

# CORNELIUS CASTORIADIS

## THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

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...When I speak about the autonomy of the organizations of the masses, I do so only because and in so far as they do not accept the established institution of society. This means in the first place, that they do not accept any other source of legitimate power outside themselves; and in the second place, that they abolish, within themselves, the division between those who direct and those who execute...

...political representation tends to “educate” people in the conviction that they are unable to manage the problems of society, that there exists a particular category of men endowed with the specific ability to govern. Permanent representation therefore goes with professionalized politics. It contributes to political apathy which in turn widens the gap between the extent and the complexity of social problems and their own ability to tackle them...

...According to the Council form of organization, all decisions have to be taken—in principle, and whenever possible—by the whole collective; that is, by the General Assembly of the Council’s constituency (be it factory, administration, university or district). A body of delegates ensures the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly and the continuity of its direction between meetings. These delegates are elected and are permanently revocable... The important point is that the power of decision rests with the General Assembly—which can reverse the decisions of the delegates...

...neither the power of General Assemblies, nor the revocability and accountability of delegates is a panacea capable of guaranteeing that a degeneration of the Revolution —bureaucratic or otherwise— is impossible. The ultimate fate of the Councils, or any other such organization, depends on the self-activity of the people; on what they will and will not do; on their involvement in the life of the collective; and on their readiness to bring their full weight to bear within the processes of discussion, elaboration, decision, implementation and control...

...What is involved here is the de-professionalization of politics —i.e., the abolition of politics as a special and separate sphere of activity— and, conversely, the universal politicization of society, which means just that: the business of society becomes, quite literally, everybody’s business...

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"... Over the coming years, all significant questions will be condensed into one: Are you for or against the action and the program of the Hungarian workers?"<sup>1</sup> Perhaps I should apologize for quoting myself. But today, twenty years later, I stand by these lines more firmly and more savagely, if possible, than when I wrote them. Nothing —not even the silence surrounding the 1956 Hungarian Revolution in virtually all the Left, New Left and Far Left literature— has altered my attitude in the least.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that this silence is but one more sinister indication of the domination of reactionary ideas in the contemporary world. It means that the Stalinist bureaucracy continues, even if more indirectly, to dictate the parameters of permissible discussion.

Of course, the actual impact and influence of the Hungarian Revolution cannot be gauged by the silence that has followed. Despite ideological repression of the memory of the 1956 events, there has certainly been a continuous "working through" of their meaning. Moreover, in addition to the Revolution's probable subterranean effects in Eastern Europe and Russia, there is little doubt that the wide diffusion of the the idea of self-management during the last two decades is linked to the exemplary demands of the Hungarian Workers' Councils.

Here again, however, it is no accident that most of the organizations advocating self-management (in particular, but by no means only, reformist parties and unions) keep silent about Hungary and instead refer to the more respectable (and empty) Yugoslav model. Divorced from the power of Worker's Councils and the destruction of the existing order, self-management is presented as something which could be added, without tears, to the present system. Nevertheless, propagation of the idea of self-management does serve to undermine the foundations of bureaucratic domination, and it is by no means certain that the reformist bureaucrats will succeed in reducing it to a mere embellishment of the established order.

I spoke about the silence that for years has surrounded the Hungarian Revolution. Although the literature pertaining to these events now amounts to several thousand volumes, most of it has been written by specialists for specialists and is, therefore, much more a manifestation of the tremendous expansion of academic writing and publishing business than it is a true recognition of the revolutionary significance of 1956.

To be sure, the Hungarian Revolution was defeated. But so was the Paris Commune of 1871, yet this did not prevent revolutionaries from celebrating its example and discussing its lessons. That the Hungarian Revolution was crushed by the Russian Army may explain its lesser resonance among the popular strata, but it does not account for the systematic silence among revolutionaries and left-wing intellectuals. Or is it that the ideas ceased to be valid once the Russian tanks rolled over them in the streets of Budapest?

But things become clearer as soon as the content, the meaning and the implications of the Hungarian Revolution are considered. Then this silence can be understood for what it is: the direct consequence of the radical character of this Revolution, and the attempt to repress its significance and its memory.

Modern society can be best characterized as bureaucratic capitalism. And its purest, most extreme form has been realized in Russia, China and the other countries presently masquerading as socialist. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was the first and, up to now, the only total revolution against total bureaucratic capitalism. As such, it foreshadows the content and orientation of future revolutions in Russia, China and the other bureaucratic capitalist societies.

In taking up arms, the Hungarian workers and youth put a final, practical end to the absurd scholastic debates about the social character of the regimes in Russia and other Eastern European countries. Through their deeds, they demonstrated that the difference between workers and the workers' state is the difference between life and death; that they would rather die fighting against the workers' state than continue to live as workers under it.

Like the fragmented bureaucratic capitalism of the West, the total bureaucratic capitalism of the East is full of contradictions and torn by permanent social conflicts which recurrently reach acute levels and drive the system toward open crisis. Economics and Politics are, of course the areas where these contradictions and conflicts manifest themselves in the most pressing manner.

The quasi-permanent economic chaos endemic to bureaucratic planning and rooted in fundamental conflicts in production, **2** and omnipresent political repression appear as the more intolerable aspects of total bureaucratic capitalism. Obviously, these two aspects are strongly interdependent and reciprocally conditioned — and both are necessary results of the logic of the system. Yet, fantastic as this may be, they are regarded as secondary blemishes or reformable defects by virtually the whole international Left.

Thus, reforms which would preserve the substance of the system (a new case of squaring the circle) are welcomed by the candidate bureaucrats of the West and their open or disguised ideologues (socialists, dissident and now even orthodox communists in Italy, France, etc., Trotskyists, progressive journalists, various types of intellectual fellow-travellers, from existentialist philosophers of yesterday like Sartre and the *Les Temps Modernes* team to radical economists of today like Nuti, etc.).

It is no wonder that these strange bed-fellows could have been more or less unanimous in their support of Gomulka in 1956-57 and in their opposition to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, while in the case of the Hungarian Revolution they resorted to shameful slanders (the communists), approved the final Russian invasion (Sartre), frowned upon the spasmodic, elementary and spontaneous actions of the Hungarian workers (Mandel) or retreated into silence as quickly as they could.

