

A large, stylized red geometric border composed of thick, blocky lines that forms a complex, maze-like shape around the central text and logo.

ANARCHOS

2

The Transformation of  
Life in its entirety  
begins When Men Dare  
to Rule Their Own  
Lives

Vietnam - and the White Refrigerator.....	3
Eighteen Rounds of Total Revolution.....	6
Forms of Freedom.....	23
Towards a Liberatory Technology.....	43

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ANARCHOS is published by a group of people in New York City who seek to advance nonauthoritarian approaches to revolutionary theory and practice.

Most of us regard ourselves as anarchists. Others feel that their views do not fit into any category in the traditional spectrum of political ideas. What we hold in common, however, is the firm conviction that revolutionary theory and practice must now look primarily to the future, rather than to the past, for inspiration and clarity; that a qualitatively new order of possibility faces our generation — the possibility of a free, nonrepressive, stateless and decentralized society based on face-to-face democracy, community, spontaneity, and new, meaningful sense of human solidarity.

We believe that technology has now advanced to a point where the burden of toil and material necessity could be removed from the shoulders of humanity, opening an era of unprecedented freedom in every aspect of life, a nonrepressive civilization and human condition in which man could fulfill all his potentialities as a rounded, universal being. We submit, furthermore, that there can be no abstract liberation of society without the concrete liberation of life in all its intimate, everyday facets. Revolution cannot end with the traditional goal of the "seizure of power"; it must culminate in the here and now with the dissolution of power as such — the power of the state over society, of centralized political entities over community, of the older generation over the younger, of bureaucracy over the individual, of parental authoritarianism over youthful spontaneity, of bourgeois routine over daily creativity, of sexual, racial, cultural, and national privilege over the unfettered development of human personality.

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### Note

The short article below -- "Vietnam and the White Refrigerator" -- was written immediately after the Tet offensive, weeks before Johnson's speech of March 31st, the assassination of Martin Luther King, and the sweeping black insurrections that followed. The article is a slap at the hypocrisy of white middle-class America. In this respect, absolutely nothing has happened to question its relevance. The Johnson speech was a shrewd maneuver, clearly intended to arrest the headlong plunge of the United States into an acute social crisis. Whether it leads to negotiations or to a resumption of the war on a still higher scale of military operations alters nothing in the article. White middle-class America for the most part exhibited a shameless indifference to the suffering inflicted on the Vietnamese people by American arms and a disgusting preoccupation with its own media-manufactured appetites, tastes, and concerns. Only the prospect of extended conscription, higher taxes, a call-up of the reserves, and the obvious futility of trying to achieve the subjugation of Vietnam by military means began to shatter this mindless indifference and evoke serious opposition from the great backwash of suburbia.

The assassination of Martin Luther King revealed this hypocrisy to its very core. No sooner was King murdered when the whole liberal Establishment moved in on the man's death, co-opting in Hollywood style the eulogies, mourning, and funeral solemnities. It is an act of supreme hypocrisy that while Johnson and Humphrey were mouthing eulogies to King as a man of nonviolence, bombs were still dropping on Vietnam. It is an act of supreme hypocrisy that while King's body was being flown to Atlanta, the strike of the predominantly black garbage collectors that brought him to Memphis in the first place was still dragging on, all but forgotten by his liberal "mourners." It is an act of supreme hypocrisy that while Rockefeller, McCarthy, Kennedy, and Lindsay were following King's body to a segregated cemetery, the body of Bobby Hutton, age 17, a Black Panther militant, was lying on an Oakland slab, the victim of racist cops who shot him down when he emerged with raised hands from a beleaguered building. It is an act of supreme hypocrisy that while the liberal Establishment croaked the refrains of "We Shall Overcome" around King's grave, H. Rapp Brown starved by a protest fast, was still in prison, the victim of outrageously high bail.

The article below is only too relevant. With a few modifications, a few changes in words, the reader has only to substitute "Afro-American" for "Vietnamese" in the lines that follow in order to retain a clear focus on recent events in Vietnam and the United States.





## **Vietnam-and the White Refrigerator**

Tell me, white, fat-cat, middle-class America: how do you live with your - self? How can you endure yourself? How can you stomach yourself?

Right now, in Vietnam, what is at issue is no longer a social or political question, but a biological question — a question of whether the Vietnamese people will physically survive the attempt of America to “liberate” them. In this horrifying apocalypse, where all the horsemen are white, a beautiful, gentle Asian people are being systematically butchered and their land reduced to a desolate cemetery. While white middle-class America wakes up to its favorite crispy breakfast cereal and its inane morning paper, while it sends its plump, well-groomed kids off to gleaming suburban schools, countless Vietnamese families awoken to a diet of rifle and mortar fire, to high-explosive aerial bombs, to napalm. In the villages of Vietnam, thousands of children are too mutilated, too maimed to walk — much less to attend class for “improving their minds.”

While white middle-class America lathers itself with perfumed shaving cream, gargles with its choice mouthwash, smugly pats its plump face with brand-name lotions and deodorizes itself, millions of Vietnamese — their destroyed cities and villages lacking food, potable water, and the most minimal sanitary facilities — are faced with massive epidemics of typhoid fever, cholera, and bubonic plague.

The people of Vietnam do not have to diet on low-calorie biscuits and yogurt to stay thin; they live daily on the edge of starvation. They are not pre-occupied with the length and styling of their garments; for them it is a question of finding bandages to cover the gangrenous ooze of wounds inflicted by American napalm and shell fragments. They are not shopping for face creams to pamper flabby, middle-aged skins; they desperately need antibiotic ointments to coat their festering, blackened, incinerated flesh. They are not concerned with occupying a corner of a psychoanalytic couch and coaxing some life out of bored, vacuous egos; they are looking for hospital beds in which to rest their shattered bodies.

What is your “dream” white middle-class America? A new dishwashing machine, a sleek Jaguar, a color television set, a hotshot hi-fi ensemble, a motorized lawnmower? In Vietnam it is simply: survival. Survival — and the silence of peace. Do you dare, white middle-class America, to babble about city planning, clean air, more park space while the cities and villages of Vietnam lie in shambles and the air is filled with the stench of decaying bodies? What has replaced your conscience and soul, white middle-class America? A supermarket, with its soothing, piped in music? A discotheque with weary go-go dancers wreathed in synthetic smiles? A topless cafe, where the naked tits of bought girls hang over your martinis? In Vietnam the supermarkets are the garbage dumps of American army camps and the grim children of Saigon have been turned into pimps for their sisters and mothers. It used to



be said of the colonized countries that whisky preceded the bible, that dynamite paved the way for the cross. Those were idyllic days compared with the "blessings" you have conferred on southeast Asia today. You have the nerve to talk about "liberating" Vietnam, of "freeing" Saigon from Viet Cong infiltrators. You demoralized and crushed the soul of this Asian city long before your guns and bombs shattered its buildings and huts. In its shanty cheapness and florid vulgarity, in its blackmarket and brothels, in its corrupted, venial officials and sadistic police, in its garish neon lights and squalid, filthy streets, Saigon has become the authentic image of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, shorn of their myths, their false tints, their hypocritical claim to culture and civilization. You have not merely Americanized this city, white middle-class America; you have shown what America means, what America is. The only pure and clean thing in Saigon is the armed guerilla lurking behind a window. And that is who you want to drive out of the city — the guerilla whose very presence is a defiant protest against all your "blessings" and "contributions."

It's your hypocrisy that rankles the soul, white middle-class America, your stinking pretensions. One can deal with a "radical" rightest, an outspoken fascist openly and cleanly — in a state of mutual hate that evokes respect. But to listen to your demeaning claims to be "liberators," your pap about "negotiations," your queasy moralisms, or more horrifying than all, to suffocate in the atmosphere of your narrow egoism and indifference — this is what aches, what nauseates. "Law-and-order" America, divinely mediocre America, beauty parlor America, tv-soaked America — vapid like the face of a Nixon, phoney like the demeanor of a Johnson, philistine like the soul of a Norman Vincent Peale. And "liberal" America — prudent like the speech of a Eugene McCarthy, treacherous like the opportunism of a Kennedy, vulgar, dense, and self-righteous like the column of a Max Lerner.

Take care, white middle-class America — the war is coming home. Your youth -- the sweet concern of your baby doctors, your PTA meetings, your recreation directors -- may not permit themselves to be hypocritically sacrificed by the thousands to your computerized god of war. Your black house-cleaners and handy-men may set your mortgaged little boxes afire. Your stinking cities may burn in the flames of insurrection.

What will you do then, white middle-class America? Try to place your youth in concentration camps? Try to place your conscience behind barbed wire and prison turrets? Try to bomb your own cities? And in the name of "freedom" try to turn America itself into the graveyard of freedom, its sepulcher: a towering, white-enameled refrigerator topped by a grinning skull? Then learn this much from your escapades in Vietnam: what will lie in that cemetery will be the ruins of your own foul and oppressive "civilization".

# **Eighteen Rounds of Total Revolution**

## **PROCESS**

### **1.**

The "poverty" against which man has been constantly struggling, is not merely the poverty of material goods; in fact, in industrially advanced countries "the disappearance of material poverty has merely revealed the poverty of existence itself" (I S). In cybernetic society it is the mediocrity of existence; the deprivation of a real intellectual, emotional, sexual or social life; the impoverishment of every dimension & every moment of man's existence that finally defines the contemporary meaning of the "poverty" of our lives.

The struggle against this condition must be total, because the poverty against which we are struggling is total: it is the repressive organization of life in its entirety depriving us of the opportunity to be fully human. The proof is on everyone's face, masking the minutia of everyday suffering: this intolerable situation, which is so much a habitual part of our lives that its very "intolerableness" has become one of the pre-conditions of our everyday routine. W/out it we would be left naked & empty to face our real selves. But he who can not change himself, can not change his environment, except to impose the particular form of his malady on the content of a sick whole (a Stalin, Hitler or Johnson). & when it is life in its entirety (literally the planet & species) that is degraded by an encompassing culture predicated on Death, then the only struggles which we can afford to call "revolutionary" are those which seek revolution in Totality: the creation of a new life in a new environment which we ourselves must construct.

### **2.**

What was true yesterday is false today/ what was then a dream now has become the substance out of which we will construct our new life: for us utopia becomes the achievable demand of practicality: But ideological solutions to the problems of total revolution destroy the possibility for thorough-going change: they define



reality in only one set of terms, develop a "one-dimensional" point of view (to turn Marcuse's phrase), & by describing reality from a set point of view, in order to represent it as a consistent (non-contradictory) picture, they always sacrifice fidelity to the original. Reality is too complex, too mysterious for their verbal & mathematic equations and they are afraid to admit their ignorance. Ideology, whether it is economic (as marxism) or psychological (as freudianism), to mention just two, only reveals fragments of the totality in which man's complex life moves. Never the less ideology seeks to impose its notion of reality on life-itself: that is what it calls "revolution," that is the content of its program, its only tactic. But finally we have been forced to see that wherever the revolution of ideology appears to "succeed" it reveals that it is not revolutionary at all: it does not change the context or content of life. & every historical change, at best, has been radical reform: Jacobinism, Bolshevism, Maoism or Castro-ismo: all have re-organized men's lives in one or a few of their aspects, but they fear the transformation of life in its entirety — the an-archos (Gk.) where men dare to rule their own lives.

### 3.

For us this conflict between revolution & liberty has been ameliorated, not by anything we have done, but by the development of society itself. We live in an age not clearly envisioned by past thinkers: & for us it is necessary to learn to see anew, lest we remain equally blind to new dangers as well as new possibilities. We are the first generation that has the cybernetic solution to the problem of survival (abundance of food, clothing, shelter & luxuries) as the starting point of our social theories; & we must begin to find the forms of organization for existence & struggle which will allow us to realize this new order.

All of past revolutionary thought has been confined to the problems of dividing the surplus of labor & distributing the scarcity of goods & services. For them the best form of society seemed to be the kind of socialism which came up w/ the most rational answers to these questions. & because of this the ultimate goal of their practice (of tactics & strategy) was to seize power; grasping control of the decision making process (politics) in order to re-organize society according to ideology.

But the very basis of revolution has changed, & only the general consciousness lags behind: we have not dared to dream high enough, seeking only to grasp that which is immediately beyond our reach, & thus succumbing, even in our most sublime moments, to the limitations which have been imposed upon us from outside by those who manipulate our lives; those who once dared to call themselves our "Masters."

In our time the problem of social change can not be solved by seizing power & establishing socialism: for we have been forced to see that what is revolutionary about change is that in the struggle to throw off the power that suppresses them, people begin to take control of their own lives. & in our time all hierarchies of power (bureaucratic, elitist or statified) are negated, destroyed, superceded by the same machines that make manual labor obsolete: for given the end of industrialism & the beginning of cybernation, we can find an "automatic" solution to the problems of production & distribution; we can provide abundance for everyone — thereby ending management as well as government & making material privilege (& therefore class) into meaningless concepts. From this we can also conclude that socialism need no longer exist: it is the answer to a problem whose solution has been found on another level (in the new means of material production). & for the present the ultimate tactical question must be, not the seizure of power, but its dissolution! We must destroy all structures based on the authority of hierarchical power. Not to impose a new ideology on reality, to create another monolithic (USA USSR China) style culture, but to allow all men to follow the logic of their personal development, to implement the technology which will free men from labor, to liberate the unconscious from its repression, to re-introduce man & society into an ecological harmony w/nature & to re-establish community as the arena in which the lost content of real human social relations can once again flourish. Only in this way will we liberate ourselves from the 6,000 year poverty of our subjugated existence. & that is why we say:  
**REVOLUTION BEGINS WHEN PEOPLE TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR OWN LIVES.**

## FRAGMENTS

### 4.

All the movements for change which exist now are merely fragments of the total process of change: movements which only incompletely satisfy the needs that demanded their existence in the first place: forms that rarely aspire to fulfill life because (as Reich has pointed out) the possibility of actually being free has been so deeply repressed in them.

In every historical period the movements for change that arise must meet the conditions of their environment; must express the felt needs of those who aspire to organize their life anew. If they do not fulfill real needs they finally fail, as by definition. & if they begin to succeed it will only be because they take what is given in history & make of that a way to destroy the forms of the old & to create the new forms of which they have dreamed. & for this task they have at their disposal all the resources of nature, technology, culture & consciousness.



## 5.

In rural agricultural societies the impulse which became revolution first appears in the rebel peasant outlaws who "stole from the rich to give to the poor", the Robin Hoods, mythified by people yearning for change. With increased centralization of agricultural properties we find mafiosi (organized bands of outlaws) who sometimes guarded & sometimes plundered the estates. In the periods of most intense movement among the peasantry we find the peasant rebellions & insurrections as well as millenarian movements who fervently believed in the imminence of "total" change. In the early stages of urban society we encounter the first "mobs"; street riots & insurrections against the aristocracy who provided employment for the artisans. & in fully emerged capitalism we see the trade unions, syndicates & co-operatives that are the characteristic forms of organization w/in urban industrial society per se. Last, but not least, in the imperialist stage of capitalism we see colonial societies using forms of pre-industrial struggle (guerilla warfare) in order to combat the most technical forms of domination.

In each historical period the struggle that takes place in order to discover the forms of organization rarely (even where it is successful) transcends the limits of the existent: after the revolution one must go back to work, a new regime is established, & in a word, order & privilege are restored. In this way we finally see that the life of the bandit was intimately tied to the wealth of aristocracy; the mafia were as much guardians of property rights as the bourgeoisie; the millenarians fervent dream did not create a means to realize itself; & even the socialist revolutionary was finally dependent on the establishment of a state in order to enforce that exploitation of the workers which is the only source of capital for industrialization. Everywhere we have ideology holding up the promise of a future freedom in order to mask (dissimulate) the fact of real un-freedom: & nowhere does the state wither away until it is exposed to the hot blast of Total Revolution.

## 6.

For our time of automated-cyberated (post-industrial) society, no idea yet exists which tells us what forms of organization are appropriate to the new changed condition. Fragmentary movements only reflect the fragmentary nature of our own consciousness: what is basically our inability to grasp the new situation of life in its totality: The old & new left, the peace movement, pacifism, & the hippies represent only the most partial & distorted attempts at a revolutionary transformation of life. & even the black movement (which gives us the greatest reason to hope) is not able to discover a final solution to the spade problem, w/anything like the certainty of the "Final Solution" the government has already planned out for them.

Never the less these several streams of social movement represent the seeds of future developments, & actually, they already contain (if unconsciously) all the elements of the total movement; but only in their most disguised (mystified) & fragmentary forms. Yet it is precisely w/in this dross that we must critically search for clues to the alchemical processes that are being wrought inside our heads by environment; we must discover the felt needs which impelled these movements into action in the first place & caused whatever success they have had. W/in both the black & white communities youth everywhere intuitively (unconsciously) grasp the new situation, instinctively seeking for forms of activity that will "work". & in each partial movement we can see the larger process of change moving thru each incomplete form, seeking its wholeness in a totality beyond the limits of present ideas & modes of organization. But here we must criticize existing forms, not because we are opposed to them, but in order to separate what is living from what is ideology or personality. Only in this way will it be possible for all of us to evolve into the body of that which is truly new & revolutionary because it consciously struggles to be free in every dimension.

