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The state and counter-revolution

Negation

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1972

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They confront the fact that state-capitalism, the state-management of production and society, the rule over society by the class of the state, the bureaucracy, is still almost universally confused with “communism” as Marx defined it, due in part to the conspiracy of silence and distortion which unites the capitalists of both “East” and “West”.

Focusing our critique on the ‘New’ Left may appear to be beating a dead horse. But it seems as if the necrophilial zombies of the movement “vanguard”, in their pathetic enthusiasm to embrace every post-mortal spasm of Bolshevik false consciousness, are still pumping their blood into its putrescent carcass. An autopsy of this movement, a movement that bills itself as revolutionary, cannot be understood without a critical dissection of those collectivist bureaucracies it also presents as revolutionary.

It is admitting nothing to admit Russia as an example of revolutionary failure. The reality of bureaucratic counter-revolution has not been grasped until China, Cuba, North Vietnam, North Korea, Algeria, etc. are included as well. It is not enough to make vague criticisms of these states; pointing to special local conditions, the peculiarities of particular personalities in the leadership, or local “culture” as the root of the problem. This kind of empiricism and eclecticism leaves everything open for a repetition of those failures here, because it blinds us to the deeper and systematic sources of that new form of class society which disguises itself as “socialism”. It is only when the phenomenon of state-capitalism is grasped in its totality and therefore in its unity, that any coherence is attained.

I

State-capitalism, the state-management of production and society, the rule over society by the class of the state, the bureaucracy, is still almost universally confused with “communism” as Marx defined it, due in part to the conspiracy of silence and distortion which unites the capitalists of both “East” and “West”.

The dominant social relation of production in the so-called “socialist” societies is still the capital-relation, i.e., the alienation or sale of labour-power, the selling of daily life-time to capital. That this daily life-time is sold in one place to competing private fragments of capital, in another place to unified state capital, does not change the essential relationship. The producers in either case sell away the use (-value) of their daily lives, and thereby forfeit all control over the world which they produce. They thus produce an alien world. That is, the producers are still, in both places, proletarians, and wherever the proletariat is, there is capital.

II

Despite their superficial divergences the ruling ideologists of these countries all share what has been the common assumption of every ruling class in history: that there must always be a separation between those who lead and those who are led. They all began with and found their justification in the Bolshevik model of state-capitalism. In the attempt to “abolish classes” by the authoritarian use of state-power, the Bolsheviks reconstituted a dominant bureaucratic class, headed by the top executives of the “communist” parties of those respective countries. Such a model contained at its source an unconscious counter-revolutionary reversal, since as the representatives of the workers, the party and its state became their new proprietors. In order to consolidate their power, these new rulers actually had to oppose the emancipation of the proletariat. Such was the case in Russia in 1921 where the communist workers of Kronstadt, who rebelled against the domination of the party, were bombed, machine-gunned, and finally massacred on the direct orders of Lenin and Trotsky.

It may be of interest to hear what Trotsky, professed today by YSA’s militant evangelists as the libertarian disciple of Bolshevism, had to say about workers’ democracy: “They (the Workers’ Opposition) have placed the workers’ right to elect representatives above the party. As if the party were not entitled to assert its dictatorship even if that dictatorship temporarily clashed with the passing moods of workers’ democracy...” The “Revolutionary historical birthright of the party” obliges it “to maintain its dictatorship... regardless of the temporary vacillations even in the working class,” and “does not base itself at every given moment on the formal principles of workers’ democracy”.

III

But the incendiary spirit of authentic revolt could not be extinguished. It rose again in Spain in July of 1936 to reassert the unfulfilled promise of the revolutionary project. During the civil war, which was initiated by the Fascists after the assumption of power by the liberal Republican government, factories were seized, and worker’s councils made their appearance in Catalonia. In federation with each other, they self-managed and began the reorganization of production and distribution. They took preliminary steps toward the abolition of the money-wage. Peasant communes collectivized the lands. This social revolution was, from its very inception, opposed by the Republican government and its Stalinist minis-

It is no wonder that the police and university authorities have done nothing to take back the park, which, by now, has become just another junkie-infested rat-hole amid the shoddy commodity wasteland of Berkeley's hip petty-bourgeoisie.

We don't offer this perspective as mere "ideas", as just one more contemplative interpretation of the world. Our desire is to change it. Ideas are alienated desire. What is deemed impossible in the world of humans is surrendered to the world of ideals, where thought is reified. Philosophy is only the historical accumulation of aborted, unlived desire, the sublimating religion of impotent intellectuals.

