

A Managed Conflict Apparatus and the Legacy of Louis Auguste Blanqui

--Epigraph--

"Genuine political warfare...is not mere competition or rivalry. It is a form of *war*, and therefore *strategic* in nature, with specific *power* objectives.... conceived strategically, organized as definite missions, and clearly targeted....

"Political warfare contains many branches: all types of agitation, propaganda, subversion, economic manipulation, incitement of riots [as in "*systems based on Blanquist cadres*" (256)], terror, diversionary diplomacy, sabotage, guerrilla and para-military actions, etc.; everything in sum, short of the employment of the main formal armed forces. Let me, in the remainder of this present note, stick to the psychological branches—agitation, propaganda, rumors and that sort of thing.

"A fencer or boxer can learn the vulnerabilities of his opponent in the course of fighting him. The dentist can spot the weak tooth by the 'ouch' that comes when he pokes it. Now in the past couple of years [1945-1960], communist yelps have revealed a number of their prime psywar vulnerabilities....

"**On the operational side**, there would be nothing particularly difficult about campaigns along these lines [*i.e.*, exploiting "their primary psywar vulnerabilities"]....If we really tried them seriously, for a while, we might find ourselves so pleased with the results that we would begin to translate them from the purely psychological to **the more activist phases** of political warfare [**while being alertly aware "that the Soviet Union is now [as of 1960] the principal colonial empire on earth"**]." (James Burnham, *The War We Are In* (1970), pp. 258-260, and 261—italics in the original; my bold emphasis added)

"The Bolshevik approach to mobs, riots and 'command of the streets' is rather more serious. In his **design for the revolutionary party—the conflict apparatus**—Lenin, like Bakunin and Nechayev before him, **incorporated the ideas of Louis Auguste Blanqui**, a French revolutionist who lived from 1805-1881....He [Blanqui] believed that **the key** to successful revolt was **the development of a small secret 'cadre' organization**. Normally the cadres would remain underground, abstaining from political affairs....**The trained cadres** could, however, deploy through the mass and **take leadership**." (James Burnham, *The War We Are In* (1970), p. 255—my emphasis added)

Three essays written in the 1960s by the strategic-minded James Burnham – himself a former Trotskyite admired by Trotsky himself – will still help us to understand **and counteract** certain lesser-known "**weapons systems**" that are **non-kinetic**, such as "political warfare" and a subordinated, but strategically directed "psychological warfare." While more generally trying to consider and differentiate various "forms of modern warfare," Burnham also chooses to remind us of Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), whom Lenin greatly admired, especially his covert "Blanquist Cadres" and their strategic direction of a revolutionary "Conflict Apparatus" (especially in the manipulation of mobs). We may still learn much from a lucid articulation of these principles and methods, and thereby more effectively be able to resist them – or even perhaps to apply them carefully ourselves, virtuously and under strict discipline – though today, necessarily now, under new conditions of advanced breakthrough technologies and the abiding reality of **pervasive** "Perception Management" (*i.e.*, "Deception").¹

Whereas James Burnham considers – and necessarily in 1960 focuses on – "the Political Action of Communist Forces" (Menshevik, Bolshevik, Gramscian, and Maoist), we may now aptly transpose and apply his insights to the "Political Action of Islamic Forces and Jewish Forces," as well as to Revolutionary Leftist Forces, in general: the applied doctrines of Saul Alinsky, George Soros, and other such networks of strategic organization and uprooting agitation such as the revolutionary liberationist Jesuits, those ardently dialectical (Hegelian and Marxist), purportedly progressive neo-Modernist ones.

In three of his 1960 strategic-cultural essays, James Burnham summarizes with lucidity the world situation as it was just before the United States was about to enter into Vietnam more fully, and while the Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council was about to open officially (in October 1962). Burnham's facts and proposed clarifications will still, I believe, help us clear our own minds of cant. For it is so that contrast and nuanced counterpoint can also soberly help to disencumber our minds and thus to clear them of humbug and much suffocating cant (as Dr. Samuel Johnson himself often said).

