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Contesting "*Le corps militaire*": Antimilitarism, Pacificism, Anarcho-Communism and 'Le Douanier' Rousseau's *La Guerre*

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Abstract

When the 1889 Military Law was passed, it established three-year universal conscription and a greater army of citizens to boost military preparedness for war in French colonies and against Germany. Far from its ramifications being of no concern to neo-impressionists, it was the subject of bightingly bitter antimilitarist cartoons by Maximilien Luce and antimilitarist paintings by the neo-impressionist outsider, 'Le douanier' Rousseau. Far from picturing the patriotic honor of becoming a soldier and the victories of war, as did Edouard Detaille, Rousseau did the opposite. In the heat of military slaughter of families at Fourmies, Rousseau revealed how conscription would transform French citizens into *le corps militaire* to fight not just against their arch-enemy with machine-like precision but against their very own people.

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Introduction: 'Le Douanier' Rousseau, "*Il ne rêvait que de paix*"

- [1] The hanging of Edouard Detaille's award-winning painting, *Le R ve* (1888), in pride-of-place at the 1889 *Exposition Universelle D cennale* was serendipitous, if not strategic (Fig. 1).¹ Picturing the young, conscripted army as the "*arche sainte*" of the Third Republic,² collectively dreaming of the revanchist victory espoused by General Georges Boulanger, it dovetailed perfectly with the Military Law of 15 July 1889.³ Like other military visual cultures aligning patriotic masculine identity with what Alain Ehrenberg terms "*le corps militaire*," it helped to lubricate the passage of the Military law through the Chamber of Deputies.⁴ Initially drafted by Boulanger when Minister of War, this Law, named after the new Minister, Charles de Freycinet, entailed reorganization of the army and three-year universal conscription to establish an army of citizens. Hailed by politicians from Jules Ferry to *Ligue des Patriotes* founder, Paul D roul des, for heralding a new dawn,⁵ this Law seemed to symbolize, like Detaille's painting, "the nation's hopes, the resu m  of all France's glories from its heroic epochs to our own

¹ When exhibited at the 1888 *Salon des Artistes Fran ais*, *Le R ve* won the First-Class Medal in Painting. After being acquired by the State, it was hung in the Mus e de Luxembourg.

² This term is used in the catalogue entry for this painting at the Mus e d'Orsay.

³ Bernard Schnapper, *Le Remplacement militaire en France*, Paris 1968; David Ralston, *The Army of the Republic*, Cambridge 1987.

⁴ Alain Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire: Politique et p dagogie en d mocratie*, Paris 1983.

days. It was an appeal, a lesson, an act of faith."⁶ Yet by no means was this view unanimously held.



1 Edouard Detaille, *Le Rive (The Dream)*, 1888, oil on canvas, 3 x 4 m. Musée d'Orsay, Paris (photo © Fae Brauer)

[2] In response to all able-bodied Frenchmen being conscripted for military training, regardless of their position in relation to war, Sebastien Faure, Jean Grave, Louise Michel, Emile Puget, Elisée Reclus, Peter Kropotkin and Zo d'Axa, alongside many other antimilitarist anarchists and neo-impressionists, were up-in-arms.⁷ Instantly the anarcho-communist and syndicalist weekly journal, *Le Père Peinard*, launched by Emile Pouget on 24 February 1889, proclaimed itself as an anarchist journal promoting "direct action, antimilitarism, anticléricalism," including "*le sabotage*" and "*le boycottage*."⁸ From May 1890 it was illustrated with bightingly acidic antimilitarist cartoons, its first

⁵ Joan L. Coffey, "For God and France: The Military Law of 1889 and the Soldiers of Saint-Sulpice," in: *The Catholic Historical Review* 80, 4 (October 2002), 677-678.

⁶ *Paris Illustré* (July 1889), 3: "[...] de la nation espoirs, le résumé de tous les gloires de la France à partir de ses époques héroïques de nos jours. Il s'agissait d'un appel, une leçon, un acte de foi." – Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

⁷ Paul B. Miller, *From Revolutionaries to Citizens: Antimilitarism in France 1870-1914*, Durham 2002. Their opposition was voiced through *La Revue Blanche*, *Le Ça ira*, *Le Père Peinard*, and *La Révolte*. According to Brian Doherty, "The First War on Terror" (*Reason.com*, January 2011): "The number of people who subscribed to the anarchist movement's many publications was in the tens of thousands in France alone." For an analysis of antimilitarism directly after this period, see Elizabeth Propes, "Re-thinking Antimilitarism: France 1898-1914," in: *Historical Reflections* 37, 1 (Spring 1911), 45-59.

⁸ *Le Père Peinard* 17 (24 July 1889), 1-2: "L'action directe, antimilitarisme, anticléricalisme"; see "Suicide d'un soldat," *Le Père Peinard* 47 (26 January 1890), 6-7; "Chouette les conscrits!," *Le Père Peinard* 48 (9 February 1890), 4-6; "Révolte de Troubadès," "La Rage du Commandement," *Le Père Peinard* 50 (23 February 1890), 4-9; 10. It was as vehemently anti-colonial frequently addressing the hypocrisy of France's "mission civilisatrice"; see "Barbarie française," *Le Père Peinard* 45 (12 January 1890) 1890, 1-3.

being commissioned from Maximilien Luce (1858-1941) to commemorate the eighteenth anniversary of "bloody week" ("*La semaine sanglante*," 21-28 May 1871) showing the massacre of Communards by conscripted soldiers from which the figure of Liberty bearing the revolutionary torch and banner arises above the caption: "Elle n'est pas morte, foutre!!!" ("Fuck, she is not dead!!!") (Fig. 2).⁹



2 Maximilien Luce, "*Elle n'est pas morte, foutre!!!*", lithograph. *Le Père Peinard* 62 (25 May 1890), 9 (full-page illustration) (photograph by the author with permission to publish by Bibliothèque Nationale Arsenale, Paris)

[3] Every fortnight, the communist anarchist fortnightly journal, *La Révolte*, published a chapter of Octave Mirbeau's antimilitarist novel, *Le Calvaire*, under the title, "La Guerre."¹⁰ To expose the brutality of the French army in Africa, Georges Darien drew upon his military experiences in Tunisia to publish his stridently antimilitarist novel,

⁹ *Le Père Peinard* 62 (25 May 1890), 9. The first image to be published by the journal, my research also reveals this was the first issue in which this journal increased its scale from hand-size to A4 and A3, able to accommodate lithographs of larger dimensions. Placed on the back cover, this image related to the first article in this issue, page 1, "La Grande Mirraillade Racontée par les bourgeois. Elle n'est pas morte!," narrating how the Communards were gunned-down by their very own people. While developed in the second article, page 3, "La grande purge," in the third article, page 8, Pouget calls the new Republic, "Nouvelles Bastilles," an analogy drawn some sixty years later by Michel Foucault: see "Panopticism," in: *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York 1995, 221-228. The significance of Liberty is stressed in many preceding issues of the journal; see "Vive la Liberté, nom de dieu!," *Le Père Peinard* 61 (18 May 1890), 5.

Biribi, Discipline Militaire, with its cover illustrated by Luce revealing indigenous people being strangled, whipped and buried by French army officers.¹¹ (Fig. 3) Lucien Descaves, published his scandalous antimilitarist novel, *Sous-Offs*, based upon his brutal experiences as a Corporal, with a controversial dedication "to all those whose blood had been sapped by patriotism."¹² Following prosecution of its publishers for offending the army and violating good morals, *Le Figaro* published a protest signed by fifty writers including Paul Bourget, Alphonse Daudet, Gustave Geffroy and Emile Zola, followed by Rémy de Gourmont's antimilitarist parody, *Le joujou patriotisme* (*The patriotism plaything*) published in the *Mercure de France*.¹³ Their antimilitarist cultural-political tactics were reinforced by the Pacifist's strategies.

[4] To address its implications for war, Frédéric Passy reconstituted the *Société Française des Amis de la Paix*, formed after the Franco-Prussian War, into the *Société Française pour l'Arbitrage entre Nations*, which attracted many socialists.¹⁴ It was joined by the *Association de la Paix par le Droit*, formed under the presidency of Jacques Dumas.¹⁵ The first two of twenty-one congresses for international peace followed before the First World War, held in Paris: the *Congrès International de la Paix* and the *Congrès Universal de la Paix*. Far from the 1889 Military Law facilitating the attainment of "la gloire" pictured by *Le Rêve*, they predicted that its outcome would be global annihilation. This outcome was captured by "Le Douanier" Henri Rousseau (1844-1910) in *La Guerre* of c.1894 (Fig. 4).

¹⁰ An autobiographical novel, *La Calvaire* was first published in 1886 and subsequently published as "La Guerre," *La Révolte, Supplément Littéraire* 45 (20-26 July 1889), 174; 47 (10-16 August 1889), 178; 5 (7-13 September 1889), 185; 1 (21-27 September 1889), 191. Set in the Franco-Prussian War, it exposed the incompetence of French officers and the futility of patriotism.

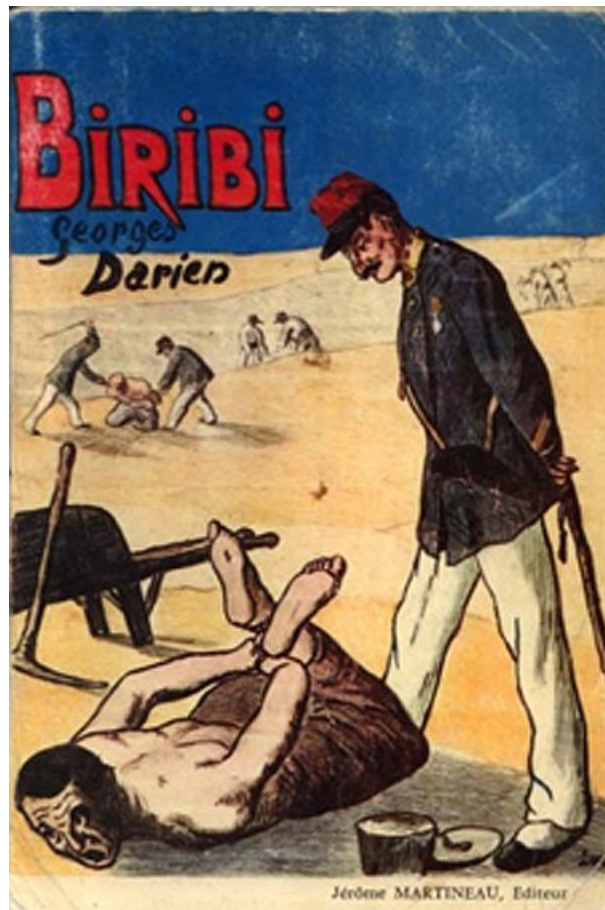
¹¹ Georges Darien, *Biribi*, Paris 1890; it was published by Albert Savine. A savage indictment of the French soldiers' behaviour in Tonkin appeared in *La Révolte* 29 (31 March-6 April 1889), 1-2, under the title, "Patriotisme": "Notre brave arme [...] est allée bombarder des villes inoffensives. Nos soldats ont porté la dévastation et le pillage dans un pays paisible. A travers les incendies et le carnage, ils ont semé la mort, puis, juste retour des choses, ils l'ont récolté pour eux-mêmes."

¹² Lucien Descaves, *Sous-Offs, roman militaire*, Paris 1889, Dédicace: "A tous ceux dont la patrie prend le sang, non pour le verser, mais pour le soumettre, dans l'absurde paix des chaix militaires, aux tares du mouillage et de la sophistication, je dédie ces analyses de laboratoire."

¹³ Jean Rabaut, *L'Antimilitarisme en France 1810-1975, Faits et Documents*, Paris 1975, 29, recounts how Descaves' publishers, Tresse et Stock, were prosecuted at the Cour d'Assises on 24 January 1890 and points out: "Pas moins de cinquante-trois passages du livre étaient jugés délictueux par le ministère public"; see also "Sous-Offs," *La Révolte, Supplément Littérature* 16 (28 December-10 January 1890), 217, and "Sous-Offs," *Le Père Peinard* 46 (19 January 1890), 5: "Tout le monde soldat; tous riches et pauvres bouffant la carne pourrie avec son accompagnement de fayots et de pommes de terre à la ma même gamelle [...] La religion de la Patrie, c'est le nouveau culte!" Rémy de Gourmont's *Le joujou patriotisme* was published by the *Mercure de France* in April 1891.

¹⁴ Frédéric Passy, *Pour la Paix: Notes et documents*, Paris 1909. Known as "the Apostle of Peace," Passy, countering the Military Law, drafted a policy for disarmament and presented a resolution calling for arbitration of international disputes. His statement, "Pacifists are not Antimilitarists," was designed to distinguish their policies, Passy maintaining that, while antimilitarists attacked the symptoms of war, pacifists attacked the causes.

¹⁵ Sandi E. Cooper, "Pacifism in France, 1889-1914: International Peace as a Human Right," in: *French Historical Studies* 17, 2 (Fall 1991), 359-340.



3 Maximilien Luce, *Biribi, Discipline Militaire*, Paris 1890, cover image (photo © Fae Brauer)



4 Henri Rousseau, *La Guerre (War)*, c.1894, oil on canvas, 114 x 195 cm, exhibited as no. 725, 10th *Salon des Artistes IndÉpendants*, Paris 1894. Musée d'Orsay, Paris (reprod. from: *Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris*, exh. cat., London 2005, p. 102-103, no. 17)



5 Henri Rousseau, *Les Artilleurs (4e batterie, 3e piece)* (*Artillerymen*), 1893-1895, oil on canvas, 79.1 x 98.9 cm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (reprod. from: *Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris*, exh. cat., London 2005, p. 108, no. 21)

[5] A committed pacifist, Rousseau would proudly raise his glass in a toast to peace.¹⁶ As recalled by his close friend, Wilhem Uhde, "he would only ever dream of peace."¹⁷ Endorsing the pacifists and anarcho-communists vehement opposition to conscription, Rousseau openly acknowledged his horror of war.¹⁸ "When a king declares war, immediately mothers must protest and stop him from doing it!" Rousseau declared.¹⁹ Consolidating with anarchists, socialists, antimilitarists and pacifists, Rousseau

¹⁶ Wilhelm Uhde, *Henri Rousseau*, Paris 1911, 24. Uhde painted a vivid picture of the context in which they discussed war: "Le 14 juillet – le dernier qu'il ait vécu – je vais le voir de bonne heure dans sa chambre. Il est endimanché et a des visites. Il est justement en train de verser du vin dans les verres: "Aimes-tu la paix" demande-t-il, et quand j'ai dit oui, nous buvons tous à la paix. Puis il me prend par la main, me conduit à la fenêtre et, parmi beaucoup de petits drapeaux, me montre celui de mon pays."

¹⁷ Wilhelm Uhde, Préface, *Exposition Henri Rousseau*, chez MM. Bernheim-Jeune & Cie, Paris 1912, unpag.: "Il ne rêvait que de paix."

