



□ The thread of the warrior spirit

BRENNUS 4.0

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"To err on the side of war is to err on the side of society. »¹

Pierre CLASTRES, Archaeology of Violence

Nassrin Abdallah is not a Kurdish woman like the others. She is a fighter and spokesperson for the People's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel, YPG). Her commitment within the Syrian Democratic Forces, like that of thousands of other fighters, brings singular lessons on the role of ideology, solidarity and the spirit of sacrifice in building a warrior spirit.

The principles drawn from Öcalan's thinking² occupy a prominent place in the formation of the future combatant while imposing a base of common values. The organization mode translates the willingness to erase hierarchical differences in favor of a unique fighter model, embodied in the *heval* (comrade), title carried by all YPG fighters, no matter where they're stationed in the chain of custody. The hierarchy of the command bodies is based on the sex or gender neutrality, and it is not uncommon that a woman is entrusted with the office of chief abreast³. The cult of the fallen horses... reminds everyone of the existence of a cause that they can transcend and will survive their existence. These combatants embody, in their own way, a form of solidarity ensuring the cohesion of the *tabour* (sections).

Illustrating both the individual springs, but also collective of the warrior spirit, the example of the war in Syria against Daesh by these fighters the question of the foundations of the tactical superiority. Questioning the spirit warrior thus returns from an anthropological point of view... to question the ability of our society to enter, temporarily, into a universe where there's a certain amount of violence.

Distinct from the spirit of defence, which aims to raise awareness the public sphere to security issues particularly military issues, the warrior spirit must guarantee the ability of soldiers to mitigate the effects of the sideration, understood as a mechanism of physical

and intellectual blockage as a result of a shock, in order to get the victory. It remains essential as a moral force to obtain the tactical superiority.

The training of the warrior spirit marks the passage from soldier to fighter through the experience of war and the acquisition of the virtues of life... military at the individual and collective level. This is important in the possible framework for the return of the high level threat intensity and on the future battlefield, without that this is not the result of warmongering ideologies... encountered in history.

The inner experience: from soldier to fighter

War turns the soldier into a fighter, man would see his worldview and state of mind changed by this experience⁴. The anthropology of war and military literature, through the multiple accounts of individual experiences, make highlight the pre-eminence of courage, solidarity and more, of collective discipline. The military way of life teaches us that cohesion makes it possible to surpass the sum of the individualities. Indeed, the sense of the collective, developed from the initial formation of the soldier, increases the value of a unit.

Based from the end of the 19th century on the analysis of the springs psychological, Ardant du Picq illustrates this principle taken from its experience of the War of 1870 and shows that the performance of the individual soldier counts less than collective effectiveness based on the "intelligence of solidarity"...⁵. A unity less but where adhesion outweighs the constraint, will be victorious over better equipped or more numerous units. It is precisely this discipline that will tip the ratio of force for unity with the strongest mindset. In the collective trust enables the individual to overcome the survival reflex by breaking down psychological barriers, to the point of giving his life for the group.

The relationship to death and bravery, peculiar to the soldier who has become fighter, can even become a distinguishing mark. Thus, Jünger emphasized that "only bravery recognizes bravery"...⁶. Going to paradoxically bringing together friend and foe in "one and the same". same body"⁷. This metaphor takes on its full meaning at the moment of the commemoration by France and Germany of the centenary of the 1918 armistice, in which former adversaries are brought together by Jan Patocka's "Solidarity of the shaken".

The attempt to define the warrior spirit furthermore poses the question of the threshold to be reached in the areas of courage individual, group cohesion and the acceptance of an form of violence unleashed, especially in combat. If force morale remains relative, the responsibility of a tactical leader remains is based on its ability to mobilise the right level of resources individual at the "paroxysmal" moment. It is therefore a question of knowing how to address the soldier so that he is able to generate an some extra moral strength.

Philosopher Alain, a First World War veteran... world, sees man as a balance between head (noûs), breast (thumos) and belly (epithumia), and reflects on the location of this ardour. According to him, the warrior state of mind does not develop from the "head", inclined towards peace and trade, nor through the belly, leading to rapine, but drawing from the plexus. There lies the seat of anger and fortitude capable of transforming man into a fighter, who "takes sides to make himself kill rather than retreat" and lets the warrior spirit express itself.

