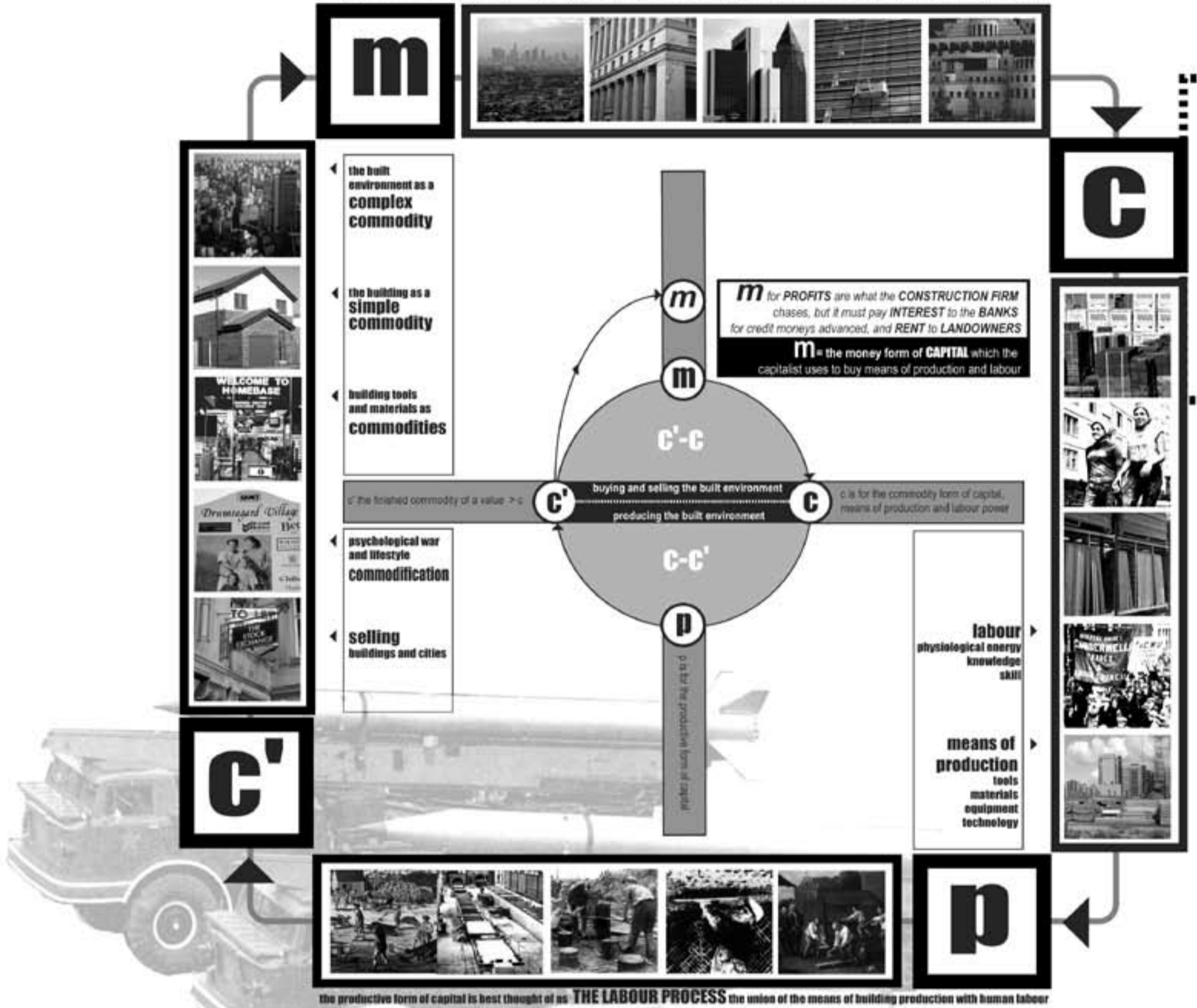
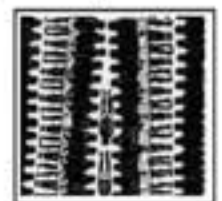
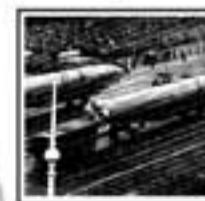
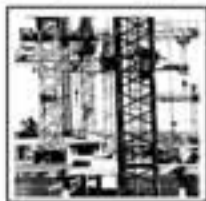


accumulation and the militarisation of the built environment
capital is always ready to shift into another circuit, seeking contracts to build the infrastructure of the

