

Terrorism or Revolution, an introduction to Ernest Coeurderoy

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SYNOPTIC OUTLINE OF PARTS I AND II

May 1968 drew the *line of demarcation* "between the reformists of survival and the insurgents of the will to live." Despite the ebbing of the revolutionary tide and the return of the class struggle to the contours it followed the day before the great upheaval, nothing is quite the same, for in that moment the "party" of *depassement* was reborn. Now. The Social Question has ceased to be posed in terms of *having*. It appears now as what it had been in fact, a construction of concrete *being*, an emancipation, not of the citizen, but of the individual.

Survival is extending itself to all of existence. In generalizing itself under the pressure of its own inner drives, the imperialism of the commodity simplified the choices. There is nothing more urgent than quick and effective intervention against the system of survival.

The experience of May '68 brought the political once again to class consciousness, consciousness of itself. It will either liquidate the power of the commodity and substitute generalized self-management for it, or it will survive to regret its failure.

The outcome of the confrontation to come depends on the offensive and defensive power of the revolutionary wing of the proletariat, on those who have not only consciousness but also the power of intervention: the workers at the point of production and distribution. They have in their hands the roots of a reversed world; they can destroy the economy. Now shields receiving all the blows and serving after the battle as safeguards for the new bosses, they must become the invincible army of generalized self-management.

We are experiencing the *last days of culture*. There is no more anti-culture, no counterculture, no parallel or underground culture. Operating under these sociological distinctions or the progressive reduction of culture to the spectacle, a spectacle which reduces the sum of the categories of real life to survival in a space-time when the commodity is not only produced, distributed and consumed but also generalized as necessity, chance, freedom, duration, and representation.

Culture then enters the economy as a luxury article available to all. Blessed with the label of intellectuality, culture is the thought of the spectacle, its separated intelligence. Formerly preoccupied with glory or posterity, today artists and thinkers punch in as skilled workers in the language factory, to be paid in tokens of prestige.

Culture becomes one of the self-regulating mechanisms of power. Incitement to the overconsumption of images and knowledge corresponds to the necessity of balancing the overproduction of ideological attitudes, of lies imposed on daily life by the dominant society. Its decline and subsequent reinforcement follows the movement of the spectacle itself. Thus it creates a propitious zone for sabotage and diversion, for direct subversive action.

At the same time as it reveals itself as a separated sphere, culture acts against it. As it issues from daily life and its creativity, the cultural work cannot be reduced purely and simply to the spectacle without revealing the trace of human practice impinging [on] it. Even as the language of power fails to fully supplant poetry, and just as life is never quite reduced to survival, so the market system fails to transform the cultural creation into a pure commodity. This check marks at the same time the place of the reversal of perspective, the point at which the creativity brought forth in the past is reinvested in the project of generalized self-management.

Dada and Surrealism erred in not associating the liberation of lifelike poetry with the revolution of everyday life. As soon as culture begins to question itself as separation, it attempts to continue itself as radical theory. But it falls backward into ideology if it fails to develop the expression of the will to live underlying it in a perspective of collective struggle. Thus culture faces two choices: to be reduced to the spectacle as a renewable and immediately reabsorbed pseudo-autonomous fragment, or negate itself by realizing itself in real life.

At the instant it rediscovers its origin, spiritual creation also reaches its end as separated activity. Those who strive to seize it at the roots of multidimensional life cannot be distinguished from those who are prepared to divert history to realize the imaginary.

III. The Nihilist State and Anti-Statist Nihilism

Our society of survival is founded on the system of absolute exchange. Values and principles commonly admitted and universally transgressed are swept along into the infernal cycle of interchangeability. In an irregularly accelerated rotation of shitty water toward the sewer pipe, the spectacular whirlpool reunites the ensemble of praised, blamed, encouraged, permitted, condemned and judged attitudes.

The commodity system produces the objectivity of vacuity through a developing movement that sucks in all of humanity to the profit of its concrete and oppressive abstraction. Previously, we were quiescent for a boss; henceforth, we survive for an entity, a phantom. What weighs on us is no longer capital but the logic of the commodity; no longer does the power of a person or a class conscious of its predominance, nor even of a cynical caste, rule. Rather, it is a machine -- whose directors, like the officers of Kafka's penal colony, are only despicable cogs condemned to rust of hardening arteries and early senility -- that runs the show.

The State -- the nerve and muscle center of spectacular commodity organization; the mind and secular arm of exchangist totalitarianism -- has been converted, through decline and reinforcement, in a cybernetic power, into self-regulation of general disorder, into a legality of that which no longer has any laws. Its power succumbs to

the imperatives of accumulation, reproduction, and socialization of the commodity to the degree that it disperses itself to reach into every nook and cranny, in order to transform people into citizens of the whole (in the sense that one speaks of all-powerful eunuchs).

