

CLASS WARGAMES

SUMMER OFFENSIVE

Pick up the pieces, citizens. Lay out your armies on the board! Class Wargames is honoured to celebrate the inclusion of Kimathi Donkor's *Toussaint L'Ouverture at Bedourete* in the Furtherfield Gallery's *Invisible Forces* exhibition. In these times of popular uprisings against neo-liberal globalisation, we take pleasure in remembering our past victories. In 1791, the enslaved masses of Haiti rose in rebellion against their oppressors. Transferring the discipline painfully learnt in the plantations to the battlefield, they created a revolutionary army that defeated the best soldiers of the European colonial powers. For a brief moment, the insurgent slaves of Haiti and the artisan agitators of France would embody the most subversive desires of modernity: liberty, equality and solidarity. Not surprisingly, conservative historians and artists have always ignored this great revolutionary achievement. Donkor's painting is a sumptuous counter-attack against this establishment orthodoxy. Look at *Toussaint L'Ouverture at Bedourete* - and study well its teachings about the emancipation of humanity. Now as then, North and South can only win by uniting their forces and striking hard against their common enemy: the liberal bourgeoisie.

On 5th March, 1802, François-Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture - the commander-in-chief of the Haitian revolutionary army - achieved a great victory over the French troops defending Fort Bedourete. What happened on that day would have world-historical significance. Having seized power in 1799 through a military coup, Napoléon Bonaparte set to work on systematically reversing the democratic gains of the 1789 French Revolution. As his autocratic rule was consolidated at home, Bonaparte's attention turned to regaining control over what had once been France's most profitable colony: Haiti. Like the Paris mob before them, its rebellious inhabitants were surely incapable of resisting his hardened veterans. Sooner or later, this military dictator would achieve his ultimate goal: the restoration of slavery in Haiti. *Toussaint L'Ouverture at Bedourete* commemorates the thwarting of this nefarious scheme. Much to the amazement of their Bonapartist enemy, the Haitian soldiers were more than a match for the French regulars in open combat. Even more deadly was their strategy of guerrilla warfare against the occupying army. Partisans wore down the French forces in hit-and-run attacks - and then waited until these tired and weary troops succumbed to the deadly diseases of the tropics. Over the next two centuries, this triumph of the Haitian revolutionaries would inspire anti-colonial struggles across the world. The lessons of history are there to be learnt - and it is our turn to put them into practice.

Ludic Labour!

Summer Campaign

Invisible Forces
Saturday 16th June –
Saturday 11th August 2012

Furtherfield Gallery,
McKenzie Pavilion,
Finsbury Park,
London, N4 2NQ

The Players

Dr. Richard Barbrook
University of Westminster

Ileze Black
Queen Mary's College

Lucy Blake
Software Developer

Mark Coplestone
Coplestone Castings

Rod Dickinson
Artist

Fabian Tompsett
Class War 1985

Alex Veness
University of the Arts


Stefan Lutschinger
State University of St.
Petersburg

Elena Vorontsova
Radio Journalist

The Game of War

Guy Debord and Alice Becker-Ho's book & game is available from:

Atlas Press
27 Old Gloucester Street
LONDON WC1N 3XX
www.atlaspress.co.uk



CLASS WARGAMES

PRESENTS

GUY DEBORD'S *THE GAME OF WAR*

AND

RICHARD BORG'S *COMMAND & COLORS*

"The vital question before us is how to cut the chains of misery that still bind the hands of Toussaint's descendants and those worldwide trapped in poverty. Toussaint's fierce opposition to slavery, his leadership skills, his freedom-inspired writings and the constitution he drafted bequeath to us all a strategy for opposing injustice. This example tells us that discipline is part of the equation."

During the *Invisible Forces* exhibition at the Furtherfield Gallery, Class Wargames is playing two ludic simulations of the French and Haitian revolutions: Guy Debord's *The Game of War* and Richard Borg's *Command & Colors Napoleonic*s. By moving pieces across their boards, today's rebels against global neo-liberalism can learn the key strategic and tactical principles which secured the triumphs of the past.

Politics are a continuation of war by other means.

For Debord, *The Game of War* wasn't just a game - it was a guide to how people should live their lives within Fordist society. By playing this Clausewitz simulator, revolutionary activists could learn how to fight and win against the oppressors of spectacular society. Inspired by this example, Class Wargames has created a Haitian variant of Richard Borg's *Command & Colors Napoleonic*s which disseminates the insights of Toussaint's victorious strategy to the insurgent leftists of the 21st century.

Just as importantly, the players of these two games are able to acquire an immunity to the temptation which has betrayed revolutionary struggles throughout the modern epoch: the leaders of the oppressed themselves turning into a new class of oppressors. When everyone can play at Bonaparte, then no one can become the new Bonaparte.

Wargames are a continuation of politics by other means.

Forthcoming Events

Invisible Forces

Saturday 16th June –
Saturday 11th August
2012.
Open Thursday-Friday
2.00-6.00pm, Saturday
11.00am-6.00pm

Launch Party

Saturday 16th June
1.00pm-5.00pm

Picnic & Subversion

Saturday 23rd June
1.00pm-5.00pm
Talk: Kimathi Donkor
Xenography: Alex Veness
Game: Guy Debord's *The
Game of War*

Picnic & Subversion

Saturday 30th June
1.00pm-5.00pm
Talk: Richard Barbrook &
Fabian Tompsett
Game: 1791 Haitian
Revolution version of
Richard Borg's *Command
& Colors Napoleonic*s

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McKenzie Pavilion,
Finsbury Park,
London, N4 2NQ