A culture of war

The characteristic features of the warrior spirit of a people are in influenced by his culture as well as by his experience in the field of the war. Observation of the Kurds in Syria makes it possible to introduce the concept of generation, based on the possible developments in

the space and time of this warrior spirit...⁸

. The latter evolves during the course of a campaign, between the different generations... of fighters. Thus, the generation of YPGs who participated in the glory days of Kobane, then Manbij, almost disappeared from the workforce because of the many losses⁹. Much younger soldiers and less experienced face the enemy's final bursts. Some may see this as one of the explanations for the loss of efficiency of the Kurdish military tool during the most recent tactical setbacks. In 2018, despite the permanence of strong constants.

This warlike state of mind, if it constitutes the most appropriate response in the face of an enemy equally conditioned and engaged in a fight, to death, raises the question of its adaptation to a society advocating individual liberalism that is out of step with the demands of combat. Placed like a mirror in front of our society, it questions our own heritage and our ability to produce this... "excess force" identified by Alain. The Turkish "Olive Branch" offensive on Afrin has also set the question of the limits of the superiority of moral forces in the face of a more modern army with control of the skies¹⁰. The breakup known by the Kurds against Turkey sends back, for the armies the prospect of a return to high-flying combat. This return raises the question of the role of the warrior spirit and invites reflection on the skills needed to win in this kind of symmetrical confrontation.

Combat logics adapted to the circumstances from naval battle to the game of go

On a battlefield that has become more fluid and decentralized, such as in the case of the 2014 conflict in the Donbass, the logic of the fight in the archipelago allows to identify basic skills complementary to fortitude.

The main evolution of the battlefield lies in a more tactical "chessboard" and in which it would be very easy to read. more difficult to conceal the forces because of the presence from a multitude of intelligence sensors. Paradoxically, if this situation renders the cover-up process illusory, it reinforces the importance of deception tactics in order to maintain uncertainty and undermine its overall understanding of the other side. Tactical thinking leads us to imagine the situation that we are in. is the most unfavourable. The representation of this configuration uncomfortable could partly take over the general's Hubin¹¹ pitting a battle ship player against a chess player. In this configuration, the first player, deprived initiative, faces a series of moves that he will not be able to make. to grasp that isolation, without being able to establish an understanding the overall logic that guides his opponent. The battlefield the emergence of tactical plots that are sufficiently autonomous and light to evolve in an environment where interlocking with the opponent is the rule.

This dissemination implies greater autonomy for the subordinate levels, requiring a higher level of trust and confidence and a consolidated understanding of the will of the leader. One of the factors of manoeuvring efficiency will be based on the ability to remain dispersed until the time is right to concentrate efforts. at a given point in a sufficiently short period of time to avoid adverse reactions¹².

Under the impetus of the leader, who is responsible for the overall understanding of the tactical situation and speed of reaction, the mind (noûs) must control the ardour (thumos). The logic of this fight makes appeal to the reasoning of the game of go not only aiming at the annihilation of the opponent, as in the case of catches to chess, but the control of space and the isolation of certain The opponent's pawns by reducing their freedom of action.

In this type of confrontation, the constitution of a moral capital robust necessary to allow transforming technological advantage into a superiority factor tactical superiority. The writings of Ardant du Picq retain all of their modernity: "the fight today requires, in order to be fought with a modernity full value, moral cohesion, stronger solidarity than at any other time. This is an almost naïve truth, so clear is it that, if one doesn't want them to break, the longer the ties have to grow, the more they must be strong."¹³

Evolving in a "constrained" environment means that you have to break out of comfortable habits as early as the preparation phase of the forces. Superiority would be achieved at the price of building a physical and psychological capital sufficiently resilient while at the same time accepting the impossibility of mastering all the dimensions from the battlefield.