Citizenship is identified with the right to be forced to partake of the spectacle, which transforms the promotion of all beings and things reduced to commodity status into varieties of nihilism. It is this double feeling of frustration -- as human being and as citizen-spectator-producer-consumer of encroaching emptiness -- that in May 1968 unleashed a first chain reaction in which subjective energy in the process of liberating itself shook French society to its foundations. In a flash, the immense hope of the reversal of a world reversed was illuminated -- a matter of taking the time to ask oneself, "And if it was possible?" -- to even the darkest consciousness.

What is shown by the anger and rancor that today continue to nourish physical repression, exorcism and the sort of psychological repression in which they want to institutionalize an "insane" person because he or she denounced the dominant madness is the violence by which destroyed passion is converted into the passion to destroy.

For the first time, the return of the social revolution has thrown the old world into chaos. The great fear of the *million pourri* has marked its class frontiers with emotional excrement. Even if it is very well known in the offices and factories that the bosses stink, it is good to know from now on that they smell only of the commodity system they protect. And, especially where there are bosses, you can smell the State, and the hierarchical power that is its essence.

May 1968 revealed to a great many people that ideological confusion tries to conceal the real struggle between the "party" of decomposition and the "party" of global *depassement*. But the reflux of the revolutionary movement, which undertook the collective realization of individual desires, recompressed the memory of authenticity, of real life without constraints, back into the spectacle.

Without a doubt, the interrupted feast has brutally returned to all the anguishes, all the phantasms of stasis, but the general dissatisfaction bears the mark of the blow that failed to drain it as one would drain an abscess. Spectacular commodity society has recuperated a greater part of the forces that are radically struggling against it into a new dichotomy. The pocket ideologies are regrouped around a bipolar distinction or antagonism between leftism, which takes and falsifies the spirit of global revolution, and rightism, which opposes it with all the energy of agonized or accepted renunciation.

The illusion of possible confrontation bears the alienating reality of a confrontation of illusions. Thus the spectacle contradictorily presents the "party" of survival as a comedic drama and palms off the anti-spectacular hostility of the "party" of life and the project of generalized self-management as a leftist ideology. The insurrectional reality of May disappeared under the lie and enters into the perspective of power. But the leftist clowning-around is so poorly disguised that the space-time momentarily suspended now appears as a vacuum that nothing but revolution can fill.

For power, the revolution does not exist outside of the spectacle; thus, in the dominant language, rightism and leftism express the necessary recuperation of the real conflict. Moreover, if the "party" of *depassement* is late in efficaciously revealing itself, there will be nothing to oppose the launching of a grotesque and bloody civil war, the melodrama of fascism and anti-fascism.

The protagonists polish their roles. The choir of the right chants, "Order, State, hierarchy, commodity." This strain runs, not without some difficulties, from the altos to the basses: "Neo-fascism, conservatism, Stalinism, social democracy, trade unionism, Trotskyism." In the choir of the left, where they shout until breathless, contestation has fallen heir to the remains of anarchism and the handful of partial claims taken as absolutes (women's liberation, gay liberation, children's liberation, koala liberation), groupism, anti-groupism, individualism, spontaneism, and councilism -- all vocalized in critical critiques. Whereas situationism, alone in the corner, gives the pitch, and makes as if to strike all who pass within its reach.

All this beautiful old word has lost nothing from its splits, its divergences, and its conflicts. But the clandestine pressure of enraged consciousness and its practice imposes on the spectacle a Manichean division, in which rightism and leftism support and mutually praise each other in the vacuum they both experience as a common horror. Nihilism only increases all the more.

As deficient as it is, leftist ideology, precisely because it is deficient, holds the trace of radical theory in custody. Recuperated into crumbs of the global critique that was principally elaborated by the situationists, leftism keeps in its own way the memory of the radical theory it falsifies. In leftism, the contestation appearing everywhere takes the place of unity, and its ideological refusal of all ideology takes the place of radicality.

All contestation enters into the mechanisms of self-regulation that characterize the imperialism of the commodity. But it precipitates the decline of the system, and this decline generalizes contestation. Where else can one measure most simply the efficacy of contestation as an element of decline if not at the center of gravity of spectacular-commodity society, the State? The strikes of functionaries, police officers, and magistrates are only amusing epiphenomena. What really reaches the State, and which the State reflects everywhere as an organ of mediation, repression and seduction, is the tendency of power to fall. Thus it is that the force of nihilism, roused by the development of the commodity system, takes hold and spreads willy-nilly. How does the interaction of the tendency of power to fall, spectacular antagonism, and the State on the road to cybernetization present itself?