The saturation of daily life by the logic of the commodity has made everyone's consciousness occupied territory. The global nature of capitalist social relations has become a false backdrop that surrounds all vision and blinds everyone to its existence. It is all one can see and therefore cannot be seen at all.

It is the task of revolutionaries to create situations that pierce this illusory boundary and reveal the possibility of a new, selfmanaged world built according to the untrammled desire of those who create it.

It is only when we seize the consciousness of the totality that we can seize the material totality. All ideals and causes are ideologies. We as revolutionaries are concerned only with desires and the strategy and tactics necessary to realize them.

ters, who denied raw materials to factories under councilist self-management and withheld arms from the anarchist militia at the Aragon front. This revolution was not defeated by the guns of Franco, but through the treachery of the bourgeois government, its Stalinist agents, and the failure of the workers' and peasants' councils to demand that their democratic federation be the absolute power in anti-Fascist Spain, rather than accept any dualism with the State. However, the Spanish experience represents "the most advanced foreshadowing in all time of a proletarian power", and one which thrived for over a year until repressed by the violence of the "left-wing" State.

IV

Proletarian revolution broke out again in Hungary in 1956. The insurgent workers of Budapest generated what became a national demand for the end of the party dictatorship and bureaucratic nationalization. They constituted workers' councils in factories and called for workers' management of the economy. This short-lived period, when workers' councils in power ran the entire country, and organized both the continuance of production and the armed defense of the revolution, saw its defeat in the ruthless repression by the Russian Army, in which every major city was pounded with artillery, and invaded by tanks. These bureaucrats knew they were fighting a whole society that was seeking to free itself.

But the overwhelming effect of the Russian invasion tends to obscure an internal source of the Hungarian failure: in the false consciousness of the workers themselves. Rather than calling for the abolition of the state, and for the undisputed power of the workers' councils, they demanded merely a "better" state under Nagy, with the workers' councils as a secondary power. They sacrificed, to the trappings of nationalism, the possibilities of their movement spreading beyond the national boundaries of Hungary (which might have saved them). "The tradition of the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living." (Karl Marx)

It might be instructive to note what Mao Tse Tung, the present ideological superstar of the New Old Left, had to say about this further attempt to resume the authentic revolutionary movement: "As I have said, in our society, it is bad when groups of people make disturbances, and we do not approve of it. But when disturbances do occur, they force us to learn lessons... It is clear to everybody that the Hungarian events were not a good thing. But they too had a dual character. Because our Hungarian comrades [i.e., the Russians] took proper action in the

course of these events, what was a bad thing turned ultimately into a good thing. The Hungarian state is now more firmly established than ever, and all other countries in the socialist camp have also learned a lesson.”

V

Large factions of the New Left are still enthralled by the spectacle of the “Cultural Revolution” in China. They have been fooled into believing that this conflict of the bureaucratic ruling class with itself constitutes some kind of genuine revolution. They should have noticed that every time the real class struggle — the struggle between the proletariat and the bureaucracy (both factions) — raised its head, the Army was hastily brought in.

In the capitalist society of the United States, the “Democratic” and “Republican” parties are but the two major factions — respectively the left and right wings — of a single ruling capitalist party and class, in whose minor conflicts and rivalries the masses are allowed to participate. Similarly, the “Cultural Revolution” in China is the result of a split in the dominant bureaucratic party (the “Communist” Party) and class. Here the masses involvement served once again as an instrument of ruling class politics.

A real revolution would have meant fundamental changes in the social relations of production. In response to this statement, our native Mao-mongers point to the formation of the “Revolutionary Three-In-One Committees” in China. These Committees, presented by the Mao faction of the Chinese bureaucracy as a radically new form of management coming out of its “Cultural Revolution” are, even formally, merely another mode of state management in which a member of the Party local cadre and a member of the local unit of the Army — two representatives of the state — hand-pick a third from among the ranks of the local workers in a factory. Thus, on formal grounds alone, this organ is an utter fraud as a form of workers’ management since it is not only the state which decides in any crucial case, but in every case. The “Revolutionary Three-In-One Committee” is, on the face of it, only a special form of bureaucratic management designed to mystify the real relation of state/class rule. It allows the workers the illusion of participation in management, whereas actually, they are only agents in their own alienation to the state.

