

## On Anti-authoritarianism

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*The challenge to the established order of capitalist civilization originates at the moment in two markedly different sectors of the world population: the under class of the colonized peoples (including American blacks), and the middle-class youth of the mother countries. The former have scant need to theorize about their condition and needs; for them, the revolutionary imperative is all too clear. But the latter are not so sure of themselves. At least, very little in their world seems to go according to the classical Marxist program. Where one ought to find the locus of rebellion—the industrial working class—one finds instead (with some notable and much studied exceptions) either a virtual political silence or even an apparent reactionism. And on the other hand, where the assumptions of a strict materialism would predict indifference if not militant defense of the status quo, one finds widespread angst, boredom, anger, rebellion. Why does this happen? What does it portend? Most important, what is the concrete basis of the curious alliance that seems to be materializing in today's world between the victims of neocolonial aggression and the aggressor's privileged children?*

*Dutschke's essay by no means deals conclusively with such problems, and it leaves unopened the question of cross-class or student-worker politics within the world capitals. But his exploration of the concept of anti-authoritarian struggle, more Marcusean than Marxist in many of its features, is an important statement in the continuing debate about the role of the mother-country radical in a fight whose scope, as he says, is clearly global.*

*In 1968, inspired by the assassin of Martin Luther King, Jr., a young German rightwinger put several bullets in Dutschke's*

*head and body. Dutschke survived. An incorrigible militant with a stereotypically German gift for theory, he has properly come to be seen as an embodiment of what is best in the Western-wide New Left movement.*

USING ALL THE MEANS at its disposal, the existing System strives to prevent us from introducing those conditions in which men can live creative lives without war, hunger, and repressive work. Every radical opposition to this System must necessarily assume a global dimension today. In the current historical period, the globalization of the revolutionary forces is the most important task of those who are working for the emancipation of the human race.

The underprivileged in the whole world constitute the historical mass base of liberation movements. In them alone lies the subversive-explosive character of the international revolution.

The Third World, as the totality of peoples suffering under the terror of the world market system of the giant corporations, and whose development was prevented by imperialism, launched this struggle in the 1940's, completely under the influence of what Trotsky called the "betrayed" proletarian revolution in the Soviet Union. But it was marked by a crucial difference: the mass character and the permanence of the revolutionary process were already grasped in theory.

A new stage began in the 1960's with the revolutionary upheavals in Algeria and Cuba and the unbroken struggle of the South Vietnamese Liberation Front against the Diem dictatorship. Only the latter achieved world-historical significance for the worldwide opposition movement. The American aggression in Vietnam, too blatant and brutal to be overlooked, took place at a time when imperialism's various mechanisms for influence and control could no longer prevent the victory of the revolutionary liberation forces in South Vietnam. The historical bad luck of the American power elite—more exactly, of U.S. imperialism—consists precisely in the fact that it had to destroy its only "base of legitimacy," namely, the anticommunist ideology, in order to make the suppression of the social-revolutionary liberation movements at all possible under the banner of anti-communism. This apparent contradiction dissolves once we understand that imperialism had to recognize the ideology of coexistence, sponsored by the Soviet Union, in order to stabilize a calm zone of the System, at least in middle and western

Europe, and in order to "cover its rear" for the short-term and effective destruction of the revolutionary movements of the Third World. The historical guilt of the Soviet Union consists in its complete failure to grasp this strategy of imperialism in a deep and fundamental sense and to counter it in a subversive and revolutionary manner.

The aggression of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam, escalating from month to month, from year to year, materialized in the highly developed countries as the "abstract presence of the Third World in the metropolis" (O. Negt), as an intellectual productive force in the process of the development of an awareness of the antinomies of the present-day world.