The question has no meaning outside of the passional interest underlying it, which is necessary to recall briefly. From the beginning of the 1960s, it was clear that the social malaise came from the degradation of the passional atmosphere. Not only was the restriction of the space-time of daily life condemned to repetition and linear flow, but roles -- substitutes for authentic realization -- were thrown into the general devaluation. The appearance of passion was disappearing. It was foreseeable, then, that the accumulation of exchange values without passional value had to involve an empty passional usage, a taste of nihilism that will go from crime without reason to the absurd defense of defunct values, and which only the revolutionary project will be

able to restore to positivity. The disposition into leftism and rightism organizes and regroups the nihilistic impulses, and puts the political back on its feet, giving it a renewed passional vibrancy. Such gratuity does not occur without increasing the importance of the ludicrous.

The more the tendency of power to fall becomes marked, the more rightism clamors for a return to a strong State, with demonstrations of xenophobia, nationalism, mediocrity. Its intervention slows the reduction of the State to a cybernetized power, to the profit of its national and police functions; it shackles the dynamism of the commodity system, but not in a permanent manner, as the struggle between the old Francoism and the Spanish technocrats shows. If cybernetization -- lacking regulation, pressured by oppositional ideologies and local revolutionary actions -- slows down, the tendency of power to fall slackens. The extreme wing of rightism sets the tone, in the concurrent struggle for the reinforcement of the State, for the statist reformists (liberals, Stalinites, socialists, Trotskyites and their baggage of parties, unions, organizations, economic councils). Leftism is reinforced to the degree that contestation responds to the re-establishment of power, recuperates real opposition, and then aims at borrowing from situationism its ideology of *depassement*, creativity and immediacy, to which it can give, in the real violence of abstraction and concrete consciousness of vacuity, only a practice of terrorist play.

To the contrary, as cybernetization progresses it revives the extreme right within rightism and confirms the power of the technocrats. The fall of authority deactivates leftist violence to the profit of an ideology that takes from situationism its unitary appearance and its anti-ideological ideology, and which is going to bring forth the "humanization" of the commodity system from a reformism of daily life and from communal experiences.

The irregularity of the commodity system allows such tendencies to occur today simultaneously, without reaching a stage of paroxysm. However, outside of the revolutionary perspective, the only way is terrorism. If the ideological antagonism between rightism and leftism prevails, civil war is inevitable. If, on the contrary, the self-regulation of the State intervenes, if the antagonism rots, we are returned to insoluble problems of survival and boredom, to the passion to destroy. In one case as in the other, nihilism wins.

Apparently the State enjoys the game of exciting the Cossacks of nihilism, only to immediately calm them with the specter of civil war and by repression distributed from one side to the other, though keeping to the tradition of class justice. In so far as the State tends to be seen as social conciliator, in this sense all the programs of the parties or political groups specify its ideal unfolding. But a slight regression, a grain of sand in the network, is sufficient for a crisis to break or reveal its immediate reality. If capitalism stimulates crisis, the spectacular-commodity system runs no risk on this account for the simple reason that it is in a state of permanent crisis, that it is the self-regulation of the disorder provoked by the accumulation and socialization of the commodity. Image of the "solved" crisis in the inverse world of the spectacle, it absorbs the every day more-profound crisis of the will to live in a time reduced to duration -- to a time that measures and is measured itself.

At the slightest pretext -- economic recession, police brutality, football riot, settling of scores -- social violence will retake its course. Isn't this the best moment to become involved with radical theory, to conduct oneself with moderation in working to forward the international revolution? Because if the "party" of *depassement* fails to liquidate the conditions of survivalism, it is self-destruction for all. If the Cossacks are loosed, if the mercenaries and desperadoes of nihilism begin to march, we have not done with laughing in blood.

There is no return to the past. If the society of survival has sworn to paralyze us little by little, it is better to avoid dying slowly in the cesspools of solitude, between boredom and pollution; it is better to precipitate joyously the course of things and the death of reified beings.

If the vise is tightened, many will think it preferable to die, taking along with them, via the bomb, the machete or the mortar, all the petty officers of survival: judges, priests, cops, bosses, foremen. These are the conditions that Coeurderoy, Maldoror, the Scythes of Blok, and Artaud called the basis of oppressed subjectivity. They wait in the street, where the newspapers redistribute criminality, sifting the diverse deeds that bring them to the accounting of rightism or leftism, specifying roles and nourishing them according to stereotypes of anger or indignation.