¹⁸ Often Robert Delaunay recalls Rousseau saying to him, "Je suis Anarchiste." See "Mon ami Rousseau," in: *Arts et lettres* (August-September 1952). As I have argued, the mutualisme conveyed in Rousseau's paintings, particularly of primates, signifies a culturo-political position close to that of Kropotkin and Reclus; see "Wild Beasts and Tame Primates: 'Le Douanier' Rousseau's Dream of Darwin's Evolution," in: *The Art of Evolution: Darwin, Darwinisms and Visual Culture*, eds. Barbara Larson and Fae Brauer, Hanover and London 2009, 194-225. The source for Rousseau's anarcho-communism may have been fuelled by his friendship with Alfred Jarry, who he appears to have met around 1893, the two bonding over their mutual origins in Laval and their cultural politics. In *Henri Rousseau*, 1911, 18, Wilhelm Uhde throws more light upon this nexus: "Quant à savoir qui poussa Henri Rousseau vers la peinture, c'est là le sujet de maintes histoires. On raconte que ce fut son ami Alfred Jarry, le "Père Ubu," qui était du même pays et dont le père était ami du père de Rousseau." In the same book, 23-24, Uhde mentions that Rousseau expressed his horror of war unequivocally: "Il me parle du Mexique, des veilles forêts, des bêtes féroces. Puis de la guerre qu'il a en horreur."

¹⁹ Rousseau in conversation with Wilhelm Uhde; see Wilhelm Uhde, *Henri Rousseau*, 1911, 24: "Quand un roi veut faire la guerre, il faut qu'une mère aille à lui et le lui défende."

contested the inhumanity of "*le corps militaire*," particularly the patriotic duty that impelled it to war at home and abroad. Reviling the heroism of military life and "*la gloire*" of military victory captured in *Le Rêve* by Detaille, Rousseau imaged how ordinary men became subjected to the anonymity, rigidity and regimentation of military life after the Military Law, and forced to engage in human slaughter. How they became powerless to resist their bodies being molded into "*le corps militaire*" and to refuse training in the deadliest forms of land-based armaments was imaged by Rousseau in such paintings as *Les Artilleurs (4e batterie, 3e piece)* of 1893-1895 (Fig. 5). How they compounded warfare with their bodies and weapons was exemplified by *La Guerre*. Through the dialogue generated between these paintings of subjection and his other paintings connoting free association as epitomized by *Le centenaire d'indépendance* (*The Centennial of Independence*) (Fig. 6) – a painting in front of which visitors danced at the 1892 *Salon des Artistes Indépendants* and sang "*Auprès de ma blonde*" – Rousseau, following Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) and Paul Signac (1863-1935), considered that his art could "awaken popular consciousness."²⁰



6 Henri Rousseau, *Le centenaire d'indépendance* (*The Centennial of Independence*), 1892, oil on canvas, 11.8 x 157.2 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (reprod. from: *Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris*, exh. cat., London 2005, p. 104, no. 18)

- [6] In revealing the violence inherent in militarist subjection alongside the freedom of association in anarcho-communist and communard utopias, Rousseau pursued the dialectical art praxis advocated by Kropotkin to revolutionize society. In his dialectic praxis, Rousseau's antimilitarism appears comparable to the scathingly satirical drawings for *Le Père Poinard* by Luce, particularly "*Elle n'est pas morte, foutre!!!*"

²⁰ See Katherine Brion's article in this Special Issue, "[Paul Signac's Decorative Propaganda of the 1890s](#)": "réveiller la conscience populaire."

(Fig. 2) and *Patrie* (1902, Fig. 16) in which patriotism is depicted devouring its adherents, a lithographed that will be discussed in detail in this article.²¹ In choosing to display this dialectical praxis at the jury-free *Salon des Artistes Indépendants* every year from 1886 until his retrospective in 1911, Rousseau exhibited alongside Luce and other neo-impressionists. In constantly commemorating its freedom of association, as epitomized by his painting, *Liberty inviting Artists to Take Part in the 22nd Exhibition of the Société des Indépendants*, and by such public statements that it was "the finest Society, the most legal Society, since everyone has the same rights," Rousseau became closely involved with the neo-impressionist group.²² In fact, not only was he encouraged by Signac to submit four paintings, including *Un Soir de Carnaval (Carnival Evening)*, to the 1886 *Salon des Artistes Indépendants*, but Rousseau also developed a long and close relationship with him, Signac being one of only seven to attend Rousseau's funeral.²³ When imprisoned in 1907 for collusion in a bank fraud, Luce was one of two friends who testified on his behalf and who endeavored to persuade the judge to release him.²⁴

- [7] Like Signac and Luce, Rousseau seems to have regarded his dialectical paintings as a form of aesthetic "propaganda of the deed" that, unlike the violence inherent in the anarchist *attentats*, was a pacifist act that could transform consciousness, as explained by Pierre Quillard:

The fact alone of bringing forth a beautiful work [...] constitutes an act of revolt [...] good literature is an outstanding form of propaganda by the deed. [...] Thus consciously or not [...] whoever communicates to his brothers in suffering the secret splendour of his dreams acts upon the surrounding society in the manner of a solvent and makes all those who understand him, often without their realization, outlaws and rebels.²⁵

- [8] Since this praxis was the ideological premise upon which the neo-impressionists forged their alliance and upon which they built their public forum at the *Salon des Artistes Indépendants*, Rousseau may be regarded as a neo-impressionist. Like the neo-impressionists, he was committed to an individual vision that was accessible to popular

²¹ Jean Grave, *Guerre-Militarisme*, Paris 1902.

²² Arsène Alexandre, "La Vie et l'œuvre d'Henri Rousseau, peintre et ancien employé de l'Octroi," in: *Comœdia* 901 (19 March 1910), 3: "C'est la plus belle société, c'est la Société la plus légale, puisque tout le monde y a le même droit."

²³ Claire Frèches-Thory, "Des sarcasmes à la consécration: fortune critique," in: *Le Douanier Rousseau: Jungles à Paris*, Paris 2006, 173: "Paul Signac, pour sa part, ouvrit toutes grandes les portes du Salon des Indépendants à Rousseau et fut l'un des rares à accompagner son cercueil en 1910." See also Robert Delaunay, "Henri Rousseau," in: *L'Amour de l'art* (7 November 1920), 228-229; Lucien Boucher, "Le Triomphe de Le Douanier Rousseau," in: *L'Art vivant* (15 December 1925), 58; Adolphe Basler, "'Le Douanier' Henri Rousseau," in: *L'Art vivant* (15 October 1926), 778.

²⁴ Yann le Pichon, *Le Monde du Douanier Rousseau*, Paris 1981, 268: "[...] le peintre, Luce, témoignent en sa faveur."

²⁵ Pierre Quillard, "L'Anarchie par la littérature," *Entretiens* (April 1892), 149-51, as quoted and translated by Eugenia W. Herbert, *The Artist and Social Reform: France and Belgium 1885-1898*, New Haven 1961, 129.

consciousness. However, in neither pursuing their exploration of a new way of seeing through the pointillist technique nor sharing their utopian vision of the Maures region as *le pays du soleil*, he will be identified as more of a neo-impressionist outsider than an insider.²⁶ Although characterized as both a naïvist and aspirant academic painter who was taught by Auguste Clément and Léon Gérôme, who adulated William Bouguereau and submitted paintings to the 1884 *Salon des Artistes Français*, from the time he exhibited at the 1886 *Salon des Artistes Indépendants*, Rousseau's culturo-political allegiance never waived from this Salon and the neo-impressionists.²⁷ Unlike Signac, but like Luce, Rousseau appears more concerned with demonstrating how Jean Grave's *terre libre*²⁸ of free association could be discovered and treasured within enclaves of the capital rather than merely in agrarian colonies outside it, as epitomized by the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, which he visited religiously every Sunday and from which most of his animal paintings derive.²⁹ A staunch supporter of the free association established by Jacobin republicanism, Rousseau was distraught at its usurpation by President Sadi Carnot's government (1887-1894), and the extent of parliamentary corruption exposed by the 1892 Panama Affair, believing it could only be reattained through anarchist communism and the solidarism of Léon Bourgeois. Unlike Signac, Rousseau was also far more focused upon exposing the curtailment of civil liberties together with the loss of human and animal rights arising from the political centre of France, as demonstrated by his vehement response to the Freycinet Military Law and the transformation of French men into "*le corps militaire*."

[9] To determine how and why Rousseau, like other anarchists, pacifists and such neo-impressionists as Luce contested "*le corps militaire*," this essay will begin by examining the replacement of the *armée de métier* in the Third Republic with the conscripted *nation-en-armes* ("Nation-in-Arms") and its organization into army-corps regions throughout France. It will then examine the need for a different model of soldier whose mind and body was to be molded physiologically and psychologically as denoted by "*le corps militaire*." It will also consider how gymnastics, physical education and modern

²⁶ Roger Cardinal, "Towards an Outsider Aesthetic," in: *The Artist Outsider: Creativity and the Boundaries of Culture*, Washington 1994, 21.

²⁷ John House, "Henri Rousseau as an Academic," *Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris*, exh. cat., London 2005, 182-189, mounts a powerful argument for Rousseau's academic aspirations. Yet in so doing, House decontextualizes Rousseau from the Salon des Artistes Indépendants, the neo-impressionists and anarcho-communism. While Rousseau may have extolled his academic teachers to officials in order to give his œuvre legitimacy, with his shift from the *Salon des Artistes Français* to the Salon des Artistes Indépendants, as I argue, his artistic praxis became aligned with the neo-impressionists. Since there has been a tendency to read the naivety of his artwork as a reflection of a supposedly simplistic intellect and unpretentious persona, rather than the result of a highly informed mind, a passionate egalitarian pacifist, and a subtle strategist, this may be why this connection has been long overlooked.

²⁸ See Woloshyn's article in this Special Issue, "[Colonizing the Côte d'Azur: Neo-Impressionism, Anarcho-Communism and the Tropical Terre Libre of the Maures, c.1892-1908.](#)"

²⁹ Brauer, *Wild Beasts and Tame Primates*, 196-202.

sport were incorporated in order for "*le corps militaire*" to function as "*le combattant isolé*" with initiative and machine-like precision undisrupted by either passion or compassion. In the third part, the demographic division of Paris by the 1889 Military Law will be investigated before exploring how the Mediterranean, despite its imaging by Signac as an anarcho-communist utopia, became extensively militarized by 1891. In the final part, the suppressive role played by "*le corps militaire*" in quelling riots and controlling the people during the 1890s will be scrutinized in conjunction with Fourmies massacre, "*les lois scélérates*" (the "Villainous Laws," 1893-1894), the Franco-Russian Alliance (1894) and the Panama Scandal in order to ascertain why French militarism was perceived as imbricated within civil war and represented a betrayal of the individual liberties and fraternal solidarity that Rousseau so cherished.

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A Nation-in-Arms: Conscripting the Third Republic

[10] From 1871 until 1914 the concept of the army was, according to Alain Ehrenberg, one of the great political debates of the Third Republic.³⁰ During 1870-1871, France's humiliating defeat by Prussia's mass army of conscripts, followed by the bloody battles fought between communards and Versailles troops, had exposed the anachronism inherent in France's *armée de métier*.³¹ The professional army seemed grossly inadequate to deal with the trauma of dishonor, political intransigence and social division, as well as the physiological and moral degeneration facing the new Republic. In light of the prediction by military experts that the next war would be fought on an unprecedented global scale with mechanized weaponry and differing battle tactics, a fundamental transformation of the French military system was considered. Alongside its facility to defend the nation with the most up-to-date weapons and to combat internal insurrections, particularly *coups d'état*, the army needed to be reconceived as an instrument of national cohesion.³² To function as a *nation-en-armes*, especially in light of the declining birthrate and depopulation of France, the entire Third Republic needed to consolidate in its goal of ensuring that every citizen, no matter how young, was disciplined, fit, skilled, stealthy and ready for war, as explained by the radical republican politician who became Prime Minister in 1881, Léon Gambetta:

The gymnast and soldier need to work side by side with our teachers until each child, each citizen, is fit to hold a sword, to handle a rifle, to make long marches, to pass nights under the stars, and to endure valiantly any hardship for the sake of his country.³³

³⁰ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 92: "L'armée a été de 1871 à 1914 l'un des grands débats politiques de la Troisième République."

³¹ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 92-93.

³² Maurice Vaisse, dir., *Aux armes citoyens! Conscription et armée de métier, des Grecs à nos jours*. Paris 1998; see also Bernard Boëne and Michel-Louis Martin (dir.) *Conscription et armée de métier*, Paris 1991.

[11] In 1872, the concept of conscription as a socio-political panacea had been explored by the Moral Order regime.³⁴ Due to internal and external threats that continued to menace the nation, the conservative deputy, Marquis Just de Chasseloup-Laubat, considered that the army base needed to be enlarged. Conscription could, he explained, not only expand it but also inculcate national order, discipline and obedience, transform the impoverished classes, integrate the dangerous ones and unify the nation in a cohesive military republican spirit.³⁵ In short, conscription could diffuse the spirit of the military Republic throughout the nation. Despite intensive debates amongst opposing political factions in the Chamber of Deputies over the need for a professional or national army, there was a consensus on conscription, albeit for differing reasons.³⁶ While legislation to establish its principal was unanimously passed in 1872, there was little agreement over the length of service, Gambetta and other radical republicans recommending three years while the provisional President of the Republic, Louis Adolphe Thiers, advocating as many as seven.³⁷ Once a compromise was reached, the Law entitled *Tout Français doit le Service Militaire Personnel*, was passed on 24 July 1873. It entailed conscription for five years in the territories or six years in the territorial reserve, and the creation of Regional Army Corps.

[12] Under this law, the territory of "metropolitan" France was divided into eighteen army-corps regions established in accordance with the resources of recruiting and the necessities of mobilization, as illustrated by the Republican map illustrating the militarization of France (Fig. 7).³⁸ With each region containing roughly 2,000,000 at the date of the laws passing, the *nation-en-arms* was meant to comprise approximately 36,000,000, increased to 38,000,000 when Algeria became the nineteenth army-corps region.³⁹ Given the patchwork of French regional cultures and dialects, recruitment into

³³ Léon Gambetta, *Discours à Bordeaux le 26 juin 1871*, as quoted in: Pierre Arnaud, *Les athlètes de la république*, Toulouse 1987, 78: "Il faut mettre partout, à côté de l'instituteur, le gymnaste et le militaire, afin que nos enfants, nos soldats, nos concitoyens, soient tous aptes à tenir une épée, à manier un fusil, à faire de longues marches, à passer les nuits à la belle étoile, à supporter vaillamment toutes les épreuves pour la patrie."

³⁴ Under the presidencies of Adolphe Thiers and Patrice de MacMahon, when the first part of the Third Republic from 1871 until 1879 was called the *Ordre Moral*, the issue of monarchy versus republic dominated public debate. This highly conservative government was not disrupted and displaced until republicans gained the majority of seats in the Senate on 5 January 1879.

³⁵ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 122.