When, in the middle 1960's, Vietnam became a living issue for us through lectures, discussions, films, and demonstrations, we revolutionary socialists were able historically to sublimate, so to speak, our guilt feelings over the existence of the Berlin Wall and of Stalinism in the German Democratic Republic by propagating the specific difference between seizing power through force, without, however, revolutionizing the masses and the collectivization of the idea of social liberation in the process of revolution, as in Vietnam. But in point of fact, Vietnam, *a priori*, presented more than just a means of compensation or a convenient rack on which to hang the activities of the leftist student groups. The world-historical significance of the struggle of the Vietnamese people, the exemplary significance of this conflict for subsequent struggles against imperialism, very soon became the focal point of the discussions of Vietnam. That this decisive aspect was able to penetrate into the students' consciousness so soon seems to have its material explanation in the students' specific relationship to the means of production. As students—although varying from faculty to faculty—we find ourselves in an intermediate position in the total social reproduction process. On the one hand, we are intellectually and educationally a privileged fraction of the people, but actually this privilege signifies nothing but frustration. Frustration because the student, especially the politically committed student, day after day experiences critically, and sometimes materially, the stupidity of the cliques of political hacks who do the bidding of the irrational authorities. Moreover, these anti-authoritarian students have not yet assumed any materially secure positions in society and are still relatively far from power interests and power positions. This temporary subversive position of the students by itself engenders a dialectical identity between the immediate and the his-

torical interests of the producers. Hence, the vital needs and interests in regard to peace, justice, and emancipation can best materialize in these sociological positions. But students develop with real virulence only when they become politicized in the anti-authoritarian struggle against the bureaucracy within the milieu of their own university institution, when they more resolutely engage in the political struggle for their interests and needs. We must not forget the direct relationship of the student producer to his educational milieu. His learning situation in the university is determined by the dictatorship of examinations, rising in an inflationary way, and by the dictatorship of professorism. In turn, the professors are the servants of the State. The present-day nationalization of the whole society creates the basis for an understanding of the anti-state and anti-institution struggle of the radical extraparliamentary opposition.

Thereby Vietnam lost much of its apparent abstract character. The productive mediation between the direct and the historico-emancipationist interests of the anti-authoritarian students can only be effected in conflict, in the political struggle. The restrictive policy of the university bureaucracy, the brutal use of the West Berlin civil army in several demonstrations, our persistent efforts to illuminate our society's contradictions and actively and systematically to violate the groundrules of bourgeois society—all these created the anti-authoritarian position, an attitude which further drives the education and the self-education of the individual in the direction of the revolution. Thus it was the ruling clique itself which beat into us our anti-authoritarian attitude. Our opposition now is directed not against some small "mistakes" of the System. Rather, it is a total opposition, aimed at the whole way of life of the authoritarian state as it has existed up to now.

The anonymous terrorism of the state-societal machinery of force and violence is omnipresent in all institutions, but it possesses "no other power outside the government machine" (Marx). The *novum* of our situation lies only in the fact that we no longer accept this order as an incontestable and unchallenged necessity. Increasingly and ever more clearly, the State thus loses its apparent impartiality and exhibits itself as the "abominable machine of class rule" (Marx).

At the end of the so-called economic miracle, i.e., after the complete exhaustion of the available quantitative and qualitative manpower and occupational structure, the Federal Republic is characterized by its high unproductive state expenditures, subventions, etc., which during the period of prosperity

could be handed out with relative ease by the state machine, in the process of establishing itself, to the representatives of the vested interests. At the end of the reconstruction period of West German capitalism, however, they suddenly appear as additional, mostly unproductive expenditures, as dead weight dangerous for the further development of the economy, as *faux frais* of capitalist production. The billions of "unprofitable investments" in the field of education (construction of new universities, schools, vocational schools, engineering schools, etc.) which might have been necessary for the creation of a quantitatively and qualitatively new vocational and educational structure in the present phase of West German capitalism are not available without sharpening inflation. In addition, there is the fact that the contradictory unity of the total apparatus of oligopolies, state-social bureaucracy, parties, lobby groups, etc., is not really guided by a "ruling will" affecting the totality of society.

The existence of stagnating production sectors incapable of accumulation (for instance, mining and agriculture, which go about "on crutches" and must be subsidized) and the underdeveloped status of the decisive bearers of the accumulation process in the 1970's (the historically new branches of industry such as electronics, space-research, aircraft construction, nuclear energy, etc.) hint at a long-term stagnation period of West German capitalism.

