

classifications, and Breman includes a brief consideration of K.P. Kannan's division of the informal population into *aam aadmi* (the common people) and the rest.

Given his acknowledgment of India's deviations from the classical model, I would argue that Breman is too hasty in his dismissal of Kalyan Sanyal's important opening into rethinking the trajectory of post-colonial development, where Sanyal divides India's economy into two sectors of need versus capitalist accumulation as salient categories of division. Breman strongly critiques Sanyal's idea of a need economy, arguing that "any classification is quite unacceptable when it starts from the assumption, as Sanyal does, that both the owners of workshops and other small establishments and the labourers whom they exploit share the same social plane" (p. 89). And yet, what do we make of people who move between categories of worker and petty owner, as frequently happens in India's informal economy? Further, what are we to make of a sub-proletariat in conditions of de-industrialization, acting as a reserve army for an all-but-vanishing industrial workforce? New concepts and categories are urgently needed.

Of India's workers, 93 per cent labor in the informal sector. Breman's perspective from the bottom of this labor hierarchy presents an essential, urgent, and deeply unsettling account.

Durba Chattaraj

Critical Writing Program, University of Pennsylvania
3808 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA
E-mail: durbac@sas.upenn.edu

DEBORD, GUY. *Un art de la guerre. Sous la dir. d'Emmanuel Guy et Laurence Le Bras*. Bibliothèque nationale de France; Gallimard, Paris 2013. 223 pp. Ill. € 39.00. doi:10.1017/S0020859014000030

Guy Debord (1931–1994) arguably entered labour history when he chalked *Ne travaillez jamais* on a wall of the Institut de France sixty years ago. It was a gesture in the futurist spirit of Kazimir Malevich who in 1921, against both capitalism and communism, had proclaimed laziness the "truth of mankind". It also reflected a moment, now long forgotten, when sociologists were beginning to worry about the imminent explosion of leisure that would undoubtedly result from the further rationalization of industry. In post-World-War-II Paris and a few other cities, avant-garde artists were expanding the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* to the point where it spilled over into everyday life. "Never work!" was a battle cry that summed up an essential part of their programme.

In 1957, a small group of those artists founded the Situationist International (SI). Among them were Debord, his wife, Michèle Bernstein (the daughter of an antiquarian bookseller who supplied many a document to the IISH), and the much older Asger Jorn, who helped to fund the movement even after he left in 1961. The SI renewed itself continually: it had seventy members throughout its fifteen-year existence, but never more than fifteen at a time. Debord alone was to be present at both its birth and its burial, and edited all twelve issues of its journal, *Internationale situationniste*. Moreover, he wrote what many consider its bible, *La Société du Spectacle*, which in some 200 densely reasoned paragraphs presented a theory of the modern world.

It explained how commodity fetishism, as famously defined by Karl Marx, had invaded every aspect of human existence, generating an endless stream of increasingly autonomous images that had come to replace reality. This process had transformed our contemporaries into consumers of prefabricated lifestyles, suggesting abundant choice while preventing

any alternative to the reigning mode of production. Most notably, the opposition between capitalism and communism was typical of the false dilemmas that dominated political and intellectual debate and served to hide an underlying similarity. The book appeared opportunely on the eve of *les années '68* and offered a framework for the understanding of what happened – to some beforehand, to many more with hindsight. It established Debord's reputation as a thinker and a stylist. In 1973, he improbably turned it into a full-length film, lightly noting that Sergei Eisenstein had failed to do the same for Marx's *Kapital*.

Although clearly an analytical statement in its own right, *La Société du Spectacle* was also intended as a move in a game. This game encompassed Debord's entire life, which from an early date he sought to fashion as a work of art – another *Gesamtkunstwerk* – in a way reminiscent of Benvenuto Cellini. Much of what he read and most of what he wrote fitted into pertinent strategic considerations, even if under the sign of uncertainty. After the SI had been dissolved, he looked for adventures in Aldo Moro's Italy and in post-Franco Spain, while befriending Gérard Lebovici, the formidable founder of the Champs Libre publishing house, whose murder in 1984 was never officially solved. Debord had noted that the spectator's life experience "remains bereft of language or concept", and "lacks any critical access to its own antecedents, which are nowhere recorded". He made sure that this would not happen to him: another film, *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni*, and two volumes of *Panegyrique* dwelt on his own passage through time, often lyrically. He thoroughly exhausted his body on the way – he liked hard drinking, and ultimately shot himself because he had outlived the capacity of his liver. He managed to have his final statement, a film made together with Brigitte Cornand, shown on French television a few weeks later.

