

BEYOND WORK

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COMMUNISM

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BEYOND WORK

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WITHOUT MONEY:
COMMUNISM**

**BY
THE FRIENDS
OF 4 MILLION
YOUNG WORKERS**

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images of the first prints of A World Without Money: Communism in French, zine format



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4. Beyond Work

Capitalism has continuously revolutionized the means of production but it has been incapable of really liberating and transforming productive activity. Industrial labour signifies the most extreme form of alienation. The proletarian in blue overalls or white shirt is chained to his machine or to his work routine. He has lost the freedom to give his labour a personal touch or to carry it out in his own way that was the prerogative of the artisan or even the slave and the serf. The impersonal character of this contemporary form of domination makes it unendurable. Work has been separated from the rest of life. Life is dominated by the fatigue and the brutalization that it engenders and by the wage that it provides. With the control exercised by modern capital over social life in its entirety, our whole existence has ended up monopolized by the principles of work. The logic of



efficiency and productivity dominate our “free” time. Everything must be rational and profitable, including pleasure and “affairs”! Everyone is cordially invited to take over from the system by transforming it. Communism is first and foremost a radical transformation of human activity. In this respect one can speak of the abolition of work.

Work and Torture

If there is a word that is safely neutral it certainly is not the word for work.

In French and Spanish one of the words for “work” or “labour” (in Spanish, “trabajo”, in French, “travail”, and with a slightly modified meaning, the English “travail”) originated from the Latin word, “trepalium”, which denotes an instrument of torture similar to the “rack”. Before assuming its modern meaning, this word designated mine labour and then certain kinds of especially hard work. Today its meaning has been considerably extended but its boundaries are still unclear. There is a constant tendency to provide it with

Retrieved on January 30th, 2013 from <https://libcom.org/library/world-without-money-communism-les-amis-de-4-millions-de-jeunes-travailleurs>

Un Monde Sans Argent: Le Communisme was originally published in three parts, as three separate pamphlets, in France, between 1975-6. It was produced by Dominique Blanc, shortly after the dissolution of the *Organisation des Jeunes Travailleurs révolutionnaires*. The name *Quatre Millions de Jeune Travailleurs* was apparently ‘adopted’ from a 1971 PSU youth publication (*Parti Socialiste Unifié* - a French Socialist Party), presumably to satisfy French publishing laws, and texts continued to be published under this name through the 1970’s including the widely distributed tract *A Bas Le Proletariat/Vive Le Communisme*.

struggle cannot be dissociated from the struggle for communism. This is true even if, with regard to this or that point or mode of organization the communists do not agree with the masses.

The party itself, which is not an organization, or worse, an institution managed from the top-down, will organize itself in the councilist manner. It is the community of those who stand for, beyond immediate tasks and interests, the defence of the movement as a whole. It must indicate the fortress to be stormed, it must concentrate its forces at strategic points, and it must propose solutions.

There is presently no organization that can call itself "the party". The latter can never be identified with a sect or any kind of mass organization. The supporters of communism are revealed by what they do rather than by membership in any particular group. Organizational forms do not have to be established or laid down in advance. They will be discovered during the course of the movement.

a natural justification, however.

In English the word originated in a particular form of activity of the peasant. What characterizes the word for work or labour is precisely its abstract quality. It no longer designates this or that special activity but activity and effort as such. One no longer plants cabbages, or weaves, or herds cattle; one works. All work is basically the same. What counts is the time spent working and the wage earned. As Marx said: "Time is everything, and man is nothing; at most he is the carcass of time."

It is not the word for work that has such an impact as the hateful reality that it represents. It does not even matter if the word disappears. If the word survives it will have to undergo a profound change of meaning. Maybe it will end up as a synonym for the greatest of pleasures!

In communist society productive activity will lose its strictly productive character. The obsession regarding efficiency and punctuality will disappear. Labour will be based on a life transformed in its entirety. Such a change implies the end of hierarchy, of the division between order-givers and order-takers,

of the separation of decision and execution, of the opposition between mental and manual labour. Man will no longer be ruled by the products of his activity and by his tools. The subjugation of nature to the productive process and its monopolization by groups or individuals will come to an end.

This revolution will be accompanied by a technological transformation. The very nature of industrial development will be called into question.

The parasitic nature of capitalism is expressed in the fact that it is possible to provide a secure foundation for social life even when most businesses are closed. A test regarding the resources contained by a highly developed country was provided by the strike of May 1968 in France. All industry can be shut down for a whole month without any significant consequences for social life.

Maybe there will be a shortage of bread in a revolutionary period. But this shortage cannot be attributed to a lack of productive capacity. It would be due to special causes. This will not prevent us from closing parasitic industries. To the contrary, it would be all the more necessary in order to be able to

When the great majority of the proletariat participates in the revolution, the party will not mistake itself for the class, since it does not claim to be the proletariat or to represent it. It is the most resolute and lucid fraction of the class. It coexists, collaborates with or confronts other fractions that are more moderate or that have an interest in the bourgeois apparatus or ideology.

Its action can be characterized in one sentence: to create a situation that makes turning-back impossible. It is normal for there to be a lack of convergence between the action of the communists and the behaviour of the masses. This does not indicate a fundamental conflict. The party does not have to eliminate the mass organizations or movements. The councils and other base committees do not have to eliminate the party. If one of these things should happen it would necessarily signify the end and downfall of the revolution. This perception of such a conflict is a legacy of the Russian revolution and the councilist wave of the twenties. It has one defect: it perceives certain organizations as communist which were not communist.

The party will fight for the councils, since this

and the most vapid of all possible desires in this society. It is an abstraction separated from concrete needs and expectations. The "revolutionary" can discourse about everything and passionately engage in strategic disputes, but he is incapable of defining what it is that he wants. If he speaks of immanent transformations, his perspective is dominated by the question of power. The society he wants to build rests upon a redistribution of power. What he "wants" is people's power, workers' power, students' power, the power of the councils (+ electrification or automation!), the power of the people over their own lives, the power of...

When the revolution corresponds to concrete needs and possibilities, however, the majority of those who will be revolutionaries will not feel the need to call themselves revolutionaries.

Only during a phase of open confrontation, when there is a possibility of communizing the social body, will the party be able to cease to be merely an association based on shared opinions or sporadic actions. It will finally be able to become a community of action.

redirect existing resources towards vital sectors.

One cannot say in advance and in detail what will be eliminated and what will be retained. We are convinced of the despicable role played by war industries. They will have no reason to exist once communist society has been fully established. In the meantime one cannot rule out its further development in communism's early stages!

Such decisions, in all cases, will not be taken by a committee of technocrats but directly by the workers affected by the decisions. The threat of a loss of wages will no longer play a role in their deliberations! If some workers, due to corporativism or for less respectable reasons, cling to useless or even harmful enterprises, they will have to answer to the entire communist proletariat. The right to property or self-determination will be no excuse for police or financial workers to seek to perpetuate the routine of their usual work!

Everything that serves finance and the state machine will be eliminated or at least profoundly transformed, as these sectors require onerous labours to satisfy secondary needs. Products or "services" like the

telephone, and the electricity that is currently being used for the most part by businesses, will be largely redirected to individual consumption. Buildings and machines can be put to different uses. Numerous needs will be satisfied with a minimum expenditure of social labour. Transportation, for example, will be based upon a more rational use of individual or collective vehicles. The "demand" for punctuality will be greatly relaxed. The need to travel will arise much less frequently.

Many activities will not simply be completely abandoned but will instead be profoundly transformed. Education will escape to the greatest degree possible all capitalist influence. The press will cease to be the tool of the big newspapers in order to be made available to a multitude of publishers of small newsletters.

The essence of the new society will no longer consist in producing and competing in order to preserve market share, but in reducing arduous and boring industrial labour as much as possible.

The closure of useless sectors will allow for the variation and amelioration of those productive tasks

hopes. Bourgeoisie and bureaucrats tremble before this still nameless and faceless threat.

It is contradictory to claim to be a communist in a world that rejects communism by every means at its disposal. Communists are not supermen who already live in a different way than the rest of their fellow men. They do not remain untouched by the reigning misery. Their theoretical consciousness is of little avail in their attempts to transform their own lives.

It is essential, and perhaps inevitable, that conscious communists should appear and that they should endeavour to understand and to prepare for the communist revolution. But it does not make sense to oppose conscious communists to unconscious communists. What is important is to see how and why the conscious communist arises as a practical necessity.

There are certainly people who call themselves revolutionaries. The production of these "revolutionaries" is not independent of the escalation of the crisis. Most of them are not communists and do not even know what they are and what they want. The desire for revolution appears as the last

increases as the possibilities for breaking with the system become more apparent.

The constitution of the party is not, however, a new and unprecedented phenomenon. The party, as it is born at a particular historical moment, is the resurgence of a movement that transcends the limitations of this historical period. The modern party picks up the thread of a party whose reality and even memory have been erased by the counterrevolution.

During non-revolutionary periods, when communism can only be asserted timidly and haltingly, the party in the strict sense is condemned to remain an insignificant and forgotten fraction of the population.

Alongside the conscious communists there are numerous unconscious communists who reveal themselves by their revolutionary actions. The party, in the fullest sense of those who demonstrate their more or less conscious commitment to communism in the increasingly frequent social conflicts, is invisible. Its image is not embodied within the reigning spectacle. Even at the level of this spectacle, however, its power is felt. Propagandists and politicians, in order to push their commodities, broadcast a distorted echo of its

that will still be necessary. The social forces thus liberated will be able to engage in new activities.

Children, students, the elderly and housewives will be able to participate according to their abilities in social activities; this participation will no longer take the form of competition on the "labour market".

These transformations are not luxurious baits the revolution will use to attract doubters. They are immediately necessary for combat and to concentrate forces against that portion of capital that poses the threat of temporary resurgence.

Science and Automation

All of these measures only give us a vague idea of what is to come. Communism will use the material basis bequeathed from the old world. It will above all develop the technological and scientific achievements of the latter. And it will do so more rapidly and better. It is fashionable to express surprise at the technological progress achieved after the last world war. In fact, one would be more justified to express surprise at

the slowness with which scientific discoveries have penetrated industry. The latter is characterized, in principle, by its inertia. It advances when historical "accidents" force it to change its suppliers and markets, and when it modifies its technical basis when interest rates fall, in order to try to escape from economic stagnation.

Contemporary industry functions by finding new uses for inventions and discoveries made decades ago. For example, vehicles based on the combustion engine and petroleum-based fuels, such as our state of the art automobiles, are veritable fossils compared with the scientific possibilities. Industry has not really been able to make much progress with regard to either the automobile or new sources of energy. Nor can it do so unless such an effort is profitable from its narrow point of view.

Communism will allow for the construction of machines or industrial facilities that would be unprofitable from the point of view of the single enterprise or even of a capitalist state. Communism will judge that the achievement of progress is worth the effort even if it does not confer any immediate advantages. It will

assembly must not take the form of something upon which all else depends, for whose benefit all the rest of reality loses all of its specific importance.

The Party

As the crisis of capital becomes more profound and the vanity of the capitalist solutions to the crisis becomes more obvious, a communist party will form within the population.

The formation of the party is not the cause that determines the outbreak of the crisis. It is only the prerequisite for the assault on capital. Its quantitative and qualitative development is, on the other hand, intimately linked to the emergence of this crisis. Its purpose is to facilitate the resolution of this crisis.

The party is not an association formed in accordance with a pre-established doctrine that will expand and grow without changing its nature. The party does not exist; it constitutes itself. It emerges slowly and proceeds by acquiring a clearer content and form. Its nature becomes more definite and its membership

action and would have muffled the independent initiative of the workers. The strikers would have remained more or less passive and, outside of the ranks of a minority of trade unionists or organizers, would have seen their strike as someone else's affair. When workers begin to become radicalized, the democratic demand acquires more and more of the character of a demand for recuperation. A vote is held to decide whether or not to return to work. The bureaucrats, specialists in negotiation, seize the initiative.

Democracy becomes the expression of resignation. At this time it becomes visibly what it is in its essence. Reliance on a general assembly as the only sovereign body is not enough to stem the tide of bureaucratization. The assemblies can become the privileged sites for manipulation, for mass meetings of atomized and powerless individuals, fortresses of confused and useless imposture.

General assemblies are necessary. It is necessary for them to be able to know where they stand, to assess their own forces, and to control and hold accountable their delegates and special committees. But the

often perceive such advantages where capitalism was blind to them: increasing the quality of products, spurring interest in research, and improving working conditions, for instance.

From the capitalist point of view it would not be profitable to manufacture a silent jackhammer since the price of such an invention would not be less than or equal to that of a noisy jackhammer. It is of little importance to the capitalist that an economy of this kind has to be paid for with such obvious inconveniences. The fact that some day the production of a silent jackhammer could be perfected in such a manner as to become less expensive than the noisy jackhammer. This does not enter into the projections made when the product is offered for sale. Why should a business risk bankruptcy or any kind of sacrifice in the name of technical progress or the betterment of humanity? Communism will not be content to just take over from capitalism and carry on with business as usual. It will transform science and technology. From conscious or unconscious servants of the industrial hell, it will transform them (science and technology) into instruments of human liberation.

Science will never again be a sector separate from production.

Capital has a vital need for innovation. It cannot cause it to arise directly from the productive sector. The latter must proceed smoothly and the imagination must by no means be given free reign. Science is carried on elsewhere.

For many years science was marginal; it was the work of dedicated amateurs. Capital had a great need for their services and took them under its wing. Under the tutelage of the State and industry, science became an investment. It became bureaucratized, and came under the control of mandarins and managers. The freedom of creation was corralled.

In the eyes of scientific opinion, this can be good or bad. The man of knowledge is the sorcerer transformed into a wage worker. What is actually the result of the spirit of critical inquiry appears to popular opinion as magic.

The ideology of production recuperates what it had to concede to the experimental impulse. Science appears as the sector where a special commodity is produced: Knowledge. Knowledge ceases to be the

The strike movement spread. A majority of the workers supported it. Their support was generated in the heat of the struggle rather than having been secured in advance by means of a poll of those who were affected by the strikes.

If the workers had been required to democratically decide beforehand whether or not to commence hostilities, perhaps they would have balked. A small number of people set the example and showed them the way to cast aside their fear of the authorities and the possible consequences of their actions. They would be swept along by the atmosphere of struggle and solidarity and would be much more determined to overcome the feeling of discouragement and resignation engendered by the powerlessness of their everyday lives.

Let us imagine that the strike was decided on by means of a mass consultation. In that case it would most likely have taken a different course. The workers' offensive would have forfeited its unexpected quality. The enemy would have been informed of the nature, the form, the scale and the objectives of the movement. Organizational imperatives would have trumped

The Strike

Democracy is negated with the spread of strikes and wildcat uprisings. The outbreak of action is not conditional on a democratic poll of the rank and file or their representatives.

A fraction of the workers, because they are the most combative and least alienated elements situated in the most advantageous conditions, revolt. There is no gap between decision and execution, between those who decide and those who act.

The fundamental problem is not necessarily that of rallying the whole population behind the revolution. From a key position in the production process it is possible to make the capitalists yield. Work stoppages could be a self-reinforcing objective; all it takes is an unauthorized break or a refusal to do a particular job.

It is possible that a breakthrough staged by a handful of people could provoke a generalized breakthrough. This is what we witnessed on the scale of an entire nation in May 1968.

delicate result of specialized research in order to be transformed into a sacralised product offered up for the contemplation of a mass of mental defectives.

For us it is a question of liberating the impulse of initiative and experimentation so that these qualities will come within the reach of all. Science will no longer be the exclusive possession of a caste of specialists and will instead once again be the taste for risk and play, the pleasure of discovery.

The "conquest" of space has illustrated the possibilities of automation and electronics. All that is necessary is to apply all this technology to everyday life, to the transformation of our daily life. Automation will allow humans to be disencumbered of boring jobs, which will be mechanized.

