erything and nothing for time which thrives on its own carcass, a time frozen in eternal transition and the image of space. The combat of anxious subjectivity grows from the same time against the fragmentary suspension of contradiction, Its own time is gradually exposing the spectre of culture and the concrete prospects of transforming everyday life. What can sway more power than the mystery of transcendence shrouded in the quantifiable metaphysic of mere, insensible things? Only the negation of the producer…

13

Throughout the twentieth century, the apparent radical alternative to the private conditions of reification merely consists of its political substitution. Rising in economically backward areas, it replaces the total transcendence of existing conditions with their undifferentiated, totalitarian concentration. The bureaucratic counterrevolution ultimately permitted the global formation of the spectacular society. It founded a patent formula of opposition derived mechanically from the repressive discipline of existing culture and political economy. Leninism is a borrowed dogma, the infantile revolutionary theory of the primitive proletariat and the highest critical variation on the reformism of traditional capitalism. It merely realized the "bourgeois State minus a bourgeoisie." What was going to be done, ever since 1905, in synthesizing all the repressive laws known to modern civilization, gave itself away even in theory, in underestimating the part played by cultural and political superstructures in the making of history. According to the radical intelligentsia which failed to seek its own dissolution in the revolutionary victory of the masses, a conscious society never arrived. As a consequence, contemporary society can now synthesize its own plastic models of revolt, parcels of rebellion or parcellized rebellion–no matter, as the youngest, most zealous merchandise, the spectacle of youth.

Diversion Number 1

Jon Horelick

June 1973

creation has disappeared. The slightest genuine glance at the historical past, the revolutionary seizure which founded the existing order, evokes a living contrast which is inadmissible within the absolute immediacy required by the prevailing order whose apparent trans-historical presence alone preserves its fragile decay. This contrast, the radical stage of the young bourgeoisie, had already shaken the world at its roots in breaking the fixed order of the land, in penetrating history with the irrevocable model of political economy and the shattering of the Church and natural isolation. Faltering, however, the free individual associations announced by Capital penetrated the concrete only half way. The eternal was routed by the partial invasion of irreversible time, but time which soon became a new eternity of partial changes. The release of social, that is to say, creative time slowly became a museum piece. The flow of fresh machinery and knowledge which could initiate the foundations of a new society blossomed on the topography of abstraction. In the transformation of the starting-point, the domination of nature, into the last objective available to history, ideology was born.

12

Modern class society has included everyone in the vast multiplication of productive forces which never acquire their social consequence. Only the space identifiable with merchandise has enlarged–the vanishing space of urban survival–in which thoughts are poor compensation. No matter how strangely, the process of dead time goes on through the river banks of the spectacle. Rather than having dissolved, the myth of a beyond has descended to the terrestrial paradise of merchandise: the spectacle. The spectacle is to merchandise what the Church was to god, and always the twain shall meet. The irrational has collided with reason to blend altogether the hybrid principle of the quantitative. Men are free finally to engage in their own prehistory. Here, culture means ev-

9

The renewal of practical theory ranks without doubt among the most powerful forces in social space and time, touching upon everyone and everything, with the force of radical denunciation capable of ruining all the designs of the specialists of power and with a whole application which can permanently disarm the modern State.

10

Within the flattened universe of merchandise, everyday life is built and consumed without ever being controlled. As all productive operations, ruling culture is now visibly what it has always been in essence: a rich power holding poor reference points whose products bear their beauty and value in evading an extravagant use among many. The glory of the arts has always risen with the fall of social action. An earlier age, whose permitted commerce only released artistic impulses to production, an age so much more eloquent and inaccessible, is forefather of present conditions where interpretations all at once have become chores, monopolized around an all inclusive display of things. From the art of mythical pieces to the art of commonplace images, from the art which sprang out of the market embryo to the art which immaculately conceives the new miracles of merchandise, separation reigns.

11

For the modern organization of poverty, the trifles of integral culture play an important part in prolonging its regime of archaic laws according to their fantastic rituals and listless celebrations. In the weary surplus of products–the dazzling affairs of pacified consumption–every trace of the historical event at the source of

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7

The global automation of the modern division of labor intensifies the pulse of contradictory production. The technology of estrangement installs at one and the same time the mechanical clash within the relations of production, class against class, in the name of the overall system of class power, and the social forces which can effectively recognize that clash, manhandle contradiction, in order to destroy and finally transcend alienated relations. The central antagonism between the contemplative stature of work which eats away at the present and the unitary setting of playful construction which can invade the future, this is fast accelerating. Today there are the appearances of technology, appearances which work for indignity against the technology in the making, the technology of concrete man.

8

At present, technical innovations are harnessed merely to invent new clusters of repression. The present technology continues to be monopolized around the refinement of division and the mental degradation of labor in the pay of mathematically disfigured priorities. Just as profoundly, however, the advanced moment of alienation is by nature a furnace in which extreme dissatisfaction burns the fuel of insurrectionary wisdom. The spreading intellectual tasks of modern labor, which composes a normal feature of highly evolved industrialization, tends to invest in revolutionary criticism itself an immediate, direct impact previously unknown to modern history; as format for the sabotage of modern capitalism by the new proletariat.

mercial propaganda, recycled, and are now translated to the majority of alienated as thought disinfected of perspective and substance, fragments of information, innocuous commentaries. Society, culture and life have been modernized to fit stillborn values, an infancy of reason, whose prestigious image is gargling in the happy mouth of the status quo.

6

In their isolation, the more people observe, the less they know. The more culture absorbs their days, the less they are. On the graft of the cultural spectacle, mass observation simply induces geometric variations on the passive properties of men. The modern spectator consumes the dead center of appearances which attract him everywhere, as a viewer who loyally acknowledges each positive feature of alienated power. He is the common denominator of banalization, relative master over his own inaction. He receives a fabulous array of views which appraise everything he initiates, after he obeys. At the same time, the alienated comforts imposed by spectacular ideology amass in the end the kind of disenchantment which can no longer be fathomed in series nor amended in dollars and cents. The irritations imposed by a leisure time consumed in passivity inspire fresh opposition, in search of its total history. By nature, the commodity form works consistently against itself as much as for itself in spite of the weathered framework of its contradictory development. Thus the delirious plunges of the intellect into the hypnotic persuasions of exchange-value have simultaneously nurtured the radical distillation of an unmerciful critique, an enlightened contempt. This contempt is rising against false needs and their modes of justification as carrier of a new conception of comfort: the comfort of being oneself in a world organized according to desire, a world commanded by subjectivity.

ing presence of men in places and time. Under the heavy artillery of commodities, the personal and collective autonomy of individuals runs the risk of disappearing from history in its first signs and symptoms without ever synthesizing as history. Through the rapid degeneration of impassioned, sensible experience, the spectacular image of merchandise scatters the geometric rhythm of history and banalizes the will to live. History is submerged in the surroundings of its opposite. Even the faintest historical murmurings, contained at first in the new intellectual discoveries of our time, turn with their amplification by prehistory against themselves. But the disappointment encountered in everyday life tends to expose everyday life itself as a disputable reality.

4

How nicely are thoughts dehydrated and packaged for the production and consumption of a space which always remains closed and a time which simply passes. Market culture is at once the most vulgar and the most rudimentary phase in the accumulation of false consciousness and accordingly hierarchical power. Coca Cola is certainly less exotic than the Madonna. Yet for that, so much more subtle must its enunciations become.

5

There is no quarter given by the logic of merchandise in its quest for an interchangeable world of subjects and objects enveloped by a monologue without limits. To the principle of suffering known of the ecclesiastical order have been added the material and contemplative rights to a marginal social situation. To be cultured means entering some critical operation within the hierarchy. The miserable laws of commodities are at the source of enrichment. Yesterday's so-called lofty conceptions have been transplanted to com-

pressure day by day, the awareness of existing facts in their totality calls at the same time for the practical resistance to these facts according to a general reversal of perspective: revolutionary criticism.

2

The whole truth remains the one outstanding innovation beyond the reach of alienated history and the totalitarian domination of the fragmentary; an epoch whose partial achievements only fulfill the particular interests of ruling classes. With the collapse of unitary myth, when the separate categories of thought and action have shattered into others and the entire space-time of individuals is dominated by the economy, the consciousness of man is reduced to the consciousness of things. As Webster's Third edition tells us, consciousness as a thing is reification. Today, reification monopolizes the planet as well as each lived moment without geographic or socio-political limits. Men are now as foreign from the modern world as they are familiar with its contemplation. For us, the one arena of thought which withstands reification is negative. Once mistaken for "Spirit," the truth of thought is nothing unless it is revolutionary and partakes directly in its practical verification; as ruthless criticism which, while not predominant, is an indispensable poetry of the future. The modern experiment still has to be realized in regard to man: that is to say, the free construction of everyday life. At one and the same time, the free construction of everyday life constitutes the destruction and the realization of known culture.

3

Presently, the mass production of culture on a universal scale corresponds to the totalitarian reduction of subjective space, the wan-

> "The rational is the highroad where everyone travels and no one is conspicuous."
>
> – Friedrich Hegel

[Unnamed section]

Twilight of Idle

> "We are against the conventional form of culture, even in the most modern state; but evidently not preferring ignorance to it, the petit-bourgeois common sense of the butcher, neo-primitivism. There is an anti-cultural attitude which favors an impossible return to old myths. We are for culture, of course, against such a trend. We line up on the other side of culture. Not before it, but after. We say that it's necessary to realize it, by surpassing it as a separated sphere; not only as a domain reserved to specialists, but especially as a domain of specialized production which does not directly affect the construction of life–even the life of its own specialists."
>
> – Number 8, Internationale Situationniste

1

So far we see only the poor aspect of modernization, the brutal infiltration of fresh sources of life by ideology. What has become a systematic–as opposed to unconscious–lie in power has fallen into conflict with its unofficial past and therefore consciousness itself. Official thought no longer bears the faintest residue of quality but instead has become an absolute quantity of lies. It fills every second with the omniscience of authority which knows everything because it appears in everything. After having suffered under their

Photo caption: Intransigent inmates at Attica meet for the last time with negotiators.

> "Only where the State ends, there begins the individual who is not superfluous; there begins the song of necessity, the unique and inimitable tune. Where the State ends, look there, my brothers! Do you not see it, the rainbow and the bridges of the superman?"
>
> – Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra
>
> "And here these men are languishing in jail, being treated abominably, while the 'great men of the future' are coining thousands in the name of revolution, and are already dividing up their future governmental posts."
>
> – Jenny Marx, A Letter to Weydemeyer, Jan. 10, 1852
>
> "If it had not been for this thing, I might have lived out might life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph."
>
> –Bartolomeo Vanzetti

The Poverty Of Ecology

No matter how severely the advanced modes of accumulating Capital may seem to slap the fundamental laws of merchandise, they do not spring from the violation but the excessive application of these laws. The commodity reappears as a spectacle, in excess of all expectations concerning its temporal limits, annihilating its own origins in utility and the spacious premises for its self-eulogy: that is to say, the entire planet. The sacred code of merchandise, the code of exploitation, intends to rebuild the world of alienation all over again out of its very debris.

The real and the imaginary life of merchandise are at opposite poles: the one spells an over-equipped misery and routine, the other an unfinished, primitive struggle for survival. According to its public image, the raw historical accomplishment of the old bourgeoisie–the physical domination of nature–is transubstantiated into the mysterious realm of unachieved possibility. After decades of putrefaction pile up with that domination, and the social alienation engendered by it, Capital looks in its fierce resistance to time for an impulse to reproduce itself through the conquest of this very decay. In a word, natural alienation is no longer natural.

The menacing congestion of modern surroundings is the extreme sign of our time surrounded by abstraction. From Shanghai to New York and from Paris to Prague, urban space bears nothing but the vertical point of view of hierarchical power. The universal relationship between glass buildings and the corporate empire is not accidentally but essentially spectacular. The commodity at work is necessary scenery, to be watched and visualized, because it cannot be lived. The city consumes at once the formless relativity

of modern science and the abstract inertia of art, in exile of people and imaginative collaboration. As the thin walls of the urban complex exclude human privacy in order to trample the desire to meet, to speak and act, the departures from mass congestion as well as the points of seclusion issue nothing but packaged quiet. One cannot travel free of the tourism of spectators because all vehicles and all places belong to the hierarchy. In the space dominated by illusion, urban spectators encounter the very illusion of space. Repressive urbanism is characterized by "dead air" and bogus games, crowds gazing religiously at the competition of star-experts. The Astrodome autographs urban life, towering over the field of play. Man becomes a spectator by default of space, in a time confined to sacrifice and isolated vacations.

Social alienation is the malicious culprit behind all discomfort and tyranny existing in the spectacular city. After all springs of regeneration are exhausted, social alienation becomes an immobile energy which saps everyone of an authentic ease and in seeming urgency lures us toward its superficial dissolution. Today, global capitalism issues critical designs in regard to the rehabilitation of social space, space whose capacity to accommodate exploitation was exploited in turn, in order to prolong the massive conditions of economy. As known work holds no obligation outside the production of objects whose value lies in their exclusive ability to require others, popular designs, as urbanism and as ecology, seek nothing but an immaculate emptiness, an extended survival. The specialized division of the world, according to classes, can induce various rationalizations within the irrational framework of its material organization as well as various ideological alternatives–starting with state bureaucratic capitalism–but it cannot rationalize life itself nor impassion it. The bad joke on contemporary ruling classes is this plain and simply: they too are choking on their spectacle.

The long delay in the full deployment of technical innovations toward human emancipation can be traced to the false consciousness

time, the Italian students have reached an extremism of action although the usual Maoist-Stalinist ideologies still linger. Now, every few hours, riot squads in Milan roar out to an embattled college or high school. At the university of Milan, red flags fly indefinitely.

In Poland, the famous "December Revolt" which rose three years ago left nothing as it was before. After having combated their own natural enemy, Gomulkaism, which was simply the liberal bureaucratic lie in power, nothing any longer mediates the ongoing insurrectionary tide of the workers and intellectuals. In the northern ports, the workers have begun to renew their own revolutionary stance in organizational terms. They battle the Trade Union Congresses, the prisons which withhold many of their comrades of "December" and various measures of the bureaucracy. After encountering forty years of totalitarian ideologies, from Stalinism and Nazism to Gomulkaism, the popular masses have already seen the bureaucratic exclusion of Gomulka for what it really was: the fall of an elite, not a power.

Something has changed in the world since 1968 from which there will be no turning back. Of course, much more is needed in order to realize a different world. Very early in the game, we warned of the inevitable "dismemberment of revolt which does not recognize itself for what it is" among the workers as well as the students. Certainly, we were correct then to acknowledge the future futility of the American workers revolt "outside the appropriation of all power by the Workers Councils." And this clarification arrived rightly before the workers had even acted. Three years later, after the workers have actually returned, it is equally obvious that nothing is any longer the same, that the workers, once having appeared to be this or that, now only need to know what they have already done. The fate of America is again subject to the course of action chosen by the workers. The opponents of the spectacular society are slowly coming to realize that they are finished with the spectacle.

March 19, 1973

tered into a violent phase of confrontations with its own regime, although it was mixed with reformist nationalist overtones. In November, the rebel workers of a chocolate factory in Beirut clashed with their local police. In Israel, there are rashes of wildcat strikes. Despite the almighty Histadrut, fifty-two per cent of all work stoppages are unofficial in Israel. The categories of labor involved have ranged from truck drivers to doctors. Last Autumn, the port of Haifa remained crippled for several weeks. On January 1st, the flickerings of a general strike gripped Tel Aviv. At the same time, the revolt of Israeli youth from school and the military (in which at least 20,000 youths cannot be accounted for) has stirred official alarm. For this, the Israeli government imports 150 soldiers at a time from the Gaza Strip, after their experience against the Arabs, in order to patrol the tense streets of Tel Aviv. The Inspector General of police has revealed the historical dialectic emerging in Israel. "There are more guns around and more people who have experience in using them."

In Italy, general revolutionary crisis has continually evolved. For nearly four years, no social equilibrium has existed there. "A country on the outskirts of reason" cries out the bourgeois Italian press. Italy is known to be the "creeping May" since the regional insurrectionary upheavals in the South, in Battipaglia and Reggio, with their democratic assemblies and their armed territorial occupation. The wildcat strike movement of the industrial north continues to grow with the workers of Pirelli and Fiat in the lead. In Milan, Turin and elsewhere, the workers have at times invaded their deserted workplaces as they have been known to destroy the cars of management. The government bomb provocation of December 14, 1969 seemed at first to pacify the Italian proletariat. Three years later, however, the means of production remain filled with agitation and disruption according to national strikes by industry and general strikes by the day. The unions and inseparably the Stalinist and Socialist parties have sponsored the fragmentation of resistance. But they have not sponsored its uninterrupted frequency. At the same

ness which transpired within the first international revolutionary movement.

In the historical hiatus, alienated industrial society inherited the very techniques of delay, that is to say, numerous partial critiques as sociology and ecology which graft the new opiate of reformism onto the old myth of eternity. The new proletariat suffers today according to conditions that were tragically pursued in a revolutionary manner by its ancestors and which could never be pursued again except as a comedy. Nothing exists in the atmosphere except techniques of integration, techniques which resolve certain conflicts while creating others from them. In a way, the advancing crisis of industrial society is the product of too much survival rather than too little. Here, men are found risking their own prehistory in the consumption of the most fundamental elements (as food or oxygen) after the most absurd refinement and diversification has been invested in them and only them up to the point of near extinction. Wherever modern technology multiplied in force without releasing social equality–which is everywhere–the perspective of survival became inseparable from the tyranny of the State and the banalization of life. Even from the highest citadels of state power, shining over their mutilated territory and torn subjects, the key bureaucrats talk ecology. Nixon, for example, played the computer-copy of Robert Frost in his first State of the Union Address saddened by the unfortunate failure of Capital in former days to expropriate hygienically.

From the publicity of governments to the melodrama of militantism, the redemption of existing conditions in all that is in question ecologically. Insofar as the ecological perspective pouts faithfully against prevailing social hazards from the playpen of separated thought the fetishistic powers of capitalist technology are effectively as natural for it as the false consciousness of men. In merely contesting the external effects of Capital–apart from the relative significance of every oppressive detail such as the automobile–the essential ridicule of reification is masked again. Ecology accepts

the old world of classes, so much so that it defies its very existence, in the spirit no less of modernity. The ecologists have merely conveyed quantitative disapproval toward the guardians of state power, which crushes all traces of the living, in reproaching not their technocratic rationale itself but their failure to apply it.

Following in the footsteps of christian priests marching to colonized regions to stamp out primitive tribes, these new missionaries expect to rinse the urban proletariat clean with natural enzymes. When the smoke clears–not from gunfire but a sanitary explosion of technology–everyone will frolic admiringly around the electronic maypole in thanks for the new balance achieved between men and their price. In the noise filled desert of the city, maddened wanderers are flocking not to the most subtle but the most backward mystification. Unlike the political and syndicalist attachments of aspiring "do gooders," the ecologically deluded receive no material compensations. There are only spectacles: to follow Bookchin beyond faded anarchism into an atmosphere of "ideal stimuli" ordered nicely on the sunset of a system, an "ecosystem," and the fresh air of reconditioned technology fashioned according to the behaviorism of a "Greek polis"; to swarm around McCluhanism and its police esthetics for mass communication where youth nibbles on the images of technology and the technology of images as the supine voyeur of domesticated capitalism; to become a romantic aeronaut in the rocketship of Fullerism soaring above the stratosphere of banalities in order to install a global satellite cafeteria with a menu of non-radioactive television, dome be-ins and macrobiotic vending machines.

