

# **Notes Toward a Theory of Revolutionary Organization**

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# Author's Note

Dear Comrades,

The theses given here grew out of several projects which initially appeared to me to be separate -- projects to publish NEGATION's own root theses, or self-theory, together with our republication of the S.I.'s Minimum Definition of Revolutionary Organizations, which we considered to be utterly minimal (we intended to distribute this as a basic self-definition and self-statement concerning revolutionary theory and practice, as a basis of adherence, and to help comrades choose between membership in NEGATION or one of the other pro-council organizations); projects to clarify the nature of Leninism, the kernel of its malpractice, and to concretely specify the determinate alternative to Leninist organization; projects to draft articles of federation for a nationwide organization which is in process of formation, and, last but not least, the project of framing my bid. for the group contract of the local organization that this meeting today might become.

The theses given below are not only tentative, but incomplete. I intend to complete them as soon as possible -- I had hoped to have them ready in full for this meeting, but time did not permit -- and with the help of insight borrowed from your critical feedback today. I will then distribute the completed version to all those present today.

I would suggest reading the section on organization first, especially if you experience any difficulty at all with the first section, which is highly concentrated. My subjectivity may seem to you to get lost in all this talk of subjectivity, so I want to make clear where I find myself in it. This is written the way it is, in a largely impersonal Debordian style, because I got tripped out on the aesthetics of the logical texture I got into. The writing of it was for me an exciting and enthralling process of breakthrough and discovery, sided in particular by discussions with Corrina about Radical Psychiatry problems among other things; an outpouring marking my finally understanding explicitly the roots of the intuitive aversion I've always had to the organizations I've known in the past and their misery -- thereby at last knowing concretely the alternative. I used to think that these organizations were the means to my ends, though I hated this means. I thought I had to stick with them because there were no other means. I came to realize that not only are these organizations not the only means to my end, but not a means to my ends at all, but to their negation. And that the reason I hated these means is the same reason I wanted those ends. If reading these theses is one tenth as fruitful for you as writing them has been for me, I could not fail to be gratified.

*Bruce Gardner*

*August 1974*

# Preface: Concerning "Subjectivity" and What It Names

The central concept used here throughout is that called "subjectivity".

In their aspect as dialectical logic, the theses presented here can be viewed in their totality as a kind of relief map of the interior of that concept. What then, does "subjectivity" name? I want to guard this concept against any possible mystification, to the extent that defining it clearly can so protect it.

*Subjectivity*, n. names the quality, or the totality and unity of qualities, which belong to the "subject" part of English and Indo-European sentence-structures in general. The subject of a sentence is that part of a sentence which names the source of action of and through the "verb" upon the "object". That is, initiative, origination of action, activity -- as opposed to the passivity which characterizes the "object" part -- is an essential quality of the subject. At the human level -- since it is certainly true that non-human objects can function as relative subjects in English sentences, since there are such objects which are self-moving, etc. -- "subjectivity" refers to qualities of consciousness, volition and will, which, for us, represent a higher degree of subjectivity than that revealed by self-moving objects, animals, etc. Qualities of sensuousness, responsiveness, spontaneity (freedom), creativity, and reflexion (in its full concept) also belong at this level to "subjectivity". In sum, subjectivity is a name for the quality of "subject-ness". The concept of "subjectification" is used as the dialectical counterpart of the concept of "objectification". As a clarifying example, I would say that Hegel's famous "Phenomenologie des Geistes" could, for the purposes of what we want from it, have its title best translated into English as "The Phenomenology of Subjectivity" instead of as "The Phenomenology of Mind" or "The Phenomenology of Spirit" as has been usual.

*Radical Subjectivity*, n. names the subjectivity of a person who bases himself or herself on his or her own root self, his or her desires, and who refuses to subordinate this root to any more external determinations or abstract categories (and therefore, abstract communities) to

which his or her self objectively belongs -- gender, class, race, nationality, etc. It is an identical name, a synonym, for the concept and the self-practice which we have named "communist egoism".

# **(i) Theory of Theory**

## **Meta-Theory**

### **1**

We have collectively alienated our subjectivity to capital.

### **2**

We have individually alienated our subjectivity to every sort of fetish and projection -- to gods, to objects, to moralities, to principles, to ideologies of every variety.

