SURREALISM
STRIKES BACK!

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by Franklin Rosemont
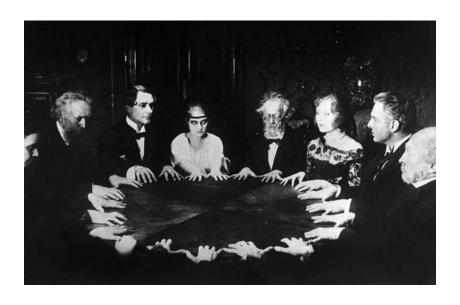
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DREAMS OF ARSON & THE ARSON OF DREAMS: SURREALISM IN '68

Don LaCoss[1]

> *In a society that has abolished every kind of adventure the only*
> *adventure that remains is to abolish that society.*
> —Anonymous striker graffiti, Paris (May, 1968)

> *…and this ol' world ain't got no back door.*
> —The Marvelettes, "Destination: Anywhere" (1968)

So many studies of surrealism's activities after the Second World War portray the events of 1968 as the movement's apogee. Within the movement itself, those affiliated with groups in Czechoslovakia and France met for a conference that produced one of the most critical and definitive of surrealist programmatic texts, The Prague Platform; meanwhile, out in the streets, spontaneous uprisings by workers, students, and dissidents shattered daily routines (and more) in Paris, Prague, Chicago, Dakar, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Lahore, Mexico City, Rome, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro, Washington D.C., Belfast, Warsaw, and dozens of other cities. Heated by the incendiary and incandescent underground currents of counter-cultural unrest, some aspects of these uprisings at times seemed to resound with the desires and designs first articulated in the pages of La Révolution surréaliste in 1924—these were furious utopian festivals of imagination, expression, liberation, and the instincts of pleasure against coercion, conformity, militarism, racism, consumer capitalism, and all other stagnant doldrums of the mind. Surrealist poet André Breton had died in 1966, but there were those who spied his words unmistakably traced in the smoke and the graffiti paint of many street-corner barricades around the world that spring and summer.

But then in 1969, a series of internal conflicts ruptured the Paris group to the extent that many incorrectly surmised that the movement was dead everywhere. This was compounded by the culture industry's tremendous

efforts to petrify surrealism by mass manufacturing the notion that it was a historical (in other words, "extinct" and therefore "irrelevant") phenomenon whose time had come and gone. Surrealists have always been dogged by bourgeois grave-diggers and stalinoid bureaucrats waving death certificates, but the museo-academic-art dealer complex embalmed surrealist creative activity in a series of blockbuster shows starting in 1968, including retrospectives on Yves Tanguy and Max Ernst, as well as the degrading and cretinizing "Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage" exhibition in New York City. (Unintentionally, the self-important Oedipal petulance of Situationists like Raoul Vaneigem enabled the enterprises of these banal taxidermists.) In this sense, 1968 was not so much the year of surrealism's apogee as it was its ignoble transfiguration into canonical modernism, when surrealism's revolutionary verve was recuperated and estranged from real life by its most contemptuous enemies as a defunct artistic school and an exhausted literary style.

What follows is a brief examination into surrealist activities in 1968, which I have triangulated between Prague, Paris, and Chicago and anchored to two key surrealist texts, The Prague Platform and "Situation of Surrealism in the U.S." My intention is show how surrealism responded to and participated in the electric events of '68, and to suggest how an understanding of the movement's past can help instigate the next tremors to run through the atmosphere. To paraphrase Lautréamont, it is only a matter of having the awareness and insolence to accept them.

PRAGUE: PRINCIPLES OF PLEASURE

Pro-Moscow Czech Communists seized control of the country in a coup d'état in February 1948; anti-Stalinist communists and socialists were arrested, imprisoned, or sent to forced-labor camps. In the Stalinist purges that followed in Cold War Eastern Europe, it has been estimated that the number of Marxists viciously persecuted by their own in the 1950s far exceeded those victimized by anti-communist forces in the 1930s and early 1940s. Not surprisingly, this "hollowing out" helped the Soviet puppet-masters exert greater control over the day-to-day affairs of life in the satellite states, and Czechoslovakia was certainly no different in those respects, but when Khrushchev's de-Stalinization program was instigated in the mid-1950s, many Czech apparatchiks found themselves in increasingly untenable positions. By 1963, controls had relaxed enough to allow for surprisingly sharp criticisms of the Stalinist old guard that frantically scrabbled to hold onto Party power in Czechoslovakia, and these attacks became more vigorous as economic, educational, housing, and healthcare

policies collapsed in the mid-1960s. Students and workers battled police and the military in the streets; as the Czech Stalinists wrestled to regain control over the growing voices of dissent that were coming to dominate cultural, artistic, and intellectual life, they were outflanked by reformist Slovak Communist Party members who resented forty years of Soviet-directed Czech Communist hegemony. By January 1968, the reformist Communists were in control.

As the political and cultural climate in Czechoslovakia thawed, surrealists emerged into the light and warmth of spring. Czech and Slovak surrealists had been active since the late 1930s, thanks in no small part to the efforts of the brilliant graphic artist and theorist Karel Teige but were forced into the shadows by the Nazi occupation of the early 1940s. After the war, Stalinist watchdogs reviled surrealism as "perverted" and "monstrous"— Teige was branded as a "Trotskyite degenerate" and died in 1951 before he could be arrested and tortured like his friend and surrealist fellow traveler Záviš Kalandra, a Marxist critic who had been hanged after confessing to a ludicrous litany of espionage charges forced into his mouth by Czech secret policemen earlier that same year. Obviously, the opportunity to interrogate and condemn twenty years of police-state Marxism had surrealists openly engaging in agitation to push the new "socialism with a human face" reforms towards more libertarian dimensions.

Vratislav Effenberger, Ivan Svitak and other Czechoslovak and French surrealists (including Vincent Bounoure, Claude Courtot, and José Pierre) organized s a major International Surrealist Exhibition called "The Pleasure Principle" in April 1968 that traveled from Brno to Bratislava and then to Prague. The exhibition orbited around four key themes: play, the truth of automatism, law-breaking, and the laws of the night. In conjunction with the show, a series of dialogues took place between the principal figures in both groups on the challenges of creativity in contemporary society and the histories and futures of surrealism. A forum series on these issues was even organized at the Socialist Academy of Prague where people from outside the inner workings of these groups could observe and participate. Special publications of these meetings were planned, but because of the Soviet crackdown, not all of them were ever fully materialized.

The title of the exposition derived from Freud's writing but aspired to terms well beyond the rarified confines of psychoanalytic theory. As Freud explained, the Pleasure Principle was that set of psychic impulses that drives children to find happiness, entertainment, enjoyment, and satisfying indulgence at all times for all needs and wants. As children mature, Freud postulated, "the ego is educated to become reasonable"—to avoid the

anxiety resulting from unfulfilled desires, the quest for pleasure must be tempered by a rational understanding that reality requires the individual work, suffer, sacrifice, put off, or otherwise deny gratification. In short, a person grows to understand that she or he must "obey the Reality Principle, which also at bottom seeks to obtain pleasure, but a pleasure that is assured through taking account of reality, even though it is pleasure postponed and diminished," Freud wrote.