In 1956 Poland the people did not take up arms. Despite their development and their effervescence, the Workers' Councils never explicitly questioned the existing power structure. The Communist Party succeeded by means of minor internal purges and some shifts of personnel, in keeping the situation under control throughout the critical period and thus in stifling any initiative from below. **3**

Things were even clearer in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the Left protests even louder. In this case there was virtually **no sign of autonomous activity** on the part of the general population. Instead, the new leadership of the Communist Party was attempting to introduce some democratic reforms and a degree of decentralization in the economy. It goes without saying that the population could not but be in favor of these measures.

A reform from above, with the support of the people — what a golden dream for today's revolutionaries! As Mandel would say, this would "have allowed millions of proletarians to once again identify with the workers' State." Of course, in these circumstances it is possible to blame the Russian tanks.

But in Hungary, the **movement of the masses was so powerful and so radical** that both the Communist party and the whole existing state apparatus were literally pulverized in a few days. There was never even a question of dual power. Whatever power there was rested with the armed youth and the Workers' Councils, whose Program **4** was totally incompatible with the preservation of the bureaucratic social structure. The demands were for **self-management** in the enterprises, abolition of work norms, a drastic reduction in income inequalities, control of general planning activities, control of the composition of the

Government and a new orientation of the country's foreign policy. And all this was agreed upon and clearly formulated in the span of a few days. (Unbelievable as it may appear, the demands formulated by the Councils after November 11 (i.e., after the full occupation of the country by the Russian Army and the murder of thousands of people) were even more radical, comprising the constitution of an armed workers' militia and the establishment of Councils in all branches of activity, including Government administrations.)

In this context to remark that certain aspects of these demands were unclear and inadequate would be ludicrously irrelevant. Had the Revolution not been crushed by the Kremlin murderers, its development would have forced the necessary clarifications and completions and would have shown whether or not the Councils and the people could find in themselves the capacity and strength to establish new power-structures and new social institutions.

What was the historical and sociological meaning of the extraordinary proliferation of parties, organizations, etc., in the span of a few days? Precisely this: that a genuine Revolution was taking place. This **proliferation and the corresponding spectrum of ideas is, indeed, the distinctive mark of the Revolution**. It is not despite, but because of this unlimited manifestation of political tendencies — this "chaotic" (for bureaucrats and philistines) character of the social explosion — that we recognize the Hungarian events of 1956 as a Revolution.

It is —or rather, ought to be— a commonplace that a true Revolution is always national: all sections and strata of the nation **abandon their passive conformity** to the old order and strive to take an **active part** in its destruction and in the shaping of a new order. The whole of the heretofore oppressed society seizes the opportunity to express itself; the people stand up and speak loudly their ideas and their demands. This is what happened during the French Revolution after 1789, and in the Russian Revolution after February 1917.

The highly suspect and intolerable mess created by both doubtlessly would have been condemned on grounds of impurity, confusion, etc., by the critics of the Hungarian Revolution. But Revolution is precisely this state of **overheating and fusion of society**, along with the general mobilization of all social categories and strata, and the **destruction** of all established barriers. It is this unrestrained character which accounts for the extraordinary liberation and expansion of **society's creative potential during revolutionary periods**, the interruption of the repetitious cycles of social life, the sudden **opening of history**.

Despite its short life-span, the Hungarian Revolution posited new organizational forms and social meanings which represent an original social-historical creation. The **source** of this creation was the **activity** of the Hungarian people—intellectuals, students, workers. Theoreticians and politicians as such contributed nothing to it; rather, they continued to offer only **deceit and mystification**.

The intellectuals, however, had begun months before the outburst to play an important, positive role by demolishing the political, ideological and theoretical nonsense with which the Stalinist bureaucracy had presented its totalitarian dictatorship as peoples' democracy and socialism. They played this role not by bringing to the people a new, ready-made truth, but by courageously exposing the old lies for what they were.

New, positive truths were created by the people themselves during and by means of their autonomous activity. I call them positive because they were embodied in actions and organizational forms designed not only for the struggle against exploitation and oppression by the bureaucracy, but also as new forms for the organization of collective life on the basis of new principles.

These principles entailed a radical break with all established social structures (East or West) and, once made explicit, **reduced to nonsense the inherited political philosophy and theory**. This, in turn, **overthrew the traditional relationship between theory and practice, as well as that between theoreticians and plain people**. In the Hungarian Revolution we find a new point of departure—a new source—which both forces us to reflect anew on the problems of politics in the modern world, and provides us with some of the means for doing so.

Let us have a look at the contributions of distinguished theoreticians and politicians before or during the 1956 events. Consider, for instance, **Georg Lukacs**. He certainly was one of the very few creative Marxist theoreticians to appear after Marx. What did he do? From about 1924 until 1956 he covered—ideologically—Stalin and Stalinism, the Moscow Trials, the Goulag, socialist realism and developments in Hungary since 1945; he implemented successively, the orders of Zinoviev, Bukharin, Zadanov, Revai, etc. And he did so in full knowledge of the facts, and of "the most revolutionary conception history has ever produced:" Marxism. **5** He spent his life swearing by *die List der Vernunft*—the Cunning of Reason; and made himself into an extreme instance of *die Unlist der blossen Vernunft*—the blindness of sheer reason.

Or consider **Imre Nagy**, the politician. Where did his political cunning come into play against the treacherous lies of the Russian bureaucracy? Did he for a single moment find in himself the clarity of mind and the resolve to speak out loudly against the Russian deception with which he was so well acquainted? No. He muddled through, and tried to seek help. . .from the United Nations! History in the making; the bloody drama of power; armored tanks and guns facing the naked hands and breasts of millions of people; and Nagy the statesman, the Realpolitiker, could only think of the United Nations—that sinister Guignol theater where the bandits of Washington and Moscow, assisted by their respective second or third order ruffians, make speeches against each other in public and combine their dirty business in the corridors.

Such was the contribution of the non-spontaneous, the most conscious, well-learned and highly skilled professionals of theory and politics. But **the contribution of the non-professionals was a radical revolution**—not foreseen, not prepared, not organized by anybody, and so spontaneous, like all revolutions in history. The Hungarian people did not act spontaneously in the sense that a baby cries spontaneously if hurt. Rather, they acted on the basis of their social and historical experience, and they fashioned something new out of it.

**Now, when the self-styled theoretician or revolutionary looks contemptuously upon what he calls spontaneity, the hidden postulate in the back of his mind is: It is impossible that this rabble could ever learn anything from their lives, draw any sensible conclusions, put two and two together—let alone bring forward new ideas and try to find their own solutions to their own problems. The essential identity of this postulate, over thousands of years, with the basic tenets of the ruling classes concerning society and man, hardly needs to be stressed.**

A slight digression seems necessary here. Marxist and leftist intellectuals continue to spend their time and energy writing interminably about the relation between "Volume One" and "Volume Three" of Das Kapital, commenting on and interpreting this or that comment on Marx by this or that interpreter of Marx, and hardly ever considering actual history, the effective creation of forms and meanings in and through the activity of people.