³⁶ Philippe Boulanger, *La France devant la conscription: Géographie Historique d'une Institution Républicaine, 1914-1922*, Paris 2001, 39: "Les différents lois sur le recrutement, celles de 1872, 1889 et 1905, traduisent la recherche d'une plus grande implication de la population dans sa défense. En effet, le service militaire, jusqu'au début du XXe siècle, n'est pas forcément en adéquation avec l'idéologie républicaine de fraternité et d'égalité que le régime véhicule. [...] La loi sur le recrutement est constituée le fondement de cette institution républicaine."

³⁷ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 97.

³⁸ Philippe Boulanger, *La géographie militaire française (1871-1939)*, Paris, 2002, 25. As the actual number of men called up depended on the need for them as determined by the War Ministry, it varied from year to year and was decided by lottery.

³⁹ Leonard V. Smith et al., eds., *France and the Great War, 1914-1918*, London 2003, 15.

regions was designed to facilitate communication, unification and bonding, as illustrated by the Sixth Regional Army Corps of Châlons-sur-Marne pictured by Detaille, the conscripts and officers asleep on the ground in Champagne collectively dreaming of victory (Fig. 1).⁴⁰



7 Map of France: Headquarters of Army Corps, 1890 (reprod. from: Philippe Boulanger, *La géographie militaire française (1871-1939)*, Paris 2002, 101)

[13] Although each regional army corps was designed to be self-contained in arms, ammunition, supply, transport, clothing and equipment for the entire troop force therein, due to the financial hardships faced by France, this did not ensue. Although an equality of military duty was meant to reign with every man from the age of twenty being eligible for the *classe de recrutement* and the *classe de mobilization*, dispensations were provided for students, ecclesiastics, public servants and the infirm, while doctors, clergymen and civil servants were granted total exemption.⁴¹ This included Rousseau, who was working as a customs officer in the Paris *Octroi* when this Law was passed, from which job he earned his nickname "Le Douanier."⁴² Although this Law meant that total commitment of service could be as long as twenty five years, a

⁴⁰ Boulanger, *La géographie militaire française*, 30. Each regional corps developed its own military culture, as manifest by its 'soldier slang' and songs. However, due to a village suffering the loss of its entire manhood when a regional corps was wiped-out in battle, the process of "brassage" was introduced. Yet with this mixing of regional corps came problems of alienation and isolation.

⁴¹ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, Appendix: TOUT FRANÇAIS DOIT LE SERVICE MILITAIRE PERSONNEL, 24 June 1873 Law: "1.5 years of service passing 4 years in the reserve, 5 years in the territories and 6 years in the territorial reserve. 1 year of service, with dispensations for students, ecclesiastics, public servants and the infirm."

⁴² Frances Morris and Christopher Green, *Henri Rousseau, Jungles in Paris*, exh. cat., London 2006, 207.

private was paid as little as one sou per day or thirty sous a month: 1.50 francs.⁴³ On top of this, due to the financial restraints arising from France's five-million franc debt with Germany, this Law could not be implemented directly or in its entirety. The full raft of reforms required to implement a *nation-en-armes*, as envisaged by Gambetta, did not occur, according to Ehrenberg, until the 1889 Conscription Law, when exemptions were abolished and service became obligatory for all.⁴⁴ With this Law not only was the army to be fully reconstructed as a *nation-en-armes*, but the soldier was also to be reconstituted as "*le corps militaire*."

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Molding "*Le corps militaire*": Republican Sport, Compulsory Gymnastics and "*le combattant isolé*"

[14] In light of the 1870 retreat, the Minister of War from 1876, General Jean Auguste Berthaut, maintained that what was required was an individualization of tactics and a decentralization of combat to enable the army to fight on multiple fronts simultaneously. In this case, the army could no longer be structured in an immense hierarchy of ranks pyramidally descending from a single commander. It needed to become a supplier network in which officers of inferior rank, particularly captains of companies, could exercise what Berthaut called "*l'esprit militaire*."⁴⁵ The 1,000 man battalion dependent upon the Commander's every word needed to be replaced, Berthaut explained, by small, independently mobile companies led by captains granted sufficient autonomy to make decisions without waiting for commands.⁴⁶ It was due to the absence of this facility to take the initiative that he considered the French had been defeated in 1870. To create small, independent companies within the regional army corps, each region had eight subdivisions making 159 subdivisions in all with their own recruiting officers. These subdivisions were composed of 50-men companies.

[15] As a correlative, the individual soldier in these small companies could no longer be conceived, according to Commander Legros, as an animal more rustic, but less intelligent than a horse.⁴⁷ Needing to operate complex machines and engage exhaustingly extensive battles no longer fought en-masse but individually, face-to-face on isolated fronts, the soldier needed to be reconstituted as a democratized individual. Following Michel Foucault, they needed to operate as a docile body, but not as an automaton.⁴⁸ They had to be reconceived as capable of seizing the initiative without

⁴³ *Handbook of the French Army*, 1914, Nashville 2002.

⁴⁴ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 48.

⁴⁵ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 50.

⁴⁶ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 62.

⁴⁷ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 48.

⁴⁸ Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, Paris 1975; *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York 1995, 135; 162-170.

being motivated by a superior. To make this new kind of soldier encapsulated by Ehrenburg's term, "*le combattant isolé*," was imperative as Jean Alphonse Colin's military text surmised: "Never in any époque has the individual value of the soldier become more important. Combat is in the hands of each combatant."⁴⁹

[16] As "*le combattant isolé*" needed to remain intensively focused and act instantaneously with aggressive determination, machine-like precision and without fear, such inhibiting qualities as empathy, sympathy, gentleness or vulnerability were to be eradicated as instinctive and feminine. As Berthaut explained, "The value of a man and soldier will be measured by his ability to subdue his instincts."⁵⁰ Hence, as Ehrenberg points out, a different kind of "dressage" was required to expunge all trace of the feminine and to turn the soldier into an invulnerable, physically-resistant, hard-as-steel body.⁵¹ It was also required to redress France's declining birthrate and the fact that only one third of French conscripts were medically fit for service at the age of twenty.⁵²

[17] The first world conflict to be interpreted in Darwinist terms, the cause of France's defeat at the hands of the Germans was linked to its waning fertility and decreasing numbers.⁵³ In 1851, France and Germany had the same population of 39 million according to the statistics collected by France's population demographer, Dr Jacques Bertillon.⁵⁴ While Germany's population had soared to nearly 50 million by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, France's population had remained static, if not declined given the increasing numbers of foreigners who made up this figure by 1870.⁵⁵ In the struggle for survival and supremacy amongst modern nation states, its declining population was perceived to have severely disadvantaged France intellectually, industrially, commercially and militarily, as the Deputy, Edouard Le Roy surmised:

The power of the number [of Frenchmen] is more than ever a factor of primary consideration in exterior relations as in the interior life of nation states. Those who possess it enjoy an incontestable superiority, from the intellectual and moral point of view, for the propagation of their language and ideas, for the diffusion of their influence in the world; from the industrial point of view, for the

⁴⁹ Jean Alphonse Colin, *Les Transformations d la guerre*, Paris 1912, 69: "Le combat est aux mains de chaque combatant, et jamais à aucune époque, la valeur individuelle du soldat n'a eu plus importance."

⁵⁰ Colin, *La France Militaire*, 54.

⁵¹ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 98: "Ce va-et-vient organize une nouvelle conception du dressage." Refer also to the section starting 134: "Le dressage physique du combattant isolé". The term "hard as steel body" derives from Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies [Männerphantasien]*, Minneapolis 1987.

⁵² Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 107.

⁵³ John Weiss, *Conservatism in Europe 1770-1945*, London 1977, 107.

⁵⁴ Dr Jacques Bertillon, *La Dépopulation de la France: Ses conséquences – ses causes mesures à prendre pour la combattre*, Paris 1911, 7. Bertillon maintained that this was not a recent problem, having commenced a century ago.

⁵⁵ Bertillon, *La Dépopulation de la France*, 21. Bertillon began writing about the problem of depopulation directly after the Commune, his first publication appearing in *La République française* in 1873.

development of its production and its commerce, but mainly from the military point of view for the defense of terrain and the resistance to invasions.⁵⁶

- [18] It was due to their greater "vigor" and "good health" that German soldiers were considered able to overcome their less fit opponents. Their greater fitness was linked to their training in physical education principals devised by Friedrich (Ludwig) Jahn in response to the continual occupation of Prussia by Napoleon from 1800 until 1815. Their fitness appeared to be bolstered by a far more modernized military technology under the direction of General Otto von Bismarck than that developed under Napoleon III. Diagnosed in the terms laid down by Charles Darwin for the "survival of the fittest" in *The Descent of Man*, Prussia had proven to possess a higher "grade of civilization."⁵⁷ Hence France's defeat was linked to the relative unfitness of its soldiers.
- [19] Most individuals entering the army and reserves were the sons of peasants, farmers and shopkeepers, who had experienced a lifetime of poor hygiene, nourishment, and physical development. While the average height was no more than 5 feet 6 inches, most of these individuals were classified as either "men of weak constitution" or "men unfit for any service that were totally exempt from military service."⁵⁸ For the first call-up in 1872, 30,500 out of 325,000 were discovered to have feeble constitutions; 16,000 unhealthy, mutilated or suffering from hernia, arthritis or rheumatism; 18,000 under 5 feet tall; 9,100 with flat feet; 7,000 with impaired vision and 8,000 obese.⁵⁹ In this case, new military training was required to produce solitary fighters able to seize resourcefully the initiative through being physically agile and intellectually alert with swift reflexes. It needed to ensure that the conscripted soldier could become welded to a machine, while performing with the precision of a machine. As fragile civilians and weak citizens were purportedly incapable of enduring the immense fatigue of military life, the army deemed different energies necessary for long, machine-driven battles. The new military training techniques designed to harness energy were formulated through gymnastics, physical education and modern sport.

⁵⁶ "PROPOSITION DE LOI ayant pour objet de combattre la dépopulation," présentée par M. Edouard Le Roy, Député, Chambre des Députés, Session de 1892, 2182, in: *Annexe du procès-verbal de la séance du 20 juin 1892*, 9: "La puissance du nombre [...] elle est plus que jamais un facteur de premier ordre, dans les relations extérieures comme dans la vie intérieure des Etats. Celui qui la possède jouit d'une incontestable supériorité, au point de vue intellectuel et moral, pour la propagation de sa langue et de ses idées, pour la diffusion de son influence dans le monde; au point de vue industriel, pour le développement de sa production et son commerce, mais principalement au point de vue militaire, pour la défense de sol sol et la résistance aux invasions."

⁵⁷ Elaborating his theory of "natural selection," Darwin deduced that extinction mostly followed from competition between tribes and races, the fittest being the ones that survived. Their fitness did not just depend upon their good health and vigor, but their fertility, their numbers, and most of all upon what Darwin called "the grade of their civilisation"; see Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, London 1871, 212; Charles Darwin, *La descendance de l'homme et la sélection sexuelle*, trans. J.-J. Moulinier, Paris 1872.

⁵⁸ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 107-108. These were the last two of four classifications. The first two were "men fit for ordinary service" and "men fit for auxiliary service." Men of "weak constitution" were recycled for reexamination the following year.

⁵⁹ Ehrenberg, *Le corps militaire*, 108.

[20] Only through the nexus forged between militarism and physical fitness during the Third Republic, according to French sport historian, Pierre Arnaud, did physical education emerge as a dominant politico-cultural phenomenon.⁶⁰ Through the lobbying of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, in 1885 the Ministry of Public Education supported his project to revolutionize French school education through the introduction of rugby, which was made compulsory in the lycées. Through Coubertin's advocacy, the first public rugby and soccer matches were played, rugby and soccer clubs mushroomed, the French Stadium opened, the French swimming society begun, the *Racing Club de France* was inaugurated, and the powerful *Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques* (USFSA) was founded. In linking these sports to military preparedness, Coubertin did not couch his words:

There exist two different kinds of people: those [...] with strong muscles, bearing self-confidence, and the kind of sickly people with a resigned and humble expression on the face, who bear themselves as defeated soldiers. In the college it is the same as in the world: The weak are eliminated; this type of education benefits only those who are strong.⁶¹

[21] Sport could also, he proclaimed, reform the army. Those who played sport, Coubertin argued, could be easily trained for war.⁶² Sporting games developed the initiative of each individual, while reinforcing the cohesion of a group. While sport excited individual action, it also led to the sacrifice of personal gain for group success. It developed contempt for grief, pain and emotion. Since sporting games and exercise stimulated combatants to initiate confrontation, it inculcated what Coubertin called, "*l'esprit combatif*."⁶³ Sport, he maintained, could bring to light outstanding players amongst their ranks, who were able to establish their authority. Conversely, it exposed cowards afraid of being hit. Overall, he concluded, it provided a feeling of personal power amongst men, while producing obedient subjects. Rather than the soldier being forced to obey a hierarchy of commands, Coubertin emphasized that like the football-player, he could be automatically disciplined by the constraints of sporting games and their rules of competition. To achieve this goal, the army also deployed the rational gymnastics developed by Georges Demeny in collaboration with French scientist and chronophotographer, Étienne-Jules Marey.

[22] In order to ensure physical development of the nation's children and the fitness of conscripts, legislation was passed in 1880, under Gambetta's Presidency, to make

⁶⁰ Pierre Arnaud, *Le Militaire, l'écolier, le gymnaste. Naissance de l'éducation physique en France (1869-1889)*, Lyon 1991.

⁶¹ Pierre de Coubertin, *L'Éducation anglaise en France*, Paris 1889; Pierre de Coubertin, *Olympism: selected writings*, ed. Norbert Müller, Lausanne 2000, 89: "Il existe deux sortes de gens: ceux [...] avec des muscles forts, portant la confiance en soi, et le genre de personnes malades avec une expression résignée et humble sur le visage, qui se portent comme des soldats vaincus. Dans le collège, il est le même que dans le monde: les faibles sont éliminés; ce type d'enseignement ne profite qu'à ceux qui sont forts."

⁶² Pierre de Coubertin, *L'Évolution française sous la Troisième République*, Paris 1896.