The evaluation of the social-economic situation of the Federal Republic and West Berlin is the precondition for a political-strategic discussion of the process of undermining and overthrowing the Federal Republic in the context of the international conflict between revolution and counterrevolution. It is increasingly clear that the "grand coalition," this last desperate attempt of the ruling oligarchies to "solve" the structural difficulties of the System, runs into objective barriers and is forced to protract the structural crisis by means of subsidies. It thereby lays the groundwork for ever-deepening contradictions in a long-term sense. We can view it as the new "party of order" whose direct business it is to keep the wage-dependent masses in a state of political immaturity and to shift the cost of the structural crisis onto them. In his remarkable historical essay, "The Civil War in France," Marx discusses the tasks of such a form of class-rule and states that its sole reason for being is the prevention of the "emancipation of the producing masses." For him, this form is "the most abominable of all political regimes." All fractions of the total apparatus—the former Fas-

cists, certain sorts of resistance fighters, and the state-social bureaucracy—join forces in this coalition; the liberal bourgeoisie, the representatives of the monopolies, the betrayers of the workers from the labor unions, the Sickerts & Co., all embrace each other, and the centers of manipulation, the Augsteins and Springers, ensconce themselves within it. Together they form the “anonymous joint-stock company” to impose the usually subtle but, when necessary, the *manifest* terrorism of the class rule of late capitalism whose historical task is to transform the masses into a collective which reacts functionally in the interest of the rulers, to keep the masses utilizable and available at all times for military and civil purposes. But in the Federal Republic it is precisely this decisive task that late capitalism can fill to a lesser and lesser degree. The cultural revolutionary transition period which since June 2, 1967, at the latest, has mobilized decisive strata inside and outside the university has by no means come to an end; and it can be terminated only by the massive and brutal employment of all means of repression.

The ruling class has undergone a deep transformation. For a long time now it has no longer been identical with the nominal owners of the means of production. Marx had already seen the dawn of a new “class” of “industrial bureaucracy.” This class cannot overcome the fundamental contradiction of bourgeois capitalist society. Rather, it brings it to a climax and ushers in its last phase, in which all capital functions have been socialized and delegated to certain groups and institutions. “The more a ruling class is able to absorb the most impotent men of the oppressed classes, the more solid and more dangerous is its rule” (Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 3). The development has gone beyond this phase and has completed the repressive socialization of capital. Therein lies the strength and the weakness of the system of late capitalism. In fact, this development does not leave any groups outside the total context and tries to dominate all through “a system of concessions within the capitalistic framework” (Sering). This structural framework is guaranteed by the “dull compulsion of conditions,” the internalized norms and ideas of bourgeois capitalistic society. But if a socially relevant fraction of the underprivileged outside the circle of vested interests, where the national product is distributed, bursts asunder this matter-of-course restriction of interests and needs to the ruling framework, the whole system is called in question. “Thus the breaching of false consciousness can provide the Archimedean point for a more comprehensive emancipation—on an infinitely small place to be sure,

but the chance for a change depends upon the widening of such small places.” (Herbert Marcuse, *Repressive Tolerance*).

We have begun with precisely this breaching of false consciousness. Through our political activity, our analysis, our provocations and mass actions, we structurally call in question the System’s control and manipulation of individuals. This is why the “left-liberal critics” of the System, from the *Spiegel* to *Zeit*, are clearly beginning to turn against us politically. They understand the nascent danger for late capitalism, which will become a mortal danger once we are successful in arousing the spontaneity of the wage-dependent masses, destroyed by the parties, through an increasingly more effective dialectic of enlightenment and mass action. “That the workers maintain an attitude of neutrality towards the totalitarian order after the betrayal of their own bureaucracy since 1914, after the development of the parties into world-spanning apparatuses for the destruction of spontaneity, after the murder of revolutionaries, is no sign of stupidity.” (Max Horkheimer: *Die Juden und Europa*, in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 1939.) The memory of the last fifty years of the German workers’ movement can have an attraction only for the contemplative intellectual. For the masses it represents a chain of betrayal by leftist and rightist intellectuals, unbroken up to now.