Thus, once again, **history is reduced to the history of ideas**, and a very narrow set of ideas at that. One of the consequences is that history tends to be understood less and less. For history is not just the array of objective facts;



what matters, from a revolutionary point of view, is the interpretation of these facts, something which cannot be left to the historians of the university establishment.

Certainly, this interpretation is a function of both the theoretical ideas and the political project of the interpreter. But it is the **organic connection between these three elements: the project, the ideas and the full consideration of actual history as a source (and not as dead material)**, which is the distinctive trait of the revolutionary intellectual's work and which alone marks his **radical departure** from the traditional, dominant conception of "theoretical work." And it is this connection which is in fact broken in virtually all of today's left-wing literature.

But much more is involved here. For both the project and the ideas have their origin in actual history, that is, in the creative activity of people in modern society. The revolutionary project is not a logical inference derived from correct theory. Rather, the successive theories in this field are attempts at a universal formulation of that which masses of people, over the last two hundred years—workers at first, then women, students, national minorities, etc.—have expressed in their struggles against established social institutions.

By forgetting this fact, the revolutionary intellectual falls into a ridiculous contradiction. He proclaims that his theory enables him to understand and even to judge history, yet he seems to ignore that **the essential source of his theory is precisely the historical activity of the people**. In this way, the revolutionary intellectual blinds himself to this activity as it manifests itself in the present, e.g., the Hungarian Revolution.

To drive home this point, consider Marx's work. Had this work been merely a synthesis of classical German philosophy, English political economy and French Utopian socialism, it would have remained just another theory. The difference lies in the political ideas which animated Marx. But what was the source of these ideas? There is virtually nothing among them—or at any rate, nothing retaining any contemporary relevance and value—which can be attributed to Marx alone.

Virtually all of Marxism has its source in the working class movement as it was forming itself between 1800 and 1840; virtually all of it is already there, black on white, in the English working class literature of this time. **6** And what "addition" was Marx able to make to his political ideas after the Communist Manifesto? Only the idea of the destruction of the existing state apparatus and the dictatorship of the proletariat which was, as he himself pointed out, the lesson of the Paris Commune; a lesson embodied in the activity of the Parisian workers and, first

and foremost, in the new institutional form they created : the commune itself. This creation Marx had not foreseen—despite his theory, and despite his genius. But being Marx, and not a Marxist, he was able to recognize it after the event. **7** (despite this precedent, and Marx's recognition of the fundamental importance of the Commune's form, Lenin's initial reaction to the spontaneous emergence of the Soviets in Russia during the 1905 Revolution was **negative and hostile**.)

Let us revert to our main argument. What would be "non-spontaneity?" To what is spontaneity opposed? To **consciousness**? But is anybody saying that the Hungarian workers, for instance, were unconscious? In what sense? Sleepwalkers? Under LSD? Zombies? Or is it that they were not conscious enough—or not in the proper way? But what is enough consciousness, or the proper way of being conscious? Mr. Mandel's, perhaps? Or Mr. Sartre's? Or would it be Absolute Knowledge? Whose? Is there anybody around representing it? And what is he doing with it? We do, at any rate, know what Kautsky and Lenin did with their **knowledge**.

Or is organization the opposite of spontaneity? But the question is precisely: what organization, and whose organization? The spontaneous action of the Hungarian people was action toward organization; and even more, their spontaneity was exactly that, their self-organization.

And this is what the **bureaucrat pseudo-theoretician** hates the most: the workers organize themselves in **Councils** instead of waiting, with enthusiastic passivity, for him to come and organize them. And how does he **organize** them if given the chance? Like the **dominant classes** have always done, for centuries, in the factories and in the armies.

Clearly, he does this if and when he takes power; but also before that—in large **unions**, for instance, or in a "**Bolshevik party**" —where **structure, form and content of relations simply reproduce the relations of capitalist society: hierarchy, the division between a stratum of executive leaders and a mass of followers, the veil of pseudo-knowledge cast over the power of a self-coopting and self-perpetuating bureaucracy**.

If the opposite of spontaneity (that is, of self-activity and self-organization) is hetero-organization (that is, organization by politicians, theoreticians, professional revolutionaries, etc.), then, clearly, **the opposite of spontaneity is counter-revolution, or the conservation of the existing order**.

The **revolution is exactly that: self-organization of the people**. By the same token, it obviously presupposes having become conscious of the essential characteristics and mechanisms of the established system and of the

desire and the will to invent a new solution to the problem posed by the institution of society. 8

Self-organization is here self-organizing and consciousness is becoming conscious; both are processes, not states. It is not that people have finally found the appropriate form of social organization, but that they realize that this form is their activity of organizing themselves in accordance with their understanding of the situation and the ends they set for themselves. In this sense, the revolution cannot but be spontaneous, both in its inception and its unfolding. For the **revolution is the explicit self-institution of society.** "Spontaneity" here means nothing else than the **creative socio-historical activity in its highest expression**; that which has as its object the transformation of society itself.

No historical action is spontaneous in the sense of surging in a vacuum, of being totally unrelated to its conditions, its environment and its past. And every important historical action is spontaneous precisely in the pristine sense of the word: spon, source. **History is creation, i.e., the emergence of that which is not already contained in its causes, conditions, etc.; that which is not repetition**, neither stricto sensu nor in the sense of a variant of the already given, but the position of new forms and figures, and new meanings—that is, **self-institution**. To put it in a more narrow, more pragmatic, more operational way: **spontaneity is the excess of the result over the causes.** 9

The Hungarian workers acted out of their experience, and their action was an elaboration, in a non-trivial sense, of this experience. But this action was neither a necessary, **causally determined** reaction or response to the given situation; nor was this elaboration the result of a logical process of deduction, inference, etc.

In half a dozen East European countries, the general conditions to which one might try to impute the 1956 explosion were present, in essentially similar form, for quite a few years—and, for that matter, in Russia for much longer. That they were similar is, after all, proved by the events in East Germany in 1953, in Poland in 1956 (and 1970 and 1976), in Czechoslovakia in 1968—as well as by the more limited and less well known revolts in Russia (e.g., Novocherkassk).