The ecologists have only interpreted the conditions of the modern city. But the point is to transform them. The great challenge for modern capitalism lies in the relocation of Capital itself according to urban ideology. From the redistribution of technology to the walking distance to work, less inhabited regions and zones are expected to become filtered, scaled down versions of existing cities streamlined according to the isolation and separation which are

mer of 1969, when the rules of direct democracy were genuinely applied by the insurgents. After the long strike of the coal miners two winters ago, the fury of the longshoremen last July reached violent proportions against both the State and the General Transport Union with an intensity resembling that of the populace of Derry, Northern Ireland. This February, the gas workers, as part of the nationally timed one-day strikes organized by the unions, left their workplaces. But having struck their work, they continued by striking against union authorities and refused to return after a day.

An insurrectionary general strike broke out in the province of Quebec, Canada last May. It was the first of its kind in North America. Street battles developed in many of the thirteen cities involved. A minister's home in Hauterville had been firebombed. During four hours, the city of Sept-Illes remained in the hands of the popular masses. And in several cities, the workers captured key radio stations.

In Australia, the workers of South Clifton occupied the mines last spring after their closing by the owners. They demanded nothing less than "recognition of our ownership of the South Clifton Colliery."

The blacks of South Africa are in revolt, since the radical insubordination manifest by the dock workers in 1972. Despite a stiff penal code as well as possible deportation from urban areas, the black workers of Durban introduced the first wildcat general strike of its kind in February, 1973. Police reinforcements were flown in with the subsequent arrest of one hundred striking municipal workers. A spontaneous rally of three thousand workers around the factories of Hammersdale–outside Durban–led to a clash with police which was dispersed in the end by tear gas and dogs.

In Bolivia, the workers of La Paz barricaded themselves last winter in the textile factories, in spite of declared martial law, "until the ultimate consequences."

In Israel and Lebanon, long after the fighting of 1967, the Civil War has begun. Similarly, the student movement in Cairo en-

nocuous citizen, the part-time gentleman. An extension of such life separates men even from their own alienation in the name of the most absurd values, the most artificial sacrifices. The new proletariat must finally annihilate itself, its false consciousness, in order to become itself. It must at once destroy and realize the hoarded riches of the bourgeois world in consciously reconstructing all aspects of everyday life.

The long reign of capitalist domination, whose legacy is the bureaucracy and its triumphant counterrevolution, is rooted in the ultimate failure of the traditional workers movement. This movement stopped long ago, vanquished by its own alienated forms of struggle. As opposed to the former hierarchical parties and industrial unions, the authentic aspect of the revolutionary past as an unmediated power is now sealed up within the pure present imposed by the spectacular commodity. It is at first forgotten history in exile. Today, specialists of revolt hope to spread the bureaucratic relics of the past, even by resurrecting them through its living, unconquerable aspect which is the Workers Councils, an aspect that acknowledges no power other than its own. It is exactly this revolutionary aspect which found its own thread of development in America, in spite of the most brutally mystified conditions from which the contemporary workers emerge as direct heirs. The American workers inherit an unfinished history which begins with the occupation of the Cincinnati breweries, the armed seizure of the mines in Telluride, the Workers and Soldiers Councils of Seattle…This history of the revolutionary proletariat and its form, the Councils, has found realization nowhere as yet, from Peking to Paris and from Moscow to Washington. Yet the modern class struggle returns everywhere, ever since the revolutionary occupations of France and the anti-bureaucratic crisis of Czechoslovakia in 1968, a struggle which, through trial and error, gradually approaches an international revolutionary perspective again.

From the shores of England, wildcat strikes are in the vast majority ever since the confrontation at Port Talbot, Wales, in the sum-

characteristic of them. Capitalist plannification hopes to revitalize the image of the neighborhood against its actual historical foundation in restless immigrant workers forcibly brought together as particles of an anonymous mass. The cities sprawled with traffic and congestion as they were brimming over with producers. Today, nothing more is sought than what now exists erratically: the reinforcement of that quieter immobility witnessed ephemerally in passing suburbs with their miniature apartment complexes–restrictive mixtures of park and schoolyard–their familiar police, their identical houses and linear streets. The automobile is expected to go away, but the family will remain. At the same time, the desperation of bureaucratic logic, as logic of desperation, is evident in the level of mercantile concentration which actually plagues urban centers today even at their outlying perimeters. In the flight of Capital toward suburban areas, in pursuit of vast caravans of migrating consumers, the new industrialists wonder "who will be the last one to turn out the lights?" in the old centers. This rhetoric affirms no doubt the expansion of the present conditions of the city rather than the desertion from them.

Photo caption: Solid Smog. Los Angeles Mayor Sam Yorty holds a ring made of compressed particulate smog. The compressed smog is a golden color with glittering flecks in the synthetic stone of almost gem-like hardness.

– *International Herald Tribune*

The eucharist of ecological salvation is the "new town" which originated in England and now finds wide reception everywhere in Western Europe and in America. "Many," writes Vance Packard, "were designed specifically to take the pressure off nearby major cities and are not especially innovative in terms of community building."

The very first experiment with the new town in Lentchworth, in 1920, revealed the general social repression which is contained in it: the planners failed to include a single pub in their original designs. At best, the author (no less inconsistent than he is intellectually

honest) can locate the example initiated in Columbia, Maryland, which on the one hand "does not permit billboards or utility poles" and in which greenery, woodland and traffic-free villages are brought into existence and yet on the other hand still basks in the splendor of "pooled religious facilities" and space again "financed by private enterprise," by a "dozen different builders"..."There is nothing," said one resident, "we have control over." Overall, the urbanistic-ecological formula is evidently a modest proposal for extinguishing the awareness growing among modern survivors, a species less predictable than ever, by way of a superlative count of environmentalism. On their horizons, an ideology without denomination awaits the next revolution.

One no longer knows the oppression of hunger but the poison of consumption. The material conditions which reify people are those which also expose them to the most fantastic forms of ridicule in which the accidental fatalities of particular individuals parody the mechanical banalization of lives day by day. Modern spectacular society reached the summit of its absurd necessity as soon as the majority of spectators were exposed to the biological hazards of primitive survival in technical comforts. The risks of annihilation known to the past are suddenly entangled in the annihilation of risks once assured by the present. The submission of the spectator is laughably shortchanged. The few comforts he knew and more often pursued erode in him in all their agony, depriving him of the halo of alienation at bargain prices. The price of his enriched survival becomes nothing less than his absolute dedication to the spectacle, as earnest libertine of insipid consumption and cheerful altar boy of pure spectacles. The spectacle is the home of the new puritans of excess.

The long sleep of revolutionary class consciousness brought about the present conditions of non-life. The dictatorship of the commodity now abuses men to the extent that they are forced to walk, travel, eat, drink, sleep and breathe miserably. At best, individuals sometimes find themselves freely active in functions. In

to let the dead bury the dead. They will not begin themselves until they have stripped away all the habitual costumes of the past. But the workers, here and elsewhere, have not intended to disguise their real feelings. Their intentions themselves are to be concrete as always. At the level of an unspoken praxis the workers waver intensely between the intervals of insubordination and acceptance in which their rebellion is their only real, ephemeral vacation from atrocious routine. Whereas they appear to fall back behind their point of departure, they are in truth only just beginning to locate the revolutionary point of departure, the situation, the relations and the methods under which their own social activity can become significant. While the workers hardly know as yet the prodigiousness of their goal, the creation of history to be lived as their own, it is the consequences of their own actions which drive them on.

The existing world of the spectacle is nothing but a reproletarianized world. It is this industrial world which founds itself contradictorily on masses of workers initially related together on an international scale by the division of labor only to be separated again in the very production of their own dispossession. The modern workers remain producers not of the community but commodities as they become not men in the concrete but spectators consuming themselves in its alienated images. At the same time, the very contradiction between their own social power and the private property of the global hierarchy furnishes them with the real, living capacity which can reverse inverted material organization at its roots. The authentic importance of the workers, against the parasite merchandise, lies uniquely in their ability to destroy their own class themselves, their momentary presence in an alien world, their old selves as workers. Insofar as the capitalist world has reified the social product in separation from the workers, the workers themselves cannot aim for the mere appropriation of existing conditions, that is to say, the products, the means or positions abandoned by separate power but rather for their uninterrupted transformation. Today, proletarian life is extended to the banal consumer, the in-

An utter parody seems to confront the workers (Stalinists posing as a black workers council, Trotskyists attempting to make others construction workers, academic theorists parading as radical america, socialist revolution and the black and red…) and yet at the same time such nonsense places a real barrier in their path: the actual decompression of revolutionary popularization by parody and mimetism. Of course, there are far graver hazards, in which the force of habit, exceeding that of the trade union bureaucracy and even the armed detachments of the State, is perhaps the deadliest hazard of all. The tradition of dead generations weighs heavy on the minds of the living. The wildcat strikers of the post offices succumbed at last to the voting machines, the very "closed ballot" which they reviled, and their own attraction to customary convenience–the provisions of a meeting hall or free cups of coffee–allowed the political return of the trade union bureaucrats. The insurgents of Cleveland elected "strike leaders" who continued in their individual names to speak for them…The radical students of Santa Barbara and Ohio went so far as to destroy banks and university buildings but without ever bothering to make any general goal explicit, even the "end of the university" … the black youths who bravely held the sporting goods store in Williamsburg, Brooklyn still combated the menace of authority in the shadow of religion…Old shadows of economy and culture linger beside fresh forms of action, actions which for all they have not said, are nevertheless radical of themselves. At such a time, the workers do not speak for themselves because they have borrowed at first the language of the past, its terms and its battle cries, a past that starts from and leads directly back to the immediate present. Today such inchoate rebels have nothing to derive from the past but a feast of stale crumbs as their talent for emancipation carries all its stakes in the future. The earlier revolt of the workers required an amnesia in regard to the future in order to drug itself in its immediate survivalist demands. In order to arrive at their own content, the modern workers must define both their past and future in order

their social activity, they are subjected to the time of the laboring spectator. In their natural activity, they no longer feel themselves to be anything but an animal. What is natural cannot become human; what is human cannot become natural. The ecological future is nothing but this: to recover satisfactory animal functions, separated from the sphere of all other possible activity, as the sole and ultimate end of being alive. Nevertheless, the ideological effort to intercept opposition before the revolution is derived from a real moment of great distress for all ideology. The shadows of the struggle for survival recovered in the modern spectacle in order to decompress the next challenge to the conservation of class tyranny cannot disguise the actual depth to which their origin in the present has already become visible. If the proletariat which is everywhere, is to tear out of the sky and the earth the excrement of spectacular merchandise, it is not to restore the survival of nature and natural survival. It is to subject the space and time of the society of classes to its conscious desires and dispose once and for all of its lie.

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News of Disalienation

"In a country as untouched as America, which has developed in a purely bourgeois fashion without any feudal past, but has unwittingly taken over from England a whole store of ideology from feudal times, such as the English common law, religion and sectarianism, and where the exigencies of practical labor and the concentrating of capital have produced a contempt for all theory which is only now disappearing in the educated circles of scholars–in such a country the people must become conscious of their own social interests by making blunder after blunder…But the main thing is that things have started moving, that things are going ahead generally, that the spell is broken. And they will go fast too, faster than anywhere else."

– Frederick Engels, 1886

As the fragmentary representations of rebellion crumble away in their illusion, the authentic subjects of revolutionary change have begun to manifest their real historical existence as a class, even at first to their own unawareness. In America, diverse yet equally powerless strata have simultaneously opposed the same alienated conditions known to all modern society. Following the most fierce and at the same time the most mystified social antagonisms, all these strata at once have directly combated the colonization imposed on all their lives by the hierarchy of commodities. Such simultaneity provides the principle substance required for their unification in the near future as an indivisible whole: according to a new proletarian consciousness.

Beyond all the stage lights and cameras, what is the specter which haunts the hierarchy of Wall Street and Washington? This

scribing to any of the possible ideologies of their superiors. Why has that happened? It is because the most advanced of the old capitalisms can best realize in itself the more and more bureaucratically rational survival which the classical ideologies, Stalinist and Trotskyist alike, have always withheld as their unique goal. In light of the fact that the past workers movement was defeated by various hierarchies which had advocated intermediary economic objectives, any reservoir of such authoritarian reformism today hardly interests those beyond the pale of economic poverty who know and refuse its source.

The workers' disinterest in the "student revolution" contained, even in the moment of their own resignation, the most understandable reasons. The swaggering anarchist or marxist militants who glibly reproached the American workers for being "fascist" or "petit-bourgeois" were willing almost monosyllabically to trade in one advocacy of imperialism for another. Feverishly, they ran to support the external terrain of an ideology which the workers directly encountered and rejected more than thirty years ago. After proclaiming the virtues of the enemies of their enemy, the totalitarian bureaucratic States, they were surprised to find themselves alone. The popular trend of black nationalism existing at the university, among other ghettos, resembles the bureaucratic reformism once imposed upon the workers by their own ascending elites. In the American university, it is not so much the social origins as the goals of the students which are so often petit-bourgeois. It was in view of their duplicity, as prospective cadres of advanced capitalism, that their bureaucratic revolutionary dreams could fall just as they had swelled: perfunctorily. Naturally, as they were convinced that the workers could never independently attain the stature of their vast intellectual awareness, the most eloquent ideologists among them (casting faithfully from their Leninist scripts) are more than ready to think for the workers. The students are at the rear of proletarian revolution. They have disappeared and the workers are here.

the American producers are again surmounting their own passive relation to the commodity, the commodity which is nothing, after all, but the abstract embodiment of their stolen labor.

Modern technology and its products have appeared to do everything independently only so far as man, their producer, has been able to control virtually nothing. As the necessity of wage-labor fades from our furtive history, the hierarchy struggles to multiply the fetishism of commodities in the partial time of its present. The slightest contempt conveyed by the workers toward the reigning spectacle whose job is to fetishize commodities leaves nothing as it was…The most visceral gestures, as the queues of Queens subway riders and hordes of Long Island commuters that suddenly refused to pay their fare or the disappointed lines of patrons which attacked the owner of the Lugoff theatres, acknowledge such an irresistible contempt. In such ways, the workers have shown that it is they who can live without the commodity system while it is the commodity system which cannot survive without them. For no other force exists within the restraints of modern society which can ever unite the means of production with the goal of life. It is the wage and commodity forms which have grown old. Others have become useless. The fresh hostility toward the dehumanization of merchandise, toward activity, toward life as merchandise, emerges not from classical conditions of economic poverty but conditions of uncontrolled, alien abundance. Far beyond the mere redistribution of material wealth, such hostility expresses the search for the complete reinvention of abundance in each and every one of its aspects (profound and trivial alike). Modern capitalism accidentally grants the workers one concession in this direction which is "the luxury to consider their time." It is our hope that the workers' actions will one day be influenced by revolutionary criticism, insofar as it is criticism appropriated as their own.

If the workers still have not spoken in their own voice, they have already rejected the voices of others. Since the bitter lesson of the thirties, the American workers most noticeably have avoided sub-

trifle reality which by official estimate consists of 80,000,000 people? This devowed [sic] citizenry which to the eyes of Nixonianism is already known to "threaten the legitimacy of the State?" What is this mute shadowy figure which panics its own official spokesmen with the winds of "rioting" "not only in the ghetto but throughout the city?" Who are these flaccid, fashionably clothed consumers who having encountered the false needs and alien pursuit of spectacular commodities now suddenly demand "to be treated as human beings?" Who are these ghosts of antiquity whose insubordination met on several occasions police and army detachments which were resisted in kind? Who are these anonymous men apt to wonder "which is worse," "the federal government or the unions" and daring in some cases even to call themselves "anarchist." Why it's the workers: nearly all of you!

After thirty years of isolation, silence and decay, the American workers are slowly beginning to recover their authentic historical work, the work of negation. Such subversive work does not rise to the level of economic struggle and reform. The rebelling workers have written their name in the tremors of production and hardly its adjustments as their own movement contains nothing less than life in the making: the end of wage-labor, merchandise and classes. At the very moment that overdeveloped capitalism has modernized its oppression, when the prolonged nullity of work is brimming with contemplation and alienations have multiplied in abundance, the workers themselves form an opposition more complete and more conscious than ever before in modern history. In the most advanced industrial country, ruling ideology prefers to represent the worker within an ever more marginal identity, in denial of that menacing estrangement at work which affects nearly everyone, from the classical sector of labor to white collar personnel and lower professional layers. From exactly this source, all the old forms of oppression and misery have derived their brutal diversification and refinement. Alienation has only become richer since man the worker has become man the consumer bound body and

mind to the endless pursuit of alien objects in exchange for his extended labor and mute passivity. For almost three years, the stereotyped image of conformist, unthinking workers has been shattered by the real workers as they put in question a way of life which has always separated them from themselves as much as from each other. Having allowed no quarter, the subordination of the workers to the exchange-value of commodities forcibly places them in the clear light of total self-emancipation. From exactly those conditions which simultaneously involve and repel them at the margins, the workers are drawing the genuine desire for life rather than survival. With them, radical effort no longer disintegrates inevitably in futility, defeat and fratricide.

Where, you ask, has all this furtive, unacknowledged movement begun? Well, it emerged on the least familiar battleground: the post offices. Between the 16th and 21st of March, 1970, the wildcat strikers of the post offices throughout the country acted for the first time of their own accord after having evicted, at least momentarily, all the trade union bureaucrats from their struggle. Their suppression of "business mail" formed an elementary rebuttal of both the private proprietors of Wall Street and the public administrators of the machinery of state power. At that time, we affirmed the genuine revolutionary capacity of the workers in view of the fact that such an initial trouble could already bear so many radical features. We wrote then…"As the postal workers launch an assault against that which assures the permanence of wage-labor (the trade union) the struggle against the total injustice of class society is itself introduced. The ruling order has responded forcefully not only to the temporary disruption of the capitalist economy and the momentary defiance of state power, but to the initial sign of an autonomous struggle of the workers for direct power." Indeed, theirs was the slightest and yet at the same time the most profound gesture of dissent–the refusal to work. In a matter of days, the State planted thousands of National Guardsmen in the main centers of New York in order to retrieve its desanctified property and bear

some white supporters furtively entered Wounded Knee under the eyes of the F.B.I. and federal marshals by way of back paths and amidst diversionary tactics. In holding the area, armed skirmishes have ensued. Helicopters carrying newsmen and oncoming video trucks have been fired upon. The Indians' disgust with the passive spirit of their own Council and its leaders equals their contempt for the bureaucracy in Washington. In speaking to reporters, one Indian spat on the ground and muttered: "Governments, I'm sick of governments." No matter how symbolic the "last stand" may seem to be at Wounded Knee–and in spite of the ambiguity of its expectations and its organization–the direct appropriation of one valley by three hundred rebels forms an insurrectionary penetration of a space monopolized by bureaucratic centralization.

The recent actions of the workers have illuminated the revolutionary theory of our times. In advancing their own protest against prevailing conditions beyond legal limits, the workers show that they are no longer integrated into modern capitalism and its logic of reification. Their own resistance injects the raw rebuttal of everything others have said about them, from professors and journalists to movie stars and militants. The mute nature of their past has vanished. In the present moment of insubordination, the stars to which the workers once paid homage, baseball players and television personalities alike, now follow at their heel imitating their own dissident behavior, their own reality, which pits itself directly against the fictitious power of commodities. Not long after the summer of 1969, when the ambiguous radicalism of the Movement, caught and reified in hierarchical division, withered away in the sheer repetition of its boredom, these more profound enemies of the spectacular society started to rally against the most significant of obstacles: the blackmail of survival. Insofar as the workers will no longer remain an innocuous gear within the machinery of affluence, their action has rejected the given terms of that survival, namely, an increasingly reified labor and a leisure time consumed in passivity. As they try to pose their own dissent apart from external controls,

Blease Montgomery, a poor white from North Carolina, announced to the world the collective possibility of the majority of Americans: "I want everyone to know we gon' stick together, we gon' get what we want or we gon' die together. '

If the demands of the 1,200 convicts altered in the course of six days, it was because the prisoners themselves had changed with the act of revolt. Under the transparent truth which grew from their liberated collaboration, all stereotyped dogma shattered and dissolved: the compulsive lie publicized before the cameras by attorney Kunstler, to which he confessed much later, concerning "amnesty" guaranteed to the inmates by "Third World Countries just around the corner"; the opportune reticence and withdrawn support of Black Panther officials from an independent minded, undogmatic rebellion, etc. From the opposite side, the equal disillusionment of many relatives of slain guards followed in turn. "Somehow we felt that the name Rockefeller was written on every bullet," said one woman. Irrevocably, the arms of free speech and the free speech in arms had spread. Without doubt, the Popular Manifesto which appeared at the outset of the seizure constituted the first revolutionary declaration of the new proletariat written in its own hand against the modern State: "We, the inmates of Attica prison, say to you, the sincere people of society, the prison system of which your courts have rendered unto, is without question the authoritative fangs of a coward in power."