#### THE MYTH OF OPPOSITION FROM THE LEFT

##### 7.

The left is dead! At least there is still death! The theory which never became life has been superceded by a condition of life that it no longer adequately describes. Reduced to an ideology (rather than conscious theory) it can satisfy only those who need to impose their notions of reality on others, forcing existence into the narrow boundaries of their outmoded ideas. Never-the-less the remains of the left are the favorite commodity of necrophiliac counter-revolutionaries & the monastics rabbis & lamas of their decaying sects.

What remains of the old Marx would hardly be recognizable to him: For as the totalitarian organization of existence has evolved its repression in every dimension of daily life, we have been forced to see the limitation of all traditional ideas & been forced to synthesize them into the total idea, which is the only thing that stands in complete opposition to the totalitarianism of repression. W/in marxism itself (the alienated view of totality) the transmutation of theory has taken place in two opposing directions, or perhaps i should say, in two separate time planes occurring simultaneously (the concurrent existence of agricultural & industrial cultures): one direction has been the reduction of Marx's theory of industrial revolution into a tool to accelerate the historic process in pre-industrial societies; theories of peasant struggle (guerilla struggle) which seek agrarian reforms & rapid industrialization. Over against this pre-urban pre-industrial theory a second direction begins to emerge in societies that are rapidly moving towards



post-industrialism: here marxism begins to be transcended in the notion of total revolution - the revolution of everyday life which seeks to liberate man in every dimension of his existence.

The transmission of marxism thru Lenin, thru Mao, thru Fidel etc. has developed a revolutionary tool for pre-industrial societies to use against industrial imperialism. The currency of these guerilla struggles has inspired many among us to adopt theoretical positions far out of proportion to their applicability to our own (national) situation. Che laughed at the idea of applying his tactics here in NY. But now that he is dead it is easier to use him, to mythify & mystify the intent of his ideas (like self-styled revolutionaries toasting Che in the Imperial Room of the Hotel Americana!). & if there is to be a notion of urban guerilla struggle it had better be a new idea: Focquismo transplanted from colonial Latin American jungles is useless in urban america; European urban resistance struggles have always been last ditch stands against a successful enemy (the French or the Warsaw ghetto); & at best, urban guerillas can initiate a limited struggle (sabotage & terrorism), forms of clandestine struggle which are always possible but which serve a limited purpose. We must be aware that they are only pre-revolutionary forms of struggle, because they involve so few people, & because for the urban guerilla there is no means of seeing a military revolution thru: & that, in a country where there is little natural cover and no mass support for the guerilla's cause. None the less the Debray version of Castro-Maoism is becoming popular jargon w/certain elements on the left who have nothing of their own to say. What really appeals to them is the concept of elitist forces that seize power thru military coup de etat. They have adopted the notion which is itself the cause for the failure of all revolutionary history: they are part of the legacy which its heirs fear to examine too closely lest they discover the hidden psychological reasons for their obsession w/power. But then, putschists will never be revolutionaries, because they can never do anything more than institute a few reforms that have been tried elsewhere — not as long as they neatly seize all the political power for themselves, in order to institute the reign of their ideology over everyone else's existence. & for us: **THE GOAL OF REVOLUTION IS THE LIBERATION OF THE ENTIRETY OF DAILY LIFE.**

If, after the revolution, it is the revolutionary party that seizes power & makes itself the model on which the new society is patterned (viz the enforced democratic-centralism of Russia or the military bureaucracy of China), then it is precisely these forms that we must transcend if we would call ourselves revolutionary in our own time. Because, even if these ideologies are solutions to problems which no longer exist (are industrial solutions to post-industrial problems), they can still impose themselves on us as difficulties in their own right: & indeed, who has better absorbed the tactics (& ideology) of stalinism

than the right-wing, w/their conspiracies, infiltrations & seizures of power.

At the other end of marxism, its theoretical limitations begin to appear on many sides. Of special interest are the writings of the now defunct "Contemporary Issues" group, inspired by German theoretician Josef Weber, & the work of the International Situationist (IS). Here the marxian neo-hegelian language finally leaves the boundaries of political ideology & becomes once again real thought. But despite its claim, the IS does not have the total theory & represents merely the theory of the spectacle, of the death process of the system which Marx first made us conscious of; but it is not the theory of its transcendence & the birth of what will come to be.

The theoretical Left has been unable (or worse, does not desire) to bind its theory as the vital critique to a living movement of men; & while they claim to contain the unity of theory & practice they purposely remain divorced in theory from the everyday needs of actual struggle. It is a specialist's revolution made of ideas & their technical envoys — the words. But the language especially alienates itself from everyday life & remains separate from our actual practice. Therefore we conclude that it is ideology and not theory because it is theory reified (reduced) into an end in itself. Their lack of program for "realization of the total project" reveals the millenarian attitude of those who are waiting on history to do their job. But the task of creating & disseminating theory is only one of the tasks of practice & w/out fusing ideas to the actions of people in movement we must always remain in the one dimension of thought & never see our dreams become life because no one has dared to live them.

The poverty of all revolutionary thought is revealed in another way also, for we may recapitulate in a few words all of the marxist critique of bourgeois society that remains valid for our time: in the concepts of alienation (separation), dissimulation (to mask or lie), reification (making means into ends, thingification), & in commodity fetishism, the "spectacle of commodities" (IS) (obsession w/things money & power) we have the basic format of the critique which once had claim to being total. But beyond marxist language we must discover a poetry of total revolution as well as a language for daily life (or else we end up translating ourselves constantly); & beyond marxist ideology we must discover the real meanings of repression & totalitarian control of everyday existence: the total theory must be generated out of all its parts, it must become a weapon forged out of these intellectual tools. The unconscious revolution is destroyed by what it refuses to become conscious of & for our time a revolutionary theory of psychology must be developed & become as much our tool as the revolutionary theory of economics & politics.\*

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\*Reich's much neglected political psychology, especially "Mass Psychology of



Fascism", begins to make up for the lack in our economic explanation both of the rise of German fascism & the failure of the Russian revolution; nor will a purely economic theory suffice to explain the process of change in America.

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We must also develop an ecological point of view, lest all our theories of social re-organization be destroyed by our unliveable environments. Finally, with the demise of philosophy we may safely relegate most of the carpus of marxist theory (political marxism) to its proper place as the ideology of the last phase of industrial society: state-capitalist socialism. & if the european & american left is dead because it has bound itself to the ideology of a historic period that is over, the movement of history & the felt need for revolution continue, stronger than ever, pressing upon us to create a new life: & IF WE DO NOT MOURN THE DEATH OF THE LEFT IT IS BECAUSE ITS ASHES HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO THE MOVEMENT FOR TOTAL REVOLUTION!

8.

What can be said for the new left is that they at least are conscious of their lack of consciousness (theory). But they will have to struggle thru a whole lot of historical shit before they ever get out into the light of real thought at the actual end of ideology: the point where ideas fail & one is nakedly confronted by existence. Perhaps acid will speed up their search a bit ?? if they are strong enough to avoid the lure of the demented hippie Circes.

#### THE MYTH OF SISSYFISM

9.

The peace movement fulfilled many needs w/in american society when it emerged in the late 50's to usher out the McCarthy period that ended america's socialist dreams. In its total rejection of war as an instrument of foreign policy & indeed of all manifestations of violence, it seemed to many young people to be a radical break w/middle class values & social norms. But non-violence was never able to direct itself to the roots of that violence in the individual or social violence & imperialism, because it refused to admit the validity of the revolutionary critique of bourgeois morality & capitalist exploitation. In reality its seemingly new values were nothing but a re-statement of christian ideals in an east indian (gandhian) guise; & its real psychological function was to continue & extend the repression of those violent impulses that are potentially revolutionary: sublimating destructiveness into a non-violent "love" whose aggressiveness & suicidal bent finally revealed the masochistic guilt & colossal self-deceit on

which it was based. Finally, as a movement it served only the interests of a state that needs to maintain the pretense of criticism. But it is only this fistless critique of "protest" which the mass media wish to promulgate, in order to create channels into which the movement for real change can be diverted.

Tactically pacifism limits itself to the domain in which one's only hope is that the enemy will change himself; it does not allow for the entrenched obstinacy or total corruption of those who commit innumerable murders everyday. & because of all this its actions amount to begging the established order to rectify itself. Militant aggressive pacifism is, in this sense, a contradiction in terms, since it attacks nothing but itself. & while many people have drawn the conclusion that the peace movement is dead, it is not properly true, since it has not yet begun to exist: the movement that cries "peace" is not the one which will ever create peace, it has no means to effectuate it. **PEACE WILL ONLY COME WHEN THOSE WHO LONG FOR PEACE MAKE WAR ON THE CAUSES OF WAR**, in order to establish a society in which peace is possible.

#### **MYTH OF THE GREAT WHITE HOPE**

##### 10.

It no longer strikes me as strange that those who speak most about "consciousness", not to mention "expanded consciousness", are those seemingly most devoid of it. So far drug, acid consciousness has manifested itself, as a social movement, only as another form of captive life: consumerism — the will to buy.

As a cultural phenomenon (who can seriously call it cultural revolution) "hippies" have not yet emerged to find a tactically relevant character: the fundamental error which they make is their absorption of non-violence as personal "love" ethic. Here again "peace, love & freedom" have been distorted to fit the limitations of an ideology that dares not confront anything too deeply, lest the most extreme love be found to shade off into hate & the most extreme peace shade off into war (the dialectic, yin-yang). & there too is a so called "total" freedom that is really tyranny.

Never the less inherent in the life-style of the "hippie" movement are many elements that are necessary to create a new revolutionary context for social life. The "hippie" has explicitly rejected the bourgeois norms of middle-class morality & sexuality & presents the alternative of community (or communal-life) where body & soul may be more fully shared. At the same time they intuitively reject labor for the greener pastures of free play, artistic creativity & something called "love". Inherent in this unconscious rejection of bourgeois values, as well as in the rejection of real politic as a form of social effacement; & in



the notion of "free", there is a potentially revolutionary dynamic which none of the "hippie" heads have become quite conscious of.

Perhaps the "hippies" (like the recent anti-war movement & the not quite analogous civil rights movement) will go thru to the other side of non-violent beggary. But to do so the hippies will have to give up their flower vision & see the establishment in all its non-mystical, non-hallucinatory ugliness & brutality. Here at least we can count on the state to play its historical role as villain to the hilt: & perhaps the head smashing at the next mass gathering will be lesson enough for those who are not yet conscious but merely awake.

Initially what we must reject is the mass media label "hippie" — if only to discover who we really are, behind the medias false images. & essentially what we must do is to discover what the real & objective reasons are that are causing the whole youth of america to move towards revolt.

What is necessary beyond the discovery of "self" is for the "hippies" to become conscious of the social origin of all their grievances; to understand that what obstructs man in his search are the cultural forms imposed on all individuals. & if they develop a socially revolutionary consciousness, then the two halves of the movement for liberation will be rejoined: & the movement which seeks not only political but also cultural liberation, will move the struggle for human freedom to its highest level; opening up the possibility for the Post-Industrial Revolution that is the real possibility for liberation in our time.

A movement of voluntary organizations (communities) that abolish the bourgeois family & engage directly in revolutionary organization & revolutionary communication (thru underground counter-media), growing not thru membership, but thru gestation of similar groups, can provide the social, cultural basis upon which revolutionary struggle can take place. &, indeed, rejection of bourgeois culture is the only basis on which we palefaces can enter into the struggle for liberation that is being conducted by all of mankind against the american way of life. We must ORGANIZE REVOLUTIONARY COUNTER SOCIETIES as the real, living, everyday alternative, to the american way of death.

## **THOSE WHO FIGHT WITH THE POWER OF DARKNESS**

### II.

Nothing illuminates the american condition so much as the blaze of her burning ghettos: hundreds of cities in rebellion, the entire youth of the black community moving ecstatically thru insurrection towards a lived revolutionary consciousness.

The black struggle emerges out of "soul", which means the heart's wisdom rebelling against its final enslavement by the disembodied "mind" of whitey's bourgeois culture. Black struggle is the emergence of rational hatred: the natural expression of rage bottled up inside by the repressions of an impoverished & racist society. & where the black community moves towards mere absorption into the white middleclass it moves toward its own annihilation, towards the destruction of the final remnants of its own humanity, which has been bleached out of everyone else (by Mr. Yacub?). Only the black youth driven by his hatred of america moves out of the real & inevitable psychological energy which is the product of his enforced alienation. Because of this the black struggle is the most advanced revolutionary development in america — "the last shall be first" — & it will be a long time before as high a level of organization for struggle & organization of independent culture emerges in the white community. (Dig Leroi — the only poet singing the destruction of the great WHITE way — making poetry in the streets. )

In Newark & Detroit the struggle reached its highest level so far, necessitating the use of paratroops just returned from Vietnam (our slogan: BRING THE WAR BACK HOME!), in order to temporarily re-capture the zones of liberation established under all black control in the ghettos. & like their brother nazis in the Warsaw ghetto, the troops discovered that enormous armed garrisons could effectively be held off by a dedicated disciplined few, knowing their terrain & w/the popular support of their neighbors. & if a thousand hamlets should all rebel?

Largely ignored was the fact of white hill billy participation in the Detroit rising: teams of black & white w/automatics confronting the troops; & white snipers arrested w/a large arsenal. Here, significantly, in the most affluent & most integrated ghetto in america, the most assimilated & highest paid blacks rebelled most effectively, proving once & for all that the struggle is not a matter of color or of class, but of the liberation of life, so that men can freely choose to live as they please, beyond the limits of economy. & if there is to be any future at all, it is this example which is its beginning.

The limitation of the black struggle is that it lacks a theory which will allow it to imagine a realistic end of struggling: Because, even if the man does not have enough troops to prevent uprisings in a thousand places — he will not be stopped from further acts of genocide & even nuclear devastation of the ghettos. If the struggle is Afro-Americans against the state we will see devastation & no victory; & even if the third world frees itself from colonial oppression it will never invade the US to free colonized americans as long as those same nuclear weapons can still be trained on them. If the US merely collapses under the stress of internal & external dissensions it will be the armed right wing which



will seize the power. Within the borders of this country, revolution, if it comes, will have to see a convergence of black & white revolutionaries in combination w/the world struggle, before we can topple this greatest & most demonic of all manifestations of evil power. & in Chicago this summer we will see blacks, puerto ricans, hill-billys, students & hippies go down against the man together while the VC win decisive military victories in Vietnam.

What i am trying to point out here is the general poverty of revolutionary thought & the overwhelming potential for actual struggle: only the establishment has "final solutions". If we have an over simplified notion of urban guerilla warfare it will only be our death notice — as Che said, "a guerilla wins or dies". Therefore we must realize that the potential for guerilla warfare in an urban environment only allows it to develop up to the first stage of military struggle: the period of sabotage & terrorism which it is always possible for a few people to get away with. But unless masses are put in motion; unless cities are seized & all the means for running society, unless whole armies defect to the side of the revolution, there will be no revolutionary change accomplished. To seize a ghetto & try to hold it permanently against the armed might of the nuclear state is not only a violation of the most fundamental guerilla tactics, it is the revolutionary crime of suicide.

Now in the black community those who struggle on the intellectual level are working as hard to develop revolutionary consciousness as they are towards arming for the ultimate conflict, for as the IS says "it is not enough for theory to seek to fulfill itself in practice/action must also seek its appropriate theory."

The only frightening thing in the black revolutionary movement (for me) is the flirtation w/putschist & elitist notions of struggle, like R. F. Williams' assertion that a minority revolution was possible. This need for a minority revolution will exist as long as the black man sees himself alone confronting a monolithic white civilization. But then, black revolutionaries who are out on the streets need not have any respect for whites (especially self-styled "revolutionaries") until they can see white people in the streets also, struggling against those who oppress them; fighting for their own reasons & their own goals (not someone else's or some ideal); fighting until the common need for cooperation is obvious to all as the only means to complete their own dream. Short of this, all our theories are mere preachment, "tellin the niggers how to do it". Well brother, say what you like but don't try to drop the fuzz by shottin yr theories at them! Because:  
**IT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR REALITY TO UNDERSTAND ITSELF IN THOUGHT/  
 THEORY MUST ALSO SEEK ITS FULFILLMENT AS REVOLUTIONARY  
 PRACTICE.**

**TOTALITY**

## 12.

Events move swiftly towards their completion. The polarization begun in american life moves closer to its extremes: escalating the conflict ever higher. The administration's recent decision to suppress demonstrations (Oakland, Madison, Washington, New York) has only made the demonstrators more aware & more prepared for the necessity of struggle. Both moves indicate that the struggle is at a new level, certainly not total, but one in which the reactionary character of the establishment is increasingly revealed (viz recent anti-riot, stringent welfare & anti-arms legislation) at the same time as the movement emerges out of its first phase (protest) & enters into its second (resistance). But there are still many stages that must be completed before the total revolution emerges out of the incompleteness of existing movements.