### **3**

We daily "reproduce" or re-enact and re-establish the alienation to capital by selling our time (which is also our energy and our activity) to capital in exchange for survival, and for uses which we do not decide. Capital appears to have subjective powers because we alienate (= sell) our labor-power to capital, and thus act (under orders) as capital, instead of for ourselves.

### **4**

The world thus evolves as the self-deployment of capital, that is, of a pseudo-subjectivity alien to human desires.

### **5**

If the real objects, held as capital, become a pseudo-subject, the real subjects, reproducing themselves as proletarians, become pseudo-objects. Daily life is reduced to a pseudo-objectivity characterized by mechanical routine and boredom, a desert of isolation in the

eclipse of spontaneity. The realization of capital and the non-realization of human beings coincide. The world we collectively produce is an inverted world, a world characterized by the inversion of subject and object, that is, by reification. Revolution means "revolving" this inverted world: the inversion of the inversion, that is, the negation of the negation. It means the return of subjectivity to the real subjects, who can re-appropriate their own subjectivity -- i.e. seize themselves -- only by seizing the totality of their world and henceforth by consciously mastering its reproduction. The name of the social relation which has emerged in historical practice and shown itself potentially suited to this practical task is the workers' council or, more generally, the society-wide federation of workplace and community councils. As "capital" names the self-negation of human inter-subjectivity, or the proletariat acting to reproduce itself as proletariat, the negation of that negation, spoken of above, must take the general form suggested by the name "the negation of capital", which also means the self-negation of the proletariat as proletariat.

## 6

The negation of capital must mean the beginning of human history, of the history according to desire. It must mean the end of the prehistoric era, the history of alienation, the history according to the pseudo-natural laws of an unmastered social production, laws which are only the unconscious structure of human practice itself.

## 7

This negation essentially involves not the destruction of physical objects but their appropriation and collective-democratic disposition. The full and practical consciousness on the part of the producers that they produce capital, that is, all that is meant by that term; that they produce themselves and their world as capital, and thereby reproduce themselves as proletarians, already contains the determination to stop producing capital and to start producing something else; to produce the world differently; to produce a different world. We have already pointed to the workers' councils as the social organization of this consciousness, the unified social means of this appropriation of the already existing "physical" means of production as means of producing that new world. That is, in the fullest sense, we see the workers' councils themselves as these "means of production". The revolution which we see coming, and which we intend to catalyze for our own reasons, has

for its content the social re-owning of the socially disowned subjectivity, the social projection called "capital". For us, then, "the council-federation" is the name of the new social relation of production of the initial phase of communist society, and "generalized self-management" is the name of its mode of production.

## 8

The real problem of revolution is the problem of the proletariat ending its social self-oppression. We force each other to alienate our life time, and in turn we are forced to force each other to do so. The myth of the diabolical ruling class as the source of enslavement, of ruling class diabolism as the unexplained explanation and the uncaused cause of all social evil, is just as much of a mystification as the myth of private self-oppression as that cause and that explanation. The abject slavishness of the majority of the proletariat much of the time is what stands in the way of it making its revolution, of us making our revolution. What we are up against is learned stupidity, acquired incapacity. That people have been produced as and continue to reproduce themselves as thought-cripples stumbling over a thousand crotchets, fetishes, and reifications, lost in false-consciousness, and as pacified sheep incapable of independent, self-governed activity in many arenas of social life, is the final fetter which a revolutionary process must burst asunder. A bunch of irresponsible fuck-ups -- "irresponsible" here meaning not to their bosses, but to themselves and each other - can never create and reproduce a councilist society. The authoritarian personality is incapable of self-management. The "fear of freedom" is involved here as well. The most debilitating thing about the authoritarian personality is that it is structurally committed to disowning, that is, to alienation. It reproduces alienation wherever it goes; it carries the seeds of alienation with it everywhere. The pronoun "it" is used here advisedly, for "authoritarian character-structure" names the syndrome of the subject become pseudo-object, a kind of frozen subjectivity which is programmed and predictable according to certain pseudo-mechanical laws. The seeds which it carries are the seeds of the failure of the revolutionary project; the seeds of reaction. The authoritarian personality cannot function in the absence of authority!

If untransformed by the self-activity of the revolutionary process itself, the bearers of those seeds will, as the social generalization of their individual malpractice, produce a managerial

bureaucracy by rendering the return to authoritarian management the only possible way to have any management at all -- a necessity of social survival, which is the only argument a latent Stalinism will ever need to triumph.

