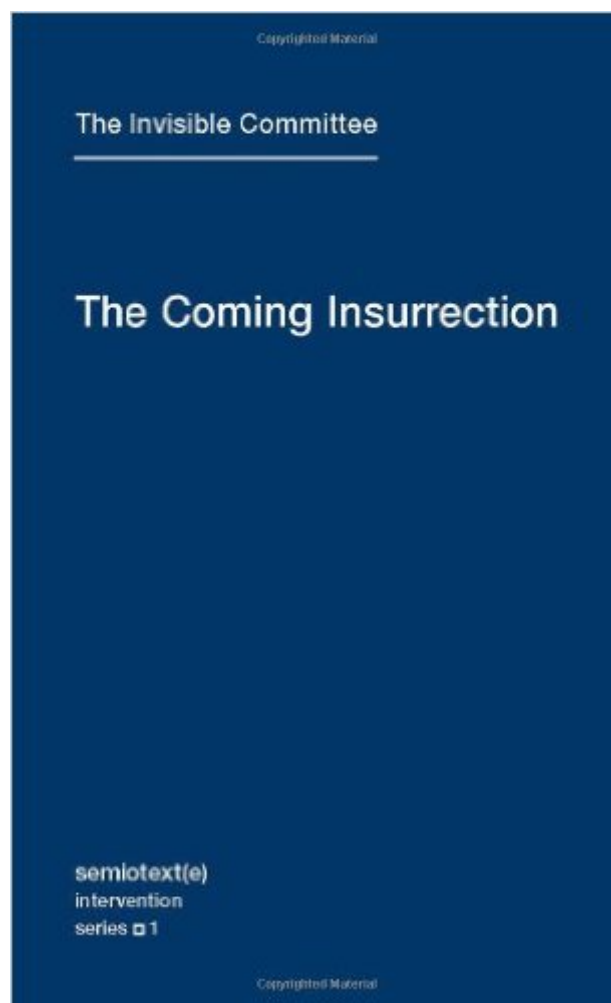


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The Coming Insurrection (Semiotext(e) / Intervention Series)



Synopsis

A call to arms by a group of French intellectuals that rejects leftist reform and aligns itself with younger, wilder forms of resistance.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is not the type of book one looks at based on the usual "do I like it?" criteria. It's NOT that kind of book. THE COMING INSURRECTION is, simply put, a manifesto. It is dull and wandering. As a "workable plan" for a society, it is the usual Marxist utopian vision of all men enjoying the benefits of nobody's exploited labor. And as scary as the idea of anarchists and Marxists rioting in the streets is (Don't LOOK--they're doing it right now in France on 10/22/10), the really scary part of this book is the authors' analysis of the state of Western Civilization. This is not so much a condemnation of Capitalism by Marxists--we're all familiar with that--but, rather a clear outline of the hardcore Marxist view of Progressivism, community organizing, Environmentalism and Social Democratic ideas. The contention the authors have that Western Civilization is IN collapse and not in "crisis" should cause you to consider whether or not government action is designed to prop up the free-market economy and society or whether they are merely trying to prop up the FACADE of the free-market economy and society. Ask yourself if the authors are right when they conclude that the negation of ideas has become the norm and whether or not current society exalts those who believe in nothing and

demonizes those who hold to principles. Ask yourself what REALLY drives those in government and the environmental movement and compare it to what the authors think is the motivating force. DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS. If you want to stick your head in the sand or don't want to give up the comfortable idea that everything will be alright because it's always worked out OK before, that's your choice.

This somewhat bizarre, yet intriguing, commentary on contemporary society and the building revolt against the governmental and economic oppression being felt is set in France. This version is a translation from the original, which includes good endnotes that clarify some references to French agencies, governmental or commercial entities and revolutionary or terrorist groups. But American readers (hearers) will instantly be able to envision the analysis in the American context. This is not a classic format nor is it classic content. The authors' introduction clarifies that this is not a composition based on their own viewpoint. It does involve an analysis or reflection on what they have observed. The oral presentation is well done and easy to listen to. They present this as a compilation of comments and viewpoints they have picked up and recorded in barroom discussions and backrooms, on street corners and in various locales where the general populace discuss the problems of the day. They present a basic view that can be called Marxist in the formal sense, and they carefully define their viewpoint, indicating that their commentary on what they have compiled focuses on the perspective of group or society, that is, communal concepts. They dissociate the term commune-ism from the classic Leninist concept known politically as Communism. They describe what they understand as communal living in society. The perspectives here seem closer to Marx's original analysis of early capitalist industrial society in Europe. But you will see it is not exactly Marxism as we have known it, either. The perspective is quite disdainful about the possibilities of the current society, but does not fit neatly into what we have known as "Communism" in the 20th century.

I really enjoyed this little book. It's one of those texts that you find yourself saying 'Yes, that IS the way it is!' with almost a shock of recognition. Certainly, at times the language is a little rhetorical, almost poetic, but that's o.k. - at least it means there's some passion there. So what is in the book? It's divided into a number of sections, the main being seven 'circles' or areas of contention. These rather reminded me of the areas of analysis outlined by David Harvey in his recent and comprehensive 'The Enigma of Capital'. The first 'circle' is the personal: 'My body belongs to me. I am me, you are you and something's wrong. Mass personalisation. Individualisation of all conditions

- life, work and misery.' (P29) It seems to me that this is related to the ideas in Thomas Frank's 'The Conquest of Cool' but taken further, and taken personally. The second 'circle' refers to culture in a fairly wide sense, including the media, schools: 'A burst of laughter is the only appropriate response to all the serious "questions" posed by news analysts. To take the most banal: there is no "immigration question". Who still grows up where they were born? Who lives where they grew up? Who works where they live?' (P35) The third concerns itself with 'work', the fourth with the 'metropolis' - rejecting the town/country split and seeing the whole as 'one single urban cloth' (P52).

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