However, it is only in Hungary that the activity of the people reached an intensity leading to a revolution. Moreover, the particularities of Hungarian history, etc., are of no help in exhaustively trying to explain why this particular form of revolution took place in this particular country at this particular moment. 10 A concrete historical investigation can, of course, help in making intelligible ex post facto, but it is never possible to jump from this

description and partial understanding of conditions, motivations, actions, etc., to the explanation of the result.

Thus, for example, a revolution is caused by exploitation and oppression. But exploitation and oppression have been there all the time, for centuries. Perhaps exploitation and oppression have reached an extreme point. But what is this extreme point? And has it not been reached recurrently, without a revolution ensuing? Then again, it has to coincide with an internal crisis of the ruling class, the crumbling of the regime. But what more crumbling can one expect than that which obtained throughout most of Europe after 1918 — or after 1945? In the end, the revolution has not taken place because the conditions for a revolution were not mature. The most important of these conditions is a sufficient level of consciousness and combativity in the masses. Sufficient for what? Well, sufficient for making a revolution. In short, a revolution has not taken place because a revolution has not taken place. This is the gist of "Marxist" (and any other deterministic or scientific) wisdom in the matter. **11**

Things are even clearer when one considers the revolution as self-organized activity aiming at the institution of a new order, rather than as an explosion and destruction of the old order. (The distinction is, of course, a separating abstraction.) In other words, it is helpful to consider the positive content of what I earlier called an elaboration of the experience.

The intolerable old state of affairs could have been met with an additional dose of **resignation**. Or by a resurgence of **religiosity**. Or by demands for more or less moderate **reforms**.

**Instead, the movement short-circuited all other solutions, and people started fighting and dying for a wholesale reconstruction of society.** It would be a difficult task for a theoretician to try to prove that this was the only logical and-or feasible alternative to the 1956 Hungarian state of affairs. The positive content of the response —the constitution of Workers' Councils, the demands for self-management and the abolition of work norms, etc. —was not a choice of the only other alternative, etc. Rather, it was **an elaboration which transcended the given** (and all that was implied by or contained in it), and posited the new.

That this transcendence stands in a deep, organic relation with previous creations of the working class movement and the content of other phases of revolutionary activity does not limit its importance—on the contrary. It emphasizes that the Hungarian Revolution belongs to a long series of struggles aiming at a radical reconstruction of society, struggles which have gone on now for almost two centuries.

Thus, the activity of the Hungarian people constitutes a new moment in the unfolding of the revolutionary project and, at the same time, ensures that its creations possess a significance which is not limited to the particular moment and conditions of their birth. The forms of organization created by the Hungarian workers—the Councils—are not variations on the forms created previously and elsewhere by working class revolutions. The aims and the demands formulated by these Councils are in line with the aims and demands implied by the whole history of the working class movement, even if on certain basic points (e.g., self-management, abolition of work norms) they are more explicit and more radical.

Thus, in the modern world, there is a unity of the revolutionary project. This unity can be rendered more intelligible by pointing to its historical inheritance and continuity; the similarity of the conditions in which the working class is placed by the social system, in particular of its conditions of life and work. But, even though these factors are relevant and important, they can never give us the sum of necessary and sufficient conditions for the production of the specific content of responses in 1871, 1905, 1917, 1919, 1936-37, 1956 — or, indeed, for the failure to produce such responses in other instances. For what we have here is not an objective unity—not a unity as in the identity of a class of effects stemming from a class of identical causes—but a unity in the making, a unity making itself (and, of course, not yet made), a unity of socio-historical creation.

Without minimizing the importance of other aspects of the Hungarian Revolution, the following will focus on the significance of the Workers' Councils. Although the Hungarian Revolution lasted only a few weeks, it was a limit situation through which new potentialities were revealed, nay, created. Thus, like the few weeks of the Paris Commune, for us the Hungarian events are **more important** than three thousand years of Egyptian history because they constituted a **radical break** with the inherited philosophies of politics and work, while prefiguring a new society.

**The exemplary character of the Workers' Councils**—which sprang up almost everywhere in a matter of hours—**does not stem from their proletarian composition, from their origin in productive enterprises, or even from the Council form as such. Rather, their importance lies in (a) the establishment of direct democracy (true political equality); (b) their rootedness in existing concrete collectivities (including, but not limited to, the factories); and (c) their demands concerning self-management and the abolition of work norms.**

What was implied was the abolition of established social divisions and of the essential separation between the main spheres of collective activity. What is involved here is not only the division between classes, but the division between rulers and ruled (including the division between representatives and represented); the separation of government or a narrowly defined political sphere from the rest of social life—particularly work or production; and the division between immediate, day-to-day activities and a political universal.

This does not, of course, require an undifferentiated identity of each and all, i.e., the establishment of a homogeneous society. **12** Nor does it mean the occlusion of these differences by means of abstract universals like "citizen," "proletarian," "consumer," etc. Rather, the abolition of these social antagonisms requires that the differences between various segments of the community be recognized and that they be given another articulation.

According to the Council form of organization, all decisions have to be taken—in principle, and whenever possible—by the whole collective; that is, by the General Assembly of the Council's constituency (be it factory, administration, university or district). A body of delegates ensures the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly and the continuity of its direction between meetings. These delegates are elected and are permanently revocable. But, neither this permanent revocability, nor even the election of the delegates are the decisive features. There could be other means (e.g., rotation) to achieve the same ends. The important point is that the power of decision rests with the General Assembly—which can reverse the decisions of the delegates — and that the power of the delegates is residual, i.e., it exists in principle and only in so far as the General Assembly cannot be in permanent session.

This power of the General Assemblies implies the abolition of the instituted division between rulers and ruled. In particular, it eliminates the prevalent, typically modern (not ancient) political mystification that democracy is equivalent to representation, by which, of course, is meant permanent representation. Being irrevocable (even if formally limited in time), the permanent delegation of power to representatives is a form of political alienation. Political power is appropriated by the representatives.

But to decide is to decide for oneself. It is not a matter of deciding who is going to decide. Moreover, this appropriation is veiled by the juridical form of periodic elections. The well-known critique of elections under present social and political systems need not be repeated here.

What is important is to stress the generally neglected point that political representation tends to "educate" people in the conviction that they are unable to manage the problems of society, that there exists a particular category of men endowed with the specific ability to govern. Permanent representation therefore goes with professionalized politics. It contributes to political apathy which in turn widens the gap between the extent and the complexity of social problems and their own ability to tackle them.