Good souls of the dominant language, it is you who incite to murder, hatred, pillage and civil war. In the shadow of a cruel and ridiculous spectacle arises the old war of the poor against the rich, which today, masked and falsified by ideological refraction, is the war of the poor who want to stay poor and the poor who want to stop being poor.

If history should wait to pronounce, through the voice of the proletarians of the anti-proletariat, the liquidation order for the commodity system, which they are capable of executing, the old forms of legal and illegal violence would unify the two camps in the same antagonistic self-destruction. In the extreme wing of rightism and in the "situationist left," the terrorist game already prevails as the ideological practice of the end of ideologies. If we do not save the ludicrous, it will work out its own salvation against us.

Rightism has unleashed its unfortunates. The white terror announces itself with the usual musty smells of fear. The leftist game hunt aligns the dejected pieces in the satisfied resentment of the inability to experience unconstrained pleasure. Young insolents, longhairs or Arabs, pay the price of passions blocked in the spectacle, the price of a voyeurism that approaches the efficiency of a police reflex in repressing -- in what it sees and seeks to see -- the desire to really participate.

Through the play of antagonisms, it will suffice that the cowardice of friends of victims and victims in power cease to respond to the cowardice of the petit-bourgeois cops for the tactic of reprisals to prevail over exorcising demonstrations and Boy Scoutish protest.

A worker fires at his foreman, misses him, clumsily hitting a policeman instead. The attorney of the Assises Court of Loire-Atlantique demands and obtains the death penalty. The circle is closed. When the example of the Baader-Meinhof gang spreads

-- and everything is set up to incite it -- the attorney will submit the punishment he inflicts himself, through an intermediary, each time that, in the name of others, he represses his own refusal of humiliations. A month does not go by without an intervention by union hacks and bosses' commandos against wildcat strikers, without the police imprisoning, mistreating or accidentally killing. What better incitement to urban guerrilla warfare, to a savage self-defense? As long as it is not admitted everywhere and without reservation that it is necessary to destroy the commodity system and lay the bases of generalized self-management, no repression, no promise, no reasoning will succeed in deterring the rebels of survival from general self-destruction and the train of logic according to which it is better to kill a policeman than commit suicide, better to kill a judge than a policeman, to lynch a boss than kill a judge, and loot a department store, burn the Stock Exchange, devastate the banks, and dynamite the churches, then lynch the bosses, because in the rules of the terrorist game these are the pigs -- the judges, bosses, chiefs, the defenders of the commodity and its system of death that they impose and whose representation they multiply.

Today illegalist exhortation has lost its obsolete voluntarism. Spectacular organization incites violence with a greater imperative than the anarchists of the past did. Hatred of the family does not need apologists because the commodity system does not need the family. But from the instant that rightism, the spectacular function of negative nihilism, resuscitates paternal authority (despotic or reformist, who cares?), it becomes the ludicrous reason for positive nihilism to compensate with parceled violence for the loss of the unitary project of generalized self-management.

The failure to bring children to awareness of their richness and their spoliation, the trouble that the commodity system introduces among them, which gets them directly and through the mediation of the family, suffices to inject uneasiness into homes and parental associations. There is nothing prophetic in assuring that such uneasiness is far from being ended.

Splintered hatred strikes more cruelly than the unitary shock of refusal. After the prisoners outside becomes the supporters of the prisoners inside filthy bastilles, when the socially alienated free the so-called mentally alienated, it is their at not seeing the end of the society of survival that presides at the massacre of screws and white-shirted police officers.

Lubricating the spectacular lie with the rest of the heavenly illusions, priests attract popular anger more surely than the lightning that they called down on the impious of yore. Managers of intimate alienation, mountebanks of sacrifice, traditional messengers of inverted reality, traveling salesmen of the toad of Nazareth and Saint Guevara, they should know that nothing will save them save the critique in acts of religion, the return of the bonfires of the Paris Commune and the Spanish Revolution, the flame ecumenically brought from churches to synagogues, from mosques to Buddhist temples, until not a stone of divine infamy remains standing.

The march of nihilism scorns apocalyptic invocation. If the proletariat does not promptly get rid of class society, the society of survival, the spectacular-commodity system, the perspective of power -- if it does not establish generalized self-management and social harmony through the play of sovereign assemblies and their

councils -- then the sickness of survival risks generalizing the conditioned reflex of death.