The first steps of automated systems—systems that, once set in motion, can function and operate without human intervention—were taken during the times of the Pharaohs. They were used to regulate the floodwaters of the Nile. With the passage of time such systems began to flourish. The first automated "factories" appeared. There was, for example, the mill invented and displayed near Philadelphia which

in 1784 received wheat and turned it into flour without human intervention. Along with automated machines for production, calculating machines were also developed. In 1881 the telephone was invented. Automation in this sense has existed for a long time. It is nothing but an extreme form of machine production. Electronics will allow such automation to become more widespread and even an ordinary form of machine production.

The electronics associated with the control of important sources of energy will allow action to be conducted at a distance and the centralization of a great number of operations.

Automation not only represents the promise of transferring painful or distasteful tasks to machines. It also, and perhaps most importantly, represents the possibility of doing things that would have otherwise remained impossible. It makes possible operations that require very fast reactions and very complicated calculations that surpass human abilities. Machines can operate in conditions that are hostile to life. Without automation the development of nuclear energy or space travel would have been impossible.

militants, they express their opinions.

Why don't the communists, who want to do away with exploitation and war, renounce the use of force and dictatorial methods?

Do you really believe that the ruling classes will renounce the use of such means? Do you think that in a period of social transformation the most democratic states will not dictate their beautiful principles at gunpoint? The capitalists, the privileged, and the servants of the most liberal political order might claim they are fighting for democracy. They will not openly try to defend their real interests before the public. But it is quite unlikely that they will fight democratically.

It is within a context of a crisis situation that we have to compare bourgeois methods with revolutionary methods. It is hypocritical to contrast the behaviour of the most democratic bourgeois states during times of social peace with the behaviour of revolutionaries during a period of social conflict. In all likelihood the revolutionaries will prove to be more human and more democratic than the defenders of order during a time of upheaval.

us, or because they want to slander us, except when they lift some ideas from the revolutionaries to spice up their program.

Democracy is supposed to be the power of the people, the power of all. The communist revolution does not expect to change the form of the power structure or to hand it over to the people. It wants to remove it from the entire world.

Power always needs external legitimization: God for the monarchy, the people for the constitutional monarchy or the republic. Are the people more real than God? No, God is a person, a representation full of humanity, while the people are nothing but a pure abstraction of humanity. This people that is invoked to legitimize the state is nothing but a reflection of the state. Between this ideal people, this political people, and the real, diverse, lively, stupid or intelligent people, the people revealed in everyday life, an abyss yawns.

It is not politics that expresses and embodies the ideas and the will of humans, but the latter become the vehicles for political opinions. They are themselves transformed into abstractions when, whether voters or

Those who want revolution but reject the accursed science and technology are in a dead-end. The massive destruction of our natural environment is certainly not unconnected with technological possibilities but one cannot blame them for it either.

Nuclear energy or computer science can present very dangerous characteristics. This is the reflection of their power. But these aspects are prejudicial to society only insofar as they are used carelessly or are employed for the purpose of reinforcing social control.

Up until now capitalism has only applied automation to this or that detail of the system. This does not imply that it can stop here. Its logic, the need to bolster or to find an appropriate rate of profit, commits it to continual advance. By this we do not mean to suggest that the generalization of automation is compatible with the preservation of the current system. Automation's very principles are contrary to the survival of class society: it renders the proletariat useless.

"Automated machinery ... represents the exact economic equivalent of slave labour" (Norbert Wiener). The logical result of the development of

automated production would make the human machines superfluous.

The solution is therefore either the communist revolution or the annihilation of the proletariat, who would be reduced to a layer of refugees or else totally eliminated. The prophets of doom have predicted the latter outcome. Our optimism is not based on the humanity of our masters: history has shown us that those who carry out genocide have absolutely no hesitation to do so. We believe that they are simply incapable of exercising control over the situation and implementing a consistent policy. For good or for ill we are not governed by supermen but simply by veritable cretins, skilled at manipulation but incapable of viewing events from a historical perspective. They are themselves in part separated from the productive process. The really decisive point with regard to this question is that the proletariat must not prove to be too weak.

The proletarians dispose of an immense force. Their degree of consciousness of this force is extremely slight. The working class always possesses its force in the place it occupies in the productive apparatus. The

who advocate it come off as naïve dreamers. When the market mechanisms cease to function, however, to continue to depend on money for one's necessities will take on the aspect of meaningless acrobatics. People will come to support communism, not through ideology or even because of their loathing for a dying society, but due to a simple need to live. It will then become necessary to defend communism from the opportunists who are incapable of conceiving of a long-term perspective, and who will seek to gain immediate personal advantages from this situation. If we say that the revolution must be based upon the broadest participation possible, why don't we proclaim our allegiance to democracy? This might pose a quandary for some of our opponents and perhaps even to some of our friends. But we are not, after all, politicians; superficial support is more hindrance than help. We need to be clear in order to unite and orient our supporters on a solid foundation. As for our genuine enemies, we do not want to make their jobs easier for them, but in any event what we really say or want makes little difference to them. Sometimes this is because they do not understand

be compared with that of the bourgeois political revolutions, even in those cases when the latter were popular revolutions. These popular revolutions, which the democrats invoke in their own favour, did not take place as a result of democratic deliberations. If the French people were given the choice in 1789, would they have voted for revolution? What actually took place was the result of one fraction of the population revolting against the superannuated privileges of the nobility. Driven forward by its successes and the consequences of its actions, the revolution swept away the worm-eaten system.

The party of communism will not follow behind the overwhelming majority of the population until the latter perceives communism as the direct means of resolving the problems of everyday life. The revolution does not take place because enough people have been converted to revolutionary views. People become revolutionary because the revolution causes a new way of life to appear, and it seems to them possible and necessary to live that way.

Today, when society's vaults are still full, the disappearance of money seems impossible. Those

first stirrings of automation have only strengthened this force. Small teams of workers and technicians hold enormous power in their hands. Economic upheavals can instil them with the inclination to use it.

The bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy cannot negate the proletariat without also negating themselves. They are chained to value, which is to say that they are chained to the human labour power that forms the basis of value. They do not seek progress for the sake of progress but only for the sake of money. If they develop machine production this is only because they want to free themselves of workers who are too unruly. The proletariat is not just a simple tool of the ruling class but also the latter's reason for existence. Capital (or labour) relegates man to the level of the machine but cannot cease to be a social relation between classes.

Class Society and Robotics

All class society tends to turn man into a robot, to reduce him to an object whose body and mind are

used. When part of society does not work for itself but toils to feed another part of society, this implies that it must perform supplementary labour but also, and even more importantly, that the nature of its activity has changed. What is of interest to the master is not the pleasure or the pain, the happiness or the punishment of the slave, but his productive output. Class society is based on the human possibility of creating goods that can be separated from their producers in order to be used by others. The human being is no longer a human being but a tool. The innately human capacity to make tools and decide in advance what is to be produced is turned against man in order to transform him into a tool.

The exploiter can be kind or cruel to the exploited. The former does not have to be totally without any feelings. Rather, feelings are necessary to grease the wheels of the system. But they are limited and secondary products of the system. The exploiter can be "good" but he cannot cease to exploit. He can be a sadist but he cannot destroy his human material. Where capitalism does reach such a condition, however, it is under great economic pressure.

an apparatus! Power and the state were not born from elections, but the reverse.

The revolutionary organizations of the masses will be formed and consolidated in accordance with certain practical tasks. They will be born from the actions of minorities. You will not see 51% of the population suddenly take action, all at the same time, for the same purpose. These active minorities will be distinguished by the fact that they will not organize the rest of the population, but will tend to merge with the latter in attempts to resolve collective problems. Its success will depend on its ability to attract the participation of much more than just 51% of the population.

Communism cannot be established by means of a coup. Because it must confront the power of the state and its repressive apparatus, communism can only be victorious if it obtains the more or less active participation of a large part of the population, in which case its enemies would be an insignificant minority.

The proletarian revolution, by breaking the chains of the wage system, will make possible and necessary a degree of mass participation that cannot possibly

has the appearance of a privileged moment. The designee does not have a blank check. He fulfils one function among others, one that is no more sacred than any other. Naming such a person or such a team of people, or approving of their previous activity, the rank and file is only establishing its own safeguards to ensure the implementation of its program. It is not the electoral procedure itself but the action that is undertaken that matters.

The formation of workers' councils is not predicated on holding a referendum. Their task is not to liberate a region in order to hold elections there that would only be considered as valid by their organizers, as usual. With reference to this question we have the bad example of the Paris Commune.

Even if elections could be successfully conducted under these conditions, this would only succeed in dissociating decision-making and action and bringing about the return of professionals of politics. To have elections, voters must be registered and records must be kept.

The establishment of an administrative apparatus by means of elections presupposes the existence of such

The ruling classes of the past preyed upon the agrarian communities. These communities were destroyed in order to bring a mutilated and atomized human material under their rule. One commodity among others, the proletariat came face to face in the market of "factors of production" with its mechanical competitors. In this war the machine won one battle after another and conquered space in the productive process from the proletariat.

Communism will transform the nature of this development. Man will not compete with the machine because he will no longer be a "factor of production". The communist use of machine technology signifies the possibility of applying automation to a great number of activities. This is not to say that generalized automation will be the key to the "social question", however.

The abolition of wage labour does not mean the replacement of man by machine but the transformation of human activity in a human sense by means of machines. It is not merely a question of the gradual or sudden reduction of the working week from forty hours to zero. A world in which an entirely

automated industry working on an inexhaustible raw material supplies him with everything desirable and imaginable would lead man to a vegetative condition. It would be a frozen world and without a sense of adventure since all that happens would be programmed in advance.

Regardless of the faith put in science, this myth is deeply capitalist. It considers as natural a complete separation between work time and leisure time. It wants to reserve the hell of production machinery and the paradise of consumption for humans. Depending on how strictly the limits to such a process were set, it would lead to either a permanent Club Med or the generalization of the condition of a foetus.

Communism is the end of the separation between labour time and free time, between production and consumption, between life and experience.

Remuneration

The disappearance of the wages system is sufficient to shake the foundations of the old society. The

permeated by the commodity. Democracy appears as the direct reflection of the economic world. The voter is no longer even a citizen, but a consumer of programs and ideologies. The spectacle of politics and its privileged moments, known as elections, must be denounced for what it really is: just another way of making the people forget their nullity.

It often happens that the people take the hoax seriously. In the aftermath of an election that was annulled or after winning what seemed to them to be an electoral victory, they begin a rebellion. At this point they have gone beyond the reality of electoral politics.

We do not advocate participation in elections, let alone strict abstention. When the proletarians vote, even if they are not right, at least they have their reasons. This ritual will not seem to be really illusory, ridiculous and unfortunate until living conditions in their totality begin to really change. In the meantime voting will have its place in the armoury of the system. Elections could very well be held in a communist organization. They will be for the purpose of designating delegates. But this election no longer

prevent from ever being addressed. They are ruled out from the start as not realistic. You are the ones who determine what is and what is not possible. But that is not enough for you. It is also necessary for your realistic programs and predictions to have never been implemented.

The state exists thanks to the taxes paid by its citizens. Its rule is based on their votes. If each one of its policies had to be directly examined and approved on an item-by-item basis by the taxpayers, it would risk losing many of its supporters. When he pays, the citizen has the impression of having been screwed. When he votes, even if he knows better he knows that he cannot do anything but keep his mouth shut, and feels flattered that his opinion should be solicited.

There is a dissociation between the system's real management and the layers of officials who staff it on the one hand, and on the other, the politics of the parties, the spectacle-politics.

Electoral democracy serves to conceal the fact that all important decisions are beyond the control of the voters and even of the politicians.

The reality of electoral politics is becoming increasingly

compulsion to work in order to survive will disappear. Labour will no longer be a means of earning a livelihood. It will no longer be an intermediate term between man and his needs. It will be the direct satisfaction of a need. In this sense it will no longer be labour. What impels a person to action will cease to appear as a necessity that is external to the individual in order to become instead an internal necessity: the desire to do something, the will to be useful. This dissociation of activity and remuneration, if by remuneration one does not mean the pleasure that such activity can concretely provide, must proceed hand in hand with a profound transformation of man: it asks individuals to take responsibility for what they do, it requires that they develop intelligence and initiative and that egoism and mean-spiritedness should disappear.

It is customary to explain all the evils of humanity by the incorrigibility of human nature. Everyone knows that man is a wolf to man. This explains nothing but demonstrates the kind of contempt that human beings have for themselves. It is the reflection of the fatalism that capitalism engenders by reducing the

human being to the role of a spectator to his own development.

The idea that we should preserve some kind of remuneration for a transitional period, as Marx proposed, in the form of a distribution of coupons reflecting hours worked, is not desirable. If it is the development of the productive forces that makes the communist revolution possible, and today it certainly does, then the revolution cannot delay the full application of its principles. A system of coupons for remuneration and therefore to compel men to work would be a contradiction of the spontaneous revolt of the oppressed, of all those who participated in the insurrection without any expectation of power, or money, or compensation of any kind. A system of coupons would only have the sympathy of bureaucrats, leaders, and of all those who would like to exercise control and power over others. Such a system would only have the effect of dampening the ardour of the active elements and would not attract the opponents of action. If it becomes necessary in a particular case to make someone do something we would prefer the method of the kick in the ass. It is

The Electoral Circus

If you confuse elections with democracy, we shall be told by subtle thinkers, this is because you know that you will lose.

We have no illusions. It is certain that, as long as the system is functioning normally, we would be utterly defeated in a general vote. Our program might not be considered to be entirely without its good points by the majority of the voters, but it would certainly be judged to be unattainable. Only by refusing to act as voters will it be possible for them to begin to perceive the possibility of its attainment.

If politics is the art of the possible, as they say, then we situate ourselves beyond the realm of that possibility. Good upstanding democratic trendsetters and opinion leaders, are you willing to submit certain questions to the population and to abide by its wishes? Lackeys of capital, we ask you: are you prepared to hold a referendum to discover whether or not capitalism should be maintained? There is a multitude of questions that you have managed to

understand his own needs in order to satisfy them. He can choose between a thousand jobs, a thousand kinds of leisure, and a thousand lovers, and will be influenced in a thousand ways, because nothing really concerns him. No certainty affects him. He doubts everything, starting with himself. As a result he is ready to put up with anything and often believes that he has made a choice. Freedom is presented as the philosophical garb of misery and doubt as the expression of freedom of opinion when it actually means wandering aimlessly, man's inability to find himself at home in the world.

During the course of the revolution man loses his chains but, having become his own objective, he is simultaneously chained to his desires and the needs of the moment. He becomes passionate and begins to know himself. The extraordinary climate of joy and tension of the insurrections is linked with the feeling that everything is possible and that what is being done must absolutely be brought to a conclusion as soon as possible. There is no longer any reason for doubt and for staggering from one meaningless task to another. Subjective and objective forces merge.

more straightforward and more effective.

We are not totally opposed in principle to the use of coupons. It would be absurd to allow diamonds to be subject to free distribution! In such cases the relevant authorized committees will allocate the coupons. When the goods in question are production goods, a factory council will allocate the coupons. When the coupons are for rare or dangerous medicines the hospitals or doctors will allocate them ... these coupons will not serve the purpose of remuneration. They will fulfil the role that is currently fulfilled by a medical prescription. More generally, the coupons' use will be determined by the nature or by the scarcity of the goods for which they will be "exchanged".

Most of the goods subject to distribution, especially food, must be distributed at no cost and with no restrictions under the auspices of the revolutionary committees and councils in the revolutionary zones or by means of expropriations in the non-liberated zones. This is the simplest, the least costly and the most pleasant method of distribution. It is the most suitable method for popularizing communism. It is advisable to apply this as a general rule, with the

exception of rigorous action against abuses resulting from petty enforcement of complicated rules and from dissatisfaction with distribution norms.

Laziness

Won't such a program be an invitation to mass laziness? If it were possible to abolish the principle of remuneration for labour while simultaneously preserving the world as it is today, this would most assuredly be true. Communism, however, transforms the conditions of life and work in their entirety.