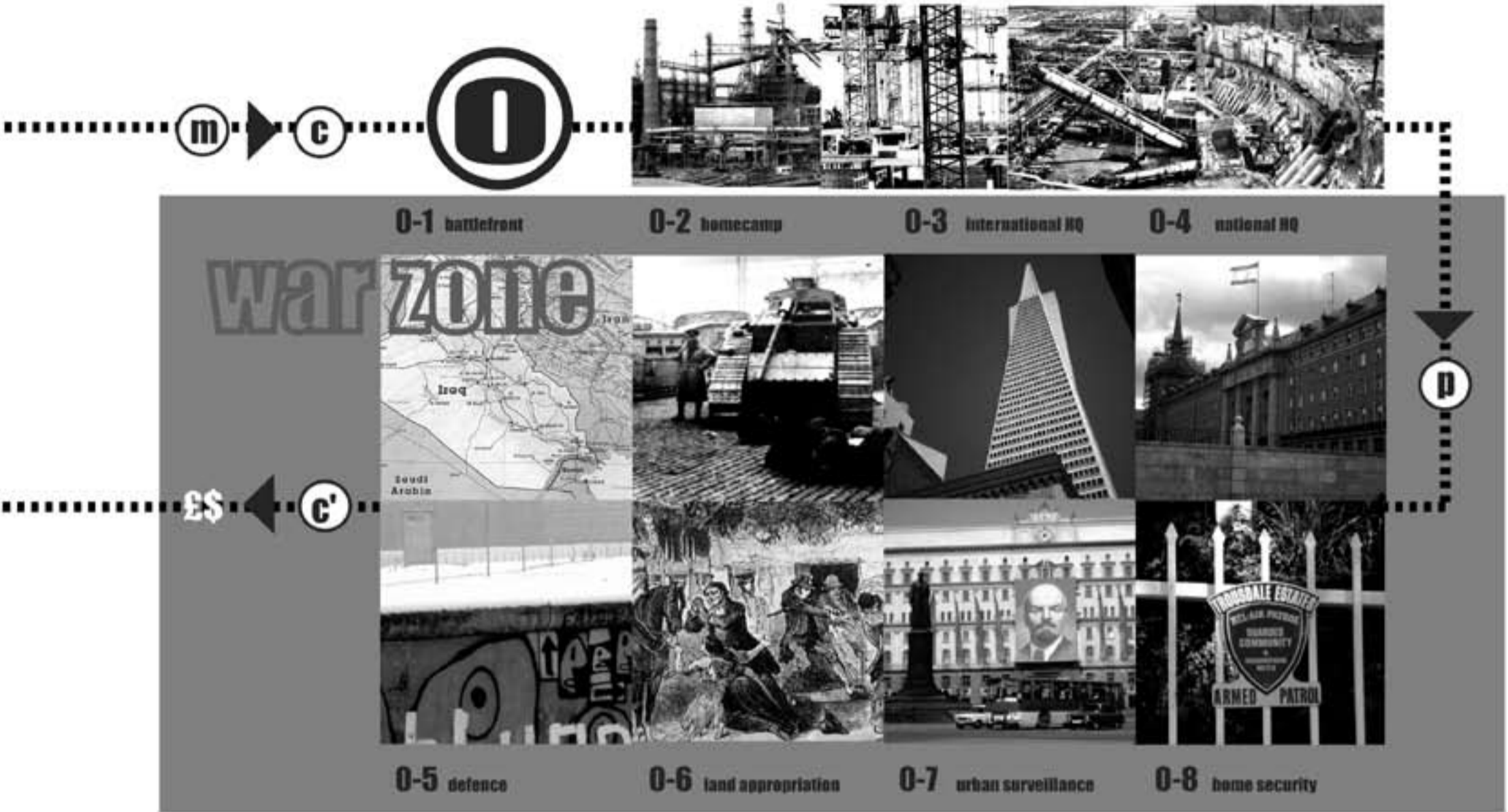
THE ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS OF GOVERNING BUREAUCRACIES
 banks, offices and penthouses for landowners, construction firm directors, and the institutions of the state and finance capital