What is necessary for the black community as much as the potentially revolutionary whites, is the rejection of all bullshit & the fusion of all the revolutionary elements of these movements into the foundation & means of struggle for the future: the growing militancy of the new left must not be separated from the social content of the hippies & the armed black cadres. Black self-defense & armed guerilla struggle need to be based on clear recognition of the need to destroy the state (real political liberation); as well as abolition of bourgeois values of commodity (real economic liberation); & abolition of bourgeois mores (real cultural liberation). & if all these elements do not merge at some point to confront the state, the revolution will be impoverished: will not find its legitimate & necessary content.

Meanwhile the theoretical struggle awaits those who will enter the battle for consciousness, against all illusion, to prepare the secret inner foundations on which future actions & modes of life will be based. Now we barely keep abreast of the times, running along behind those who are moving w/our portable typewriters, screaming slogans which have not yet caught on, not yet become part of the consciousness that is beginning to emerge. & all that we express finally is our own incompleteness, the fragmentary nature of our own ideas, & these hopeless, terrible words. But when all is corrupted by the disease of bourgeois life, we are called upon to do everything, to become truly new beyond the poverty of our present condition. Now in every dimension of our life, that which could fulfill our yearnings is suppressed & it struggles to awaken the Consciousness which will cause its liberation as real life. This is the repressed revolutionary struggle of our lives: & IN OUR TIME THE REVOLUTION WILL BE TOTAL OR IT WILL NOT BE!



## 13.

The left is dead, the peace movement is dead, the hippies have staged their own funeral ("Death of Hippie — devoted son of mass media — Oct. 6 H/Ashbury S. F."), only the black struggle fuses its internal necessity w/its determination to organize & fight. An equivalent will does not yet exist among whites, but it is only because the felt needs of the non-economic in white culture have never before been given credence, have never before been even deeply experienced, & are consequently not understood as inherently human demands on environment: they have not been made fully conscious yet, liberated from their age-old repression by economic necessity & labor. But the beast, man, is suffused w/new energies which are really only his own, energies freed finally from toil. Yet he does not recognize himself in his desires & fears them; he is still satisfied, for the moment, w/what is partial & incomplete.

## 14.

The hippies reject work for love play & try to liberate desires unrecognized behind the facade of bourgeois life; the anti-war movement evokes our bodily disgust of imperialist genocide; "love, peace & freedom" are invoked by a hundred false names & gestures, but the desire for love, peace & freedom emerges & that is the all important thing. On the left the intellect finds a 150 year old continuum of thought & experience in which to learn about failure & out of which we must communally build new ideas. From the black struggle the repressed impulses of hatred are released which must complement the liberation of our repressed need for love (Reich also tried to teach us this duality). The revolution occurs simultaneously on the psychological & tactical level: learning how to be revolutionary includes learning how to live & move in a revolutionary way.

In the revolutionary process un-recognized needs & desires emerge first, before names are given to them, before they emerge as "issues", & before the forms of organization develop to clothe them. Everywhere that the impulse to change appears, in whatever guise, it tries to organize the environment according to its new sensibility. Form follows content or it limits it — of this we must be certain — & we must seek to fulfill life by making its content the movement towards fullness in every dimension — striving to defend the content of the revolution from those who would merely formalize it.

## 15.

The total revolutionary process goes on simultaneously in every dimension. Where revolutionaries fail to understand this wholeness they become the agents of its suppression: In post-revolutionary Russia it was Malevich & the Futurists

who were revolutionary in art, not the socialist realists; & Lenin despised Mayakovsky, seeking to make of art merely the highest form of political education, propaganda. The suppression of thousands of communes that spontaneously appeared among the religious peasants & communarians destroyed the social form that most closely resembled the fulfillment of the revolutionary life-style that was then possible. & in "Sexual Revolution" Reich makes clear that new social & sexual relations emerged after the revolution, but that these life-styles & the communities that made them possible were all destroyed by Stalin's ideological program of state-controlled collectives.

"No revolution w/out general copulation" Peter Weiss, Marat/Sade.

The economic theory of revolution does not recognize the psychological process of revolution. Because of this the left is unable to explain Hitler, or the repression of the revolution in Russia, or again, the present development of america. They cannot see the contradiction between their liberatory goals & the repressiveness of their organization. Only the Futurists, Dadaists & Surrealists fused revolutionary & economic consciousness w/liberation of the unconscious (the psychological project) & artistic reconstruction of life. Only they realized intuitively, that all liberated energies become part of the revolution of Totality: & when all of socialism was fighting for shorter hours, better working conditions & more money, Dada was yelling in the streets for the end of labor & the liberation of man.

## 16.

If the revolution must be total it is because a successful but fragmentary revolution can succeed only in liberating us from a part of our degradation (like freeing the left arm but leaving the rest to rot in slavery). We are given our canned freedom (television, LSD & a so-called "underground"), but it is style w/out content, masquerading as life; a celebration inside the barbed wire encampment.

Not only the third world rises in rebellion against the subjugation of life to the industrial needs of a few nations obsessed w/material development. Nature itself writhes from the exploitation of her body, while man labors to create an environment that will not support his own, or any organic life: On a higher level "the american way of life" represents the pathological condition of a planet — a cancer which devastates its host, madly expanding & consuming to no end but exhaustion & death. But then, the only good parasite is a dead one.

In the psychological dimension man struggles to liberate himself not only from the excess repressions of economic psychosis (fetishisms of labor & commodity),



but from the so-called "normal repressions" which are the structural roots of everyday life — from culture itself (ways of sitting, standing, shitting & fucking etc.): Man seeks to become both more universal & more individual; he participates in the multi-dimensional revolution which is occurring around & thru him. & it is obviously not mere coincidence, no high level of chance alone that caused the simultaneous development of the technology of nuclear destruction (the Bomb), the technology of chemical mind altering (LSD, psilocybin etc.), & the automatic cybernetic technology which will eliminate work; all at the same time as it created the technology of mass communications & information which makes it possible to transmit our revolutionary ideas. Here already the objective basis exists for the conscious construction of the utopia that is historically achievable NOW.

## 17.

Beyond our present stage of fragmentary struggle, of movements against issues, a second stage of development towards revolution appears in which two simultaneous avenues of development open where we must experiment. We must study both & reject neither — indeed, we must escalate the synthesis of creativity & opposition in every way. Our sole function as conscious revolutionaries must be to communicate our awareness of the necessity for revolutionary struggle; & where we have not solved fundamental problems of strategy & organization we must not dissimulate but admit our ignorance & hope that the solution to these questions will become clarified. Beyond the immediate alternatives of small clandestine groups & the parallel necessity for mass movement (to create new revolutionaries) we must develop a multi-dimensional movement, attacking the vulnerability of every organ in the beast's body. & we must never forget the obstacles that remain: the political conservatism of those who still believe the myth of the socialist state (unwithered) as much as those who believe the myth of representative democracy that has fooled the last 300 years. But already anarchic forms of total opposition begin to emerge as small independent guerilla cadres & in the mass demonstration & riot tactics of Zengakuren (Japan), Provo (now defunct in Amsterdam), as well as our own disruptive street-games. Tactics have been developed for seizing the streets & taking over gov't buildings, mass media (radio stations) & in 1960 the Zengakuren prevented Eisenhower from landing in Japan. Where it is possible for MR 16 (the Chinese Zengakuren, which is called left-counter revolutionary in the Maoist press) to function in China, & black youth to hold the ghetto, it is also possible for us to make the street into the arena of social change.

Beyond these forms of pre-revolutionary struggle the real conflict of social forces will finally emerge as the struggle between the people & the state. & here the brute force of the nuclear bourgeoisie will be pitted against the yearning

flesh & blood of a living movement for change, but as gandhi once said "NO FORCE IS MORE POWERFUL THAN AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME".

18.

& despite its seeming difficulty, the multi-dimensional project will succeed, because it fulfills the basic needs of the time. Reality cries out to be completed: all that is necessary is available for the liberation of man from labor, the release of Eros, the expansion of consciousness & a new multiplicity of life-styles (cultural ecology). This new organic unity can emerge to replace the one destroyed six to ten thousand years ago w/th appearance of hierarchically fragmentary (patriarchal) society. And by fusing itself to the ethic, not of renunciation, but of fulfillment, the revolution can inaugurate a period of human evolution towards completion in every dimension of the totality & the liberation of everyday life.

10/67

P. S. 1/68 the general becomes concrete — we have begun to organize synthetically to begin the total movement.

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# The Forms of Freedom

MURRAY BOOKCHIN

Freedom has its forms. However personalized, individuated, or Dadaesque may be the attack upon prevailing institutions, a liberatory revolution always poses the question of what social forms will replace existing ones. At one point or another, men must deal with how they will manage the land and the factories from which they acquire the means of life. They must deal with the manner in which they will arrive at decisions that affect the community as a whole. If revolutionary thought is to be taken at all seriously, it must speak directly to the problems and forms of social management. It must, at the very least, open to public discussion the problems that are involved in a creative development of liberatory social forms. Although there is no theory that can presume to replace the demands of real experience, there is sufficient historical experience and a sufficient theoretical formulation of the issues involved to indicate what social forms are consistent with the fullest realization of personal and social freedom.

The problem of what social forms will replace existing ones is basically a problem of the relations free men will establish between themselves. Every personal relationship has a social dimension; every social relationship has a deeply personal aspect to it. Ordinarily, these two aspects and their relationship to each other are mystified and difficult to see clearly. The institutions, especially the state institutions, created by propertied society produce the illusion that social relations exist in a universe of their own, in specialized institutional compartments, be they political or bureaucratic. In reality, there exists no strictly "impersonal" political or social dimension; underlying and basic to all the social institutions of the past and present are the relations between men in daily life, especially in those aspects of daily life which determine their survival: the production and distribution of the means of life, the rearing of the young, the maintenance and reproduction of life. The liberation of man, not in some vague "historic," moral, or philosophical sense, but in the intimate details of day-to-day life, this conquest of the immediate conditions of existence by the individual, turns out to be a profoundly social act and raises the problem of social forms as a mode of relations between individuals.

The relationship between the social and the individual requires emphasis especially in our own time, for never before have personal relations become so impersonal and never before have social relations become so asocial. Bourgeois society has brought all relations between men to the highest point of abstraction by divesting them of human content and anchoring them in objects, in commodities. The object — the commodity — takes on roles that formerly belonged to the community; exchange relationships (actualized, in most cases, as money relationships) supplant nearly all other modes of human relationships. In this respect, the bourgeois commodity system becomes the historical culmination of all societies, precapitalist as well as capitalist, in which human relationships are mediated, or interposed, by alien factors rather than directly established on a face-to-face basis.

### THE MEDIATION OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

#### 1.

To place this development in clearer perspective, let us briefly look back for a moment in time and establish what the mediation of social relations has come to mean.

The earliest social "specialists" who interposed themselves between men, who permanently mediated their relations as priests and tribal chieftains, established the formal conditions for hierarchy and exploitation. These formal conditions were consolidated and deepened by technological advances — advances which provided only enough material surpluses for the few to live at the expense of the many. The tribal assembly, in which all members of the community had decided and directly managed their common affairs, dissolved into the tribal council, in which the elect or the elected few began to manage the affairs of all. In time, the council finally dissolved into the chieftainship and the community into social classes.

Despite the increasing investiture of social control in a handful of men and even one man, the fact remains that men in precapitalist societies mediated the relations of other men — council supplanting assembly, chieftanship supplanting council, class supplanting community. In bourgeois society, on the other hand, the mediation of social relations by men is replaced by the mediation of social relations by things, by commodities. The point is that commodity society turns the mediation of social relations from a problem into an absurdity. It focuses attention on mediation as such; it brings into question all forms of social organization based on indirect representation, on the management of public affairs by the few, on the distinctive existence of concepts and practices such as "election," "legislation," "administration."



The most striking evidence of this social refocusing is the demand, voiced almost intuitively by increasing numbers of American youth, for tribalism, participatory democracy, and community. These demands are "regressive" only in the sense that they go back temporally to pre-propertied forms of freedom. They are profoundly progressive in the sense that they go back structurally to non-propertied forms of freedom.

By contrast, the traditional "revolutionary" demand for council modes of organization remain within the historical terrain of propertied, more precisely class society — workers' councils, i.e., class councils. Within this context, the demand for "self-management" tends to center around workers' control of production, an arena where man is still primarily an economic entity and the "self" still one-sided, instead of turning around the community, where the human condition can become all-rounded and the "self" all-sided. Even the labor process remains untouched by this demand; it is merely attenuated quantitatively, as though the question of freedom is determined exclusively by the amount of working time versus free time. The transformation of time into life, like the transformation of space into community — both of which involve the qualitative differentiation of time and space psychologically and ecologically — is either ignored, dismissed as "utopianism," or acknowledged rhetorically. Finally, and most significantly for the purposes of this discussion, the demand for council organization takes its point of departure from mediated relations in social organization, from social structures based on interposed relations and not on directly posed ones. What the council mode of social organization demands is not the elimination of mediated relations at the basis of society, but the elimination of the existing system of mediation — this, at a time when social mediation tends, if only because of the centralistic nature of the modern economy, to turn into bureaucratic state capitalism.

## 2.

Characteristically, the adherents of council organization evoke as precursors and/or models the particularistic, so-called "proletarian" revolutions of the last hundred years: the Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian soviets of 1905 (formations inseparably linked to those of 1917), the revolutionary syndicates of Spain in the 1930's, and the Hungarian councils of 1956. It may be asked what these modes of organization have in common; the answer, actually, is very little other than their limitations as mediated forms. The Paris Commune may be taken either as a highly confused revolution, which lasted less than three months, or as a popular municipal council. As a council it was more democratic and more plebian than other highly democratic bodies of the same kind, but it was structured primarily along parliamentary lines — elected by "citizens" grouped according to geographic constituencies, structured on an indi-

rect system of popular representation — and its widely touted commissions hardly combined legislation with administration more organically than other democratic municipal bodies in the United States today.

Fortunately, revolutionary Paris largely ignored the Commune after it was installed. The insurrection, the actual management of the city's affairs, and finally the fighting against the Versaillaise, was undertaken in great part by the popular clubs, neighborhood vigilance committees, and the battalions of the National Guard. Had the Paris Commune (the Municipal Council) survived, it is extremely doubtful that it could have avoided a confrontation and conflict with these loosely formed street and militia formations. Indeed, by the end of April, some six weeks after the insurrection that created it, the Commune constituted an "all-powerful" Committee of Public Safety, a body redolent with memories of the Jacobin dictatorship and the Terror, which consumed not only the right in the Great Revolution of a century earlier, but also the left. Thereafter, history left the Commune a mere three weeks of life, two of which were consumed in the death throes of barricade fighting against Thiers and the Versaillaise.

It does not malign the Paris Commune to divest it of "historical" burdens it never actually carried. First and foremost, the Commune was a festival of the streets; its partisans, primarily handicraftsmen, itinerant intellectuals, lumpens, belonged to dissolving or dissolved precapitalist classes. The industrial proletariat, so dearly beloved by Marx and the Marxists, constituted a minority of the Communards.\* One must pull the dry tit of ideology with a frenzy to describe the Commune's social conquests — the right to recall members of the Commune, the limitation of their salaries, the improvement of working conditions, the separations of church and state, the confiscation of abandoned workshops, the unity of legislation with administration, the substitution

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\*To class the bulk of the Communards as "proletarians," indeed to describe any social stratum as "proletarian" simply because it has no control over the conditions of its life, is to lump all oppressed classes — slaves, serfs, peasants, large sections of the middle class — under a single rubric. To create sweeping antitheses between "proletarian" and bourgeois is to artificially eliminate all the determinations that characterize these classes as specific, socially limited strata. This giddy approach to social "analysis" divests the industrial proletariat and the bourgeoisie of all the historically unique features and contradictions which Marx believed he had discovered (a theoretical project that proved inadequate, although by no means false); it slithers away from the responsibilities of a serious critique of Marxism and the development of "laissez-faire" capitalism toward state capitalism, while pretending to retain continuity with the Marxian project.



of a standing army by militia — as especially revolutionary, much less as socialistic. More hortatory than real in its claim to be a “social republic,” the Commune was the last great rebellion of the French sans culottes, a class that lingered on in Paris for a century after the Great Revolution. Ultimately, this highly mixed stratum was destroyed not only by the guns of the Versailles, but by the advance of industrialism.