Evidently, the American workers can do no less in responding to the reified terms of their own dispossession than those social layers that are confined from everything, even the urban milieu of consumption, the very milieu which isolated them under the lie of cultural superiority. The American Indian Movement, after the riot in Custer, North Dakota, on February 8, 1973, reached the significance at Wounded Knee of an armed struggle for territorial emancipation. For twenty days, the Indians have forcibly occupied the area of Pine Ridge after looting the trading post there of as much food and arms as they could find. Indians from all over the U.S. and

down on the strikers. This disclosed both the military foundations of the working milieu, of commodity relations, as well as the proprietary interests submerged in the State. Who else but the very masters of politics and economics would know the hidden danger of major retardations in the process of commodity production, so much so that they threatened to impose direct military constraints before the slightest discontinuity falling within their jurisdiction, even against a possible walkout of railway workers when the most conservative grievances were at stake. In New York, the government suppressed an instance of revolt which having freed itself of authoritarian discipline was no longer predictable.

Starting on April 1, 1970, the truck-drivers of Cleveland occupied the streets and main thoroughfares in and around the city for the duration of thirty days. This was the first mobile occupation of urban space of its kind. The truckers' promise "to shut the town down" spread from the roadblocked highways of Florida to an armed clash in Teamsters' headquarters in Pennsylvania. The local media witnessed a "workers' riot" which cost 67 million dollars to Cleveland alone while the drivers had the first glimpse of their own self-management. The means deployed in the course of their immediate battle represented at the same time their best goals, goals brought factually to immediate light without the slightest knowledge. In deciding to sustain the circulation of food and medicine, for example, the drivers were taking an initial part in regulating the affairs of an entire city. During thirty days the insurgents succeeded in deploying direct methods of sabotage and physical violence without ideology. Not only had confrontations occurred on the roads as well as at the depots but there were numerous instances in which trucks had been dynamited. In using more violent methods, the rebels were playing with the possibility of their power and an end to compromise. As they withheld the main arteries of circulation from commercial passage, the drivers were freeing their environs of exchange-value. After the trucks with their various shipments were cleared away, it was no longer the mas-

sive image of capital but rather the sudden gathering of workers throughout the city which commanded the cards of production, of everyday life. At this moment, the city opened to the producers–rather than the hierarchy–in streets long deprived of their opposition and thus the presence of almost everyone. The rebels of Cleveland moved about their streets as freely as the insurrectionaries of Watts once roamed them. The quality of their response was without doubt insurrectionary. "My son should see me now," said one driver holding up a V-sign, "marching down Euclid Avenue." Accordingly, all the banalities of the street, even the slashing of tires, suddenly carried universal significance. At the moment one hundred men could be summoned to any point in Cleveland within an hour by way of "prowl patrol cars" with radio transmitters and a system of "chain telephone calls," liberated communication and spontaneous organization had become concrete.

The revolutionary moment often finds its nature disclosed in the extreme hostility manifest in turn by all its adversaries. In Cleveland, tough mindedness bellowed from every quarter of power, from the press to the municipal government. In insisting that such antagonism was anomalous, the editors of the Plain Dealer depicted the antagonists themselves as iconoclasts for whom the police represented "cossacks or pigs"; various manufacturing interests hollered vociferously about the grave chance of economic extinction involving all the Capital of the city; black liberal mayor, Carl Stokes, heeded their plea in requesting the same federal troops which once crushed the black revolt of Detroit, Los Angeles and Newark, which emerged on Kent State days later; and various militant groups could imagine nothing better than the nationalization of the trucking industry at the very moment the nation's troops were actually arriving in Cleveland. What else could happen? What else but a military alternative existed in face of an independent formation of workers which could burst out in laughter when learning that Teamster leader Presser attributed their radical activity, from the grave of McCarthyism and Stalinism, to "a hard core of 200 or

ward of sectors insofar as they are most dependent on the State as well as the integrated trade union and therefore acclaim their ideology with enthusiasm. They acquire all the legal security which can assure them of their wage-labor, threatened by advancing technology, as exclusive hereditary property. Rather than opposing the specific relations of production, they support the retardation of productive forces in the most archaic language of bourgeois ideology: religion, race and nation. To the contrary, the majority of worker-consumers face the same predicament as all those separated entirely from the marketplace. For them, their very employment within modern capitalism–an employment increasingly devoted to manipulative ends–encompasses as much degradation as social security. The lumpenproletarian and the modern worker face similar problems, problems of life rather than survival. Their action transforms their problems into burning ones. While the worker has opposed the active nature of his scarce time, merely producing his own confinement, the lumpenproletarian has revolted against the passive nature of his abundant time, of just killing his time.

The unity between the two became visible within the very prison walls of Attica. There, the well known rebellion of September 9, 1971, organized itself internally according to Workers Coalitions. And there in the very words of the *New York Times*, "racial animosity had been submerged in class solidarity." This was the first occasion in history that the clandestine discussion of sociology led to insurrection from which rebelling convicts manifest not the most backward but the most advanced awareness of present conditions and the prospects for changing them. Despite the least favorable circumstances, namely, a handful of police hostages utterly dispensable to the State, the prisoners brought into the open a great lesson in direct democracy, so much so that on the very morning of the 14th, hours before the police invasion, they cared to revoke their old delegates and appoint more radical ones. Among prisoners varying from former chemical engineers, university students and high school dropouts to industrial workers and unemployed,

capitalism resembles that of the blacks." Indeed, there are many within the present rebellion at work that passed through several other struggles to arrive at their own. The fresh level of resistance is not contrary to that of the recent past but its very center. Their similarity is manifest in the deficiencies as much as the strengths of the present. From those who pillaged merchandise come those who suppress the machinery of alienation. Who could ignore the genuine likeness between the contempt of the Berkeley students for the cultural hierarchy and the scorn of the wildcat strikers for the trade union bureaucracy? No, there is hardly a lapse in the progression of practical radical activity from the young rioters hurdling the fences at the Newport Festival and the masses of spectators vandalizing Pittsburgh after the World Series to the workers defending their highways in arms. Among the potentially advanced strata of modern capitalism, the thousands of youth who circumvented the poverty of the student milieu expressed in their search for new relations, sexual and otherwise, the first great refusal of the necessity of labor. Inevitably youth rediscovered an ugly necessity. At the same moment, the struggle at work encountered its youth and accordingly its responsibility toward the free reconstruction of all values and behavior imposed by an alien present. Neither the resistance to working on the part of the "new lumpenproletariat" nor the revolt at work can ever come to anything apart from one another. The one could never find the way to realize its desires, to make its criticisms work; the other would reveal in its failure to live differently that it had never really rebelled.

The radical combatants of the spectacular commodity and alienated labor have recently conveyed their mutual reciprocity. In this, the bitter winds of racial separation are slowly dying away. Those construction workers who pummeled the war resisters at City Hall in New York under the coordinated instructions of their managers, owners and shop stewards represent the same minority which had the mercenary esteem of opposing the workers' battle against Standard Oil as scabs and provocateurs. They constitute the most back-

more communists?" In the last days of March, the National Guard bivouacked itself on the outlying highways of the area in order to recapture the lost arteries of the city. The first attempts to escort the passage of trucks in arms were themselves repulsed by groups of rebels, bricks in hand. The drivers were not risking their own lives merely in order to accumulate some additional commodities. They had won the terrain for their emancipation, if not that emancipation itself.

The following August, the toll booth operators of New York abandoned their positions on the bridges at the peak of the rush hour. Their own resistance immediately harmonized with the masses of working traffic which were thereby permitted to move gratuitously at will for more than a day. During the winter, the fuel deliverers in New York gave the key bureaucrat of their union a ruthless thrashing. At the same time, the street car drivers in San Francisco formed an immediate wildcat strike as soon as several drivers harassed by police had battled with them in the street. In March of 1971, the yellow taxi drivers ravaged a meeting hall in Manhattan in direct response to an impenetrable monologue fixed by their appointed bureaucrats with the support of vigilant goons. In June, the drawbridge mechanics, in spite of their official passivity, paralyzed the five boroughs of New York. They accomplished this by robbing one vital part from all the bridges to the horror and dismay of the oncoming corps of army engineers whose clumsy searches were of no avail. The workers surrounded the bridges. In Brooklyn, the Verrazano site remained under their control according to the force of an extreme ultimatum. In August, the telephone workers, known to bear a significant number of young dissidents that have started to band together in independent groups, effectively compelled their official delegates to initiate an unusually long work stoppage, lasting almost eight months. By virtue of the duration of the antagonism and at the same time a disastrous conclusion (an increase of 1 percent over the initial settlement), American Capital showed the incapacity to yield unlimited concessions at the very

moment that the workers manifest the equal possibility of taking the whole of the economy into their own hands.

From December 1971 to March 1972, the assembly line producers of Lords-town, Ohio, manufacturers of the Vega, ruthlessly disrupted the rhythm as well as the goal of the profit system. Noted for an average age of 24, these neo-luddites consciously sabotaged well over a half million cars. Their own act of immediate destruction repudiated at once the well known defects, hazards, and mortality built in to the company's schedule. Before the exasperations of economists and social psychologists alike, their uncompromising response disclosed "the wider issue of how management can deal with a young worker who is determined to have a say," where "wages are good" and moreover where the "pressure of unemployment had little effect" (N.Y. Times). From within the factories, the auto producers uncovered an initial unity between subversion and everyday life. In holding their machines hostage, they invoked the strict mandate of their delegates. This was done forcibly in their disruption of labor-management negotiations at will. Nothing less than a Council in embryo was developing in Lordstown. The workers of Lordstown succeeded again in transferring the objective time of production to the subjective time of the producers. The response to Lordstown spread as far as Burbank, California. Between April and September, 1972, the workers of Norwood, Ohio sustained the longest controversy ever with G.M. Starting on November 3, 1972, the television technicians, cameramen, lightmen and engineers subverted the C.B.S. network. In six cities, they challenged monopolized media for the first time. At Shea Stadium, as in Milwaukee and San Francisco, the television hands stopped the spectacle. Amidst skirmishes with police, main cables were severed by the strikers and the station was blacked out. There were at least three arrests in New York alone. To the surprise of millions of spectators, the passive entertainment of a football event met with sabotage, or better yet, sabotage had become an entertainment which here and there found the support of commentators and reporters. The

spell of the most incessant machinery of commercial conditioning and monologue had been broken. As recently as February 13, 1973, some of the transit workers in New York broke up a meeting of the mayor's "Watchdog Committee" where they prevented an exhibition of surveillance films.

In the same period, it's equally important to note, in the slow withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, the parallel movement of anti-military resistance which compelled the government to disband the civilian army and draft system. The critical awareness of the military hierarchy and the imperialism of the commodity reached its apex in the Navy last summer. The S.O.S. Movement (Save Our Ships) formed an elementary point of reference for diverse hostilities which multiplied spontaneously. On July 10, 1972, the carrier ship Forrestal was lit up by clandestine arson. In other efforts to suppress ship movements to Vietnam, the insertion of one paint scraper and two metal plugs in a main gear of the Ranger prevented the carrier from functioning. In September, the Enterprise failed to depart from San Diego without extreme trouble. In November, violent, anti-racist skirmishes broke out on two other ships, the Kitty Hawk and the Hassayampa. At that moment, both the Saratoga and the Cruiser were attacked by arsonists. The outrage conveyed by those in arms has truly enunciated the advanced nature of the modern class struggle which is developing.

The revolt of the American workers arises out of the contemporary period as the location for revolutionary opposition after the release of its time. As early as 1965, this merger of forces and places was already present in embryo in America. In "The Rise and Fall of the Spectacular Commodity Society" in Watts, the class context in which the insurgents had battled the logic of merchandise and defied the power of the State was already depicted by the Situationists when they wrote: "The blacks are not isolated in their struggle because a new proletarian consciousness–the consciousness of not being the master of one's life in the slightest degree–is taking form in America among strata whose refusal of modern

available funds for the organization of necessary tasks, (cleaning, babysitting, education, kitchen assistance, etc.); and a self-defense section. Each section is responsible to the plenary assembly; the revocable delegates, submerged in the principle of vertical and horizontal rotation, come together and regularly present their reports.

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To the logical commodity system, which encompasses alienated practice, the social logic of desires must respond with the practice it implies. The first revolutionary measures will necessarily have an effect on the decrease in hours of work and the largest reduction of servile work. The Councils will be concerned with distinguishing their priority sectors (food, transport, telecommunications, metallurgy, construction, clothing, electronics, printing, armament, medicine, comfort, and in general, the material equipment necessary for permanent transformation of historical conditions), reconversion sectors chosen by the workers as being worthy of subversion to the profit of revolution, and parasitic sectors for which the assemblies will have decided pure and simple suppression. Evidently, the workers of eliminated sectors (as offices, administration, industries of the spectacle and pure merchandise, will prefer 3 or 4 hours of freely chosen work per week within the priority sector to eight hours of presence every day in a workplace. The Councils will experiment with attractive forms of unpleasant tasks not in order to hide their drudgery but to compensate for it by playful organization and as much as possible in order to eliminate them to the profit of creativity (according to the principle, "work no, play yes"). To the degree that the transformation of the world will identify itself with the construction of life, necessary labor will disappear in the pleasure of history for itself.

14

At the stage where false needs govern every incident, culture materializes–beyond recognition–in a world of objects. Productive history, which first reduced man to a thing in order to conquer the rest of nature, at this point devotes all its intellectual energies to his limitless elevation in images. Under the direction of hierarchy, the prestigious expansion of technological innovations crumbles into calculated ridicule with a rainfall of absurd gadgets, prospective instruments of dialogue and social consciousness pursue the refinement of commodities which no longer transmit any use beyond their own, their exchange-value. Always, ever more affluent means are being supplied in order to multiply the limitations of experience, always, with the ebb of pleasant discovery amidst the foam of a functional boredom without end. Everyone and everything is subject to ideological technique inasmuch as ideology itself balances the scales of exchange-value best of all through the direct collusion of the modern masses in their own misery. The mass possession of cultural knowledge takes place with the collapse of use-value, after there is nothing left to be enjoyed apart from acquisition itself. Merchandise, meager heir to aristocratic events, locates its philosophy in the living room.

15

Ideological technique advances the neutralization of the lie with a new civility which allows it to become no more or less innocuous than any of the marginal phenomena mirrored on the screen. Every banality is founded on the lie. What else is the lie of progress but the great big lie succeeded by many little ones? Rival lies. from opposing political systems to star commodity rivalries, are doubling the potency of universal ideology. On one side, state capitalism can never rationalize the whole of existing production. The

bureaucratic class has justified and protected its ownership of "the Revolution" according to an absolute dictatorship over social behavior down to the last cultural detail. On the other side, private capitalism swiftly buys up cultural operations in order to exempt consciousness more than to convert it. The bourgeoisie establishes one principle, the freedom to sell and buy, around which the public at large and tattered intellectual elites are incited to choose their individual brands of irrelevance. Although revolutionary criticism simply finds room for expression in the mass media in inverse proportion to their "impact," the main stream of false consciousness is supported by the dogma carried in abundance itself. As ideology becomes pure information, false consciousness has descended to the level of repressive automatism. Even the surrealist experiment, having idealized its dream, its specialized language, became a technique of commercial advertising which invades our sleep as well as every waking hour. The enemy inherits every technique, every fallen experiment in subversion.

16

Up to now, the richness of ideas has never attained the stature of history to be lived, except, of course, for those notions which were inseparably -insurrectionary, at irrevocable odds with dominant ideology, i.e., the very mystique of thought "for itself." In addressing the deformed character of the industrial revolution, Marx remarked that both science and art had appeared to require the existing realm of private life (an area of time dominated by the exclusive consciousness of a privileged sector) in which misery functioned as the necessary contrast for their charms. This well characterizes the quandary of established intellect right up to the arduous pluralism of today. As late as the 1930's, when the gestures and sentiments of the limited cultural arena were well inoculated with triviality and opened upon vanquished masses the famous opponent

16

Generalized self-management can sustain itself only by developing the freedom lived by all. It is certainly enough to infer starting from its elaboration its preliminary rigor. From now on, such a rigor must characterize the revolutionary councillist organizations; inversely their practice will already include the experience of direct democracy. It is this which is going to tighten up the adherence to certain formulas. Thus, a principle like, "the general assembly is alone sovereign" also signifies that what escapes the direct control of the autonomous assembly revives through mediation all the autonomous varieties of oppression. Through its representatives, the entire assembly with its tendencies must be present at the moment of decision. If the destruction of the State essentially prohibits the repetitious joke of the Supreme Soviet, it must still guard what the simplicity of organization guarantees as the impossibility of the appearance of a neo-bureaucracy. Precisely the richness of the techniques of long distance communication, pretext for the maintenance or return of the specialists, permits the permanent control of the delegates by the base, the confirmation, the correction or the immediate retraction of their decisions on all levels. Telex, computers, televisions, belong therefore to the assemblies of the base. They realize their ubiquity. In the composition of a Council–one can undoubtedly distinguish local, urban, regional and international Councils–it will be a good thing that the assembly elect and control an equipment section destined to receive demands for supplies and to extend the possibilities of production; to coordinate these two sectors an information section, in charge of maintaining a constant relation with the lives of other Councils; a coordination section, upon which rests, to the degree that the necessities of the struggle permit, the enrichment of intersubjective relations, responsibility for demands of passionate satisfaction, the material assurance of individual desires, offering that which is necessary for experimentation and adventure, harmonizing playfully

zation of new everyday relations in order to prevent the extension of what an american police specialist calls "our nightmare", small groups of insurgents rising from the mouth of subways, shooting from the roofs, utilizing the mobility and indefinite resources of the urban guerilla to fell the police, to liquidate the servants of authority, to sustain riots and destroy the economy. But we do not have to save the managers in spite of themselves. It will be enough to prepare the Councils and assure by all means their self-defense. Lope de Vega shows in one of his works how some villagers, fed up with the orders of a royal functionary, killed him while he was asleep. They answered the judges charged with uncovering the guilty one in the name of the whole village, "Fuenteovejuna", a tactic which the asturian miners apply to impudent engineers although confusedly according to terrorist attachments. General self-management will be our "Fuenteovejuna". It is no longer enough for collective action to discourage repression (e.g. as one judges the powerlessness of the forces of order if, with the start of the occupations, the employees of a bank squander some funds). It is still necessary that it encourages progress toward greater revolutionary coherence. The Councils are the order facing the decomposition of the State, contested in form by the rise of regional nationalism and in principle by social demands. To the questions which it poses, the police can respond only by estimating the number of its dead. The Councils alone carry a definitive response. What prevents stealing? The organization of distribution and the end of merchandise. What prevents the sabotage of production? The appropriation of machines by collective creativity. What prevents explosions of anger and violence? The end of the proletariat by the collective construction of everyday life. There is no justification for our struggle other than the immediate satisfaction of that project; that which satisfies us immediately.

of the repression lodged within contemporary civilization, Freud himself, still defended the necessity of the old contradiction. Oppressive labor had to continue inevitably. And the human instinct "to play," creative spontaneity and sexual gratification, would not evolve within the everyday life of -unhappy humanity but within the sublime stacks of a "higher" cultural anthropology. Today the artifacts of everyday life are in full bloom. The arts accompany the extended exclusion of modern workers from their own production as supplementary compensation, after philosophy. The sphere of cultural expression is by no means open to wider participation and greater meaning but simply to a larger audience. There are more spectators. Contemporary art has not aroused everyday life but rather the compulsory domain of consumption, as "the ideal commodity which makes all the others sell." It became a spectacle. The art for artists, the criticism for critics, the science for scientists shows us a time inflated with spectacle, a time in which everyone has become the spectator.