In the past, Nazi fury has, in conditions much less favorable, set the tone. The bait of abstract immediate profit -- ecological destruction is only one aspect -- expresses (in repression and inversion) the individual tension experienced by all regarding a multi-passional life. If the weight of such a social inversion -- which is objectively encouraged by the logic of the commodity -- blocks the reversal of perspective, interdicts global *depassement*, despairs revolutionary consciousness, and isolates and destroys attempts at insurrection, there remains for us only the game of destruction in every sense, the pleasant suicide of terrorism, the shooting of judges in a social Western in which no one is unworthy of the bullet. All or nothing, but not survival. The revolution or terrorism.

But the ascendancy of the spectacle today is not such that the proletariat is completely dissimulated to itself. In vain and under the cover of culturalization and its barkers, increasing proletarianization reveals itself as a new negritude, as pride in being nothing, that is to say, something on the level of appearance. No proletarian feels at ease, which is hardly reassuring to those who would persuade him or her of the contrary.

Furthermore, everything that evokes the dreams of subjectivity and the hopes of the will to live continues to exercise an animating power on the majority, despite gangsterish ideologies. As situationist theory encountered before 1968 -- despite its limited diffusion -- the best reception from souls spontaneously disposed to understand and practice it, its ideological falsification has lost its rationale and passional attraction only by winning the power to fascinate. The absurdity of the use of words such as "spectacle," "survival," "individual realization," and "global critique" in the rounds of the dominant language shows well enough that the spectacle recuperates radical theory poorly, and even more poorly those people who practice it with critical consciousness of possible recuperation.

If situationism became the panacea of leftism, its pseudo-unity in decomposition, [then it is] that which can only disappear, be it in the alienated reality of the terrorist game or in the movement of the realization of the situationist project. Starting out as a critical ideology, situationism can only become ideology in arms; from pseudo-unity of refusal [to a] front of delinquents *separately* bringing partial revolt on all fronts of oppression and the lie.

At its ultimate stage, such recuperation also throws light on essential separation, principle of all hierarchy, of all sacrifice, of all separations: the division between intellectual and manual.

While the accumulation and socialization of the commodity entails the tendency of power to fall, the devaluation of the role and function of the intellectual coincides with the culturalization of the spectacle. In absorbing culture, the spectacle tends to reduce the intellectual's role to bureaucratic functions, while self-abstraction -- in the roles to which the intellectual is submitted -- is keenly felt as promotion and a regression toward intellectualism.

The spectator is intellectualized proportionately as the spectacle drains the reservoirs of culture. So that in refusing to accept oneself as spectator, as participant in general passivity, as ensemble of roles, each comes to criticize his or her own forced intellectualization.

Different from the old rancor of the self-taught and the ignorant toward people of patented culture, the spontaneous refusal of intellectualism responds to a confused critique of the spectacle and roles. It is also pleasing to see how, in the antagonism of the ideologies of right and left, the intellectualism of the anti-intellectuals is dead set against the intellectuals of anti-intellectualism. The intellectual -- that of the academy, the cafe or the groupuscules -- secretes ideology as generalized ideology intellectualizes the most besotted of the old combatants. Social changes have been roused, even in the present, only by the agitation of intellectuals, under their control, through the mediation of culture. To consider how the radicality of Marx, Sade and Fourier disappeared, how it begins to revive in the situationist project, and how it is privy to becoming (in the hands of the new university intellectual) an incomprehensible hodgepodge condemned twice by terrorist practice (as its occult source and as its useless abstract dimension) -- to do all this, it seems urgent to transmit that radicality to those who know its use, since it comes from their practice and only their practice can continue it without end. It is high time that those who transmit and continue this radicality be already *declassé* people who are already conscious of the struggle for the liquidation of classes, revolutionaries who also live as unitarily as possible and want to prove their efficiency by destroying the world of separations.

From those who are prepared to act alone because they know that thousands of others are acting in the same way, will be born the "party" of *depassément*, the resurgence -- in much more favorable conditions -- of what Marx and Engels called "our party."

IV. THE SUBVERSIVE GAME AND THE "PARTY" OF *DEPASSEMENT*

Humanity will be destroyed neither by the disorder of anarchy nor by the confusion of despotism (...); the result of the new conflict of these two primordial powers of humanity will be nothing but a new revolution that will conserve it. --- Hurrah, or the Revolution of the Cossacks.

As it moves along with the movement of accumulation and socialization of the commodity, the old opposition between private capitalism and State capitalism is abolished in the totalitarian reality of the spectacular-commodity system.

Individualizing alienation, the universality of the commodity reveals to each person the identity existing between all forms of repression and the lie and the reductive movement in which life is changed into survival. Contradictorily, all forms of refusal bear within themselves the collective propagation of the will to live, individually experienced.