The Paris Commune of 1871 was largely a city council, evoked by the need to coordinate municipal administration under conditions of revolutionary unrest. The Russian soviets of 1905 were largely fighting organizations, established to coordinate near-insurrectionary strikes. These councils were based almost entirely on factories and trade unions: a delegate for every 500 workers (where individual factories and shops contained a smaller number, they were grouped together for voting purposes) and, additionally, delegates from trade unions and political parties. The soviet mode of organization took on its clearest and most stable form in St. Petersburg, where it contained about 400 delegates at its highpoint, including representatives from newly organized professional unions. Arising directly from the need to coordinate the Petersburg general strike of October, 1905, this soviet rapidly developed from a large strike committee into a “parliament” of all oppressed classes, broadening its representation, demands, and responsibilities. Delegates were admitted from cities outside St. Petersburg; political demands began to dominate economic ones; links were established with peasant organizations and their delegates admitted into the deliberations of the body. Inspired by St. Petersburg, soviets sprang up in all the major cities and towns of Russia and developed into an incipient revolutionary power, counterposed against all the governmental institutions of the autocracy.

The St. Petersburg soviet lasted less than two months. Most of its members were arrested in December, 1905. To a large extent, the soviet was deserted by the St. Petersburg proletariat, which in fact never rose in armed insurrection and whose strikes diminished in size and militancy as trade revived in the late autumn. Ironically, the last stratum to advance beyond the early militancy of the soviet were the Moscow students, who rose in insurrection on December 22. and, for five days of brilliantly conceived urban guerilla warfare, virtually reduced local police and military forces to impotence. They received no aid from the mass of workers in the city. Their street battles might have continued indefinitely even in the face of massive proletarian apathy, had the Tsar’s guard not been transported to Moscow by the railway workers on one of the operating lines to the city.

The soviets of 1917 were the true heirs of the ones developed in 1905, and to distinguish the two from each other is spurious, to say the very least. Like their predecessors of twelve years earlier, they too were based largely on factories, trade unions, and party organizations, but they were expanded to include delegates



from army groups and a sizable number of stray radical intellectuals. The soviets of 1917 reveal all the limitations of sovietism as such. Invaluable as local fighting organizations, they proved to be increasingly unrepresentative as congresses, that is, on a national scale. Structurally, the congresses were organized on an extremely hierarchical basis. Ordinarily, local soviets in cities, towns, and villages elected delegates to district and regional bodies; these, in turn, elected delegates to the actual nationwide congresses. In larger cities, representation to the congresses was less indirect, but it was indirect nonetheless: from the voter in a large city to the municipal soviet and from the municipal soviet to the congress. In either case (and both approaches were used simultaneously), the congress was always separated from the mass of voters by one or more representative levels.

The soviet congresses were scheduled to meet every three months. This permitted far too large a span of time to exist between sessions under revolutionary circumstances, still less under ordinary ones. The first congress, held in June, 1917, contained some 800 delegates; later congresses were even larger, numbering a thousand or more. To "expedite" the work of the congresses and provide continuity of function between the tri-monthly sessions, the congresses elected an executive committee, fixed at not more than 200 in 1918 and later expanded to a maximum of 300 in 1920. This body was to remain more or less in permanent session, but it too was regarded as unwieldy and most of its responsibilities after the October revolution were turned over to a small Council of People's Commissars. Having once acquired control of the Second Congress of Soviets (October, 1917), the Bolsheviks found it quite easy to pin-point soviet power in the small Council of Commissars and later in the Political Bureau of the Communist Party. Opposition groups in the soviets either left the Second Congress or were later expelled from all soviet organs. The tri-monthly meetings of the congresses were "permitted" to lapse; the completely Bolshevik Executive Committee and Council of Peoples' Commissars simply did not "summon" them. Finally, they were held only once a year. Similarly, the intervals between the meetings of district and regional soviets grew increasingly longer and finally even the meetings of the Executive Committee, created by the congresses as a body in permanent session, became increasingly infrequent until they were held only three times a year. The power of the local soviets had passed into the hands of the Executive Committee; the power of the Executive Committee had passed into the hands of the Council of Peoples' Commissars; and finally, the power of the Council of Peoples' Commissars had passed into the hands of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party.

That the Russian soviets were incapable of providing the anatomy for a truly autonomous democracy is to be ascribed not only to its hierarchical struc-



ture, but to its limited social roots. The insurgent military battalions, from which the soviets drew their original striking power, were highly unstable, especially after the final collapse of the Tsarist armies. The newly formed Red Army was recruited, disciplined, centralized, and tightly controlled by the Bolsheviks. Except for partisan bands and the navy, soviet military bodies remained inert as independent political forces throughout the civil war. The peasant villages were turned inward toward their individual concerns, which is to say that they were apathetic about national problems. This left the factories as the most important political stimuli within the soviets. And here we encounter a basic contradiction in class concepts of revolutionary power: proletarian socialism, precisely because it emphasizes that power must derive from the factory rather than the community, creates within itself the conditions for a centralized, hierarchical political structure.

The factory is not an autonomous social organism, however much it is refurbished by the trappings of "self-management." Whatever "self-management" a factory can enjoy is superficial at the very best; in reality, it is highly dependent for its operation and very existence upon other factories and raw materials' enterprises. The factory may be an integral part of a community, a region, often even fitting into an elaborate division of labor. The soviets, by rooting themselves primarily in factory and isolating the factory from its local environment, shifted power from the community and region to the nation, from the base of society to its summit. Not only did the soviet system consist of an elaborate skein of mediated social relationships, but it knitted these relationships along nationwide class lines.

If the issue of social management is to be viewed in terms of class concepts, it is fair to add that the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists were the only traditional workers' and peasants' movement that sought to limit the tendency toward centralization. They did this consciously, mindful of its dangers to the revolution. The CNT (Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo), the mass anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain, created a dual organization: an elected committee system for local activities and a counterbalancing assembly system for checking local bodies and national congresses. Local assemblies of workers in specific trades invariably exercised complete control over the committees and nation-wide bodies. They formulated all policies, countermanded any undesirable administrative actions taken by the committees, strictly mandated and circumscribed the activities of delegates to the committees and national congresses, and finally, they were free to take any action on their own that differed with the decisions of "higher" bodies. In effect, there were no "higher" bodies in the CNT, merely coordinating bodies. Let there be no mistake about the effectiveness of this organization: it imparted to each member of the CNT a weighty sense of responsibility, a sense of direct, immediate, and personal influence in the activities and policies



of the union. This responsibility was exercised with a highmindedness that made the CNT the largest and most militant revolutionary movement in Europe during the interwar decades.

The Spanish Revolution of 1936 placed this system to a practical test, and it worked admirably. In Barcelona, CNT workers seized the factories, transportation facilities, and utilities, and managed them along anarcho-syndicalist lines. It remains a matter of record by visitors of almost every political persuasion that the city's economy operated with remarkable success and efficiency — this, in the face of systematic sabotage practiced by the bourgeois Republican government and the Spanish Communist Party. The experiment was reduced to a shambles when the central government's assault troops occupied Barcelona in May, 1937, following an uprising of the proletariat. Despite their enormous influence, the Spanish anarchists had virtually no roots outside certain sections of the working class and peasantry. As a large minority movement, limited primarily to industrial Catalonia, the coastal Mediterranean areas, rural Aragon and Andalusia, anarchism was dependent upon the political and economic aid of alien, even hostile social strata. What essentially destroyed the experiment was its isolation within Spain itself: the incompleteness of the revolution and the overwhelming forces, Republican as well as fascist, Stalinist as well as bourgeois, that were mobilized against it.\*

It would be fruitless to examine the council modes of organization that emerged elsewhere (Germany in 1918, the Asturias in 1934, Hungary in 1956). These councils, in all cases, were either quickly destroyed by counterrevolution or, in the case of Germany, irretrievably perverted. There is absolutely no reason to believe that, had they developed further, they would have avoided the fate of the Russian soviets. History was to clearly show that it was not the Bolsheviks alone, with their conspiratorial techniques and centralized organization, who were capable of distorting the council mode of organization. In

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\*This is not to ignore the disastrous political errors made by many "leading" Spanish anarchists — entry into the Republican government, concessions to the defunct Catalan state (the Generality) and to the Popular Front parties, and finally opposition to the May uprising in Barcelona. Although it must also be added that the "leading" anarchists were faced with the alternative of establishing a dictatorship in Catalonia, which they were not prepared to do (and rightly so!), this was no excuse for practicing opportunistic tactics all along the way. Ultimately, however, the fate of Barcelona and other areas committed to anarcho-syndicalism depended upon the ability of the CNT to rally all of Republican Spain behind its social demands. This the organization proved incapable of doing owing to the incompleteness of the social development in Spain itself.



1918, the so-called "majority" Social Democrats, a faction-ridden, reformist movement, succeeded in gaining control of the newly formed workers' and soldiers' councils in Germany and in using them not only for non-revolutionary but counterrevolutionary ends. Even in anarcho-syndicalist Spain there is evidence that, by 1937, the committee system of the CNT was beginning to clash with the assembly system, but the outcome was left unresolved by the assault of the Communists and Republican government against Barcelona.

The fact remains that the council mode of organization -- be it the municipal council of Paris in 1871 or the soviets of 1905 and 1917 -- were highly vulnerable to centralization, manipulation, and finally to perversion. They belong to particularistic, one-sided, and mediated forms of social management and statification. Whatever may be their revolutionary origins, experience shows that statification was built into their structure and nourished by their class roots.

## ASSEMBLY AND COMMUNITY

### 3.

We must turn, now, to an alternative mode of organization -- the popular assembly -- which provides a remarkable insight into unmediated forms of social relations. The assembly became the structural basis of early clan and tribal society, that is, until its functions were pre-empted by the council and tribal chieftanship. It later reappeared as the Ecclesia in classical Athens; in a mixed and often perverted form in the medieval and Renaissance towns of Europe; and as an insurgent body in Paris, under the name of "sections," during the Great Revolution. The Ecclesia and the Parisian sections deserve the greatest amount of attention. They developed in the most complex cities of their time and they assumed a highly sophisticated form, often welding individuals of different social origins into a remarkable community of interests. It does not minimize their limitations to say that they developed methods of functioning, so successfully libertarian in character, that even the most imaginative utopias have failed to match in speculation what they achieved in practice.

The Athenian Ecclesia probably has its origins in the early assemblies of the Greek tribes. With the development of property and social classes, it had disappeared except, perhaps, as a memory and it was replaced by a feudal oligarchy. For a time, it appeared that Athenian society would chart a course toward internal decay in which Rome found itself several centuries later. A vast, heavily mortgaged class of peasants, a growing number of sharecroppers reduced to a serf-like status, and a large body of urban laborers and slaves, had polarized against a small number of powerful land magnates and a parvenu com-

mercial middle class. By the sixth century, B.C., all the conditions in Athens and in Attica (the surrounding agricultural region of the city) had ripened for a devastating social war.

The course of Athenian history was reversed by the reforms of Solon. In a series of drastic measures, the peasantry was restored to a condition of economic viability, the landowners shorn of most of their power, the Ecclesia revived, and a reasonably equitable system of justice established. The trend toward a popular democracy continued to unfold for nearly a century and a half until it achieved a form that has never been equaled elsewhere. By Periclean times, the Athenians had perfected their polis to a point where it represented a triumph of rationality within the material limitations of the ancient world.

The structural basis of this polis was the Ecclesia. Shortly after sunrise at each prytany (tenth of a year), thousands of Athenian male citizens from all over Attica began to gather on the Pnyx, a hill directly outside Athens, for a meeting of the assembly. Here, in the open air, they leisurely disported themselves among groups of friends, chatting, composing letters, or simply dozing, until the solemn intonation of prayers announced the opening of the meeting. The agenda, arranged under the three headings of "sacred," "profane," and "foreign affairs," had been distributed days earlier with the announcement of the assembly meeting. Although the Ecclesia could not add or bring forward anything that the agenda did not contain, its subject matter could be rearranged at the will of the assembly. No quorum was necessary, except for proposed decrees affecting individual citizens.

The Ecclesia enjoyed complete sovereignty over all institutions and offices in Athenian society. It decided questions of war and peace, elected and removed generals, reviewed military campaigns, debated and voted upon domestic and foreign policy, redressed grievances, examined and passed upon the operations of administrative boards, banished undesirable citizens, etc. Roughly one man out of six in the citizen body was occupied at any given time in regular daily activity for the community. Some 1500, chosen mainly by lot, staffed the boards responsible for the collection of taxes, the management of shipping, food supply, and public facilities, and the preparation of plans for public construction. The army, composed entirely of conscripts from each of the ten tribes of Attica, was led by elected officers; the policing of Athens fell to citizen-bowmen and Scythian state slaves.

The agenda of the Ecclesia was prepared by the Council of 500. Lest the Council gain any authority over the Ecclesia, the Athenians carefully circumscribed its composition and functions. Chosen by lot from rosters of citizens who, in turn, were elected annually by the tribes, the Council was divided into



ten subcommittees, each of which was on duty for a tenth of the year. Every day a president was selected by lot from among the fifty members of the subcommittee on duty to the polis. During his twenty four hours of office, the Council's president held the state seal, the keys to the citadel and public archives, and functioned for his day as the acting head of the country. Once he had been chosen, however, he could not reoccupy the position again.

Each of the ten tribes annually elected 600 citizens to serve as "judges" — more precisely, what we would call jurymen — in the Athenian courts. Every morning, they trudged up to the temple of Theseus, where lots were drawn for the trials of the day. Each court consisted of at least 201 jurymen and the trials were remarkably fair by any historical standard of juridicial practice. Run almost entirely by amateurs, the Athenian polis had reduced the formulation and administration of public policy to a public affair. "Here is no privileged class, no class of skilled politicians, no bureaucracy; no body of men, like the Roman Senate, who alone understood the secrets of State, and were looked up to and trusted as the gathered wisdom of the whole community," writes W. Warde Fowler. "At Athens there was no disposition, and in fact no need, to trust the experience of any one; each man entered intelligently into the details of his own temporary duties, and discharged them, as far as we can tell, with industry and integrity." Overdrawn as this view may be for a society that required slaves, denied women any role in the polis, and slipped repeatedly into bitter class conflicts, the fact remains that it is essentially accurate.

Indeed, the greatness of the achievement lies in the fact that Athens, despite the slave, patriarchal, and class features it shared with all of classical society, developed into a working democracy in the literal sense of the term. No less significant and consoling for our own time is the fact that this achievement occurred when it seemed that the polis had charted a headlong course toward social decay. At its best, Athenian democracy greatly modified the more abusive and inhuman features of ancient society. The burdens of slavery were greatly diminished, except when slaves were employed in capitalistic type enterprises. Judging from inscriptions on ancient family tombstones, a warm, intimate, and at times even endearing relationship existed between the Athenian farmer and his one or two enslaved co-workers. Generally, slaves were allowed to accumulate their own funds; on the yeoman farmsteads of Attica, they normally worked under the same conditions and shared the same food as their masters; in Athens, they were indistinguishable in dress, manner, and bearing from citizens — a source of ironical comment by foreign visitors. In many crafts, slaves not only worked side by side with freemen, but occupied supervisory positions over slaves and free workers alike.

Greek women, in turn, were treated with enormous respect and rare con-



sideration by their men. Lacking political equality, they usually reigned supreme in their homes and in the management of domestic affairs. Athens, moreover, produced relatively few men of great overbearing wealth. Property and class distinctions surely existed and produced serious crises. But even more important than the class differences that developed in this society were the commercial ties — the commodity relations — that slowly undermined all pre-existing community bonds and eventually catapulted Athens into an imperialist course. It is the growth of commerce, more than any other development, that irrevocably undermined the polis.

In balance, the image of Athens as a groaning slavocracy which built its civilization and generous humanistic outlook on the backs of human chattels is false — “false in its interpretation of the past and in its confident pessimism as to the future, willfully false, above all, in its cynical estimate of human nature,” observes Edward Zimmerman. “Societies, like men, cannot live in compartments. They cannot hope to achieve greatness by making amends in their use of leisure for the lives they have brutalized in acquiring it. Art, literature, philosophy, and all other great products of a nation’s genius, are no mere delicate growths of a sequestered hothouse culture; they must be sturdily rooted, and find continual nourishment, in the broad common soil of national life. That, if we are looking for lessons, is one we might learn from ancient Greece.”

## 4.

In Athens, the popular assembly emerges as the end product of a sweeping social transition. In Paris, more than two millenia later, it emerges as the lever of social transition itself, as a revolutionary form and insurrectionary force. The Parisian sections of the early 1790’s play the same role as the soviets of 1905 and 1917, with the decisive difference that relations within the sections were not mediated by a hierarchical structure. Sovereignty rested with the revolutionary assemblies themselves, not above them.

The Parisian sections emerged directly from the voting system established for elections to the Estate Generale. The monarchy in 1789 had divided the capital into sixty electoral districts, each of which formed an assembly of the so-called “active” or taxpaying citizens, the eligible voters of the city. These primary assemblies were expected to elect a body of electors which, in turn, was to choose the sixty representatives of the capital. The districts were expected to disappear after performing their electoral function, but they remained behind and constituted themselves into permanent municipal bodies. By degrees, they turned into neighborhood assemblies of all “active” citizens, varying in form, scope, and power from one district to another.