The revolutionary spirit is not a spirit of sacrifice: each individual forgetting himself in order to serve the collectivity. This is not communism—it is Maoism! Communism presupposes a certain degree of altruism but it also presupposes a certain degree of egoism. Above all, it does not oppose love for one's neighbour to love for one's self, asking each individual to serve his neighbour. We don't love either the priests or the scroungers. It is capitalism that causes the interest of the individual and that of the

the basis and the possibility for common action. The group does not exist independently of, or prior to, the action. It is not split by a vote only to immediately be reunified by virtue of the submission of one part to the other. It is constituted in and through action, and by the ability of each individual to identify with and to understand the point of view of others.

It is not a matter of categorically rejecting all voting and all majority rule. These are technical forms which cannot be given an absolute value. It could happen that the minority is right. It could happen that the majority may yield to the minority in view of the importance of the question for the minority.

Is communism the advent of freedom? Yes, if by freedom you understand that men will have more possibilities for choice than they do now, and that they will be able to live in accordance with their inclinations.

What we reject is the philosophy that opposes free will and determinism. This separation reflects the opposition between man and the world, and between the individual and society. It is an expression of the anomie of the individual and his inability to

Politics derives from the dissociation between decision-making and action, and on the separations which set individuals against one another. Politics appears first of all as a permanent quest for power that motivates men in capitalist society. Democracy and despotism seem to be the only forms for regulating problems that arise between people. The introduction of democracy into romantic relationships and families passes for a new stage in human progress. It expresses, in the first place and perhaps in the least unacceptable way, the loss of the profound unity that could exist between human beings.

Communism does not separate decision and execution. There will no longer be a separation between two groups or even between two distinct and hierarchical moments. People will do what needs to be done or what they have decided to do without considering whether or not the majority approves. Thoughts about majority vs. minority presuppose the existence of a formal community.

The principle of unanimity rules in the sense that those who do something have reached an agreement in principle and this agreement has provided them with

collectivity to be constantly opposed to each other: to give is to renounce.

Communist man will be neither the man of self-abnegation nor the man who submits to fate. The spiritual transformation that accompanies communism will not be a mere substitute for education. There will be no ideal image to which one must conform. There will be no separation between the transformation of social structures, on the one hand, and the transformation of individuals, on the other. It is capitalism that separates things like that. The proletariat will dis-alienate itself and can only do so by changing the world and its conditions of existence. A few weeks of revolution will shatter decades of conditioning. Cowardice, greed and weakness of character are the results of a certain kind of social condition. Deception, the truncheon, or education will only be capable of making people reject such base characteristics if the situation that engendered them and made them seem useful does not disappear. With communism these kinds of approaches will disappear because their corresponding objects have disappeared.

If there are egoists, incurable slackers and

irremediable incompetents they will not necessarily pose a serious threat. The greatest enemy of such people is not repression but boredom. The least avid of them will surrender. Men are social animals. They lack the courage to be useless in a collectivity where they live. Even today the parasite and the egoist have to dissimulate. Once the system of wage labour is abolished it will be hard to nourish illusions about one's activity. Each person will be judged not by the time spent on some task but by what they really accomplish.

Communism does not exclude disagreements between individuals and groups. Slackers risk being asked to account for themselves. If they are supported and allowed to fatten themselves at the expense of the community that is because the community wants it that way.

Communists have nothing against a healthy laziness. The revolutionary society was not created so that we can work ourselves to the bone. We have no problem with the lazy person who does not demand from others what he rejects for himself. We don't mind if some high-spirited individuals play their practical

The left has the habit of emphasizing the possibilities of politics, while the right focuses on economic necessities: this is a false debate.

Politics is increasingly prone to become a carbon copy of economic life. During a certain period it was capable of playing a role in the establishment of compromises and alliances between social layers. Today, the significance of politics as a factor of economic intervention has grown. At the same time, however, the political sphere has lost its independence. There is nothing left of politics but a single political program of capital, which both the right and the left are forced to implement regardless of the specific interests of their respective constituencies. While the state appears to be an institution with more or less recognizable boundaries, politics is constantly exuded from every pore of society. Even if it is manifested in the action of a particular milieu of militants or politicians, it relies upon and is echoed by the behaviour of every individual. This is what gives it its force and lays the foundation for the widespread opinion that the solution of any social problem can only be political.

it is the friend of dictatorship and fascism. It is the enemy of democracy because it is the enemy of politics. Nonetheless, communists are not indifferent to the regime under which they live. They prefer to quietly go to bed each night without having to ask themselves if that will be the night when they will be dragged out of bed and taken to prison.

Critique of the state must not replace the critique of politics. Some attack the machinery of the state only in order to save politics. Just as some educational theorists criticize the school in order to generalize the educational paradigm to cover all forms of social relations, for the Leninists everything is political. Behind every manifestation of capital they see intention or design. Capital is thus transformed into the instrument of a political program that must be opposed by another political program.

Politics is supposed to be the terrain of liberty, of action and of movement, in contrast with the fatalism of economics. The economy, the domain of goods production, is ruled by necessity. Economic development and its crises appear to be natural phenomena that are beyond man's control.

jokes, as long as they don't try to impose their personal tastes on everybody!

By replacing compulsory labour with passionate activity the majority of the causes of systematic laziness will disappear. Gone too will be the irritation that the workaholic feels when he sees someone goofing off, which is often nothing but disguised envy. Those who are lazy today are not necessarily those who will be lazy in the world of tomorrow. Among the latter will be those who now exert themselves to exhaustion in the pursuit of profits; they will need to be watched carefully.

In an established communist society, machinery will grant man great power. Each person will be able to choose his work rhythm. One person will devote great efforts to costly adventures and will spend more in terms of resources than he produces for society. Another will not do much and society will be in debt to him. Such debts shall not be subject to accounting. Once the financial incentive has disappeared will the spirit of free inquiry and invention disappear as well? No one will be satisfied doing his job in a routine manner! It is a mistake to think that the desire for

profit and the spirit of free inquiry go hand in hand. The merchant negotiates using the lie and illusion. The scientist must always reject both. Science makes its contribution and the invention makes money but there is often a discrepancy between those who discover and those who profit. Even in the capitalist world the motor of scientific passion is not money. Creativity and imagination are recuperated for the purpose of making money.

Allocation of Tasks

By allowing laziness doesn't our society run the risk of collapsing into chaos? Even if good will generally prevails, will it be enough to regulate the coordination of all necessary activities? Won't everybody rush to try to get an easy job and abandon the hard jobs before machinery is developed to perform the latter? In short, each person, by doing what he wants, will lead the whole world to catastrophe!

The view that modern society is very complicated and that this complexity is inevitable is very common. This

does not pretend to rule, if not through the people, at least for the people?

Democracy, which during calm periods can appear to be a useful means to pacify workers' struggles, is shamelessly abandoned when this is required for the defence of capital. There are always intellectuals and politicians who are very surprised when they are so easily sacrificed on the altar of the interests of the powerful.

Democracy and dictatorship are two contrasting, but not totally unrelated, forms. Democracy, since it implies the submission of the minority to the majority, is a form of dictatorship. A dictatorial junta may very well have recourse, in order to make decisions, to democratic mechanisms.

It is often forgotten that fascism, Nazism and Stalinism have shared a predilection to impose both terroristic procedures and periodic elections. It is characteristic of them to oppose the masses of the population and their popular tribunes, on the one hand, to a handful of "traitors" and "unpatriotic" and "anti-party" individuals, on the other.

Communism is not the enemy of democracy because

are constantly impeded?

Democratic aspirations and values result from capitalism's tendency to act as a solvent in society. They correspond to the end of the era when the individual had his place in a stable community and network of relations. They also correspond to the need to preserve the image of an idealized community, to regulate conflicts, and to reduce friction for the good of the whole community. The minority yields to the will of the majority.

Democracy is not merely a lie or a vulgar illusion. It derives its content from a shattered social reality, which it seems to reunite into a totality. The democratic aspiration conceals a search for community and respect for others. But the soil in which it is rooted and attempts to grow prevents it from successfully attaining these goals.

Even so, democracy frequently poses too great a threat to capital or at least to certain powerful interests. This is why it is always encountering impediments to its existence. With few exceptions, these constraints and even unadorned dictatorship are presented as victories for democracy. What tyrant

is not just an illusion. The individual feels lost in the capitalist jungle. He does not identify with it, much less understand how it functions as a whole. It is a mistake, however, to think that this impression would apply to any modern society. This idea is not necessarily due to the multitude of operations and relations that constitute society as a whole. It originated in the separation of the function of decision and coordination, on the one hand, and execution, on the other.

This impression of complexity and permanent disorientation that capitalist society produces has influenced some depictions of the socialist world of the future. It is widely believed that the main problem that has to be solved in the society of the future is that of planning and coordination. A "Plan Factory" has been imagined, an enterprise that is responsible for evaluating the state of the economy and determining the technical coefficients that express the relative inputs of one product in the production of another product: the quantity of coal needed to produce one ton of steel, for example. This "Factory" will propose attainable goals and assume responsibility for the necessary revisions as the plan is implemented. The

problems of the future society are thus understood primarily as problems of management. (Chaulieu (Castoriadis), *Socialisme ou Barbarie* No. 22)

The communist society will also have complex problems to solve. The resolution of these questions will not be the purview of any particular committee or group. There is nothing to be gained from an attempt to predict the forms that human activity will take, but only in the determination of its content. It will no longer be necessary to unite or to manage something that will no longer be separate and scattered. The free producer will address himself to both his own activity and his connections with the totality of general needs and possibilities.

In the revolutionary society relations between men will be clear and transparent. The fear of competition that renders the trade secret compulsory will disappear. What is essential is not that every person should attain competence in universal science and that every brain should be a "Plan Factory" in miniature. What good does it do me to know where the minerals came from that were used to manufacture my fork! What matters is that the necessary information should circulate

founding fathers said about democracy, and who praise democracy so much in order to conceal their own taste for power and dictatorship... Ironically enough, it is certain elements tainted with the brush of Stalinism that will hypocritically accuse us of being Stalinists.

Democracy seems to be the antithesis of capitalist despotism. Where everyone knows that it is a minority that really rules, it is common for people to set against this minority rule the power derived from universal suffrage.

In reality, capitalism and democracy go hand in hand. Democracy is the fig leaf of capital. Democratic values, far from being subversive, are the idealized expression of the really existing and somewhat less than noble tendencies of capitalist society. Communists are no more eager to realize the trinity of "liberty, equality, fraternity" than that of "work, family, fatherland".

If democracy is the consort of capital, why do dictatorship and capitalism so often coexist? Why do most people live under authoritarian regimes? Why is it that, even in democratic states, democratic functions

This same power! Whilst it must attempt to acquire the broadest support and participation of the masses, should not accept formal democracy as its basis, by organizing elections, for example.

Democracy

What on Earth could be more beautiful than democracy, the power of the sovereign people? As the word "capitalism" assumes more pejorative connotations, "democracy" gains adherents. The whole world is for democracy, whether constitutional monarchy or republic, bourgeois or people's democracy. If there is one thing everyone accuses their enemies of, it is that they are not democratic enough.

Anyone who criticizes democracy can only be, in the best case, a nostalgic apologist for the old absolute monarchies. Generally the appalling label of "fascist" is the preferred epithet reserved for such people. The most fanatic mudslingers in this regard are often the Marxists and Marxist-Leninists who forget what the

freely and should be available.

In a fluid society where the spirit of individualism and enterprise patriotism will have disappeared, where each person will have many useful skills, individuals and groups will be oriented towards the fulfilment of the needs of society.

Social needs will not be imposed from the outside by means of a centralized office: whether a democratic assembly or a dictatorial committee. The individual or the group will no longer have to submit to their consciousness of the situation if we imagine this consciousness as a simple reflection of external imperatives. We shall act safely in recognition of our consciousness of social needs and possibilities but not independently of our own tastes and inclinations. Often, no compromises will be necessary. We shall perceive in social needs our own aspirations. We shall be more inclined to apply a remedy where we perceive a deficiency. If I lack wine it will not be necessary for me to acquire information regarding the details of production on a computer in order to deduce that perhaps the vines need to be tended! The communist man of the future will not separate the

fulfilment of his tastes from its social impact. He will not throw himself into tasks that someone else has already attended to. In any event it would be stupid to think that the whole world should be standardized and that those who work the same jobs should follow the same fashion trends.

There will be a more acute awareness of what society needs than is now the case. The whole world will be able to be informed about and will be capable of understanding what works and what does not work, even if it does not have a direct effect on everybody. Computers will be essential tools for the circulation and interpretation of information.

Society's general organization has absolutely no need for either one or several central planning offices. Perhaps there will be certain individuals who will be responsible for gathering data, and drawing up projections for the future, but they will not have to elaborate a "plan" in the compulsory sense of the word. Such planning would amount to a desire to chain the future to the present!

Coordination will not be the permanent job of a particular caste. It will be carried out continuously

be soviets....

The council is necessary when a territory has to be administered. It disappears when this necessity temporarily ceases to exist as a result of a certain relation of forces or permanently ceases to exist as a result of the consolidation of communism. Certain groups can, in accordance with a revolutionary situation, intervene and communize stocks of commodities without being capable of or wanting to take the production or distribution of these commodities in their hands on a more permanent basis. It all depends on when the revolutionary forces reckon they possess the means to advance from specific wildcat actions to the direct administration of a region. The advantage of taking such a step would be an improved position with regard to securing resources for feeding the population or waging the revolutionary war. The disadvantage would be that the liberated region would become a target for attack. From the moment that this risk is accepted the problem of the councilist organization of the liberated region is posed: the problem of the constitution of a revolutionary power.

They will have deep roots in the life of society. To reject the councils due to purism is, from the moment when they arise to meet real needs, to situate oneself outside the revolutionary process. It would be better to participate in their creation, their operation and their eventual dissolution in accordance with the struggle and the correlation of forces between revolution and counterrevolution.

Participation in the councils does not mean that revolutionaries must renounce their own autonomous action and organization. The councils are mass organizations. Hence they will exhibit a certain degree of hesitation, and a slower rate of radicalization than certain fractions of the population. The development of the councils will to some degree be determined by what is done by those organized outside them.

It will be necessary to fight and to boycott the corporatist councils, the managerial organizations, the neo-trade unionist or neo-political groups that will seek to seize the organization of social life for the benefit of a minority. Organizations that will maintain commodity production, form police units, or demand the return of the capitalists, cannot be considered to

at all levels of society. Because men will not be separated by a thousand barriers, they will spontaneously associate.

This is not to say that everything will go smoothly. Conflicts will be inevitable. But the task of the revolution is not to liberate society from all kinds of conflict and thus to bring about a society where everything is harmonized "a priori". Certain kinds of conflicts will be utterly eliminated, those which sundered social classes and nationalities, for example.... In the world we want there is a place for both agreement and opposition. Harmony and equilibrium will be brought about by way of discussion and debate.

The basic difference with regard to the current situation is that in the future society each individual can only rely on his own personal forces in a conflict. There will be no appeal to abstract rights derived from the world of conflicts and concrete relations of force. The opportunity to resort to a specialized social force like the army or the police in order to impose the "recognition" of the truth of a cause will not be possible.

Communism will transform conflict into something

normal and necessary, subject to the obvious condition that the possible gains from conflict outweigh the damage it incurs. Capitalism is profoundly conflict-ridden. It is based upon the opposition between classes, nations and individuals. It is a battle of all against all. Love and "fraternity" were preached in order to exorcise this reality. Aggression rules all, but the image of "peace" must reign. If someone must be killed it is not done in the name particular interests but for the advancement of civilization, for universal values, etc....

Doesn't a communist society run the risk of wasting a great deal of time in talk and debate? This is a risk we can take, considering the scale of the problems of coordination and adjustment. The idea that time is something that can be lost or gained is itself somewhat odd. From the communist point of view the problem cannot be narrowly focused on discovering which method achieves the best economy of time. What matters is the way this time is used.

Will people get pleasure and become interested in debates and attempts to bring about harmony, or would they prefer to be satisfied with implementing

from the councils.