17

As aristocratic society once concealed its domination and fractured interests, its sacrifice of the community of individuals to the honor of a few, through the unitary veil of christian myth, the spectacular society advertises social alienation in a fragmentary series of positive images. The incense of renunciation passes to the gaseous stench of banalization. Through the communicating vessel of reification, social alienation appears in the automatism of the spectacle as "interesting material" or "profound subject matter" for literature, museum galleries? auto shows, film festivals, television and group therapy–to the ever doubling passivity of everyone. Characters, like those of Godard, are suddenly drawn from the most ordinary contexts in order to arrive at even more ordinary tragedies: endless hallways, Coca Cola, Maoism, instant sui-

cide…The minuscule intoxication of shredded novelties sold by the caretakers of the once avant-garde cultural estate establish nothing for us but irony, ironies of life, irony as opposed to life. Indeed, all the elegant particularities of bourgeois settings have vanished except one. The artistic celebrities endure despite the downhill turn of creative values, and so much The better, Without any. In the arts, the topical "death of culture" enlivens a deadly culture as an ideal mirror of spectacular contemplation. The tragic dilemmas which grapple for the attention of the viewers reflect a time in which misery has become a commodity and the commodity a spectacle. The old world holds on to esthetics–with the esthetics of decay–against the creative power that will be released by global revolutionary change. The museum which is the modern city is glutted with purely nominal artists, pygmy interlocutors between the beauty of cash and the art free of artists. The proletariat alone can realize art.

18

In the calculated imprisonment of urban space, according to which modern architecture moulds its illusions, every scrap of commodity survival receives new importance. Every gesture, every habit, every exchange is dramatized in order to inspire altogether an endless multiplicity of spectacles. Whether fumigating body odors, broadcasting university courses or televising assassinations and counter-murders, the medium and the message of commodities impose one and the same destitution for everyone, item for item, the same shares of dead time, the same portions of cultural debris. Thanks to the mass production of advertisements, news and entertainments, spectacular survival can now offer a fuller, a richer and a more learned day's insignificance. The insignificant is noticeably over-equipped. Surely this is the time of the studious consumer, the informed slave, the mass curator of images.

14

Because they do not exercise any power separated from the decision of their members, the Councils tolerate no power other than their own. To encourage everywhere anti-state actions cannot be confused with the anticipated creation of Councils thus deprived of absolute power concerning their field of extension, separated from generalized self-management, necessarily emptied of content and ready to be stuffed with ideologies. The only lucid forces which can today respond to finished history with history to be made will be revolutionary organizations which are developing, in the project of the Councils, an equal awareness of the adversary to combat and the allies to support. An important aspect of such a struggle manifests itself before our eyes with the apparition of a double power. In the factories, offices, streets, houses, barracks, schools, a new reality is taking form, the contempt for bosses, an attitude which immediately forces them to scream for mercy. From now on this contempt must attain its logical conclusion in demonstrating, through the initiative of the workers, that the managers are not only detestable but useless, and that one can liquidate them even from their own point of view with impunity.

15

Current history won't be long to unleash, in the consciousness of the leaders as that of the revolutionaries, an alternative which concerns the two: general self-management or insurrectionary chaos; the new society of abundance or social disassociation, pillaging terrorism, repression. The struggle in double power is already inseparable from such a choice. Our coherence demands that the paralysis and destruction of all modes of government be indistinguishable from the construction of Councils; that the elementary prudence of the adversary would, with all logic, have to adapt itself to an organi-

strike and more or less secretly during work–to inaugurate the reign of gratuity by offering to friends and revolutionaries some products; in producing some gift objects (transmitters, playthings, arms, ornaments, diverse machines); organizing luxurious or excessive distributions of merchandise in department stores; to crush the laws of exchange and prime the end of wage-labor through collectively appropriating some products of work; in making machines serve personal and revolutionary ends; to depreciate the function of money by generalizing strikes against payments (taxes, rent installment buying, transportation, etc.); to encourage the creativity of everyone by setting in motion, even if intermittently but only under workers control, sectors of supplies and production and regarding the experience as a necessarily uncertain, perfectible exercise; to liquidate hierarchies and the spirit of sacrifice in treating the owners, managers, and union bosses as they deserve, in refusing militantism; to emerge everywhere united against all separations; to extract theory from all practice and inversely through the composition of pamphlets, posters, and songs.

13

The proletariat has already shown that it knows how to respond to the oppressive complexity of the capitalist and socialist states through the simplicity of organization exercised directly by all and for all. The questions of survival only pose themselves in our epoch with the preliminary condition of never being resolvable. On the contrary, the problems of history to be lived are clearly posed within the project of the Workers Councils both as positivity and negativity; in other words, as basic element of a unified and passionate industrial society, and as anti-state.

19

As Hegel revealed in a decisively revolutionary manner, pure thought is simply knowing alienation which attains the appearance of autonomy at the expense of its actual self-division. Like the solitary omniscience of the Brahman, contemplation constitutes nothing but a particularity in the extreme, miles away from the totality of experience which stands to be made. Thought which remains thought becomes an object of its own fixation whose truth reclines into abstract self-identity. In the trenches of alienated survival, the spectator represents the last Brahman on the face of the earth. The world of believing has shifted to the world of staring across a century of defeated revolutionary attempts. The world of thought and practice have merged in the eyes, the gay lights of abstraction. Certainly, the transformation of history in consciousness led to the consciousness of historical transformation. Heir to philosophy, proletarian revolution could only master the world according to its own truth. According to an ideology, this has never happened. Thought found structure by default of man. Philosophy came into the hands of Madison Avenue, Peking Review and Pravda, including, of course, the "Daily News" type travelogue portrayed by Castro's Granma with its trotskyist and surrealist admirers. Quantity has still not passed to quality, a century after Marx. The game which situates modern society is none other than competition, operating under diverse hierarchical specifications, everywhere. The rules are never egalitarian, the chances are never real. In one hemisphere, the alienated pursuit of money and goods is dominated by the past: the family and its holy property. In the other, the State's power is a new certainty, a certainty which regulates the insidious struggle for socio-bureaucratic status. The global dictatorship of false consciousness verges on no consciousness.

20

What are the ad men and cyberneticians designing within your contemplations? Unhappiness in the inevitable encounter with stark reality; instant contentment before the imaginary comforts and mechanical oppositions handed to you on a silver platter by the present world. With every ambiguous rejection of alienation, the consciousness of alienation fatally swells. Insofar as the values, thoughts and patterns of behavior imposed by an alien reality are hardly attractive any more in themselves, their habitual force alone must attend to most of the convincing. Ideology is thoughtless in its own climate. Worn thin and frail by the pains taken to prolong the surroundings of the irrational, surroundings which lack the slightest sense whatsoever, the dosage and application of ideology has stepped up intensively. As the hierarchy materializes more and more calculably in time, and becomes equally surmountable in turn, ideology constitutes the substance of commodities whose grossly fetishized laws can only survive through the oblivion of the producers themselves. The fallen credibility of all dogma has been compensated by the fierce changeover to subliminal techniques. Everyone is subject to the instant colonization of their time by the unilateral message of the spectacle, a message which removes them from each moment in order to fill the void with the image of their absence. Beyond the id, one is certain to stumble across another can of 7-Up. Ideological technique has become blatant: systematic conditioning and still more conditioning at every level. The devices of falsification themselves emerge from the following hypothesis. Either the rhythm of banalization will infect men with an utter disinterest in themselves as living subjects–not to speak of others–or drive them instead toward unconscious reactions; radical acts deprived of perspective; outrage possessed by ideology. Personal and collective escapism, jaded alienations, sinister inertia "for one and all" pave the absolute condition of spectacular existence. "Everyone is

10

It is one of the great merits of Fourier to have shown the necessity to realize immediately (and for us that is to say from the beginning of the general insurrection) the objective conditions of individual emancipation. For everyone, the beginning of the revolutionary movement must mark an immediate elevation of the pleasure of living; the lived and conscious entry into the totality.

11

The accelerated pace at which reformism leaves behind it some dejected as laughable as the leftists–the multiplication in the tricontinental colic of the heap of small maoist, trotskyist and guevarist groups–proves the stench which the right and in particular socialists and stalinists smelled of a long time ago: partial demands contain in themselves the impossibility of a global change. The temptation to put the old trick back in its proper bureaucratic skin is unquestionably superior to combating one reformism in order to conceal another. It's a final solution to the problem of recuperators. This implies resorting to a strategy which releases general explosion in favor of insurrectionary moments more and more near; and to a tactic of qualitative progression of actions, necessarily partial, which contain as their necessary and sufficient condition, the liquidation of the world of merchandise. So long as one guards the law of immediate pleasure as a collective tactic, there will be no cause to be anxious of the result.

12

It is easy to evoke here some possibilities, for sake of argument at least, whose conceivable insufficiencies will be demonstrated in any case by the practice of liberated workers–overtly within the

7

The Workers Councils constitute a new type of social organization through which the proletariat puts an end to the proletarianization of mankind. Generalized self-management is only the totality according to which the Councils cohesively inaugurate a way of life based on permanent individual and collective emancipation.

8

From beginning to end, it's clear that the project of generalized self-management requires as many precisions as there are desires in each revolutionary, and as many revolutionaries as there are people dissatisfied with their everyday life. At one and the same time, the spectacular commodity society establishes repressive conditions and contradictorily, in the opposition that it creates, the positivity of subjectivity. In the same way, the formation of the Councils, as the outlet of the struggle against global oppression, creates the condition for a permanent realization of subjectivity limited only by its own impatience to make history. Thus generalized self-management fuses with the capacity of the Councils to realize the imaginary historically.

9

The Workers Councils lose their significance outside of generalized self-management. It is necessary to treat anyone who speaks of the Councils in terms of economic or social organisms as a future bureaucrat and immediate enemy, anyone who does not place them at the center of the revolution of everyday life with the practice that this entails.

allotted their specific role in a general passivity" (The Poverty of Student Life).

21

At the mass gatherings of isolated, fragmented individuals which revere a diversity of spectacular identities, one enters the holy communion of mediocrity. Throughout the pastimes of aimless peer groups, from the factory athletic team to the authoritarian wilderness of the street gang, one must never violate the stereotyped behavior of normal routine in order to externalize his isolation in common. The spectacle of opacity is epitomized by hierarchical groups of militants. There, the presence of each atomized individual, each follower attracted to the nucleus of star leaders, enlarges the nullity of the other. Within the mass of admirative spectators, every person is forever ready to dispute the value of others in furtive conversation while always remaining reconciled with his unqualified and habitual acceptance of everyone. Sacrifice and manipulation are envisaged as the best tools of practical realism. This is the political quintessence of the spectacular milieu, by-product of former ideologies which shattered with the complete integration of state socialism into the world market, after having suppressed on each revolutionary occasion in the past the absolute power of Workers Councils. The revolutionary game with time will remain caught in the terminology of the spectacle so long as an image motivates the decision to act. Unknowingly, Nietzsche has put the cards on the table for us. "I do not love your festivals either. There are too many actors there and the spectators, too, often behaved like actors."

Caption for illustration: THE CYBERNATION OF THE DIALECTIC

This graphic representation appeared in the California Engineer in an article by Bruce Gardner entitled Marxism and Philosophy.

The author claims to find some of the sources of his inspiration in the Situationist International as well as Anarchos. Not bizarre enough, he has drawn his mathematical insignia of the dialectical triad in Marx according to the basic "formal" dimension of alienation. A distressing gastronomy, "reality" is digested as "knowledge" and simultaneously "excreted" in polluted technology. In this marxist naturalism I.B.M. has found a friendly nutrient.

22

The most withered ideology has renewed its ludicrous strength in proclaiming the impotence of thought. Because there is nothing more which can be said for its part, nothing more is there to think about or say. Suddenly, the world has become infinitely subtle, incomprehensibly complex, unapproachably modern and permanent. Ideology has died only theoretically. It rules over the kingdom of its abandon concerning events which now escape precise apprehension. The amorphous state of presence-absence oils the greaseless sleight of hand of grown-up mystification, in the fatherland which may not convince you but which will certainly bore you! A formless perspective rolls off the conveyor belt as the last article of dogmatic prehistory, dogmatism without name or title. Clearly, there is no general point of view which emerges any longer from modern ideology except the persistent celebration over the defeat of history in its historical perspective. Nothing occurs any longer within the labyrinth of ideas, once rich with forms and styles, except for the occasional rumination of the labyrinth itself in the contentment of its menopause. Here and there, one can detect the pitter-patter of the "counter-culture."

without dead time. The notion of Workers Councils forms, in this sense, the first principle of generalized self-management.

5

May marked an essential phase in the long revolution: the individual history of millions of men, each day in search of an authentic life, rejoining the historical movement of the proletariat in combat against all alienations. This unity of spontaneous action which was the passionate motor of the occupation movement can only develop its theory and practice as one. What was in all hearts must pass to all heads. From having proven that they "could no longer live like before, not even a little better than before", many tend to prolong the memory of an exemplary part of life, and the hope lived a moment of a great possibility, in a forceful direction which only lacks, in order to become revolutionary, a greater lucidity concerning the historical construction of free individual relations, concerning generalized self-management.

6

Only the proletariat makes precise in negating itself the project of generalized self-management, because it carries it objectively and subjectively in itself. This is why the first precisions will come from the unity of its combat in everyday life and on the front of history; and from the consciousness that all demands are realizable in the immediate but by it alone. It is in this sense that a revolutionary organization must henceforth pride itself on its own capacity to hasten its disappearance in the reality of the society of Councils.

2

History responds today to the question posed by Lloyd George to the workers and repeated in chorus by the servants of the old world: "You want to destroy our social organization, but what will you put in its place?" We know the response, thanks to the profusion of the little Lloyd Georges who defend the state dictatorship of a proletariat of their choice and wait until the working class organizes itself in councils to dissolve it and choose another.

3

Each time that the proletariat takes the risk of changing the world, it finds again the global memory of history. The establishment of a society of Councils–until now confused with the history of its failure in different epochs–unveils the reality of its past possibilities through the possibility of its immediate realization. The evidence of it has appeared to all workers since May when Stalinism and its trotskyite residue showed, by their aggressive weakness, their inability to crush an eventual movement of the Councils, and, by their force of inertia, their inclination to restrain its appearance. Without truly manifesting itself, the movement of the Councils was found present in an arc of theoretical rigor wavering between two contradictory poles: the internal logic of the occupations and the repressive logic of the parties and unions. Those who still confuse Lenin and "what is to be done?" do nothing more than manage a garbage can.

4

The refusal of all organization that is not the direct emanation of the proletariat negating itself as proletariat has been felt by many to be inseparable from the realizable possibility of an everyday life

23

The inveterate nags who guard over history seen as an idea (minus ideas themselves) are the wrinkled specialists of abstract history which reproduces its means in order to avoid its ends. Prehistory found its spectacles! All that remains of the metaphysics of traditional thought is the faint odor of the original abstraction. For example, take the most modern Airwick of social science, the science of psychology. Since the writings of such imbeciles as Jaspers and Lemaitre, the most lofty, super-egocentric dreams of psychoanalysis imagine the wide incidence of neurosis–which emanates in reality from the excessive alienation of human nature–to be the perfect stimulus for a psychiatric transfiguration of the globe; the totality as a mental hospital. Imagine, the libidinal cathexis of the human race within a psychiatric clinic…

The commodity did not need the Church in order to become the spectacle of the masses. But it needed the conservation of the Church to maintain the masses of the spectacle. Before power was restored, the myth had to be restored that consecrates power. Today, as the Reverend Billy Graham has claimed, even the youthful consumers of the image of rebellion think of "God" or "death" on an average of every ten minutes. In the Mexican parish shown above, however, there are no people present–only these dogs– as the Reverend Laureiro says his daily Mass.

24

Simultaneously, the central void which is the lot of contemporary thought tends to provoke the multiplication of marginal intellectual critiques. The unrelenting squabbles issued by rival ideologies obscure the real problems and genuine antagonisms that concern the emancipation of reality from all systems. Sartre / Camus, Stalin / Trotsky, Aragon / Dali, Marcuse / Norman O. Brown…They

compose the bad renditions of an original flop, already discredited by the practical developments of its own time. Simply scratch the surface of modernism, you find the greyest matter of power. Critical thought renewed for its own sake will never arrive too late to the fast of history, a fast which reserved the setting for its sobriety years ago. Anything which remains interpretive is ideology.

25

Whereas the Hegelian critics of the last century substantiated the total unification of reality in the form of an idea, the structuralist-formalists at the heart of contemporary ideology are content to scatter the separations of the present world under the heels of their unthinkable language. Not a word can be uttered about the practical history of modern reality, and modern reality becomes nothing more than the language which it utters. Evidently, the "mangled forms" have become absolute in the gullet of anemic ideology which through the wear and tear of age old application falsely has lost the very chord of thought, both past and future, in the voice of an eternal present. The menu scheduled for the "international think tank" which convenes among twelve nations sometime this year ("world health," "urban growth," "pollution") says much about the ways and means of ideological verbiage. Every particle of practical inquiry is broadcast in order to elude the center of the social question, the inquiry into liberation and the liberation of inquiry itself. The merchants of state power have deliberated a thousand and one self-critical sessions in the language of survival, in words that carry the actual reality of alienation in depicting the mere sediment of social distress. In the barren surroundings of spectacular existence, the significations have taken on all significance. The mediations of desire are robbed of their immediacy and ossify. The language of action, whose first shimmerings dwelled in the vital repudiation of art by dadaism and surrealism,

Notice to the Civilized

Raoul Vaneigem

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> "Do not sacrifice the present good for the good to come. Play for the moment. Avoid every association with marriage or any other concern which does not satisfy your passions at the first instance. Why work for the good to come, since it will always be out of reach of your desires and since you will have in sum-total only displeasure? This displeasure would be not to be able to double the length of days, necessary for the satisfaction of the immense circle of enjoyments you are bound to encounter."
>
> –Charles Fourier, Notice to the Civilized Concerning the Next Social Metamorphosis

1

In its non-achievement, the French movement of occupation in May '68 has vulgarized in a confused way the necessity of transcendence. The immanence of a total overthrow, felt by all, must now discover its practice: the passage to generalized self-management by the founding of Workers Councils. The point of arrival to which the revolutionary spirit has brought consciousness now becomes a point of departure.

demagogues." Clearly, the bureaucracy could no longer retain the fragile bases of its power by way of an ideology of any kind.

The logic of a dying class reality has only become more and more absurd. In the international reaction of rival bureaucratic Parties to the bloody Polish revolution, eyes merely saddened in order to reinvigorate their fossil polemics. Peking imagined a "crisis" of "Soviet social imperialism" at the same moment that an actual alliance was being prepared in Warsaw itself with the very American ruling class which continued to slaughter the Vietnamese at its own doorstep. Moscow in turn now found in the Maoist clique "more absurd inventions, greater lies." Each particular mask of opposition, from Paris to Bucharest, had simply revealed the general paroxysm of all bureaucratic dogma caused by the revolutionary disorder in Poland.

The amorphous adaptations and re-adaptations of the bureaucratic title of ideological property shows that the bureaucrats were left speechless long ago. The title is irrevocably charred in Poland where the proletariat disposed of everything associated with the former "October Left" of 1956. The new revolutionary currents have shown that they do not forget. The eclectic radicalism contained in the past, radicalism that failed to distinguish itself from the vague anti-Stalinist opposition which remained tied to the liberal wing of the bureaucracy and a technocratic model of Councils, is dead and gone. Mangled by fifteen years of official institutionalization, the existing appearance of Workers Councils cannot dissuade the new currents from seeking their full, unmediated truth. These currents cannot avoid combating any less the reservoir of inchoate ideology operating within the workers movement which still envisages a "State founded on Workers Councils."