Viewed more closely still, the problem, for us, is the present inadequacy of our own theory to a practice which could lead toward the practical dissolution of authoritarian projection in ourselves and in our class in general.

## (ii) Theory of Practice

### Organization

#### 1

The name of the whole game of revolution is the return of subjectivity to the real subjects. The organization of revolutionaries can only be the organization of subjectivity against pseudo-subjectivity, the living negation of reification. The revolutionary organization is, simply, the organization for the production of revolution. The essential task of the organized revolutionaries is thus the production of subjectivity, and its expanded reproduction. And not another thing. Anything else is counter-revolutionary!

(This formula expresses the totality of their collective project. It holds both internally and externally, and at all levels at once.)

#### 2

An organization founded by means of collective egoism is such that each of its members relates to it, at minimum, as a means to the amplification of his/her own powers in the project of changing his/her own life, the revolutionary project which s/he had already chosen for him/herself independent of the revolutionary organization.

But to leave the formulation at that would be one-sided. It would suggest that the revolutionary project chosen independently by the individual could exist as a simply individual project, that the association called 'revolutionary organization' merely allows the individual to carry on his project better, but could be dispensed with. In fact, the revolutionary project is an essentially collective private project. This formulation would also exclude all mention of what goes beyond the minimum relationship of individual members to the organization, i.e., to the rest of the individual members. It excludes all mention of the pleasure of intersubjectivity, which is both the means and the end of this project. But the essential relationship it stresses is that of the ownership of the organization -- the kind of property that it is: each member must be the private proprietor of the whole organization, without that proprietorship excluding the proprietorship of any other member. Each member must be the owner of the whole organization simultaneously with every other. That is, the revolutionary organization, as such is already communized property. All that holds it (them) together is the fact that in its continued existence its members find a greater (use-)value and gratification than in any act that would destroy it.

### 3

The form of the revolutionary organization is the council of revolutionaries, and the (ultimately global) federation of these revolutionary councils.

### 4

Self-management is both the means and the end of the practice of revolutionary organization. The administration of the revolutionary organization, the conscious mastery of its praxis, the management of its existence in acts, must be the collective democratic management of its whole membership. It must already be a self-managing organization. If we can't make it here, we might as well pack up and go home!

This is the only sense in which the revolutionary organization can be an "end-in-itself" and still be (revolutionary).

### 5

The organizations which aim at the power of the councils must be councilist in practice as well as in theory, practicing council democracy in their internal relations and in their relations with

one another. Council organization can be the end of these organizations only if it is their means as well. The centralization of common decision-making must be through bodies of mandated delegates, emanating strictly from the base and accountable to it, whenever it cannot practicably be through the combined assemblies of the membership as a whole. Likewise, the execution of tasks. The association of councils is neither centralist or decentralist, but federated.

## 6

In federation, the local councils of revolutionaries should be autonomous in their local and internal practice, but all actions which sent the federation as a whole and make all its member-councils responsible, by taking its name, etc. must be approved in advance by common consensus or mandate. However, the free flow of criticism among member-councils should not be impeded in any way, or channeled strictly through any central body, even where it concerns purely local and internal (i.e., "autonomous") matters of the council being criticized, just should be admissible before the federal council --the general council of delegates from all the local member-councils; the council of councils at the national, and eventually international level --from any member of any local council, through his/her delegate. This motion should be decidable, however, only by vote of the entire base of the federation, by simple majority. However, the refusal to exclude expressed in a majority no vote would already constitute a de facto split between those voting for and those voting against exclusion; a de facto exclusion of those who proposed the exclusion. It would mean that the opposing sides in the vote no longer wish to maintain the same associations, and hence no longer belong in the same organization. The importance given to the motion to dissociate, what makes it always germane, is the fact that the existence of a formation of ideology within the embrace of the organization of theory radically compromises the foundation of its very, existence, before which issue all other issues are subordinate. The emergence of systematic malpractice within the organization of revolutionary practice means that this organization is beginning to turn into its opposite; to go into a headstand.