Can we conclude, on the basis of the fact that the councils of the past often had little that was communist about them, that their time has passed, and that all institutionalization is counterrevolutionary?

We do not see the workers' council as just one more institution. The revolution, whether we like it or not, will encounter problems of administration, the preservation of order, and the unification of opposed tendencies. It will be necessary to govern, if not men, then at least some men. One could very well maintain that looting is a healthy reaction to the provocation of commodity society and poverty. It could play a beneficial role in the phase of rupture, with the rout and downfall of the commodity. But looting cannot be institutionalized; it cannot be the normal mode of communist distribution of products. It is impossible to allow all products to be subject to free distribution. It will be necessary to organize, allocate, and restrict. This is the task of the councils.

As the scarcity of goods is diminished and the power of the counterrevolution declines, the councils will lose their statist character. They will not be abolished.

are problems of organization, but they cannot be addressed independently of what it is that is being organized, of the tasks that are faced. Are we saying that the rules of organization are neutral, or that they are purely technical questions? Of course not. Such choices are of great importance. Some organizational rules are adapted and conducive to communist action. Others hinder it. But it is a serious illusion to believe that the implementation of certain rules, especially regarding the control of delegates, is sufficient to avoid bureaucratization, deception and schism. Bureaucrats are professionals of organization as a separate organization. They like to stress the preliminaries to action rather than action itself. Detailed and unsuitable rules, even if they are formally anti-bureaucratic, run the risk of actually facilitating bureaucratization.

However slight the progress of the councils, when they cannot be easily liquidated, the worst enemies of the revolution will claim to be councilists in order to more easily put an end to them. They will try to transform them into the private preserve of their manoeuvres, and to exclude the real revolutionaries

without debate the decisions of an executive committee that will have arranged that there will be no opposition? Men will learn how to debate and polemicize in a way they find pleasant. The more tedious debates will be limited by the boredom of the participants but also by the simple fact that many things do not have to be debated, for we can rely on past experience.

Undesirable Jobs

There are some jobs that are frankly nasty and unpleasant. We hope to reduce their number with the use of machinery, but until then they will still have to be done; nor can we eliminate all of them.

It would be unacceptable, and would not in any case be accepted by those involved, for these bad jobs to always be done by the same persons. It will be necessary to allocate them among the greatest number of persons who will take turns doing them. The resulting loss of efficiency will be a matter of secondary importance.

In the factories and other productive facilities we will be able to peacefully divest ourselves of unpleasant jobs.

At the level of society as a whole these bad jobs will also be subject to the principle of rotation of personnel. Everyone will have at least one assignment each year as a garbage collector.

The impact of the bad jobs will seem much less when compared to the time spent on pleasant activities. Today jobs are extremely specialized, as the requirements of the "rational" use of labour power demand that each worker should do one particular routine and leave the rest for other workers. In communist society the researcher will be able to participate in cleaning the lab he uses, the driver will be able to help pave the roads, and who is better-placed than the dead man to dig his own grave?

Disagreeable activities will be much less disagreeable if those who do them only devote a small part of their time to them, and do not labour under the impression—as is now the case—that they will be chained to them their whole life. Above all, such activities can be carried out in an environment quite different from

In such cases, the council appeared to be more of a working class response to the vacuum left by the bourgeoisie than an organizational form imposed by the radical demands of the struggle itself.

We support workers' councils but we are not in favour of the councilist ideology. This ideology does not perceive the councils as a moment of the revolution, but as the goal of the revolution. For the councilist ideology, socialism is the replacement of the power of the bourgeoisie by the power of the councils, and capitalist management by workers' management; from this perspective the success or failure of the revolution is an organizational question. Where the Leninists make everything depend on the party, the councilists make everything depend on the council.

The workers' councils will be what they make of themselves. The only way they can be victorious is to undertake and to embody the organization of communization.

For communists, the revolution is not a question of organization. What determines the possibility of communism is a certain level of development of the productive forces and the proletarian class. There

off in Catalonia, Poland and China is undesirable to some people: to dispense with masters and to proceed from there.

The counterrevolution, even in the Soviet Union, has never been able to coexist with councils. The fact that the councils have demonstrated their moderation is one thing. It is another thing entirely for the counterrevolution to show moderation in regard to the councils.

The best expressions of the workers' councils were provided when they had to respond quickly, unambiguously and with a strong hand to their enemies. They were forged directly as an organization of struggle. Their program may have been limited but they were aware of this.

On other occasions they became entangled in administrative details and procrastination. At these times their only reason for existence seemed to be the absence of bourgeois power. They elaborated magnificent organizational plans. But this was carried out in a vacuum, removed from the imperatives of struggle. The apparent absence of danger led to the worst illusions.

the one they take place in today: without harassing foremen, without the obsession for profit. Garbage collection could, for example, take on a carnival-like aspect.

Many undesirable jobs are considered as such not so much by virtue of their actual nature as due to the fact that, in the name of the rationalization of labour, they are executed in mass production and always by the same persons.

These transformations in the rhythm, the distribution and the very nature of jobs will not be programmed in advance and planned from "above". They will be carried out in the workplace in the context of the desires of the people involved. If someone involved in a particular productive process is passionately attached to driving a forklift or some other task that is not generally held in high esteem, it would obviously be absurd to deprive him of his pleasure.

We are not fanatics of equality. It would be stupid if, with surgeons in short supply, we forced them to work as nurses. Such inequalities cannot be attenuated except by means of the retraining and transfer of people to truly useful sectors.

The End of Separations

Communism means the end of the separations that compartmentalize our lives.

Work life and emotional life will no longer be opposed. There will no longer be separate times for production and for consumption. Schools, production facilities, sites for entertainment ... will no longer be distinct and separate universes with nothing in common. They will gradually disappear with the disappearance of their specialized functions. Within the productive process, hierarchical divisions and the fragmentation of human activities will be confronted. This will mark the end of the situation where the worker is the executor of the designer, the designer the executor of the engineer, the engineer the executor of the financial department or management.

Bringing these changes to fruition will take some time. We cannot immediately erase our current way of life, or our type of technological development, or certain human customs and defects. We shall nonetheless immediately implement measures to initiate this

between capitalism and communism.

The workers' councils of the past, with the exception of a few rare instances, never rose to the level of the program that we are sketching here. They were managerial, bureaucratic, indecisive, dispute-ridden, and incapable of attaining a perspective that was in accord with their own nature. They were destroyed. This does not prove that the council form does not work, but rather that it was assayed on a terrain that was still unfavourable for its development.

In 1956, the Workers' Council of Greater Budapest, which then administered an entire region of Hungary, proclaimed its own suicide with its call for the reestablishment of parliamentary democracy.

Previously, the workers' councils at least had the merit of having existed. They demonstrated the workers ability to run their own affairs, and to take factories and cities into their hands. They were connected with formidable movements by means of which the workers overthrew, at least temporarily, bourgeoisie and bureaucrats. If these experiences have been dissimulated and distorted this is because the prospect of the proletariat picking up where it left

all the conflicts that affect the latter. It is an institution of the class and of the struggle. This implies that there must be a certain amount of agreement within its ranks. It cannot tolerate divergences of opinion that would paralyze it.

The workers' council can be viewed as an ultra-dictatorial or as an ultra-democratic institution. It is both and yet neither. It is ultra-dictatorial in the sense that it is only answerable to itself and insofar as it casts the principles of the division of powers to the winds. It is ultra-democratic in the sense that it allows for a degree of debate and participation by the masses that was never achieved by the most democratic state. Above all, the workers' council is not a political institution, since it no longer separates the citizen from the social individual. In this respect it transcends both dictatorship and democracy, which are the two faces of politics, even if it makes use of forms or procedures that are democratic or dictatorial.

The council is neither the instrument of a popular democracy, nor the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat. These expressions are not suitable for describing the phase that comprehends the break

process and to make its effects felt by abolishing commodity production and the wages system.

The separation of one's work life on the one side and one's emotional and family life on the other is linked to the development of wage labour. The peasant was uprooted from his land and his family to be integrated into the industrial universe. Previously, the family constituted the unity of life and of production. The man and his wife, but also the children and the elderly, participated in farm labour and gathered wood. Each person found something useful to do that was within his capacities.

Reactionaries like to defend the endangered "family". These cretins just cannot understand that it is precisely the order they defend that transformed the family into what it is today. Kinship ties were elements of mutual aid in the agricultural world. They extended beyond the immediate family and its direct descendants. Today the family is only the place where babies are produced—and sometimes not even babies: its economic role is that of a unit of consumption! The basic institution, the elemental cell of highly developed capitalist society, is not the family, but the

business enterprise.

It is not our intention to restore the old patriarchal family so it can take over production from the capitalist enterprise. Blood ties were capable of playing a great role in the past. They no longer play such a role in the modern world.

In communist society, in order to carry out productive or non-productive activity, people will not be brought together by the power of capital. We shall associate freely in accordance with our shared tastes and affinities. Relations between persons will be as important or even more important than production itself.

We are not claiming that occupational and amorous connections will exactly coincide. This will be a matter of choice and of chance. It will be much more likely than it is now.

Some people wish to depict communism as a system that makes women and children common property. This is stupidity.

Amorous relations have no other guarantee than love. Children will not be tied to their parents by the need to eat. The feeling of ownership over persons

its structure the division between the legislative, executive and judicial powers. It endeavours to unify and concentrate these functions in its hands. Even if it lays down rules it acts, above all, in accordance with the situation, without hiding behind an arsenal of formal laws.

The workers' council constitutes itself as a tribunal to adjudicate conflicts; to judge, to resolve, and to punish. These actions are carried out with reference to each concrete situation. What is subject to judgment is not the seriousness of the transgression, but the objective risks and dangers for the revolution and for society.

The legitimacy of the council is not based upon a few democratic elections that would make it a consecrated vessel of the people's will. It is not the representative of the masses. It "is" the organized masses. The individuals and groups that assume responsibility for particular tasks are not necessarily elected. But when they commit themselves to act on behalf of the entire council they are responsible to its general assemblies. The council does not claim to be the general expression of all of society, or to be located above

The soviet, on the other hand, if it were to be separated from its base, could become a kind of regional state or workers' parliament. In this case it would cease to be an active anti-political institution and would instead become a battleground for competing political parties.

What gives the workers' council its revolutionary character and its anti-political content is principally the fact that it arises directly from the masses in action. It is composed of a pyramid of committees that give rise to one another, but without the apex of the pyramid ever being able to conceive of itself as independent of the base of the pyramid.

The committees are not simple voting assemblies that delegate power among themselves from the bottom upward. Each level carries out practical functions. Each committee is an active community. It delegates to a higher-level committee those problems which it cannot solve itself. It does not thereby abdicate its sovereignty. All delegates must explain their actions and are responsible to the base and revocable at any time.

The workers' council does not reproduce within

will disappear along with the feeling of ownership over things. This is very disturbing to those who need the guarantee of the priest or the judge. Marriage will disappear as a state-sanctioned sacrament. The question of whether two or three... or ten people want to live together or even enter into an agreement to do so is nobody's business but their own. We shall not determine or limit in advance the forms of sexual relations that are possible, healthy or desirable. Even chastity will not be totally rejected. It is a perversion that is just as worthy as any other! What is important, besides the pleasure and the satisfaction of the couple, is that the children live in an environment that responds to their need for material security and affection. This is not something that can be left to morality.

Hypocrisy rules over the remains of the family putrefied by the commodity. Love is said to exist where there is actually nothing but economic or emotional security or sexual gratification. Relations between parents and children have reached the pit of degradation. Under the veil of affection the will to exploit answers the desire for possession. The birth of a child burdens the

parents with worries about the child's future. The child must play with his toys, get good grades in school, and show that he is intelligent and well behaved, alert and full of initiative. In exchange he receives a little affection or pocket money.

The family, in need of security and love in a cold, hard world, is not immune to the commercialized reality in the workplace, where the expenditure of too much emotion is avoided. The superficial amiability and constant handshaking conceal contempt, rivalry and exploitation. Everyone is good, everyone is friendly, everyone communicates, but above all everyone is terribly annoyed by each other's presence.

Production and Consumption

The separation of production from consumption appears to be a natural division between two very distinct spheres of social life. Nothing could be more false. This can be viewed from two angles.

First, the frontier between what is called production time and consumption time is quite mobile when

The word "council" actually embraces quite diverse organizational forms, even if we exclude those institutions of co-management or workers' management that have nothing revolutionary about them. They range from the factory or neighbourhood committee to the soviet that administers a big city or even a region. It is incorrect to seek to distinguish among these organizations in order to confer the title of "workers' council" only on some of them.

We do not advocate one or another variety of council. We advocate the council organization of society. This implies and requires different levels of organization that complement and sustain one another. What would be unfortunate, and this is what has regularly taken place, would be if one of these levels should be predominant.

For example, the factory committee could be reduced to the exercise of a simple function of workers' control or strictly limited to managing one productive unit. The absence of real soviets in Spain and Catalonia, despite the flourishing base committees, left the field open to the republican state and the politicians; hence the anarchist dilemma.

the soviets. Its basis of support was the soviets, where the Bolsheviks controlled the military committees and had obtained majorities in the Petrograd and Moscow soviets. This victory was the beginning of the end for the soviets. With the reflux of the revolution, the onset of civil war, and the reinforcement of the power of the Bolshevik party and its administrative apparatus, the soviets were gradually deprived of their original content. The last show of resistance to this process, offered by the Kronstadt naval base, was crushed in 1921 by the Red Army led by Trotsky, the former president of the Petrograd soviet.

The proletarian revolutions of the 20th century have repeatedly led to the re-emergence of the soviet form. In the immediate aftermath of World War One and the Russian Revolution, workers' councils were formed in Hungary, Germany and Italy. During the Spanish war, workers and peasants committees arose throughout the country. In Hungary, in 1956, factory delegates formed the Workers' Council of Greater Budapest. In Poland, in 1971, the insurgent workers of the Baltic ports once again utilized this form of organization.

considered historically, and quite confused when considered in its ideological dimension. In which category should we put cooking, or sports? It depends on whether those involved are professionals or amateurs. The cardinal point is not the nature itself of the activity: cooking is more productive than the postal service in the sense that it presupposes a material transformation, whether or not those engaged in it are paid wages.

Many activities that pertain to consumption have fallen under the sign of production. The astronaut or the invalid who breathes from an oxygen tank and the housewife, who buys ground coffee or jars of jam, participate in the shifting of the frontiers between these two spheres.

The split between production and consumption conceals the continuing importance of unpaid housework in the modern world. It confers a fixed and natural appearance on a separation that is actually flexible and socially determined.

Secondly, all productive activity is also necessarily consumption. It does nothing but transform matter in a certain way and in a certain sense. At the same time

that it destroys, or, if you prefer, consumes certain things, we obtain, or, if you prefer, we produce others. Consumption is productive; production is also consumption. Production and consumption are the two inseparable sides of the same coin.

The concepts of production and consumption are not neutral. It cannot be said that they are bourgeois. But bourgeois society uses them. A fruit tree is not bourgeois because it produces fruit. The notion of production assumes an ideological character because behind the idea of creation and growth lies the idea of consciousness and planning. The confusion of the two concepts is preserved. Everything ends up being interpreted in the terms of production. A chicken becomes a factory to manufacture eggs.

The continuity of the cycle through which primitive or civilized, capitalist or communist man modifies the world in which he lives in a simple or an intelligent way, individually or collectively, irreversibly or temporarily, on a large scale or in minor details, and transforms himself as well, is thus disguised. The totalitarian use of the idea of production conceals the radical insertion in and dependence of the human being

has been outlined by proletarian insurrections since the Paris Commune. It is the workers' council, the councilist organization of social life.

The Workers' Councils

The Paris Commune already provided an initial glimpse of what a workers' government would look like.

In 1905, insurgent Russian workers elaborated the form of the soviet. This institution formed by factory delegates was at first devoted to the coordination of the struggle. It was gradually transformed into an administrative institution whose purpose was to replace the official governing bodies of the state. Even part of the police force passed under the control of the Petrograd Soviet. Its existence came to an end with the arrest of its deputies by Czarist forces.