In struggling to locate and realize its autonomous objectives, the Polish proletariat has come to know that the arduous course of its long historical struggle is inseparable from the totality of its mission. Its practical critique of bureaucracy foreshadows the liberation of truth in the world, as its means and equally its goal.

finally tumbled into the reconditioned mortar of historical separation. The linear words of abstraction monitor the dead weight of the past over the minds of the living. They mutter their powers of suggestion austerely, as penitent heirs to the gallant armor of concepts and ideas. Bureaucratic speech, formal colonizer of everyday life, administers the psalm "say anything" against the possible poetry which "says everything." The spectacle of merchandise plays the parts both of oppressor and oppressed. It speaks so that we cannot be heard. Spectacular commodity relations intend to leave men wordless in their endless volume. In the harmless speech of commodities, one can still smell the bad odor of the gas chamber.

26

"Style flows from a worthy theme," declared the blind puritan poet of English capitalism. Indeed, the real movement which suppresses all conditions existing independent of individuals, that communism which exists nowhere as yet, can alone sponsor a renaissance of human relations in the time free of exchange-value. The contemplations which arrive at nothing and always return to the circle of alienation stand to be surmounted by revolutionary poetry, by the anti-spectators of the future. These combatants of the old word [sic] are gathering at the pole of active dialogue. At the side exits of the modern theatre, one already finds the disgust of growing minorities, driven from the crowded congregation of anonymous audiences, in flight from the confusion and isolation which haunt them again and again. For us, nothing less than the force of maximum disturbance, in direct antagonism with the settled state of spectators, can effectively publicize the shame of the ruling spectacle of passivity and make it still more shameful. Before the immobile smiles of an ever more absurd world, the ruthless critique cannot make itself known without resorting to the parody form.

27

The renewal of practical criticism of existing conditions cannot hope to free everyday life of oppression without establishing once more the language of historical freedom itself, in annihilating all the conventional chains which have confined a conscious understanding of the modern world. Revolutionary praxis must first criticize the fixations attached to the defeated revolutionary tradition itself. Until today, the critical alternative to what exists appears scattered in separate categories, restrained by fixed systems, compressed by the logic of separation. Revolutionary theory must dominate the whole of its own past through a new use of all former criticism. Plagiarism becomes necessary. Progress requires it. It squeezes the phrase of the author, makes use of its expression. It rubs out a false idea and replaces it with a true one. In diversion, the unshakable stature of truths which have frozen into respectability–as ideology–collapses irrevocably. The radical transfer of thoughts to the thought of totality at once destroys their former limitations and places them in an interdependent whole from which they can draw their only significance. The technique of diversion spells violation of the linguistic contract, an insurrectionary upheaval against the rules of established speech. It assaults that speech founded on the marketplace which has censored and abbreviated all the natural ties of words with historical movement. Expression diverted is criticism already communicated and clarified, in the phase of living speech and inseparably the speech of the living. One day liberated experience will be so rich it will not have to be spoken about. It will be life at its highest moment.

28

The ever widening division between manual and intellectual labor forever poisons everyday life. This is also the time when the ex-

nation for what it had done, also confirmed the radical position occupied already by the workers themselves. In the immediate moment, however, the bureaucracy emerged in tact and exacted the anxious approbation of everything, every particular in the administrative plan and the cessation of residual work stoppages, on the basis of "good faith." In exchange, the bureaucrats had offered a gesture of "democratic tolerance" which was to inform the workers of the decisions made by power. Though having recognized that "our society is divided into classes," the insurgents had not acted upon all the consequences implied by their burning dissatisfaction.

During the following March, the class antagonism broke out again. Knowing that the directors of old abuses were hardly going to realize vast changes, the machinists of Lodz–mostly women–invoked their own work stoppage. Another delegation of bureaucrats arrived from Warsaw. Intending to pacify hostilities with their presence, the bureaucrats ended up by being chased away. Subsequently, in acquiring a hundred million dollar loan from its superiors in Moscow, the bureaucracy was finally able to muffle tensions at least ephemerally by retracting those measures which had ignited the total question of power. The timing, however, assured little stability in light of the fact that it was not the old but the new regime which conceded. In retaining some vestige of authority, the new regime completed the formal aspects of the Reform–replacing "profit-sharing" for bonuses and leaving immediate decision-making to regional factory associations–with the aim of diffusing bureaucratic responsibility and easing what was felt to be an economic dilemma. But in the autumn of last year, the workers began again to question existing conditions, the conditions of work as well as the veracity of their representative bodies. Without restraint, they have fought the new regime in demanding the release of all those rebels of "December" still imprisoned by the State. At the annual Congress of the Trade Union last November, the brokers of labor value were unable to push through a Uniform Code of Labor under the opposition, in Gierek's words, of "these

Despite the practical demystification cemented in the popular masses when the smoke had cleared, political methods were still available at first to the bureaucratic class, in correspondence with the immediate level of the antagonism and its absorption in particular points of contention. The changing of elites within the Party substituted the mirage of an internal bureaucratic conflict within itself for the actual external antagonism. Quite simply, the ideological turnover arrived post festum. In the masquerade, the old ally Gierek now made his singular debut in the most fashionable, democratic, anti-Gomulkaist garb. The bureaucracy as a whole simply had grasped the opportunity to publicize an inveterate "self-critique," tearing out and segregating a part of itself with which every previous crime and mishap was associated in turn. Since the very beginning of the Bolshevik State model, the bureaucrats have always been as arbitrary with each other in their furtive internal domain as they have to be with the outside world. The incident simply displays all the bureaucrats "going with the wind," reversing positions in appearance, in trying to preserve the sinecure of bureaucratic authority itself.

Weeks later, the famous meeting held at the Warski Shipyard in Szczecin brought the independent voice of the workers into the open for the first time. On January 25, 1971, Gierek had been forced to arrive from Warsaw to hear the grievances of persevering dock strikers. These grievances were presented by delegates strictly mandated by a unitary base of workers and which under their pressure had become public knowledge. Just as the very context of "negotiations" carried an adverse spirit of mutual compromise, the demands themselves had not ceased to be partial: free speech and complete access to the press, freedom of organizational association improvised during the course of struggle, general reelections to existing workers' structures, etc. Unlike the revolutionary examples of Petrograd and Hungary, the radical movement still failed to pursue a generalized model of autonomous Councils. Nevertheless, the barren status evoked by the ruling class, compelled to give an explaperts are lost in the narrowness of their own expertise. The missionaries of a pure, instrumentalist rationality possess the finest instruments of calculation with which they comb a universe of detail less and less assertively. The trite, enervated contradictions which they embody really correspond to the actual decay which sets in over all aspects of life. The social praxis of our age is plagued with troubled sleep, in long need of negation and transcendence. The movements and schools which rise and fall without bearing the slightest consequence are signs of a great social loss and equally the need for new life. Everything which is missing on the plains of modern culture, that stockbroker which speculates with shares of everyday life, has become possible at the frontiers of qualitative change. The rigor of free choice accented by existentialism becomes concrete with the formation of revolutionary society, the liberation of history in which each individual will be free to invent his own. The marginal exploration of the imaginative introduced by art finds the moment of being lived apart from merchandise as well as superstition. The discovery by psychology of the repressive function of the family, the role and taboos within authoritarian society can end in the practical dissolution of the framework of survival–the playful federation of Workers Councils–the simultaneous presence of reason and men. The modern spirit of scientific relativity can acquire full application beyond the restraints of reification, in passing to the science of the totality, revolutionary praxis; the annulment of all sides of the myth of historical determinism according to a plan whose verification is bound up with practice; as truth, neither predestined nor utopian, which "man must prove."

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The extension of prehistory has provoked the extension of its negation without limits. The value of revolutionary theory today depends on the consequence of those who put it to use, or who

fail to. The radical masses are sole bearer of the anti-hierarchical principle and the famous theory of praxis. They alone can transform theory into an objective force to the extent that they speak themselves for their own emancipation. For them, theory can serve simply as a tool which helps to clarify fresh desires and felt historical objectives. The truth will have an urgency for them, as it has for us, inasmuch as it concerns their own struggle for life, an urgency to think unknown to all "thinkers" and a thought which they will never know. Inversely, the specialists of the revolutionary proletariat have appropriated the revolution to the exclusion of the proletariat itself. The apparent humility of the radical intelligentsia consists forever of speaking down, from the mist of new hierarchies, not in order to raise others higher but fatally to dominate them with the image of their dependence. The bolshevik concentration of power, coordinated around the "democratic centralism" of professional intellectual revolutionaries and leading worker elites, never disappears in the coherent enrichment of the masses but always returns as the permanent feature of the Socialist State dictatorship which refuses to "wither away." Ideology is the concentrated private property of prehistory, in the possession of bureaucratic power whose eternal proclamation of "historical necessity" represents nothing but its own. The revolutionary intelligentsia constitutes a power pitted against the intelligentsia itself, against the mechanical evolution of "happy society" envisaged by utopian myths and the unhappy transitions forecast by bureaucratic dogmas. Its victory is seen in its dissolution. Its answer to the specialist is the amateur-professional.

30

In the revolutionary game, the individual who towers above the rest or falters under all the others must be eliminated so that its impassioned organization may reawaken as a whole and reawaken

social life into question and releasing the total prospects for its revolutionary reconstruction. Six days of unrelenting confrontation formed what is known as the "December Revolt." In their explosive spontaneity, the radical masses abandoned those intermediary organs which normally expressed and canalized opposition. Acting of their own accord, the populace burned and destroyed every architectural symbol of power which stood in its way, from Party headquarters in Gdansk to the municipal police building in Szczecin. In Gdansk, Gdynia and Szczecin, pillaging ran rampant. Sixty shops in Gdansk alone were burned and looted. In Szczecin, police cars were overturned and destroyed and vast crowds were heard shouting "Gestapo" as they battled with the police and committed acts of arson. After the first few days, the troubles spread as far as Lodz, Poznan and Katowice. In all this, the workers played the decisive part in radical initiation at each succeeding interval of crisis. The dock workers of Gdansk formed on the morning of the 14th the very first violent demonstration in the center of the city which was joined immediately by vast numbers of women as well as students. By Wednesday, the 16th, the government denounced "anarchist and hostile forces" and swiftly dispatched 53,000 special militia to the first revolutionary zone of Gdansk. The Warsaw bureaucrats knew the importance involved in deploying vast regiments of anonymous soldiers to an area in which popular insurrection had restrained the use of arms by local forces from which elements of sympathy and direct support could eventually be drawn. Under the heaviest risks, the populace demonstrated the highest spirit of bravery as great in many ways as that displayed once in Poznan. At a time when the whole international bureaucratic order preferred to enjoy its power calmly and to show itself to be the worthy adversary of private capitalism on the marketplace, the bureaucracy had to resort to the maximum of repression in all its history: 45 killed, 1,165 wounded. From these days, the bureaucracy salvaged its class domination not by conciliation but by force in order to terminate the military phase of an unresolved antagonism.

the goods. The imposition of technocratic reform from above acted as the veritable stimulus of revolutionary crisis. The formalist bureaucracy had tinkered with the surface of technocratic modernity since the first days of the National Economic Council under the direction of the noted social-democratic economist, Oscar Lang. This eclecticism tended to integrate new strata at the base of production into the bureaucracy by extending the partial mechanism of market economy. The founding of more autonomous industries according to the profit motive and more direct relations between costs and prices simply intended to intensify the day to day rhythm and volume of production. Nothing was to change, however, in content, at the moment of full application. The bureaucrats still showed their preference for heavy industrial investments as opposed to the extension of consumer goods. In keeping with the spirit of supply and demand, the technocratic novitiates retained the stationary level of wages which existed already for ten years and yet intensified simultaneously the barometer of prices for necessities without regard for the fixed declining penury of the producers themselves. By the same awkward logic, the old party hacks now chose to reduce the price of scarce, luxury items on behalf of the immediate masters of the workers: the technocrats. Consequently, the oppressive effects of the internal modernization of bureaucratic power, that is to say, the harmonization of the central political bureaucracy charged with the task of ideological decisions and the regional and local managers responsible for the immediate supervision of productive relations, found echo in the cohesion of its opponents. The proletariat recoiled subsequently against every level of the hierarchy, from the plant management at the workplace and the regional apparatuses of the Party to the political apex of the State. The authentic owners of social surplus value, once considered sinful "to contemplate," carried out an initial critique of their own of the political economy without mediation.

Again, the practical rejection of the slightest detail imposed by the totalitarian bureaucracy had the effect of calling the whole of

at best the search of everyone. It supposes that in the natural order of things there are many possible complementary talents which can spur each other to subversive action. It abominates the rule of minorities and recognizes their danger; it desires, as protection against the enlightened critic, another critic.

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One knows since Feuerbach the objective power of man as a species. Now is the time to realize the roots of that power, the power of autonomous subjects, power which evolves not against man but for him. Power by division is fast coming to its close. Yet only the accelerated excellence of the next whip of the revolutionary class struggle can effectively liquidate the present world of misery and boredom. One can be more certain of the technical and intellectual capacities which present conditions must give over to the immense tasks of the revolutionary project than the existing intentions of individuals who so often know and don't know. The will to live will be the central talent which confronts a time of resignation and compromise and leads to the others. Surely, we ourselves will be the ultimate cause of our defeat or our victory.

Views From Near And Afar

Karl Korsch rightly emphasized the fact that any renewal of the marxian system as a whole would constitute a "reactionary utopia". In respect to the present conditions of revolutionary criticism which begin for the most part even as an ideology to the left of traditional Stalinism and Maoism, one must also recognize the "reactionary" nature of every eclectic view which still preserves an attachment with either of the two main traditions of the revolutionary past. From the workerism expressed by the anarcho-syndicalists of Solidarity to the Marxism advocated by Socialist Revolution, there is nothing but a concession to some doctrine and a doctrine of concessions. The present critique of the totality cannot begin without abandoning the sides of both economism and ethics. The anarchist and marxist movements failed long ago. On the one hand, the mythical economic crisis of modern capitalism has never delivered the social revolution nor has the "Workers State" ever issued the emancipation from work according to its bureaucratic modalities. On the other hand, the pure will of the radical masses in spontaneous action has never led of itself to the destruction of hierarchical power, in the absence of revolutionary theory and precise democratic organization deployed by the masses themselves. The only critique of the modern world is unitary, a critique which refuses to tolerate any form of separate power in its combat against all aspects of alienation. The renewal of the revolutionary perspective is founded on one initial premise: the revolution itself must be totally reinvented. Every idea of the "inevitability" of the revolution must be overthrown in view of its authentic possibility. Accordingly, the critique of anarchism and

well-integrated Trade Union. At the Fourth Trade Union Congress, the following year, the Councils were wiped away completely in the framework of the so-called Workers Self-Governing Congress which consisted of an amalgamation of the Trade Union Works Council, the Party Committee of the enterprise and Council delegates whose decisions were subject to the approval of plant management itself. By 1959, rigorous production quotas were reintroduced in keeping with tougher days. The severe reduction of real wages followed. In 1960, six old Stalinist officials reappeared in the government. Everything then which the bureaucracy, released in crisis was retracted in the aftermath. "The main thing," announced Gomulka, "is that the Polish people learn to work hard and everything else holds secondary importance.

Complete radical opposition began to stir in turn. A new polemic reached extreme proportions in the Communist Party itself beginning in 1965. The young revolutionary intellectuals were no longer willing to tolerate the showcase bureaucracy evoked by Gomulkaism. The celebrated denunciation of Kuron and Modzelewski advocated "the victorious anti-bureaucratic revolution." Later, in 1968, the Polish students began to agitate at the universities and in the cities, in the form of an opposition to the prevailing organization of life which simply demanded "socialism in the facts." Thus, the "December Revolt" had not introduced but synthesized the revolutionary process. All the universal qualities present there confirmed the abundance of historical experience lived by the Polish masses in the radical past, an experience which frames their perspective today. In December, the populace battled a counter-bureaucratic illusion which could no longer hide in the external preoccupation with Soviet imperialism. The elementary falsehood then exposed itself. Through the sudden turmoil, the Gomulkaist regime nullified the origins of its own justification, calling in futility for the Russian Army which knew better than to come.

In the Five Year Plan of 1970, the traditional masters of Warsaw fatally imposed the formal husk of reformism without delivering

To its very end, Gomulkaism conveyed an eclectic dogma more and more intensely, talking Yugoslavian here, acting Russian there, falling silent then suddenly reversing to the former at the moment of total disequilibrium. As for its contents, nothing but the private ownership of land was assured after 1956. Recoiling against its own exposure to "bureaucratic excesses," the new regime advanced formal internal modifications in respect to the Party which it wanted to balance and redeem and with time the State apparatus and regional bureaucratic structures which it cared to harmonize and integrate. The conjunction between social democracy and state communism attempted between '46 and '48 reawakened fully in the new period in the framework of an internally fluid dictatorship. The hierarchy itself retained its fixed supremacy and the official guarantee of particular elites continued to stabilize itself through automatic purges from the top down. The particular strategy of Gomulkaism bubbled in a "middle course," as median between "orthodoxy" and " revisionism." One can say that Gomulkaism performed the heart of its bureaucratic function in its initial phase. Certain ephemeral concessions appeared through the course of its first three years: purging the Stalinist clique completely, yielding intellectual liberties and free communication and granting formidable wage increases. The sweeping tokenism allowed time for bureaucratic reconsolidation.

Good intentions displayed, the bureaucracy proceeded to stigmatize and destroy the remaining revolutionary tide. Censorship was reinvoked at the same time that scattered residues of autonomous workers' organizations were suppressed. The editor and then the whole staff of the revolutionary journal Po Protsu were thrown out of existence. The street demonstrations which responded to the totalitarian revival were smothered. In 1957, the striking street car drivers of Lodz were subdued by police violence. By 1958, the Workers Councils which had risen of their own accord in Poznan now had their relations with the State mediated by "arbitration committees," thus reducing them to a secondary body of the

marxism set the precondition for the negation of politics in our epoch, as the critique of the spectacular commodity and art forms the prelude to the positive reconstruction of everyday life.

> "From the moment all members of society, or at least the vast majority, have learned to administer the state themselves, have taken this work into their own hands, have organised control over the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits and over the workers who have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism–from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment when it becomes unnecessary. The more democratic the 'state' which consists of the armed workers, and which is 'no longer a state in the proper sense of the word', the more rapidly every form of state begins to wither away."
>
> – Lenin

> "A socialist society can therefore only be built from below. Decisions concerning production and work will be taken by workers' councils composed of elected and revocable delegates. Decisions in other areas will be taken on the basis of the widest possible discussion and consultation among the people as a whole. This democratisation of society down to its very roots is what we mean by 'workers' power.'"
>
> – Solidarity

> "…The overestimation of the State as decisive instrument of the social revolution;

"The mystical identification of the development of capitalist economy with the social revolution;

"The ambiguous future development of this first form of the marxian theory of revolution by the artificial graft of a theory of communist revolution as two phases; this theory, directed on the one hand against Blanqui, on the other hand against Bakunin, hides from the present movement the real emancipation of the working class, and pushes it into an undetermined future.

"Here the point of insertion of the leninist or bolshevik development comes; and under that new form marxism has been transferred to Russia and Asia…"

– Karl Korsch

"The State, however popular it be made in form, will always be an institution of domination and exploitation, and it will therefore always remain a permanent source of slavery and misery. Consequently there is no other means of emancipating the people economically and politically, of providing them with well-being and freedom, but to abolish the State, all States, and once and for all do away with that which until now has been called politics."