## 7

No formal arrangements can guarantee the democratic, intersubjective character of the revolutionary councils, but only their content, the quality of the individuals and of their

relations; their egoism, that is, their radical subjectivity. Only the maintenance of initiative and responsibility at the base, the continued egoism and greed of the membership, the determination of each member to use the organization for himself, as his own property, or leave, can insure that the organization stays in the hands of the membership, is wielded from the base, or perishes. This is a situation in which the "strongest" prevail only in the sense that the resonant collective is where it exists at all - always the "strongest".

## 8

The question of federation cannot be separated from that of the egoistic need of federation. Collaboration of this sort emerges naturally out of the perceived advantages of coordinating actions regionally, nationwide, and eventually internationally; out of the discovery and stimulation of new loci of praxis -- i.e. other councils -- which results from the practice of single councils; out of the means of augmenting the space-time of revolutionary practice which accumulate as the result of previous practice; out of the general expansion of the project and the growth of tasks, of contacts, of opportunities which occurs in the soil prepared by previous activity. At a certain point, the relations which have sprung up spontaneously need to be consciously organized and thus, in a special sense, formalized, in order that the individuals involved can maximize the probability of getting what they want from one another.

## 9

Federation can, properly speaking, be only of groups with groups, and not of isolated individuals with groups, a procedure which would expose that individual and the organization to a *defacto* hierarchy. That is, an individual who discovers us can not simply "write in for a membership card". It is rather a matter of him/her getting accepted into an already functioning local member-council or, if in a locale where no such council exists, or if s/he does not wish to work with the individuals in the existing local, starting his/her own. However, as few as two people or even a single person, center of his own practice, in exceptional cases as decided by the federation, might be for practical purposes considered as a local group, or the beginning of one. At any rate, the admission of a new council to membership in the federation should be only by unanimous consent of all the already-member-councils, as any opposition would already constitute a *de facto* split in the association.

## 10

In federation, all delegates must emanate directly from base assemblies, in this case, local member-councils, and be recallable to them. No hierarchy of councils, wherein appointment, dispatch, and control of delegates by base assemblies would be mediated through another delegated body, can be tolerated. For example, a regional-central council must not elect the delegates for its region to its national-central or the international-central council, but only the combined base of the whole region.

## 11

The revolutionary organization can be neither an organization of followers nor an organization of leaders, nor oven of their rate combination, which is still not their synthesis, but only the organization of their contradiction, the organization of master-slave relationships (i.e., a Leninist organization, whether it knows itself as such or not; whether or not anybody in it has ever heard of Lenin). To be revolutionary, the organization must be an organization of individuals in the process of becoming masters without slaves. The self-management and self-master of their practice by the associated revolutionaries must exist as a conscious foreshadowing of communist society -- which is nothing other than the conscious mastery of the totality of their self-production by the associated producers -- by being a means to the production of that society.

## 12

From the position of the revolutionary organization, we must pass to its negations, in order to make clear what it is (must be). These negations are of three forms: (i) its dissolution in the wake of a social revolution, i.e. the self-negation which is its success; (ii) its degeneration into a counter-revolutionary organization, its schism, or its disintegration, i.e. the self-negation which constitutes its failure; and finally (iii) its enemies, the counter-revolutionary organizations which include especially that organization of revolutionary ideology which we call the Leninist organization. We will take these up in reverse order.

## 13

An organization that splits deserves to split; an organization which perishes deserves to perish. It is better that it openly cease to exist than carry on the image of its past coherence and unity as the cover of its present and future malpractice. For if a split becomes

necessary, it can only be because both parties to the split are wrong: each suppresses within itself the truth that the other exclusively and thus partially affirms. If a split becomes necessary, it can only be because the organization has reached an impasse in the development of its coherence, whose supersession demands its own negation.

## 14

If a revolutionary organization has to split, it must be because both sides are wrong, that is, because both are partly right -- i.e., because neither is right. One sign, then, of the organization capable of superseding the impasse, will be its break with both parties to the split.

## 15

Less important than the conservation of any particular organizational apparatus --whose over-valuation is precisely the bureaucratic point of view, and which apparatus, once it has gone the way of ideology, is, on the contrary, from the point of view of the revolutionary, best destroyed -- is the conservation of the radical subjects produced by their collective practice, who are for themselves and for each other an end in themselves, and who can come together in countless organizational crystallizations of their developing relationships, each superseding the previous ones in coherence, before the threshold of social revolution is breached. Their radical subjectivity, and none of its objectifications, is the essential wealth bequeathed by a moribund organization to the social movement as its real fruit.