The pattern of this pseudo-revolution was little different from that of normal alienated daily life: from producing surplus-value for a unified ruling bureaucracy,

The federation of councilist revolutionary organizations through their mandated delegates forms a moment of the practical rehearsal of the society of workers’ councils; of the necessary maturation of the praxis of self-management.

By regarding themselves as essentially premature workers’ councils engaged in the production of councilist revolution, they embody the unity of councilist theory and practice, recognizing in selfmanagement both the means and end of the struggle.

XIV

A few activities have been done locally that partially embodied the critique presented here. The tactic of scandalizing false consciousness in order to reveal it is one of the most potent of all in the primitive stages of the authentic revolutionary movement. In Berkeley, the diversion of the Daily Cal by Point-Blank! and our distribution of the fraudulent Warren Widener letters have demonstrated the possibilities of this method. Also, secondarily, it momentarily captured for ourselves the use of the media of the dominant spectacle, which disseminated a critique of itself by reporting our activities.

Unlike these deliberate efforts, certain spontaneous acts have manifested only a semi-conscious revolutionary content. The recent widespread trashing of the local merchants of alienation expressed a healthy disrespect for the commodity but because the rioters were mostly unconscious of the radical nature of their own actions they could not supercede them. The only hint of supercession came in the few instances of limited but qualitative looting, the transition from mere abstract destruction to appropriation. Although in such moments of play individuals assert their human superiority over the dead things that dominate them, this negation of commodity-capital is only a very shallow beginning of the negation of capital, still very far from the point of production.

The initial seizure of what became People’s Park contained an authentic moment of revolutionary expropriation and of self-management but soon became recuperated into a “therapeutic” gardening project. The short-sighted militants, who might have otherwise generalized their action and spread the logic of expropriation one step further, i.e., to the looting of local supermarkets and the free distribution of food, etc., instead dutifully watered with partial solutions the compost heap of aborted struggles from which grew, once again, the ideology of reformism and, simultaneously, the renewed strength of the Spectacle.

and of objective wealth as inherited from capital. The councils are the social organs for the self-management of society as a whole and for the transformation of daily life. As the definitive end of separate power, they have as their maximum programme the end of all other artificial separations imposed by the old world, exposing the enforced dichotomy between work and play, art and everyday life, imagination and reality — all the fallacious divisions that have embalmed the free creative activity of men and women since the beginning of prehistory.

The councils, never anticipated by any theoretician, emerged historically as the spontaneous creation of the revolutionary proletariat: in Russia in 1905 and again in 1917 as the "Soviets," in Germany and much of middle Europe after the First World War, and in Spain in 1936 where workers' self-management of factories and farms was practiced for a substantial period. And we have already mentioned the case of Hungary, where the workers' councils effectively ran the country and organized the armed defense until repressed from without by the overwhelming force of "Soviet" imperialism.

The eruption of workers' councils in France was only narrowly averted by the best united efforts of the French "Communist" Party, trade union bureaucracy, and bourgeois government, who saw in the threatened abolition of power the common danger of their mutual demise, during the nationwide general strike, and the factory and university occupations which occurred in June of 1968.

XIII

In matters of revolutionary organization, we take as our starting point the "Minimum Definition of Revolutionary Organizations"¹ of the Situationist International², as we do indeed seek "the international realization of the absolute power of the workers' councils."

Beyond that, we maintain that the organizations which aim at the power of the councils must be councilist in practice as well as in theory. Practicing councilist democracy in their internal relations and in their relations with one another, they sever themselves from all the gangrene of the old Leninist ideology of hierarchical organization and party vanguardism, which still unites groups as "disparate" as the C.P. U.S.A., that palsied paragon of Stalinist orthodoxy, and the Third-Worldist altar-boys of Venceremos.

¹ Available through us.

² The S.I. no longer exists as an international revolutionary organization. However, its theoretical contribution has formed, for us, part of the essential background of our own theoretical perspective.

the proletarian masses were turned to performing political surplus-labour for rival factions of a rent bureaucratic ruling class.

VI

On November 2, 1956, at exactly the same time that Soviet tanks were rumbling through the streets of Budapest, the Ho Chi Minh government faced its most important uprising of dissatisfied peasants. Ho reacted to the rebellion with eminently practical measures. Hanoi, acting as any colonial power would have done, sent their 325th division to crush the rebels. Bureaucrats are the same the world over.