But the surrealists were not inclined to resign themselves to the grim inevitability of Freud's schema—borrowing from the works of renegade Freudo-Marxists like Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse, the surrealists argued that the "rational understanding" of the Reality Principle was more likely a "rationalized understanding" that conditioned us all to accept repression in the name of what was realistic, practical, logical, responsible, and efficient. In other words, the smothering of the Pleasure Principle by the norms and forms of the Reality Principle was an attack on freedom at the most primal and intimate level; all institutions of domination and control manipulate the sly vocabulary of the Reality Principle in order to thwart desires of those being oppressed "for their own good." Marcuse's Eros and Civilization (1955) is crucial to understanding surrealist explorations of the Pleasure Principle: "The history of man is the history of his repression," Marcuse says. "Our civilization is, generally speaking, founded on the suppression of instincts." (The French surrealists first explored some of these ideas in their 1965 exhibition, "Absolute Deviation.") Theories of the Pleasure Principle, surrealism, and Marcuse's socialist blueprints for a "non-repressive civilization" built on "non-alienated libidinal work" are absolutely central to understanding surrealism in 1968, but more complete explanations are best left for a separate study. Suffice it to say that that the dialectical jiu-jitsu between the Pleasure Principle and the Reality Principle in the realm of the social were not without relevance for Czechoslovakians in 1968.

As Party bureaucrat Alexander Dubcek struggled to steer his reformist regime through a post-Stalinist minefield between April and August of that year, the energies of pleasure and possibility of long-repressed people delightfully destabilized the nation. But the renaissance of the Prague Spring was being sharply criticized by anxious Communist governments in other East European states that feared such a outbreak of liberty among their own serfs. Just after sunset on August 20, Czechoslovakia was invaded by 250,000 troops from the USSR, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Insurgents battled the invaders but to no avail—Soviet tanks reduced neighborhoods to ruins and an unknown number of resistance fighters were killed in the fighting. Dubcek was abducted by Soviet secret

police commandos, tortured, and made to publicly renounce on Czech national television all the changes that had begun to take place since January. Within months, a savage crackdown on all cultural, intellectual, and social experimentation in Czechoslovakia was in full effect. When the Czechoslovakian surrealists' periodical Analogon was denounced as "a Trojan horse of Western imperialism" on the state-run radio network, the surrealists disbanded and scattered, some fleeing into exile while others disappeared into the shadowy world of secret meetings and hand-circulated samizdat. The Reality Principle had returned to Czechoslovakia with a vengeance.

PARIS: ALL POWER TO THE IMAGINATION

While some of the French surrealists were in Czechoslovakia to help with "The Pleasure Principle" exposition, a chain reaction of revolt crackled throughout Paris. In March 1968, following a string of bombings against the Paris offices Chase Manhattan Bank, the Bank of America, and Trans-World Airlines for their involvement in the Vietnam War, dissatisfied university students at the Nanterre branch of the University of Paris organized demonstrations against the De Gaulle regime, demanding changes in curriculum, employment regulations, and campus infrastructure. Throughout April, the protests increased in intensity and scope; parallel to this, unrest was growing among workers against the government as well over issues of minimum wages, a forty-hour work-week, and retirement benefits, but these, too, grew to accommodate much larger themes, such as Taylorist assembly lines, trade-union bureaucracies, capitalist exploitation, the artificial consumerist desires of commodities, and the rule of political elites.

By the beginning of May, the anger of Nanterre had spread to other Parisian campuses, notably the Sorbonne, where the university administration invited French police to forcibly break up the on-campus protests. Within a week, the student uprisings had braided together with the striking workers, creating a kind of revolutionary resistance to the government whose demands went well beyond reforms to schools and the workplace. It was the largest strike wave in the history of the industrialized West, fueled by a decade of simmering radical working-class discontent; in addition to walk-outs, ad-hoc workers' councils occupied factories and workshops against the wishes of their union stewards and Communist Party parliamentary representatives. Barricades went up on the streets as students, workers, and others joined hands against French security forces. Widespread police brutality brought others out into the

streets in protest, and by mid-May 1968 the nation's capital (and some cities in outlying provinces) was paralyzed by wildcat general strikes. In a premonition of what would happen in Prague three months in the future, army tanks and armored troop carriers began appearing on the ring roads around the city. After securing the allegiance of the French Fifth Army for possible action against the French people, De Gaulle appealed on television for the patriotic silent majority to take to the streets in counter-protest of the rebels. Off-camera, he caved in to many of the workers' and students' demands and in effect defused the situation. By July, the revolts were over and a parliamentary coalition of conservative nationalists faithful to De Gaulle had control of the government.

The surrealists in Paris were tuned in to the situation and were prepared to assist in any way they could—they were aware of the troubles smoldering on the campuses and made mention of them in statements from early February and March, 1968. When the protests erupted in late April, they were quick to back them unequivocally. Their May 5 pamphlet "No Pastors for this Rage!" urged the streetfighters to reject any attempt to centralize their rebellious efforts under the direct control of any clique of leaders. The special June 1968 issue of their paper L'Archibras was little more than an urgently-compiled collection of short, seething declarations in support of the rebels. "Let's systematically insult all lovers of flags, ribbons, crosses, and medals until they might finally be ashamed of being inscribed on the honor roll of a rotten society," one essay howls. "Let's defile all monuments to the war dead and turn them into monuments of ingratitude … We owe no one anything … Down with national heritage! Down with patriotic and patronal patrimony! … The only just war is a civil war because it is only then that one knows the enemy one is killing. Men and women of France, we appeal to your rage." Another inspired and accurate text was "A Portrait of the Enemy," which described the dangerously toxic precepts inherent in the terms "realism" and "realistic" and which, for the most part, continue to be accurate in 2008, such as "Realism is the occupation of all reality by just the reality of policemen"; "All political parties and all trade unions are realist institutions motivated by fear of consciousness that develops from the imagination and by the fear of the desire to changes reality"; and "Anything realist is senile. Everything senile is realist."

Much has been said about the wild, utopian joy that sprouted unexpectedly among the insurgents that spring. As had been the case in Prague in April, the surrealists saw this as a historical moment when the forces of individual desire could be mobilized and dialectically advanced to the tipping point of all-out social revolt. And if the wall-posters and graffiti art is to be believed, then some of the insurrectionaries were very consciously invoking and

evoking radical social theorists during their struggles. Quotes attributed to Breton and other surrealist slogans peppered the streets: "Imagination is not a gift—it must be conquered"; "To the great outrage of some, and under the watchful, less punishing eye of others, raising its wings' weight, your freedom"; "Down with socialist realism! Long live surrealism!"; "Long Live the Surrealist Revolution!"; "Art Does Not Exist!" Surrealist tracts from before World War II were reprinted and re-contextualized in the flyers, pamphlets, and newspapers of the strikers, such as Artaud's "Open Letter to the Rectors of European Universities" that was reprinted by the radicals of March 22nd Movement. Surrealists such as Mimi Parent, Jean Benoît, and Roberto Matta were conspicuous and contributed agitational-propaganda to many meetings and protest marches. In 1984, surrealist Claude Courtot—one of those most active in L'Archibras—recalled that the events of 1968 not only presented "surrealism in the streets" but also demonstrated how unexpectedly that surrealist theory and action had far exceeded what the group had imagined. "We were almost marginalized by it. We felt we had been surpassed," Courtot explained gleefully. Small wonder, then, that the disillusionment that followed the failed May revolt contributed substantially to the sharp splintering of the French surrealist group that occurred in 1969.