– Bakunin

"Let us concede for the moment that the bureaucracy is a new "class" and that the present regime in the USSR is a special system of class exploitation. What new political conclusions follow for us from these definitions?

tiges of private property and condensing the market economy in one essential commodity, social labor, bureaucratic state capitalism merely intensified the opposition of classes and installed an advanced proletariat on its own terrain–as in Poland–deprived of illusion. In Poland, the radical masses answered the degeneration of state power to the point where it could no longer support its own domination except through a neuter image; in the words of Minister Cyrankiewicz, a "scientific-technical revolution." The proximity of an economistic dogma to immediate material development laid the ruling class open to brutal demystification with the slightest error of judgment. In Poland, the manifestation of the error and its consequences simply revealed how long the bureaucracy which existed there had constituted a threadbare power.

The evolution of Gomulkaism was after all the simple evolution of its own destruction as well as its transcendence by the revolutionary opposition which walks its own path. The contradictory mixture of radical historical sources and progressive illusion which formed the base of Gomulkaism also lay at the heart of the revolutionary crisis which ushered in its downfall. After this eclectic ideology has fallen, there is no binding option which can fill the void of bureaucratic reality. The seeds of its dissolution were sown in its formation. Gomulkaism reemerged after an initial suppression by the rival Stalinist faction between '48 and '56–as the illusory product of proletarian insurrection. The armed rebellion of popular Poznan against the existing Stalinist regime served subsequently to defend the Gomulkaist alternative against external domination and secured its international legitimacy. When the Russians left Poland in October, 1956, the new bureaucracy was only prepared to abide temporarily by the festive orgy of criticism which had broken out in conformity with the spirit of tolerance implied by anti-Stalinism. Henceforth, the autonomous regime showed nothing over fifteen years but an absolute identity with all the arbitrary crimes associated with its predecessors. The "Polish Road to Socialism" gave nothing new to the proletariat, except Polish expropriators.

ism, the partial reform of totalitarian society has epitomized the bureaucratic lie with every dissimulation of "socialist reconstruction." In Yugoslavia, Poland and Czechoslovakia, the auxiliary dictatorship has always encountered the contradictory injury run in the course of its bureaucratic inheritance. This dictatorship has torn apart the Stalinist doctrine in different ways–and its theory of "socialism in one country"–in order to reestablish some fragmentary alternative which finds application in its own totalitarian manner. The recalcitrant bureaucracy has actually magnified the mode of totalitarian administration in denouncing its ideological corollary. Henceforth, on one Caribbean island, miniature China courtesy of Russian good will, the "socialist man" is evolving by way of an immense army of vigilante squads dispatched by block and massive labor camps which absorb thousands of dissidents at a time. There, in the first rebelling Party of the Cominform, we see the sudden reproach against "nationalism ""class enemy" that it now becomes, and the overt return to orthodoxy in a country decentralized supposedly according to a "socialism of the managers" years ago. In the largest dogmatic Party of all in Asia, bureaucratic incapacity at the level of preliminaries has been confirmed: that is to say, in agrarian production. In the mother of bureaucratic domination, popular revolt transpires within whole regions of the country.

The revolutionary masses have arrived in turn at the point of total confrontation exactly where official Stalinism had dissolved in liberal bureaucratic illusion long ago: that is to say, in Poland. There, bureaucratic power has witnessed a unitary practical opposition emerging without distraction. Let us first address the general features of that revolt before revealing its particular origins. The famous revolutionary outbreak of the 14th of December, 1970, the "December Revolt," rejected above all the normal functioning of bureaucratic society according to its concentrated exploitation. There, the bureaucracy showed that it was unable to develop the ensemble of productive forces without bringing about the radical awareness of the producers themselves. In eliminating most ves-

The Fourth International long ago recognized the necessity of overthrowing the bureaucracy by means of a revolutionary uprising of the toilers. Nothing else is proposed or can be proposed by those who proclaim the bureaucracy to be an exploiting "class." The goal to be attained by the overthrow of the bureaucracy is the reestablishment of the rule of the soviets, expelling from them the present bureaucracy. Nothing different can be proposed or is proposed by the leftist critics. It is the task of the regenerated soviets to collaborate with the world revolution and the building of a socialist society. The overthrow of the bureaucracy therefore presupposes the preservation of state property and of planned economy. Herein is the nub of the whole problem."

– Leon Trotsky

"Nevertheless, the majority of workers will strike for higher wages and continue to be preoccupied with quantitative issues until they understand fully that they are producing their own needs themselves, needs that they might not want to have. Only when they are made conscious of the discrepancy between bourgeois thought and practice and of the radical dissociation of their own thoughts and feelings by the further expansion of material production and increased social impoverishment by the practice of a revolutionary party will the majority of the proletariat begin to transform its consciousness."

– Socialist Revolution

"Our cities must be decentralized into communities, or eco-communities, exquisitely and artfully tailored

to the carrying capacity of the ecosystems in which they are located. Our technologies must be readapted and advanced into eco-technologies…The administration of humans must be replaced by the administration of things. The revolution we seek must encompass not only political institutions and economic relations, but consciousness, life style, erotic desires, and our interpretation of the meaning of life."

– Murray Bookchin

"But the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes…At the same pace at which the progress of modern industry developed, widened, intensified the class antagonism between capital and labor, state power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labor, of a public force organised for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism. After every revolution marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely repressive character of the state power stands out in bolder and bolder relief."

– Marx

"The Workers Councils are in the times to come the form of self-government which will replace the forms of government of the old world. Of course, not for the entire future; no form as such is for eternity. When life and work as a community have become customary and man controls his own life entirely, necessity gives way to freedom and the strict rules of justice established before dissolve in spontaneous behavior. Workers Councils are the organizational form for the transition period in which the working class is fighting for

The Shattering of Bureaucratic Power in Poland

The universal crisis of totalitarian bureaucratic society is now wholly visible. At one and the same time, the complete deterioration of the global alliance of bureaucratic power and the finished coexistence of two camps once apparently irreconcilable, mark the troubled times in which the bureaucracy can no longer explain itself away.

The prevailing atmosphere of common disequilibrium among rival bureaucracies has its roots in the defeated Stalinist past from which the bureaucracy as a whole can neither emerge completely nor return. No matter how arbitrary, the liberal bureaucratic denunciation of monolithic Stalinism–that excess of terrorism which applied to the bureaucrats themselves–has caused an irreparable loss of ideological infallibility from which the entire bureaucratic state order has never recovered. From Peking to Belgrade, the furtive masters of state capitalism maintain their monopoly over the whole of society and moreover all expression according to fatigued ideology when ideology still forms their one proprietary basis as a class. Now the ideological fragmentation which tends to accompany the bureaucracy outside Russia concludes as a fatal chapter in counter-revolutionary history.

After nearly twenty years, the new liberty acquired by the imported counterrevolution has proven to offer only ephemeral victory for the fledgling Party-State free to duplicate in its own way the totalitarian archetype, as sovereign heir to its explosive contradictions. From Maoism and Titoism to Castroism and Gomulka-

plants, and neighborhoods, whose delegates are always subject to recall, depending entirely upon the assemblies. A councilist organization will never stand for any other goal: it must translate into acts the dialectics which supersede the static and one-sided terms of spontaneism and of openly or insidiously bureaucratized organization. It must be an organization thrusting revolutionarily towards the revolution of Councils; an organization that neither disperses at the moment of declared struggle, nor institutionalizes itself."

– Internationale Situationniste

power, at once destroying capitalism and organizing social production."

– Anton Pannekoek

"The greatest revolutionary idea concerning urbanism is neither urbanistic, technological, nor esthetic. It is the decision to rebuild the entire territory according to the needs of the power of the Workers Councils, of the anti-state dictatorship of the proletariat, of executory dialogue. And the Councils' power, which can only be effective if it transforms existing conditions in their entirety, cannot settle for less a task if it wants to be recognized and recognize itself in its world."

– Guy Debord

"Lenin always did his best to guard against being misunderstood. We especially of the underdeveloped countries should not misunderstand his views. We may claim that they are utopian, visionary, unrealistic, unworkable, a fantasy. We should bear in mind that these were exactly the charges that the majority of the colleagues made against him in March, 1917, when he arrived in Russia, and, almost alone, hurled the masses of Russia at the bourgeois regime and initiated a new epoch in world history, with the slogan, 'All power to the Soviets.'"

– C.L.R. James

"The councils are the transformation of strike committees under the influence of the situation itself, and in response to the very necessities of the struggle, in the very dialectic of this struggle. Any other attempt to

formulate at any moment in a struggle the necessity to create workers councils rises from a councillist ideology such as one sees under diverse forms among certain unions, the P.S.U., the Situationists. The concept itself of the council excludes all ideology."

– I.C.O., Workers Information Correspondence

"We have had a long discussion about it, and I have always considered self-management to be a genuine revolutionary institution in the aftermath of the revolution, but not before. Because if it occurs before the revolution–apart from the fact that I don't see how it can occur from within a functioning capitalist system–if it succeeds, the result of self-management would be with all probability that in one specific plant the workers would develop interests created by the better functioning of that said plant. That is to say it would create an autonomous self-interest within the established system. But by self-management one understands that to mean workers control in the majority of factories; at least in key industries. I say that this is already the revolution. One hardly presumes for example that if a corporation such as General Motors is taken, the powers that be are going to look on peacefully as the corporation is transferred to workers control."

– Herbert Marcuse

"Granting, as Lenin wants, such absolute powers of a negative character to the top organ of the party, we strengthen, to a dangerous extent, the conservatism inherent in such an organ. If the tactics of the socialist party are not to be the creation of a Central Committee but of the whole party, or, still better, of the whole

labor movement, then it is clear that the party sections and federations need the liberty of action which alone will permit them to develop their revolutionary initiative and to utilize all the resources of a situation. The ultra-centralism asked by Lenin is full of the sterile spirit of the overseer. It is not a positive and creative spirit. Lenin's concern is not so much to make the activity of the party more fruitful as to control the party–to narrow the movement rather than to develop it, to bind rather than to unify it."

– Rosa Luxemburg

"If one ideally counts only on the "concept" of Council or, what is even more euphoric, on the practical inactivity of I.C.O., to "exclude all ideology" in the real Councils, one must expect the worst: we have seen that historical experience does not justify an optimism of this kind. The transcendence of the primitive form of the Councils will be able to develop only from struggles becoming more conscious, and struggles for more consciousness. The mechanistic image of I.C.O. about the perfect automatic response of the strike committee to "necessities," (which shows that the Council will do very well all by itself in its hour, on the condition above all that no one speaks about it), completely mistakes the experience of the revolutions of our century, which shows that "the situation itself" is also quick to make the Councils disappear, or to capture and recuperate them, as it is to make them rise."

– Rene Riesel

"The next revolution will only recognize as Councils sovereign general assemblies of the base in the shops,

Jon Horelick
Diversion Number 1
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Note: Scanned from the print original, 2013. The print edition of Diversion Number 1 contains an unnamed section with 6 articles followed by a section titled The Practice of the Truth, which contains 5 articles. A leaflet inserted in the print edition, titled Beyond the Crisis of Abstraction and the Abstract Break with that Crisis: The S.I., is included here as a third section.

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To say that the councillist organization of distribution and production prevents pillaging and the destruction of machines and supplies is still placing oneself on the side of the anti-state. What the negative conserves here of separations, the Councils, as organizations of the new society, will come to end through a collective politics of desires. The end of wage-labor can be immediately realized with the inauguration of Councils, from the precise moment when the "equipment and provisions" sector of every Council organizes production and distribution in response to the desires of the plenary assembly. Then in homage to the best bolshevik prediction, one will be able to call the pisspots in gold and massive money "lenins".

19

General self-management implies the extension of Councils. At the start, the zones of work will be taken in hand by the workers concerned, grouped in Councils. In order to rid the first Councils of their corporative features, the workers will open them as quickly as possible to their companions, to the people of the neighborhood, to volunteers coming from parasitic sectors in such a way that they rapidly take the form of local Councils, fragments of the Commune (be they unities nearly equivalent numerically, say from 8 to 10,000 people).

20

The internal extension of the Councils must go hand in hand with their geographic extension. It is necessary to guard the perfect radicalism of liberated zones apart from the illusion of Fourier concerning the attractive character of preliminary communes and yet

at the same time without underscoring the seductive part which, once extricated from lies, is carried by the whole experience of authentic emancipation. The self-defense of the Councils thus illustrates the formula: "the truth in arms is revolutionary."

21

General self-management will have its code of possibilities soon, destined to liquidate repressive legislation and its millennial influence. Perhaps it will appear in double power before the courts and swines of punishment are annihilated. The new rights of man (the right of each one to live as he pleases, to build his own home, to participate in all assemblies, to arm himself, to live as a nomad, to publish what he thinks–to each his own wall–to love without reservation; the right to meet, the right to the material equipment necessary for the realization of one's desires, the end of commodity-time, of history in itself, the realization of art and the imaginary, etc.) awaits their anti-legislators.

The Practice of the Truth

The Crisis of the Situationist International

The succeeding failures of the majority of revolutionaries to participate effectively in revolutionary organization manifest, in the last analysis, the failure of the organization itself. An ineffective stage of collective action proves nothing at root except the failure of nearly every participant in knowing how to act for himself and for others. Between October, 1969 and at least as it concerns us, April, 1971, the new revolutionary current initiated and sustained by the situationists declined in force both quantitatively and qualitatively. Despite the noticeable enlargement of the group, after the revolutionary occupations in France, in May, 1968, real activity was dissipating severely. The paralysis of critical publications and fresh types of exemplary action coincided with an unceasing multiplication of internal antagonisms, pseudo-expulsions, expulsions and breaks. The visible lapse of almost all personal effort and imagination accumulated with the internal breaks and expulsions.

The critical inertia of almost every situationist formed the radical absence of spontaneous life from common association and induced in turn the heavy, artificial presence of the "organizational question." With persisting torpor in the formation of specific subversive projects and the selection of tasks "to the man" which goes hand and hand with them, the second and third round of interpersonal judgments and expulsions had become abstract. The judgments became abstract to the extent that no working truth was present even among a few as their positive point of contrast. The application of a group discipline (in response to a reservoir of specific inequali-

The more precise examination of the subjective stature of the existing proletariat is overlooked (the very objective condition for fresh critical intervention), an attribute which is already fundamental to the situationist perspectives with the double specificity which they impart to the historical encounter; an encounter which is equally their own.

14.

The appearance of Diversion did not bear the intention of either reviving a situationist theory or getting rid of one. It was simply preoccupied with the real use for this theory in locating the route of revolutionary praxis, the noose of unified opposition which tightens around the neck of the old world as words and deeds become one. The new anti-hierarchical groups which emerge today must be like a factory of everyday life in which a half dozen or dozen rebels unite in order to make the pressure of their critique rise throughout the world. Nothing less will satisfy them than being fully satisfied with themselves.

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Compliments of some typesetters who diverted the use of their machines.

ties in combination with the insufficient qualitative participation of many individuals) did not lead in turn toward an extremism of coherence.

The problem of how to be more than a "group of theoreticians" and yet still realize both an effective and equalitarian formation of the radical critique never found its solution in the American section of the S.I. The first number of Situationist International, printed in June, 1969, missed delivering a full revolutionary analysis, not only because two of the three other American situationists failed to materialize certain articles promised but also because of what was said and how it was said. One cannot find in that publication just one positive affirmation of all the historical forces existing visibly in America then and, accordingly, the concrete prospects of the social revolution which were carried in them. From June, 1969 to April, 1971, the failure to prepare the task implied by that deficiency and then in turn to realize the task transpired at two succeeding intervals with the ultimate dissolution of the section. A minimum coherence never came, that realization of radical theory which makes practice possible.

On November 7, 1969, an ultimatum of expulsion was issued from New York by two members of the American section, Robert Chasse and Bruce Elwell, against the two others then in Europe, Tony Verlaan and myself. Less than four weeks after the accepted geographic separation had begun, in my case to exist up to a year, they posed their measure on the basis of our failure to keep "close contacts" (apropos of an actual lax in correspondence for approximately 17 days) and therefore, to "participate" as agreed in the section. The ultimatum demanded, at least initially, an immediate response to the commentaries contained in former letters from N.Y. as well as an adequate explanation for the lapse of contact. The two claimed to represent a "qualitative majority," insofar as they considered themselves executors of a unanimous decision of the section and would thus determine our expulsion or re-acceptance. In reality, one could hardly have imagined more regarding "participation"

during such a period than a common critical contribution in publications. Instead, the most ideal expectation of sustaining and even enlarging all common activity existed prior to the geographic separation without the slightest preparation and specification: in the outline of critical works, the personal choices, the order of priorities. The gross absence of concrete organization now passed to an excessive measure of formalism.

The ultimatum from New York was completely unacceptable in both its form and its content. The bureaucratic logic of the measure revealed itself in the term "qualitative majority" as much as in its abstract identification of the brief interlude of silence in letters with the withdrawal from "participation" in "projects." The ultimatum was, after all, simply the point of provocation. The very next day, the 8th, Chasse and Elwell received three letters from us which contained substantial evidence of interest and preparation for the forthcoming elaboration of projects and collaborations. One of the letters, written at my hand, informed them clearly of certain personal difficulties which transpired with Verlaan in these preparations as well as in the process of finding a suitable living location. Even the preliminary solution to the difficulty was stated with the explicit intent to draw better coordination, namely, to "delimit our daily relations." A day later, the reasons and the reality had arrived in their hands, which annulled the trivial bases of their precipitous measure and immediately required a retraction. To the contrary, as their ultimatum evidently intended to force the whole section to reconvene in New York–four weeks after a common decision was made to the contrary and acted upon–their response now was to form another ultimatum, to provoke Verlaan in particular, in order to impose his expulsion in the end. As they were not content with what was not said, they were now even less content over what was.

Evidently, the strikingly unharmonious relations which persisted among the first three situationists, since their first encounters in the summer of 1967, reached their last stage: the formalism of Chasse, the activism of Verlaan and the weak, un-autonomous

anticipation of the subjective-objective limits in which they must inaugurate a new society antagonistic to alienation.

12.

Debord and Sanguinetti have taken the liberty to contradict themselves with ease when they define the future possibility or impossibility of various Situationists who had known a failure within the S.I. equal in its specificity to the S.I. itself. Their trans-historical judgment had never been a practice of the S.I. in its real days. Their judgment could appear exactly because the reality of the S.I. no longer existed.

13.