The first of Burnham's three essays was published significantly on 4 June 1960, five months before young John F. Kennedy's own stirring election to the Presidency and four years before Donald

¹ See James Burnham, *The War We Are In* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1970), pp. 240-284, Chapter VIII ("The Forms of Modern Warfare"). We shall now be more closely examining three essays from this more extensive and wide-ranging Chapter Eight, namely: "Student Riots and Blanqui's Legacy" (4 June 1960), pp. 254-256; "Sticks and Stones Break Our Bones" (27 August 1960), pp. 256-259; and "What Targets for Polwar?" (19 November 1960), pp. 259-261.

Trump graduated in 1964 from the New York Military Academy in Cornwall, nearby West Point (and, dare I say it?, only one month before a very young 17-year-old boy was to enter the U.S. Military Academy itself as Plebe, on 5 July 1960). Burnham's essay is entitled "Student Riots and Blanqui's Legacy,"² and it commences, as follows, by first recalling for us some of the acute facts of that history:

During the past two years [1958-1960] **there have been mass riots in the streets** of many major cities **of the non-communist world**: Caracas, Montevideo, Lima, Baghdad, Havana, Capetown, Léopoldville, Algiers, Seoul, Ankara, Tokyo, **San Francisco**, among others. In these, **students are usually prominent** [even before 1968]. Nearly all of the riots, with the notable exception of Algiers, have been directed against **political friends** of the United States or [against] **policies** favorable to the United States.

These riots have been remarkably successful. They played an essential role in the overthrow of no less than five governments that were firm allies of the U.S.: in Venezuela, Iraq, Cuba, South Korea and Turkey. **South Korea and Turkey have been thrown into domestic turmoil.**

Riots in the Latin American capitols **prevented** Vice President Nixon's visit from yielding positive results, **marred** the President's [Eisenhower's] subsequent trip, and **degraded** U.S. prestige in the eyes of the Latin American masses. **The fierce riots now sweeping through the streets of Tokyo may smash** the pro-United States Kishi government, **and compel both repudiation** of the U.S.-Japan security treaty **and cancellation** of Mr. Eisenhower's scheduled visit. (254—my emphasis added)

After presenting these **concurrent** facts and acts, Burnham poses a strategic question:

Do the communists have a hand in these events? When we **fit** them together, **the political pattern** emerges unmistakably. *Cui prodest?—to whose benefit?—the old rule tells us to ask.* Invariably the answer is, to the benefit of the communists **and the policies they favor. Where are the street riots against a pro-communist regime or policy? Coincidences so multiple**, both positive and negative, **simply do not occur in politics.** (255-256—my bold emphasis added; italics in the original)

By way of emphatic iteration, we present Burnham's own important words once again, in part.

For, indeed, he says:

The Bolshevik approach to mobs, riots and "command of the streets" is rather more serious [as is its deceitfully manipulative use of the duped and later discarded "*Lumpenproletariat*"]....

Blanqui [himself] first became prominent in the 1830 revolution, and **devoted the rest of his life, in and out of prison, to revolutionary conspiracy.** He

² James Burnham, *The War We Are In* (1970), pages 254-256. All further page references to this book and to its three individual essays will henceforth be placed in parentheses above in the main body of this text.

believed that the key to successful revolt was the development of a **small, secret "cadre" organization**. Normally the cadres would remain **underground, abstaining** from [any visible or open] political affairs. They were to be trained in the **manipulation of crowds** and the use of small arms and **improvised weapons accessible to crowds**.

Blanqui assumed that the normal course of **modern mass society** would periodically bring **crowds** into the streets. **Unguided** they would mill around to **no particular purpose**. The **trained** cadres could, however, **deploy through the mass and take leadership**. In the 1848 and 1870 revolutions [in France] **the practical cogency of Blanqui's ideas was proved**. In 1870 it was his cadres—4,000 strong—who were **primarily responsible for the overthrow of the Third Empire and establishment of the [1871] Paris Commune—history's first revolutionary, proletarian, Soviet dictatorship**.