Our historically correct limitation of our action to the university should not be made into a fetish. A revolutionary dialectic of the correct transitions must regard the “long march through the institutions” as a practical and critical action in all social spheres. It must set as its goal the subversive-critical deepening of the contradictions, a process which has been made possible in all institutions that participate in the organization of day-to-day life. There no longer exists a sphere in our society which would be exclusively privileged to express the interests of the whole movement in its cultural revolutionary phase.

The lukewarm opposition movement is dead, the spontaneous resistance—albeit it very often still in a completely unorganized form—has begun. Be it in Frankfurt or in Bremen, in Berlin or in Hamburg, the anti-authoritarian camp controls the links of the chain decisive for developing the political and social consciousness of people: the enlightenment rallies outside the universities, the plenary sessions of the students in the large universities, the meetings held by pupils in the secondary schools. The profusion of student newspapers is a mobilizing and educating force of the total movement. Everywhere “self-appointed vanguards” are being formed which have taken up

the struggle against the manipulation and repression of man's creative capabilities, and they have not been organized by a central authority or otherwise manipulated. The strength of the anti-authoritarian movement lies precisely in the fact that the practical-critical activity of the anti-authoritarians is the real expression of their own needs and of the interests of individuals. The practical awareness of one's own needs in the making, of one's own interests and sufferings, prevents the monopolization of the historical interests of individuals in a membership party "representing" the masses. We already control the streets of the metropolises and easily find our way around in what Brecht called the "jungle of the cities." But the real collectivization of the idea of social-revolutionary liberation is still to come.

The first autonomous groups are being formed in the factories—loosely coordinated with the other groups according to the principle of mutual aid. This brings the anti-authoritarian methods picked up in the streets and during the study sessions into the centers of the production process for a direct fight against the authoritarian coerciveness of the factory structure.

The state-social bureaucracy is utterly helpless in all spheres. It sees the activities of ringleaders or a temporary conflict of generations in the socially mediated conflicts. It must personalize the problems because for it history exists only as the achievement of "great personalities," and for it the masses are only the "material" of the "elite."

Many leftists, on the other hand, often court the danger of absolutizing the "proletariat" or the "masses" in an almost metaphysical way. They do not grasp the concrete and difficult dialectic of developing the political and social consciousness of the masses and do not see the temporary separation between minor radical groups and the general masses. The other danger besetting us is that of intellectual arrogance, and in the last analysis, the fear of the creative capacity of the masses who have arrived at true consciousness. The practice of the historically correct activities lies between these two false alternatives.

The old concepts of socialism must be critically suspended, not destroyed and not preserved artificially. A new concept cannot yet be realized. It can be worked out and brought into being only in the practical struggle, in the constant mediation between reflection and action, practice and theory.

Today revolutionary science is possible only *within* the anti-authoritarian movement, as a productive force for the liberation of man from the uncomprehended and uncontrolled powers of society and nature.

Today we are not bound together by an abstract theory of history but by an existential disgust in the presence of a society which chatters about liberty and yet brutally oppresses the immediate interests and needs of individuals and peoples fighting for their social-economic emancipation.

This radical (because it affects the whole man) dialectic of the sentiment and the emotion (Marcuse), of which theory is the conscious expression, unites us more strongly than ever against the nationalized authoritarian society and makes possible a unity of radical action of the anti-authoritarians, and without a party program or a party's claim to monopoly of strategy and tactics.

Both the subtle and the brutal methods of social integration no longer work on us. In the struggle with the power structures of the System, with the state-local bureaucracy, with the police, with the law machinery, with the industrial bureaucracies, etc., the sentimental-emotional rejection becomes a practical-critical knowledge, a revolutionary will to destroy the autonomous productive forces, the inhuman machineries of war and of manipulation which, from day to day, spread death and fear in this world, from day to day can cause genocide on a worldwide scale. New radical needs develop during this struggle, as for instance the desire to liberate the totality of the forces of production from the fetters of capital and the bureaucracy, and which can free man from long working hours, manipulation, and misery, and to subject these forces of production, finally, to the conscious control of the producers.