Everything tends to become a commodity in a process in which what is opposed to the imperialism of the commodity tends to become everything. The revolution corresponds to this awareness. The root of spectacular-commodity society is the commodity, being and object totally transformed into exchange value. The root of

generalized self-management is humanity itself, the concrete individual in his or her unitary and collective movement of liberation.

Though the refusal of hierarchy, the global critique, and permanent analysis are indispensable, the diffusion of radical theory and its practice will not escape the risks of ideological backsliding and ethical voluntarism that attempt to oppose them as long as the root of the commodity system remains untouched by a collective action in which individual passions dominate and gather together, by a subversive game in which real life adventure experiments with the destruction of the commodity, through diversions and sabotage, and generalized self-management.

To strengthen the will to live, to clarify the rationality of radical subjectivity, to call for struggle against sacrifice, roles and militantism makes real sense only in a practice whose efficacy objectively founds the hope of radically changing the dominant conditions. In the periods in which the analysis of new historical conditions was elaborated, the exigencies imposed on the revolutionary in the unity of his or her theory and practice necessarily called for the establishment of coherence in an essentially defensive manner, in a world in which everything attacked him or her. Failing to directly shake alienating conditions, the offensive technique consisted of attacking persons, treating as an enemy anyone who supported the dominant conditions.

From now on, it is possible to demand less and obtain more from the anti-militant revolutionary, because it is possible to pass to the attack of the system, to participate effectively in striking against it, and to prove by the practice of the *subversive game* the excellence of the rationality that animates it.

Theory is not apprehended radically if it is not tried out. It only superficially touches the individual who does not discover in it a way of drawing out the will to live. Outside of such unity, the passions are blocked up, turning against themselves. Theory is crumbled, ideology and passions harmonize in an identical inversion. Either terrorism or the subversive game. The stakes are critical. Since what the sociologists have called the explosion of May -- because it blew them up -- the wild beasts of spontaneity are on the loose. The self-regulation of power, menaced on all sides as it menaces everywhere, puts its money on the antagonism between rightism and leftism, and on its decline, to harness subjective energy. But for anyone who suddenly discovers the unique character of his or her subjective universe, the plurality of desires, the violence of the will to live: can he or she exist any longer not being innocently amenable to the act of throwing a little monkeywrench into the machinery of daily brutality? The "party" of *depassement* will be born from such acts, from such individuals. Its existence as a collective manifestation is tied to this question: can each individual multiply his or her chances for authentic life by destroying that which destroys him or her? Generalized self-management will come from the answer given in deeds.

Not only does the subjective game exclude, by virtue of its simple coherence, all militant practice, all action that implies sacrifice, renouncement or the accumulation of misery, but the apprenticeship of self-management -- which is positivity -- incites to all the joys of everyday life. At the places of intervention, the quest for impunity is the most succinct tactical form of creativity.

Thus, instead of preaching revolutionary fortitude to the world, as is the case when one resorts unilaterally to books, speeches, leaflets -- even if done critically -- it is better that radical theory be communicated inseparably with the propagation of methods sabotage and diversion, on the condition that the subversive players spread it on their part, by every means, by propagating their particular techniques and the types of actions they judge opportunely appropriate for disrupting the system.

In fact, there is no factory where sabotage and diversion are *not* cheerfully practiced. It is necessary to generalize them through consciousness of the project that unites the liquidation of the commodity system and apprenticeship in generalized self-management. The presence of global critique gives maximum import, impunity and pleasure to actions taken against fragments of the commodity. It is the revolutionary dimension in the subversion and emancipation of everyday individuals, the opening for collective *depassement*, the guarantee of tactical and strategic rationality. The radical critique, in rejoining the spontaneous subversive game, will reinforce the fundamental practical unity that will permit all varieties of revolutionary action.

It is important that each person individually proves his or her effective autonomy, so that accustomed to act alone with consciousness of a common project, he or she learns never to tolerate what is done in his or her name, never to act in the name of others, and to discover, in the reinforcement of his or her will to live, the practical truth of collective action.

From the start, it is out of the individual, with his or her passions, creativity, imagination and insatiable lust for real experiences that movements for social change burst forth. And no collective movement will reach the qualitative force of radicality until it proves that it increases the power of individuals over their own daily life. Being radical, it places history at the service of individual happiness.

The conscious masses, the opposite of crowds, conditioned and conditionable, are composed of individuals aware of their subjectivity and its global exigencies! The imperialism of subjectivity develops, in the course of the struggle, the spontaneity of collective self-management! Each for themselves and self management for all!