⁶³ Pierre Arnaud, *Les Athlètes de la République; Gymnastique, sport et idéologie républicaine, 1870-1914*, Paris 1997.

physical education obligatory in all lycées.⁶⁴ Its military objective was emphasized by its chief proponent, Gambetta's Minister for Public Instruction, Jules Ferry:

Gymnastics is inseparable from military education, one is the end, the other is the means [...] Hence we are firmly resolved to organize in all schools of all kinds a serious and strong military education system in which the study of gymnastics forms the base and the principle. We believe that military education will not only completely pervade our schools' customs but that the instructor will himself become a teacher of military exercise.⁶⁵

[23] Two years later when the Decret was passed to establish Bataillons Scolaires in which boys were also to receive military training at school, Ferry's goal seemed to be achieved.⁶⁶ The subsequent Law of 27 January 1889, making gymnastics also obligatory in lycées, was directly annexed to the 1889 conscription Bill.⁶⁷ As succinctly surmized by Arnaud, gymnastics became a military affair, guaranteed by the Minister of War and promoted for military reasons.⁶⁸ This was reinforced by Georges Demenÿ who, in 1880, had founded a *cercle de gymnastique* in Paris in order to, in his words, "restore to the French their muscles."⁶⁹ A year later, when Demenÿ became Marey's assistance and *préparateur* at his *Station Physiologique*, illness, energy and fatigue, particularly amongst soldiers, were studied.⁷⁰ In 1886, cadets were sent to this Station under the auspices of the Ministry of War, to determine the pace at which the soldier could march over the greatest distance with the least fatigue. After the 1889 Gymnastics and Conscription Bills, the army funded more research and sent more recruits for Demenÿ to

⁶⁴ G. Andrieu, "La Loi du 27 janvier 1880," in: *Revue Spirales*, 13-14, 1998, 26: "Si la gymnastique devient obligatoire pour tous les garçons en 1880 c'est principalement parce que la défaite nationale est devenue l'affaire de tous les citoyens mâles et non parce que la République est devenue humaniste et pense démocratiquement."

⁶⁵ Arnaud, *Le Militaire, l'écolier, le gymnaste*, 136 quoting from Jules Ferry's speech at Reims, B.A.M.I.P., 495, 2 June 1882, 424-425: "Mais la gymnastique est inseparable de l'éducation militaire, celle-ci est le but, l'autre est le moyen [...] Nous sommes donc bien résolus à organiser, dans toutes les écoles de tous les orders, une sérieuse et forte education militaire, dont l'enseignement de la gymnastique soit la base et le principe. Nous croyons que l'education militaire ne pénétra complement dans nos mœurs scolaires que l'instituteur sera devenu lui-meme un professeur des exercices militaire."

⁶⁶ Arnaud, *Le Militaire, l'écolier, le gymnaste*, 119: "L'Ecole, les bataillons scolaires, les sociétés conscriptives conjuguent leurs efforts pour promouvoir, dans une mobilisation acculturante et homogénéisante, l'instruction physique nationale." The Decret du Bataillons Scolaires, 6 July 1882, was prepared by Paul Bert to ensure that boys of 12 years of age and older were prepared as soldiers. Yet Arnaud also points out, 182, that eight months earlier a State circular dated 22 October 1881 was released permitting Schools to have guns, which were subsequently distributed to both écoles primaires and écoles normales. Although the training of boys as soldiers from twelve had virtually disappeared by 1893, that year legislation was passed to make it compulsory for all boys from 10 years of age to learn how to shoot.

⁶⁷ Pierre Arnaud, "Le geste et la parole: Mobilisation conscriptive et celebration de la République, Lyon, 1879-1889," in: *Mots* 27, 29 (1985), 5-22.

⁶⁸ Pierre Arnaud, *Les Athlètes de la République*, Paris 1988, 22: "La naissance du mouvement sportif en France est incontestablement marquée par la contexte politique et militaire." Arnaud, *Le Militaire, l'écolier, le gymnaste*, 131, points out that the terms, "éducation physique," "gymnastique" and "instruction militaire" became interchangeable.

⁶⁹ Georges Demenÿ, *Les bases scientifique de l'éducation physique*, Charleston 2010, 27: "Pour rétablir les muscles à la France"; trans. Eugen Weber, *France, Fin de Siècle*, Boston 1986, 214.

⁷⁰ Martha Braun, *Picturing Time. The Work of Jules-Étienne Marey, 1830-1904*, Chicago 1992, 69.

determine the influence of height, weight, uniforms, load, terrain and rest periods upon the energy and endurance of the average man representative of the new soldier. Their data provided a rational foundation for developing a gymnastic drill to train the army and to mould "*le corps militaire*."⁷¹

- [24] Appointed the first professor of applied physiology at the army's *École de Joinville*, Demenÿ designed a new manual of gymnastic exercises for the army and schools.⁷² In his *Livre du gradé* (1904), gymnastics was prescribed with such war games as combative fencing with a bayonette. As Demenÿ explained,

The application of gymnastic exercises to battle situations could, develop masculine sang-froid, sharpen reflex actions, economize movement, eradicate wastes of energy and free the will so that the new solitary soldiers could make decisions on the spot.⁷³

- [25] Under wartime conditions, Demenÿ explained, when the brain soon reached a point of no longer being able to intervene, movement had to become instantaneous, automatic and economic. "*Le corps militaire*" was then inscribed by the new demands of modern warfare for a solitary fighter, "le combattant isolé." As the solitary fighter was to be trained and inculcated with the values of modern sport and compulsory gymnastics, they were to develop what Klaus Theweleit calls a "muscle physis": physical strength, agility, dexterity, sharp reflexes, instant, automatic and economic movement, initiative, a sang-froid presence of mind and "*l'esprit combative*" – a fighting spirit, in terms of hardness, destruction and self-denial.⁷⁴ These fighters also needed to become, according to Theweleit, invulnerable to grief, pain, intuition and emotion, empathy and compassion – all qualities identified with cowardice, anarchism, antimilitarism and pacifism.⁷⁵ These were the very qualities heroized by the militarist paintings of Detaille (Fig. 1) as well as by Charles Crès in his painting, *L'Inspection Générale des Exercices Physiques au Prytanée Militaire* (1889), exhibited at the 1889 *Salon des Artistes Français* (Fig. 8). They were

⁷¹ Georges Demenÿ, *Les bases scientifiques de l'éducation physique*, Paris 1893; *Plan d'un enseignement supérieur de l'éducation physique*, Paris 1899; *Mécanisme et éducation des mouvements*, Paris 1903; *Evolution de l'éducation physique: L'école française*, Paris 1909; *L'éducation de l'effort, psychologie-physiologie*, Paris 1914.

⁷² Georges Demenÿ, *Manuel de Gymnastique et de Jeux Scolaires*, Paris 1891 (which replaced the 1881 Manuel); Georges Demenÿ, *Nouveau règlement sur l'instruction de la gymnastique militaire*, Paris 1902. Demenÿ's appointment, like his methodology, was not without contention, a battle erupting over physical education from 1885 and raging until the outbreak of the First World War between Philippe Tissié, Fernand Lagrange, Pierre de Coubertin, Edmond Desbonnet and Georges Hébert; see Georges Andrieu, *La Gymnastique au 19^{ième} siècle*, Paris 1999, 48-55; Fae Brauer, "'L'Art Eugénique': Biopower and the Biocultures of Neo-Lamarckian Eugenics," in: *L'Esprit Créateur* 52, 2 (2012), 38-42. So virulent were these disputes that even Demenÿ's ethnicity and virility came under attack; refer *Revue des Jeux Scolaires et d'Hygiène Sociale*, October-December 1910.

⁷³ Demenÿ, *Les bases scientifique*, 40: "L'application de la gymnastique à des situations de combat pourrait, de développer masculine de sang-froid, d'affiner les actions réflexes, économiser le mouvement, à éradiquer les déchets de l'énergie et de la libre volonté. De sorte que les nouveaux soldats solitaires pourraient prendre des décisions sur-le-champ."

⁷⁴ Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 56.

⁷⁵ Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, 57.

also captured by the new military photographs regularly taken of the local army corps, as demonstrated by Eugène Chaperon's *Le Photographe au Regiment*, 1899 (Fig. 9).



8 Charles Crès, *L'Inspection générale des exercices physiques au Prytanée Militaire*, 1889, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. La Flèche, Prytanée National Militaire (reprod. from: Richard Thompson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France 1889-1900*, New Haven and London, 2004, p. 173, Fig. 139)



9 Eugène Chaperon, *Le Photographe au regiment*, 1899, oil on canvas, dimensions and location unknown. Richard Thompson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France 1889-1900*, New Haven and London, 2004, p. 173, Fig. 138)

[26] These were also the qualities singled-out by the government of Jean Paul Pierre Casimir-Perier and Sadi Carnot in the troops they mobilized to quell riots and to control the people. This is why they became the butt of Luce's antimilitarist lithographs, as demonstrated by his cartoon entitled "the departure of the contingent" in which trained conscripts marching together like automatons incite their officer's remark: "These are not men! These are mutton going to the abattoir!"⁷⁶ "Once they shit themselves when they break-down," says the officer in another cartoon to a soldier who has collapsed, "they are beginning to be made."⁷⁷ Luce did not need to add the words, "into *le corps militaire*."

⁷⁶ "Le Depart de la Classe," *Le Père Peinard* 138 (8 November 1891), 8: "C'est pas des hommes! c'est des moutons qui vont à l'abattoir!"

⁷⁷ "L'entraînement dans l'armée," *Le Père Peinard* 182 (11-18 September 1892), 8: "C'est emmerdant qu'ils soient crevés, ils commençaient à s'y faire."

In the Time of Harmony: Demographic Divisions and the Militarized Mediterranean

[27] "We are afraid," confessed the writer Guy de Maupassant in 1889. "We are afraid of everybody, and everybody is afraid under this regime."⁷⁸ By the 1889 Military Law, the buoyant optimism arising from Gambetta's liberalization of education and licensing laws, the press and art, alongside his aspirations for a "nouvelle couche sociale," had been irrevocably punctured by demographic divisions and income inequalities. So divided had Paris become that it seemed to comprise two cities: the people's Paris, stretching from the East to the fortifications, and the chic quartiers of the bourgeois capitalists, stretching from the Opéra Garnier to the west and culminating in the Bois de Boulogne.⁷⁹ Stumbling upon the bourgeoisie leaving the Paris Opera one night, this great divide was highlighted by the reaction of anarchist writer, Augustin Léger:

There I saw luxurious carriages, men and women covered with jewelry, dressed in their finery, carrying rare flowers [...] What a beautiful society when four million francs of the state budget is spent each year on the opera [...] while poor people try to get by in the streets and public places without anywhere to live [...] What kind of society is this when the rich drink full glasses of champagne [...] while their brothers in the lower classes die of misery, the cold and hunger!⁸⁰

[28] As the industrial belt around Paris expanded, tens of thousands of workers were piled into unsanitary houses, basements, attics without running water and even stables subdivided into small rooms. Rousseau's close friend from his home city of Laval, Alfred Jarry, vividly recalls suffering the fate of his room cut vertically so that none of his visitors could stand upright inside it.⁸¹ In this zone or wasteland that separated the industrial periphery from the suburbs proper, the working classes were forced to live in shanty shacks amongst the pollution and noise of these factories, as illustrated by the red-roofed apartment blocks adjoining factories and figures that can barely be glimpsed in Van Gogh's 1887 painting, *Factories at Clichy* (Fig. 10). In these desolate landscapes enclosed by smoking factories, as illustrated by Rousseau's *Saw Mill*, 1893-1895 (Fig. 11) and *Pont de Grenelle*, 1892 (Fig. 12) as well as Signac's *Road to Gennevilliers*, 1892 (Fig. 13), nature seems stifled by industry – the weed-ridden slopes and barren earth in the fortifications being far removed from bucolic pastureland.⁸² With tuberculosis five times higher here than around the Opera, this was an environment in

⁷⁸ Guy de Maupassant, *La Main gauche*, Paris 1889, 131.

⁷⁹ Roslyn Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism in Fin-De-Siècle France: Painting, Politics and Landscape*, Vermont 2007, 63-78.

⁸⁰ Augustin Leger, *Journal d'un anarchiste*, Paris 1895, 21: "Là, j'ai vu voitures de luxe, des hommes et des femmes couvertes de bijoux, vêtus de leurs plus beaux atours, portant des fleurs rares [...] Qu'est-ce une société beau quand quatre millions de francs de budget de l'Etat est consacré chaque année à l'opéra [...] alors que les gens pauvres essayer de se débrouiller dans les rues et les lieux publics sans nulle part où vivre [...] Quel genre de société est-ce lorsque les verres de boissons riches pleins de champagne [...] tandis que leurs frères dans les classes inférieures meurent de misère, le froid et la faim!"

⁸¹ Henri Béhar, *Les Cultures de Jarry*, Paris 1983.

which diseases festered, as conveyed by the bile colors in the foreground of Van Gogh's painting and the discolored, thick fetid air in the background displacing a clear blue sky. In this environment circumscribing the so-called dangerous classes, it was also subject to invasive surveillance by "*le corps militaire*."



10 Vincent Van Gogh, *Usines à Clichy (Factories at Clichy)*, 1887, The St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri (reprod. from: Jacob Baart de la Faille, *The Works of Vincent van Gogh. His Paintings and Drawings*, Amsterdam 1970, no. 317)



11 Henri Rousseau, *Scieries aux environs de Paris (Sawmill, Outskirts of Paris)*, 1893-1895, oil on canvas, 25.5 x 45.5 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago (reprod. from: *Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris*, exh. cat., London 2005, p. 138, no. 41)

⁸² With their studios only twenty minutes by foot from the northern fortifications overlooking the industries of St. Denis, Angrand and Signac had ready access to this desolate zone.



12 Henri Rousseau, *Le Pont de Grenelle (View of Grenelle Bridge)*, 1902, oil on canvas, 20.5 x 75 cm. Musée de Vieux-Château, Laval (reprod. from: *Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris*, exh. cat., London 2005, p. 138, no. 41)



13 Paul Signac, *La Route de Gennevilliers (The Road to Gennevilliers)*, 1883, oil on canvas, 73 x 91 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris (© RMN – G. Blot. Reprod. from: Françoise Cachin, *Signac. Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre*, Paris 2000, p. 10, cat. 48)

[29] Within this dystopian demography, the Mediterranean, as the work of Vojtěch Jirat-Wasiutyński has admirably shown, was proffered as a utopian community "conducive to anarcho-communism."⁸³ Long had its climate and cultural geography been linked by Reclus and Kropotkin to anarcho-communism.⁸⁴ Following Kropotkin's theory of "mutual

⁸³ Vojtěch Jirat-Wasiutyński, "Modern Art and the New Mediterranean Space," *Modern Art and the Idea of the Mediterranean*, Toronto 2007, 12.

⁸⁴ Elisée Reclus, *Nouvelle géographie universelle: La terre et les hommes*, vol. 2, La France Paris: n.d., 50.

aid," as manifest by "natural" association, communal decision-making and cooperation, not competition, they envisaged how small decentralized self-governing groups could live in mutual harmony.⁸⁵ Elaborating Proudhon's "property as theft" and model of mutualism, Kropotkin envisaged that all barriers defining land as private property needed to be abolished.⁸⁶ Instead of living in squalor by factories, people could then live in agrarian co-operatives or communes of free association where they could mutually aid one another and exchange their products through mutualist support markets.⁸⁷ This system of anarchist communism would nurture rather than oppress the intelligence, creativity and well-being of everyone, as Kropotkin explained:

Communism and anarchism [...] are [...] a necessary complement to one another. The most powerful development of individuality, of individual originality [...] can only be produced when the first needs of food and shelter are satisfied [...] when man's time is no longer taken up entirely by the meaner side of daily subsistence – only then his intelligence, his artistic taste his inventive spirit, his genius, can develop freely.⁸⁸

[30] To activate this revolution, Kropotkin called upon artists to take a defiant stand.