Just as the Czechoslovakian surrealists' magazine Anagalon was attacked by Soviet censors following the invasion in August 1968, L'Archibras was similarly outlawed by the State's reactionary forces when the Paris revolts collapsed. The surrealists involved in producing the publication were charged with public incitement to crime, offenses against the office of the President of the Republic, and the slander of police officers. Nevertheless, the group managed to reprint documents from the Czechoslovakian surrealists starting just three weeks after the Soviet invasion and continued to distribute them throughout the fall and winter of 1968-69. One of these was the most significant surrealist declarations of the time, if not the entire history of the movement: The Prague Platform.

THE PRAGUE PLATFORM: ON THE POSSIBLE AGAINST THE CURRENT

Led by Vratislav Effenberger—the most important surrealist theoretician since Karel Teige—The Prague Platform emerged from the discussions, disagreements, and collaborations among and between French and Czechoslovak surrealists during the process of "The Pleasure Principle" project and partly in commemoration of the 9 April 1935 publication in Prague of The International Surrealist Bulletin. The platform had been

assembled between April 5 and April 18, 1968, and it had been originally signed by twenty-eight French, twenty-one Czechoslovakian, and eleven other surrealists (when police attacks against the surrealists began in late summer and the early fall in both Prague and Paris, many of the names were deliberately removed to confound law enforcement efforts). In unexpectedly straight-ahead ("anti-confusional") language, The Prague Platform sketches out the a series of ambitions and possible goals for the international movement, but insisting all the while a commitment to preserving the spontaneity and non-dogmatic openness to any and all sensitive, critical, and independent theoretical readjustments.

Of particular interest are the ways in which the surrealists identified and characterized the enemies of human liberty in 1968, definitions that today's freedom fighters have lamentably forgotten in the absurdly overheated ideological world of today. Rather than succumbing to the easy binary thinking of the Cold War years, the surrealists associated the common elements between the unfreedom of the "Free World" and the despotism of the "Popular Democratic Republics"; they astutely assessed the conventions used by all contemporary repressive systems, namely the technocratic mechanisms of social control that ultimately rely on the hypnotic dazzle of more consumer goods and the internalized fear of police violence. On both sides of the Iron Curtain (and everywhere else where the state dominates the lives of individuals), the surrealists pinpointed the systematic enervation of language and images by governments, bureaucrats, propagandists, advertising agencies, and entertainment industries. Bleached, tamed, utilitarianized, regulated, standardized, and homogenized, the symbolic building-blocks of expression and creativity are garbled to the extent that "people are deprived of the real powers of their own thought." (As a recent example, consider how the word "freedom" has come to mean laser-guided missiles and protracted military occupation and "security" has become a euphemism for censorship and surveillance.) This disfigurement of words, images, and symbols forces people to rely upon a hierarchy of "cultural agents" whose job it is to compel them to "conform to the proper functioning of the system" and thereby reinforce its rule. In response, the surrealists pledged "to refuse to admit as definite the categories of psychic, social, and natural reality" as defined by these technocratic regimes. They also reaffirmed their efforts "to tear language from the repressive system and make it an instrument of desire" that could help restore it to its purpose "as indicators of subjective reality and the essential intersubjectivity of desire as it is reflected in the public mind."

Six other positions were raised by The Prague Platform, including offering to align with any other non-surrealist individuals and movements

anywhere in the world that sought to stymie and attack these same repressive systems. The third position demanded a complete reformulation of Marxist-Leninist anti-capitalism away from the authoritarian, statist interpretations and towards an infusion of more poetic thought in its theory and practice, and they pointed towards a number of struggles (including Black Power revolutionaries in the US and various student uprisings around the world) as possible first steps. This was followed by a renewed commitment to experimental dialectical thought (especially in the realms of dreams and sexual freedom) and a position on the relationship between art and revolution that dismisses both art-for-art's-sake and expressly politically-engaged artistic creation in favor of explorations into "the most obscure zones of psychic reality" and the "emancipation of the powers and desires lying dormant in the unconscious." Point Six declared unmistakably and without qualification the primacy of play, games, and experimental activities within the core of the surrealist project: "We place all of our intellectual hopes in them," the text reads simply. "Surrealist games are a collective expression of the Pleasure Principle." Such actions "animate the life of groups," "exalt friendships," and "integrate exchanges of the mind" in the spirit of a utopian intersubjective state. The final plank in The Prague Platform was an expression of recognition of and solidarity with other surrealists and surrealist groups around the world, including New York City, Buenos Aires, Havana, Brussels, and Chicago. The platform was distributed to these cities and more, where they were translated and published; in France, the Platform appeared in the special "Czechoslovakia" issue of L'Archibras in September 1968.

A 1969 collective statement by a dozen Czechoslovakian surrealists called "The Possible Against the Current" should be read today as a provocative addendum on The Prague Platform, which they viewed as "a broad outline of a program proposed to the surrealist movement the world over" that was not intended to be "constraining, constitutive, or institutional in character." The document opens with the idea that "permanent and reciprocal revalorization of the subjective and the objective, the rational and the irrational, the individual and the collective" was the first step towards a surrealist "resolution of antimonies" that would clear the way for a profoundly revolutionary consciousness that can "allow for the establishment of a new kind of relations between people." Keeping with the powerful influence of Freudo-Marxist readings, the Prague surrealists underlined sexual activity as one subset of these relations that needed to be overhauled to such an extent that the existing social structures would be demolished. "What is so mysterious and fascinating in these relations is that struggle between intellect and imagination takes place in a world where

the so-called 'laws of positive reality' are thwarted." While the dominant repressive system falsely emphasizes harmony, the surrealists countered that the secret of dynamic sexual congress and physical love came from a dialectically "intimate union of thought and instincts" that "somehow accomplishes the impossible" in welding together the fundamental existential contradictions between partners.

Alluding to the splintering of the Paris group earlier that year, the Prague surrealists went on to say that the emphasis on conflict rather than harmony should also be the engine for surrealism as well as lovemaking, both in terms of other international groups and in terms of the movement's own history. Erecting "a sentimental cult" around the late André Breton's surrealist theories would bitterly betray Breton's own insistence on the creative power of dialectics. Rather than bowing before "legend, dogma, personality, or authoritarian dominance," surrealists should stitch together a dynamic "community of opinion" formed of "permanent critical conflict" that is necessary for the movement's perpetual evolution, all the while "welcoming various external tendencies and contributions" to the surrealist mix, particularly "certain manifestations of youth (psychedelia, the underground, etc.) which all more or less respond to Rimbaud's appeal to 'the derangement of the senses.'"

The tract ends with a five-item agenda for activities to which the Prague group was committed and it was hoped that others would adopt, including the liberation of the unconscious against civilization, continued analyses of the growing systems of repression, the pursuit of new forms of knowledge based on analogy and dialectic, the hijacking of "commercialized sexual cynicism" for use against the hypocritical "rationalist exploitation" of sexual relations, and finally the development of guerrilla tactics of "play activity" that will subvert "lives governed by utilitarian principles" for the purpose of deconstructing notions of identity through the free-play of analogical thought. As a summation of the history of surrealist concerns since 1919 and an invitation to the future, both The Prague Platform and "The Possible Against the Current" are outstanding and quite beneficial surrealist texts whose continued urgent relevance remains, unfortunately, obvious to this day.