The same thing happened again in 1917, but this time with more extensive participation on the part of the military. The Bolshevik coup d'état in October 1917 was carried out in the name of transferring all power to

on the state is to justify and confirm this weakness as eternal.

Revolutionary society will have institutions of coordination and centralization. It will in many cases allow for a higher degree of worldwide centralization than is currently allowed by capital. But it will not need a state in which power will be concentrated, that whole machinery of repression, identification, control and education. In revolutionary society the administration of things will replace the government over men.

The problem lies in the need to avoid recreating some kind of state in an insurrectionary or transitional stage, while nonetheless ensuring that administrative and repressive, and therefore typically state, functions, are carried out. Those who do not want to face this problem, like the anarchists, will only succeed in being crushed by the statists or will be obliged to become statists themselves. The participation of anarchist ministers in the Government Junta during the Spanish revolution illustrates just what can happen to those who persist in this attitude.

The solution to this problem, to this contradiction,

on his environment and natural laws. Everything is interpreted in terms of domination and instrumentality. Man the producer, self-conscious and self-controlled, starts with the conquest of nature. The vast power that humanity conferred upon the image of divinity can be directly attributed to humanity's own self-image. Communism is not the victory of consciousness over unconsciousness. It is not the stage in which, after having been devoted to the production of things, man will at last be able to produce himself, and take over in a way from the divine creator. To say that man will be his own master just as he is the master of the object that he produces is to seek to reunite what has been separated and thus separation itself under the sign of production. The producer will thus not cease to be an object; he will simply be his own object.

The split between production and consumption is confronted in order to abolish the separation—a separation that is concrete enough but arbitrary from the point of view of nature and psychology—between the time employed on making money and the time employed on spending it.

For the communist man consumption will not be

opposed to production since there will no longer be a conflict between acting for oneself and acting for others. This is because by producing for others, he creates use values that can serve him as well. He will not produce shoes in order to later be obliged to buy them on the market. Above all, production will be transformed and it will become creation, poetry and potlatch. Groups or individuals will express themselves through their activity. In this respect the revolution is the generalization of art and its supersession as a separate commercial sector.

Extending our reflections within the context of the opposition between consumption and production, it can be said that by having found satisfaction and pleasure (or the opposites, dissatisfaction and displeasure) through his productive activity, man will be a consumer. The computer or the shovel he will use will not have a fundamentally different value from the automobile or the food that he will use at another time.

Communism is by no means production finally put at the service of the consumer, nor can it be, as is the case with capitalism, the dictatorship of production.

and result in an increasing institutionalization of the "workers'" organizations. Often, these "victories" do not result in even a redistribution of resources towards the most disadvantaged layers but instead just end up costing them more money. This is true regardless of the hypocritical claims of the trade unions and state officials.

Increasing state control must not be considered solely as a factor weakening the proletariat. It corresponds, to the contrary, to the need to control the proletariat's increasing power. This increasing state control compensates for the fragility of modern societies; but it is not itself exempt from this fragility. The statist regimentation of the population is only possible thanks to the complicity of the population. The anti-political revolution will reveal the utterly superficial nature of this regimentation.

Unlike politicians of every stripe, revolutionaries are very careful not to appeal to the responsibility of the state when a problem arises. They systematically assert, first of all, the autonomy and the self-organization of the proletarian class. Invoking the weakness of the proletariat in order to justify reliance

disappearance. And this is what they get: power without imagination.

The state has intervened ever more openly in social life over the last few decades. The rise of Stalinism and fascism signified merely a few more flagrant steps in this direction. Where some have believed they could see the state becoming a people's state, it is necessary to see instead the accentuation of the control of the state over its population.

Of particular importance in this regard is the usurpation or the integration into the state apparatus of the organizations of workers' defence and solidarity. Through various channels such as social welfare measures, the trade union apparatuses have been subjected to the state. This has allowed them to act more or less like political special interest groups. We must not be deceived by their declarations of independence and opposition, since they are just performing their assigned roles.

This integration of the struggle and this bureaucratization of social groups have obviously been presented as great victories of the working class. The workers' struggles benefit a layer of specialists in contestation

By engaging in an activity, one will acquire a certain power. Up to a point one will be able to do what one wants with the fruit of one's labours, and give up or keep what one has produced. Above all, by providing this or that good or service and giving it a particular form, one will have an impact on the possibilities of society. The activity of the end-users will be determined by that of the producers. There is no incentive for the latter to abuse a power that by no means can assume the form of political or separate power but is the simple expression of the usefulness of their jobs.

The "consumer" will not be able to reproach the producer for the imperfection of what he does in the name of the money that he did not give in exchange, but will be able to simply criticize him not from the outside but from the inside. The object of his criticism will be their common labour if he participates in the same production process. If an individual is not satisfied with what the producer is doing or not doing he will not be able to appeal to his abstract rights as a consumer. He will have no other recourse than to oppose his own ability to do it better or at least to

attempt to make his own suggestions or contributions prevail. Criticism will be impassioned and positive. It will not take the form of complaining and then not doing anything about it.

Production and Education

The separation between productive life and education is not the fruit of necessity. It cannot be explained by the increasing importance of knowledge and training. Instead we must understand why it is necessary for knowledge to no longer be the direct fruit of experience.

The basis of this split lies in the fact that the proletariat must not be able to attend to his own self-improvement, his pleasure or his education, when he is engaged in production. This separation that is so essential for the survival of the world of the economy comes at a very high price. It implies the immobilization of a major part of the population in schools, vocational training centres and universities who could be much more useful and have much more fun outside these

peoples were peoples without a state is far behind us. The increasing threat posed by the proletariat, the rise of competing imperial powers, and the scale of economic crises have demonstrated the value of possessing a powerful state machine that is primarily a good repressive apparatus.

The political parties fight among themselves to conquer, in the name of the people, this state machine that is presented as a neutral instrument. Consistent Leninists proclaim the class nature of the state and the impossibility of controlling it through a simple electoral victory. They conclude from this the need to dismantle it, but only in order to replace it with a "workers' state".

It was to the honour of the anarchists to have maintained a fundamental anti-statism.

However, even more than with respect to money, the whole world believes in the duty of heaping abuse on the state. Everyone complains about the stupidity of its administration, the high taxes, the arrogance of the police, the venality of the politicians, the ignorance of the voters.... But what apparently lies beyond the pale of their imagination is the prospect of the State's

political activity as a distinct activity oriented towards the acquisition of power for the sake of power will disappear. There will no longer be, on the one hand, the economic—the sphere of necessity, and on the other hand, the political—the sphere of freedom.

The End of the State

The cult of the state is fundamentally anti-communist. This cult is paradoxically spawned from and reinforced by all the shortcomings, all the weaknesses, and all the conflicts that are engendered by capitalist society. It is the supreme saviour; the last resort of widows and orphans. Incidentally, and although it pretends to be above all classes and presents itself as the guarantor of the general interest against the excesses of individuals and groups, it is devoted to the defence of property and privilege.

There was a time when the rising bourgeoisie exhibited anti-state sentiments. Today the most that it exhibits with regard to the state is annoyance. The era when bourgeois revolutionaries claimed that the happiest

institutions. This does not allow for the effective adaptation of human abilities to the requirements of the activities they must later undertake. This kind of *in vitro* training is complemented by an apprenticeship in the workplace that is often carried out secretly.

The education system is presented as a “public service” that is above the distinctions of social classes. We are supposed to take its usefulness for granted. Who would dare to be an apostle of ignorance? Enlightened minds attack the curriculum. They accuse it of being archaic, of being separated from real life, that it is contributing to subversion. According to their recommendations students should be taught to read the *Bible*, *The Communist Manifesto* or the *Kamasutra*! The most extreme critics put the blame on the education system itself. They do not do so in the name of combating its deadly “efficiency”, but rather its inefficiency! They take on the school in order to thereby defend pedagogy all the more effectively.

It is necessary to learn and to learn forever. To swallow this insipid paste called culture. The world is so complicated! You do not understand it? Then you need a “refresher course”.

People have never before learned so much and never have they been so ignorant with respect to what concerns their own lives. They have been crushed, beaten to a pulp by the mass of information that oozes from the university, the newspapers, and the television. The truth will never come from the accumulation of commodity-knowledge. It is a dead knowledge that is incapable of understanding life because its nature is precisely to be separated from experience and real life.

The school is where one learns to read, to write and to add and subtract. But the school is above all else an apprenticeship in renunciation. That is where we learn to do what we do not want to do, to respect authority, to compete with our friends, to dissimulate, and to lie. That is where the present is sacrificed for the sake of the future.

Communism is the decolonization of childhood. There will never again be the need for a particular institution for education. Are you worried about how children will learn how to read? You should be more concerned about how they will learn how to speak. The school dissociates and inculcates the dissociation

lesser degree to the detriment of men. It is always irrational.

Communist rationalization does not have the goal of imposing a rhythm of work. Its essential tendency will be to increase the freedom and pleasure of humans. Decision-making and the implementation of decisions will not be carried out without regard for the preferences and the customs of those affected. There will still be technical requirements and production necessities that will influence the course and duration of human activity. But this will have nothing to do with making human capital profitable.

6. Beyond Politics

Communism is not a political movement. It is the critique of the State and of politics.

The intention of the revolutionaries is not to conquer and wield state power, even if it were for the purpose of destroying it. The party of communism does not take the form of a political party and has no intention of competing with organizations of that kind.

With the establishment of the communist community all

when a single criterion of selection is sufficient, according to the nature of the products under consideration. This would be the case when it is a matter of increasing or decreasing the output of a particular production process. It would also prevail when the savings of expenditure corresponds to a qualitative savings in the utilization of a raw material devoted to the same use, as in the case of canned food. But even in this case, the savings must not be considered as a savings in labour time, but simply in the quantity of raw materials. That this decision could result in a reduction in the time spent in productive activity is simply one possible outcome.

Shouldn't we fear this communist frenzy of rationalization? Does it not run the risk of becoming similar to the capitalist frenzy of exploitation?

Today, rationalization and exploitation are conflated. Man tends to be considered as an object from which you try to get as much as possible. Inhuman methods have been developed that do not derive from technical requirements: hellish work rhythms, working two or three shifts. Capitalist rationalization, whether brutal or subtle, is always carried out to a greater or

of the effort or process of learning and its necessity. What matters is that the child learns to read because it is necessary to learn to read rather than to satisfy his curiosity or his love for books. The paradoxical result is that literacy is on the decline at the same time that the taste for reading and the real ability to read has been eliminated in most people. In communist society the child will learn to read and write because he will feel the need to learn and to express himself. The world of childhood, because it will not be separated from the rest of the world and from social life in general, will engender in the child an imperative need to learn. He will learn to read and to write as naturally as he will learn to walk and talk. He will not do this entirely on his own. He will find that his older friends or his parents will help him. The difficulties he encounters will prove useful. By overcoming them he will learn how to learn. By not receiving knowledge in the form of a pre-digested baby food from the hands of a teacher, he will become accustomed to observing and listening, he will be capable of elaborating his understanding and making deductions on the basis of his experience. This will be the reward of real

life as opposed to the educational or vocational programming of human beings.

Men will share their experience and will communicate their discoveries. The times and places for this sharing and communication will be chosen on the basis of their convenience. The form this relation will assume will not be determined in advance. It will depend on the content of the knowledge mutually exchanged by those interested in the topic. At the risk of displeasing the fanatics of intensive pedagogy, if 10 or 10,000 people want to know what one individual knows, the simplest solution would be to reinvent the lecture hall. The modern interest in pedagogy reflects the fact that teaching methods are not imposed on the basis of a particular content. When there is no longer anything to say, the content of the lesson becomes interchangeable, and then the form of the lesson is debated. It is when the soup is bad that one becomes interested in how clean the bowl is.

What will happen in the world of capitalist production if the workers were to frequently really avail themselves of the right to experiment and were not judged by their immediate profitability? They would quickly forget

a choice is made. In this way, calculating machines have become means for management forecasting."

– Robert Faure, Jean-Paul Boss and Andre Le Garff, 'La recherche opérationnelle', Presses universitaires de France, Paris (Vendôme, Impr. des P.U.F.), 1961

What must be simplified and universalized is not so much the factors of decision that come into play as the procedures of decision making, the programs that allow one to address a mass of data. In a certain sense, the more important the criteria, the more accurate the representation of reality.

We could imagine the general contours of a future debate on the importance of various energy sources. A vast amount of data will come into play. A single criterion can only be used at the cost of distorting reality. Comprehensive decisions will have to be made in accordance with the different resources and needs of each region.

Communism does not rule out purely quantitative comparisons and decisions. They will still be valid

all comparisons on a universal scale. It suffices to be able to determine the possibilities that really exist and to favour those that offer the most rapid results, those that will be the safest, the least dangerous....

What is essential is to determine a set of pertinent criteria and in accordance with these criteria to directly address the diverse solutions that can be discerned. It is not so much a matter of quantifying as it is of ordering the various criteria and solutions. What predominates is the relative, qualitative meaning.

We are not saying we will rely on computers to arrange everything but they will be necessary and useful.

"Conceived at first for accounting operations and later used for management, as well as being used for scientific calculations, they were long considered (for perhaps ten years...) as instruments for generating quantitative results. This has changed. Thanks to the methods of cybernetics, and especially to those of simulation, the accumulation of numbers led to a qualitative result: what is of interest is no longer the exact numbers but their meaning relative to which

why they were hired. They would get experience from their experiments, and their experiments would lead to further experience. By not producing they will quickly abandon efficiency in favour of pleasurable research, since no one is interested in what is being produced. The joy of discovery and the elation of freedom, total chaos and a festive atmosphere, will replace the repetitive routine. The contacts that will be developed among the workers under the pretext of improving production by means of the exchange of experience will be able to take new forms. Why not surrender to the intoxicating happiness of collective sabotage, why not organize games, why not reorganize and transform production in a way that would make it directly useful to the workers?

The principle of the system of wage labour militates against the possibility of trusting the workers, and instead subjects them to the requirements of a system of production that does not interest them. The most alienated, the most beaten down, and the most menial wage workers will not be retained by this slippery system. One cannot leave a worker to his own devices during the production process. If he is

left on his own he will amuse himself by taking action against the capital that denies his humanity. He must be treated like a tool.

The capitalist division between production and training has its limits.

It is impossible to completely dissociate production, education and research. In production, even the least difficult job demands a certain degree of adaptability in the worker and the ability to deal with unforeseen circumstances. Similarly, the most abstract learning must find practical realization in some "product", even if it is a "crib" used to pass an examination. The necessity of external control has an impact on production.

The student is not a sheet of paper on which knowledge is inscribed. He will not be able to learn anything as long as he is completely passive. The period of apprenticeship cannot be totally separated from experience and the production process, even if it is separated from the strictly economic sphere. The school serves to provide a boundary and content to this limited activity and to disconnect it completely from real life. Teaching functions and continues to

universally valid. This does not mean that it is irrational with respect to the situation in question.

When the situation involves choosing between various manufacturing procedures it will be necessary to find a more general basis for comparison. The choice will be less subjective in the sense that it must not depend on a passing whim, because it will have long-term repercussions.

Under current conditions it is sometimes the case that purely monetary evaluations are not decisive or are modified by other considerations. The risk posed by major swings in certain prices over the course of time or political requirements prevent automatic compliance with the strictly financial viewpoint.

Let us consider the question of nuclear power. In opposition to economic arguments in its favour, questions have been raised that focus on the environmental, social and political costs of nuclear power. The debate is often carried on with a degree of bad faith, about energy yields, problems of transport and storage of wastes, of national sovereignty, and the creation or elimination of jobs.

In communist society it is no longer necessary to make

cannot be dissociated from the need to engage in exchange. All things must be capable of being subjected to comparison from a universal point of view because they have become exchangeable goods and economic values. This is precisely what must disappear and this is what the dream—or the nightmare—of measurement by means of labour time seeks to preserve by giving it a new disguise.

Even under the rule of capital, not all comparisons can be reduced to comparisons of value. Goods still have use values. The buyer's evaluation is made not only with reference to price, but also with reference to the usefulness and the quality of the product.