The "warrior spirit": beyond the formula

The warrior spirit returns to the forefront with the specter of high-intensity warfare. Its declination in three dimensions (innovation, tradition and hardening) summarizes the challenges that arise at the command level and stresses the need for to develop such a state of mind by setting an example of authority. The complementarity between moral force and new technology was already underlined by Ardant du Pic who said "the weapons news is almost worthless in the hands of a soldier at heart. weak, no matter how many there are."

A lucid observation highlights a rapid faculty of forgetting about fundamental skills as well as the violence of the shock, like the one represented by the sudden loss of fifty-eight French soldiers during the Drakkar attack in 1983.

The first challenge for the command is the ability to fire the best of innovations, particularly in the areas of armaments and information and communication systems, while retaining a memory of ancient methods. The warrior spirit, a permanent reminder of the purpose of combat, must ensure this coexistence and the achievement of a balance between agility and reversibility.

This capacity for forgetting can be mitigated by further integrating the lessons of operational and tactical history, from the training phase for young executives.

Thus, the warrior spirit must contribute to putting into perspective current challenges and bring control of the action through a historical reason drawn from past examples. Young executives, find themselves in the position of "practitioner" of war, without knowing the teachings of their confronted elders the same situations before them. In this spirit, to imbue oneself the writings of General Brémont, a contemporary of Lawrence. of Arabia during World War I in the Middle East, would be a source of lessons on the military partnership... operational as presented in the French strategy current¹⁴.

In the absence of an organic chain of command, the Command YPG values the combat experience as a source of authority. of the various leaders in the command of a tabour or a sector. Within our regiments, it would be a matter of promoting a certain "paternal superiority"¹⁵, to transmit the warrior spirit of the most experienced soldiers towards the most young recruits. Our units have recruits in their midst volunteers and managers with operational experience acquired in Afghanistan, Mali and the Central African Republic, to cement the cohesion of the different generations of soldiers through mentoring while

strengthening the legitimacy of command.

Developing such a mindset in an army is a challenge, demanding and goes through the exemplary nature of military leaders like of Marshal Leclerc. Thus in August 1933, then assigned as instructor at the School of Saint-Cyr, he joined Morocco and the General Giraud to take part in operations in the High Atlas the time of his permissions. Ten years later, Leclerc manages, by his actions... and its decisions, to develop such a warrior spirit that will weld the units that will form the 2nd AD and will accompany it throughout his victories¹⁶.

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1 Stéphane AUDOIN-ROUZEAU, Combattre : une anthropologie historique de la guerre moderne, Seuil, 2008, p. 14.

2 Abdullah ÖCALAN, founding member and leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (source Wikipedia).

3 Patrice FRANCESCHI, Mourir pour Kobané, Tempus Perrin, 2017, p. 105.

4 "The war changed me deeply, as it did, I believe, my whole generation. My conception of the world is no longer as certain as it once was. Ernst JÜNGER, Le combat comme expérience intérieure, Journaux de guerre 1914-1918, La Pléiade, p. 594.

5 Charles ARDANT DU PICQ, Études sur le combat, Paris, Economica, 2004, p. 81.

6 Ernst JÜNGER, Le combat comme expérience intérieure, La Pléiade, p. 571.

7 Ibid, p. 611.

8 Hervé COUTEAU-BEGARIE, "La stratégie en tant que culture" in Traité de stratégie, p. 411.

9 Patrice FRANCESCHI, op. cit. p. 120.

10 Offensive launched by the Turkish army on 20 January 2018 and the rebels of the Free Syrian Army against the YPG aimed at conquering the canton of Afrin.

11 Guy HUBIN, Perspectives tactiques, 3rd edition, Economica, 2009.

12 Like the Scorpio program.

13 Charles ARDANT DU PICQ, op. cit. p. 86.

14 Édouard BRÉMOND, Conseils pratiques pour les cadres de l'armée métropolitaine appelés à servir en Afrique et au Levant, Lavauzelle, 1922.

15 Ernst JÜNGER, op. cit. p. 595.

16 Christine LEVISSE-TOUZÉ, Du capitaine de Hauteclocque au général Leclerc, l'officier 1924-1940, Complexe, 2000, p. 108.

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