The Viet Minh always was a good Stalinist organization. This explains their liquidation of any self-governing organs of popular administration, as well as the systematic assassination of revolutionary militants not affiliated with the Viet Minh. Such was the case in the autonomous workers' insurrection in Saigon in 1945. In August of that year the rebel workers of Tramway Company who took over and managed the enterprise themselves were denounced as traitors and reactionaries when they refused representation by the Viet Minh. Despite this attempt at bureaucratic manipulation the workers organized themselves into a proletarian militia to fight the French. Meanwhile, the local Stalinists were far more concerned with arresting and shooting their revolutionary critics than with pursuing any struggle against the French imperialists.

In the same month Ta Tu Thau, a popular local insurgent, was arrested for his encouragement of workers' and peasants' councils in place of Viet Minh rule. He was "tried" before "peoples' committees" and three times declared innocent. As there was little point in arranging a fourth trial, he was shot a few days after his third acquittal.

One fact emerges from any critical look at Vietnamese history: that what happens in Vietnam is mostly determined in Moscow, Peking, and Washington. The New Left's fetishization of Vietnam blinds it to what lies behind the fallacy that the Vietnamese struggle is self-determined: the external manipulation of the war from Washington, Moscow, and Peking through their decisive military and economic support.

A more basic point is the similarity in the social structure of the three world powers that have dominated (prevented) the historical development within Vietnam, a similarity not only to each other's but to that of the Vietnams as well. All five are class societies in which there is a class that manages and a class that obeys.

Each of these systems is based on the accumulation of capital. Workers in all those societies are wage-labourers (in South Vietnam increasingly so due to forced urbanization) who have no control over the use of their lives. That Vietnam, both North and South, China, Russia, as well as America are all capitalist should by now surely escape no one.

VII

The mass movements occurring in these countries were, in fact, social revolutions in the exact sense that they overturned the old social relations and established new ones. But the content of these revolutions was not and could not have been communist society, communist social relations. On the contrary, their real content was economic development: specifically, a certain form of capitalist development; state-capitalist development. The new social relations they established were capital-relations, specifically, the relation of state capital. Thus they were revolutions, but not communist revolutions. Rather, they were substitutes for, or variants of, the classical bourgeois revolutions (such as occurred in England in the 1660's and France in the late 1700's) in late-to-capitalize societies for whom the strength of already-developed foreign capital (English, French, etc.) had forever closed the classical capitalist road.

These revolutions certainly contained proletarian elements. This was true especially in their early phases due to the premature strength of the wage-labouring class in these societies (a strength not based on their internal development, but on external stimulation due to the penetration of advanced foreign capital). For this reason, the consolidation of bureaucratic rule can be seen as a counter-revolution to these proletarian tendencies.

VIII

The relationship between North Vietnamese state-capitalism and the state-capitalist movement here at home is only the clearest and most present-to-mind example of the general connection between world pseudo-socialism and the pseudo-socialist movement in the U.S.

The so-called "revolutionary movement" here has never detached itself from the goal of "socialism" — i.e., state-capitalism — (with the exception of the anarchists, who detach themselves from everything), and its organizations reproduce

acid-heads, and Maoists that occupy the politico-hippie ghettos of Berkeley, or the impoverished rural settlements of youthful escapists from the urban and suburban middle class. The term "commune" rather defines the indistinction of rural from urban in the commune as a settlement-formation, a type of settlement, and the common ownership — or rather, the non-ownership — of the means of their production by the residents of the commune.

XII

The content of the revolution that marks the beginning of communist society can only be conceived of as the NEGATION of capital, the abolition of the capital-relation, of alienated labour. [For anyone who takes Marx' critique of political economy seriously, capital is not an object, but a social relation of production surrounding the (social) use of objects. For example, the revolutionary seizure of capital in the form of factories, etc. and their councilist self-management by the workers renders them no longer capital, even though they consist of the same physical objects as before.] It can only mean the storming of capital from within, by the proletariat as incorporated within capital, at the point of production. It must mean the establishment of a new social relation of production in place of capital: workers' management of production, the power of the federated workers' councils, or, in Marx' phrase, the control of the production of society by "the associated producers" themselves, thereby no longer proletarians.