## 16

One of the greatest ideological obstacles to the practice of revolutionary organization in the society founded on the expanded reproduction of isolation, is the ideology of abstract community. It is of the greatest difficulty for people to get each other and themselves to accept that once the level of internal disagreements passes a certain threshold, they no longer belong in the same organization together, it is time for a split in the organization, i.e. the split has already occurred, and to go on pretending it hasn't is to gradually hollow out all content within the increasingly empty shell of the representation, the spectacle, of unity erected around an organization of contradictions.

## 17

The best way to insure that unnecessary splits will not occur, that minor differences will not accumulate a fatal explosive mixture of repressed resentments and Interpersonal toxins, is to leave the possibility of a split open at all times to undercut right from the start the desperate anxiety that says "we have to stay together, no matter what" and thereby mutes the flow of internal dialogue, suspends the free airing of criticism, and thus poisons the collective life of the organization. Keeping this possibility open at all times can contribute to an atmosphere which permits free, unfettered discussion of all differences, unmuted by any fear of rupture which is based on an abstract and unspoken contract to "stay together" rather than letting the concrete and personal losses which such a rupture would entail -- which need to be re-evaluated constantly -- be the basis of a real unity and a real dissolution.

## 18

The practice of Leninism, the organization of revolutionary ideology, defines the organization of revolutionary theory by contrast, as its organized negation. This practice is, from beginning to end, the production of a new mode of hierarchical property, bureaucratic property; spectacular property -- property in representation. It is the expanded reproduction of master-slave relationships, in their bureaucratic form. It is the practice of the project of expanded reproduction of subjectivity stood on its head. Its basis is the disowning of responsibility and initiative by the base -- who thus become a mass of militants -- to the organization, which thus becomes a pseudo-subject, owned by its representatives, the leaders (the members of the central committee, etc.). The basis of the Leninist organization's struggle against the fetishism of commodities, of capital, and the general reification essential to the world of private capital, is its fetishism of the organization and its reification of the organization. It knows only one trick: the substitution of "The Party" for "The Proletariat". Its growth is the accumulation of bureaucratic property, on the way to becoming state-capital. Bureaucratic management and hierarchical power are its means and therefore, admitted or not, also its ends. All those who we cannot immediately recognize as our adversaries will reveal themselves by claiming, at some point in the course of the struggle, that Leninist organization is only a little bit pregnant with state-capitalism.

## 19

The Leninist organization, as a whole, is not the organic expression of the social interrelations of all its members to each other, but rather the expression of the unilateral relation of each isolated militant to the representation of the organization as a whole, the hub of leadership, which is his/her only center, outside him/herself. The mass of militants is thus atomized in the face of the organization. They relate to each other officially only through the mediation of the organization, which means practically, of its proprietors. This is revealed in meetings where members speak only to and through the chair, not directly to each other, and through organized internal factions, in which the old leadership perceives the threat of the formation of a new leadership, whose appropriation would mean their expropriation. If the revolutionary organization organized dialogue, the pseudo-revolutionary organization is organized monologue.

## 20

The practice of anarchist ideology tends, in place of the followers with leaders and the masters with slaves of the Leninist practice, to try to put an organization of followers without leaders, of slaves without masters. The demand this practice expresses is the demand for an abstract negation of hierarchical organization, the negation of organization such. The anarchist base tends to resent and repress any self-assertion on the part of individual members as an assertion of hierarchical power over the base, the collective. The anarchist base tends to demand the suppression of individual initiative as threatening the individual domination of the slavish community. Thus the ideological formula 'collectivism = the suppression of individuality' finds a home among the anarchists who know and cherish 'the individual', the radical subject, only as an ideal abstraction and a moral fetish. Whereas, in the Leninist organization, the leadership uses the ideology of sacrificial collectivism against the base, to exploit it, in the anarchist organization, a "reform" has been legislated wherein the base is theoretically empowered to use this ideology against the leadership as well. Of course, in such a situation, real leadership reasserts itself as secret leadership -- even though this leadership is always a always a public secret within the anarchist organization -- as the only way out of the impasse of the community without initiative. In anarchism, Leninist ideology is in turn ideologically negated. What is required is not the negation of organization as such but the negation of hierarchical organization as such -- democratic organization, and

the self-production of the individuals who can support such organization. What is required is not the abstract negation of hierarchical organization, but its determinate negation. The determination to be negated is not organization but hierarchy. The alternative to both these ideologies, and to their unending, fruitless antinomy, is the fruit of their antithesis; their synthesis: the negation of both as such -- the organization of masters without slaves.