The municipal law of May, 1790, reorganized the sixty districts into forty-eight sections. The law was intended to circumscribe the popular assemblies and centralize sovereignty in the National Assembly, but the sections simply ignored it. They continued to broaden their base and extend their control over Paris. On July 30, 1792, the Theatre-Francais Section swept aside the distinction between "active" and "passive" citizens, inviting the poorest and most destitute of the sans culottes to share in "the exercise of the portion of sovereignty which belongs to the sections." Other sections followed the Theatre-Francais, and from this period the sections become authentic popular assemblies — the very soul of the Great Revolution. It is they who constitute the new revolutionary Commune of August 10th, which organizes the attack on the Tuileries and finally eliminates the Bourbon monarchy; it is they who decisively block the efforts of the Girondins to rouse the provinces against revolutionary Paris; it is they who, by ceaseless prodding, by their unending delegations and by armed demonstrations, provide the revolution with its remarkable leftward momentum after 1791.

The sections, however, were not merely fighting organizations; they represented genuine forms of self-management. At the highpoint of their development, they undertook the administration of the entire city. Individual sections policed their own neighborhoods, elected their own judges, were responsible for the distribution of foodstuffs, provided public aid to the poor, and contributed to the maintenance of the National Guard. With the declaration of war in April, 1792, the sections took on the added tasks of enrolling volunteers for the revolutionary army and caring for their families, collecting donations for the war effort, and equipping and provisioning entire battalions. During the period of the "maximum," when controls were established over prices and wages to prevent a runaway inflation, the sections essentially saw to it that the government-fixed prices were maintained. In provisioning Paris, the sections sent their representatives to the countryside, buying and transporting food and seeing to its distribution at fair prices.

It must be borne in mind that this complex of extremely important activities was undertaken not by professional bureaucrats, but for the most part by ordinary shopkeepers and craftsmen. And the bulk of sectional responsibilities were discharged after working hours, during the leisure time of the section members. The popular assemblies of the sections usually met during the evenings in neighborhood churches. Assemblies were ordinarily open to all the adults of the neighborhood. In periods of emergency, assembly meetings were held daily and normally they could be called at the request of fifty members. Most administrative responsibilities were discharged by committees, but the popular assemblies established all the policies of the sections, reviewed and passed upon the work of all the committees, and replaced section officers at will.

The forty eight sections were coordinated through the Paris Commune, the municipal council of the capital. Whenever emergencies arose, various sections tended to cooperate with each other by means of ad hoc delegates. This form of cooperation from below never crystalized into a permanent relationship. It is almost meaningless, on the other hand, to deal with the Paris Commune of the Great Revolution as a fixed institution; this body was changed during almost every important political emergency and its stability, form and functions depended largely upon the wishes of the sections. In the days preceding the uprising of August 10th, 1792, for example, the sections simply suspended the old municipal council, confined Petion, the mayor of Paris, and, in the person of its insurrectionary commissioners, took over all the authority of the Commune and the command of the National Guard. Almost the same procedure was followed nine months later, when the Girondin deputies were expelled from the Convention, with the difference that the Commune and Pache, the mayor of Paris, gave their consent (after some persuasive "gestures") to the uprising of the radical sections.

Having relied on the sections to strengthen their hold on the Convention, the Jacobins began to rely on the Convention to destroy the sections. In September, 1793, the Convention limited sectional public assemblies to two a week; three months later, they were deprived of the right to elect justices of the peace and divested of their role in organizing relief work. The sweeping centralization of France, which the Jacobins undertook between 1793-94, completed the destruction of the sections. The Convention eliminated their control over the police and placed their administrative responsibilities in the hands of salaried bureaucrats. By January, 1794, the vitality of the sections had been thoroughly sapped. As Michelet observes: "The general assemblies of the sections were dead, and all their power had passed to their revolutionary committees, which, themselves being no longer elected bodies, but simply groups of officials nominated by the authorities, had not much life in them either." When the time came for Robespierre, Saint-Just, and Lebas to appeal to the sections against the Convention, the majority did virtually nothing in their behalf. Indeed, the revolutionary Gravilliers section — the men who had so earnestly supported Jacques Roux and the Enrages in 1793 — vindictively placed their arms at the service of the Thermidorians and marched against Robespierrists, the very men who, a few months earlier, had driven Roux to suicide and guillotined the leaders of the left.



## FROM "HERE" TO "THERE"

## 5.

The factors which undermined the assemblies of classical Athens and revolutionary Paris require very little discussion; they can be inferred from the most elementary histories of the periods involved. In both cases, the assembly mode of organization was broken up not only from without, but also from within, by the exacerbation and development of class antagonisms. There are no social forms, however cleverly contrived, that can overcome the actual content of a given society. Lacking the material means, the technology, and the level of economic development to overcome class antagonisms as such, Athens and Paris could achieve the forms of freedom only temporarily — and these, essentially as measures designed to deal with the more serious threat of complete social decay. Athens held on to the Ecclesia for several centuries, mainly because it still retained a living contact with tribal forms of organization; Paris developed its sectional mode of organization for a period of several years, largely because the sans culottes had been precipitously swept to the head of the revolution by a rare combination of fortunate circumstances. Both the Ecclesia and sections were undermined by the very conditions they were intended to hold in check — property, class antagonisms, exploitation — but which they could not eliminate. What is remarkable about them is that they worked at all, considering the enormous problems they faced and the formidable obstacles they had to overcome.

It must be borne in mind that Athens and Paris were not peasant villages but large cities, indeed complex, highly sophisticated urban centers by the standards of their time. Athens supported a population of more than a quarter of a million; Paris, over 700,000. Both cities were engaged in worldwide trade; both were burdened by complex logistical problems; both had a multitude of needs that could be satisfied only by a fairly elaborate system of public administration. Although they had only a fraction of the population that resides in present day New York or London, their advantages on this score were more than cancelled out by their extremely crude systems of communication and transportation, and by the need, in Paris at least, for members of the assembly to devote the greater part of the day to brute toil. Yet Paris, no less than Athens, was administered by amateurs: by men who, for several years and in their spare time, saw to the administration of a city in a state of extraordinary revolutionary ferment. The principal means by which they made their revolution, organized its conquests, and finally sustained it against counterrevolution at home and invasion abroad was the neighborhood public assembly. There is no evidence that these assemblies and the committees they produced were inefficient or technically incompetent. To the contrary: they awakened a popular initiative, a reso-



luteness in action, and a sense of revolutionary purpose that no professional bureaucracy, however radical its pretensions, could ever hope to achieve. Indeed, it is worth emphasizing that if Athens literally founded philosophy, mathematics, drama, historiography, and art, revolutionary Paris contributed more than its due measure to the culture of the time and, above all, to its political thought of the western world. The arena for these achievements was not the traditional state, structured around a bureaucratic apparatus, but a system of unmediated political relations, of direct, face-to-face democracy organized into public assemblies.

The sections provide us with a rough model of assembly organization in a large city and during a period of revolutionary transition from a centralized political state to a potentially decentralized society. The Ecclesia provides us with a rough model of assembly organization in a completely decentralized society. The word "model" is used, here, advisedly. The Ecclesia and sections represent lived experience, not historical precedents. But precisely because of this, they validate in practice many anarchic theoretical speculations that have often been dismissed as "visionary" and "unrealistic."

The goal of dissolving propertied society, class rule, centralization, and the state is as old as the historical emergence of property, classes and states. In the beginning, the rebels could look backward to clans, tribes, and federations; it was still a time when the past was closer at hand than the future. Then the past receded completely from man's vision and memory, except perhaps as a lingering dream of "the Golden Age," "the Garden of Eden."\* At this point, the very notion of liberation became speculative, theoretical, and like all strictly theoretical visions, its content became permeated with the social material of the present. Hence the fact that even utopia, from More to Bellamy, is a heightened image not merely of a hypothetical future, but of a present drawn to the logical conclusion of rationality — or absurdity. It has slaves, kings, princes, oligarchs, technocrats, elites, scientist-godheads, suburbanites, and substantial petty bourgeois. Even on the left, it became customary to define the goal of a propertyless, stateless society as a series of approximations, of stages in which the end in view was attained by a slow reworking of the institutions at hand. This approach did not exclude revolution. Marx relegated the end of the centralized state to a distant future. Concealed beneath Marx's demand that the proletariat

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\*It was not until the 1860's, with the work of Bachofen and Morgan, that man rediscovered his communal past; but by that time the discovery had lost its reconstructive value and had become a purely critical weapon directed against the bourgeois family, property, etc.



must destroy the bourgeois state and replace it with one of its own was a demand, not for institutional dissolution, but for institutional appropriation. The revolutionists of 1917, by and large, followed this course — with disastrous results. Mediated power was preserved; worse, it was strengthened to the point where the state today is not merely the “executive committee” of a specific class, but a ubiquitous human condition. Life itself has become bureaucratized. Man has become a commodity — the product of a society reduced entirely to the status of a factory, a business office, a marketplace. Daily life has become a function of exchange value.

In envisioning the complete dissolution of the existing society, we cannot get away from the question of power — be it power over our own lives, the “seizure or power,” the dissolution of power. In going from the present to the future, from “here” to “there,” we must ask: what is power? Under what conditions is it dissolved? And what, precisely, does its dissolution mean? In short: how do the forms of freedom, the unmediated relations of social life — assembly and community — emerge from an all-statified society, a society in which the state of unfreedom is carried already to the point of absurdity, to domination for its own sake?

We begin with the historical fact that nearly all the great revolutions started out spontaneously: the three-days of “disorder” that preceded the take-over of the Bastille in July 1789, the defense of the artillery in Montmartre that led to the Paris Commune of 1871, the famous “five days” of February, 1917 in Petrograd, the uprising of Barcelona in July, 1936, the takeover of Budapest and expulsion of the Russian army in 1956.\* “Revolution does not fall from the sky,” declared a Trotskyist “leader” last December at a public debate, obviously meaning that it must be engineered presumably by his own party.\*\* This cute

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\*And, here, indeed, “history” has something to teach us — precisely because these spontaneous uprisings are not history but various manifestations of the same phenomenon: revolution. Whosoever calls himself a revolutionist and does not study these events on their own terms, thoroughly and without theoretical preconceptions, is a dilettante who is playing revolution.

\*\*He might have also added that “money doesn’t grow on trees.” And when a young Digger burned several dollar bills before his nose as a de-symbolization of the commodity nexus, nearly all the Trotskyists in the audience, being “practical” men, were duly horrified; after all, you know, it could have been used to print more election posters, election buttons, election stickers, or perhaps, keep the “office” going. There is nothing more repellant than a Poor Richard turned Bolshevik.

observation excludes the fact that nearly all the great revolutions come from below, from the molecular movement of the masses, their progressive individuation, their explosion — an explosion which invariably takes the authoritarian “revolutionist” completely by surprise. Where popular ferment is “channeled” — i.e., denied its initiative, deprived of its own free movement toward self-administration — revolution is debased into the Bolshevik-type coup d’etat: the “revolution” legislated by the Central Committee and decreed by the Politbureau. The old game of the past half-century is repeated. To rephrase the words of William Morris: Men fight and “win” the battle, and when their victory “turns out to be not what they mean. . . , other men have to fight for what they meant under another name.”

The bitter experiences of the past half century have made it axiomatic that there can be no separation of the revolutionary process from the revolutionary goal. A society based on self-administration must be achieved by means of self-administration. This implies the forging of a self (yes, literally a forging one in the revolutionary process) and a mode of administration which the self can possess.\* If we define “power” as the power of man over man, power can only be destroyed by the very process in which man acquires power over his own life and in which he not only “discovers” himself but, more meaningfully, formulates his selfhood in all its social dimensions.

Freedom, so conceived, cannot be “delivered” to the individual as the “end-product” of a “revolution” — much less, one orchestrated by social-philistines hypnotized by the trappings of authority and power. This means that the assembly and community cannot be legislated or decreed into existence. A revolutionary group can, purposively and consciously, seek to promote the creation of these forms; but if assembly and community are not allowed to emerge organically, if their growth is not only cultivated by revolutionists, but instigated, developed, and matured by the social processes at work, they will not emerge at all. Assembly and community, then, must arise from within the revolutionary process itself; indeed, the revolutionary process must be the formation of of assembly and community and, with it, the destruction of power. Assembly and community must become “fighting words,” not panaceas! They must be created as modes of struggle with the existing society, not bucolic retreats and refuges!

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\*For discussion of “selfhood” and revolution, see “Desire and Need” in ANARCHOS 1. What Wilhelm Reich and, later, Herbert Marcuse in Eros and Civilization have made clear is that “selfhood” is not only a domestic, a personal dimension but a social one. The self that finds expression in assembly and community is, literally, the assembly and community that has found self-expression — the complete congruence of form and content.



It is hardly possible to stress this point strongly enough. The future assembly of people in the block, the neighborhood, the district — the revolutionary sections to come — will stand on a higher social level than all the present-day committees, syndicates, parties and clubs adorned by the most resounding “revolutionary” titles. They will be the living nucleus of utopia in the decomposing body of bourgeois society. Meeting in auditoriums, theaters, courtyards, halls, parks and — like their forerunners, the sections of '93 — in churches, they will be the popular assembly that the revolutionary process has demassified, for the very essence of the revolutionary process will be popular initiative, a people finally acting as individuals.

At this point, the assembly may be faced not only with the power of the bourgeois state — the famous problem of “dual power” — but with the danger of the incipient state. Like the Parisian sections, it will have to fight not only against the Convention, but against the ever-lasting committees which will surround it and proliferate like cancer cells. The assembly must become the universal solvent of institutions, cleansing away all the social flyshit — bureaus, councils, agencies, committees, directorates, boards, and above all, political parties — that impair its initiative.\* This is not to say that committees, councils, and boards are unnecessary as such, but whenever they are functionally soluble, they must be dissolved. They must be rooted completely in the assembly; they must be answerable at every point to the assembly; they and their work must be under continual review by the assembly; their members must be chosen, rotated, and replaced by the assembly (preferably, where possible, by lot); their meetings must be open to the assembly; their members must be subject to recall by the assembly. The specific gravity of society, in short, must be shifted to its base: the armed people in permanent assembly!\*\*

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\*Together with disseminating ideas, the most important job of the revolutionary libertarian movement — the anarchists — will be to defend the spontaneity of the popular movement by continually engaging the authoritarians in a theoretical and organization duel — in sum: they will be organized against organization.

\*\*The use of rotating committees, councils, and boards provides us with guidelines for integrating the technical work of the assemblies, and later, of the future decentralized communities. There is no danger that unmediated relations will be replaced by mediated ones if such bodies are limited strictly to technical or advisory functions, if they are rotated as often as possible, rigorously mandated and circumscribed in their activities by the assemblies, open to thorough-going public scrutiny and to a regular accounting of their work, and above all, divested of all prerogatives in formulating policy. Rooted entirely locally in the assem-

As long as the arena of the assembly is the modern bourgeois city, to be sure, the revolution is located in a recalcitrant environment — one difficult to assimilate to an assembly-community. The bourgeois city, by its very nature and structure, fosters centralization, massification, and manipulation. Inorganic, gargantuan, organized by commercial forces as a grid of streets and avenues (rather than ecologically as an ecosystem), the city inhibits and obstructs organic, rounded community growth. In its role as the universal solvent, the assembly must now dissolve the city itself.

We can envision young people — society's germplasm, as it were — renewing social life as it renews the human species. Leaving the city, they begin to found the nuclear ecological communities to which increasingly older people repair. Large pools of resources are mobilized for their use; careful ecological surveys, guidelines, and suggestions are placed at their disposal by the most competent, talented, and imaginative people available. The modern city begins to shrivel, to contract, and to disappear, as did its ancient progenitors millennia earlier. In the new, rounded ecological community, the assembly finds its authentic environment and true shelter. Form and content now correspond completely. The journey from "here" to "there," from sections to Ecclesia, from cities to communities, is completed, certainly as far as men can see today. The revolutionary urban assemblies are essentially communities in their own right, but based on ecological communities, they become more rounded organisms. No longer is the factory a particularized phenomenon, but an organic part of the community. In this sense, it is no longer a factory. The dissolution of the factory into the community completes the dissolution of the last vestiges of propertied, class, and above all, of mediated society into the new polis. And now the real drama of human life can unfold, in all its beauty, harmony, joy, creativity, and tragedy.

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blies. (which alone formulate policy and administrative guidelines) and subject at any time to immediate recall, the committees, councils and boards can be used to work out practical details of regional and interregional coordination between assemblies and decentralized communities — details which, as in the Parisian sections, can be examined, approved, or modified by the assemblies.