NOT the state-ownership of the means of production (state-capital), but their social ownership or socialization through their appropriation by society as a whole in the form of the association of producers, the federated workers' councils, marks the beginning of socialism. The social revolution is nothing other than this act of appropriation of capital by society, the seizure of factories and all social facilities by their workers themselves, and their administration by the society-wide federation of factory and community councils, and (later) of councilist communes.

By the councils we mean the popular assemblies of factories, communities, etc. which self-manage their collective work and affairs, and which federate with other councils for deliberations and execution of all common activities by means of elected, strictly mandated, periodically rotating, and immediately revocable delegates. Their task is (1) the organization of production and distribution (no longer accomplished through the exchange-relations known as commodity, money, and capita!), (2) the organization for the armed defense of the new social relations, and (3) the transformation of the entire structure and deployment of the social world

XI

In order not to limit our critique of various forms of false consciousness to the sub-Leninist left, we must expose the vapidness of other movements that have also portrayed themselves as opponents to capitalist society, specifically the neolithic know-nothings of the “counter-culture” and the underdeveloped proselytizers of present-day (Bookchinist) anarchism.

It is difficult to make a unified critique of an ideology so chaotic, so fragmented, so eclectic, and so incoherent as is anarchism. In that sense the difficulty of making the critique of anarchism verifies our critique of it. But this much can be said: the valid moments of anarchism, revolutionary anti-statism, and emphasis on the individual, can have no quarrel with our perspective: revolutionary (communist) egoism, the critique of state-capitalism, and the strategy of the workers’ councils, that is, of the anti-statist dictatorship of the proletariat.

What we leave behind is what must be discarded — the incoherence, the slobbering eclecticism, the philosophical idealism and moralism, the mysticism, the thousand and one crochets and fetishes (to each anarchist ideologue, his own). In separating ourselves from anarchism, we also mean to separate ourselves from the movement critique of anarchism. What the movement rejects in anarchism is precisely our only point of convergence with it, namely its firm insistence, however abstract, on the immediate negation of the state. The movement critique of anarchism — insistence on the “necessity” of the “socialist” state — merely parrots the ideological self-defense of the state-capitalist bureaucracies.

As culture is the commodity that sells all the rest, the “counter” culture is but a new market-place promoting the consumption of alternative commodities: rock stars instead of politicians, bellbottoms instead of Brooks Brothers’ suits, the Whole Earth Catalogue instead of Sears Roebuck. Trumped-up and inflated like Sugar Pops, with all the illusion of substance, “life-style,” the Spectacle’s “new-and-improved” substitute for living, is pandered by the geriatric stockholders of this cultural counter-revolution to those who despair about actually changing life. Packaging alienation in psychedelic wrappings is, for the dominant class, the final solution to the “youth problem.”

The only attempt of the counter-culture to separate itself from the dominant society and economy takes the form of the “commune.”

Indeed, communist society means nothing other than the society of communes, but this has nothing to do with the squalid pig-sties jammed with speed-freaks,

within themselves the bureaucratic relations and practices which already form the embryo of state-capitalism before their would-be assumption of totalitarian power.

It is true that the present “movement” in the U. S. has been generated largely by the protest against the Indochina war. This does not mean, however, that no movement would have developed without it; in fact, the preoccupation with Vietnam has distorted and deflected the emergence of a real revolutionary movement here.

For examples of autonomous revolutionary activity that required no external stimulation, we need only look to France in 1968 or Hungary in 1956 where people rebelled against their own impoverished existence and the domination of their local masters.

In this country energy has been bled away from any genuine rebellion by the priests of the new left who have given new life to the still-born christianisms of duty, sacrifice, and martyrdom. In order to expiate their own bourgeois guilt, the cretinous “serve the people” cult became the new movement peace corps, whose Holy Crusade was dedicated to bringing the “good life” of commodity fetishism to the domestic Third World. This ideological Easter has also resurrected other symbolic acts of devotion: rallies, peace marches, and vigils.

It may be that the mini-spectacle of demonstrations has hastened the victory of North Vietnamese state-capitalism. And we would even grant that the NLF bureaucrats are preferable to the parasites in Saigon, if it were useful to make such a distinction. But this would only be because the bureaucracy would foster an economic development which would, inadvertently, lead to its own negation, to the possibility of a total revolution and the end of this class as the new proprietor of the Vietnamese.

On the contrary, had these great energies been successfully invested in the production of our own revolution instead of into the social quicksand of symbolic protest, the Vietnamese would have been liberated in the process of liberating ourselves from the organization of “life” that daily reproduces imperialism, domestic as well as foreign.