Of the numerous oppositions which have emerged outside the domain of the S.I. against Debord and Sanguinetti, the polemic composed by Jimmy Lallement is among the most honest and least intellectualized. This comrade has not extended a critique of the practical subjective breakdown to the whole of the S.I. but the entire revolutionary movement of the recent past whose troubles and setbacks were everywhere. And he maintains the same practical concern in delimiting the self-critical function attached to the revival of Reichean methods, their value and necessity when deployed from an active position of strength. Despite these virtues, there is still a shortcoming present in his "Gazette 3": on the one hand, while searching for "the general deficiency" witnessed in the S.I., he still believes like Debord and Sanguinetti that the "S.I. has not failed"; on the other hand, like in many other polemics, he exaggerates the importance of ridding the proletarian movement of a generic situationist reduction without really questioning the idealistic projection of a few Situationists who sustained their presence as the S.I. and the consciousness of the proletariat as Situationist.

now occur to its surprise and equally its shame. In so far as the class struggle has arrived at higher forms of tension, history itself starts to obliterate this dependent. The social problems of the proletariat, which are the problems no doubt of the conscious individual, have reached a breaking-point before its very eyes. Thus, the proletarian side of Situationism corresponds, not to the moment when the proletariat is absent from its struggle, but when the situationist is absent from theory. When all of the strata which supported Situationism (including the high bourgeoisie as well as the classical lumpen proletariat) had lived this absence, the global proletariat was sustaining the accelerated collective moment of its history in which everything, even its burning deficiencies, became concrete. Today, it welcomes its crisis, a crisis in which it comes to know its true antagonists and refuses any thought other than the stakes of its own life and their improvement. Rather than daydreaming any longer in the delirious images of the reigning spectacle, each and every one of its public gestures smashes their repressive mode of conditioning. It is on the attack, and perhaps for the first time, it can really speak about itself. While the existing proletariat is far from suppressing the totality of determinants which underlie the Reichean critique of character-in-revolt, the terms of its sovereignty already exceed the Reichean situation. Accompanying the transition from isolated to collective proletarian terrain (in a word, the reawakening of the unitary social critique), Reichean theory tends to lose the necessity for its categorical identity in the enrichment of life. In a similar way, the more localized critique of Situationism will not withstand the contemplative deficiency which is at the origin of its attack unless it takes form as a passing' critique and equally a critique which passes. For this critique really manifested an infantile moment in general within the new course of the international revolutionary movement. Beyond Situationism, the workers are coming to master the situation through the irreversible consequences of their own action, and as a consequence, with a clearer

comportment of Elwell. At a meeting in Paris in late September, the apparent formation of a new solidarity between the three (myself having joined the group only months before with the defect of natural ignorance in regard to many aspects of past operations as well as some of the best theoretical texts) supposedly had cohered. There, Verlaan agreed that his previous restraint from participating in the first number of the magazine and his frequent geographic departures were in themselves unjustifiable. Chasse and Elwell had in turn recognized the mistaken part which each of them played in a particular incident in the past which had disenchanted him. In this incident, Chasse, who was then only considering his formal adherence to the S.I., wrote to the situationists in Europe in respect to Verlaan who was already a member. He stated his unwillingness to become a situationist, so long as Verlaan remained a part of a student commune which operated around Columbia University, the Radical Action Committee, where in effect he had stayed for two months among people in no way equal to him as a de facto leader and as a carrier of entrism–dual organizational ties. Elwell now admitted his belief that Chasse was mistaken in having mailed the letter without first showing it to Verlaan, even though he continued to refuse to leave the commune until much later. Chasse himself agreed. Certainly, none of the elements of the common problem were in any way more or less detrimental and least of all those manifest by Verlaan. The ultimatum, however, was radically preemptive.

Our response to them in November simply proved to be an indulgence in their rigidity and delirium. On the 10th, I wrote that "hasty ultimatums" were "remaining a problem of the present" and three days later demanded the recognition and retraction of the error. On the 17th, Verlaan opposed the measure in turn and expressed his disgust with an "ultimatum practice" on their part which was becoming 'cyclic." In so doing, he recapitulated and introduced various faults which he felt existed in them. Both Chasse and Elwell, now judging the manner of his response to their initial provocation,

claimed that he was simply reversing "the history of the section." Accordingly, they authorized the pseudo-elimination of Verlaan on the 26th. After having pretended to accept the validity of my own presence in the American section, Chasse and Elwell now claimed the right to expel Verlaan without a majority vote, not on the basis of an ultimatum–in any case false and provocative–but his reaction to it. Later, after they had been expelled from the S.I. in turn, the two of them wrote an attack against the situationists consisting of forty-six pages and an equally ridiculous title, A Field Study In The Dwindling Force of Cognition, Where It Is Least Expected. The text tries among other things to prove that the countermeasure of expulsion directed against them by the French section on December 19, 1969, sufficiently demonstrated the centralist role which that section played. The judgment of centralism was evidently their last rationalization. In truth, every section had already offered its complete opposition to those bureaucratic ordinances which Chasse and Elwell never failed to sustain. The prudent hypothesis formed by the Italian section, namely, that the false measure of elimination does not automatically eliminate those in turn who formulated it, had no real significance in regard to their case of indefatigable bureaucratic energy. But one must still recognize the error contained in the initial form of their expulsion in its specificity. In the same way that Chasse and Elwell could say in their polemic that they themselves committed "a breach of democratic practice" in issuing their expulsion of Verlaan without first notifying me of their intent, in spite of the known stature of my opposition, one must indicate our own "breach" even though nothing would have changed. This was at the root of their dissimulated resignation on December 28th. At the Conference of Delegates at Wolsfeld, on January 19, 1970, their resignation was refused by everyone. Their expulsion was reiterated.

As in many other times and places, the formulation of some expulsions, under the pressure of certain immediate events, were simply necessitated without marking a definite level of theoretical or

trary, Debord and Sanguinetti present an image of critical retirement, gazing at the wonders of the modern class struggle instead of registering their membership in the immediate struggle to conclude it once and for all. While yielding more systematic structure to situationist theory in its very relativity, they have released the mythical portrait of its relative presence on working terrain. No one can hide their eyes any longer from the central fact that revolutionary theory has been an exterior truth to the extent that it has been communicated at the actual margins of everyday life. It requires no great wisdom to see that the medium of disalienated publicity is crucial (noting that the truth does not guarantee its utility of itself); that its invention and combat require theory and practice equally; the vastest struggle against the ruling spectacle which has censored and fragmented the proletarian opposition at its base. There is a line from an old and no less harmless film which aptly characterizes the urgency of this immense task. "You can't but you will." Today, it's not that the Situationists have to face the task of regroupment as much as they have to regroup for the above task.

11.

Situationism belongs, for the most part, to the student in his romance with revolutionary extremism, that prestigious commodity which serves to decorate the poverty of his life and equally his complicity with the old world. The pro-situationist represents the proletarian ass backwards. He is simply postponing his descent toward the spectacular alienation of the cadre in the same period that the proletarian is Found fluctuating in his departure from private life. All the same, Situationism is more diverse in its social origins, having contained a proletarian side which corresponds to an intermediary phase of the international class struggle, as a bitter incapacity to live through and understand this phase whose sudden advances

themselves. In its abstract urgency, the S.I. retreated from the dialectical method with the easy intellectual expectations of its immanent revolutionary conclusion. Having drawn the historical goal of life from the total critique of advanced capitalism, and essentially from the new class struggles which form the central product of its extended alienation, the Situationists tended to withdraw from the subjective pass in their international development. They lost sight of the life present in the class struggle, and accordingly the opportune necessity of an intensified exemplary activity of their own, because they had lost sight of their own concrete existence i.e. what was new and therefore revolutionary about their own contradictions. To this day, the international proletarian assault verifies itself through its own objective practice, revealing the historical truth of its being exactly at the moment of raw intervention, without plan and without visible title, without an explicit knowledge of its own history and its own theory which is the recognition of itself as a class. The present state of the real movement tends to indicate the likelihood of the popularization of situationist theory in a matter of years and perhaps even months according to its own mounting suppression of existing conditions. While this popularization will never arrive at one stroke, it is even more true that situationist theory will belong to the masses alone when the masses have subjected that theory to their own experience and transformed it like any other productive force. In reality, the presence of situationist theory in the masses will be identical with the autonomous formation of workers councils and thus the beginning of the revolution.

10.

The revolutionary critique of our time is just starting to really enter the search for its practical terrain more than this terrain itself; as struggle, in other words, for its universal situation parallel to the universal situation which is struggling to know. To the con-

practical progress in the actual life of the group. The "old problems" themselves had not been resolved in a complete way here. Merely one aspect of them had been negated. Much of the poor style of the American situationist activity continued as it was. The absence of qualitative progress persisted even after a break had occurred with the few remaining Europeans as the result of our stated disapproval over two specific cases of expulsion and resignation which had occurred there some months before. In early April, with six months spent again in New York since the first breaks, the activist outlook which had manifest itself in past times reappeared. Activism reemerged from the side of Verlaan by default of a genuine contribution and originality. Not only the originality but the very struggle for it was diminishing in him between October and February. Previously, the relations had almost broken completely in periods of extreme discord over the most cursory common writing. Moreover, no individual analyses emerged up to April except my own. As for Verlaan, he had chosen at various intervals to rewrite not only finished parts of incomplete texts but amended even key organizational writings with an ever more obscure result. At a meeting on April 1, 1971, just after his return from another six-week excursion to Europe, Verlaan failed to offer anything new, as was promised, in regard to the completion of articles involved in the publication of a second edition of our magazine. He did bring much which was old.

Verlaan felt obliged to make a pseudo-critique of what was done, how it was done and how it should have been done in New York during his absence. This pseudo-critique actually concerned a clerical mailing as well as one contact, Arnaud Chastel. Verlaan arduously stated his opposition to the manner in which posters had been folded and to the way in which readers on the old list were asked to "send bread," as it was written on the back of envelopes in regard to publications sent them for over a year. In addition, he indicated his belief that Chastel and another ally, Steef Davidson, should have been "put together," namely, "better organized." In re-

sponse, I simply stated the core of the militantism which such remarks contained in respect to "organizing" others, others in whom I did not yet place full confidence and who did not find that confidence in each other. Only a few months before, Verlaan and I had formally threatened to cut off all relations in particular with Chastel for the most abstract, insubstantial tendency to voice criticism at the first moment over anything. On April 1, the common decision to sustain a modified relationship with Chastel for whom Verlaan admitted finally that he held his own "suspicions" concerning his contacts was maintained. Nevertheless, Verlaan showed in future days–during which he preferred to continue working on the translation and reproduction of other established texts–an arbitrary disloyalty to the common decision and a persisting desire to maintain his criticism of detail. Days later, we met again in order to speak with still another contact, Ken Knabb, belonging to a group from California, which at least then was anonymous and whose positions were self-admittedly very elementary as this anonymity showed. In the past, Verlaan particularly wanted to criticize the members of the group by mail in relationship to many of the particulars involved in their preliminary activity. In any case, at this meeting, in answer to a question posed by Knabb concerning the type of relationship which existed between Chastel and us, Verlaan quickly responded in this way. Upon the basis of the criticism which Verlaan already put to me, Chastel was willing, as he too now agreed, to join our group. The abstract urgency felt by Verlaan in organizing those who were not equal or corresponding with them in detail after detail of critical advice, now became obvious. He wanted to "organize" them and unite with them to the extent that he could not fulfill the game of the qualitative on his own terrain–and no matter what was said there about them. This evidently was hostile enough to former positions. Despite the fact that Verlaan was unable to hold to the slightest agreement, the trouble was still taken to arrange a meeting on the following day at which time, I said, the matter would be settled at last "in one way or another."

8.

In the new moment of anti-hierarchical groups, the nightmare of social alienation can never be dealt with in the same way without predicting possible evolutions and planning to avoid them on the spot. The full personal critique should be more and more customary at the earliest time without the presence either of restraint or immanent rupture. At the least, the mechanism of breaks must apply more and more specifically to forewarned failure that contradicts the subversive progress which exists in general, inverting the self-fissiparous nature of expulsion which persisted between 1969 and 1971. Surely, exclusions have not been the source but the product of our real problems. They are no problem for us as long as they serve as real means which uncover each alienated interference at its roots. But they can no longer be the parochial means for resolving common inactivity, emerging From a generalized ultimatum with its utilitarian necessity. These years in question exhibited the opposite result, more silence and inertia, rising on the terrain of glorified behaviorist judgment. With the profound diffusion of negativity in the present world, the unity founded on the break with alienated relations will reveal itself among autonomous revolutionary groups themselves, among those whose practical opposition has become their real life. With each new day, an increasing refusal of proletarian conditions will leave them more and more harmonious among themselves.

9.

The breakdown of the situationist milieu has left its mark on present history as time lost for the revolutionary movement itself. This occurred exactly at the moment when the S.I. had to release the total use for its ideas as situated material power, in articulating the restive expanse of working life within reach of the workers

7.

The time of Situationism had become the time of the S.I. as a whole. People there were reluctant to attain certain critical faculties of others while others guarded their basic contentment with a common theoretical orientation for the group. In this condition, the S.I. could not approach a concrete recognition of itself as a whole, a real appraisal of its immediate and previous capacities, what it still was and equally what it had to become. It even lacked the awareness of its given marginality due to the vanities, reservations and even fears that are connected with the malaise of these twins, resignation and minimalism. Accordingly, the abstract state of the S.I. tended to increase with the verbal radicalization of its intentions, namely, "to be more than a group of theoreticians". Failing to define the authentic terrain of participation, the subsequent breakdown of individual after individual involved almost no historical substance, universal content or direct practical alternatives. Pretending all the while that its internal struggles were already on the terrain of practical preparation, the S.I. became more and more isolated from direct historical intervention, in a time reduced to organization theory for its own sake. The old disciplinary modalities of the S.I. and its extended goal worked against each other in the abstract, in the precipitous clash of various internal relations struggling to realize "the new form of human relations", apart from uninterrupted external resistance. One can say with accuracy that the greater number of internal quarrels had emerged through each succeeding pause in this very resistance. It was on this terrain tied to the idea more than the practice of uncompromised extremism that participants were in some way apt to go or to have others go.

Situationism was allowed to develop through the prolonged theoretical function of the S.I. Today, the example of the S.I., an internal organizational rapture without positive synthesis, will serve to clarify the hegelian conception which idealizes this rupture exactly because it is a dialectic of return.

Although having lost trust in him, with little expectation of an effective settlement in view of such arbitrariness, I made it explicitly clear then that all other engagements and all other matters were suspended until this sudden maneuver was resolved definitively. But on the following day, he failed to appear. Among all his subsequent excuses he included a delay resulting from previous engagements that day with Chastel and others. After this absence, I broke with Verlaan on the 15th of April according to the central fact that he could not "be taken at his word." This genre of militantism, carried in the enthusiasm of an "organization man," had completely obstructed all further struggle for radical coherence. The desire to translate volumes of material, to bask in an image of coherence on the laurels of past organization in which one had played a very modest part, constituted the most patent ideology.

In this light, it is necessary to criticize the preceding organizational position which had been taken in New York–"The Tendency for the Truth of Practice"– since September 21, 1970. Our criticism of the methods and the practical reality which had existed in Europe was, after all, glib. In our analysis, there was no element of self-criticism present. We said very little about ourselves, our own part in past errors and our difficulties. However, the refusal in turn of the five remaining comrades of the "Declaration" initiated on November 11, 1970, to recognize the disputable form as well as the bases involved in the past elimination of Eduardo Rothe was certainly mistaken itself. The same was true for the forced nature of the resignation imposed on Francois Beaulieu who was attacked for being "pitiful." As much as the comrades in Paris had violated the basic rules of sectional autonomy in the elimination of Eduardo Rothe, the following clarification should also be made now. One must respect the spirit of irrevocable decision which was present in Paris. A fundamental loyalty existed among all the situationists there in living by the same rigor in the rules of the game, as they applied not only to others but to themselves. It is important to note, apart from the most severe conditions of inequality under which

judgments were made there, that every measure itself always expressed a clear democratic majority. As for our objection to the above two cases, our proposal to include the two departed comrades in a "regroupment" was hardly qualified really. Certainly, our proposal for "regroupment" itself offered no real specifications suitable in any way to the vast dimensions of general practical inertia which had already evolved.

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increasing our possibilities of intervention". By July, 1970, he was obliged to depict the new inter-personal crisis which was stigmatizing this advance of the S.I. with equal truth. "Between the rupture and contentment in principle, it seems that there has been no place for the real critique". In a matter of days, Debord was again the first to attack a sort of "pseudo-radicalism which manifests itself in an extremism of personal elimination", as evidenced in an internal conflict which had developed in Italy. Thus, Debord's position had slowly modified its original dramatic extremes as this pseudo-radicalism fatally evolved while forgetting that it was he himself who had Inaugurated the necessity of progress through virtual ultimatum, seconded after the Eighth Conference of the S.I., in "as many exclusions as necessary" in order to locate an effective activity. While having resigned from the editorial committee, in order to protest the inordinate responsibilities imposed on him within the French section by all the other Parisian Situationists in their languor or at the least in the weakening of their traditional excellence (as the Parisian section in turn had complained at times of the central role imposed on them by the "infantalism" of other sections). Debord continued to defend the basic truth of these expulsions late in the pileup, and despite this pseudo-radicalism, with the ghost of a "we". He ends in a vain rush to conserve the S.I. by retracting its practical goal. Today the assertive renunciation of practical agitation, even to encounter proletarian practice (as so flagrantly documented in "A Propos of Vaneigem"), founds the pseudo-critique of Situationism. Situationism in turn can renounce everything, wavering between a pure critical orientation deprived of organization and subjectivist metaphysics which goes so far as to abandon its proletarian foundation. Looking back, the S.I. did only have inequalities in the beginning, but it was hierarchical in the end.

rioration. They say nothing minimally about a certain spirit of indulgence and even exuberance which developed within the sphere of exclusions and reciprocally the crude opposition at the least to this indulgence.

6.

Supposing that the extreme personality attacks waged by Debord and Sanguinetti intend to spit on prehistory, Gianfranco Sanguinetti, model adolescent throughout the greater part of the former crisis, must be choking on his own saliva. Meticulously bypassing this aspect of the past, he can join in a chorus of venomous denunciations, with the highest sociological rejection of this foreign virus: Situationism. Similarly, one may find the institutional presence of J.V. Martin after a decade of virtual qualitative inertia. and essentially because he risked almost nothing new, even the suppression of his geographic isolation. Thus, the false moment of the subjective critique is concentrated in the very account of this tendency i.e. the petty history of exponential expulsions, in which each succeeding case worsens until the very last, Rene Riesel, half a step away from their own toybox, and after some fifteen -different departures. As for Guy Debord, his central part in this historical parody revolves around the contradiction between the course of his critical positions asserted during the real time of the S.I. and the practical conclusions which were drawn by him in the end. Without wanting to ignore the obvious stature and excellence of Guy Debord over a period of many years (which were the most crucial for the S.I. in many ways), he must be reproached for a certain myopia. In the "April Theses" of 1968, Debord introduced the first extreme moment of negative self-recognition and transcendence when he wrote as follows, "The S.I. must now prove its effectiveness in a future stage of revolutionary activity–or disappear." No less right was he to stress the intensity of this advance as "quickly

North American Ideologies

The few examples of militant interest in the critical conception of the spectacle have been as confused as they are academic. The rare instances of theoretical discussion which are introduced are as helplessly didactic as they are incoherent. Where refutations are cast toward the global rejection of the spectacle, the utterances are always as meek as they are arbitrary. This trend is expected. Like businessmen taking accounts at their board meetings, various left-wing journals and papers close the doors to open debate, shirk from the prodigiousness of their adversary, yet pass for elusive allies while murmuring furtively under marginal footnotes and anonymous titles, equally plaintive accords and discords. Well, we don't want to hurt them and we don't want to scold them, we only want to play with them a little to expose the mechanisms of vulgarization.

The worse cases are not related to antipathy but obscurity. Certain incoherent groups and individuals bearing common brand labels of radicalism fall into this category. They have the merit of conveying the most blind enthusiasm for anything, and toward us nothing but the most contemplative theoretical interest and the most base practical fragmentation. Many American "underground" newspapers, like the Barb in Berkeley and Fusion in Boston, wanted to simplify revolutionary theory in favor of popular prejudice, but for intellectuals and not popularly. The Tribe, also in Berkeley, rallied to the scandalous subversion which was called for in the text, "The Poverty of Student Life," against the circus of culture, professors and academic guerrilla warfare. Yet they never understood a word about their own ideology or the truth of

others. They wanted to import a real sense of scandal in the service of their radical professors as if the poverty was not there and they were not the students. Certain other esthetes have viewed the spectacle as some bizarre impressionist portrait which simply disturbs their thoughts and fashionable dreams. Hegelianism seems to motivate their criticism minus the dialectic.