Narrate for us your vivid style or in your fervent pictures the titanic struggles of the masses against their oppressors, inflame young hearts with the beautiful breath of revolution that inspired our ancestors [...] Show the people the ugliness of contemporary life and make us see the cause of this ugliness. Tell us what a rational life would have been if it had not been blocked at each step by the ineptness and ignominies of the present order.⁸⁹

[31] By revealing on the one hand, the present oppression and, on the other, the anarcho-communist utopia of free individuals, Kropotkin considered that a dialectical art praxis could mediate this transformation. Having revealed the oppressive working and living conditions in the people's Paris, Signac turned to the second part of Kropotkin's dialectic to illuminate the freedom attainable in an anarcho-communist utopia, as exemplified by *Femmes au puits* (*Women at the Well*; also known as *Jeunes provençales au puits* [*Young girls from Provence at the well*]), 1892 (Fig. 14) and *Au temps d'harmonie: l'âge d'or n'est pas dans le passé, il est dans l'avenir* (*In the Time of Harmony: The Golden Age Is Not in the Past, It Is in the Future*), 1893-1895 (Fig. 15).

[32] Rather than crammed into one of the factories polluting the fortifications of Paris, Signac portrays two Provençal women liberated in the clear air and temperate climate at a

⁸⁵ Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, London 1902.

⁸⁶ Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, 37: "The land will become collective property, barriers will be removed and the land, belonging to all, will be developed for the pleasure and well-being of everyone."

⁸⁷ Peter Kropotkin, *L'Avant-Garde* (12 August 1878): "The products required will be precisely those that the land can best provide, and production will exactly meet needs, without anything being lost as is the case with the disorganized labor of today." Collective ownership of the means of production would exactly meet needs without loss – as he found occurred with industrial labor – while the products would be those best provided by the land.

⁸⁸ Peter Kropotkin, *La Conquête du Pain* (Préface, Elisée Reclus), Paris 1892, 135.

⁸⁹ Peter Kropotkin, *Paroles d'un révolté*, Paris 1885, 65; *Words of a Rebel*, trans. George Woodcock, Montreal 1992, 81-9; Herbert, *The Artist and Social Reform*, 157.

communal (rather than private) well. In keeping with Kropotkin's theory of mutualist aid, they appear to assist one another in drawing water from the well and pouring it into a jug. Their mutual aid and interaction differ substantially from the relationships of servitude in which, as Anne Dymond perceptively points out, Signac's workers in Paris are portrayed.⁹⁰ Their relationship also differs substantially from factory workers in Paris on an assembly line. Rather than turn away from one another and suppress any other form of verbal communication – knowing that their wages would have been docked for doing so – they face one another and appear to chat, work and leisure having become fused. This is most potently captured by Signac's *In the Time of Harmony*.



14 Paul Signac, *Femmes au puits (Women at the Well)*, 1892, oil on canvas, 195 x 131 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris (© RMN. Reprod. from: Françoise Cachin, *Signac. Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre*, Paris 2000, p. 110, cat. 234)

[33] The dazzling southern sunlight in Signac's painting, as Jirat-Wasiutyński observes, becomes color.⁹¹ Wearing the same colors as the hill topped by a citadine on which these Provençals retrieve water, the arabesque shadows, the ribbon-line path and the

⁹⁰ Anne Dymond, "A Politicized Pastoral: Signac and the Cultural Geography of Mediterranean France," in: *The Art Bulletin* 85, 2 (June 2003), 363.

⁹¹ Vojtěch Jirat-Wasiutyński, "Modern Art and the New Mediterranean Space," in: *Modern Art and the Idea of the Mediterranean*, Toronto 2007, 12.

curving contour of the land against the sea integrates these women into the natural environment. Following Charles Henry's *Chromatic Circle*, the broad expanses of the yellow-orange hillside, complementing the lavender of the women's skirts and shadows and the blue of the sea, enhance one another in a way designed to affect the spectator psychologically.⁹² Together with the arabesque, they are meant to impart a sense of social harmony and well-being. As Signac explained, "This is the great scientific and philosophical law of contrast."⁹³



15 Paul Signac, *Au Temps d'harmonie: l'âge d'or n'est pas dans le passé, il est dans l'avenir* (*In the Time of Harmony. The Golden Age Is Not in the Past, It Is in the Future*), 1893-1895, oil on canvas, 310 x 410 cm. Mairie de Montreuil, Montreuil (image kindly provided by the Mairie de Montreuil. © Photo: Jean-Luc Tabuteau)

- [34] In keeping with Signac's subtitle of his manifesto painting, the harvesters, boules players, dancers, readers, painter and the young couple manifesting "free love" indicate, like the Provençal women, that "the golden age" of "anarchy" – the word originally chosen by Signac – was not in the past but in the future.⁹⁴ Following what Signac called

⁹² Roslak, *Neo-Impressionism and anarchism in fin-de-siècle France*, 147.

⁹³ Marina Ferretti-Bocquillon, Anne Distel and John Leighton, eds., *Signac 1863-1935*, exh. cat., New Haven 2001, 91.

⁹⁴ Marina Ferretti-Bocquillon, "Paul Signac au temps d'harmonie, 1892-1913," in: *Signac et la libération de la couleur de Matisse à Mondrian*, exh. cat., Paris 1997, 52. In a letter to Cross written in the summer of 1893, Signac described the painting and made its relation to anarchism clear: "Great news! On your advice, I'm going to try a large canvas! [...] The boules player is becoming a minor figure of: in the time of anarchy (title to be determined). In the foreground, a group at rest [...] man, woman, child [...] under a large pine an old man tells stories to the young kids [...] on a hillside [...] the harvest: the machines smoke, work, lessen the drudgery: and around the haystacks [...] a farandole of harvesters [...] in the center, a young couple: free love!" This future had first been conveyed to him by anarchist writer and publisher, Jean Grave, who he maintained had made him understand "the hope of this near future where, finally, for the first time, all individuals will be free."

the "moral influence of color," these paintings were designed to affect the ethical tenor of individual spectatorship in such a way that they would engender a commitment to this "golden age" and the revolution through which it would be spawned. As such, these two paintings reconfigure the classical landscape into what Dymond aptly calls "a politicized pastoral" embracing "the anarchist ideal of natural order and harmony that would be found in the golden age to come."⁹⁵ Nevertheless, despite its seemingly safe distance from capitalism, industrialization and socio-economic divisions, the Mediterranean bedrock from which Signac's "golden age" was to spring was more mythology than reality.

- [35] Although Signac includes a tractor and alludes to "smoking machines" to "lessen the drudgery" of work, any signs of chemical industry and "investment capitalism" (as Jules Ferry called it), are conspicuous by their absence, as is the *nation-en-arms*.⁹⁶ Despite the prevalence of conscription, not one of the soldiers portrayed by Detaille or Rousseau can be seen. While proffering an image of "a left-wing paradise" within a new cultural geography of nation, as Dymond argues,⁹⁷ this paradise was not only becoming increasingly capitalized and industrialized but, with the passing of the Military Law, it was also becoming intensely militarized. As succinctly surmised by Richard Thomson: "Because conscription involved the vast majority of young men even in times of peace, the army became a mass presence in the everyday world."⁹⁸ Throughout the French countryside, including Provence, the presence of the army became, in Thomson's words, "a highly visible presence."⁹⁹
- [36] The environmental determinism with which Signac, like Reclus and Kropotkin, imbues the Mediterranean region was, as Jirat-Wasiutyński elucidated, "a modern invention inseparable from the spread of European power and colonization, the retreat of Islamic and Ottoman empires, and the impact of technological and cultural modernity."¹⁰⁰ Only through modern technologies and capitalism had it been mapped and mythologized.¹⁰¹ Despite its mythologization as the cradle of individual and communal freedoms, by no means was this privately-held land publicly available for sharing in anarcho-communist communities.¹⁰² With the passing of the Military Law, no place was immune from

⁹⁵ Dymond, "A Politicized Pastoral," 353.

⁹⁶ Signac, letter to Cross, 1893, Signac et la libération de la couleur, 189.

⁹⁷ Dymond, "A Politicized Pastoral," 354.

⁹⁸ Richard Thomson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France 1889-1900*, New Haven and London 2004, 172.

⁹⁹ Thomson, *The Troubled Republic*, 172-173, in reference to François Robichon, "Les panoramas de Champigny et Rezonville par Edoard Detaille et Alphonse de Neuville," in: *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'art français*, 1979, 259-77.

¹⁰⁰ Jirat-Wasiutyński, "Modern Art and the New Mediterranean Space," 5.

¹⁰¹ Jirat-Wasiutyński, "Modern Art and the New Mediterranean Space," 6.

¹⁰² Jirat-Wasiutyński, "Modern Art and the New Mediterranean Space," 12.

conscription in France, not even the Mediterranean. This was especially so after Italy, driven into the Triple Alliance by the French occupation of Tunis from Spring 1881, had received Bismarck's backing for their policy to control the Mediterranean.¹⁰³

[37] As indicated by the French conscription map (Fig. 7), the subdivisions of the Montpellier Regional Army Corps conscription camps, marked XVI, were based at Albi, Béziers, Mende, Rodez, Narbonne, Perpignan and Carcassonne. The subdivisions of the Toulouse Regional Army Corps, numbered XV, were based at Agen, Marmande, Cahors, Montauban, Foix, Mirande and Saint-Gaudens. However, as indicated by number XV on the map, the subdivisions of the Marseilles Regional Army Corps conscription camps were installed in Ajaccio, Avignon, Digne, Nice, Nîmes, Privas, Pont-Saint-Esprit and Toulon. In the battle against Germany and Italy for control of the Mediterranean, a sizeable portion of the military budget accompanying Freycinet's Military Law of 15 July 1889 was directed to redeveloping the port of Toulon as not only the principal base for the French navy but more strategically, "le premier port militaire de la méditerranée."¹⁰⁴ Its shipyards were extensively enlarged, mechanised and divided into four zones, each able to accommodate 6,000 workers and provide direct access to the Mediterranean.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, the building of two ironclad frigates began, the world's first modern submarines with torpedoes, which were called *Le Sous-Marine* and *Le Gymnote*. In covering the Toulon coastline and the Basses-Alpes (excluding the cantons of Saint-Paul, Barcelonnette and Lauzet), the Alpes-Maritimes, Ardèche, Bouches-du-Rhône, Corse, Gard, Vaucluse and the Var, this meant that the area around St-Tropez and the Maures, where Signac's *Au Temps d'harmonie* was located, would have been intensely militarized. Since these military bases circumscribed the Mediterranean, this was a time of preparation for war, not harmony. With divisions calcifying between workers, the State and the military, it was also a time of civil war, as revealed by Rousseau.

[<top>](#)

Civil Warfare: State Massacres, Franco-Russian Alliance and Rousseau's *La Guerre*

[38] By January 1891, reorganization of the army was almost complete. On May Day, four months later, nearly two hundred workers with their families had gathered in the town square at the northern industrial village of Fourmies, to present their request to the mayor for an eight-hour working day and a rise in salaries.¹⁰⁶ That afternoon they enjoyed street theatre and began to prepare for the evening ball.¹⁰⁷ Suddenly they were

¹⁰³ William Leonard Langer, *The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1880-1894*, Cambridge 1929, 110.

¹⁰⁴ Cyrille Roumagnac, *L'Arsenal de Toulon et la Royale*, Paris 2001, 189.

¹⁰⁵ Philippe Boulanger, *La géographie militaire française (1871-1939)*, Paris 2002, 101.

¹⁰⁶ This occurred on May Day in 1891; see André Pierrard and Jean-Louis Chappat, *La Fusillade De Fourmies: premier mai 1891*, Paris 1991.

¹⁰⁷ Pierrard and Chappat, *La Fusillade de Fourmies*, 43: "Le plus grand calme est recommandé, pas de tumulte, pas de récriminations personnelles."

confronted by three hundred artillerymen armed with the new Lebel rifle, able to fire eight pellets automatically.¹⁰⁸ Introduced by Charles de Freycinet after his 1889 Military Law had been passed, he considered the Lebel, together with melanite shells, provided the army with a military power that would enable it to brave aggression of any sort.¹⁰⁹ Despite the workers' absence of aggression, the government troops were ordered to fire upon them, their wives and children. Within seconds, nine were killed and thirty wounded, including children as young as nine. By no means hushed-up, this event was sensationalized by the press, particularly by the anarcho-communist journal, *La Révolte*, who pointed out that these soldiers had been forced to behave like machines or automatic rifles.¹¹⁰ How they had behaved as "*le corps militaire*," turning the Lebel as brutally upon families of Fournies as Versailles troops had turned the Chassepot upon Communards, was illuminated by their compassionate appraisal of what *La Révolte* called a "massacre":

The government revealed itself at Fournies [...] On the order of a civil servant, the army made several charges on the workers who had been demonstrating for the eight-hour day. Fifteen deaths and more than thirty wounded are, it appears, the reckoning of the massacre. Amongst the dead, there were women and children! And the government has not even the excuse of saying that these were revolutionaries, 'hideous anarchists.' To fight the Prussian and the English is a dirty business, to make an assault with batteries of canons is no joke [...] but to fire at a heap of unarmed workers, to inflict wounds on young girls who were carrying flowers, to harm children who were playing with spinning tops, oh this was all pleasure [since] at no point was there danger. [...] This is what one calls 'the exploits of our army!' Here are the heroes of revenge! The armed Lebel has been baptized with the blood of the people, just as the Chassepots were and just as it will be with smokeless powder!¹¹¹

[39] The following year when the secretary of the miner's union and the city's mayor was fired, the miners of Carmaux went on strike for three months while soldiers occupied the mines. These events mark a turning point in civil warfare, which was conveyed by Luce and Rousseau.

¹⁰⁸ This was part of de Freycinet's plan to reequip the army. In 1896, it was followed by introduction of the recoiling 75mm gun.

¹⁰⁹ Charles de Freycinet, *Souvenirs, 1878-1893*, Madison 1914, 414.

¹¹⁰ "Le Massacre de Fourmies et notre 'noble Armée'," *La Révolte* 35 (9-15 May 1891), 1: "Peut-être y avait-il des anarchistes parmi les malheureux soldats poussés comme des machines, comme des mitrailleuse inconscientes."

¹¹¹ "Le Massacre de Fourmies et notre 'noble Armée,'" 1: "Le gouvernement vient de s'illustrer à Fournies. [...] Sur l'ordre d'un fonctionnaire, l'armée a fait plusieurs décharges sur les travailleurs qui réclamaient la journée de huit heures. Quinze morts et plus de trente blessés, sont, paraît-il, le bilan du massacre. Parmi les morts, il y a des femmes et des enfants! Et le gouvernement n'a même pas l'excuse de dire que c'étaient des révolutionnaires, de 'hideux anarchistes'. [...] Combattre le Prussien et l'Anglais est une grosse affaire, prendre d'assaut des batteries de canon n'est pas une plaisanterie [...] mais tiere dans le tas des travailleurs désarmés, mais larder des jeunes filles qui portent des fleurs, embrocher des enfants qui jouent à la toupies oh là, tout est plaisir, il n' y a point de danger. [...] Voilà ce qu'on appelle les 'exploits de notre armée!' Voilà les héros de la revanche! L'arme Lebel a été baptisé dans le sang du peuple comme le furent les Chassepots et comme le sera la poudre sans fumée!" See also, "Viande à mitraille. S Fournies les fusils Lebel ont fait merveille," *La Révolte* 36 (16-22 May 1891), 1; "Le Massacre de Fournies," *La Révolte: Supplément Littérature* 36 (16-22 May 1891), 3.