## 21

The ideological character of anarchism reveals itself most glaringly, in the contradiction between anarchist "theory" and anarchist practice. The morality of collectivism, of the subordination of individual egoism to the community, is proclaimed. Narrow egoism, or "individualist anarchism" is practiced. Neither is adequate, as theory or as practice, to the ends and desires, for a social revolution, for a libertarian society, or for a revolutionary practice, which the anarchists profess.

## 22

At the revolutionary moment of dissolution of social separation, the revolutionary organization must recognize and welcome its own dissolution as a separate organization. It is not merely that the social revolution is the nirvana of the revolutionary organization, in which it can at last cease to exist... it is not just that the social revolution marks the victorious conclusion of its project, wherein it comes to an end... social revolution means that revolutionary practice is no longer a sequestered activity, but has become one with social practice itself. The arena for the organization of this practice is that of the factory and neighborhood councils themselves. Revolutionary organization goes on now within the councils themselves. To maintain dual membership, membership in one's local council and, in addition, membership in some other "revolutionary organization", some organization outside the workers' councils, or "both-inside-and-outside" them, would at best be a fetter on revolutionary activity, at worst the mark of the attempt to set up a separate power, i.e., a power separate from the councils themselves.

## 23

However, it would be unrealistic to assume that programmatic tendencies and factions will not form within the councils, that individuals will not discover that they share greater affinity

concerning what should be done with some individuals outside their local councils than with some of those inside, especially prior to the formation of communes founded at least in part on the basis of such affinity. Tendencies can be expected to form around competing proposals for the plan of social production and for specific mandates at least, and organizations may be formed to coordinate campaigning for these proposals beyond the local level. Such organizations may even attempt to run slates of delegates, though the coherence of the practice of delegation as opposed to that of representation and of rotation, requires that the election of a mandated delegate be indifferent to the personality and personal opinions of the candidate, conditional only upon his/her expressed willingness to wholeheartedly carry out his/her mandate, with the prior knowledge that s/he is subject to immediate removal should his/her practice prove unsatisfactory to the electing assembly (of which s/he must, of course, be a member). That is, the practice of delegation rests on the election of mandates, not personalities. At any rate, what distinguishes "factions" and "tendencies" as we have here described them from Leninist parties, is that the reference of the agitation of factions is always to the councils, to what the councils should do, to where the councils should go; is always conceived and executed within the power of the councils, whereas the Leninist organization seeks to set up a separate power -- its own.

## 24

In the end, only subjectivity, and no objectification, can guarantee subjectivity. In the end, only the quality of the individuals can guarantee the quality of their organization. But this quality of individuals is itself, in part, the product of their social interaction in the organization, of the quality of their association, of the formal arrangements which they demand only in order to demand their content.

# Tasks

## 25

As an organization for the production of revolution, the revolutionary organization is an organization for the production of consciousness, consciousness of a particular kind -- revolutionary class consciousness. It is an organization for the preparation of the subjective conditions of revolution which are, in their totality, "radical subjectivity". As such, it must be, in part, an organization for the diffusion of revolutionary theory throughout society; not just for its diffusion as theory, but (more powerfully) for its diffusion as practice as well. It is always trying to precipitate a revolutionary situation. More generally, it is an organization for the labor upon the existing social consciousness and false-consciousness, the work and play with frozen subjectivity, which can, at length, yield such a situation. This perspective outlines the totality of its essential tasks.

## 26

The task which we have chosen for ourselves is, in general, the practical critique and negation of the prevailing social relations, specifically capital and its latest elaboration as state-capital and as the spectacle. That is, our project is the catalysis of a social revolution. We seek to catalyze, to stimulate and. accelerate the movement already going on. This distinguishes us from the Leninist organizations which seek to represent that movement, and by identifying themselves with it in that way, to appropriate it, to own it, to become its proprietor.

## 27

The general form of this practice of *Catalysis* we name the "intervention".