# Towards a liberatory technology

LEWIS HERBER

NOT SINCE THE DAYS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION have popular attitudes toward technology fluctuated as sharply as in the past few decades. During most of the twenties and even well into the thirties, public opinion generally welcomed technological innovation and identified man's welfare with the industrial advances of the time. This was a period when Soviet apologists could justify Stalin's most brutal methods and worst crimes merely by describing him as the "industrializer" of modern Russia. It was also a period when the most effective critique of capitalist society could rest on the brute facts of economic and technological stagnation in the United States and Western Europe. To many people, there seemed to be a direct, one-to-one relationship between technological advances and social progress—a fetishizing of the word "industrialization" that excused the most abusive of economic plans and programmes.

Today, we would regard these attitudes as naive. Except perhaps for the technicians and scientists who design the "hardware", the feeling of most people toward technological innovation could be described as schizoid, divided by a gnawing fear of nuclear extinction on the one hand, and by a yearning for material abundance, leisure, and security on the other. Technology, too, seems to be at odds with itself: the bomb is pitted against the power reactor, the intercontinental missile against the communications satellite. The same technological discipline tends to appear as much a foe as a friend of humanity, and even traditionally man-oriented sciences, such as medicine, occupy an ambivalent position, as witness the promise opened by recent advances in chemotherapy and the threat created by recent research in biological warfare.

It should not be surprising, then, to find that this tension between promise and threat is increasingly resolved in favour of threat, by a blanket rejection of technology and the technological spirit. To an ever-growing extent, we find that technology is viewed as a demon, imbued with a sinister life of its own, that is likely to mechanize man if it fails to exterminate him. The deep pessimism this view tends to produce is often as simplistic as the optimism that prevailed in earlier decades. There is a very real danger, today, that we will lose our perspective toward technology, neglect its liberatory tendencies, and worse, fatalistically submit to its use for destructive ends.

If we are not to be paralyzed by this new form of social fatalism, a balance must be struck. The purpose of this article is to explore three questions: What is the liberatory *potential* of modern technology, both materially and spiritually? What tendencies, if any, are reshaping the

machine for use in an organic, man-oriented society? And finally, how can the new technology and resources be used in an ecological manner, that is, to promote the balance of nature, the full, lasting development of natural regions, and the creation of organic, humanistic communities?

The emphasis in the above remarks should be placed on the word "potential". I make no claim that technology is necessarily liberatory or consistently beneficial to man's development. But I surely do not believe that man is destined to be enslaved by technology and technological modes of thought, as Juenger and Elul seem to imply in their books on the subject.\* To the contrary, I shall try to show that an organic mode of life, deprived of its inorganic, technological components (be they a plentitude of raw materials or machines), would be as non-functional as a man deprived of his skeleton. Technology, I submit, must be conceived as the basic structural support of a society, the indispensable frame on which hang all the living institutions of a dynamic social organism.

### TECHNOLOGY AND FREEDOM

The year 1848 stands out as a turning point in the history of modern revolutions—the year when Marxism made its debut as a distinct ideology in the pages of the *Communist Manifesto* and when the proletariat, represented by the Parisian workers, made its debut as a distinct political force on the barricades of June. It could also be said that 1848, a year close to the halfway mark of the nineteenth century, represents the culmination of the traditional steam-powered technology initiated by the Newcomen engine a century and half earlier.

What strikes us about the convergence in a single year of these ideological, political, and technological milestones is the extent to which the revolutionary goals in the *Communist Manifesto* and the socialist ideals that permeated the thinking of the Parisian workers were in advance of the industrial possibilities of the time. In the 1840's, the Industrial Revolution was limited primarily to three areas of the economy: textile production, iron-making, and transportation. The invention of Arkwright's spinning machine, Watt's steam engine, and Cartwright's power loom, had brought the factory system to the textile industry, and a number of striking innovations in iron-making technology assured the high-quality, inexpensive metals needed to sustain the expansion of the factories and of a newly discovered means of transportation, the railways. But these innovations, important as they were, were not accompanied by commensurable changes in other areas of technology. For one thing, the common run of steam engines used at the time rarely yielded more than 15 horse-power, compared with the enormously powerful steam turbines in use today, and the best blast furnaces provided little more than 100 tons of iron a week, a mere

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\*Both Juenger and Elul seem to believe that the debasement of man by the machine is intrinsic to the development of technology, and they conclude their works on a grim, unrelieved note of resignation. Their works reflect the social fatalism I have in mind—especially Elul, whose views are more symptomatic of the contemporary human condition. Cf. Friedrich Georg Juenger, *The Failure of Technology* (written in the pre-World War II period) and Jacques Elul, *The Technological Society* (written in the 1960's).



fraction of the two to three thousand tons produced daily by modern furnaces. More important still, the remaining areas of the economy had barely been affected by technological innovation. The mining techniques underpinning the new metals technology, for example, had changed very little since the days of the Renaissance. The miner still worked the ore face with a hand-pick and crowbar, and drainage pumps, ventilation systems, and hauling techniques, were not greatly improved over the descriptions we find in Agricola's classic on mining, written three centuries earlier. Agriculture was only first emerging from its centuries-old sleep. Although a great deal of land had been cleared for food cultivation, soil studies were still a novelty, and so heavy was the weight of tradition and conservatism, that most harvesting was still done by hand, despite the fact that a mechanical reaper had been perfected as early as 1822. Buildings, despite their massiveness and ornateness, were erected primarily by sheer muscle power—the hand-crane and windlass still occupying the mechanical centre of the construction site. Steel was a relatively rare metal. As late as 1850, it was priced at \$250 a ton and, until the discovery of the Bessemer converter, steel-making techniques had stagnated for centuries. Finally, although precision tools had made great forward strides, it is worth noting, after all, that Charles Babbage's efforts to build a mechanical computer were completely thwarted by the inadequate machining techniques of the time.

I have reviewed these technological developments because both their promise and limitations exercised a profound influence on nineteenth century revolutionary concepts of freedom. The innovations in textile and iron-making technology provided a new sense of promise, indeed a qualitatively unique stimulus to socialist and utopian thought. To the revolutionary theorist, it seemed that for the first time in history, he could anchor his dream of a liberatory society in the visible prospect of material abundance and increased leisure for the mass of humanity. Socialism, he argued, could be based on the self-interest of man rather than on his dubious nobility of mind and spirit. Technological innovation had transmuted the socialist ideal from a vague, humanitarian hope into a practical programme, superior in its realism to all prevailing modes of bourgeois thought.

By the same token, this new sense of realism compelled many socialist theorists, particularly Marx and Engels, to deal with the technological limitations of their time. They were faced with a strategic issue: In all previous revolutions, technology had not developed to a level where men could be freed from material want, from toil, and from the struggle over the necessities of life. However glowing and lofty were the revolutionary ideals of the past, the vast majority of the people, burdened by material want, had to depart from the stage of history, return to work, and deliver the management of society to a new, leisured class of exploiters. Indeed, any attempt to equalize the wealth of society at a low level of technological development would not have eliminated want, but would have merely made it into a general, overall feature of society as a whole, thereby recreating all the conditions for a new struggle over the material things of life, new forms of property, and



eventually, a new system of class domination. "A development of the productive forces is the absolutely necessary practical premise [of Communism]," wrote Marx in 1846, "because without it want is generalized, and with want the struggle for necessities begins again, and that means that all the old shit must revive."

And the truth is that virtually all the utopias, theories, and revolutionary programmes of the early nineteenth century turned on the problematical axis of necessity—on the two poles of want and toil. The problem of necessity—the formulation of theories that would answer to the need to allocate labour and equitably distribute material goods at a relatively low level of technological development — permeated revolutionary thought with an intensity comparable only to the problem of original sin in Christian theology. The fact that men would have to devote a substantial portion of their time to toil, for which they would get scant returns, formed a major premise of all socialist ideology, be it authoritarian or libertarian, utopian or scientific, Marxist or anarchist. Implicit in the Marxist notion of a planned economy is the fact, incontestably clear in Marx's day, that socialism would still be burdened by relatively scarce resources. Men would have to plan—in effect, restrict—the distribution of goods and rationalize—in effect, intensify—the use of labour. Toil, under socialism, would be regarded as a duty, a responsibility which every able-bodied individual had to undertake. Even the great libertarian Proudhon advanced the same view when he wrote: "Yes life is a struggle. But this struggle is not between man and man—it is between man and Nature; and it is each one's duty to share it." This austere, almost Biblical emphasis on struggle and duty reflects the harsh quality of socialist thought during the Industrial Revolution.

The problem of dealing with want and work—an age-old problem perpetuated by the early Industrial Revolution—produced the great divergence in revolutionary ideas between socialism and anarchism. Freedom would still be circumscribed by necessity in the event of a revolution. How was this world of necessity to be "administered"? How would the allocation of goods and duties be decided? Marx left this decision to a state power, a transitional, "proletarian" state power, to be sure, but nevertheless a coercive body, established above and beyond society. According to Marx, the state would "wither away" as technology developed and enlarged the domain of freedom, granting humanity material plenty and the leisure to control its affairs directly. This strange calculus of necessity and freedom, mediated of all things by the state, differs very little politically from the common run of radical bourgeois-democratic opinion in the last century. The anarchist hope for an immediate abolition of the state rested largely on a belief in the viability of man's social instincts. In Bakunin's mind, to be sure, custom would compel anti-social individuals to abide by collectivist values and needs without obliging society to use coercion. But Kropotkin, who exercised more influence among anarchists in this area of speculation, invoked man's propensity for mutual aid—essentially a social instinct — as the guarantor of solidarity in an anarchist community, a concept which he hardheadedly derived from his study



of animal and social evolution.

The fact remains, however, that in both cases—the Marxist and anarchist—the answer to the problem of want and work is shot through with ambiguity. The realm of necessity was brutally present; it could not be conjured away by mere theory and speculation. The Marxists could hope to administer it by means of a state; the anarchists, to digest it through free communities. But given the limited technological development of the last century, both schools depended in the last analysis on an act of faith to cope with the problem of want and work. Anarchists could argue that any transitional state-power, however revolutionary its rhetoric and democratic its structure, would be self-perpetuating; it would tend to become an end-in-itself, to preserve the very material and social conditions it had been created to remove. For such a state-power to “wither away”, that is, to promote its own dissolution, would require that its leaders and bureaucracy be people of superhuman moral qualities. The Marxists, in turn, could invoke history as evidence that custom and mutualistic propensities were never effective barriers to the pressures of material need, to the onslaught of property, and finally, to the development of exploitation and class domination. Accordingly, they dismissed anarchism as an ethical doctrine, reviving the mystique of the natural man and his inborn social virtues. The problem of want and work—the realm of necessity—was never satisfactorily resolved by either body of doctrine in the last century. It is to the lasting credit of anarchism that it uncompromisingly retained its high ideal of freedom—the ideal of spontaneous organization, community, and the abolition of all authority—although this amounts to saying that it remained an ideology of man’s future, of the time when technology could eliminate the realm of necessity entirely. Marxism increasingly compromised its ideal of freedom, painfully qualifying it with transitional stages and political expediencies, until today it is an ideology of naked power, pragmatic efficiency, and social centralization, almost indistinguishable from ideologies of modern-day state capitalism.\*

In retrospect, it is astonishing to consider how long the problem of want and work lingered at the core of revolutionary theory. In a span of only nine decades—the years between 1850 and 1940—Western society created, passed through, and evolved beyond two major epochs of technological history—the pneumatic age based on coal and steel, and the neotechnic age based on electric power, synthetic chemicals, electricity, and internal combustion engines. Ironically, both ages of technology seemed to enhance the importance of toil in society. As the number of industrial workers increased in

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\*It is my own belief that the development of the “workers’ state” in Russia thoroughly supports the anarchist critique of Marxist statism. Indeed, modern Marxists would do well to consult Marx’s own discussion of commodity fetishism in *Capital* to better understand how everything tends to become an end-in-itself under conditions of commodity exchange. On the other hand, the Marxist critique of anarchist communitarianism has been grossly oversimplified. For an excellent discussion of this problem see Buber’s *Paths in Utopia* (London: Routledge; New York: Beacon Press).



proportion to other social classes, labour—more precisely, toil—acquired an increasingly high status in revolutionary thought. During this period, the propaganda of the socialists often sounded like a paean to toil; the workers were extolled as the only useful individuals in the social fabric. They were imparted with a superior instinctive ability that rendered them into the arbiters of philosophy, art, and social organization. This curious emphasis on toil, this Puritanical work ethic of the left, instead of diminishing with the passage of time, acquired a new sense of urgency by the 1930's. Mass unemployment made the job and the social organization of labour *the* central theme of socialist propaganda. Instead of focusing their message on the emancipation of man from toil, socialists tended to depict socialism as a beehive of industrial activity, humming with work for all. The Communists incessantly pointed to Russia as a model of a socialist land, where every able-bodied individual was employed, indeed, where labour was continually in demand. Surprising as it may seem today, the fact is that little more than a generation ago, socialism was equated with a work-oriented society and liberty with the material security provided by full employment. The world of necessity, in effect, had subtly invaded and corrupted the ideal of freedom.

If the socialist notions of the last generation now seem to be anachronisms, this is due not to any superior insights that prevail today. The last three decades, particularly the years of the late 1950's, mark a turning-point in technological development — a technological revolution that negates all the values, political schemes, and social perspectives held by mankind throughout all previous recorded history. After thousands of years of torturous development, the countries of the Western world, and potentially all of humanity, are confronted by the possibility of an affluent, workless era—an epoch in which all the means and luxuries of life can be provided almost entirely by machines. As we shall see in the following section, a new technology has been developed that could replace the realm of necessity by the realm of freedom. So obvious is this fact to millions of people in the United States and Europe, that it no longer requires elaborate explanations or theoretical exegesis. This technological revolution and the prospects it holds for society as a whole form the premises of radically new life-styles among many young people, a generation no longer burdened by the values and age-old, work-oriented traditions of their elders. Even current demands for a guaranteed annual income irrespective of whether the recipient is engaged in work or not, sound like faint echoes of a new reality that currently permeates the thinking of young people today. Owing to the development of a cybernated technology, the notion of a toilless mode of life has become an article of faith to an increasing number of young people in the 1960's.

In fact, the real issue we face today is not whether this new technology can provide us with the means of life in a workless society, but whether it can *humanize* society, whether it can contribute to the creation of new relationships between man and man. The demand for a guaranteed annual income is still anchored in the *quantitative* promise of a cybernated technology—the possibility of satisfying essential



material needs without toil. I submit that this quantitative type of solution, if such it can be called, is already lagging behind technological developments that carry a new, *qualitative* promise—the promise of decentralized, communitarian life-styles, or what I prefer to call ecological forms of human association.\*

What I am asking, in effect, is a question that differs from what is ordinarily posed with respect to modern technology: Is this technology staking out a new dimension in human freedom, in the liberation of man? Can it lead man not only to freedom from want and work, but aid directly in shaping a harmonious, balanced human community—a community that would provide man with the soil for the unrestricted development of his potentialities? Can it not only eliminate the age-old struggle for existence, but nourish the desire for creation, both communally and individually?

### THE POTENTIALITIES OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Let me try to answer these questions by pointing to a decisive feature of modern technology: For the first time in history, technology has reached an open end. What I mean by an “open end” is that the potential for technological development, for providing machines as substitutes for labour is essentially unlimited. Technology has finally passed from the realm of *invention* into that of *design*, from fortuitous discoveries into systematic innovations.

The meaning of this qualitative advance has been stated in a rather free-wheeling way by Dr. Vannevar Bush, the former director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development:

Suppose, fifty years ago, that someone had proposed making a device which would cause an automobile to follow a white line down the middle of the road, automatically and even if the driver fell asleep. . . . He would have been laughed at, and his idea would have been called preposterous. So it would have been then. But suppose someone called for such a device today, and was willing to pay for it, leaving aside the question of whether it would actually be of any genuine use whatever. Any number of concerns would stand ready to contract and build it. No real invention would be required. There are thousands of young men in the country to whom the design of such a device would be a pleasure. They would simply take off the shelf some photocells, thermionic tubes, servo-mechanisms, relays and, if urged, they would build what they call a breadboard model, and it would work. The point is that the presence of a host of versatile, cheap, reliable gadgets, and the presence of men who understand fully all their queer ways, has rendered the building of automatic devices almost straightforward and routine. It is no longer a question of whether they can be built, it is rather a question of whether they are worth building.

\*An exclusively quantitative approach to the new technology, I may add, is not only economically archaic, but morally regressive. It partakes of the old moral principle of *justice*, as distinguished from the new moral principle of *liberation*. Historically, justice is derived from the world of material necessity and toil; it implies a domain of relatively scarce resources which are apportioned by a moral principle that is either “just” or “unjust”. Justice, even “equal” justice, is a concept of *limitation*, involving the denial of goods and the sacrifice of time and energy to production. Once we transcend the concept of justice, of limitation—indeed, once we pass from the *quantitative* to the *qualitative* potentialities of modern technology—we enter the unexplored domain of liberation, of unrestricted freedom based on spontaneous organization and unlimited access to the means of life.



