

CLASS WARGAMES

SUMMER OFFENSIVE

Comrades! Raise your glasses of champagne to mark Class Wargames' decisive victory on the cultural front: the launch of our film on Guy Debord's *The Game of War*. For the first time, the Situationist politics of this military simulation are carefully explained in sound and vision. After watching this movie, opponents of spectacular capitalism will understand the importance of studying *The Game of War*. By playfully competing against each other over its board, they are learning the strategic and tactical skills required for success in the deadly struggle against the global bourgeoisie. In our film of Debord's game, Class Wargames has divided these teachings from the battlefield into five sections: terrain, combat, cavalry, arsenals and lines of communication. Analyse their insights with great care, fellow workers. As the crisis of neo-liberalism intensifies, you will need this military knowledge to thwart the wicked schemes of bankers and bureaucrats. Remember well the lessons of socialist history: clever tactics and smart strategy are our most powerful weapons.

In the early-1970s, Debord created his film adaptation of *The Society of the Spectacle* by splicing together clips taken from other people's movies and then adding his own soundtrack. When social relations between individuals are mediated through images, this avant-garde technique of détournement acts as the proletarian antidote to capitalist monopolisation of historical memory. Quoting from the products of commercial cinema involves much more than recruiting glamorous movie stars and expensive special effects for audiovisual subversion. As Debord emphasised, these borrowed film excerpts are transformed in the editing process into a revolutionary critique of the spectacular misrepresentation of the human adventure. Torn out of its original context and carefully placed in a new juxtaposition, the cinematic propaganda of the class enemy can be turned against itself. The imagery of bourgeois ideology must be metamorphosed into the elucidation of Situationist theory. Expropriating the media expropriators is the premonition of cybernetic communism in the present.

When Debord was working on the film adaptation of *The Society of the Spectacle* in the early-1970s, making a movie out of movie clips was very difficult. Buying celluloid stock, hiring editing suites and organising cinema screenings had required serious money from a generous sponsor. Fortunately, over the past three-and-a-half decades, digital technology has caught up with this Situationist technique. Class Wargames only needed a small grant from the Arts Council to fund a film constructed on a Mac laptop with Final Cut out of video from our performances and excerpts from our DVD collection. Best of all, we are now able to distribute our cinematic creation to a worldwide audience for free over the Net. Détournement is no longer the privilege of a minority of avant-garde artists. Media communism is now embedded in everyday life. Become a 21st century Debord - a director of remixed movies. Sweep away the anachronistic barriers of intellectual property. Switch on the computer, start up the video editing software, plug in an external drive filled with rendered DVDs and begin making your own film. Everyone is a practical Situationist.

Ludic Labour!

The Players

Dr. Richard Barbrook

University of Westminster

Iize Black

Waterman's Art Gallery

Lucy Blake

Software Developer

Mark Copplestone

Copplestone Castings

Rod Dickinson

Artist

Stefan Lutschinger

State University of St
Petersburg

Fabian Tompsett

Class War 1985

Alex Veness

University of the Arts

The Game of War

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

Gallimard (in French)

<http://www.gallimard.fr>

Atlas Press (in English)

<http://www.atlaspress.co.uk>

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PRESENTS

GUY DEBORD'S THE GAME OF WAR

"Reworking appropriated material not only leads to the discovery of new forms of creativity; in addition, clashing head-on with all social and legal conventions, it cannot fail to be a powerful weapon in the service of a real class struggle. The cheapness of its products is the heavy artillery which breaks through all the Chinese walls blocking understanding. It is the real means of proletarian artistic education, the first step towards media communism." "

Class Wargames is playing Guy Debord's *The Game of War* using a replica of his original 1977 design for the board game.

Guy Debord is celebrated as the chief strategist of the **Situationist International** and author of the searing critique of the media-saturated society of consumer capitalism: *The Society of the Spectacle*. What is less well known is that after the French May '68 Revolution, Debord devoted much of the rest of his life to inventing, refining and promoting what he came to regard as his most important project: *The Game of War*.

Politics is the continuation of war by other means.

The Game of War is a Clausewitz simulator: a Napoleonic-era military strategy game where armies must maintain their communications structure to survive - and where victory is achieved by smashing your opponent's supply network rather than by taking their pieces.

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.

Wargames are a continuation of politics by other means.

Forthcoming Engagements

Saturday 10th October

Crash/Crush Festival

Bed eLZE
Spui 24-26,
The Hague,
Netherlands
<http://www.tag004.nl>

Saturday 14th November

Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art

Gateshead Quays,
South Shore Road,
Gateshead,
England
<http://www.balticmill.com>

Saturday 14th November

Lens Politica

Toppila/Kuvataideakatemia,
Kaikukatu,
Helsinki,
Finland
<http://www.lenspolitica.net>