The global wealth locked up here, in the artificial enforcement of scarcity, must be freed to eliminate the material poverty that has always been the breeding ground of class society. Our own revolution alone will strike the death blow to the administrators of our common colonization. The ideology of anti-imperialism makes but a partial critique of imperialism by seizing only upon one of its fragments, failing to recognize the colonization of everyday life by capital the world over; the most significant colony of the U.S. being the U.S. itself.

IX

The ideologies of the various militant sects of the new left in every way mimic those of the pseudo-socialist bureaucracies already in power. Blind worship of Third World governments has led to the complete ossification of what was once revolutionary theory. Marxism, beginning as a revolutionary critique of all ideology, was recuperated to become the ideology of a bureaucratic ruling class, and is used by the various “communist” parties as a truncheon to beat back those persistent dialecticians who dare to question the power of the state.

At the base of movement catechism is a facile analysis of capitalism. Capitalism, for these advocates of partial solutions, consists of the sum of its fragments: racism, sexism, imperialism — thus being defined only by its most obvious excesses. Being preoccupied with the curable side-effects of the market, our faithful guardians of revolutionary incoherence leave uncriticized the most basic foundation of bourgeois society: alienated (sold) labour and the universal power of the product that dominates its producers and consumers: the commodity.

In the developing state-capitalist economies not only has the commodity failed to disappear but has, in fact, never wavered from its traditional role as the dictator over all social life. In these countries social goods are produced by wage-labourers and are appropriated by the bureaucracy (in the name of “the people”). These objects in turn are bought back by the class that produced them, who in order to pay for commodities must reduce themselves to a commodity, to be bought by and sold to the state. (And, as in Western countries, the exquisite moments of pilfery and theft provide a primitive point of departure for the first real negation of commodity domination. Everywhere, the refusal to pay is the refusal of sacrifice.)

Third-Worldism, the ideology that enables an impotent movement to sustain itself on the vicarious satisfaction it gets from the struggles of burgeoning bureaucracies elsewhere, is profoundly ignorant of one of Marx’ most important insights: that a communist revolution is not merely a revolt against misery, but an upheaval that generates and sustains a new set of social relations; a classless society. Installing the new class of the state, the state-bourgeoisie, the anti-colonial coups of China, North Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba, and Algeria reproduced once again that infamous historical separation between those who rule and those who are ruled.

The decrepit reformists of New American Movement would still have us believe that revolution is primarily about welfare, ecology, and national health insurance. They only reflect, however, what is the generalized mode of recuperation (the deflection into partial solutions) of any articulated defiance. The spectacle of

opposition offers up for our passive consumption a whole assortment of false conflicts, whereby the primary contradiction in the world is seen not between capital and labour but between men and women; good leaders and bad leaders; “groovy” capitalists and “pig” capitalists; oppressive laws and liberal laws; the Viet Cong and American Imperialism. From the point of view of Power it is important for everyone to take a stand on each separate issue in order to forget about the totality.

X

The Spectacle is the organization of appearances made possible through modern means of communication. The facility with which images can be detached and alienated from their sources, and reorganized for re-presentation in accord with the ideology of power, forms the technical basis of the unprecedented amplitude of the modern spectacle, where “everything that was once directly lived has moved into its representation.”

The organization of spectacular activity is the organization of real social passivity — the grouping of human beings as spectators around the unilateral reception of the images of their own alienated life. The spectacle is not a collection of images but a social relation among people mediated by images. If capital is the dominant social relation of production, the spectacle is that social relation as a social relation of communication. That is, the spectacle is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image, i.e., becomes visible. Since the present social world is nothing other than capital in its concentrated self-deployment, the spectacle is capital creating a world in its own image. Capital is the material God, and the spectacle is religion materialized.

All opposition to the spectacle is absorbed and re-presented as the image of opposition. The various actors in this arena of false conflicts — politicians and political parties — attempt to dissimulate the real conflict which is with Power itself. And, as the pitiful sideshow of this spectacular conflict, there is the court jester of Capital, the New Left. This counter-spectacle of false opposition has become a necessary part of the reproduction process of the spectacle. It forms a vital feedback loop which locates for the spectacle trouble-spots within its domain which require modernization, and thus, decompression. It is a safety-valve. on the pressure-cooker of capital’s contradictions, alerting Power to its particular excesses without ever challenging Power itself, that is, Power in general.