Unguided mobs may shake but they **do not overthrow regimes**. They do not spontaneously produce **consistent slogans and select strategic targets**. The **coordinated operations** of these recent riots [also in San Francisco!], and their high measure of success, are the product of **trained Bolshevik neo-Blanquists who**, once the masses take to the streets, **supply the guidance and slogans, point to the targets, and foment the violence**. (255-256—my emphasis added)

In order to bring it soberly closer to attentive U.S. citizens in 1960 – and maybe also still to us today – Burnham leads us to a representative example of such a guided revolutionary process in its inchoate, or incipient, or germinating manifestations:

This [covertly guided neo-Blanquist process of manipulation] is **true not only in Tokyo, where** the Bolsheviks work **through wild Zengakuren hoodlums** [the communist-anarchist **league of students first** founded in 1948], **or in Montevideo, where** the communists **openly** control the student clubs, **but [also] in our own San Francisco at its "earlier stage" of the revolutionary process**. (256—my emphasis)

It is only now, after this larger preparation, that James Burnham attempts to give us a more detailed depiction of the guided and purposive use of mobs in San Francisco in 1960 – even before the deeper involvement of the U.S. in Vietnam some five years later. Here is how he compactly presents the revolutionary methods and how they constitute a "weapons system," though essentially without **"physical firepower"**:

San Francisco at its "earlier stage" of the revolutionary process [in May of 1960]: The police investigation proved the communist leadership of **the student mob** that took command **of the center** of the city, **blocking** the entrances of city Hall and **forcing** members of the Committee on Un-American Activities to scuttle out the back door. Americans smile incredulously [or condescendingly, sometimes even smugly], **but it is the simple truth that the** [the U.S. House Un-american Activities Committee] **HUAC riots last month**

[in May of 1960] **were not a student prank but a rehearsal for revolution.**

The [Bolshevik neo-Blanquist] **cadre chiefs were well pleased** with their exercise. For several hours, **screened by student-innocents (in the protective role of the proletarian wives that the Bolsheviks pushed to the front of the 1917 Petrograd mobs [in St. Petersburg, Russia]), they held control of the streets against all the power of the enemy [as it were].** They [the student mobs] **compelled the local sovereign, Mayor George Christopher, to capitulate, with his order henceforth banning use of the City Hall by the [U.S.] Congressional Committee. And they bent the Courts to their will. Judge A. Axelrod, with a fatuous statement about not wanting to "cause a stigma," dismissed all charges against all the rioters, Blanquists and dupes. They flung his sentimentality back in his face with a scornful declaration that they "still stand firmly" by their aims and actions.** Would that our mayors and judges might say as much! (256–my emphasis added)

Such is a classic manifestation of "Provocative Weakness" – "a form of weakness that is so weak it is provocation to others" (as the great Dr. Fritz Kraemer himself once quite pertly told me, and emphatically so, in his German accent!). Fritz Kraemer (who died on 8 September 2003, at 95 years of age) could also have taught George Soros and Saul Alinsky a few things – and not just a few artful tricks and counterattacks!

In the second of three essays to be considered here, first published on 27 August 1960 and entitled "Sticks and Stones Break Our Bones,"³ James Burnham speaks about providing an adequate defense "in the nuclear age" (257) and sufficient "**protection against the sticks, rocks and stones thrown by rioting mobs**" (257):

In the nuclear age [*i.e.*, the 15 years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, from 1945-1960], stones function as weapons **a good deal oftener** than A-bombs, and have won many more battles. Strategists on both sides have remarked that **beyond a certain limit—already passed by H-bombs [as of 1960]—the more powerful the weapons become, the less chance there is that they will be used.** (The reason being that **fewer and fewer occasions would be taken to justify their use.**) There seems to be a **paradoxical corollary: the more powerful the new weapons that exist, the more primitive the weapons that are actually used.** In the Congo [now in 1960] we are back to clubs and stones, blow guns and magic spells. (257–my emphasis added)

Burnham then once again wants to lead us to consider more carefully the truly effective kinds of "weapons systems" that had been most resorted to in the years 1945-1960:

³ See James Burnham, *The War We Are In* (1970), pp. 256-259 ("Sticks and Stones Break Our Bones"—27 August 1960).