## 28

Interventions can be judged according to their relative degree of "abstractness" and "concreteness". An attack on an ongoing social phenomenon of ideology or malpractice which enters at an arbitrary time in the duration of that phenomenon -- such as our anti-Jesuitism poster (*Jesus Loves You - Kill Yourself*) -- intervenes at an abstract time and

place and thus belongs to the class of the least concrete types of intervention. It lacks a specific social occasion, and can only try to create its own occasion. Since it occurs without the spotlight of spectacular (media) attention, which still controls and directs social attention, it is not likely to reach as many people as an intervention which has the benefit of such an occasion, and is thus less productive, and in that sense, less preferable than a more "concrete" intervention, i.e., one which exploits and attempts to expropriate the meaning of an event invested by the spectacle. It can at best divert a little spectacular attention to itself through the scandalous mode of its presentation. The spectacle is here seen as a means of amplification of practical critique, i.e., of revolutionary practice, but it must be remembered that it is also an intentionally distorting amplifier and the practice of *detournement* must aim at sending out undistortable signals (the seizure and self-management of a factory is such a signal), or at organizing its false appearances to fool the programmers of the spectacle and to beat the spectacle at its own game -- a kind of "scrambling" of the signals so that when the programmers try to scramble the signal again, they unknowingly succeed in unscrambling it instead (an example would be our phoney press releases at the more concrete, would be one that entered at a privileged moment of spectacular time, that intervened in a spectacular event or pseudo-event such as an election or a well-publicized convocation of the promoters of a particular ideology, thus attempting to expropriate some of the attention captured by that staged event for purposes of our own, thereby using the spectacle against itself. here concrete still would be our intervention in a moment of history-in-the-making, of unofficially and spontaneously produced history created by fellow proletarians themselves -- a moment of real (as opposed to represented), historical time. Examples would be interventions in spontaneously self-organized reformist practice that contain a radical potential, to try to push it further in its own immanent. radical direction, and to block recuperation. Of this kind were our entries into the North Berkeley Neighborhood Council, the nationwide anti-inflation boycott, and the Berkeley anti-war riots of May 1972. Interventions into unconsciously created, potentially revolutionary situations, such as those of the S.I. during the May-June events in France 1968, into factory occupations and work-ins, etc. constitute a still more concrete type under this category. But the most rewarding and successful type of intervention would be the conscious premeditated creation of a revolutionary situation triggered by a precipitating incident produced by the revolutionary organization itself at any moment when this could be achieved, occasioned or not, based on

a specific application of its critique of the totality, its critique of daily life, which would be sufficiently incendiary to yield such a momentous result. Nowhere to date, needless to say, has such a degree of success been obtained, though it has, on occasion, been approached. (notably Strasbourg, 1966).

## 29

Our effectiveness is also, in part, and dialectical, a quantitative question, a question of the means of praxis, the means of production of revolution, which we collectively command at any given time. It is a question of the collective labor-time over which we collectively dispose (which thus ceases to be labor-time, but which by the same token we subtract from the aggregate social labor-time available to capital). But the qualitative, our practical coherence, is our only means of attracting and accumulating that quantitative, that is, of finding each other, and of growing in our association. Each project must, along with everything else that it intends be designed as a means of growth, a means to expand these means, as well: as the expanded reproduction of revolutionary praxis. That is why, at minimum, provision for dialogue is built in every project where it is safe to do so: so that those who find the project and find themselves in it can find us, and thus be found by the project for us.

## 30

Every intervention undertaken by the associated revolutionaries must be conceived, however tenuously within the context of its immediate historical conditions, as, maximally, a means of revolution, an attempt to begin the revolutionary process, to "start" the revolution. Only in this way can the unity of revolutionary theory and practice, and the cohesion of their means and end, be maintained. That is, each time we act we aim, as a maximum outcome, at the creation of a revolutionary situation, of a "situation which goes beyond the point of no return."

## 31

We should constantly be striving to increase the productivity, the yield per time (in terms of subjectification) of our practice. This is a matter of developing and acquiring more productive means. One movie with the name of an important concept like "reification" or "capital", which succeeded in making that concept visible would do more in the direction of the dissemination of revolutionary theory than a thousand printed tracts. One electronic seizure

of some TV broadcasting time would do more for the publicity of the critique than ten thousand posters. In general, we should try to move wherever possible from the less powerful, more ancient means of communication such as print to the more powerful, more recent-of-origin means of information such as film and television.

## 32

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