CHICAGO: "OF COURSE YOU REALIZE THAT THIS MEANS WAR!" (-BUGS BUNNY)

"We salute our comrades, Franklin and Penelope Rosemont, who publish Surrealist Insurrection in Chicago," proclaimed The Prague Platform of April 1968. At the time, the Rosemonts had been synthesizing Beat

poetry and Industrial Workers of the World anarchism with surrealism in the Windy City for about five years; in the spring of 1966, they met with Breton and the rest of Paris surrealists and were encouraged to contribute to L'Archibras and to expand and extend their surrealist activities; in a series of collective letters with the Paris group, the Chicago surrealists shared their interests in the revolutionary potential of Marcuse, Malcolm X, Melville, and Thelonious Monk. They proceeded to plug into surrealist experiments happening in São Paulo, Athens, Brussels, Amsterdam, Prague, Tokyo, London, Lisbon, Copenhagen, and Buenos Aires. In addition to revisiting many of the central ideas and approaches of the international surrealist movement, the Chicago surrealists gathered a group that brought with them an entire arsenal of new weapons, tools, and tactics. The agit-prop wallposter/broadsheet Surrealist Insurrection was one of their endeavors, first appearing on the streets of Chicago in late January 1968 and asserting their allegiance to poetic thought "in our criticism, as well as our very lives, in the service of the total liberation of man." In the issues of Surrealist Insurrection that followed, the Chicago group rallied for the support of Black Panther Huey Newton, American Indian militants, anarchists in New York City, Japanese student revolutionaries, and "surrealism in the service of the revolution in 1968!"

Just prior to the day when the first Soviet tanks rumbled into the streets of Prague to face angry stone-throwers, a wide spectrum of protest groups began to converge onto Chicago in anticipation of the Democratic Party's National Convention for the nomination of a presidential candidate to run against Republican hopeful Richard Nixon (Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson had announced that he would not run for re-election in March). Many of the protestors were first and foremost opponents of the US war in Vietnam and of other dissident movements included a number of more expressly revolutionary and counter-cultural organizations whose criticism stretched beyond the Johnson regime to the entire rotten system of institutionalized political, social, and economic power. The ghetto revolts following the April execution of Black civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. haunted Chicago Mayor Richard Daley as his police reported on the convergence of movements planning to shut down the Chicago DNC. Perhaps inspired by the Red Army's urban counter-insurgency operations in Poland and Czechoslovakia, Daley repeatedly boasted a guarantee of "law and order" and authorized the use excessive force by police and of paramilitary violence by the National Guard and Army (including an order to shoot to kill), first against dissidents camped out in Lincoln Park and then later against demonstrators marching from Grant Park to the convention arena. As liberal delegates within the convention hall brawled over the

refusal of Democratic Party commissars to recognize the candidacy of a very popular anti-war politician from within their ranks, the crackdown on anti-war and pro-democracy demonstrators in front of the Hilton Hotel was savage, bloody, and televised around the globe. Nightly news footage of the convention delegates' shenanigans and of the Chicago police's riot against the unarmed youth of the USA was sandwiched between the latest images of carnage from Vietnam and Czechoslovakia, poignantly underscoring for many television viewers how the systems of repression and realism chose to run the world.

In the weeks leading up to the havoc of the Democratic National Convention, the Rosemonts and their surrealist fellow-workers allied themselves in the streets with a number of different organizations and basing much of their comings and goings around the Solidarity Bookshop, a scruffy hangout for the usual suspects, including Diggers, the League of Black Revolutionary Workers, ultra-left syndicalists active in Students for a Democratic Society, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee workers, assorted anti-war malcontents, and truant high school kids. Having had already a number of clashes with overzealous Chicago riot police, the Chicago surrealists offered practical advice to out-of-town visitors and plenty of other things to think about long afterward. Three thousand or so copies of the August edition of Surrealist Insurrection were circulated among the protestors. The publication sketched out some fundamental surrealist ideas for seditionists to consider, including a tract clamoring for "a vast, multi-level, interconnected program of cultural guerrilla warfare" and promises that "as the revolutionary movement grows in consciousness and confidence, its true history will become as familiar as its present actions, which in turn will increasingly reflect the limitless resources of dreams."

In the weeks following the convention, the Chicago surrealists' cultural revolution took aim at the imbecilic anti-surrealist museum exhibition "Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage," a show that was organized by and opened at New York City's Museum of Modern Art in March 1968 but then travelled to Chicago and Los Angeles. The MoMA exhibition teleologically locked surrealism into a formalist death-march of historical supersession whose climax was supposedly CIA-funded Abstract-Expressionism and some of the more lucrative works of sinister mystico-capitalist Pop Art. Surrealist Insurrection complained that the MoMA show sought "to immerse the entire movement in pseudo-critical formaldehyde" and neutralize its unruly, revolutionary essences: "Surrealism is today the most passionate and defiant articulation of the cause of human emancipation. Now as ever we join our brothers and sisters in the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society." Meanwhile in NYC, surrealist

stalwart Nicolas Calas helped to spearhead public demonstrations against the exhibition and found hundreds of allies among other elements of the city's radical subcultures, including the Youth International Party yippies and the cantankerous Lower East Side ex-SDS street-theater grouplet known as "Up Against the Wall, Motherfuckers" (a name derived from a line in a LeRoi Jones [a.k.a. Amiri Baraka] poem, "Black People"), who showed up at the MoMA pickets clad in comical pirate costumes. Nervous culture industry officials called upon the violent riot-geared NYPD Tactical Patrol Force goon squads to protect the museum's sanctity.

When the "Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage" moved to the Art Institute of Chicago, the surrealists there were equally obstreperous. In addition to staging protests and disrupting events held at the Institute, the Chicago group mounted a counter-exhibit (much in the same way that surrealists had in 1931 in response to the Paris International Colonial Exhibition) "as a minimal act of retaliation and correction testifying to the authentic living presence of surrealism today" at the Gallery Bugs Bunny storefront/radical meeting space in the pre-gentrified Lincoln Park neighborhood. This small exhibition represented the first group show of the Chicago surrealists; it opened (in the way that "a whooping crane opens its wings, or a guerrilla opens fire, or one opens one's eyes," announced the exhibition statement) just before Halloween 1968 and ran through December.

The surrealists' objectives for the Art Institute protests and the Gallery Bugs Bunny counter-exhibit were meant to do more than solely mark their fury at conniving nullification of surrealism by mummifying museumificators—the "Dada, Surrealism, and Their Heritage" art display was absolutely symptomatic and endemic of the State's and Capital's infection of the mind. To quote the notorious (and frequently FBI-harassed) Milwaukee Kaleidoscope's review of the Gallery Bugs Bunny event: "The surrealists have set their sights on the decapitation of Western civilization"; the surrealists "were defending much more than an artistic movement from bourgeois confinement. They were setting free those powers within us which surrealism seeks to amplify in all ways possible." The museum show, the pathetic spectacle of the Democratic Party's convention, and the Vietnam War were related abominations. Franklin Rosemont's chapbook The Morning of a Machine Gun—which appeared at the beginning of May 1968—was just one of the Chicago surrealist publications from that year to reiterate that point. "I write this preface while the government of the United States engages itself in a vicious imperialist war against the people of Vietnam," Rosemont wrote in the introductory essay "Revolution By Night," adding that the neo-colonialist butchery in Southeast Asia needed

to be understood as "the no less inevitable result of stale Cartesian ideas, the hypocrisies of the Mosaic ethic, the chauvinistic impotence and cowardice of humanism, liberalism, positivism, and the entire edifice of stinking epistemological and theological lies."