It is terribly **hard** for Americans to **understand something so simple**. We have all been **learning to be glib about grandiose "weapons systems"** made up of **infinitely complex** aircraft, bases, carriers, nuclear devices, missiles, submarines, **computers, and what not**. On such systems we are ready to lavish scores of billions of dollars and immense quantities of manpower, effort, technical ingenuity and scientific intelligence. **But we seem to have difficulty in focusing attention on "weapons systems" by which the struggle of the world is in fact being fought.** (257—my emphasis added)

After noting again that, between 1945-1960, "only two nuclear devices have ever been used for combat purposes," (257) he adds that

In the fifteen years since that parenthetic employment [of nuclear weapons only twice within a single month in early August 1945] there have been **many victories and defeats vast in scope and lasting in consequence**. **Power** over many nations and over whole regions of the earth and hundreds of millions human beings **has changed hands all without the benefit of nuclear leverage**.

The rioting mobs of Tokyo, Seoul, Ankara **needed no A- or H-bombs**, or planes or tanks or even guns, **to bring governments down**. Gandhi and Nehru had no strategic air force to help them **drive the British Raj** [*i.e.*, Dominion] **out of the Indian subcontinent**. Even Mao and Castro managed with small arms and a few outdated cannons. Indonesia, Iraq, Bolivia, Egypt, the Congo, Guatemala....**It is mostly sticks and stones, rifles and submachine guns—and the mobs, of course: the mobs are a primary element of the "weapons systems" that have been deciding most battles and campaigns**. Occasionally—as in Korea, Indochina or Algeria—a few bigger guns and some planes are added, **but as supplement to, not replacement of, the sticks and stones and mobs**. **Words also, of course** [*e.g.*, propaganda and other psychological operations]. (257-258—my emphasis added)

Burnham again prepares us for, and then presents us with, his even deeper insights of wisdom:

Although **most** professional military men, **unlike** their civilian counterparts, know that we are in a fight, I have observed that **very few of them can take a weapons system seriously unless it comprises a lot of firepower**. They can **seriously debate** strategic manned bombers *vs.* submarine-carried Polaris *vs.* railroad-borne Minutemen, **and envisage** ten or twenty billion dollars to develop a system based on one or the other. **But if** you suggest any such sum, **or a tenth** of such a sum, **for systems based on Blanquist cadres**, crowd manipulation, guerrillas, psychological warfare, paramilitary operations, subversion, bribery, infiltration, with specialized, mobile, ranger-type units in supportive reserve—**in short, political warfare**—a skeptical smile is the best you can hope for. **Yet it is the polwar systems** ["political warfare systems"] **that win all the battles**. What good are Atlas and Polaris in Laos, Cuba, Algeria, the Congo?

The real worth of a weapons system is measured by what it can accomplish, not by its size, complexity, cost or physical firepower. (258–my emphasis added)

Returning to some earlier revolutionary history and some specific, contemporary (or near-contemporary) cases throughout the world, Burnham strengthens (with his artful irony added) his own larger argument, and with his characteristic trenchancy:

It has been **demonstrated** over and over again in the past fifteen years [1945-1960]—since 1917 indeed—that **modern polwar systems can smash governments and armies, and take over territory, peoples and nations. Isn't a weapons system that can defeat the British, Dutch and French armies, that can seize Czechoslovakia, China and Cuba, worth spending a few billions on, and perhaps an occasional hour of concentrated thought?** (258–my emphasis added)

As he approaches the conclusion of his brief essay, Burnham tries to explain to us what he does **not** mean by his proposed system of political warfare:

I am not talking about "foreign aid," "truth campaigns" and "student exchange." These are Boy Scout ideas. **Strategically undirected** foreign aid, "information programs" or scholarships for foreigners **never won anything except insults and an eventual kick in the teeth.** In a genuine polwar system, foreign aid is only a key to open a national door **for the conduct of field operations; "information" and propaganda are a weapon with which to undermine, divert and injure the enemy; student scholarships are a cover for training activist cadres** [even training some of our own Blanquist cadres, perhaps].