But let us not succumb to any illusions. The worldwide net of organized repression, the continuity of power, will not be easily broken. The "new man of the twenty-first century" (Guevara, Fanon) who represents the preconditions of the "new society," will be the product of a long and painful struggle in which temporary upsurges will be followed by unavoidable "defeats." Viewed in terms of classical revolutionary theory, our cultural revolution is a transitional pre-revolutionary phase in which persons and groups still yield to various illusions, abstract ideas, and utopian projects. It is a phase in which the radical contradiction between revolution and counterrevolution, between the ruling class in its new form and the camp of the anti-authoritarian and underprivileged, has not yet matured in a concrete and immediate sense. What in America is already a clearly defined reality has a great significance for use, with some modifications. "This is no time for sober reflection but a time for adjuration. The *task of intellectuals* is identical

with that of the organizer of the street, the conscientious objector, of the Diggers: *to talk with the people and not about the people*. The literature that leaves a mark is now the underground literature, the speeches of Malcolm X, the writings of Fanon, the songs of the Rolling Stones and of Aretha Franklin. All the rest sound like the Moynihan Report or a *Time* article which aims to explain everything, understand nothing, and change nobody." (A. Kopkind, *From Non-Violence to Guerrilla Warfare*, in *Voltaire-Flugschriften*, No. 14). We still do not have a broad, continuous underground literature, the dialogues of intellectuals with the people are still missing, that is to say, from the standpoint of the real, immediate, and historical interests of the people. There is the beginning of a desertion campaign in the American occupation army, but there is no organized desertion campaign in the *Bundeswehr*. We dare to attack American imperialism, but we do not yet have the will to smash our own power structure.

Comrades, anti-authoritarians, fellow human beings! There is not much time left. We, too, are being slain daily in Vietnam—and that is not an image, a phrase. If U.S. imperialism can convincingly prove in Vietnam that it is capable of destroying the revolutionary peoples' war, a long period of authoritarian world rule will start anew from Washington to Vladivostok. We stand before a historically open possibility. How this period of history will end depends primarily on our will. "If the Vietcong is not joined by an American, European, and Asiatic Cong, the Vietnam revolution will fail as others have before. A hierarchic state of functionaries will reap fruits it has not sown." (Partisan I, Vietnam, *The Third World and the Self-Deception of the Left*, Berlin, 1967). Frantz Fanon says for the Third World: "Come, then, comrades; it would be as well to decide at once to change our ways. We must shake off the heavy darkness in which we were plunged, and leave it behind. The new day which is already at hand must find us firm, prudent and resolute. (Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press, New York).

Let us, finally, accelerate our correct course. Vietnam is coming closer. In Greece the first units of the revolutionary liberation front are starting to fight. In Spain the conflict is coming to a head. After thirty years of Fascist dictatorship, a new revolutionary force exists among the workers and students organized in a united front.

The secondary school pupils in Bremen have shown how in the politicization of immediate demands of day-to-day life—

the fight against a fare hike—subversive explosive power can be developed.

Their solidarity with the wage-dependent masses and the correct handling of the contradictions and disputes with the authoritarian-militaristic police clearly show that great possibilities of struggle exist within the system of late capitalism. Such a confrontation in radical form is possible everywhere in the Federal Republic. It depends on our creative capability to deepen and politicize the apparent and immediate contradictions with courage and determination, to risk action, to unfold the initiative of the masses everywhere. True revolutionary solidarity with the Vietnam revolution consists in the actual weakening of the centers of imperialism and in their processual overthrow. The roots of our ineffectualness and resignation thus far lay in our theory.

The decisive precondition for the revolutionizing of the masses is the revolutionizing of revolutionaries.

(Translated by Salvator Attanasio)