On the surface a book of twenty poems and drawings, The Morning of a Machine Gun also contained texts from a handful of surrealist leaflets: "The Forecast is Hot!" (a 1966 declaration that had been reprinted by radicals in London, Amsterdam, and elsewhere that summer); a critical response to the first Chicago production of Peter Weiss's all-too-provocative play The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade; a rhapsodic reflection on the mysterious fire that devastated the McCormick Place exhibition-convention center in Chicago in 1967; and "This Too Will Burn!," a rollicking and uncompromising denunciation of Picasso's untitled monumental municipal sculpture that was unveiled in the Loop in 1967. A fifth text was the founding manifesto of the Chicago group written by Franklin and Penelope Rosemont called "Situation of Surrealism in the U.S."—in 1966, the Paris group had encouraged the Rosemonts to pen a statement to acquaint them with the context and intentions of a surrealist group in the United States. Upon completion, the declaration later appeared in translation in the second issue of L'Archibras in October 1967 just as events in France were starting to boil.

Like The Prague Platform, the "Situation of Surrealism in the U.S." specifically mentions Marcuse's formulations on "non-repressive civilization," and does so in its opening paragraph. Interestingly, it does so in commending the possibilities that were opened up by the Los Angeles Watts insurrection of August 1965, and goes on to discuss the revolts of workers against their unions and the growing restlessness of students and a "new lumpenproletariat" of jobless refuseniks. The Rosemonts point out the extremely important point that "the parties of the traditional or even the 'New Left' play a very slight role in these developments, and can in no way claim the responsibility for the emergence of a new revolutionary movement." The rebels of the future, the Rosemonts insist, need to ignore party leaders and look instead to "the most poignant proofs" of the "serious intentions, "violent sincerity," and "impassioned humor" of the rambunctious Black ghetto renegades. As the Paris and Prague surrealists would do in the years that followed, the Chicago manifesto attacked the rule of miserabilist technocrats over modern life; the pernicious anesthesia of liberal welfare-statism and religion also come under fire. "Situation of Surrealism in the U.S." concludes with the words: "Effortlessly, we place all our hope in love and all our despair in the obstacles to love. We swim

in the water, in the air, across day and night, as dangerously as the eye sees. We declare our absolute accord with the principles and aims of surrealism, our solidarity with all those who compose the international surrealist movement, and our desire to pool our collective resources with our surrealist comrades throughout the world. The Vendôme Column must fall again; the White House must be smashed to dust! Elements of a new mythology are everywhere around us; it is up to us to give them a reality. More than ever we can say with certainty: surrealism is what will be." The Morning of a Machine Gun booklet was distributed widely from San Francisco to London.

With the group around Chicago's Solidarity bookshop, the Rosemonts also helped to produce the seventh (and most surrealist) issue of Rebel Worker which appeared later that year. It included a preface by Franklin Rosemont and Bernard Marszalek called "Wild Celery"; a translation of Breton's militant "The Colors of Freedom"; and a tribute to Breton. Another sign of the times was the Chicago surrealists' mimeographed pamphlet Surrealism and Revolution, published first in 1000 copies in 1966 and reprinted in a run of 1000 a year later, when it was also published in London. Londoner Charles Radcliffe, inspired by surrealism and anarchism, had published two issues of the scrappy paper Heatwave and was now active with the Situationists across the Channel.

It was also during this period that the Chicago surrealists escalated their collaboration with some of the more staunchly libertarian Marxist elements of the wide-ranging SDS movement, specifically the Wisconsin-based "journal of American radicalism," Radical America, where excerpts from The Prague Platform appeared in the January 1970 "Surrealism in the Service of the Revolution" issue. Though the relationship was fractious and lasted only a few years, the Chicago surrealists brought with them a number of fresh perspectives that were often dismally lacking in the intellectual and cultural work of New Left in the US in those days, such as a wildly subversive appreciation for cartoons, comic books, African-American music, and vernacular folk-architecture. In the decades since, the Chicago surrealists have continued their exploration of these themes as they have adhered to a number of anarchist, anti-capitalist, and radical environmentalist causes.

JUNCTURES AND FRACTURES

The British historian G.M. Trevelyan famously wrote just after World War II ended that "1848 was the turning-point at which modern history failed to turn." Trevelyan was referring to the wave of unsuccessful "Spring

Revolutions" that rocked a number of the Italian and German states, as well as some regions of the Habsburg Empire, France, Poland, and Romania. Obviously, the intensity and objectives of these uprisings differed from one territory to the next, but in general they all were ineffective and unorganized bourgeois liberal and nationalist revolts against aristocratic rule. But Trevelyan was what's called a "Whig historiographer," a scholar who represents change over time as stages of development inexorably marching up a staircase of Progress that culminates in white, patriarchal liberal-capitalist rule. (Tellingly, "whig" was also the acronym for the "White House Iraq Group," the neoconservative cabal that masterminded the US invasion and occupation of Iraq five years ago.) By calling the 1848 revolutions a missed historical turning point from his vantage point of one hundred years later, Trevelyan claims that these uprisings were a blown opportunity that ended up strengthening the monarchies and by so doing slowed the supposedly inevitable ascendency of bourgeois rule in Europe.

These days, as I read some of the histories and historical revisions on the fortieth anniversary of some of the many important events that happened in 1968, I'm reminded again and again of Trevelyan's oft-quoted line. In general, was 1968 a historical turning point? Did history take the turn, or did it veer off and get sidetracked somewhere along the way? For the Prague, Paris, and Chicago surrealists—and for numerous other surrealist individuals and collectives around the world—1968 was a moment when entangled political, social, and cultural crises precipitated an atmosphere that the surrealists were best-suited to exploit. "Situation of Surrealism in the U.S." and The Prague Platform anticipated much of what was to come and possible surrealist responses quite accurately. And the next time the ruling order starts to come off of the tracks, surrealists will be there again to grease the wheels.

Historians will argue about the degree to which the global rebellions of 1968 can be linked together or what (if any) catalysts triggered the transnational movements. But there can be no mistaking the pronounced cross-pollination of surrealist ideas and activities in '68 at the same time that the groups were carefully following events in their own cities and elsewhere. Whether or not the revolts of that year could have ever joined hands, the surrealists were working in concert—united, but diverse—doing anything and everything that could do to push local conditions towards a point of conjunction with the other struggles. When the moment passed and the systems of repression had re-entrenched, surrealists returned to work. 1968 was neither an apogee nor an apotheosis for surrealism; it was not a turning point, but rather a point of no return.

THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF WORK

Penelope Rosemont[2]

> *"Work, now? Never, never. I'm on strike"*
> — Arthur Rimbaud

Depersonalization and alienation from our deepest desires is implanted during childhood via school, church, movies, and TV, and soon reaches the point where an individual's desire is not only a net of contradictions, but also a commodity like all the others. "True life" always seems to be just a bit beyond what a weekly paycheck and credit card can afford, and is thus indefinitely postponed. And each postponement contributes to the reproduction of a social system that practically everyone who is not a multimillionaire or a masochist has come to loathe.

That is the problem facing us all: How to break the pattern of work — of week-to-week slavery, that habit of habits, that addiction of addictions; how to detach ourselves from the grip of Self-Defeating Illusions For Sale, Inc., a.k.a, the corporate consumer State. Especially ingrained is that pattern of working for someone else: making someone else's "goods", producing the wealth that someone else enjoys, thinking someone else's thoughts (sometimes actually believing them one's own), and even dreaming someone else's dreams — in short, living someone else's life, for one's own life, and one's own dream of life, have long since been lost in the shuffle.