16 Maximilien Luce, *Patrie*: "Jamais rassasiée l'abominable Goule! Rude garce, madame Patrie: elle mange ses enfants!" 1891, *Almanach du Père Peinard* 1894, p. 39 (source: gallica / Bibliothèque nationale de France, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k83575m/f40.image>)

- [40] Military cultures, particularly "the professional soldier" were assaulted with more virulence than ever by socialists, anarcho-communists and their press, particularly *Le Père Peinard*.¹¹² They were supported by the insider and outsider neo-impressionists as epitomized by Luce's scathing antimilitarist cartoons, particularly *Patrie*, commissioned for *Le Père Peinard* in which the fatherland was figured as both Medusa and his Medea (Fig. 16). In this issue featuring the assassination of miners at Saint-Etienne and linking it to the massacre at Fournies, the fatherland was personified by Luce as a Medusaesque figure who glares directly at the spectator, her snaked hair encircling her head like a halo articulating the words, "*Patrie*."¹¹³ A double identity, Luce's "*Patrie*" was also depicted as an insatiable Medea devouring her babies, her fang-like teeth being shown about to incise their naked flesh. With skulls nestling at her feet, the city burning behind her and cruciform gravestones punctuating the skyline, the caption aptly reads: "Never will you satisfy the loathsome Ghoul! Rough bitch, Madame Patrie: She eats her children."¹¹⁴ That Carnot's Third Republican government and its soldiers trained as "*le corps militaire*" were unscrupulous and unrepentant about destroying their very own

¹¹² Miller, *From Revolutionaries to Citizens*, 23: "The satire of the 'professional soldier' became a fertile genre throughout the Socialist press."

¹¹³ "Assassinat de mineurs à Saint-Etienne," *Le Père Peinard* 143 (13 December 1891), 1.

people was also captured by further lithographs commissioned from Luce by *Le Père Peinard*, particularly, *Remembrance of Massacres* (Fig. 17) and *The Review of the 14 July* (Fig. 18).¹¹⁵



17 Maximilien Luce, *Souvenance de Massacres*: "Y a du bon à l'ordinaire les jours de fusillade!" *Le Père Peinard* 168 (5-12 June 1892), p. 8 (Bibliothèque Nationale Arsenale, photo: Fae Brauer)

[41] In *Remembrance of Massacres*, a drunken soldier standing with the Lebel rifle strapped across his body is depicted by Luce toppling over the body parts and skulls of his victims strewn across the ground by his boots. Claspng a bottle with his right hand, with his left he raises a banner listing the serial atrocities of the French military against its own citizens: "Transnonain, Juin 1848, Aubin, Mai 1871, Fourmies."¹¹⁶ That Luce has caught him in the sadistic act of toasting these massacres is confirmed by the irony of the

¹¹⁴ *Patrie* was first published on the back page of *Le Père Peinard* 143 (13 December 1891), 8, with the caption: "Jamais rassasiée l'abominable Goule! Rude garce, madame Patrie: elle mange ses enfants!" It was republished in *Almanach du Père Peinard*, 1894, 39. In 1902, this image was commissioned from Luce by Jean Grave as a print for *Guerre-Militarisme*.

¹¹⁵ "Souvenance de Massacres," *Le Père Peinard* 168 (5-12 June 1892), 8; "La Revue du 14 Juillet," *Le Père Peinard* 174 (17-25 July 1892), 8.

¹¹⁶ Alistair Wright, "Mourning, Painting, and the Commune: Maximilien Luce's A Paris Street in 1871," in: *Oxford Art Journal* 32, 2 (2009), 223-242, n. 3, refers to this lithograph as *Soldat ivre*, a different title to the one given this cartoon by *Le Père Peinard*, and mentions that his banner links the massacre in rue Transnonain, depicted by Honoré Daumier, to the conservative turn of the 1848 Revolution in June of that year, the defeat of the Commune in May 1871, and to the killing of strikers at Aubin in 1869 and at Fourmies in 1891. I am most grateful to Anne Dymond for bringing this article to my attention.

caption: "Here it's been good to do rifle practice." This cartoon is complemented by the second cartoon in which Fourmies also features, which appeared in the issue of *Le Père Peinard* announcing the execution of Ravachol.¹¹⁷ In "The Review of 14 July," in which a sergeant is drawn by Luce inspecting his troops for the celebration of Bastille Day, he is confronted by a worker supporting a dead woman with his left arm and holding a banner with his right arm on which is inscribed on the top part, "Vive l'Armée," ironically juxtaposed with "Fourmies" written directly below it.



18 Maximilien Luce, *La Revue du 17 Juillet*: "Ohé, les jean foutre, invitez-donc à votre revue Maria Blondeay, le conscrit Giloteaux et tous les massacrés de Fourmies!..." *Le Père Peinard* 174 (17-25 July 1892), p. 8.

[42] With the woman in front of him cradling a dead child while punching her arm at the commander and the soldiers, the caption indicates that they are inviting the "Fucking Johns," as they call the soldiers, to a review by all those who were massacred at Fourmies.¹¹⁸

[43] Continually the most effective vehicle of anarchist antimilitarist propaganda, *Le Père Peinard*, persisted in attacking barrack life, military discipline and punishment for desertion, while extolling a conscript strike.¹¹⁹ Its articles and cartoons were reinforced

¹¹⁷ "L'Execution de Ravachol," *Le Père Peinard* 174 (17-25 July 1892), 1.

¹¹⁸ "La Revue du 14 Juillet," *Le Père Peinard* (1892), 8: "Ohé, les jean-foutre, invitez donc à votre revue Maria Blondeau, le conscrit Giloteaux, et tous les massacrés de Fourmies!"

¹¹⁹ "Vive la Sociale!," *Le Père Peinard* 163 (1-7 May 1892), 1; "Vive la Sociale!," *Le Père Peinard* 164 (8-15 May 1892), 1; "La Semaine Sanglante!," *Le Père Peinard* 167 (29 May-5 June 1892), 1;

by anarcho-communist posters, often produced by workers, and articles in the Socialist press. On May Day in 1892, flyers were plastered over walls in the 20th arrondissement reminding the people of the massacre at Fourmies and calling for "death to sergeants!"¹²⁰ Article after article in *Le Parti Ouvrier* and *Le Parti Socialiste* endeavored to expose the harsh realities of military life and the pernicious morals of the army.¹²¹ Augustin Hamon's *Essai du Psychologie Militaire Professionnel*, published by *La Revue Socialiste* in 1893, likened the behavior of officers to "teratological criminals."¹²² In placards made by the *Ligue of Antipatriots*, conscripts were urged to use their weapons against their officers.¹²³

[44] Once the government ordered the army to occupy the Paris Bourse de Travail at the same time as the Panama Scandal exposed how many ministers and deputies had taken bribes, "propaganda by the deed" was increasingly advocated by French anarchists.¹²⁴ Shouting "Death to bourgeois society! Long live Anarchy!" French anarchist, Auguste Vaillant, threw his home-made bomb into the French Chamber of Deputies in December 1893. To justify his right to commit this act of violence, Laurent Tailhade stressed not just the injustice inflicted upon working class victims by the State but the aesthetics inherent in it.¹²⁵ Nevertheless this act ended any cooperation between pacifist socialists and antimilitarist anarchists, unleashing a cycle of retribution that widened politico-cultural divisions and exacerbated civil war. Its violence led to vigorous re-endorsement of the pacifist revolutionary anarcho-communist position by Grave, Kropotkin and Reclus, particularly in relation to the aesthetic propaganda of the deed through word and image. Not only was propaganda of the deed through the image endorsed by the neo-impressionists, particularly by Luce and Signac, as mentioned earlier, it was promptly activated by them.

[45] Directly after the State retaliated by sentencing Vaillant to death at a trial epitomizing a travesty of justice, in revenge against the State Émile Henry exploded a bomb in the

"Ravachol torture avant la Guillotine," *Le Père Peinard* 176 (31 July-7 August 1892), 1; "Cochonneries Militaires à Perpignan," *Le Père Peinard* 185 (2-9 October 1892), 1; "La Torture à Toulon," *Le Père Peinard* 187 (16-23 October 1892), 1.

¹²⁰ Miller, *From Revolutionaries to Citizens*, 28.

¹²¹ Miller, *From Revolutionaries to Citizens*, 23.

¹²² Augustin Hamon, "Essai du psychologie militaire professionnel," in: *La Revue Socialiste* (November 1893); as referenced in Paul B. Miller, *From Revolutionaries to Citizens: Antimilitarism in France, 1870-1914*, Duke 2002, 24.

¹²³ Miller, *From Revolutionaries to Citizens*, 34.

¹²⁴ Jean Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste en France*, Paris 1975. A subject of extensive ethical debate, the crucial dilemma seemed to revolve around whether *Propagande par le fait* could be morally justified when directed toward an individual tyrant, but indefensible if enacted against an unjust society. Its efficacy was also questioned. The anarcho-communist Kropotkin argued that a few sticks of dynamite could not undo the structures of the capitalist-industrialist state; see Niall Whelehan, "Political Violence and morality in anarchist theory and practice: Luigi Galleani and Peter Kropotkin in comparative perspective," in: *Anarchist Studies* 13, 2 (2005), 147-168.

¹²⁵ Gilles Picq, *Laurent Tailhade ou De la provocation considérée comme un art de vivre*, Paris 2001: "What do the victims matter if the gesture is beautiful!"

Café Terminus at the Gare Saint-Lazare.¹²⁶ Declaring the Republic threatened by anarchists, the Casimir-Perier government seized the opportunity to pass the so-called *lois scélérates*.¹²⁷ While it is well known that these "Villainous Laws" condemned advocacy "by provocation or apology," of arson, looting, theft or murder, it is less known that they also condemned any provocation to the military (in terms of the army or navy) "in the aim of diverting them from their military duties and the obedience due to their chiefs."¹²⁸

[46] Rendering any antimilitarist text and image illegal, immediately police collected antimilitarist posters, flyers and brochures, closing down *Le Père Peinard* and *La Révolte*.¹²⁹ As *La Révolte* pointed out, *Le Père Peinard* was prosecuted for having divulged too many truths about the army and "*la patrie*."¹³⁰ While 426 were condemned for "*association de malfaiteurs*," over one hundred anarchists were imprisoned. Immediately Luce was imprisoned for his incendiary illustrations, while Grave was incarcerated for his book indicting the State for "the demise of society."¹³¹ At the so-called *Procès de Trente* in August 1894, even the writer who had championed the *Salon des Artistes Indépendants*, Félix Fénéon, was prosecuted.¹³² Alarmed by the government crackdown, this is why Signac felt compelled to flee Paris.¹³³ Rousseau remained. Amidst these explosive and divisive events, he was neither reticent to declare his allegiance to the anarcho-communists,¹³⁴ nor to display his commitment to Jacobin republicanism and

¹²⁶ John M. Merriman, *The Dynamite Club: How a Bombing in Fin-de-Siècle Paris Ignited the Age of Modern Terror*, Chicago 2009, 65.

¹²⁷ See chapter 6, "*Le Procès des Trente. Fin d'une époque*," 251-261 in: Maitron, *Le mouvement anarchiste en France*. Two days after Vaillant's bombing of the Chambre, the first of these Laws was passed on 11 December 1893; the second, one week later.

¹²⁸ Francis de Pressensé, *Les Lois Scélérates de 1893-1894*, Paris 1899: "1. Soit par provocation, soit par apologie [...] incité une ou plusieurs personnes à commettre soit un vol, soit les crimes de meurtre, de pillage, d'incendie [...]; 2. Ou adressé une provocation à des militaires des armées de terre et de mer, dans le but de les détourner de leurs devoirs militaires et de l'obéissance qu'ils doivent à leurs chefs [...] serait déféré aux tribunaux de police correctionnelle et puni d'un emprisonnement de trois mois à deux ans."

¹²⁹ Miller, *From Revolutionaries to Citizens*, 10: "Le Père Peinard en Assises," *Le Père Peinard* 190 (6-13 November 1892), 1; "Encore la Dynamite, nom de dieu!," *Le Père Peinard* 191 (13-20 November 1892), 1.

¹³⁰ "Le Père Peinard en Cour d'Assises pour avoir guelé trop de vérités sur l'armée et la patrie," *La Révolte* 105 (22-29 March 1893), 1

¹³¹ Jean Grave, *La société mourante et l'anarchie*, Paris 1892; Louis Patsouras, *Anarchism of Jean Grave*, Montréal 2001. Luce was imprisoned for 45 days and released without charges.

¹³² At this Trial, 26 were acquitted. A flask of mercury and some detonators were found in Fénéon's War Office. Fénéon was arrested on 25 April 1894 and imprisoned at the Mazas Jail until his trial in August at which he travestied the prosecution: "— Êtes vous un anarchiste, M. Fénéon? — Je suis un Bourguignon [...]" ; see Joan Halperin, *Felix Fénéon: Aesthete and Anarchist in Fin-de-Siècle Paris*, London and New Haven 1988.

¹³³ *Le Procès des Trente*, ed. Maurice Imbert, Paris 2004.

¹³⁴ Robert Delaunay often recalled Rousseau saying to him: "Je suis Anarchiste"; see "Mon ami Henri Rousseau," in: *Tous les arts* (4-11 September 1952), 10. See also Robert Delaunay, "Mon ami Henri Rousseau," in: *Tous les arts* (21-28 August 1952), 9. Le Pichon, *Le Monde du Doanier Rousseau*, 213: "Il avouera aussi à Robert Delaunay: "Je me demande si je ne suis pas un peu anarchiste." The source for his anarchism may have been Alfred Jarry, who in 1894 had

its modernization through Léon Bourgeois' solidarism, particularly in terms of the revolutionary idea of fraternity.¹³⁵



19 Henri Rousseau, *La Balance du Bon Droit*, Salon des Artistes Indépendants, 1892, whereabouts unknown (courtesy of Musée d'Orsay documentation)

[47] From March 1891, *Le Père Peinard* ran a series of articles commenting upon the trials of anarcho-communists and indeed, their journal, entitled "At the Palace of Injustice."¹³⁶ Accompanied by an icon of a Judge watching the scales of justice becoming severely unbalanced due to the deposit of a bag of 1,000 francs, the bribery and corruption in French law courts was clearly implied.¹³⁷ As if in dialogue with this journal, Rousseau exhibited at the 1892 *Salon des Artistes Indépendants* his painting *Le Balance du Bon Droit* (*The Balance of Good Law*) (Fig. 19). Featuring a courtroom with the clergy and aristocracy on one side and the people on the other, the figure of the Republic tips the balance of the scales against the figure of the King constituting authoritarianism in

commissioned a lithograph of Rousseau's *War* and who stayed with the artist in 1897.