Needless to say, neither the power of General Assemblies, nor the revocability and accountability of delegates is a panacea capable of guaranteeing that a degeneration of the Revolution — bureaucratic or otherwise—is impossible. The ultimate fate of the Councils, or any other such organization, depends on the self-activity of the people; on what they will and will not do; on their involvement in the life of the collective; and on their readiness to bring their full weight to bear within the processes of discussion, elaboration, decision, implementation and control.

It would be contradictory to seek an institutional form capable of ensuring such participation and coercing people to be autonomous. The Council form cannot guarantee the development of such autonomy, but merely renders it possible. In contrast, established political forms such as representative democracy, or the leadership of a party guarantee that such a development remains impossible. What is involved here is the de-professionalization of politics — i.e., the abolition of politics as a special and separate sphere of activity—and, conversely, the universal politicization of society, which means just that: the business of society becomes, quite literally, everybody's business.

A revolutionary phase necessarily starts with an outburst of autonomous activity and, if it proceeds beyond the stage of revolt or revolutionary episode, it establishes autonomous mass organization. It displays a tremendous amount of activity, abnegation and self-sacrifice, an extraordinary expenditure of energy. Individuals become actively interested in public affairs, as if they were their own—which is indeed what they are.

Thus, the Revolution manifests itself to society as the unveiling of its own repressed truth. This goes together with almost unbelievable social, political, practical and technical inspiration and invention of the sort abundantly illustrated during the Hungarian Revolution by the audacity and skill with which the Workers' Councils continued fighting Kadar more than a month after the second Russian invasion.

The continuation and further development of the autonomous activity of the people depends upon the character of their power in mass organizations and the relevance of their decisions for their concrete, daily existence. In this sense, the main problem of post-revolutionary society is the creation of institutions which allow the continuation of this autonomous activity, but without requiring heroic feats twenty-four hours a day. **The more people can see that their day-to-day existence crucially depends on their active participation in the exercise of power, the more they will tend to participate. In this way, the development of self-activity feeds upon itself.**

Conversely, any limitation on the power of autonomous mass organizations, or any attempt to transfer a "part" of its power to other institutions (e.g., Parliament, "party," etc.) can only favor the opposite movement toward less participation, declining interest, and finally, apathy. **Bureaucratization** starts when certain decisions pertaining to common affairs are removed from the competence of mass organizations and, under various rationalizations, are entrusted to such "**representative**" bodies. When this is allowed to happen, the **participation** of people and the activity of the mass organizations inevitably **declines**, and the ensuing vacuum is filled increasingly by bureaucracy.

Eventually, people abandon the mass organizations, where substantial decisions are no longer being made, and revert to the state of **cynical indifference** toward politics which is not only characteristic of present bureaucratic societies, but the **very condition** of their existence. This state of affairs will then appear, to sociologists and philosophers, to both explain and justify the bureaucracy (after all, somebody has to take care of public affairs). **13**

**Now the people's day-to-day existence depends on what is going on at the general social and political level as well as on what is happening in the particular collectivity to which they belong and the specific activities in which they are engaged. The separation of these two spheres is an essential expression of alienation in present society.**

It is in this that the importance of the Hungarian demands for self-management and for the constitution of Councils in all sectors of the national life is to be found. Participation in general political structures which leaves people **powerless** over their immediate environment and **separated from the management of their concrete activities** is, of course, a **mystification**. And so is participation or self-management when confined, for example, to the enterprise, thus **leaving general political power in the hands of a separate social stratum**.

What is entailed by the demands of the Hungarian Workers' Councils is precisely the overcoming of this



separation. It is the demand that people be allowed to manage the concrete collectivities to which they belong—not only in factories, but in all sectors of national life; and that they be able to participate in the exercise of political power—not abstractly, as voting citizens, etc., but directly, through the very organs of their self-activity, i.e., the Councils. **14** Thus, the abstract formulation of the problem in terms of social divisions and the homogenization of society is eliminated; what we are led to is a mode of articulation capable of mediating between society and the particular segments which compose it.

By now, the mystification of the Yugoslav Workers' Councils and self-management of enterprises should be clearly visible. There can be no "self-management" as long as a separate State apparatus is maintained; even in the narrow field of the management of the enterprise, people's activities are stunted and finally destroyed. For example, of what value is self-management when it is confined to thejyjkujg@yopmail.com functioning of the factory and especially when the League of Yugoslav Communists retains total power over all other important matters including, in the final analysis, what is happening in the factories themselves.

Conversely, one can also see why the power of Councils or other such organizations (e.g., Soviets in Russia after October 1917) rapidly becomes devoid of content if confined to the realm of the political in the narrow and current sense of the word. **15** For then the division between a political sphere in the traditional sense, and people's concrete existence is reintroduced. If the Councils—or Soviets—are called upon only to write laws, sanction decrees and nominate Commissars, then all they really possess is the abstract shadow of power. Thus, once they were separated from the interests and preoccupations of concrete collectivities, the Soviets were bound to appear empty. Even if they had not been dominated and manipulated by the Bolshevik Party, the people could not have helped but view the Soviets as just another official institution not belonging to them, not caring about their cares. **16**

When I speak about the autonomy of the organizations of the masses, I do so only because and in so far as they do not accept the established institution of society. This means in the first place, that they do not accept any other source of legitimate power outside themselves; and in the second place, that they abolish, within themselves, the division between those who direct and those who execute.

The first point implies not merely that they create a situation of dual power, or even that they tend to assume for themselves all power; but rather that the autonomous organizations posit themselves as the only legitimate

source of decisions, rules, norms and laws—that is, as organs and embodiments of a new institution of society.

The second point means that, through their activity, they abolish the antagonistic division between a sphere of politics, or government, and a sphere of everyday life. The second point is, in fact, the concrete implementation of the first.

For the political organization of historical societies, as well as the nuclear organization of all other social relations, has for thousands of years been the institution of a social hierarchy. This has involved both the institution of a real-material sub-stratum embodied in social networks and individual positions, and objectified in possessions, privileges, rights, spheres of competence, tools and weapons; and an imaginary social signification whereby people are defined as superior and inferior along one or various socially instituted lines of order. The internalization of this hierarchical ordering by each and every individual has been, and remains, a cornerstone of class society.