After his death, his second wife, Alice Becker-Ho, embarked on a programme that continued his life. At Fayard, together with Patrick Mosconi, she edited Debord's *Correspondance* in eight volumes, as well as *Le marquis de Sade a des yeux de fille*, which reproduced some of his earliest letters in the large format their graphics demand. She cooperated with Jean-Louis Rånçon and Vincent Kaufmann (the author of a glowing biography of Debord) on a 1,900-page edition of the complete works, published as *Oeuvres* in Gallimard's *Quarto* series; with Olivier Assayas, on a DVD version of the *Oeuvres cinématographiques complètes* (Gaumont); and with Jacques Le Glou, on a reissue of some of his (and her) songs, first published on the latter's album *Pour en finir avec le travail* (EPM). She also helped stage an exhibition on Debord's papers at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), held in March–July 2013. The book under review was its catalogue.

Little of this, to be sure, has been uncontroversial. To much lament, the *Correspondance* contained only Debord's letters, not those of his counterparts. One of them, Jean-François Martos, was sued even before its first volume had appeared, because he had himself published his own correspondence with Debord, in a book that was in fact seized. A decade later, Debord's part in the exchange was unsuccessfully offered at an auction, presumably by the addressee. By then, the former enemy of the state had been declared a *trésor national* after France had forbidden his widow to sell his papers to Yale University; in 2011, she sold them to the BNF instead. With fury or glee, scores of commentators have since pointed to the incongruity of the greatest critic of the spectacle being commodified by his comrades-in-arms and exhibited in one of the temples of French official culture.

However that may be, we are going to have full access to Debord's papers less than twenty years after he died. One major purpose of the exhibition catalogue is to give us an idea of the contents of the BNF's fonds NAF 28603, through the eyes of eleven researchers who have already consulted it. Some of it is unsurprising: Debord characteristically preserved the early versions of his various scripts and manuscripts, and maintained files of press cuttings. There is a lot of correspondence, if only because more often than not he kept copies of his own letters, even when they were handwritten.

We learn that the BNF has become the owner of a sizeable part of his personal library and of a certain number of realia, including the table at which *La Société du Spectacle* was written – a worthy rival to Shelley’s guitar, once on show at the British Museum. The most remarkable item, however, consists of his *notes de lecture* written on more than 1,400 catalogue cards and sheets of paper. They contain phrases or paragraphs that were excerpted not so much for the sake of memory as to be actually used, often as *détournement* – the practice of redeploying existing texts in a new context (for example, the opening of *La Société du Spectacle*, though unattributed, is a modified version of the opening of *Das Kapital*). The notes were sorted in files with labels such as “Poetry etc.” or “Machiavelli and Shakespeare”, and could be rearranged as part of a working file for a new book or film. In this way, a wide variety of authors contributed unwittingly to a modern Good Old Cause.

The natural question as to what extent the papers are complete would seem to have a two-fold answer. On the one hand, Guy and Alice Debord never concealed the fact that they consciously destroyed documents, in particular letters, towards the end of his life. On the other hand, it is simply astonishing how much is there, given the circumstances in which Debord used to move. Even those who were aware of the importance he attached to letters will have been impressed by the number now in print; indeed, the *Correspondance* has opened up a quite substantial new part of his oeuvre to most readers. Of course, both our losses and our gains are closely related to the sense of history, including of his own history, that permeates everything. As in life, so in death he wanted to project a certain personality, with the complicity of his widow – it was just a matter of consistency.

In over thirty contributions, mostly relatively brief, the authors of the richly illustrated catalogue comment on aspects of the archive and look at a number of topics it illuminates. In addition to his personal papers, Debord held considerable parts of the records of the movements he belonged to. Meanwhile, a rough archival description has appeared on the website of the BNF. By way of an epilogue, the catalogue contains Alice Debord’s *Vers d’alcools renversés* and her husband’s notes for an unpublished pamphlet, *Les erreurs et les échecs de M. Guy Debord, par un Suisse impartial*, which was designed as a devastating examination of everything he did or did not do in his life, from the perspective of an admirer of present-day society. In a universe that owed as much to Jonathan Swift as to Georges Sorel, he had every opportunity to lay smoke screens and to feed myths, to friends and foes alike. It is a fitting conclusion to an exhibition that in its title ambiguously refers to the art of war, which brings together strategy, deception, and aristocratic values much appreciated by someone who profoundly despised *bourgeoises* and *bourgeois*.

Jaap Kloosterman

International Institute of Social History
PO Box 2169, CD 1000 Amsterdam, The Netherlands
E-mail: jkl@iisg.nl

KEELING, DREW. *The Business of Transatlantic Migration between Europe and the United States, 1900–1914*. Chronos Verlag, Zürich 2012. xix, 345 pp. Ill. S.fr. 42.00; € 34.00; \$44.00. doi:10.1017/S0020859014000042

This study of the business of transatlantic migration between Europe and the United States combines elements of social history, economic history, and business history