The systematic suppression of a person's real desires — and that is largely what work consists of — is exacerbated by capitalism's incessant manipulation of artificial desires, "as advertised." This gives daily life the character of mass neurosis, with increasingly frequent psychotic episodes. To relieve the all-embracing boredom of daily life, society offers an endless array of distractions and stupefactions, most of them "available at a store near you". The trouble is, these distractions and stupefactions, legal or illegal, soon become part of the boredom, for they satisfy no authentic desire.

When the news reports horrible crimes committed by children or teenagers trying to be satanists, or superheroes, or terrorists, or just "bad guys", we can be sure that these kids lived lives of intolerable dullness, that they were so isolated from their own desires and from the larger society that they didn't even know how or where to look for something different, or how to rebel in such a way that it might actually make a difference. Instead, they picked up some trashy notions from bible school, Hollywood and TV which promised a few minutes of meaningless "excitement" followed by lots of publicity — also meaningless. Each time something like this happens we hear cries to "monitor" films more closely, and to ban "violence" on TV. Rarely, however, does anyone criticize the Bible or the Christian churches, despite the fact that Christianity — by far the bloodiest of the "world's great religions" — is far more to be blamed. Similarly, one rarely hears criticism of the armed forces — a gang of professional killers whose influence on children cannot be anything other than baleful.

And even less often does one encounter criticism of another intrinsically violent institution: the nuclear family. Indeed, at this late date in human history, this relic of patriarchy is still held up as some sort of ideal. Replacing the extended family as we know it today is an invention of the nineteenth century. Constructed by white bourgeois Europeans to meet the needs of expanding industrialization, it reflects capitalism's model of the "chain of command". It continues the sanction of male supremacy as a time-honored tradition dating back to a mandate of God, no less. In the nuclear family, he works at a job, and she works in the home (and increasingly also at a job). As for the children, they are the family's private property, and remain so for years after they reach biological maturity.

Children too learn to work, or at least how to suffer boredom. From the earliest age they are taught to obey orders. School and church teach them the necessity of going to and staying at a particular place for a prolonged period, even when they would rather be anywhere else. All the classic parental admonitions — "Sit still!", "Do what I tell you!", "Don't talk back!", "Stop behaving like a bunch of wild Indians!" — are part of the education of the well-behaved, uncomplaining wage-slave...

The world today is confronted by greater, more earth-shaking, more life-threatening problems than ever before: wars all over, massive pollution, global warming, the return of slavery, white supremacy, oppression of women, ecological disaster, neocolonialism, state terrorism, the prison industry, genocide, cancer, AIDS, the traffic death-toll, xenophobia, pesticides, genetic engineering — the list goes on and on. Ceaselessly bombarded by news reports and sound bites of one catastrophe after another, most people have no idea what to do, and lapse into paralysis.

On the ideological front, this widespread passivity, itself a major social problem, is maintained by Andre Breton called *miserabilism*, the cynical rationalization of misery, suffering and corruption — the dominant ideology of Power in our time.

Every hour, moreover, countless billions are spent on propaganda, advertising and other mystifications to sustain the delusion that the crisis-strewn society we live in today is the best and only one possible.

What is most important to grasp is that work is at the center of all these problems. It is work that keeps the whole miserabilist system going. Without work, the death-dealing juggernaut that proclaims itself the "free market" would grind to a halt. "Free market" means freedom for Capital, and unfreedom for those who work. Until the problem of work is solved — that is, until work is abolished — all other problems will not only remain, but will keep getting worse…In a world too busy to live, work itself has become toxic, a form of "digging your own grave".

Renewed scarcities and engineered economic crises notwithstanding, society today has the capacity to reduce work to a tiny fraction of what it is now, while continuing to meet all human needs. It is obvious that if people really want paradise on Earth, they can have it — practically overnight. Of course, they will have to overcome the immense and multinational "false consciousness" industry, which works very hard to make sure that very few working people know what they really want…

Work kills the spirit, damages the body, insults the mind, keeps everyone confused and demoralized, distracts its victims from all the things that really matter in life…Our struggle calls for labor organizers of a new kind…To bring about the meltdown of miserabilism, we need awakeners of latent desires, fomentors of marvelous humour, stimulators of ardent dreams, provokers of the deepest possible yearning for a life of poetic adventure.

DISOBEDIENCE: THE ANTIDOTE FOR MISERABLISM

Penelope Rosemont[3]

> *"Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is man's original virtue."*
>
> — Oscar Wilde

> *"...and then we go out and seize a square of singular symbolic significance and put our asses on the line to make it happen. The time has come to deploy this emerging stratagem against the greatest corrupter of our democracy: Wall Street, the financial Gomorrah of America."*
>
> — From *Adbusters* (September/October 2011 issue)

> *"We are not protesting. Who is there to protest to? What could we ask them for that they could grant? We are occupying. We are reclaiming those same spaces of public practice that have been commoded, privatized and locked into the hands of faceless bureaucracy, real estate portfolios and police 'protection.' Hold on to these spaces, nurture them and let the boundaries of your occupations grow."*
>
> — Egyptian (Tahrir Square) Comrades

Unemployed, depressed, don't know what to do next? WORK FULL-TIME! Men and women needed NOW to work on Occupy Everything! No pay; possible great future.

Guaranteed: Enormous satisfaction right now! Make your Unemployment meaningful. Take the world apart and remold it to your desires. Don't gamble in casinos for petty stakes, don't waste your nickels and dimes. Gamble big! You have a world to win!

Work as we have known it is gone! For better or for worse, the workless future is here; right now. And, it must be reckoned with. Don't ask for jobs, don't be lonesome for your exploitation; don't miss your

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cage, or your alarm clock. Demand instead that everyone gets an equal share; demand ownership of the products that you make, the world that you create. Demand the natural world be restored...a beauty for us now to enjoy and a way to sustain us in the future.

Jacques Vache, one of those World War I rebels who, with Andre Breton, was at the root of surrealism, considered the role of the Alarm-Clock in daily-life-that materialized superego lurking in every household. The Alarm Clock, he wrote, "a monster that has always frightened me because of the regimentation glaring from its face, because of the way it — this honest man — glares at me when I enter the bedroom." It is, "a hypocrite that detests me."

Franklin Rosemont, co-founder of the Chicago Surrealist Group, commented that the alarm/time clock is "at the very center of the class struggle...scientific management...multiplied profits and the power of the giant trusts." He then asks, "When will the last ten-thousand alarm-clocks be tossed on a bonfire of the last ten-million time cards?"

A good time would be now.

"Human dignity has been reduced to the level of exchange value," wrote Surrealist Andre Breton. "We do not accept the laws of economy and exchange, we do not accept enslavement to work."

Occupy Wall Street (OWS), we need to note, is the precariat-those who face an uncertain future-manifesting not as the "unemployed," as defined by pointless policy makers, but as humanity in search of its dignity.

The critique of work and the consideration of new possibilities for everyday life began in the 1880s when Paul Lafargue, Karl Marx's son-in-law, wrote an amazing book, *The Right to Be Lazy*. It was the first to recognize a disastrous dogma, "A strange delusion possesses the working classes of the nations where capitalist civilization holds its sway...[T]his delusion is the love of work, the furious passion for work, pushed even to the exhaustion of the vital force of the individual and his progeny. Instead of opposing this mental aberration, the priests, the economists and the moralists have cast a sacred halo over work..."