¹³⁵ Léon Bourgeois, *Solidarité*, Paris 1895; for Rousseau's relationship to solidarism and neo-Lamarckism, see Brauer, "Wild Beasts and Tame Primates," 194-225. As mentioned earlier, Rousseau seems to locate anarcho-communism and solidarism as the means of achieving the original revolutionary aims of Jacobin republicanism. Although the anarcho-communist prioritization of the individual is generally posited as antithetical to the Jacobin republican ideal of fraternity at this time, Rousseau appears to have endorsed individual rights as well as fraternity and egalitarianism, aligning them with the Jacobin triad of *liberté, égalité, et fraternité*. By no means were these ideologies exclusive to anarcho-communists, being developed by Bourgeois in relation to solidarism from 1890. Arguably it was due to this overlap of ideologies that the Bloc des Gauches could be forged in 1901-1902.

¹³⁶ "Au Palais d'injustice," *Le Père Peinard* 105 (22-29 March 1891), 3.

¹³⁷ While this icon began as the scales of justice, it developed into this image from "Au Palais d'Injustice," *Le Père Peinard* 111 (3-10 May 1891), 4.

terms of "divine right" – signified by his plaque entitled "royauté héréditaire" – while pointing to her plaque saying "Le pouvoir appartient au mérite": "Power must be earned." It was hung next to *Le centenaire de l'indépendance* (Fig. 6) to show, in Rousseau's words, "our forebears, in short trousers, dancing to celebrate the advent of liberty."¹³⁸ Like the group dancing in Signac's *Au Temps d'harmonie*, they dance *La Farandole*, the rustic dance popular in the Midi known as the dance of the people.¹³⁹



20 "Les Fêtes à Andorre (La Farandole)," *Le Petit Journal, Supplément Illustré* 20 (11 April 1891), p. 8 (author's collection)

[48] Featuring on the back cover of the illustrated supplement of *Le Petit Journal* (Fig. 20), this dance in front of the Palais des Vallées of Andorre on the French Spanish border, surrounded by the rocky Pyrenées, seemed to embody the "golden age" as one of "universal peace, of general disarmament," according to this journal, that had been achieved in this utopian commune.¹⁴⁰ "They dance often in Andorre; should you benefit

¹³⁸ Arsène Alexandre, "La vie et l'œuvre d'Henri Rousseau: peintre et ancien employé de l'Octroi," in: *Comœdia* 901 (19 March 1910), 3.

¹³⁹ Vincent Gille, "Illusion of Sources – Sources of Illusion: Rousseau Through the Images of his Time," in: *Jungles in Paris*, 49–63.

¹⁴⁰ "Les Fêtes à Andorre (La Farandole)," *Le Petit Journal, Supplément Illustré* 20 (11 April 1891), 7: Alors pacifiquement, sans coup férir, Andorre s'annexerait l'Europe d'abord [...] plus d'impôts,

from this environment, you would throw yourself into a keenly felt farandole," the accompanying article reads. "It is in front of this palace that the joyful Farandole unfolds; it is there that men free of heart can give themselves over to dance, this pleasure of innocent times."¹⁴¹ An avid reader of *Le Petit Journal Supplément Illustré*, as well as many other popular journals, these significations were not lost upon Rousseau.



21 Henri Rousseau, *Le Carmagnole* (Carmagnole), 1893. Harno Museum, Nagano (reprod. from: *Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris*, exh. cat., London 2005, p. 195, no. 79)

[49] One of many Republican festivals replacing celebrations of Saints' Days and religious holidays, Rousseau's ring of Jacobins in red Phrygian bonnets dance the Farandole around the tree of liberty on a meadow flanked by pennants of the First and Third Republic in front of which flutters the Tricolor and the red and blue flag of the municipalities. Following the balls organized by local councils across Paris on 22 September 1892 to commemorate the First and Third Republic, they appear to rejoice in the liberty initiated and sustained by the Republic.¹⁴² Centralized on Rousseau's canvas, they signify the equality, liberty and particularly, the fraternity of Jacobin republicanism and the power of the people to displace authoritarianism as signified by the aristocracy carrying the double eagle of Marie Antoinette and the House of Habsburg being relegated to the margins. In front of his painting at the *Salon*, Rousseau recalled that not only did "the people dance around the two republics, that of 1792 and that of 1892, hand in hand," but also, as mentioned earlier, they sang the popular French melody, "*Auprès de ma blonde qu'il fait bon, fait bon dormir.*"¹⁴³

plus d'obligations, plus de corvées, plus de guerre, ce serait enfin le moyen de rendre réelle cette utopie de la paix universelle, du désarmement général."

¹⁴¹ "Les Fêtes à Andorre (La Farandole)," *Le Petit Journal, Supplément Illustré* 20 (11 April 1891), 8: "On danse beaucoup à Andorre; vous pensez si l'on a profité de la circonstance pour se livrer à une frandole bien sentie. [...] C'est devant ce palais que se déroule la farandoule joyeuse; c'est là que des hommes libres de cœur se livrent à la danse, ce plaisir des temps innocents."

¹⁴² Le Pichon, *Le Monde du Douanier Rousseau*, 189: "Parce que la liberté est synonyme d'indépendance, c'est à l'annonce de la célébration à Paris du centenaire de la naissance de la 1er République qu'il décide de peindre son centenaire de l'Indépendance. En entendant parler de cette fête magnifique qui se déroulera le 22 septembre 1891, entraînant autour de ses chars allégoriques d'immenses cortèges de Parisiens qui finiront la journée en dansant dans les bals organisées par les conseils municipaux, de combien de fêtes antérieures s'est il souvenu?"

¹⁴³ Yann le Pichon, *Les Écrits du Duanier Rousseau*, Paris 2010, 18: "*Un Centenaire de l'Indépendance (1892)*: "Le peuple danse autour des deux républiques, celle de 1792 et celle de 1892 so donnant la main sur l'air de "Auprès de ma blonde, qu'il fait bon, fait bon, fait bon, etc." Théophile Steinlen also depicted *La Carmagnole* in *Le Chambara Socialist* (18 March 1894).

- [50] When the municipal authorities of Paris announced a series of competitions to design murals for local town halls, Rousseau submitted his *Carmagnole*, 1893 (Fig. 21), drawn from this painting, in which "the people" are also depicted dancing the Farandole. Immediately the jury rejected it as "too revolutionary."¹⁴⁴ Presumably this was due to the Carmagnole being a revolutionary battle cry sung in triumph from August 1792 over the fate of the monarchy, those refusing to support the Jacobins being forced to sing the Carmagnole and to dance the Farandole.¹⁴⁵ With its name deriving from the short jacket and trousers worn by workers from the town of Carmagnola in Piedmont, introduced by revolutionary forces to Paris as Jacobin trousers, the Carmagnole was also renowned as the song of revolution and liberation, elaborated during the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, sung on May Days, and illustrated in March 1894 by Théophile Steinlen (1859-1923) for *Le Chambard Socialiste*.¹⁴⁶ Consistent with his dialectical praxis inspired by Kropotkin, Rousseau also began painting the antithesis to *A Le centenaire d'indépendance* and *Carmagnole*, in order to illustrate what would happen to liberty under the autocratic rule of a tyrannical monarch. This meant that throughout the spectacles commemorating the Franco-Prussian Alliance – in spite of the dubious politics of the authoritarian monarch, Tsar Alexander III – Rousseau was working on *La Guerre* (Fig. 2).¹⁴⁷
- [51] Known as "the autocrat of autocrats," Tsar Alexander III was committed to monarchical absolutism and eradication of any danger of revolution that might destabilize it.¹⁴⁸ Since the assassination of his father in 1881 by nihilists, he had refused to sign Russia's First Constitution, usurped peasant communes of any autonomous power, imposed the Slavophile principles of autocracy and Eastern orthodoxy upon German, Polish and Swedish residents, launched pogroms against Jewish Russians and exiled anarchist revolutionaries to Siberia.¹⁴⁹ Far from these deportations being unknown in France, they

¹⁴⁴ Robert Delaunay, "Mon Ami Henri Rousseau," in: *Tous les Arts* (21 August 1952), 10. Delaunay recalls, "On avait trouvé son projet trop révolutionnaire." Nevertheless the source for this work, as for *Le centenaire d'indépendance*, was the popular lithograph of a ring of dancers at Andorre reproduced on the cover of *Le Petit Journal*.

¹⁴⁵ See John T. Gilchrist and William J. Murray, eds., *The Press in the French Revolution*, London 1971, 312-323; these authors mention that after the storming of the Tuileries Palace on 9-10 August 1792, and massacring the King's Swiss guard, the Parisians, "drunk with blood," danced and sang the Carmagnole to celebrate the victory. In "La Grande Canule Militaire," *Almanach du Père Peinard*, 1894, 40, Pouget writes about sword-laden conscripts being cajoled to perform the Carmagnole as part of a revolutionary repertoire: "A l'invitation du traine-sabre, les gas contonnèrent la *Carmagnole*; le pas se releva, le galonnard paraissait boire du lait. Après la *Carmagnole*, le Père Peinard, puis une autre [...] enfin tout le répertoire révolutionnaire y passa."

¹⁴⁶ Adriani Götz, *Henri Rousseau*, exh. cat., Tübingen, Kunsthalle, 2001, 60.

¹⁴⁷ In Mirbeau's letter to Pissarro, early September 1891, he mentions his article criticizing that the Alliance was rejected by *L'Echo de Paris*; see Octave Mirbeau, *Correspondence avec Camille Pissarro*, ed. Pierre Michel and Jean-François Nivet, Tusson 1990, letter 5.

¹⁴⁸ William L. Langer, "The Franco-Prussian Alliance (1880-1894)," in: *The Slavonic Review* 3, 9 (March 1925), 554-575.

¹⁴⁹ Charles Lowe, *Alexander III of Russia*, London 1895; Charleston 2010.

were mentioned by the national press and featured by the anarchist press, Émile Pouget not hesitating to report "the crimes of Alexander III" through *Le Père Peinard*, and readily providing statistics on the number of nihilistes who had suffered this fate at Yatoutsk and Verkhoyansk, "the coldest of all lands."¹⁵⁰ By contrast, not only did Carnot and his regime seem to turn a blind eye to these atrocities but from as early as 1890, the French President also seemed to pander to him, as colorfully recounted by Pouget:

For all the bad that he has done, this gangster of an emperor has been accepted by the fatheaded opportunists as a friend of France! In Russia, this monster is not only emperor; he is pope; he is god; he is all! [...] Long live the hangman, Alexander III! He is the gangster of all the Russians, and Carnot licks his arse.¹⁵¹

[52] Despite the ideological oxymoron inherent in the Third Republic allying itself with this absolutist counter-reformist regime, the Russian fleet was greeted at the newly militarized port of Toulon in October 1893 far more rapturously than the French fleet had been welcomed at Kronstadt.¹⁵² As illuminated by the immense entourage and lavish decorations captured in the hand-colored photograph of Admiral Avellan and his officers passing through the elaborate Russian triumphal arch erected at the rue de Lyon in Paris (Fig. 22) and Louis-Jules Dumoulin's 1893 painting, *Réception de l'Admiral Avellan, Place d'hôtel de Ville*, revealing the lavish celebrations at the Hôtel de Ville, no expense was spared upon these festivals. Despite the burden upon the taxes of the French people, the government loaned the oppressive Tsarist regime as much as 1.5 billion francs. To curry more favor, the French government even offered to round-up Russian dissidents. Although designed to undermine the power of the Prussian Empire, it had the opposite effect, Kaiser Wilhelm II introducing *Weltpolitik* and a Military Service Bill to increase the Prussian army by some sixty thousand soldiers. Paradoxically commemorated by the nationalist press as a vital strategy for the maintenance of peace, many historians of this period regard the Franco-Prussian Alliance as the harbinger to the First World War.¹⁵³ In the midst of these celebrations, and the arrest of anarchist writers and Neoimpressionists after the "Villainous Laws," including Luce's

¹⁵⁰ "Au Fond de la Sibérie," *Le Père Peinard* 46 (19 January 1890), 14-15: "Les crimes d'Alexandre III [...] 40 nihilistes, hommes et femmes à Yakoutsks, 60 nihilistes déporté à Verkhoyansk, cochon de pays, le plus froid de toute la terre."

¹⁵¹ "Au fond de la Sibérie," *Le Père Peinard* 45 (12 January 1890), 7-8: "Ce qu'il en a fait du mal, ce bandit d'empereur que ces couillons d'opportunards font passer pour un ami de la France! En Russie, ce monstre-là n'est pas qu'empereur; il est pâtre; il est dieu; il et tout! [...] Vive Alexandre III le Pendeur! Il est le bandit de toutes les Russies, et Carnot lui lèche le cul."

¹⁵² "Fêtes Franco-Russes," *Le Petit Journal* 141 (30 September 1893), 4. For an analysis of the culturo-political role played by such public celebrations, see *Les Usages Politiques des Fêtes aux XIXe-XXe siècles*, dir. Alain Corbin, Noëlle Gérôme and Danielle Tartakowsky, Paris 1994, particularly Alain Corbin, "La Fête souveraineté," 25-38.

¹⁵³ George F. Kennan, *The Fateful Alliance: France, Russia and the Coming of the First World War*, New York 1984; "Fêtes Franco-Russes," *Le Petit Journal* 141 (30 September 1893), 4: "Ses conséquences sont de la dernière importance, et les relations amicales, l'entente scellée entre les deux peuples par cette visite les fêtes auxquelles elle a donné lieu sont le plus sûr garant qui nous ait été donné encore du maintien de la paix en Europe."

imprisonment in Mazas in 1894, Rousseau completed his huge canvas, *La Guerre* (Fig. 2).¹⁵⁴



22 "Admiral Avellan et officiers russes à Paris. Arrivée à Paris – rue de Lyon" ("Admiral Avellan and Russian officers in Paris. Arrival in Paris – rue de Lyon") (reprod. from the collection of Hervé Bernard, *Fêtes et Alliances Franco-Russes, 1893. Notes de lecture de l'un de mes ouvrages*, Livre unique et inédit avec préface du Président de la République, p. 10, http://ecole.nav.traditions.free.fr/pdf/RIEUNIER%20_RUSSE.pdf)



23 Henri Rousseau, *The Last of the 51st Rank*, 1893 (esquisse); no. 1143, 9th Salon des Artistes Indépendants, 1893 (courtesy of Musée d'Orsay documentation)

¹⁵⁴ Le Pichon, *Les Écrits du Douanier Rousseau*, 155. Rousseau also began preparing notes for his five Act play, *La Vengeance d'une orpheline russe* in which the eighteen-year old Russian orphan, Sophie, takes her revenge upon the 76-year old French Général Bousquet.