Natural enemies of the bourgeoisie, which now is the group that organizes survival, proletarians become revolutionaries only by thwarting ideological tricks in the movement where their spontaneous practice elaborates radical theory and is confirmed as practical consciousness. At present, the accent has been placed, on the one hand, on the elaboration of radical theory through an analysis of the old world and through practice in which the analyst negates him or herself as separated consciousness; and, on the other hand, but inseparably, on its diffusion. The problem was to say everywhere to people: here are the real reasons that guide your actions. Thus becoming conscious of their misery and their richness, they recognize themselves in a common project and, from there, act more effectively and with a better understanding of what they really want. The May Days have revealed the result.

Now that degenerated leftism manipulates the remnants of the possible revolution into the perspective of hierarchical power, it is time to replace despair with pleasure: to arouse to radical theory by the stimulation of its uses.

The principle that what is easiest to overthrow and destroy is also what is most immediately concrete in the mechanisms of the spectacular-commodity system, indicates well enough that the simplest and most concrete function allows the best clandestine revolutionary practice.

Were it only with regard to the ease of execution, with impunity and efficiency, the pleasure of ludicrous subversion is -- from all evidence -- the privilege of those who have the upper hand on the commodity in gestation, of the workers in the sectors of production and distribution: factories, warehouses, department stores, agricultural cooperative centres, freight transport (truckers, railwaymen, dockers).

Practiced everywhere, sabotage and diversion are experienced there with a maximum of happiness. In the vital sector of spectacular-commodity society the manual worker is, from the point of view of revolutionary struggle, the one who holds the raw material of generalized exchange. Isn't it scandalous that, with or without factory occupations, strikers have to this day never touched the commodity?

At best, in suspending production (rarely distribution), the striking workers only superficially disturb the self-regulating mechanisms. But, at this stage of intervention, it is no longer sabotage that has the most import but, rather, diversion, the diversion of the raw material of exchange, all the ways of removing it from the circuits of production and distribution where it becomes exchange value, is accumulated, reproduced, socialized: all the ways of putting it into the collective service of the individual will to live.

The warehouses, supermarkets, priority industries (that is, those that furnish the material equipment necessary for the realization of our desires) could truly recover, at their actual level of development, the functions filled in ancestral communities of free style (the Trobrianders, for example) by the forge and the communal granary. The impending strikes will be less boring, and thus more revolutionary, when they offer the lure of human usage of the goods of production and consumption.

How could strikers neglect, if the strike were truly theirs to begin with, if they acted with full autonomy, to seize the stocks so as to distribute them, to utilize them for their profit (arms, means of pressure on the management and union leaders), or to destroy them if they have no use value (gadgets, boxed putrefaction, polluting products, etc.)?

Against the terrorism of theft, pillage and legal exploitation, salesmen, women and checkout clerks should utilize trustworthy tactics. They should, at the first hint of a strike, organize the free distribution of products traditionally transformed into commodities, and the diffusion of texts explaining how their new practice announces the mode of social organization managed by all. It is possible to slip on the individual label of a product a note giving the price of becoming real again, specifying its wretched quality, its function as illusion and so on. Subversive activity, more surely than calls to revolutionary practice, brings into play this principle of satiable and insatiable pleasure, this grain of authentic realization that is spread everywhere, affirms liberty, specifies autonomy, destroys roles, ideologies, authoritarianisms, repugnant behaviors (jealousy, avarice, contempt for women, men, children, etc.). From within autonomy generalizing itself through subversion aimed at the commodity

system, it is survival that is put into service in the name of life, thus founding the movement of generalized self-management.

Thus, each profession discovers what hastens its end as each worker discovers how he or she can destroy all that which is appropriated from him or her, in order to appropriate him or herself all that he or she is allowed to construct. Creativity has no limit.

From fear that only the death logic of terrorism has the upper hand, it is necessary to open the gate to an anonymous and consciously oriented insight against the order of things, not against its servants. Ideologies are directed against people, the subversive game against conditions. Terrorism shows small bosses that if they don't consume the big bosses, they will be consumed by them first. The subversive ludicrous is content just to shake the coconut tree of hierarchy, so that no one remains there -- if it is not they who are strung up and hung there -- and at the time to burn it. Likewise, it is preferable, in the tactic of taking hostages, to threaten destruction of expensive prototypes, stock, and computers, rather than bosses, who one will execute in despair, for example, if one fails to obtain the disarmament and retreat of repressive forces sent to break the insurrectional strike. Clandestine experience and anonymous subversion offer to those who fear hierarchical "superiors" -- not out of cowardice, but because they know well enough that a proprietor of authority, ridiculous as it is, has the powers of boredom and repression -- the occasion of regaining assurance, of measuring the deception of roles, of discovering him or self as original subjectivity, of no longer having this fear which is the source of terrorism, of knowing this social feeling of authentic richness that gives courage and resolution in the strike or insurrection.