This year, *The Right to Be Lazy* has come back into print at the precisely right moment with an excellent introduction by Bernard Marszalek, a *Fifth Estate* contributor in this issue. In his introduction, Marszalek writes, "*The Right to be Lazy*, after decades of obscurity, was reprinted by Solidarity Bookshop in the 60's, at a time when academics, hippies and revolutionaries questioned the future of work."

At that time, he writes, "A tiny faction of the '60s revolutionaries questioned the very necessity of work itself and advocated its abolition before the 1968 rebellion of French students and workers inspired many to

think of work radically transformed. The Rebel Worker Group in Chicago, Fredy and Lorraine Perlman's *Black and Red* and the *Fifth Estate*, both in Michigan, and *Black Mask* in New York City, expressed their utter disdain for toil and devised schemes to avoid it. Several dissident intellectuals, like Paul Goodman and Ivan Illich, agreed with these sentiments."

The State, and the capitalism that it embodies and defends, has no solutions to offer; it can only respond by expanding its influence, economically if possible, and militarily if necessary. Ideally, however, its best method of social control is through a bewildering array of Non-Choices-breathtaking spectacles of useless products and despicable celebrity antics. A corruption geared to leave us with an acute sense of defeatism.

We can observe the truth of Fredy Perlman's often quoted passage from his *Reproduction of Daily Life*, concerning the situation of humankind in this society. They who were "previously conscious creators of their own meager existence become unconscious victims of their own activity...Men who were much but had little; now, have much, but are little." Surrealists have a word for it-"miserablism."

In *Creating Anarchy*, Ron Sakolsky writes, "Miserablism is a system that produces misery and then rationalizes it by perpetuating the idea that such misery comprises the only possible reality."

It's time to ask the question, what do we really want? Shiny-black Gucci shoes and a stone-grey Bugatti Veyron, the world's most over-priced auto to drive around through the assorted junk-yards of smashed automobiles, graveyards of abandoned tires and lonesome-bloated refrigerators that now surround our cities instead of prairies and forests? Or, an authentic life in a verdant world?

Our social world could be restructured so that work that needs to be done would be divided up among us all. Many hands make work light, as the old, old saying goes. Work could be structured so that hours would be short, variety would be possible, and it would be a pleasure to cooperate with each other and accomplish what needs to be done. Transforming work into useful, collaborative and fun activity, means we need to call that activity something besides work.

Can the great joy in the restoration of forests and prairies and sanctuaries for animals be called work? Is the joy of creating art, work? Or, constructing beautiful buildings, or teaching and helping others, work? Those lucky scientists who have the privilege of puzzling over the universe and figuring out complicated scientific and technical problems, do they define that activity as a sacrifice of their time and energy? They may call it "their work," but this is not working by any current definition of the activity.

If for one day, work was freely shared, was focused on needs and for the benefit of all, not only would it be necessary to find another word for what was formerly known as "work," but also, the world would change overnight. Also, freedom from oppressive work would allow us for the first time in history to truly develop our individuality.

It is interesting to note that Marszalek's concluding comments on Lafargue's *The Right to be Lazy* are almost a prediction of what began in lower Manhattan as Occupy Wall Street. Marszalek calls for seizing space-creating communal living spaces, occupying abandoned factory sites to re-industrialize for community use, building a decentralized energy commons, doing spontaneous theater in a bank-are like the late winter blossoms in the field of a new culture, a culture of rhizomic expansion."

These remarks especially found their concrete expression during Occupy Oakland's General Strike on Nov 2, when a theatrically animated and inspired crowd closed down a Wells Fargo Bank by assembling a typical American living room-complete with sofas, chairs, end-tables and lamps on the sidewalk in front of the bank.

They apparently were planning to make themselves at home and why not? It's our world. What are you going to do about It?

Marszalek analyzes what happens when we take our daily-lives into our own hands: "Development of this sort encourages and connects diverse social projects in a non-hierarchical way to solidify pragmatic politics and to amplify human capabilities that can lead to a truly rich life."

In other words, rebellion that creates lasting social change changes the change-maker — frees the agent of change, to, as Breton famously said, change life and transform the world.

MUTUAL ACQUIESCENCE OR MUTUAL AID?

Ron Sakolsky

> *Most of us have made a compact, saying "Let us make a convention. Let us agree to call what we are feeling not 'pain' but 'neutral,' not 'dull unease' but 'well enough,' not 'restless dissatisfaction intermitted by blowing up,' but average 'hanging around.' Our consensus is that how we live is tolerable. If I ask, 'How are you?' you must say, 'Pretty good.' And if I do not remind you, you must not remind me. To all this we swear."* [1]
> --Paul Goodman

> *The hugger-mugger totality wants nothing and does nothing. They are entangled with one another, do not move, prisoners; they abandon themselves to opaque pressures but they themselves are the power that lies upon them and binds them, mind and limb.* [2]
> --Robert Walser

What I will refer to here as "mutual acquiescence" is the social adhesive that cements the bricks of alienation and oppression which structure our daily lives into a wall of domination. It is a major obstacle to the practice of what anarchists refer to as "mutual aid" in that the latter is concerned with providing the cooperative means for vaulting that wall. While cooperation can take many forms, for Peter Kropotkin, who developed the evolutionary theory of mutual aid [3] in relation to human behavior, its quintessence in the political realm is anarchy. With that in mind, I will take the liberty here of referring to the concept of mutual aid only in the anarchist sense, and will consider those cooperative human relationships associated with welfare state capitalism and state socialism as being built upon forms of mutual acquiescence because of their implicit or explicit statist assumptions which run counter to anarchy.

Even in its least cooperative and most authoritarian forms, mutual acquiescence cannot simply be equated with unmediated mass conformity to societal norms. The hierarchical power of rulers and ruling ideas are reinforced by the interpersonal collaboration of the ruled in their own servility. Such collaboration is composed of the paralyzing intermediary social relationships that are the scaffolding of conformist assimilation to the ideological authority of society and state. What makes mutual

acquiescence so insidious is that it is a form of social control that is rooted in the everyday psychological and social relationships of consent that compose the lived experience of domination. Accordingly, an analysis of how mutual acquiescence prevents and immobilizes individual and collective forms of direct action allows for a more nuanced model of domination and resistance than can be afforded by merely referencing the devastating effects of conformity imposed from above.

Beyond the compliant nature of the behaviors themselves, mutual acquiescence does have an institutional context. The mutual dimension of such institutional forms of domination is intrinsically linked to the existence of the state and is mirrored by the economy. According to the Tiqqun collective, "The more societies constitute themselves in states, the more their subjects embody the economy. They monitor themselves and each other; they control their emotions, their movements, their inclinations and believe that they can expect the same self-control from others. They link up, put themselves in chains and chain themselves to each other, countering any type of excess." [4] Such collusive relationships of self-enslavement in which we relinquish our potential power as individuals and collectivities are at the core of mutual acquiescence.

Like the relationships of empowered solidarity that animate mutual aid, disempowering relationships of mutual acquiescence are complex. Taken together in practice, both compose an individual's ensemble of social relationships. Moreover, they are differentiated and impacted by social constructions of class, ethnicity, race, and gender. As an example, a family that one is born into can be characterized by relationships of mutual acquiescence, but these can crisscross with a primary or secondary affiliation which one has with an anarchist affinity group in such a way that the relationships of one may modify or detract from the other. Alternatively, family ethnicity and political affinity can reinforce one another as was the case with the German, Jewish and Italian anarchist groups that flourished in the US in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet, even in the latter historical case, the egalitarian relationships of mutual aid still might have possibly been undermined by the hierarchical practices associated with patriarchal domination or reinforced by the lack of them. Just as the individual balance between relationships based upon mutual acquiescence and those associated with mutual aid can shift and is not necessarily fixed over the course of one's lifetime, anarchism itself is always in the process of becoming.