24 Jules Monge, *Le Dernier du bataillon*, 1894, oil on canvas, dimensions and location unknown, reproduction in *Le Petit Journal* (reprod. from Richard Thompson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France 1889-1900*, New Haven and London, 2004, p. 191, fig. 155)

[53] Hung at the *Salon des Artistes Indépendants* accompanied by a plaque stating: "Terrifying, she passes leaving despair, tears and ruin all around,"¹⁵⁵ Rousseau's *La Guerre* may have appeared less as an allegory of the Franco-Prussian War and Commune, as the Musée d'Orsay contends, than as one invoking the imminence of warfare in Europe.¹⁵⁶ Following anarchist riots in such French colonies as Guyana, the Dahomey, Sudan, and the Madagascar Wars and Sino-French war over control of Vietnam, it is sufficiently generalized to allude also to France's brutal colonization policy. Yet for the neo-impressionists, anarchist antimilitarists and socialist pacifists who frequented the *Salon des Artistes Indépendants*, it may have seemed less an allegory of international and colonial warfare than one of civil war, as signified by the differences between it and Rousseau's previous military paintings.

[54] In the heat of the military slaughter of families at Fourmies and of the miners at Carmaux, Rousseau began painting *Le dernier du 51ème* (*The Last of the 51st Rank*), 1893 (Fig. 23), which was accompanied upon exhibition by a plaque stating: "After the long combat, the regiment was completely decimated; alone the poor mutilated stayed to save the flag."¹⁵⁷ In keeping with Rousseau's dialogic praxis, this painting of bloody

¹⁵⁵ "Elle passe effrayante, laissant partout le désespoir, les pleurs et la ruine."

¹⁵⁶ Henri Rousseau [dit Le douanier], *La Guerre*, Musée d'Orsay: "Plus de vingt ans après le conflit franco-prussien de 1870 et la Commune de 1871, c'est encore marqué par ces événements que le Douanier Rousseau peint *La Guerre*."

¹⁵⁷ Rousseau, *Le Dernier du 51ème*, Salon des Artistes Indépendants, 1893: "Après de long combats, le régiment fut complètement décimé; seul le pauvre mutilé reste pour sauver

subjection was juxtaposed at the 1893 *Salon des Artistes Indépendants* with its opposite entitled *La Liberté* accompanied by an ode saying: "Oh liberty, be always the guide of those who, through their work, wish to unite for the glory and grandeur of France."¹⁵⁸ Drawing upon one of many photographs taken of regiments, as subsequently illustrated by Eugene Chaperon's painting, *Le Photograph à la Caserne*, 1899 (Fig. 9), Rousseau began to paint *Les Artilleurs (4e batterie, 3e piece)* (Fig. 5). Rifles in hand, sabers in soil, this image of the fourth battery of the third rank of a French artillery company gathered around the 105 cannon, on the wheel of which their military rank is inscribed, consists of young men who had been conscripted through the 1889 Military Law. These groups would have included Rousseau's diminutive friend, Alfred Jarry, who, despite being under 5 feet and a committed pacifist, like Rousseau, was conscripted in 1894. Although the soldiers appear composed and alert, neatly buttoned-up in a tranquil wooded setting, like the Bois de Bologne where vast sections of the military were trained, their experiences would have been far from calm, even in maneuvers. When called upon to fight, they would have become as bloody and as messy as those portrayed in Jules Monge's extensively reproduced painting, *Le Dernier du bataillon*, 1894, in which a dying soldier writes on the wall in his own blood, "Vive le 2ème zouaves" (Fig. 24). The casualties of war who were powerless to prevent it, Rousseau's artillerymen could be called upon to fight not just against German soldiers or insurrectionary colonials but also against their own people. Trained as "*le corps militaire*," they could not flinch at carrying out orders with the precision of a machine. While commended for taking initiatives as "*le combattant isolé*," they were condemned for reflecting upon the humanitarian consequences, even though the outcome could be far from the victory dreamed of in Detaille's *Le Rêve* (Fig. 1).

- [55] Clad in their uniforms and wrapped in standard issue blankets, Detaille depicts young conscripts from the Sixth Regional Army Corps of Châlons-sur-Marne asleep by their stacked piles of rifles. Collectively dreaming of the victories of war attained by Napoleon's triumphant soldiers, the new dawn about to break on the horizon signals the glory to be achieved by France's revenge against Germany. As a poster, this image was given pride-of-place in every patriotic home and hung in every classroom to inculcate the glory to be gained from revanchist nationalism, as illustrated by Paul Legrand's painting, *Devant 'Le Rêve' de Detaille*, 1897 (Fig. 25).¹⁵⁹

l'etendard sous lequel nos aînés ont conquis tant de gloire." This painting was deemed lost until it surfaced for auction at Christies in 1998, where it was authenticated by Dora Vallier (refer Musée d'Orsay Documentation).

¹⁵⁸ 9e Salon de la Société des Artistes Indépendants Catalogue, Palais des Arts Liberaux, Paris 1893; Uhde, *Henri Rousseau*, 1911, 61, indicates that the painting entitled *La liberté*, no. 1144, was hung with the text: "O Liberté, sois toujours le guide de tous ceux qui par leur travail, veulent concourir à la gloire et à la grandeur de la France." This is also mentioned by le Pichon, *Le Monde du Douanier Rousseau*, 256. In *Les Écrits du Douanier Rousseau*, 21, le Pichon speculates that this may be the painting subsequently known as *La République française*.



25 Paul Legrand, *Devant 'Le Rêve' de Detaille (The Dream by Detaille)*, 1897, oil on canvas, 134 x 105 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes (reprod. from: Richard Thompson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France 1889-1900*, New Haven and London, 2004, p. 214, Fig. 176)

- [56] Despite the range of prints displayed on a newsstand, it is the color-print of *Le Rêve* that commands the schoolboys' attention. War was, *Le Petit Français Illustré* explained to its young readership, a "sacred duty" necessary for "the defense of invaded territory."¹⁶⁰ Yet instead of representing war as a "sacred duty" or conveying its glory, Rousseau's painting of *La Guerre*, like Francisco de Goya's "Tanto y mas" in *Los Desastres de la Guerra*, 1810-1815 (Fig. 26) and Luce's *Patrie* (Fig. 16) exposes its horrors. Far from the victory march dreamed about by young French conscripts in

¹⁵⁹ To unravel the complexities of *revanche nationalisme*, in *The Troubled Republic*, Thomson writes, 213: "Given the evidence of visual culture, the proliferation in all forms of images revolving around the war and revenge—monuments, paintings, prints, even decorative objects—the idea had never been more alive among the French populace. There may well have been a taboo on the part of the government about speaking of the lost provinces and France's hereditary enemy, but no such injunction was placed on artists, as the widespread reproduction of works such as Detaille's *The Dream*, which even appears as a print in other images, attests. The memories of the defeat lived on, and the images helped to prepare a whole new generation for the battles to come. They were a subtle, but persuasive form of propaganda, perhaps more effective than any public speech or official rallying cry could ever have been in convincing young Frenchmen that it was their duty to die for la patrie."

¹⁶⁰ Thomson, *The Troubled Republic*. As Thomson argues, 223: "The proliferation of this imagery, its accessibility to all ages and classes, gave it a universality that should not be downplayed." Thomson likens *revanche nationalisme* to "a low-grade contagion," which "might lie dormant in the body politic, but once infected [...] could, in certain conditions, swiftly be inflamed."

Detaille's *Le Rêve*, their bodies lie amputated and dying on the ground while crows peck their bleeding flesh. While the location appears unspecific, its desolation conjures what *Le Père Peinard* called "French Siberia."¹⁶¹



26 Francisco de Goya, *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (*The Disasters of War*), no 30: *Estragos de la guerra*, 1810-1815, black and white aquatint, 140 x 170 mm (reprod. form: *Francisco de Goya. Radierungen. Die Sammlung des Morat-Instituts*, ed. Wendelin Renn, Freiburg/Breisgau 2007, no. 172, p. 104)



27 Cartoon, *L'...galité* (6 October 1889), reprinted in *Le Courrier franÁais* (27 October 1889) (author's collection)

[57] The source for Rousseau's painting was a cartoon that had appeared in the anarchist magazine, *L'Égalité*, on 6 October 1889 and which had been reprinted in *Le Courrier*

¹⁶¹ "Sibérie Française," *Le Père Peinard* (18 January 1892), 4. This became a regular series, alongside "Chouetes Executions," with an image of a gun, in which assassinations were reported.

Français on 27 October 1889 (Fig. 27). In keeping with its title, *Le Tsar*, the most dominant figure in this cartoon is the autocratic Russian Tsar, Alexander III who in 1887 had ordered the hanging of Lenin's brother, Alexander Ulyandov and who, after the Imperial Train crash in October 1888, had sent thousands of working-class revolutionaries to die in Siberia as mentioned earlier. Viewed by French anarchists as a brutal despot, he is depicted on horseback riding roughshod over his people who have been dumped in the frozen wasteland of Siberia to die, vividly illustrating the accompanying caption: "Wherever the mysterious black horse passes, calamity descends, a crime was committed."¹⁶² The analogy to be drawn between the brutality of Tsar Alexander III and the government of Prime Minister, Casimir-Perier, was not lost upon Jarry.



28 Henri Rousseau, *La Guerre* (War), pen lithograph on red paper, *L'Ymagier II* (January 1895), facing page 101. Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas (source: <http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/almanac/lyii12.shtml>)

[58] So important did he consider this image that Jarry commissioned a lithograph of it from Rousseau to publish in the new journal he was editing with Rémy de Gourmont, *L'Ymagier*, 1894-1896 (Fig. 28).¹⁶³ In *L'Ymagier*, Jarry wrote of the power of the direct archetypal symbols, particularly the religious woodcuts of death and damnation created in Medieval France (Fig. 29). This power, he found, was captured by Rousseau's *La Guerre*. While arguably as gory as the medieval image published in *L'Ymagier* of the body and soul of the damned being roasted alive on a flaming pit (Fig. 30), Rousseau's *La Guerre* resonated with contemporary controversy. In one of two reviews, the young playwright pointed out that the figure of battle was drawn from Nordic mythology and wrote of "the black leaves that populate the purple clouds; the ruins tumbling like pine

¹⁶² "Le Tsar," *L'Égalité* (6 October 1889), unpag.: "Partout où passait le mystérieux cheval noir, un malheur s'abattait, un crime était commis."

¹⁶³ In *L'Ymagier*, the editors announced their intention to publish about two images each year, including vignettes by Albrecht Dürer and striking religious imagery. Works by contemporary artists, including prints by Paul Gauguin and the editors, appeared cheek by jowl with historical and popular prints.

cones among the corpses, translucent with anoxia."¹⁶⁴ Following Jarry's analogy, the figure of Valkyrie seems to ride horseback across this decimated landscape littered with bloody corpses pecked at by pale-beaked crows, just as Tsar Alexander III had seemed to ride roughshod across his people.



29 Anonymous, *Le Miroir du PÉcheur*, Image d'...pinal, stencil-colored woodcut, 2.67 x 2.14 cm, *L'Ymagier* I (October 1894), facing page 48. Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, Kansas (source: <http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/almanac/lyi14.shtml>)



30 Anonymous, *Le Miroir du PÉcheur*, Detail: "Petit crayon de l'état malheureux d'une âme damnée" (source: <http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/almanac/lyi14.shtml>)

¹⁶⁴ Alfred Jarry, "Les Indépendants," *Essais de l'Art Libre* (May-July 1894), 124-125: "Les feuilles noires [qui] peuplent les nuages mauves et les décombres [qui] courent comme des pommes de pin, parmi les cadavres aux bords translucides d'axotls, étiquetés de corbaux au bec clair."

- [59] From the day government troops fired upon workers at Fourmies, the writer, Quillard recalls, we realized that "wars would be fought between the rival classes."¹⁶⁵ "War between nations would become more and more an anachronism," explained André-Ferdinand Hérold, "but the opposite would ensue with war between classes. I do not mean by this that we have entered an era of universal peace. I believe the struggle between nations has finished. But the struggle between classes remains."¹⁶⁶ For the anarcho-sydicalist writer, Urbain Gohair, Fourmies marked the start of the war between the army and the nation in terms of its people, the army being increasingly dispatched to break strikes from this time.¹⁶⁷ For the lawyer and Symbolist poet, Jean Ajalbert, the massacre at Fourmies sparked a new period of "passion and revolt" amongst anarcho-communists and socialists.¹⁶⁸ It also signalled what Bernard Lazare called "New Monarchy."¹⁶⁹ With workers and their families gunned down by government troops, with anarchists guillotined for pursuing the propaganda of the deed in dynamite, with anarcho-communist writers and artists tried, imprisoned and exiled with the passing of the "Villainous laws," Rousseau's *La Guerre* may then be regarded as an allegory of civil war.
- [60] As signified by the resemblance between Rousseau's painting and the popular cartoon of Tsar Alexander III, this was a civil war being fought between the people of France and the republican government, which had behaved as brutally and inhumanely as the tyrannical autocratic with whom the government had forged the Franco-Russian Alliance. In showing that this republican government would slay its revolutionaries as brutally as Tsar Alexander III had slayed his people, Rousseau's *La Guerre* reveals the ramifications of the Military Law of 1889 and the molding of the French male body through modern sport and compulsory gymnastics into "*le corps militaire*," invulnerable to any grief, pain, empathy and compassion. Yet due to the transfiguration of French men into "*le corps militaire*," the ultimate tragedy that Rousseau's painting conveys is the Third Republic's betrayal of the Jacobin Republic's triad of liberty, equality, and most of all, fraternity that Rousseau and the neo-impressionist *Sociétaires* of the *Salon des Artistes Indépendants* so cherished. Deciphered from the anarcho-communist, antimilitarist and pacifist position of Rousseau and his fellow *Sociétaires*, the militarist

¹⁶⁵ Jean Maitron, ed., *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français. Troisième partie, 1871-1914, de la Commune à la Grande Guerre*, vol. III, Paris 1976, 76; as quoted and translated by Herbert, *The Artist and Social Reform*, 122

¹⁶⁶ A.-F. Hérold, *Mercure de France* 24 (1897), 466; as quoted and translated by Herbert, *The Artist and Social Reform*, 121.

¹⁶⁷ Urbain Gohair, *L'armée contre la nation*, Paris 1898.

¹⁶⁸ Jean Ajalbert, "Après Fourmies," *La Révolte, supplément littéraire* (13-19 June 1891), 56; as referenced by T. J. Clark, "We Field-Women," Chapter 2 in: *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*, New Haven and London 1999, 100.

¹⁶⁹ Bernard Lazare, "Nouvelle Monarchie," *La Révolte, supplément littéraire* (28 November-4 December 1891); T. J. Clark, "We Field-Women," 100, mentions that this article was first published in *Entretiens*.

repercussions of the Military Law would not be the glory of victory pictured in Detaille's *Le Rêve* but brutal national destruction wrought by a nation at war with itself.

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