When a housewife goes shopping and chooses between a lettuce and a bunch of radishes she does so according to the taste of her son, the meal of the day, the appearance of the product, how much room she has in her basket.... Price is not really determinate except when two identical products have different values.

The multiplicity of criteria that come into play does not prevent this person from making his comparisons and his choice. His criterion is subjective. It is not

exist thanks to the principles it rejects. This is just as true of reading as it is of writing. Thus, the latter is the negation of all communication. The student must learn to express himself in writing, regardless of what he has to say and regardless as well of whom he is addressing(!).... It is a completely vacuous exercise. If the student writes, because he is forced to write, he will not be able to do so except by engaging in some type of communication. In this respect the student is like the worker who, compelled to work, can only carry out his assigned labour in collaboration up to a certain point. He cannot be a simple executor or machine.

The production system would collapse if the workers did not engage in experiments, if they did not assist one another, if they did not carry on discussions among themselves. The hierarchical organization of labour can only survive if its rules are constantly ignored. The hierarchical organization of labour imposes certain limits on these illicit and disrespectful activities as well as on the spontaneous activity of the workers in order to prevent them from spreading and becoming really subversive and a threat to the system.

5. Money and the Estimation of Costs

Communism is a world without money. But the disappearance of money does not signify the end of all evaluation of costs. The societies and human activities of the past, present and future are necessarily faced with this problem whether or not they use monetary symbols. The criteria selected for these evaluations obviously vary according to the essential nature of the society in question.

Money

In a highly developed capitalist society, where money has become the general equivalent for products, money appears in the eyes of all as a necessity even if everyone does not have the same amount and does not use it in the same way. It is a good that is almost as necessary for human life and almost as natural as oxygen. Can one survive without money? Both the rich and the poor have to reach for their wallets to

equivalent, everything is simple since any good can be evaluated in accordance with this single standard. There is a quantitative relation between all products. When, however, we decide to do without money and even without measurement by the quantity of labour, on what basis can we make comparisons? What else do all goods have in common that makes them comparable?

There is no other single and universally valid standard. We shall therefore have to do without one. But this will not prevent comparisons from being made. These comparisons will be qualitative and will be based on different and variable standards. They will no longer be carried out in accordance with an abstract and universal reference, but will be connected to concrete situations and goals.

What is bizarre is the fact that different goods can be equal to each other regardless of their specific natures. It is understandable for foods to be compared in accordance with their protein content or their freshness. But these distinct criteria do not allow for the definition of a general standard of equivalence. The need for a general standard of equivalence

What seems to be impossible today will be possible tomorrow. Modern technologies, instead of furthering the arms race, will be used to make the deserts bloom. From the moment when there is a rising demand for a good, there is a risk that this could lead to a fall or a rise in the production cost incurred by the new production units. A fall in the production cost will have a tendency to increase the demand for the product. If on the other hand there is a rise in the production cost of a product, then we will have to know when the cost becomes prohibitive. In this case it must be determined if it is the recent increase in demand that must be curtailed or whether, to the contrary, this demand must be satisfied by abandoning or reducing the demand for other products.

Calculation

In communism, just as in capitalism, in order to estimate costs and to select the optimal solutions, comparisons must be made. How are we to compare?
As long as there is money, that is, a universal

cover their most essential needs or their most frivolous whims.

Corresponding to the objective, although limited, place occupied by money, there is the subjective and imaginary place occupied by money in the social consciousness. All wealth is eventually assimilated by monetary wealth by the servants of the economy. Things that have no price seem to lose all value even if they are the most indispensable goods required for life: air, water, sunlight, sperm and soap bubbles. Paradoxically, our era has finally, although in the sense that the triumphant commodity assumes responsibility for turning everything into a commodity value, bottled water and deposited sperm in a bank. Where the vulgar are content with noting the ubiquity and the omnipotence of money and attempt to avail themselves of the favours of this capricious divinity, the learned economists assume responsibility for apologetics in its favour. Not only is money indispensable in today's society, and indeed is based upon an unfortunately undisputed everyday experience, but it is indispensable for all social existence that is even minimally civilized. Monetary

circulation is to the social body what the circulation of the blood is to the human body. The history of progress is the history of the progress of money, from the primitive forms of money to today's letter of credit. Do you want to liberate society from money? You must be mentally retarded, an advocate of a return to barter. We may mention in passing that not only has capitalism not eliminated this much-discredited barter but has constantly reinvented it, notably at the level of international exchange.

Money has become a veil that has dissimulated economic reality. Gone are the milling machines, the engineers, spaghetti ... only dollars or roubles appear. It is always necessary for the control over money, its creation, its circulation and its distribution to correspond to an in-depth control of the entirety of use values into which the economy is converted. Hence the deception.

Money is often the focus of dissatisfaction but it is not the existence of money itself that arouses discontent but the parsimonious way it finds its way into our wallets. The more it is criticized, the more of it is demanded. Everyone wants to destroy the golden

products in question. There will be no advantages for some and disadvantages for others; it will simply be a matter of developing the most advantageous production processes.

If the increase of the cost of production of a product implies a decrease in its cost-effectiveness, this does not mean that it must be rejected. First of all, its decrease in cost-effectiveness may be a temporary or periodic phenomenon; also, because one must evaluate the importance of the needs that have to be satisfied. Thus, with regard to food production, a rise in the cost of production often signifies a decreasing crop yield. Let us assume that less fertile soils are cultivated. This would be no reason to refuse to feed part of the population and instead shift the resources in question to more cost-effective activities.

Decreasing yields could on the other hand be a short-term phenomenon. Sowing crops in a desert is not very promising; but major investments, such as irrigation projects and new methods of farming, could make a big difference. A sun-baked desert, once it is watered, or a fish farm, could be more productive than traditionally fertile soils.

A product will have the cost that will reflect the cost of replacing it under the prevailing conditions. There will be no reason for a rise or fall in productivity to be translated into a difference between the cost of production and the cost of sale. This will apply immediately even to the objects that were manufactured previously. This variation could result in an expansion of the production in question if it becomes more worthwhile. Decisions to increase investment in a productive process will not be based on a surplus of profits.

There may be differences in cost in the production of the same product or of two similar products. This difference may result from the preservation of relatively antiquated production processes. Or they may be determined by natural conditions. Agricultural output is quite variable, and not every mine is as easily exploited as another. Does this mean that similar products will have different costs, or that there will be an average cost that will be the same for all of them, just like today's average market price? It will be very important for the differences in costs to be known. But this will not affect the users of the

calf and abolish idolatry, but only in order to more effectively fill their own pockets. You have the choice between the brutalization of labour, the risk of getting mugged, and the randomness of the lottery....

Although the economists will object, we have to say that money is a very strange thing. This becomes clear the moment that one ceases to think about it and its undeniable economic utility in order to focus instead on its usefulness for humanity.

Let us try to be naïve for a moment.

How is it possible, by what kind of infernal magic, that wealth, which makes possible the satisfaction of needs, has come to be interred in money? It was free to take any particular form to become visible, it could have appealed to our memories of the good times and to the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by choosing bread and wine which are things that are useful and agreeable. But, no! It preferred to embody itself in the form of gold and silver, which are among the most rare and least useful metals. Even worse, today it only shows itself to the common run of mortals in the form of paper.

The only need that money responds to is the

need to exchange, and it will disappear with the disappearance of exchange.

It is monstrous to want to abolish money while preserving exchange or wanting to equalize exchange in all of its applications. During the early 19th century some "Ricardian Socialists" proposed that commodities should be exchanged directly with respect to the quantity of labour required for their production. The Bolsheviks Bukharin and Preobrazhensky advocated the same illusion in 1919:

"Thus, from the very outset of the socialist revolution, money begins to lose its significance. All the nationalised undertakings, just like the single enterprise of a wealthy owner ... will have a common counting-house, and will have no need of money for reciprocal purchases and sales. By degrees a moneyless system of account-keeping will come to prevail. Thanks to this, money will no longer have anything to do with one great sphere of the national economy. As far as the peasants are concerned, in their case likewise money will cease by degrees to have any importance, and the direct exchange of

is no need to put price labels on goods in order to put pressure on the intentions of the user, not to speak of his wallet.

There are various kinds of cement that presently have, and will continue to have, different costs of production. It would be stupid to use a kind of cement that is twice as expensive as another that would serve the same purpose. As a general rule, the nature of the product or its mode of employment is sufficient to determine its desired use; where there is a risk of confusing the different grades of products it will be enough to specify along with the mode of employment of the product the cost differences among the various products.

Today, dead labour weighs upon living labour, and the past weighs upon the present. In communism, the cost of a product is not the expression of a value that has to be realized, or of equipment that has to be amortized. This means that the cost of an object will not necessarily represent the expense required to produce it. It will not even be the average necessary expense required to produce all products of the same kind.

of their own resources and capabilities. But when they have to avail themselves of warehoused goods that they did not themselves stock, such self-reliance is no longer possible. Certain materials that are easier to install, or that may have a reputation for providing more satisfaction to the users of the building, might nonetheless be rejected because of the cost of their manufacture. In every situation it is necessary for the advantages obtained to justify the expense incurred in order to avoid problems.

Products, and even production processes, must have an objectively determined cost. The users will make a rational choice on the basis of these costs.

Does this mean that each product will have a "price tag"? Will the housewife, when grocery shopping, find a bar code on her carrots and cabbages?

That would be an unfortunate recrudescence of today's society. As a general rule, each person will take what he needs when it is available and pay no attention to any other more urgent claim than his own. The calculation of costs is first of all in the nature of a forecast and its direct outcome is manifested in the nature and the quantity of the available goods. There

commodities will come to the front once more.... The gradual disappearance of money will likewise be promoted by the extensive issue of paper money by the State.... But the most forcible blow to the monetary system will be delivered by the introduction of budget-books and by the payment of the workers in kind...."

– Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky, 'The ABC of Communism', The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1966, pp. 334-335

Attempts were made to at least partially de-monetize the economy by expressing transactions between enterprises only by means of quantifiable operations. Nothing very notable or very communist was thereby achieved.

Congratulations

In the communist world products will circulate without money having to circulate in the opposite direction. A

balance will not be established at either the household or the enterprise level: all output of commodities will not correspond to an entry of money and vice-versa. It will be established directly in a comprehensive way and will be measured directly for the satisfaction of needs.

By the end of exchange we obviously do not mean that children will no longer be able to trade marbles or baseball cards or affectionate caresses. A limited degree of barter will subsist on a small scale. Above all at the beginning it will fill gaps in the general network of production and remedy any of its rigidities. The best proof that the secret of money does not lie in its material nature is that monetary standards have changed according to time and place. Salt and cattle were once able to play this role. The precious metals, notably gold, were finally selected only due to their uselessness. In a time of scarcity gold cannot be withdrawn from circulation and consumed. When gold is withdrawn from circulation in order to be hoarded or to be used in ornamentation this is a result of its economic value. Its qualities and above all its rarity have given it priority at a certain level

evaluation of costs will be undertaken directly on a worldwide scale. For human and technical reasons, the producers will be fragmented into separate groups whose interests will no longer be antagonistic, but whose opinions may very well be divergent. Since individuals may move from one job to another, from one workshop or construction site to another, and the membership of work crews may not be permanent, this fragmentation in time and space will persist.

The construction of a building implies the involvement of various skilled trades. We can imagine that in communism the architect will also be a labourer, a bricklayer or a painter. This will not obviate the fact that, especially if the construction project is very important, the workers will be divided into different teams and their tasks will be carried out at different stages of the project. The builders may be obliged to ask for outside help. They will have to get advice. They will have to obtain machinery and materials.

How will the cost of these products that come from outside the work unit be established and accounted for? The builders could attempt to facilitate the work where it is a question of the allocation and utilization

modified form of a more classical situation.

There is a hierarchy of solutions. When the decision is made to build a house, the costs of the means to get to the upper floors will probably be of secondary importance. Once the more general decision is made, the builders will have to construct a stairway, an elevator, or both. The existing options will depend on the nature and the quality of the available materials. Choices can only be made in accordance with the products and the technologies that are currently in use and development within this sector. Every choice tends to miss the optimal solution, but every choice is made in accordance with a certain number of unavoidable objective conditions. The optimal solution may end up being a compromise between the interests of the different groups of people affected by the decision in question.

The end of the division of the economy into separate competing enterprises does not mean that all social production will assume the form of one big coordinated enterprise where every activity will be immediately subsumed to another, where there will be only one common interest and where the

of economic development. In the first stage of the commodity system salt could be used as money due to its usefulness and due to the fact that its sources were concentrated in certain locations. It was the perfect object of circulation.

Today money demonstrates a tendency towards dematerialization. Its value is no longer backed by any other particular commodity but by the banking and financial system that control and manipulate it. It is still a means of exchange but has become above all an instrument at the service of capital. This allows it to be managed and utilized adequately to finance investments, and to provide credit to capital.

The destruction of money does not mean burning banknotes and confiscating or melting down gold coins. Such measures may be necessary for symbolic or psychological reasons, in order to disorganize the system. But they are not enough. Money would reappear under other forms if the need for and the possibility of money were to persist. Wheat, canned sardines, sugar ... could be means of exchange and payment for labour. "You do this work, I will give you ten kilos of sugar with which you can obtain meat,

alcohol or a straw hat.”

The problem is, first of all, that of the struggle for production, for organization, against scarcity. Next comes the enactment of repressive and dissuasive measures with respect to those who would seek to use the period of reconversion to operate on the black market. Gold and other precious materials will be requisitioned by the revolutionary authorities so as to eventually be ... exchanged with those sectors not yet under revolutionary control, for arms and for subsistence goods.

Money is the expression of wealth, but of commodity wealth. It is not itself the direct satisfaction of needs, but the means to satisfy them. It is therefore also the wall that separates the individual from his own needs. The aspirations of men are the reflection of the things, the commodities that confront them. To have needs and to satisfy them is to be capable of buying and consuming. In this game one can only be swindled. Wealth, real happiness, cannot be acquired and must be publicly displayed as an unattainable dream.

of elevators should we construct such tall buildings? On the other hand, given the pleasures experienced by those who manufacture elevators, should we build more skyscrapers?

The list of questions that can be posed is practically endless. This may seem discouraging. In reality only a small number will be posed. Many will be ruled out by simple common sense. Our mountain climbers cannot demand an elevator for their expedition. Each decision will be made on the basis of a concrete situation in which a vast number of questions will already have been answered in advance by the facts themselves. Custom plays tricks on us, but it also spares us much trouble. It is quite likely that the man who is standing at the front door of the building will base his decision on habit. The evaluation of costs only acquires its full significance when one encounters a new situation, when a new productive process emerges. The problem of the fabrication and the installation of the elevator and the stairway could very well be a common problem that is solved according to known parameters. A special or unprecedented situation will be addressed as a

methods and solutions. The degree of difficulty of an undertaking derives from the nature and the complexity of the problems that have to be solved. It could also be the result of the unsuitability of the methods of calculation applied to the object in question or a difficulty in determining the criteria of choice. The risk of error and the need to be satisfied with approximations by no means invalidate the procedure. In any event this would not constitute a step backwards with respect to current conditions.

What applies today to the use of the elevator or the stairs, will also apply tomorrow to their production and installation. The objective foundations of the individual's choices will no longer be economically determined.

Is it better to construct a stairway, an elevator, both, or nothing at all? These questions imply a whole series of subsidiary questions. Is it worth the effort to go to the upper floors? Is this requirement so important or so frequently necessitated that it justifies the necessary expense to build the stairway, the elevator, the rope or the kick in the ass that will get you to the desired floor? We can reverse the perspective. Given the cost

The Law of Value

Money is used for exchange. But money also signifies measurement. What money measures in exchange, the price of the commodity, has its origin outside the sphere of exchange.

How is an equilibrium established, within the capitalist system, between what is produced and what is consumed? Between the effort expended and the benefit obtained? How is one choice determined to be more rational than another?