Because we decline to fight genuine strategically conceived political warfare, our billions of foreign aid dollars have been mostly wasted, lining the pockets of corrupt local residents and building up industry for the enemy or his friends to inherit; our propaganda program is a gravy train for **the world's left intellectuals** and a laughing stock to the enemy; the foreign students we educate usually end up as enemy agents. **Will this new round of looming catastrophes** [even as of 1960]—**in the Indochinese successor states** [Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and part of Burma, for example], and Ceylon, Indonesia, Cuba, the Congo, Algeria—**induce our leaders to go ahead with that oft-promised but never performed reappraisal?** (258-259–my emphasis added)

In James Burnham's third 1960 essay – first published in 19 November 1960 – we are made more attentive at the outset by the very title of his proposals: "What Targets For Polwar?"⁴ We wonder who is targeting whom? And who is making the target selection? Are "they" (and who's "the they"?) targeting us and our vulnerabilities; or are we targeting "them" and their vulnerabilities? Or, is it both?

4 James Burnham, *The War We Are In* (1970), pp.259-261 ("What Targets For Polwar?")

When we see today the demonstrations in the streets, especially the ones apparently directed against "Candidate Donald Trump" and now also against "President Donald Trump," we also wonder what the targets are, proximately and eventually, and to whose benefit? ("*Cui prodest?*") Who is the enemy, what are they trying to protect and why? What are President Trump's own targets now, in his strategic and tactical responses and counteractions? As James Burnham would insistently remind us:

Genuine political warfare...is not mere competition or rivalry. It is a form of war, and therefore *strategic* in nature, with specific *power* objectives.
(259—my bold emphasis added; italics in the original)

As Burnham had again said in 1960 – as he had also been saying since the 1940s – the United States has certain serious disadvantages and incapacities in trying to conduct and discharge its responsibilities as a larger world power, especially in our situation after World War II. In 1960, he again specifically said:

In the conduct of our international affairs [then also with the Soviet Union and Communist China], we have been spending several billion dollars yearly on foreign aid [as also in the case of the State of Israel, a putative ally since its formal founding in 1948], information programs, cultural exchange and clandestine ("black") activities. **Contrary to the widespread assumption, however, very few of these may correctly be classified as "political warfare" or "psychological warfare."** (259—my emphasis)

Moreover, Burnham always thus emphasized that the United States did not adequately understand and counteract those others – both **covert state** apparatuses **as well as non-state networks** – who **do indeed** conduct "genuine political warfare" and effective **strategic** "psychological warfare."

Refreshingly, we hope, and perhaps unexpectedly, we may now also ask: "**What are the Targets for Polwar against the Catholic Church?**" And, by way of response, what should be the Catholics' own chosen targets to nullify or deflect such subtle and cumulative Modernist attacks – both in the short term and in the long term? How, for example, may the Catholic Church fortify its own Cultural Immune System?

That is to say, if one wants to conduct genuine political warfare and effective strategic psychological warfare against the current Catholic Church, what targets should one choose, and in what strategic and tactical sequence? Should some of the initiatives that target the Church's vulnerabilities also be conducted **concurrently**? Ought one not, for example, **indispensably** attack the Sacrament of Penance and undermine trust in the Catholic Priest's preserving the Seal of Confession and its vowed uncompromising secrecy? Understanding an attacker's own selected targets helps us, for sure, to

execute our own resistance and an effective "**strategic defense-in-depth.**"

Even in his three 1960 essays, James Burnham has certainly prepared us always to ask such questions – and even certain discerning **classes of questions** with which to interrogate every situation – in order to help us detect the presence of certain forms of modern warfare and their agents, to include those who conduct "**strategic** deception and diversion operations" and subtle "**false-flag operations.**" Lest we be too rash and self-destructively peremptory, we must, minimally, also always ask (and try to answer) these kinds of perceptive questions "*Cui prodest?*" and "*Cui bono?*" To whose **benefit**, for whose **interests**, and, finally, for whose **actual good**? Thus the other question: "What can we afford to lose, and how much will it cost us (not only materially)?"

Would that we had with us today the virtuous moral character and illuminating strategic mind of James Burnham (1905-1987) – especially since, late in his life, as a man of honor, he also gratefully returned to his Catholic Faith. In his polite and gracious presence, we would thus have likely had many additionally searching reflections and co-operative combative initiatives together; and have thereby formed, *sub gratia*, even deeper bonds and a disciplined "battle joy."

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