We are millions discovering, in confirming our own possibilities, a revolution whose pleasure we want to relish at the point of running risks, and we recognize fully the force of repressions in order to study all the ways to avoid displeasure. Prudent or flamboyant, the subversive player is never a candidate for martyrdom. The *grand game* of anonymous subversion prepares for the international appearance of the "party" of *depassement* in exemplary collective actions. In this style of radical intervention, the individual is seized at the root in seizing the root of the commodity world, becoming his or her own leader, hostile to all leaders, giving to his or her authentic passions -- to love, play, encounter, hate, create, dream -- their dimension of multidimensional realization, their bed in the making of history.

(Author's note, 5 January 1972: the ensemble of these notes constitutes the outline of a work that will be prepared under a more appropriate form.)

[Editor's note: at the conclusion of "On the decomposition of our enemies," included in *The Veritable Split in the International: Public Circular of the Situationist International*, 1972, the SI had the following to say about Vaneigem's preface.]

"As for Vaneigem, he is so utterly flummoxed, he has recently seized the poor occasion of a presentation of selected extracts of Ernest Coeurderoy to graft very arbitrarily thereon his opinion of the revolution. It is the typical text of the *vulgar pro-situ*, who has nothing to say but wants to sign; who would like to sell the advertizing value of his name on the *wrapper* of someone else's book. But he has also, in order to

sign, to speak for himself on questions that escape him. So that the most hollow formulae, and the long series of concepts without use, accumulate in a slap-dash manner in what seems to be a bad pastiche of the Vaneigem of 1962. The spectacle, just like Vaneigem, would not cease to reinforce itself by weakening itself, and -- if by ill luck there is no revolution -- one will have ever more terrorist confrontations between the ones and the others [sic]. Cryptically, Vaneigem hints that the SI could well find itself at the extremist pole of this terrorism, on the leftist side. A bit of worthless 'theory' is sprinkled upon his frozen and archaic abstractions. He shows a certain conflict between the 'rich and ruling bourgeoisie,' which is for him simply and literally represented by 'technocrats, union leaders, politicians, bishops, generals and chief cops,' and the 'poor and exploited bourgeoisies of the departmental managers, subordinate cops, small shopkeepers, seedy priests, executives.' One can see the rigor and the precision of his analyses from these quotations. And, further on, he discovers that 'what weighs upon us is no longer capital but the logic of the commodity.' He knows only too well that Marx did not wait for him to demonstrate that capital is nothing other than the 'logic of the commodity,' but Vaneigem naively calculates that his phrase *will appear to be modern*. In the same way that, by a lucky windfall of Vaneigemism become solitary, what weighs on us 'is no longer the power of one man nor of one class conscious of its predominance. . . .' But who will he get to believe this? The dominant class is everywhere as *conscious of its predominance* as Vaneigem himself is conscious of his inferiority. By their very tone, these hasty revisions do not recall Bernstein, nor even Edgar Morin, but Louis Paulwels. Like a more learned Lefebvre, or a Nash less audacious in faking, believing that he can save himself by *omission*, Vaneigem declares himself strongly in favor of the 'situationist project,' hoping that the reader will be able to forget how much Vaneigem has himself become unworthy of it, and will not be able to see straight away that these few recent pages provide the overwhelming proof of this. Two enormous details will suffice to show how Vaneigem spares a little his wretched reader. (The weakness of putting up with survival implies that nearly everywhere else others have some equal or superior weakness.) Vaneigem says quickly, in passing, that in November 1970 the SI no longer inspired in him anything but 'indifference.' He believes he can pass the thing off, without further explanation, as a *sudden mystery*. But, in the same way that there is nothing mysterious here, there is nothing sudden about its advent (cf. the report of the 7th Conference of the SI in 1966). And -- just as Vaneigem slips out the truth, somehow a bit cynically on his part, that 'theory is not seized radically as long as it is not experienced' -- he attempts to recapture, as if nothing has happened since then, his old deflated bluff by praising those who were in May 1968 'the insurrectionists of the will to live.' We have already shown that the SI was something less vague and more precisely historical in the occupations movement. But the 'Communique of the SI concerning Vaneigem,' dated 9 December 1970, reveals that Vaneigem's will to live was, even then, rather far from this insurrection."