Contemporary bureaucratic capitalism tends to push the hierarchical organization of society to its limits and posit it as the rational organization par excellence. 17 The hierarchical, pyramid-like structure of organization—omnipresent in contemporary society—is rapidly replacing the traditional bifurcation of capitalist society. In Russia, the latter has been completely replaced for more than fifty years and in Eastern Europe and China for the last quarter of a century. This hierarchical structure is the dominant form of oppressive relations in the present world. 18

But the Council organization destroys the structure of hierarchy. By vesting power in all concerned, the hierarchical structure, and the division between those who direct and those who execute, are overcome. Decisions are made by the people who will have to implement them, and who are, therefore, in the best position to judge not only abstract options but also the concrete conditions of this implementation including, above all, its real costs: their own effort and work.

Similarly, the relevance of the decisions can thus best be judged by those most interested in minimizing the time and cost involved. In this manner, experience in both technical matters and the exercise of direct democracy can begin building up. This is another illustration of what I have called articulation.

Of course, the abolition of the antagonistic division between specialists and non-specialists does not mean the suppression of their difference. Self-management does not require that competence and specialized knowledge be ignored — quite the contrary. In fact, it is under today's

bureaucratic capitalist social structure that they most often are ignored and that **decisions largely depend on the outcome of strife between bureaucratic cliques, each of which uses its specialists for purposes of public justification and mystification.** [...solutions to the problems facing the organization are determined by the constant power struggle between rival bureaucratic groups... The idea of a technostructure as such is a mystification: it is what the bureaucracy would like people to believe. The tops are tops not as experts in a technical field, but as experts in the art of climbing the bureaucratic ladder. As it expands the bureaucratic apparatus is forced to reproduce within itself the division of labor which it imposes increasingly on the whole of society; thus, it becomes estranged from itself, and from the factual substance of the problems. Thus, any "rational" synthesis becomes impossible...]

Under the Council organization, specialists are not eliminated as such, but instead belong to the collective and are listened to in their specific capacity as specialists, like everyone else. But in the last instance, it is the General Assembly, not the engineer, that must decide. Certainly their decisions may prove to be mistaken. But it is unlikely that their record could be any worse than that of bureaucratic capitalism. **19**

What is involved here is much more than the traditional separation between means and ends. This separation is an abstraction with limited validity only in fragmented and trivial domains. The point is not that people have to decide what to do, and then technicians will tell them how to do it. Rather, **after listening to the technicians, the people must decide both what to do and how to do it.** For the how is not neutral, and the what is not disembodied; neither are they identical or external to each other. **The notion of "neutral" technique is, of course, an illusion; a conveyor belt is linked to both a type of product and a type of producer.** (The idea that technique is **neutral**, as well as the idea that capitalist rationalization is **rational**, is central, even if more or less hidden, in Marx's thought.)

The demand of the Hungarian Workers' Councils for the abolition of work norms addresses this problem in a concrete way while, at the same time, suggesting new conceptions of work, man and their relation to each other. If the tasks already have been decided, and if the various **technical means** are simply taken as **given**, then it is inevitable that work itself appears as just another means to be used in the most rational and efficient way possible. The how of its usage appears to fall into the province of the corresponding technicians, whose job it is to determine the best way of doing the work, the time allowed, etc. The **absurdity** of the ensuing results, and the permanent strife thereby introduced within the labor process, are well-known.

But we are not concerned here with the critique of Taylorism or the capitalist (and socialist) rationalization of the work process. The crucial point is that the demand for

the abolition of work norms is not simply a means by which workers defend themselves against exploitation, speed-up, etc. Instead, this demand contains certain positive elements of paramount importance; it suggests that the people charged with the implementation of a task are the ones entitled to make **decisions concerning work rhythm**, etc. Contrary to their conception within the rationalistic framework of capitalism, such decisions affect an essential dimension of the worker's life.

Moreover, workers cannot really defend themselves against exploitation without doing something positive relative to production itself. Of course, if externally imposed work norms are abolished, the rhythm of work will still have to be **regulated** owing to the collective and cooperative character of modern production. But under these circumstances, **the only conceivable source of such regulation is the collectivity of the workers themselves**; groups of workers—whether in the shop, the department or the factory—will have to establish their own discipline and ensure its observance (as, indeed, they presently do, albeit informally and illegally).

Implied here is a categorical rejection of the idea that **"man endeavors to avoid work... Man is a lazy animal" (Trotsky)**, and that, therefore, work discipline can only be achieved through external **coercion** or **financial reward**. **The coercive organization of work is not, in fact, a response to the "laziness of man;" rather, it is laziness that is a natural and understandable response to alienated work.**

The germinal character of these demands can also be seen in terms of another series of implications. Once the principle of effective self-determination has been accepted, and once the separation between means and ends has been repudiated, then it follows that **the tools and machines, etc., cannot be taken as a given**. Nor can they be imposed by engineers, technicians, etc., who would design them with an interest in increasing productive efficiency, thereby **further promoting the domination of the mechanical universe over human beings**.

A radical change in the relations between workers and their work implies **a radical change in the nature of the instruments of production**, which in turn requires, first and foremost, that **the perspective of the users of those instruments becomes the dominant one in the process of their conception and design**.

**A conveyor belt socialism is a contradiction in terms; machines must be adapted to people, not people to machines. Obviously, this leads to a repudiation of the basic character of present-day technology. Today's machines imply today's junk and vice versa. And both presuppose and tend to reproduce a certain type of human being.**

Clearly, numerous and by no means trivial problems would emerge along this road. But nothing would appear to render them insuperable — certainly no more insuperable than the ones created daily by the present antagonistic organization of society. For example, if groups of workers set their own work rhythms, there may be problems concerning both the equality of rhythms between different groups —in other words, concerning justice —and the integration of these various rhythms into the whole production process. But both of these problems exist today and have not yet been solved. Considerable progress will be made, however, once these problems are explicitly formulated and discussed.

In an analogous vein, the production of machines in the interests of those who use them will require **constant and close cooperation between machine-makers and machine-users**. And more generally, a collectivistic organization of production —and of all other social activities— will, of course, require a large measure of social responsibility and reciprocal control; the various segments of the community will have to behave in a responsible manner and accept their role in the exercise of **mutual control**. Obviously, such social coordination will best be carried out through the networks of delegates linked to the basic organizations and the **permanent, public discussion of common affairs**.

This is not the place to discuss the more important and complex questions that will confront a collectivist society relative, for instance, to the orientation of the "total economy" or other social activities, to their mutual interdependence, to the general orientation of society, and so on. In fact, as has already been stressed, the crucial problem for a post-revolutionary society concerns neither the management of production, nor the organization of the economy.