"Exactly son, you got it. Efficiency of problem resolution, that was all that mattered. Rationalise production with a machine not a whip. Bring speed and order to labour. Discipline them on the production line, discipline them in leisure time. Housing, weapons, human bodies. It was just stuff son, stuff and more stuff still. Bring the parts to the production line, cut it up and reconstruct into comparable sized bits, wrap it up nicely in a package, fix a price tag, sell it, tick box, productivity target met, bonus, pronto. A house, a bomb, a slave, seen as a factory, same difference son, same difference."



ground zero in the simultaneous commodification and militarisation of space
military-industrial complex, winning the contracts to build, destroy and then rebuild a country's built environment



THESES ON WAR AND ACCUMULATION

COMMODITY Capitalist society arises from the generalised transformation of human labour including that of architects and building workers into a commodity. The capitalist production of the built environment implies the historical transformation of all aspects of the making and use of buildings and cities into arenas for the accumulation of capital and the reproduction of the commodity form. As commodities buildings have two fundamental aspects. They must fulfil some need or desire. But they are also produced as things to be sold. The house exists as 'home' and 'investment'. The battlecamp as military staging post and production opportunity for tent manufacturers. In short the built object possesses what is termed a use-value and an exchange-value.

CAPITAL The economic imperative of the capitalist production of the built environment is to maximise the exchange-value latent in the commodities it produces. All capitalist building ventures must look to achieve this so as to maintain and improve the rate of capital accumulation. Capital is not a thing such as money, which is just one form of capital. Rather capital as it circulates through the built environment can be thought of as value in motion. Value that expands as it moves from bank, to factory, to building site and stock exchange.

VALUE is best imagined as the materialisation of the abstract labour that all commodities have in common and that enables us to exchange buildings and land. This abstract labour can be understood as the expenditure of physiological energy, human labour power. This refers to our ability to think, make things and transform nature. The value of any built commodity is always related to the quantity and quality of human labour of which it is always the end result. This goes as much for the production of domestic space as for a mobile city like an aircraft carrier.

PROFITS When capitalism enters the built environment it has a number of investment opportunities. Building means of production like infrastructure, or items of consumption such as speculative offices and housing are familiar pre-occupations. However, when capital confronts a falling rate of profit it looks to other sectors for potential take-overs, that is, it actively seeks to commodify some aspect of social life still exempt from the commodity form. This sees modern International construction firms branch out into parallel sectors, such as land development even shopping, scouring the globe for investment opportunities and cheaper labour power.

M.I.D More generally however, late capitalism creates another department or circuit within which profits can be made. This refers mainly to the state sector. On the one hand we can think of the architecture of the welfare state, and on the other construction work for the military industrial complex, specifically in "Department Three, the means of mass destruction". It is not that previously war and the war machine were unsuitable arenas for capital accumulation, it is rather that in the latter half of the twentieth century, the "arms economy" became a permanent feature of modern life. Including buildings the US arms economy soaked up anything between 7 and 12 % of GDP. In Britain slightly less, in the former USSR it is estimated up to thirty per-cent.

LABOUR As a means to accelerate the turnover of capital and hopefully the rate of profit the labour process in the construction industry is underpinned by a type of martial law. The fenced compounds of Filipino and Pakistani construction workers in the Gulf. The militarisation of construction labour in the USSR. The Reserve Army of Labour itself. Waiting for a call up by a labour only subcontractor who demands total obedience. Then there is the whole process of industrialised building production where the dream persists of executing buildings with the same military efficiency as arms. Rigid hierarchies and chains of commands with workers organised in brigades. Promotions and bonuses awarded for loyalty and heroism. The hero of labour and the war hero were the same person.

FEAR Not only are their obvious profit opportunities available in the construction of the physical built environment for war, airports, transport equipment, barracks, secret headquarters, but in the potential profits that become available through the institutionalisation of fear. Homeland security and social order are the banners under which the militarisation of everyday life takes place. The war is not against terror but against peace. This sees the culture of surveillance and safety add another dimension to the whole panoptic history of disciplining the human subject.

FORTIFICATION The fortified condo, the fortified offices and administrative headquarters of Governing bureaucracies. Neighbourhood watch and CCTV. City cleansing schemes and soft policing. Swipe cards and restrictions on music. These are just some of the ways in which the war against peace, otherwise called security allows capital to militarise our domestic and public lives. Formally it appears as the archi-semiotics of class war. In terms of urban design it becomes manifest as the good city. The dream of the ordered metropolis resembles the purified landscape of a scorched earth. The plan of a Roman Military Camp drops onto the plan for a concentration camp. This is copied in the spatial arrangement of a modern housing estate that in turn mimics the floor plan and layout of a call centre.