The problem applies to each particular commodity, which is a use value and an exchange value at the same time. The use value is the benefit that the commodity can supply. The consumer is thought to be able to directly assess this use value. Exchange value, expressed in the price, corresponds to the expense for which this good is purchased. It takes the form of monetary expenditure for the buyer but is above all and in principle an expenditure of labour.

The price of a good is determined by the forces that are exercised at the level of the market, by supply and

demand. Beyond this aspect, however, price refers to the cost of production that is expended in labour directly utilized and in the labour contained in the materials used for production.

Each commodity therefore expresses the need for an equilibrium between the social expenditure and the social profit, which is reflected in the need for a financial equilibrium between business enterprises and households. The need for an equilibrium, but not of exactly that equilibrium! A good's price only corresponds in a very distorted way to the quantity of real labour effectively expended in its production and likewise to the socially necessary quantity of labour needed for its production. Equilibrium is not established at the level of the individual commodity but at the level of the system as a whole. And here this equilibrium is rather a kind of disequilibrium.

So, is the price of a commodity determined by the quantity of labour that it contains? Yes and no. Yes, because price has a tendency to vary in proportion to the increase of productivity, because a product that requires twice the time to produce than another runs the risk of costing twice as much, because the

the economy and to dissolve it as a separate sphere. It is a question of doing away with the economy. This will not be achieved by suddenly discovering that we can replace today's methods with more direct and simpler procedures. Paradoxically, the development of the economy, the socialization of production, the generalized interdependence of enterprises, and the implementation of economic forecasting and calculation, make this rupture possible.

In the future, the principles that inform our choices will be as simple and as transparent as the ones we presently apply on a daily basis. They will be concerned with the reduction of effort, fatigue, and expenditures in general. These considerations will not in themselves constitute the goals of social life, but will comprise one aspect of the projects of the future depending on the nature of the latter. Perhaps very difficult and dangerous problems will have to be solved but we will have to try to address them. A team of mountain climbers can attempt to reach the summit of a difficult mountain, but this does not mean they have to do so with their bare hands.

Simple principles do not always entail easy

the stairs, or cancelling his appointment in the building in question. It becomes more complicated if the elements that may or may not consciously intervene in the decision making process are taken into consideration. What floor does he have to go to? Does he know which one? Is he in good health? Is he elderly? Tired? Handicapped? How high are the steps? How steep is the stairway? How fast is the elevator and how often does it run? How urgent is his errand in this building?

The decision will not be an economic decision. It will be subjective, directly connected to a concrete situation. It is not a monetary decision. It does not involve an inquiry regarding which possible solution would be more expensive, since the elevator is free to use. The question of speed may play a role in his choice, it could prove to be decisive, but it is not necessarily connected with the situation. The economy of time would be given top priority if he were a fireman, if he did not prefer to use the ladder on his fire truck.

How can a procedure that is properly foreign to the economic sphere be applied to the economy? This is a false problem. The real problem is to go beyond

total mass of labour determines the total value of commodities. No, because one cannot establish a necessary and direct link between each commodity and the labour it contains. And this is true because if the price of a commodity were actually to be determined by the concrete labour crystallized in it, then the lower the productivity, the lazier the workers and the more expensive the commodity! In reality, those that have high cost prices are not at all favoured on the market. Those that win the market competition are those that economize on the costs of production and labour. And this is so because the formation of prices is affected by the tendency towards the establishment of an average rate of profit.

What then remains of the law of labour-value inherited from the classical economists that says that the value of things is determined by the labour contained in them? This law is a general law that, by means of the formation of prices, determines the general developmental trends of the system. Capital expands and is distributed as a result of the economies of labour time that it can realize. Like a river, even if its path is not the shortest route, even if

it meanders in oxbows, even if it has many bends, finally it blindly follows its natural slope by destroying everything that stands in its way. The unnoticed profit that capitalism generates in order to invest here or there, to choose this or that technology or machinery, far from contradicting this tendency is nothing but the tortuous path by which it is imposed.

Finally, the law of value does not refer so much to the connection between the commodity and its price on the one hand, and on the other between the creative labour and its dissociation. By converting labour into value, the particular task is separated from labour and from the worker in order to be situated as a satellite in economic space, in which it moves according to its own laws. When all the commodities become autonomous and compete with each other they end up by obtaining the value among themselves by way of exchange and by means of money. With communism, the law of value disappears, a law whose development was intimately bound with that of exchange and that of the latter's influence on human activity.

What about the global equilibrium between expenses

necessities into account. What characterizes this kind of evaluation is that it is effected without monetary subterfuges and is not reduced to temporal criteria.

Strictly speaking, the ability to evaluate costs is not a natural endowment peculiar to the human species. The pigeon that hesitates before pecking at the seeds you offer it is, in its own way, also evaluating costs. That he might make a mistake in his calculations and end up in the pot does not constitute a contradiction of this claim. Evaluation does not necessarily exclude the possibility of error.

The bird's choice depends more on instinct and habit than any other factor. With human beings we move to another level.

The individual who finds himself at the entrance to a building, and intends to go to an upper floor, and who has to choose between using the elevator and walking up the stairs, confronts a problem of evaluating costs. He might spend an hour reflecting on the problem or he might automatically make his decision without thinking about it.

The problem is simple if it is reduced to the three solutions that are obviously available: the elevator,

will organize and control the construction of situations in view of its needs. In this sense it will become situationist.

Elevator or Stairs?

Behind the economic idea of cost we once again find the most ordinary and banal reality, which that idea has ended up concealing.

Each person reflects on the question of whether what he is doing is worth the effort. Does the inevitable result justify the expense or the risk? Are there less costly, that is, more pleasant, ways to obtain an equivalent result or one that is good enough?

If such questions arise concerning the economy, they are only asked by economists or managers. In fact, economic and financial problems comprise a special, and rather strange, case of a more general problem. The spontaneous and ingenuous evaluation of costs took place long before the advent of capitalism. It subsists at the margin of the economic sphere even though our choices must always take financial

and income within the system itself? This equilibrium is a disequilibrium. From the point of view of value society produces more than it spends. The surplus is accumulated. Without this capital would not be capital.

Marx has shown that there is a special commodity that has the property of producing more value than is required for its production. This explains why capital in motion grows, from transaction to transaction, instead of remaining the same. This commodity is labour power; its price, which is lower than the value it creates, is the wage. The difference is the surplus value.

The worker does not sell his labour on what is falsely called "the labour market", but his capacity to work, a part of his time. Labour is not a commodity; it has no value. It is the basis of value. Labour, Engels said, has as much value as gravity has weight.

When capital emerges from the sphere of circulation in order to enter the den of realization, the expenditure of the unpaid labour of the workers is increased, without which the law of value would be a joke; if this were not so then profit would appear to

arise from mere price gouging or else would have to break with the laws of exchange. Each commodity-capital can be broken down into constant capital, which corresponds to the amortization of the raw materials and machinery utilized, variable capital, which corresponds to the wages, and surplus value or added value, which corresponds to unpaid labour. Money is the bearer of a profound mystification. It conceals the original nature of the expenditure that really created the product. Behind wealth, even mercantile wealth, are nature and human effort. Money seems to produce interest, it seems to breed. The only source of value, however much it appears to derive from commerce and all the more so the more it does derive from commerce, is labour.

It is true that the most servile economists assign a small place to labour as a source of wealth alongside capital and land. This does not even partially abolish the mystification. It is not labour as such to which this favour is conceded, it is labour as a counterpart of labour as an accounting entry. It is not money that is reduced to labour but the contrary, it is labour that is reduced, by way of the wage, to money.

Don't tell us that personal preferences or subjectivity would objectively prevent any such choices. There are some things that do not change. We are not saying that the criteria must have a universal scope. They will vary according to the time and the situation. Men will make agreements to determine what suits them best. The diversity of personal preferences and the willingness to experiment can follow different roads in the context of a similar objective.

The estimation of costs cannot be reduced to the need to balance "income and expenditures"; equilibrium must be conceived as a dynamic equilibrium. Starting from the basis of the conditions inherited from capitalism, what is required is to give development a certain direction. Is the estimated cost of constructing a particular productive facility or way of life justified? Does the automation of this or that unit of production justify the efforts required for the fabrication of the automated machinery? The logic of the economy of labour time that serves as the organizing principle of the construction of situations in the capitalist world will yield to a different logic, a logic that is no longer external to the men that put it into practice. Humanity

the conditions of labour. As a matter of principle, investment decisions will not be made on the basis of the economy of labour time, even if the possibility exists that the task can be expedited. These decisions will have the objective of producing the conditions in which activities can be enriched, favouring the most pleasant ones. The determination of the conditions of activity does not mean that the activity itself and the behaviour of the producers themselves will be determined in advance. The producer will still be master of his activity, but he will act in certain conditions, within the framework of certain limitations that constitute the arena in which he can act.

The production by men of the instruments and the plan of production allow for this transformation of human activity. The development of technology can be oriented so as to be more or less favourable for the producers. This or that kind of machine or ensemble of machines could allow those who use them to experience less exhaustion and be less subject to a certain rhythm of production. Those characteristics that would allow men to be as free as possible can be systematically developed in the productive process.

Free Distribution

One might be tempted to conclude that, with the disappearance of money, communist society will no longer have to regulate costs, and that it will not have to calculate the value of things. This is a fundamental error.

The fact that a good or service is distributed free of charge is one thing. The assertion that this costs nothing is something else entirely. This illusion is a direct legacy of the functioning of the commodity system. We are accustomed to identify cost with payment. We only see the payment, the monetary expenditure. We overlook the expenditure in effort and materials that gave rise to the product in the first place.

In capitalism as well as in communism free distribution is not equivalent to the absence of costs. The difference between communist free distribution and capitalist free distribution is that the latter is merely a semblance of free distribution; in the capitalist version, payment has not been eliminated, but has

simply been deferred or shifted to another party. The fact that education and advertising are free does not mean that they are external to the commodity system and that the consumer does not ultimately pay for them. The freely distributed commodity is a very perverse thing. It implies an imposed or semi-imposed consumption, and hinders our ability to make choices and to refuse what is "offered" to us.

In the new society the cost of things will have to be ascertained and if necessary calculated in advance. Not because of a Manichaeism of accounting procedures or to avoid fraud, which will no longer have any reason to exist. It will be done in order provide the framework for deciding whether the particular expense incurred was justifiable, and to reduce it if at all possible. There will have to be an effort to assess the positive and negative effects on the human and natural environment of the satisfaction of a need or the implementation of a new project.

A needle, or a car—are the time and the effort devoted to their production as well as all the concomitant social costs of their use justified? Is it better to build a production facility in this location

supersession.

Labour, the source of value, is not susceptible to numerical measurement. One can economize on it, but its identity is unquestionable. In communism this or that activity will no longer be distinguished from the effort made by the human beings who engage in it. Not all jobs have the same human cost. It is a matter of developing the least costly ones.

In capitalist society, if one shifts one's perspective from that of capital to that of the worker, labour also has a cost; one job is preferable to another. When night arrives one feels one's fatigue or anxiety. But finally the differences are small. Labour is always considered time that is more or less lost. No one devotes any time to calculating boredom or health damage. For the worker the price of all of this shit is his wage. One already knows that it is a mystification and that the wage is not determined by the effort expended or the discomfort experienced.

The superiority of communism lies in the fact that is not content with the satisfaction of the needs of "consumption". It applies its efforts to the transformation of productive activities, that is, to

to the satisfaction of absolutely vital needs, there will be some jobs that are more urgent than others, and men who work faster than other men.

With capital it is necessary to dissociate the price, the expenditure of labour power and what this expenditure contributes, and the labour that does not have any value. With communism this dissociation makes no sense. Labour power and labour, man and his activity, can no longer be separated.

This means, first of all, that there is no more surplus value, not even for the benefit of the community, or a new form of social surplus. One can no longer speak of accumulation or of expansion except in physical and material terms. To speak of socialist accumulation is an absurdity even if at any given moment more steel or more bananas are produced than before, even if more social time is devoted to production. These processes no longer assume the form of value or time employed.

As a result, this means that labour, which in capitalism has no value, acquires value in communism. This value that it acquires is neither moral nor monetary. This is not the apotheosis of labour but instead expresses its

or somewhere else? Is a certain production process justified in consideration of its utilization of finite mineral resources? One cannot leave such things to chance or intuition. It is easy to see that all of this implies evaluation, calculation and forecasting.

If we retain the notion of cost, which is so redolent of economism, this is because it is not simply a matter of choice and measurement, an intellectual process, but a physical expenditure. Regardless of the technical level there will be activities that are more costly and jobs that are more arduous than others. It would be especially sad and strange if everything were to become easy and a matter of indifference in a communist society, even more so than it would be if this were to happen to other kinds of societies.

The commodity presents a double face: use value and exchange value. They seem to depend on two irreducible orders.

Use value, or utility, depends on the qualitative. The user compares and evaluates the airplane and the orange, in order to decide which would suit him better. The choice cannot be made independently of his situation and his concrete needs.

Exchange value depends on the quantitative. Goods are all evaluated and objectively arranged in the framework of a single standard, whether the goods in question are airplanes or oranges.

Communism is not so much a world that perpetuates the realm of use value, finally liberated from the exchange value that parasitized it, as a world where exchange value is repudiated and becomes use value. Advantage and disadvantage come from the same order of things and are no longer either united or separated back to back. Value ceases to be value in order to reappear as concrete and diversified expenditure. Labour ceases to be the basis and the guarantee of value. There is no longer a single standard that allows for quantitative comparisons between all things, but concrete expenditures and labours, of various degrees of burdensomeness which should also be taken into account. Having ceased to perform its role as the basis of value unified by the exchange process, labour ceases to be LABOUR.

“The bourgeois economy is a double economy.

nature will change and its duration will be extended. The quantity and the character of production will no longer be evaluated with respect to the duration of the consumed labour. One person will produce enough in a little time, while another will take a long time to produce little. If remuneration were to be based on the time expended then we will need to have strict prison guards on the jobsite or we would soon be faced with an incitement to laziness.

Whether the workers will agree to guarantee a certain amount of production or devote a certain number of hours each day to productive labour, is a question of practical organization that is not directly pertinent to the determination of the cost of what they produce. In one factory it might take twice as long as another factory to produce objects of the same cost.

One can certainly speak of the social allocation of labour time at the community's disposal, but one must not forget that time is not a material that one can dish out with a ladle. It will be men who will go to such and such a location in order to assume responsibility for such and such a task. From the moment when free time is no longer extraordinarily scarce and is not devoted

based on the expenditure that would be required to rebuild it from scratch? At this price, nothing would be worth undertaking.

To assess the different values of two labour processes of equal duration in which the risks or the discomfort of the jobs are different, do we have to find a single standard by which they can be compared? One hour of bricklaying would count as one and a half hours of carpentry. Let us say that the difference would be accounted for by the expenditure of time necessary to provide for the bricklayer, to wash his clothing ... and we refuse to reduce everything to the expenditure of labour time, but then how can we establish the coefficients that express the differences in value or discomfort that distinguish the two jobs? Why, on the other hand, should we want to establish such coefficients when these differences depend on the conditions and the rhythm of the activities concerned and the inclinations of the participants?

When the workers take over, the advocates of measurement by time or remuneration as a function of labour time run the risk of being left behind. From the moment when activity ceases to be compulsory, its

The bourgeois individual is not a man, but a trading company. We want to destroy all trading companies. We want to abolish the double economy in order to found a new one that is one single unit, which history already knew during the times when the cave man went to collect as many coconuts as there were comrades in his cave, with his hands as his only tools."

– Amadeo Bordiga, 'Property and Capital', 1950

Everything will be free because the "gift" will replace the act of selling. Those who carry out one or another kind of labour with the object of satisfying their own desires or being useful to others, will be paid directly by their own efforts.