Rather, it concerns the political problem proper or what might be called the other side of the problem of state power; namely, the capacity of the society to **establish and maintain its concrete unity without establishing relatively autonomous institutions charged with this "task," i.e., the State apparatus**.

Despite appearances, this problem was ignored by classical Marxism and, indeed, by Marx himself. The notion that the State — as a separate, quasi-autonomous apparatus—has to be destroyed, was not accompanied by a positive consideration of the political problem. Instead, this problem was dissolved (mythically) in the conception of an explicit, material unification and homogenization of society supposedly brought about by the development of capitalism.

Politics, for Marx, Lenin, et al., involved the struggle against the bourgeoisie, the alliance with other classes,

etc.; in brief, the elimination of the "remnants of the ancient world." But in their view, it did not concern the positive institution of the new world. According to Marx, in a 100% proletarian society there would not and could not be a political problem. Furthermore, this neglect is deeply rooted in Marx's **determinist** philosophy of history: either socialism or barbarism, but, if not barbarism, then socialism.

The wicked irony of history, however, has been that the first victorious revolution took place in a country where the population was anything but "united and disciplined by the very process of capitalist production itself." And the task of unifying and homogenizing Russian society had to be accomplished by the Bolshevik party and by Stalin's totalitarian terror. Fortunately, they met with less than total success.

Unfortunately, we can no longer look forward to the unity of post-revolutionary society being brought about through a process of homogenization, even if such a process exists, which it manifestly does not. The political problem as such can never be eliminated. The **unity** of post-revolutionary society can only be brought about—that is, constantly recreated—through the permanent, **unifying activity of the collective organizations**.

This, of course, entails the **destruction** of any separate State apparatus. But it also entails the existence and continuous **remodelling** of political institutions (e.g., the councils and their networks), which are neither **antagonistic** to the real society, nor directly and immediately **identical** to it. And there is no magical guarantee that all possible frictions between segments of the community will disappear; that a stratum will not emerge that will attempt to occupy permanently positions of power, thereby reinstating the **division between rulers and ruled**, and a separate State apparatus.

In conclusion, we can pose the following problem: either, the autonomous and collective organizations of the people will invent a solution—or rather a process of solutions—to the problem of maintaining society as a differentiated unity or, if they fail, substitute solutions—such as the power of a revolutionary party and the reconstitution of a permanent bureaucracy—will necessarily be imposed. In this latter instance, the old mess will ipso facto be re-established.

It is not that we are ignorant of which route to follow. Such a route simply does not yet exist, either in reality or in theory. If and when this route is opened to us, it will be through the autonomous and collective activity of the people. In the mean time, however, we do know which route not to follow: namely, the route leading to totalitarian bureaucratic capitalist society.

The Hungarian Revolution never had the opportunity to face these problems. Nevertheless, in the short span of its development, it not only destroyed the ignoble mystification of Stalinist "socialism," but also posed—and provided certain germinal answers to—some of the most important questions confronting the revolutionary reconstruction of society. Thus, we are obliged not only to honor the heroic struggle of the Hungarian people but also recognize that, in the resolve to manage collective life, the Hungarian Revolution truly does constitute one of the creative sources of contemporary history.

August 1976

# Notes

1. "La révolution prolétarienne contre la bureaucratie," *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, 20 (December, 1956); reprinted now in *La Société bureaucratique*. Vol. 2 (Paris, 1973), pp. 277-278. The present text presupposes some familiarity with the Hungarian events of 1956, especially concerning the constitution, activities and demands of the Workers' Councils. Numbers 20 and 21 (March, 1957) of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* were largely devoted to the 1956 events in Hungary and Poland, and included documents and texts by refugee participants in the Hungarian Revolution. For some bibliographical indications, see *La Société bureaucratique*, *ibid.*, p. 265.
2. Cf. my article cited in note 1 above, especially pp. 278-307; also, "Sur le contenu du socialisme, III: La lutte des ouvriers contre l'organisation de l'entreprise capitaliste," *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, 23 (January, 1958); reprinted now in *L'Expérience du mouvement ouvrier*, Vol. 2 (Paris, 1974), pp. 9-88. The extraordinary book by the Hungarian Miklos Haraszti, *Salaire aux pièces: Ouvrier dans un pays socialiste* (Paris, 1976), a section of which has been translated into English as "I Heard the Iron Cry," in *New Left Review*, 91 (May-June, 1975), shows the **identical nature of the relations of production and organization** of the work process between "capitalist" factories in the West and "socialist" factories in the East.
3. I discussed, at the time, developments in Poland in "La voie polonaise de la bureaucratisation," *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, 21 (March, 1957), reprinted now in *La Société bureaucratique*, Vol. 2, *op.cit.*, pp. 339-371. Here it is worth quoting at length the inimitable **E. Mandel**, lest the reader think I am exaggerating for the sake of polemics: **"...Socialist democracy will still have to engage in more battles in Poland. But the main battle which allowed millions of proletarians to once again identify with the Worker's State, is already won. . . The political revolution which, for a month now, shakes up Hungary, has shown a more spasmodic and unequal development than the political revolution in Poland. It did not, like the latter, fly from victory to victory [sic]. . . This is because, contrary to the situation in Poland, the Hungarian Revolution was an elementary and spontaneous explosion. The subtle interaction between objective and subjective factors, between the initiative of the masses and the building of a new leadership, between pressure from below and the crystallization of an opposition faction above, at the summit of the Communist Party, an interaction which made possible the Polish victory [?!?], has been missing in Hungary."** From *Quatrième Internationale* (December, 1956), pp. 22, 23.



The bureaucratic essence of Trotskyism, its nature as a [faction of Stalinist bureaucracy in exile](#), its yearning to rejoin the Party apparatus at the slightest chance of internal struggle and some "pressure from below" has rarely been expressed with more clarity—and in more laughable style.