An attitude of this kind appeared in August, 1970, in the Argentinian review Contracultura. One article in it was entitled "The Dependent Spectacle" whose author went under the pen name of Colador and whose objective was to "freely Argentinianize situationist theories." The text proved faithful to the language of a handful of intellectuals in Buenos Aires who were interested in using a new vocabulary and fresh metaphors to dress up their old objectives. This example of confusion arrived at the pinnacle of pretension in treating the specific historical conditions in the underdeveloped world with the most vague, picturesque social philosophy, so much so that its conclusion manifests an unapproachable ambiguity. The key misconception involves the relationship between the global spectacle of merchandise and backward economic zones: on the one hand, the spectacular image is seen as an invasion from abroad which cannot be supported by local production already deprived of its autonomous sources; on the other, the vast distance between the imported "contemplation" and the actual "possession" of commodities is said to discharge psychic estrangement in the spectator, "neurotic cargo," "tension," "irritation" in place of material alienation. It is this erroneous psychological reduction, accompanied by a narrow geographic conception of alienated mediation, which hobbles to the last paragraph. This paragraph is worth mentioning for the sake alone of anthropological inquiry. Colador writes or scribbles as follows:

In this way all that the proletariat gains from the world centers at the point of having before it the illusion in block of a production that is not exclusively produced by it, in finished alienation and the edification of its partial historical mission (May, 1968), the

4.

If the "Real Break…" bears an ideology of partial truth anywhere, it is exactly within those pages which deal with the given organizational period of the S.I. between 1969 and 1971, where they exert a pure synchronic portrayal of past expulsions, ultimatums, resignations and breaks. These pages betray the traditional precision and completeness of organizational reports, as the double of the organization itself in its last phase. The incidental specificity is absent exactly because their recuperation of the S.I. mitigates against specificity at the moment of total loss and the virtual loss of the totality of its members. In this way Debord and Sanguinetti did not become some political bureaucrats but some bureaucratic idealists. Suffice to say that an international association of revolutionaries has become mythical once it is sustained by two or perhaps three of its original members.

5.

Debord and Sanguinetti fail to tell the whole truth about the actual regressions which developed in these years. The intersubjective difficulties that evolved through this period corresponded first of all to an enlarged terrain of possible practice, no longer confined to four or five invaluable critics in Paris but joined by a considerable number of young agitators. The subsequent failure to continue the coherence of its critique equally and democratically among all the new participants was reciprocal with its inability to supersede a purely theoretical activity according to a superior experimental practice, more constant, more specific in what it communicated and even more daring. Secondarily, they forget to mention the real course of this internal breakdown, the most false, the most true and the most irreconcilable moments which occurred in the very deployment of extreme organizational modalities against this dete-

2.

The above situationist tendency has offered everything concrete at the general level of critical theory itself (in defining the totality of new revolutionary conditions) while retracting the total spirit of specificity from the most important organizational crossings. They have risen by neglecting the painful forest of subjective facts which made up the tortuous identity of the S.I. Accordingly, they were at last able to materialize their apparent critical force in the exterior exactly when the true practical basis of the organization i.e. the near totality of its members, had fallen, patently, irrevocably and incontrovertibly. Judging this subjectively, Debord and Sanguinetti have fallen at the moment they arose, or put another way, they will never be able to rise again until the S.I. has also fallen for them. They have not inherited the S.I. by virtue of their place in time or their critical reformulation of its specificity, its poetry and dialectic. They have only inherited its contemplation.

3.

The essential fault contained in the above tendency consists of the pretentious assertion of its own historical salvation of the S.I. from the clutches of ideological degradation. Debord and Sanguinetti have broken at best with an inert common activity which lost hold even of its theoretical pre-requisites for creative participation, by default of locating and enriching new practical terrain. But according to their own conservative self-justification, they are even further away from this terrain whose leading part can be replaced by no second. It is not situationist theory itself which has been in crisis (as perspective for the negation of all existing conditions by the producers becoming creators) so much as the method of its organization.

proletariat gains from the periphery qualitatively transforming its neurotic cargo into unbridled desire to transpose the distance of the contemplated-possessed, to recuperate its alienated product. Copying plainly the model that the spectacle offers it, it begins to knock down the weak local scaffolding. This desire finds immediate manifestation in violence, its wise midwife. The Tupamaros and Che Guevara are the individual and collective realization. the social appropriation, the humanization of James Bond.

On November 8, 1971, we pointed our finger to this "pampa of determinism" in a letter directed to "The Readers of Contracultura." Evidently, an image of negativism was as foreign to the critique of modern spectacular society as Guevaraism was hostile. This critique could not be mistaken for some ideal formulation which only finds the contemporary peasantry and numeric minorities of workers vanquished in futility. Beyond infantile image-making, one cannot glimpse, for instance, at the Bolivian workers from the side of their struggle to recuperate the alienated product without seeing at the same time the side of their departure from themselves as an alienated product. In the gallery of recuperations, the cultural critic had simply approached politics as the Marxists would approach culture in the framework of a Victorian tragedy motivated not by history but by impulse.

Global illusion haunts the radical intelligensia, illusion which pushes again toward the peasantry under the title of Bolshevism as it enters the horizons of industrial workers as socialist reformism. Other western intellectuals have complemented the fragmentary portrayal of the critique without illusions according to an insipid antiquarianism. This text or that text is reproduced as a "document," no more or no less. Similarly, the actual objections felt by the antiquarian revolutionary are posed in documentary terms. The American journal, Radical America, epitomized the antiquarian in their publication of Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* from which they hoped to design an additional specialization consisting of new "situationist-type" texts within their own shadowy circles. As for

Radical America, one must say that its "historical research" always formed the least inspiring aspect of Students For a Democratic Society which now is defunct. The beginnings of the organization had shown, to the contrary, far more imagination. The Port Huron Statement, issued in 1960, expressed an initial disdain for all forms of power and every shade of falsehood. Subsequently, the contempt failed to germinate within the limited battleground of the university and even ended up in intellectual surrender. Some young rebels had shown, after all, their exclusive concern with the university, by agitating over and over again there, enjoying a sort of refuge within it. As these "activists" failed to criticize everyday life, their theoretical heirs now seemed to treat the critique of everyday life as a highlight.

These recuperators had simply seen as much opportunity in a "situationist dialectic" as in a few miserable surrealist admirers in Chicago in function of their traditional politics. Their new joy was to reproduce theory other than their own, theory much of which is pregnant with the old world, in order to supplement their empirical studies. Months afterward, Radical America revealed its actual position in publishing a special issue on Hegel and Lenin with a hand from some allies of the Marxist philosophy journal, Telos. Evidently, there were many different cooks, poets, philosophy professors and soft anarchists, who could follow the package recipe faithfully. At one and the same time, the following phenomenology revealed itself there: the recuperators wavered between the contrary poles of Trotskyism and Luxemburgism as they were unable at first to read more than the opening three chapters of *Society of the Spectacle*. In turn, they tried to redress their error by expressing at the margins a detail of opposition.

> "Lenin and Stalinism must be sharply separated. It is interesting to notice that Stalin, stupid fuck that he was, first admitted to the authenticity of Lenin's Testament in 1928, and subsequently lied about it by pre-

Leaflet distributed along with Diversion, June 1973

1.

Debord and Sanguinetti have attempted to continue the organizational voice of the S.I. when the S.I. no longer exists in reality, to sustain the S.I. by sustaining an organizational critique. For the succession of individual and collective breakdowns which ended in an organizational void, they have substituted an imaginary "Break". Knowing the outline of projects formulated during the former "orientation debate," Debord and Sanguinetti have thus succeeded in publishing a Situationist Manifesto. Unlike the terrifying manifesto of 1848, however, their manifesto does not announce the turning-point of the accelerated organizational movement which is its radical axis. It conceals its irreversible decline. Their book which is entitled, "The True Break In The International", did not effectively end a void but simply came at its end. Their critical work represents the best and at the same time the very worst product of the situationist milieu, as thought of a theoretical organization whose coherence was only unitary in thought while divided against itself at the moment of its own self-negation and transcendence: in other words, in its everyday existence and its struggle for a scandalous practice.

> senting it as a Trotskyist fabrication…Since the politburo in Moscow had agreed to keep the document secret, it demanded that Trotsky write an outright denial, which was then reluctantly made by him in the September 1, 1925 issue of Bolshevik…Guy Debord's account of this, carried away by the force of its rhetoric, blurs very important details…"

Of course, no such "important detail" exists, nor can they produce one in order to redeem some bureaucratic variation to which they are disposed or the transitions of one bureaucratic decision or another. Their projected rhetoric is in itself of secondary importance in comparison with their contemplative historical irrelevance, irrelevance whose lips will be forever closed to the massacre of Kronstadt. This kind of historical apology is merely the dust of a long counter-revolutionary episode from which the twentieth century is only now emerging. Let it equivocate over the 13th Party Congress, let it "sharply separate" bureaucratic lies, let it file away its cardinal sins. These people who indulge in some reformation of the past with a folkloric methodology tied to its heroes, are foreign to historical transcendence except as a spectacle. Laughably, they have set out against the future, against a fresh activity realized in the world, by virtue of adumbrated typography. This brand of recuperation will surely fall away with its monographs while the revolutionary texts it borrowed will remain.

In conclusion, we do not ask for worthier opponents than those we mention. We will be well satisfied with the defeat of the dreary.

Beyond the Crisis of Abstraction and the Abstract Break with that Crisis: The S.I.

Publications and Activities

On Labor Day, 1971, we invoked the scandal known as "The Kings County Comics". The comic strip was released at the actual hospital complex, Kings County, which is situated on the periphery of the Brownsville ghetto district in Brooklyn. Insofar as the hospital was familiar to us, we decided to specify the revolutionary critique as well as to denounce the conditions there. We simply used the opportunity presented by an evacuated institutional location in order to revel in subversion.

The results were by no means marginal either among the patients or the workers of the hospital. To the extent that the comic referred to particular bureaucrats and administrative procedures known at the hospital, word rapidly circulated about the comics in spite of a very limited, clandestine distribution. At the same time, the scandal encouraged the refusal to pay among the patrons as it advocated the use of direct democracy among the employees in denouncing the repressive aspects of their function especially. From friends and colleagues employed at the hospital, we can relate the results which followed: much of the hospital administration was inflamed the following day when it found its employees gathering together in the reading and discussion of the mysterious parody-denunciation which appeared on each of their desks that morning; queues of patients found and read copies of the text in defiance of the cashiers behind the pay booths who were enraged; no copy of the "Comics" ever returned to the central office of hospital administration, as the directors had demanded.

The positive significance which the agitation accomplished was underlined, moreover, by the simple fact that people in districts

There is no other adventure but the concrete. Today, we know where we are. Others now must begin to surprise those who have already had the honor to participate in the revolution. Clearly, the foul days of mix-up with the small desires of reproducers, of amateur idealists and "organization men," are behind us. In America, revolutionary theory has found an initial place at last. Our time has not expressed the search and the realization of a situationist theory but that revolutionary position which was rediscovered by the situationists.

collective game as the possible milieu for the refinement and extension of his proven creativity, in the communication and publication of radical theory as well as the arrogance of his refusal of power. Nothing need be said about all those in the past who did not bother to capitalize on the opportunity to write tracts, to study vital readings and to master the dialectical method (without discipline) as well as the initial patience and generosity of those who knew best.

At the beginning of new stages of radical experience, with the growth and extension of organization, the radicalization of agitational aims and even the desire to fulfill those which exist already in a superior way, the usage of the arms of expulsion, ultimatum and breaks requires the maximum possible delay until the minimum of collective projects is set specifically in motion along with the choice of individual tasks. After long trying experience, it is necessary to make that arm serve concretely, wherever necessary, in the fundamental defense of the absolute liberty of the group and each individual. Revolutionary organization can no longer accept the paltry contents of its breaks any more than it can accept the trite substance of its praxis. Accordingly, the pure questions of bad conduct, the failure to participate in a real schedule of disalienation, the deviation of individuals from a common decision and agreement, deserve an interval of real criticism between total acceptance and extreme measures of sanction. The search for transitional methods should be no more tiring than are individuals to whom they apply.

Under the peculiar atmosphere known to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of anarchism–bearing the most stupid varieties of pacifism and laissez-faire individualism–let us warn those in advance who do not hold a "taste for violence" that the present tasks before new revolutionary groups here exclude all taste for non-violence and the aversion for defending the truth. Let the whole spider web of mysticisms and mystiques spare themselves the agony of approaching us.

as far away as Bedford-Stuyvesant had gotten wind of what happened. Certain subjective conditions were presented for the first time among us in New York. The composition as well as the diffusion of the text emanated from diverse sources, namely, several comrades as well as their friends and the sympathy and support of one or two workers at the hospital itself. We had realized again an episodic agitation, without banality and without interference, as we are certain that those we ridiculed will never be quite the same.

The text entitled "To the Readers of Contracultura" was issued on November 8th, 1971. In the spring of 1972, we drew up the tract "Have a Moment for the Examination of Reality?" in answer to the commercial repression of revolutionary theory which had built up ever since the first publications in 1969. It was circulated around key newsstands and bookstores which automatically resisted all critical publications which are independent of the monopoly of commercial distributors and are free of commercial advertisements. There, we emphasized the spectacle of obstruction which "little newsstands" and the "distribution racket" have imposed, as outright censorship parallel to the political terrorism known to bureaucratic state capitalism. We have continued to embarrass those merchants who defend by virtue of habit and "propriety" the papal lists of weekly journals and newspapers handed to them by various middlemen. Moreover, the publishers and editors who have refused to print English versions of *Society of the Spectacle* and On Knowing How to Live for the Use of the Younger Generations, as at Grove Press and Avon Books in New York, or those who worked to sabotage their publication, as Porter Sargent in Boston, have not heard the last of us.

A cartoon-advertisement extracted from the present text, "The Poverty of Ecology," in combination with the diversion of Marvel Comics, was issued in 500 copies, preceding the publication of our magazine. This spring, we published a Spanish version of the situationist text, "Contributions Serving to Rectify Public Opinion Concerning the Revolution in the Underdeveloped Countries" by

Mustafa Khayati. It appears under the title "La Verdad de los Paises Subdesarrollados en La Revolucion Internacional" and it was translated by Julian Cordero. This text has been circulated, in particular, in the Dominican Republic as well as in New York. Five thousand copies of the present magazine have been issued initially.

of a finished period. Collective revolutionary practice must still begin an elementary exploration of situations, outside, although not excluding, the subversion of the university and the cultural scene. Inseparably, the compositions of tracts, posters, manifestoes and magazines must become increasingly concrete, active analyses. Certainly, such an experiment will require an enlarged deployment of many of the diverse techniques of communication and inseparably the negation of their dominant use. But the experiment must concern the individuals themselves, their immediate way of life and the situations which chance as well as their radicalism allows each of them to offer to the collective milieu of subversion. The struggle of revolutionary groups cannot fix its horizons lower than the formation of an everyday interaction between its members. And their interaction in turn must also concern the immediate satisfaction of their desire to play, that is to say, to act together. The question of how to make theory more practical is inseparable from how each actually lives day by day. From train turnstiles to evacuated workplaces and consumer spectacles, the radical group must make its perspective known. The situations which are not yet accessible will not exclude the capacity to find them nor the desire to divert those which are most familiar and, accordingly, most banal. One cannot make less of an assertion without hiding in the pure shelter of theory and contemplative organization. The truth of organization is its immediate subversion of banalities within the concrete.

Here, and only here, can the new life of the revolutionary community begin to be a history. The question "what would be fun to do tomorrow" presupposes a minimum proof of the capacity to express theory and situate it among all those today who want to form new organizations and all those endeavoring to enter them in the future. Previous experience has shown that the mastery of fundamental theoretical expression through the group, and ultimately through others, is hazardous and detrimental as it existed. The point of entry into an anti-hierarchical group must glow with the common meeting of achievements. Each can only approach the

Now Diversion

The time has come to make our concept of democratic organization more precise, to state our sense of rules, methods and objectives, in view of how we want to live and to combat the old world.

After having seen the menace of abstraction peering out from the most eloquent critical discussions, always isolated from an ongoing public praxis, the former use of the term "historical relations" seems to satisfy the kind of association which does and ought to occur between autonomous individuals at the base of the revolutionary group in this sense alone. Our relations will be historical to the extent that they are both subjective and practical. The key to the concrete truth of revolutionary activity is contained in its capacity to spread its relations and its practice. And, no doubt, in spreading the reality of what it can do it extends the possibility of what it can be. But the truth of each revolutionary is also the truth of his ability to be with others in order to be himself and to make the group radically more. The struggle of groups of individuals to be themselves expresses nothing less than their own immediate struggle for a history of individuals. The possibility of this history is inseparable from the actual struggles of revolutionary groups, the sum-total of their talents and determination, in combating the ruling spectacle.

The general question of what is now to be done involves nothing principally but the everyday life of revolutionary organization. Both the recurrence of formless, habitual encounters which never fail to carry a mock ambience of critical harmony as the bad replacement for qualitative works and in contrast the occasional intervals of real collaboration must be left behind as the gross reflections

Some Traditional Writings

The chronological account of Paul Avrich, Kronstadt, 1921, represents the typical insufficiency of the historical specialist. The so-called objective accuracy of the investigation actually consists of the repetitive assertion of certain aspects of the historical question which are by now presuppositions to any further exploration of the subject. In the case of revolutionary Kronstadt, the author merely dwells on the actual cleavage which existed between the revolutionary populace of the island and the central bureaucratic authorities in Moscow. Avrich bothers only to affirm the non-existence of a "White Reaction" and the existence of a true revolutionary spirit among the "zealots" who formed the Provisional Revolutionary Committee. One could have learned as much from the remarks of Lenin alone concerning the perspective of his revolutionary adversaries when he said, for example, that "they do not want the White Guards and they do not want our power either." At the same time, this libertarian specialist from Columbia University has only returned, tearfully, in the last analysis to the repression uttered softly through his double logic:

"The sailors, on the one hand, were revolutionary zealots, and like zealots throughout history they longed to recapture a past era before the purity of their ideals had been defiled by the exigencies of power. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, having emerged victorious from a bloody Civil War, were not prepared to tolerate any new challenge to their authority. Throughout the conflict each side behaved in accordance with its own particular goals and aspirations. To say this is not to deny the necessity of moral judgment. Yet Kronstadt presents a situation in which the historian can sym-

pathize with the rebels and still concede that the Bolsheviks were justified in subduing them."

One new element of the book is of marginal value. Avrich emphasizes the defensive spirit which still existed fatally in the "third revolution". In the process of forming an independent Soviet, the sailors and workers of Kronstadt resisted the military advice transmitted by military specialists as well as the extensive intervention of the specialists themselves. The insurrection avoided the full attempt to form a beachhead at Oranienbaum early in the struggle and to penetrate in turn turbulent Petrograd. This defect had simply reflected the elementary level of organization evoked in the initial moment of revolutionary improvisation. It is not Avrich, but the anarchist revolutionary analysis of Voline written long ago, that reveals the victorious truth which was lived and represented by the insurrectionaries of Kronstadt. "Kronstadt was the first entirely independent attempt of the people to liberate themselves from all yokes and achieve the Social Revolution, an attempt made directly, resolutely and boldly by the working masses themselves without political shepherds, without leaders or tutors."

…

A principal landmark of revolutionary theory has finally been published in English fifty years after its actual inception. In History and Class Consciousness the young Georg Lukacs manifests an extremism of philosophy which carries a double significance: as radical expression of dialectical theory and at the same time as ideological device of bolshevik polemicism. In the context of the twenties, the rediscovery of the critical concept of alienation as motor force of the radical historical process carried an extra-scientific character which was decisively revolutionary in view of prevailing economism. Lukacs arrived, in excess of his own political ties, in order to reaffirm the essential interaction between the subject and object at the base of dialectical materialism and to denounce in turn the degeneration of the theory of praxis into the formalism of a natural "Marxian" science and its contemplative metaphysic

of reformism. For the first time, the effects of reification are understood to exceed the simple dimensions of culture and the workplace. Simultaneously, the revolutionary transformation of history is shown to depend on the "free action" of the proletariat for whom consciousness becomes a central necessity in liberating itself. As always, however, the very best of bolshevik analyses abandons the transcendence of voluntarism and determinism in actual practice. There, the author retains the proletariat as a philosophical subject in exchange for its externalized hierarchical representation. In the last analysis, the Communist Party becomes the organized form of class consciousness. "It implies the conscious subordination of the self to the collective will that is destined to bring real freedom into being."