Bush focuses, here, on the two most important features of the new, so-called "second industrial revolution": The potentialities of modern technology and the cost-oriented, non-human limitations imposed upon them. I shall not belabour the fact that the cost factor—the profit motive, to state it bluntly—inhibits the use of technological innovations as well as promoting their application in many industries. It is fairly well established that in many areas of the economy it is often cheaper to use labour than machines. Instead, I would like to review several developments which have brought us to an open-end in technology and deal with a number of practical applications that have profoundly affected the role of labour in industry and agriculture.

Perhaps the most obvious development leading to the new technology has been the increasing interpenetration of scientific abstraction, mathematics, and analytic methods with the concrete, pragmatic, and rather mundane tasks of industry. This new order of relationships is relatively new. Traditionally, speculation, generalization, and rational activity had been sharply divorced from technology—a chasm created by the sharp split between the leisured and working classes of ancient and medieval society. Although a number of bridges had been created between the two domains, these structures were largely the inspired but episodic works of a few rare men, the pioneers of early applied science. Actually, applied science did not come into its own until the Renaissance and it began to really flourish in the nineteenth century, when scientific knowledge—the growing corpus of man's generalizations about the physical world—fertilized the mundane world of technology. The authentic personification of this new interplay between scientific generalization and technology is not the inventor, the James Watt or Thomas Edison, but the systematic investigator with catholic interests, the Michael Faraday, who almost simultaneously adds both to man's knowledge of scientific principles and to engineering. In our own day the synthesis embodied by the work of a single, inspired genius now reposes in the anonymous team of specialists — the co-operative activity of physicists, biologists, engineers, and technicians — with its clear-cut advantages, to be sure, but also with the resulting lack of vision, imagination, and inspiration so characteristic of bureaucratic modes of organization.

A second development, often less obvious, is the impact produced by industrial growth itself. This development is not always technological in the sense that a machine replaces labour. One of the most effective means of increasing output, in fact, has been the continual reorganization of the labour process, the extension and sophistication of the division of labour. Ironically, by an inner dialectic of its own, the steady breakdown of tasks to an ever-inhuman dimension, to an intolerably minute, fragmented series of operations, to a cruel simplification of the work process, suggests the machine that will recombine all the separate tasks of many workers into a single mechanized operation. Historically, it would be difficult to understand how mechanized mass manufacture emerged, how the machine increasingly displaced labour, without tracing its development from craftsmanship, where an independent, highly skilled worker engaged in many diverse operations on a single



commodity, through the purgatory of the factory, where these diverse tasks were parcelled out among a multitude of unskilled or semi-skilled employees, to the highly mechanized mill, where the tasks of many were largely taken over by machines, manipulated by a few operatives, and finally the automated and cybernated plant, where operatives are now replaced by supervisory technicians and highly skilled maintenance men.

Looking further into the matter, we find still another development—the evolution of the machine from an extension of human muscles into an extension of the human nervous system. In the past, both tools and machines enhanced man's muscular power over raw materials and natural forces. The mechanical devices and engines developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not replace human biceps but rather extended their effectiveness. Although the machines increased output enormously, the worker's muscles and brain were still required to operate them, even for fairly routine tasks. The calculus of technological advance could be formulated in the strict terms of labour productivity: One man, using a given machine, produced as many commodities as five, ten, fifty, or a hundred before the machine was employed. Nasmyth's steam hammer, exhibited in 1851, for example, could shape iron beams with only a few blows, an effort that would have required many man-hours of labour. But the hammer required the muscles and judgement of a half-dozen able-bodied men to pull, hold, and remove the casting. In time, much of this work was diminished by the invention of handling devices, but the labour and judgement involved in operating the machines formed an indispensable part of the productive process.

To develop fully automatic machines for complex mass-manufacturing operations requires the successful application of at least three technological principles: A built-in ability of the machine to correct its own errors; next, sensory devices for replacing the visual, auditory, and tactile senses of the worker; and finally, devices that provide an approximation of the worker's mental faculties—judgement, skill, and memory. The effective use of these three principles, to be sure, presupposes that we have also developed the technological means, the effectors, if you will, for applying the sensory, control, and mind-like devices to everyday industrial operations; that we can adapt existing machines or develop new ones for handling, shaping, assembling, packaging, and transporting semi-finished and finished products.

The use of automatic, self-correcting control devices in industrial operations is not new. James Watt's flyball governor, invented in 1788, provides an early mechanical example of how steam engines were self-regulated. Attached by metal arms to the engine valve, the governor essentially consists of a thin, rotating rod supporting two freely mounted metal balls. If the engine begins to operate too rapidly, the increased rotation of the rod impels the balls outward by centrifugal force, closing the valve; conversely, if the valve does not admit sufficient steam to operate the engine at the desired rate, the balls collapse inwardly, opening the valve further. A similar principle is involved in the operation of thermostatically controlled heating



equipment. The thermostat, manually preset by a dial to a desired temperature level, automatically starts up heating equipment when the temperature falls and turns off the equipment when it rises.

Both control devices illustrate what is now called the "feedback principle". In modern electronic equipment, the deviation of a machine from a desired level of operation produces electrical signals which are then used by the control device to correct the deviation or error. The electrical signals induced by the error are amplified and fed back by the control system to other devices which adjust the machine. A control system in which a departure from a norm is actually used to adjust a machine is called a *closed* system. This may be contrasted with an *open* system—say, a manually operated wall switch or the arms that automatically rotate an electric fan—in which the control operates without regard to the function of the device. Thus, if the wall switch is flicked, electric lights go on or off quite aside from whether it is night or day; similarly, the electric fan will rotate at the same speed whether a room is very warm or relatively cool. The fan may be automatic in the popular sense of the term, but it is not self-regulating in terms of its function.

Obviously, an important step toward developing self-regulating control mechanisms is the discovery of sensory devices. Today, these consist of thermocouples, photo-electric cells, x-ray machines, television cameras, and radar transmitters. Together or singly, they provide machines with an amazing degree of autonomy. Even without computers, these sensory devices make it possible for man to engage in extremely hazardous operations by remote control, placing a great deal of distance between the worker and the job. They can also be used to turn many traditional open systems into closed ones, thereby expanding the scope of automatic operations. For example, an electric light controlled by a clock represents a fairly simple open system; its effectiveness depends entirely upon mechanical factors. Regulated by a photo-electric cell that turns it off when daylight approaches, the light becomes a highly sophisticated and flexible device that responds to daily variations in sunrise and sunset. It is now meshed directly with its function.

With the advent of the computer, we enter into an entirely new dimension of industrial control systems. The computer is capable of performing all the routine tasks that ordinarily burdened the mind of the worker a generation or so ago. Basically, the modern digital computer is an electronic calculator, capable of performing arithmetical operations enormously faster than the human brain.\* This element of speed is a crucial fact: the enormous rapidity of computer operations—a quantitative superiority of computer over human calculations—has a profound qualitative significance. By virtue of its speed, the computer can perform advanced, highly sophisticated mathematical and logical operations. Supported by memory units that store millions of bits of

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\*There are two broad classes of computers in use today: the analogue computer and the digital. The analogue computer has a fairly limited use in industrial operations. My discussion on computers in this article will deal entirely with digital computers.



information, and using binary arithmetic (the substitution of the digits 0 and 1 for the digits 0 through 9), a properly programmed digital computer can perform operations that approximate many highly developed logical activities of the mind. It is arguable whether computer "intelligence" is, or ever will be, creative or innovative, although every few years brings sweeping, often revolutionary changes in computer technology and programming. But there is no doubt that the digital computer is capable of taking over all the onerous and distinctly uncreative mental tasks of man in industry, science, engineering, information retrieval, record-keeping, and transportation. Modern man, in effect, has produced an electronic "mind" for co-ordinating, guiding, and evaluating most of his routine industrial operations. Properly used within the sphere of competence for which they are designed, computers are faster and more efficient than man himself.

Taken as a whole, what is the concrete significance of this new industrial revolution? What are its immediate and foreseeable implications for work? Let us trace the impact of the new technology on the work process by examining its application to the manufacture of automobile engines at the Ford plant in Cleveland. This single instance of technological sophistication in about a decade of development will help us assess the liberatory potential of the new technology in all manufacturing industries.

Until the advent of cybernation in the automobile industry, the Ford plant required about 300 workers, using a large variety of tools and machines, to turn an engine block into an engine. The process from foundry casting to a fully machined and complete engine took more than three weeks. With the development of what we commonly call an "automated" machine system, the time required to transform the casting into an engine was reduced from three weeks to less than 15 minutes.

Aside from a few monitors to watch the automatic control panels, the original 300-man labour force was entirely eliminated. Later a computer was added to the machining system, turning it into a truly closed, cybernated system. The computer regulates the entire machining process, operating on an electronic pulse that cycles at a rate of three-tenths of a millionth of a second.

But even this system is obsolete. "The next generation of computing machines operates a thousand times as fast—at a pulse rate of one in every three-tenths of a billionth of a second," observes Alice Mary Hilton. "Speeds of millionths and billionths of a second are not really intelligible to our finite minds. But we can certainly understand that the advance has been a thousand-fold—within a year or two. A thousand times as much information can be handled or the same amount of information can be handled a thousand times as fast. A job that takes more than 16 hours can be done in one minute! And without any human intervention! Such a system does not control merely an assembly line but a complete manufacturing and industrial process!"

There is no reason why the basic technological principles involved in cybernating the manufacture of automobile engines cannot be applied to every area of mass manufacture—from the metallurgical industry to



the food processing industry, from the electronics industry to the toy-making industry, from the manufacture of prefabricated bridges to the manufacture of prefabricated houses. Many phases of steel production, of tool- and die-making, of electronic equipment manufacture, of industrial chemical production—the list, in fact, is nearly endless—are now partly or wholly automated. What tends to delay the advance of complete automation to every phase of modern industry is largely the enormous cost involved in replacing existing industrial facilities by new, more sophisticated ones and, partly, the innate conservatism of many major corporations. Finally, as I mentioned before, it is still cheaper to use labour instead of machines in many industries.

Every industry, to be sure, has its own peculiar problems and the application of a workless technology to a specific plant would doubtless reveal a multitude of kinks that would require careful, painstaking solution. It would be necessary in many industries to alter the shape of a product and the layout of a plant so that the manufacturing process lends itself to automated techniques. But to argue from these problems that the application of a fully automated technology to a specific industry is impossible would be as preposterous as to have argued, years ago, that flight was impossible because the propeller of an experimental airplane did not revolve fast enough or the frame was too fragile to withstand buffeting by the wind. There is no industry that cannot be fully automated if we are willing to redesign the product, the plant, the manufacturing procedures, and the handling methods. In fact, any difficulty in describing how, where, or when a given industry will be automated arises not from the unique problems we can expect to encounter, but rather from the enormous leaps that occur every few years in modern technology. Almost every account of applied automation, today, must be regarded as provisional, for no sooner do we commit a description of an automated industry to paper but that we learn of remarkable advances which render our description obsolete.

There is one area of the economy, however, in which any form of technological advance is worth describing—the area of work that is most brutalizing and degrading for man. If it is true, as radical thinkers have argued, that the moral level of a society can be gauged by the way it treats women, its sensitivity to human suffering can be gauged by the working conditions it provides for people in raw materials industries, specifically in mines and quarries. In the ancient world, mining was often a form of penal servitude, reserved primarily for the most hardened criminals, the most intractable slaves, and the most hated prisoners of war. The mine is the day-to-day actualization of man's image of hell—dismal to the eye, stunting the body and spirit, a deadened inorganic world, a treacherous cavern that demands pure mindless toil. "Field and forest and stream and ocean are the environment of life: the mine is the environment alone of ores, minerals, metals," writes Lewis Mumford.

. . . In hacking and digging the contents of the earth, the miner has no eye for the forms of things: what he sees is sheer matter, and until he gets to his vein it is only an obstacle which he breaks through stubbornly and sends up to the surface. If the miner sees shapes on the



walls of his cavern, as the candle flickers, they are only the monstrous distortions of his pick or his arm: shapes of fear. Day has been abolished and the rhythm of nature broken: continuous day-and-night production first came into existence here. The miner must work by artificial light even though the sun be shining outside; still further down in the seams, he must work by artificial ventilation, too: a triumph of the "manufactured environment".

The abolition of mining as a sphere of human activity would represent, in its own way, the token of a liberatory technology. That we can point to this achievement already, even in a single case at this writing, presages the freedom from toil implicit in the technology of our time. The first major step in this direction, at least so far as the coal industry is concerned, was taken by the continuous miner, a giant cutting machine with 9-foot blades that slices up eight tons of coal a minute from the coal face. It was this machine, together with mobile loading machines, power drills, and roof bolting that reduced mine employment in areas like West Virginia to about a third of the 1948 employment levels—at the same time nearly doubling individual output. The coal mine still required miners to place and operate the machines. The most recent technological advances, however, replace the operators by radar sensing-devices and eliminate the miner completely.

By adding sensing devices to automatic machinery we could easily remove the worker not only from the large, productive mines needed by the economy, but also from forms of agricultural activity patterned on modern industry. Although the wisdom of industrializing and mechanizing agriculture is highly questionable (I shall return to this subject at a later point), the fact remains that if society so chooses, it can easily automate large areas of modern agriculture, from cotton-picking to rice harvesting. We could operate almost any machine, be it a giant shovel in an open-strip mine or a grain harvester in the Great Plains, either by cybernated sensing devices or by remote control with television cameras. The amount of work needed to operate these devices and machines at a safe distance, in comfortable quarters, would be minimal, assuming that a human operator were required at all. It is easy to foresee a time, by no means remote, when a rationally organized economy could automatically manufacture small "packaged" factories without human labour; when parts could be produced with so little effort that most maintenance tasks would be reduced to the simple act of removing a defective unit from a machine and replacing it by another, a job no more difficult than pulling out and putting in a tray; when machines, in short, would make and repair most of the machines required to maintain a highly industrialized economy. Such a technology, oriented entirely toward human needs and freed from all considerations of profit and loss, would provide humanity with an abundance of goods unprecedented even by modern Western standards of material affluence. The machines at man's disposal would eliminate the *ponos* of want and toil, the penalty inflicted in the form of denial, suffering and inhumanity exacted by a society based on scarcity and labour.

In these circumstances, the issues raised by a cybernated technology



would be transformed from the satiation of man's material needs to the re-integration of society. It would be our responsibility, now, to determine how the machine, the factory, and the mine could be used to foster human solidarity, a balanced relationship with nature, and a truly organic community. Would our new technology be employed on a large scale, based on a national economy and vested in giant industrial enterprises? This type of industrial organization—an extension, in effect, of the Industrial Revolution—would require a centralized system of national planning, the delegation of authority to economic and political representatives with strategic, decision-making powers—powers strengthened by the control they exercise over a large, socialized industrial plant, national in scope and anonymous in character. Large-scale industry by its very nature is the breeding ground of bureaucratic modes of administration, be it privately owned or under “workers control”. To the degree that it is socialized in the regressive sense that it transcends the human scale, it becomes the strongest material support for the centralized, authoritarian state.

Or does the new technology lend itself to small-scale production, based on a regional economy and physically structured on a human scale? This type of industrial organization tends to place all strategic economic decisions in the hands of the local community, with its popular assemblies and with its technical boards clearly within the purview of the individual communitarian. To the degree that material production is decentralized and localized, to that degree is the primacy of the community asserted over national institutions, assuming that any develop to a significant extent. Primary authority belongs to the popular assembly of the community, convened in a face-to-face democracy; the authority of the assembly is qualitatively strengthened by the fact that it has exclusive command over all the material resources of society.

The question, in effect, is whether society would be organized around technology or whether technology would be organized around society. Our answer can be obtained only by examining the new technology itself with a view toward determining if it can be scaled to human dimensions.

#### **THE NEW TECHNOLOGY AND THE HUMAN SCALE**

In 1945, J. Presper Eckert, Jr., and John W. Mauchly of the University of Pennsylvania unveiled ENIAC, the first digital computer to be designed entirely along electronic principles. Commissioned for use in solving ballistic problems, ENIAC required nearly three years of work to design and build. The computer was enormous. It occupied 1,500 square feet of floor space and weighed more than 30 tons; it contained 18,800 vacuum tubes with 500,000 connections (these connections took Eckert and Mauchly two-and-a-half years to solder), a vast network of resistors, and miles of wiring. The computer required a large air-conditioning unit to cool its electronic components and it broke down often or behaved erratically, entailing time-consuming repairs. Yet by all previous standards of computer development, ENIAC was an electronic marvel. It could perform 5,000 computations a second, generating electrical pulse signals that cycled at 100,000 a



second. None of the mechanical or electro-mechanical computers in use at the time could approach this rate of computational speed.