4. I am referring to the points I consider most important as they were already formulated by the 28th and 29th of October, 1956. Unbelievable as it may appear, the demands formulated by the [Councils](#) after November 11 (i.e., after the full occupation of the country by the Russian Army and the murder of thousands of people) were even more radical, comprising the [constitution of an armed workers' militia](#) and the [establishment of Councils in all branches of activity](#), including Government administrations
5. I am not talking about the persons as such, but about the significance of their behavior. The personal tragedy of Lukacs (or of Nagy, etc.) is, in this context, irrelevant. For Lukacs in particular, the Hegelian Marxist, to weep about his "subjective drama" would only add insult to injury.
6. The material contained in E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Gollancz, 1963; revised Penguin edition, 1968) abundantly illustrates this point.
7. It is all the more striking to note that, [despite this precedent, and Marx's recognition of the fundamental importance of the Commune's form, Lenin's initial reaction to the spontaneous emergence of the Soviets in Russia during the 1905 Revolution was negative and hostile](#). People were doing things contrary to what he, Lenin, had decided on the basis of his theory that they ought to be doing.
8. It is clear, for instance, that the understanding possessed by the Hungarian workers in their activity of the social character of the [bureaucracy as an exploitative and oppressive class](#), and of the conditions for its existence, was from a theoretical viewpoint infinitely superior to all the pseudo-theoretical analyses contained in thirty years of Trotskyist literature and in most of the other left Marxist writings.
9. The postulate of "identity" underlying all inherited philosophical and scientific thought is equivalent to the assertion that such an excess, if and when it exists, is always only "a measure of our ignorance." The presumption which goes with it is that this measure can, de jure, be reduced to zero. The shortest answer to this is: Hie Rhodus, hie salta. We can confidently sit back and relax waiting for the day when the difference between Tristan und Isolde and the sum total of its causes and conditions (the bourgeois society of the 1850s,

the evolution of instruments and orchestra, Wagner's unconscious, etc.) will be reduced to zero.

10. Though one can, of course, explain why this type of revolution did not take place in 1956 in Egypt, Iran, or Java.
11. Another illustration of this type of argument: It is correct that one of the main differences between Poland and Hungary in 1956 is that the Polish Communist Party was able to adapt itself to the events, while the Hungarian Communist Party was not. But why did the Polish Communist Party succeed where the Hungarian one failed? Precisely because in Poland the movement did not go far enough. This allowed the Polish Communist Party to continue to exist, and to play its role, while in Hungary the violence and the **radical character of the movement** rapidly reduced its Communist Party to nothing. And this also explains, up to a point, the different attitude of the Kremlin in the two cases. As long as a bureaucratic party remained alive and more or less in command in Poland, the Moscow bureaucracy believed — and rightly so — that it could spare itself an armed intervention and maneuver instead toward a gradual restoration of the bureaucratic dictatorship of the sort which eventually took place. Such maneuvering seemed impossible in the case of Hungary, where the Communist Party had been destroyed and the **Workers' Councils** were showing their intention to demand and **exercise power**.
12. **This dichotomy — either society is antagonistically divided, or there is total homogeneity — is one of the hidden postulates of inherited political thought. Moreover, it is a postulate shared by Marx himself, for whom the elimination of the social divisions of society, state power, politics, etc., will result from the homogenization of society brought about by capitalism.**
13. On a reduced scale, this spiral of bureaucratic degeneration and apathy is visible in the life of contemporary political organizations and trade unions.
14. It is true that in Hungary there were demands for free elections to designate a new Parliament, and it seems that they had the support of the Councils. But this was an understandable reaction to the previous state of affairs and the bureaucratic dictatorship. Had the Revolution been allowed to develop, the question of the respective roles of Parliament and the Councils would, of course, have remained open. In my view, the uninterrupted development of the power and activities of the Councils would have brought about either a gradual atrophy of the Parliament, or a clash between the two.

15. This was the line Lenin was advocating, on paper, when speaking about Soviet power. In actuality, of course, he was striving to **centralize** all power in the hands of the Bolshevik party.
  
16. Cf. my article "Socialisme ou barbarie," in *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, No. 1 (March, 1949); reprinted now in *La Société bureaucratique*, Vol. 1, in particular pp. 164-173. Also, "Le rôle de l'idéologie bolchevique dans la naissance de la bureaucratie," in *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, No. 35, (January 1964); reprinted in *L'Expérience du mouvement ouvrier*, Vol. 2, pp. 384-416. **Unbelievable as it may sound, Lenin and Trotsky considered the organization of work, the management of production, etc., as purely technical questions, having nothing to do with the "nature of the political power" which remained "proletarian," since it was exercised by "the Party of the proletariat." This absurd position corresponded to their equally ridiculous enthusiasm for the capitalist "rationalization" of production, Taylorism, piece work, etc. In the second of the articles mentioned above, and in many other texts, I have tried to show that this attitude corresponds to one of the deepest layers of Marx's own thought.**
  
17. Elsewhere, I have tried to show that this **"rational" organization is, in fact, inherently irrational and full of contradictions.** Cf. "Sur le contenu du socialisme, II" *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, No. 22, (July 1957); "Sur le contenu du socialisme, III" quoted in Footnote 2 above; and "Le mouvement révolutionnaire sous le capitalisme moderne, II" *Socialisme ou Barbarie* No. 32, (April 1961). In modern conditions (as opposed, e.g. to "Chinese mandarin" conditions) **there can be no rational basis for organization along hierarchical-bureaucratic lines.** Knowledge, skill and expertise should, but cannot be the criteria for appointment. For **solutions to the problems facing the organization are determined by the constant power struggle between rival bureaucratic groups**, or rather clans. This is not an accidental or anecdotal phenomena, but is, instead, **central** to the workings of the bureaucratic mechanism. **The idea of a technostructure as such is a mystification: it is what the bureaucracy would like people to believe. The tops are tops not as experts in a technical field, but as experts in the art of climbing the bureaucratic ladder. As it expands the bureaucratic apparatus is forced to reproduce within itself the division of labor which it imposes increasingly on the whole of society; thus, it becomes estranged from itself, and from the factual substance of the problems. Thus, any "rational" synthesis becomes impossible.** But some synthesis must take place. In the end, decisions must be made. And they are—in the Oval Office (or the corresponding Kremlin Bulb), between Nixons, Ehrlichmans, Haldemans, and other petty delinquents of **sub-normal intelligence.** This is the apotheosis of technostructure, scientific management, etc., just as the Lockheed bribes are the apotheosis of perfect competition, optimization through free market mechanisms, etc.

18. This is a fact which today's "Marxists" are unable to see, as they go on talking about "commodity production" in the West and "socialism" —however "degenerate," "deformed" etc.— in the East.
19. Consider the recent example of Pan American Airways, where management, with the expert advice of hundreds of technicians, statisticians, computer experts, econometricians, transport economists, etc., extrapolated the demand curve for air transport in the 1960s into the future (something a moderately intelligent first-year undergraduate would not have done) and almost went into bankruptcy, from which they had to be rescued by the American government.

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