Foucault is unhappy at the outset of “Society Must Be Defended”. It is clear that the lecture as performance, with the assumed role as expert, was not to his liking, and that the preparation was getting in the way of the research itself. He speculates about the possibilities if thirty or forty of us could get together in a room. I could tell you roughly what I’ve been doing, and at the same time have some contact with you, talk to you, answer your questions and so on, and try to rediscover the possibility of the exchange and contact that are part of the normal practice of research or teaching

(Foucault, 1997: p. 4; 2003b: p. 3)

As Ewald and Fontana note, ‘he dreamed of holding a seminar in which truly collective work could be done. He made various attempts to hold such a seminar’ (Foucault, 1997: p. viii; 2003b: p. x; see Foucault, 1994a: p. 49). The two most famous results are the publication of the dossier on the case of Pierre Rivière, which occupied Foucault’s seminar at the Collège de France for a number of years (Foucault, 1973); and *The Foucault Effect*, a collection which appeared after his death, but which collects a number of papers from colleagues in his seminars (Burchell *et al.*, 1991).

What this chapter seeks to do is to discuss several other projects in which Foucault operated as a collaborateur, a colleague, a research team-leader, a facilitator. In this we see that his Collège de France courses not only contain numerous developments of material familiar from his books, as well as themes that he never worked up for publication, but also material that finds its most explicit expression in his work with others. Almost none of this material is available in English; much is not
even published in France. This chapter therefore draws extensively on materials archived at the Institut Mémoires de l’Édition Contemporaine (IMEC) in Paris. These projects provide valuable background and a more general contextualisation of “Society Must Be Defended” than can be gained simply from the course itself or the better-known writings in Foucault’s career. For while “Society Must Be Defended” is explicitly orientated around questions of war, it is implicitly about the tactics that must operate in peacetime.

This goes beyond merely an acknowledgement of Foucault’s return to, and reversal of, Clausewitz. According to a paper in the Foucault archive, shortly before his death Foucault planned a collaborative project with students at Berkeley. Keith Gandel’s project outline on ‘New Arts of Government in the Great War and Post-War Period’ seeks to continue that work, studying how mechanisms of wartime governance continued into peacetime. The proposal puts forward the idea of ‘waging’ peace, suggesting that ‘peace became a new object for government’, having become recognised as a problem during the Great War. Reversing a formulation Foucault makes in Le pouvoir psychiatrique, we can claim that the verso of violence, of war, is sovereignty (Foucault, 2003a: p. 45). In the “Society Must Be Defended” course itself Foucault notes how war itself can change, from a concentration on the battle to ‘a war that begins before the battle and continues after it is over’ (Foucault, 1997: p. 141; 2003b: p. 159), which he suggests derives from Boulainvillers (see also Foucault, 1997: pp. 146–7; 2003b: p. 165). This chapter takes these formulations as its guide, looking at how Foucault’s collaborative projects discuss the strategies for waging peace, both as compliment and context to “Society Must Be Defended”.

Reading “Society Must Be Defended”

Obviously, as this volume attests, there are several different things going on in “Society Must Be Defended”. One of these is a question that Foucault has been concerned with for some time. The preceding courses Le pouvoir psychiatrique and Les Anormaux had provided much detailed analysis, and Discipline and Punish had further polished these theses. This is the question of normalisation.

In our day, it is the fact that power is exercised through both right and techniques, that the techniques of discipline and discourses born of discipline are invading right, and that normalising procedures are increasingly colonising the procedures of the law, that