Some 20 years later, the Computer Control Company of Framingham, Massachusetts, offered the DDP-124 for public sale. The DDP-124 is a small, compact computer that closely resembles a bedside AM-FM radio receiver; together with a typewriter and memory unit, the entire ensemble comfortably occupies a typical office desk. The DDP-124 performs over 285,000 computations a second. It has a true stored programme memory that can be expanded to retain nearly 33,000 words (the "memory" of ENIAC, by contrast, progressed according to preset plug wires and lacked anything near the flexibility of present-day computers); its pulses cycle at 1.75 billion per second. The DDP-124 does not require any air-conditioning unit, it is completely reliable, and it creates very few maintenance problems. It can be built at a minute fraction of the cost required to construct ENIAC.

The difference between ENIAC and the DDP-124 is basically one of degree rather than kind. If we leave aside their memory units, both digital computers operate according to the same basic electronic principles. ENIAC, however, was composed primarily of traditional electronic components (vacuum tubes, resistors, etc.) and thousands of feet of wire; the DDP-124, on the other hand, relies primarily on microcircuits. These microcircuits are generally very small electronic units—squares a mere fraction of an inch in size—that pack the equivalent of many of ENIAC's key electronic components.

Paralleling the miniaturization of computer components is the remarkable sophistication of traditional forms of technology—a degree of sophistication that yields ever-smaller machines of all types. To cite one example: A fascinating breakthrough has already been achieved in reducing the size of continuous hot-strip steel rolling-mills. A typical mill of this kind is one of the largest and costliest facilities in modern industry. It may be regarded as a single machine, nearly a half mile in length, capable of reducing a ten-ton slab of steel about six inches thick and 50 inches wide to a thin strip of sheet metal, a tenth or a twelfth of an inch thick. A hot-strip mill runs the steel slab through scale-breaker stands, roughing stands with huge vertical rollers, and a series of finishing stands. The entire installation, including heating furnaces, coilers, long roller tables, and buildings, may cost in excess of 50 million dollars and occupy 50 acres. It produces 300 tons of steel sheet an hour. To be used efficiently, a continuous hot-strip mill must be operated together with large batteries of coke ovens, open-hearth furnaces, blooming mills, etc. These facilities, in conjunction with hot and cold rolling mills, may cover several square miles. It is a modern steel complex, geared to a national division of labour, to highly concentrated sources of raw materials (located at a great distance from the complex), and geared toward large national and international markets. Even if totally automated, its operating needs and management far transcend the capabilities of a small, decentralized community. The type of administration it requires is essentially national in scope. Its economic weight, in effect, is thrown in support of centralistic institutions.



Fortunately, we now have a number of alternatives—in many respects, more efficient alternatives—to the modern steel complex. We can replace blast and open-hearth furnaces with electric furnaces. These are generally quite small and produce excellent pig iron and steel; they operate not only with coke as a reducing agent, but also with anthracite coal, charcoal, and even lignite. Or we can choose the HyL process, a batch process in which high-grade ores or concentrates are reduced to sponge iron by means of natural gas. Or we can turn to the Wiberg process in which reduction is achieved by the use of carbon monoxide and a little hydrogen. In any case, we can eliminate the need for coke ovens, blast furnaces, open hearth furnaces, and possibly even solid reducing agents.

But the most important step in the direction of scaling down the size of the steel complex to community dimensions is the development of the planetary mill by T. Sendzimir. The planetary mill reduces the typical continuous hot-strip mill to a single planetary stand and a light finishing stand. Hot steel slabs,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches thick, pass through two small pairs of heated feed rolls and a set of work rolls, mounted in two circular cages, which also contain two back-up rolls. By operating the cages and back-up rolls at different rotational speeds, the work rolls are made to turn in two directions. This gives the steel slab a terrific mauling and reduces it to a thickness of only one-tenth of an inch. Sendzimir's technique can be regarded as a stroke of engineering genius; the small work rolls, turning on the two circular cages, are given a force that can only be achieved by four huge roughing stands and six finishing stands in a continuous hot-strip mill.

What this means is that the rolling of hot steel slabs requires a much smaller operational area than that occupied by a continuous hot-strip mill. With continuous casting, more-over, we can produce steel slabs without the need for large, costly slabbing mills. Taken altogether: Several electric furnaces, the use of continuous casting, a planetary mill, and a small, continuous cold-reducing mill, occupying little more than an acre or two, would be fully capable of meeting the steel needs of a moderate-sized community. This small, highly sophisticated complex would produce an extremely high grade of steel and involve substantially lower heat costs and scale losses. Without automation, it would still require fewer men to operate, even if we account for its lower output level, than a conventional steel complex. It could reduce lower grade ores more efficiently and with less difficulty. And finally, since the planetary mill produces a shiny and clean strip for cold rolling merely with high-pressure water, it eliminates acid-pickling and the need to dispose of waste-pickling liquor—a major source of stream pollution caused by conventional steel plants.

The complex I have described is not designed to meet the needs of a national market of the kind that exists in the United States today. It is suited for meeting the steel requirements of small- or moderate-sized communities and industrially undeveloped countries. Most electric furnaces produce about 100 to 250 tons of molten iron a day, compared with new large blast furnaces that produce 3,000 tons daily. A planetary mill can roll only a hundred tons of steel strip an hour,



roughly a third of the output of a continuous hot-strip mill. Yet the very productive scale of our hypothetical steel complex constitutes one of its most desirable features. Owing to the more durable steel produced by our complex, the community's need to continually replenish its steel products is appreciably reduced. Since the complex requires ore, fuel, and reducing agents in only small batches, many communities can rely on local resources for their raw materials, conserving the more concentrated resources of centrally located sources of supply, strengthening the independence of the community itself vis-a-vis the traditional centralized economy, and reducing the expense of transportation. What may seem to be a costly, inefficient duplication of effort that could be solved by a few centralized steel complex would prove, in the long run, to be more efficient as well as socially more desirable.

The new technology has produced not only miniaturized electronic components and strategic alternatives to centralized forms of production, but also highly versatile, multi-purpose machines. For more than a century, the trend in machine design moved increasingly toward technological specialization and single-purpose devices, reflecting the intensive division of labour that tightened its grip around industry. The operation was subordinated to the product. In time, this narrow pragmatic approach "led industry far from the rational line of development in production machinery," observe Eric W. Leaver and John J. Brown. "It has led to increasingly uneconomic specialization. . . . Specialization of machines in terms of end product requires that the machine be thrown away when the product is no longer needed. Yet the work the production machine does can be reduced to a set of basic functions—forming, holding, cutting, and so on—and these functions, if correctly analyzed, can be packaged and applied to operate on a part as needed."

Ideally, a Leaver and Brown drilling machine would be able to produce a hole small enough to hold a thin wire or large enough to admit a pipe. Machines with this operational range were once regarded as economically prohibitive. By the mid-1950's, however, a number of these machines were actually designed and put to use. In 1954, for example, a horizontal boring mill was built in Switzerland for the Ford Motor Company's River Rouge Plant in Dearborn, Michigan. The boring mill would qualify beautifully as a Leaver and Brown machine. Equipped with five optical microscopic-type illuminated control-gauges, it drills holes smaller than a needle's or larger than a man's fist. The holes are accurate to a ten-thousandth of an inch.

The importance of machines with this kind of operational range can hardly be overestimated. They make it possible to produce a dazzling variety of products in a single plant. A small- or moderate-sized community using multipurpose machines could satisfy many of its needs for a limited number of goods without burdening itself with underused industrial facilities. There would be less loss in scrapping tools for the older single-purpose machines and less of a need for single-purpose plants. The economy of the community, in effect, would become more compact and versatile, more rounded and autarchal

than anything we find today in industrially advanced countries. The effort that goes into retooling machines for new products would be enormously reduced. Retooling would generally involve changes in dimensioning rather than in the design and type of machine required for the job. This might merely mean changing the drill in a boring machine or the cutting tool in a lathe. Finally, multipurpose machines with a wide operational range are relatively easy to automate. The changes required to use these machines in a cybernated industrial facility would generally involve changes in circuitry and programming rather than in machine form and structure.

Single-purpose machines, of course, would continue to exist and they would be used for much the same function they have today: the mass manufacture of widely used non-durable goods. At the present time we have striking examples of highly automatic, single-purpose machines, often small installations, that can be employed with very little modification by decentralized communities. Bottling and canning machines, for example, are compact, automatic, and highly rationalized installations. We could expect to see smaller automatic textile, chemical processing and food processing machines after decentralized communities are established. A major shift from conventional automobiles, buses and trucks, to electric vehicles would undoubtedly lead to industrial facilities much smaller in size than existing automotive plants. Many remaining centralized facilities could be effectively decentralized by making them as small as possible and sharing their use among several communities.

I do not profess to claim that all of man's economic activities can be completely decentralized, but the majority surely can be scaled to human and communitarian dimensions. *It is enough to say that we can shift the overwhelming weight of the economy from national to communitarian bodies, from centralized bureaucratic forms to local, popular assemblies in order to secure the sovereignty of the free community on solid industrial foundations.* This shift would comprise a historic change of qualitative proportions, a revolutionary social change of vast proportions, **unprecedented in man's technological and social development.**

Part II of "Toward a Liberatory Technology" will be continued in the next issue of Anarchos. It will contain material on the ecological use of technology and technology for life.





## **BUENAVENTURA DURRUTI**

Born on July 14th, 1896, in Leon, one of nine children; father, railway worker. At fourteen enters railway workshops as apprentice. Compelled to leave Spain after suppression of railway workers' strike of 1917. Returns after three years of exile in Paris and enters anarchist movement. Organizes expropriations of banks with Ascaso; funds used for union activities, anarchist publications, and Ferrer schools. Personal income obtained exclusively as workingman. Together with Ascaso assassinates reactionary cleric, Cardinal Soldevila of Saragossa; flees to Latin America, then to Europe. Arrested in Paris for attempted assassination of King Alfonso of Spain; spends year in French prison. Returns to Spain in 1931, after Republic is declared; arrested after insurrection in Figols and deported to Africa. Returns again to Spain, where he is hounded by police and jailed repeatedly. On July 19th, 1936, personally engages in barricade fighting in Barcelona against generals' revolt. Mobilizes anarchist militia column of 15,000 Barcelona workers and marches to Aragon front, carrying social revolution throughout Catalan countryside. Although elected "commander" of the column, lives as ordinary militiaman at the front, without privileges or ornaments. After stopping fascist advance in Aragon, goes to aid of Madrid with 3,000 anarchist troops in November, 1936. Killed on Madrid front - November 20th, 1936.

"We went to defend our libertarian ideal. We fought for a better life, our hearts filled with human desire."

--Manifesto of the Durruti Column

Durruti at  
the front

**ANARCHISM . . .**

Where the influence of political power on the creative forces in society is reduced to a minimum, there culture thrives the best, for political rulership always strives for uniformity and tends to subject every aspect of social life to its guardianship. And, in this, it finds itself in unescapable contradiction to the creative aspirations of cultural development, which is always on the quest for new forms and fields of social activity, and for which freedom of expression, the many-sidedness and the continual changing of things, are just as vitally necessary as rigid forms, dead rules, and the forcible suppression of ideas are for the conservation of political power. Every successful piece of work stirs the desire for greater perfection and deeper inspiration; each new form becomes the herald of new possibilities of development. But power always tries to keep things as they are, safely anchored to stereotypes. That has been the reason for all revolutions in history. Power operates only destructively, bent always on forcing every manifestation of social life into the straitjacket of its rules. Its intellectual expression is dead dogma, its physical form brute force. And this unintelligence of its objectives sets its stamp on its representatives also, and renders them often stupid and brutal, even when they were originally endowed with the best talents. One who is constantly striving to force everything into a mechanical order at last becomes a machine himself and loses all human feelings.

It was from this understanding that modern Anarchism was born and draws its moral force. Only freedom can inspire men to great things and bring about intellectual and social transformations. The art of ruling men has never been the art of educating and inspiring them to a new shaping of their lives. Dreary compulsion has at its command only lifeless drill, which smothers any vital initiative at its birth and brings forth only subjects, not free men. Freedom is the very essence of life, the impelling force in all intellectual and social development, the creator of every new outlook for the future of mankind. The liberation of man from economic exploitation and from intellectual, social and political oppression, which finds its highest expression in the philosophy of Anarchism, is the first prerequisite for the evolution of a higher social culture and a new humanity.

--Rudolf Rocker



**NEWS BRIEFS . . .**

On February 8, 1968, Octavio Alberola, a well-known anarchist militant, was arrested in Brussels and imprisoned in the Foret prison. Alberola has taken part in all the campaigns for political prisoners which have been undertaken by the Spanish anarchist youth organization (the FIJL). He organized the press conference in New York after five young Spanish anarchists were arrested in Madrid for trying to kidnap the American military attache as a protest against the repressive situation in Spain in the presence of American military bases on Spanish soil. The FIJL requests that letters and telegrams of protest be sent to the Belgian Minister of Interior, rue de la Loi, 6, Brussels, and to the Belgian Ambassador in Washington, D.C.

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James Cain has formed the Insurgency Anarchist Association in "an attempt to organize a continental-wide, libertarian association of Anarchists for correspondence, communication (a sharing of ideas) and propaganda (a confrontation of people in our society with libertarian alternatives and ideas wherever possible)." He requests that all Anarchists in North America write to him for further information and/or dialogue. James W. Cain, Insurgency Anarchist Association, 323 Fourth St., Cloquet, Minn. 55720

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A Free Community is taking shape in Washington, D. C. coalescing around housing co-ops and involving workshops, a newspaper, political organizations and more. For a report see The Washington Free Press of February 20, 1968 (3 Thomas Circle, Wash. D. C.) or contact Rick Margolies of The Institute for Policy Studies (1520 New Hampshire Ave NW, Wash. D. C.)

**. . . ANARCHIST PUBLICATIONS**

The Anarchist Revolutionary Calendar for 1968, a superbly illustrated job prepared by Chicago anarchists, is now available for sale. Please request price and/or copy from Solidarity Bookshop, 745 Armitage Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60614

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Anarchist publications in English:

Black Mask, P. O. Box 512, Cooper Station, New York, N. Y. 10003

Bulletin of The Seattle Group, 1815 18th Ave., Seattle, Wash. 98122

Anarchy (monthly) and Freedom (weekly), two British anarchist periodicals,

Freedom Press, 17a Maxwell Road, London, S. W. 6, England

Anarchist literature is also available from Freedom Press (write them for a list) and from Solidarity Bookshop (send them 10¢ for a ten page anotated catalog).

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ANARCHOS No.1 contains:

Revolution in America by Robert Keller  
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Revolutionary movements, we believe, can no longer limit their tasks of spreading consciousness simply to the critique of society. Critique must also pass over to the vision of a sweeping reconstruction of a nonrepressive civilization, to a developing utopianism based on the objective, material possibilities at hand. The future must take on a palpable life in the present. Thus, revolutionary movements can no longer attack the misery of the ghetto and modern urbanism without offering a liberating vision of a free human community, of a new polis. They can no longer attack the spectacle of a false existence — the rule of men by commodities, of real human relations by bureaucratic, hierarchical ones — without evoking a new vision of daily experience and social solidarity. They can no longer attack the repressive quality of private life — the patriarchal family, the authoritarian socialization of the young, the substitution of learning by conditioning — without offering a new vision of free association between sexes, generations, and the fullest self-management of personal life as well as social life.

Revolutionary theory can no longer be separated from revolutionary practice. The revolutionist, we believe, must not only fight for the revolution; he must live the revolution to the extent that it is possible within the limitations of the existing society. In seeking to change society, he can no longer avoid making the changes that are needed in the reconquest of his own being and his own relation with other human beings. By the same token, the revolutionary movement must try to mirror the society it seeks to achieve — internally and in its relations with the external world — if only because it cannot separate itself from the society it seeks to achieve and must dissolve into that society when its particular organizational functions become general social functions. There can be no separation of the revolutionary movement from the revolution. There can be no “theory” that rises above the living realities of action. There can be no refuge for ideas that avoids the mundane efforts of social struggle. The revolution must be lived not only in theory but in practice, in private life as well as social life, in the possibilities of the future as well as the actualities of the present.

The immensity of future possibilities evokes from the established order comensurable reactions in defense of the past. Just as the situation today is posed with a revolutionary advance into a liberated, nonrepressive civilization, so too it edges on a return to a savage, totalitarian barbarism. The revolutionary movement must recognize the need to obtain the highest degree of consciousness in every unfolding situation; it must gauge its activity with the utmost sensitivity. Never before has there been a greater need for coordinating day-to-day practice with a probing insight; for anticipating developments, for spreading consciousness, above all for achieving a clear sense of direction — theoretically and practically — in events to come. It is to this urgent task that we address ourselves in ANARCHOS and in which we invite your support and participation.



## Future Issues of Anarchos will Contain:

Toward a Liberatory Technology  
The Limits of the City  
Social Study in Genocide  
Toward Free Communities  
The Tactics of the Antiwar Movement  
Post-Scarcity Anarchy  
Marxism and Anarchism  
The Dialectic of Revolution  
Guerrilla Warfare: Myth and Reality  
The Liberation of Everyday Life  
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