Is this something new? No, since even today it never occurs to anybody to charge anyone else for the price of the saliva they used up in the course of a debate. In a conversation one does not exchange a certain time for speaking or a certain decibel level, one attempts to say what one has to say, because one feels that it has to be said. The interlocutor or

the auditor does not owe us anything in exchange for their attention. Awaiting a response, the risk of running into incomprehension, silence, or the lie, are all part of the game. They are neither the expectation of payment nor the risks of the market. In everyday life the word is not a commodity; speaking is not a job. What is true today of the word, when it is not recorded and sold as a commodity, will be true tomorrow for all of production. The estimation of the cost of production will no longer be distinct from the effort dedicated to its fulfilment. The very first step in this calculation will be the impulse that will lead towards this or that kind of activity. A book or a pair of shoes will be "offered" in the same way that words can be offered today. The gift implies, up to a certain point, reciprocity, the word implies the response, but this is no longer the anonymous and antagonistic process of exchange.

Labour Time

Since the time of Ricardo, the official economist of the English bourgeoisie, who during the early 1800s

Will we be told that this is no longer valid for our civilized epoch, and that the hunt is a very special case of productive activity? Let's face the facts. It is the ubiquity of exchange that conceals reality. Measurement by means of labour time does not exempt us from the hazards of human existence or of the exhaustion of natural resources. These problems are not specific to primitive man but apply to all societies. Not acknowledged by the logic of capital they return with a vengeance....

Measurement by time only indirectly accounts for any repercussions on the environment and the difficulty of the activity concerned. Can it be used in communism by translating the transformation or destruction of a rural region, the exhaustion of a mine's resources, or the production of oxygen in a forest, into its language? The inherent advantages or drawbacks of a production process will be reckoned in terms of the labour time that is virtually saved or virtually expended. It would surpass the absurdity of capitalism if it were to seek to consciously reduce use values and qualities to labour-values. What value does a stretch of countryside have? Should it be

existed or that our primitive peoples decided to rationally employ their forces to acquire meat with the least expenditure of effort. Would they have constructed their system on the basis of necessary labour time?

There are pleasures and risks involved in hunting, concerning which the time employed in hunting is totally uninformative. What is the comparative value of a lion as opposed to an antelope, when considered on the basis of the duration of the hunt without reference to the different risks involved in each hunt? Certain modes of hunting may take more time but may also be more certain of success, less arduous, less dangerous, and more or less cruel.

If they still wanted to practice this type of measurement, could they do so? It is hard to evaluate with precision the time necessary to obtain this or that animal. By systematically hunting the most productive animals, from this narrow point of view, they would risk modifying the conditions and the necessary time for the hunt. In any event, one often goes out to hunt antelopes and comes home with rabbits. It is useless to predict the unpredictable.

maintained that the value of a product was based on the quantity of labour necessary for its production, there has been no lack of people who demanded that the worker should receive the whole value of his product. Profit was morally condemned as theft. The problem of socialism was thus the problem of remuneration, of a fair day's pay.

An American communist, F. Bray, went even further. He saw equal exchange as not the solution, but a means for preparing the solution which is the community of goods. He envisioned a transitional period when no one could get rich by receiving only the value of his labour. Each worker would receive from the public warehouses the equivalent of what he had produced in the form of various objects. Equilibrium would therefore be maintained between production and consumption.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx rendered homage to Bray but also criticized him. Either equal exchange leads to capitalism:

"Mr. Bray does not see that this equalitarian relation, this corrective ideal that he would like to apply to the

world, is itself nothing but the reflection of the actual world; and that therefore it is totally impossible to reconstitute society on the basis of what is merely an embellished shadow of it. In proportion as this shadow takes on substance, far from being the transfiguration dreamt of, is the actual body of existing society.”[/i] Or else it leads to exchange: *“What is today the result of capital and the competition of workers among themselves will be tomorrow, if you sever the relation between labour and capital, an actual agreement based upon the relation between the sum of productive forces and the sum of existing needs. But such an agreement is a condemnation of individual exchange....”*

– Karl Marx, ‘The Poverty of Philosophy’, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1978, pp. 70-72

Not wanting to resort to exchange, certain

not have the time necessary for the accumulation of a surplus. Time is scarce; one must concentrate into it the densest activity possible.

Instead of thinking only about how to save time, primitive peoples were instead busy with the most effective means of squandering it. These peoples often present the most indolent character. Besides the tools needed for hunting, they hardly sought to accumulate goods of any kind.

In the 18th century, Adam Smith renounced the attempt to base value on labour time with reference to modern times. But this labour-value did play a role, according to Smith, in those primitive societies where things were still relatively uncomplicated.

Imagine, if you will, some hunters who want to exchange among themselves the various animals they took in the hunt. Upon what basis can they do this, other than the basis of labour time, as a function of the time required to get the animals? This is the assumption made by an economic and banker’s mentality when confronted by a situation where the rules of sharing and reciprocal bonds prevail.

Let us assume, however, that exchange already

detached from the content of activity as the latter was diversified.

This process was accentuated when exchange penetrated into the sphere of production. Measurement by means of time developed in relation to the tendency of the economy to be based on labour time. The maximum amount must be produced in the least amount of time. The possibility to use time as a standard of measurement is inseparable from the compression of human activity within the smallest possible span of time. Not only did labour produce the commodity; the commodity produced labour through the despotism of the factory.

With this development, the practice of measurement by means of time lost its innocent airs, but was concealed behind money and justified by financial necessities.

Bourgeois ideologists, especially those who invoke Saint Marx, project this fetishism of time and production over all of human history. In their view, the latter is nothing but an incessant struggle for free time. If primitive peoples remained primitive this is because, dominated by their low level of productivity, they did

revolutionaries, Marx and Engels in the forefront, understood the imperious need to regulate the problem of costs and their accounting in the future society. They looked for a standard of measurement to evaluate and to compare costs.

The standard proposed has commonly been that of the quantity of labour. This quantity has been measured by time, corrected at times by taking the intensity of the labour into account. All of society's investments can in this way be reduced to a certain expenditure of time. The orange and the airplane no longer correspond to a certain quantity of money but to a given number of hours of labour. Despite the differences in their nature they can be compared according to the same scale of measurement.

This procedure seems logical. What could different goods have in common besides the labour they contain? This was where Marx started in [i]Capital when he was describing labour as the source of value. What other standard could be found?

Marx and Engels adopted this idea without pausing to consider the practical details. Others have tried to elaborate it in more detail, basing it upon a precise

accounting of hours of labour, that would allow for the evaluation of every good produced.

For our part, we have not evoked the call to go "beyond labour" only to immediately fall back miserably upon the measurement of labour time, at the very moment when the time comes to tackle the really hard practical problems.

The theory of the measurement of goods or of the forecasting of investments by means of the quantity of labour is false. It must be radically rejected. This is not a methodological dispute but a basic problem that affects the very nature of communism itself.

Measurement by means of labour is still economic. It seeks to bring about the end of the law of value but it does not take into account everything this implies. Capitalist society has a tendency to perpetuate itself even while unburdening itself of the division into classes and of exchange value!

A solution was sought to a problem that has two aspects. The first is that of the workers' pay. The second, more general, aspect concerns the distribution of the productive forces at the level of society as a whole. How to distribute consumption goods without money?

example. This procedure was especially developed in the system of the Incas, a great agrarian empire under the unified rule of a bureaucracy where money was unknown. The labour services were performed in the form of days of labour spent in one or another task. This required a very rigorous system of accounting.

In the peasant or rural communities, an individual spent one day harvesting the fields of another person and vice-versa. The peasant and the blacksmith bartered their products on the basis of production time. The activity of a child was valued as a portion of that of an adult. These practices can be seen as the beginning of the use of time as universal standard and even of the submission of the planet to the commodity economy; but only the beginning. These marginal practices were more of the order of mutual aid than of exchange. The activities subject to measurement were of the same or concretely comparable nature. Measurement by time was not yet independent of the content of what was being measured.

With the dual development of the commodity system and the division of labour, measurement by means of time began to assume its fanciful character, becoming

is not a trivial point. A one-litre bottle of water could instead contain a litre of wine. But no one would ever deduce from that fact that a bottle of water is always equal to a bottle of wine, or alcohol, or soft drink, or hydrochloric acid. Strictly speaking, only from the narrow point of view of the wholesale dealer would this make sense.

Time is the only objective language that can be used to express the creative force of the slave or the worker, from the point of view of the exploiter. This implies external measurement, control and conflict. The duration and the intensity of the activity are privileged above its nature and its particular difficulty, which become matters of indifference. The subjectivity of what is experienced is sacrificed in favour of the objectivity of the standard of measurement. Creation and life are forced to submit to production and repetition.

Measuring by means of time is older than the commodity system. Instead of providing a certain quantity of a particular product, the exploited put a certain amount of their time at the disposal of the exploiter: the labour services of the feudal era, for

How to justly recompense the worker in view of the efforts he has contributed to production?

With respect to these questions Marx fell back in *The Critique of the Gotha Program* on the point of view of Bray, while purging it of its most tedious aspects. In a transitional period where the principle "to each according to his needs" still cannot be applied, remuneration will be based on the labour provided by each worker. It will only be based upon but not equivalent to it, since one part of what this labour represents must go to a social fund devoted to the production of production goods, support for invalids and the elderly, etc.... The worker cannot receive the full product of his labour. On the other hand, because the coupons that testify to the labour contributed by the worker do not circulate, exchange is totally destroyed at its source.

This is Marx's purpose in demanding that society should have some kind of accounting unit:

" ... labour, in order to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity; otherwise it would cease to be standard."

– Karl Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Program', in Marx: Later Political Writings, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1996, p. 214

For Marx, the problem of remuneration is of secondary importance and only applies to the lower stage of communism. The question of the distribution of the productive forces, on the other hand, is of fundamental and permanent importance.

"On the basis of socialized production the scale must be ascertained on which those operations—which withdraw labour-power and means of production for a long time without supplying any product as a useful effect in the interim—can be carried on without injuring branches of production which not only withdraw labour-power continually, or several times a year, but also supply means of subsistence and of production."

– Karl Marx, 'Capital: Volume II', International Publishers, New York, 1967, p. 362

that some day labour will constitute the most imperious human need. The Stalinists have constantly exploited this formula in a most odious manner. There is in any event a contradiction. Will labour in the communist society become a waste of time or a source of satisfaction? Is it therefore necessary to reduce labour time to a minimum, or should we, to the contrary, produce the maximum amount of labour possible to satisfy the demand for it? Only in capitalist society can labour appear as the most imperious need, as the only means to satisfy all the others. Only in capitalist society can it be both detested and demanded.

Fanciful

The whole idea of using labour time as a standard of measurement is somewhat fanciful.

The idea of measuring all productive activities by the time they require would be like measuring and comparing all liquids only by their volume. It is true that every activity takes a certain amount of time, just as a particular liquid occupies a certain volume. This

Despite his critical and pertinent observations, Marx was still dominated by the fetishism of time. Whether considered as an instrument of economic measurement or as an instrument of extra-economic measurement:

“For real wealth is the developed productive power of all individuals. The measure of wealth is then not any longer, in any way, labour time, but rather disposable time.”

– Karl Marx, ‘Grundrisse’, Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1973, p. 708

Labour time is the basis of free time. The realm of freedom can only be based on the realm of necessity. The error does not lie in continuing to see necessity, sacrifice and production in the new society. The error lies in consolidating these elements under the rubric of “labour time”, reduced as much as possible, and universally opposing this to free time. In “The Critique of the Gotha Program”, Marx says

The calculation of necessary labour does not however imply that the law of value is perpetuated while money-capital disappears. The quantity of labour is allocated with reference to needs. In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx wrote:

“In a future society, in which class antagonism will have ceased, in which there will no longer be any classes, use will no longer be determined by the minimum time of production; but the time of production devoted to different articles will be determined by the degree of their social utility.”

– Karl Marx, ‘The Poverty of Philosophy’, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1978, p. 58

The law of value is nothing but an expression peculiar to commodity society of a more general rule that applies to every society:

“In reality, no society can prevent production from being regulated, in one way or another, by the labour

time available to society. But insofar as this positing of the duration of labour is not effected under the conscious control of society—which would only be possible under the regime of communal property—but by the movements of commodity prices, the theory set forth with such precision in the Franco-German Yearbooks is completely vindicated.”

That is what Marx wrote to Engels on January 8, 1868. What did Engels have to say with regard to this issue?

“As long ago as 1844 I stated that this balancing of useful effects and expenditure of labour on making decisions concerning production was all that would be left of the politico-economic concept of value in a communist society. [Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, p. 95] The scientific justification for this statement, however, as can be seen, was made possible only by Marx’s Capital.”

– Frederick Engels, ‘Anti-Dühring’, Foreign Languages

There is some confusion between the mode of distribution of the products and their nature as “consumption goods” or instruments of production. On the one hand are the individuals and on the other is society conceived abstractly. There are isolated individuals, individuals in groups, and individuals in communities, who confront one another and organize. In reality, however, when the State or the owner of an enterprise as the representative of the “general interest” disappears, Society as separate from the individual also disappears. There are then nothing but isolated men, men in groups, and men in communities, who organize in this or that way. An individual can lay claim to a power tool and a neighbourhood committee to several tons of potatoes. The separation between, on the one hand, labour power composed of separate individuals, and social and collective capital, on the other, will disappear. One cannot invoke the necessity for remuneration in a transition period to preserve this separation. To the contrary, the advocacy of this necessity in Bray or in Marx is the reflection of the limitations of an era when communism was still immature.

arises from the material character of the particular labour-process, not from its social form."

– Karl Marx, 'Capital: Volume II', International Publishers, New York, pp. 361-362

Marx and Engels placed too much emphasis on the continuity of communism with capitalism. This is their deficiency.

They preserve the bourgeois separation between the sphere of production and the sphere of consumption. Already in *The Manifesto*, they distinguished the collective property in the means of production from the personal appropriation of consumption goods. They thus emphatically affirmed that they did not want to socialize anything but what was already common social property: the instruments of capitalist production. In *The Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx still opposed individual and family consumption to the labour time contributed to productive and social consumption. But he does not say how the latter will be established.

Press, Peking, 1976, p. 403)

What Marx and Engels are telling us about communist society—and we see that they did have something to say about it!—follows directly from their analysis of capitalist society. Their ideas about the communist society of the future partake of both the assets and the deficiencies of their analysis of capitalist society. The assets consist in demonstrating that the problems of the allocation of consumption goods and the remuneration of labour are not fundamental ones. It is the mode of production that determines the mode of distribution. To claim, contrary to the view of the beautiful souls, that the worker cannot receive the whole product of his labour, proceeds directly from an analysis of capitalism which shows that the value of a commodity represents, besides the wage and the surplus value, the constant capital. Instruments of production must be produced. Unlike previous social forms, capitalism and communism are societies provided with an abundance of tools. Capitalism and communism are also societies undergoing constant change. There is no such thing

as an unchanging condition. In these societies, it is not the case that everything is regulated in advance by reference to its past use and then eventually corrected by common sense. The estimation of costs is not so much a problem of accounting as a problem of forecasting. With regard to this fundamental point, there was a significant regression in the communists who came after Marx. Certain councilists would reduce the question to that of an almost photographic copy of reality and economic trends.

The following passage shows that, for Marx, today's society and the society of the future have to resolve the SAME problem. The former, thanks to money-capital and credit, and the latter, by dispensing with both.

"... on the basis of capitalist production, more extensive operations of comparatively long duration necessitate large advances of money-capital for a rather long time. Production in such spheres depends therefore on the magnitude of the money-capital which the individual capitalist has at his disposal. This barrier is broken down by the credit system

and the associations connected with it, e.g., the stock companies. Disturbances in the money-market therefore put such establishments out of business, while these same establishments, in their turn, produce disturbances in the money-market."

"On the basis of socialised production the scale must be ascertained on which those operations — which withdraw labour-power and means of production for a long time without supplying any product as a useful effect in the interim — can be carried on without injuring branches of production which not only withdraw labour-power and means of production continually, or several times a year, but also supply means of subsistence and of production. Under socialised as well as capitalist production, the labourers in branches of business with shorter working periods will as before withdraw products only for a short time without giving any products in return; while branches of business with long working periods continually withdraw products for a longer time before they return anything. This circumstance, then,