If the relationships that constitute and perpetuate the state are the negation of mutual aid in the anarchist sense of that term, then the theoretical concept of mutual acquiescence might be the missing link

in understanding how Landauer's conditional notion of the state and Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid ultimately fit together.

Emphasizing this sense of fluidity, Gustav Landauer conceived of not only anarchy, but the state as a living organism. By postulating that the state is based upon lived social relationships, he explained how it might be deposed. It is in this sense that he found common ground with anarchists like Max Stirner in conceptualizing the state as a "spook." In Landauer's words, "People do not live in the state. The state lives in the people." " [5]

For Landauer then, both the state and capital exist as relations between people. As he puts it, "The state is a social relationship, a certain way of people relating to one another. It can be destroyed by creating new social relationships, i.e. by people relating to one another differently." [6] Kropotkin's concept of mutual aid is just such a way of "relating to one another differently." Using the latter's terminology, Landauer envisioned the antidote to the "passivity," "compliance" and "indifference" that he decried as being found in the development of "a spirit of mutual aid." [7]

He further elaborated on this spirit elsewhere as being characterized by "peoples uniting in freedom." [8] Such an invigorating spirit of reciprocity and collective transformation through mutual aid can be contrasted with Kropotkin's depiction of the debilitating "spirit of voluntary servitude that is cleverly cultivated in the minds of the young in order to perpetuate the subjection of the individual to the State." [9] Saul Newman traces the theory of voluntary servitude back to the sixteenth century formulations of Etienne de la Boetie in order to explain the ways in which an internalized desire for self-domination can thwart the creation of the kind of radical subjectivity that is at the heart of the post-anarchist project. [10] Yet Newman fails to mention Kropotkin's use of the term voluntary servitude and misses an opportunity here to link the concept to the classical anarchist tradition through the influence of both Boetie and Kropotkin on Landauer. Reincorporating voluntary servitude into anarchist theory, while at the same time bypassing Kropotkin's thinking on the subject, obscures the way in which voluntary servitude informs, and is informed by, the theory of mutual aid. I prefer to use my original formulation of the term "mutual acquiescence" precisely because of its linguistic relationship to the living concept of mutual aid. [11]

Relationships that exemplify mutual acquiescence inhibit our ability to construct other relationships that might displace those upon which the state is built. If the relationships that constitute and perpetuate the state are the negation of mutual aid in the anarchist sense of that term, then the theoretical concept of mutual acquiescence might be the missing link in understanding

how Landauer's conditional notion of the state and Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid ultimately fit together. With this conjunction in mind, it becomes clear that we cannot simply eliminate the state from above, but need to replace those relationships of mutual acquiescence that prevent our disengagement from it with ones involving mutual aid. As James Horrox has pointed out, "Landauer's analysis of state power anticipated the central premise of Foucault's governmentality thesis... his notion of capitalism and the state as sets of relations between subjects (discourse) rather than as 'things' that can be smashed (structures)." [12] In this Foucaldian sense, it is the authoritarian discourse between disciplined subjects which constitutes the process of mutual acquiescence that must be challenged.

Surrealist Penelope Rosemont has insisted in her seminal piece on Landauer that discourses of control can be overturned by the poetic language of desire that always takes unexpected paths in revolutionary situations. Such poetic discourses, inspired by what Landauer referred to as the "vagabondage of the imagination" appear in emancipatory moments with the "swiftness of dreams" in which everything seems possible. It was just such a mythopoetics of resistance capable of confronting routinely docile relationships of obedience and inspiring social outbreaks of surrealism that intrigued both Walter Benjamin and Herbert Marcuse and continues to animate what Stephen Shukaitis refers to as "surrealism's attempt to realize the power of the imagination in everyday life." [13] As Rosemont further elaborates, "Landauer sought a total revolution--a leap beyond conventional limits not only in politics and economics, but also in culture, in the individual's emotions, in the life of the mind." [14]

Landauer's vision of what he called "structural renewal" was not predicated only on the dramatic circumstances of the revolutionary uprising. He prized the way in which the anarchist dream of liberty and community could manifest itself at the societal level in the construction of dynamic new cultural alternatives founded upon what we would today call horizontality and autonomy, and, at the personal level, in the formation of individual relationships of reciprocity based upon a desire for experiencing the more expansive reality of anarchy denied to us by relationships of mutual acquiescence. While mutual acquiescence blocks the flow of mutual aid, relationships of mutual aid can in turn act as a catalytic agent in the dismantling of the conditioned social relationships of mutual acquiescence. Yet, while his legacy as a theorist is often identified with the creation of such prefigurative beachheads of social revolution, Landauer understood that the shedding of the constraints of mutual acquiescence can likewise occur in the heat of insurgency.

As he has expressed it, "The first step in the struggle of the oppressed

and suffering classes, as well as in the awakening of the rebellious spirit is always insurgency, outrage, a wild and raging sensation. If this is strong enough, realizations and action are directly connected to it; both actions of destruction and actions of creation." [15] Though Landauer opposed propaganda of the deed when it came to political assassinations, he understood that the insurrectionary upheaval of social war and the blossoming of the insurgent imagination went hand in hand. David Graeber, an active participant in both the global justice and Occupy Wall Street movements, has added direct action to the prefigurative lexicon. "In its essence direct action is the insistence, when faced with structures of unjust authority, on acting as if one is already free. One does not solicit the state. One does not even necessarily make a grand gesture of defiance. Insofar as one is capable, one proceeds as if the state does not exist. [16] More specifically, as AK Thompson has elaborated in relation to the enabling essence of "becoming" implicit in the black bloc tactic, "Rioting--despite being an essentially reactionary form of activity--allows its participants to concretely prefigure the society they want to create. This is so because the riot yields political subjects that are able to produce the world, subjects that--through the process of transformation the riot entails--are forced to confront the unwritten future within them." [17] In any event, whatever tactical differences in terms of violence and non-violence, or overt street protest as compared to the infrapolitics of everyday resistance, may be present in a given situation, the transformative power of anarchist direct action is rooted in an intrinsic withdrawal of consent from the underlying hierarchical assumptions of the dominant reality.

The question remains as to why certain individuals choose mutual acquiescence over mutual aid. For many people, there is a cold comfort contained in mutual acquiescence precisely because it is experienced as a familiar, even tolerable, social relationship, the social acceptability of which is keyed to an underlying desire for alignment with the parameters of what is considered to be legitimate protest in terms of the dominant political ideology. This ideology is in turn reiterated ad nauseam by the mass media in spectacular form, and enforced by a nagging fear of state repression. In a political climate characterized by widespread feelings of powerlessness, mutual acquiescence is rooted in the social denial of our ability to mount radical opposition. Therefore, in an estranged way, it allows us to experience psychological relief in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds, and this is not only true for those who do not involve themselves in resistance, but even for many who actively engage in protest.

As an example of the latter, a mutual acquiescence dynamic can be gleaned from the widely circulated left-liberal explanation for the police

force's failure to restrain those using the black bloc tactic at the 2010 Toronto G20 summit. This explanation attributed the largely unimpeded black bloc property destruction spree not to the ability of direct actionists to outmaneuver the police, but, instead to police agents provocateur who allowed or even provoked the bloc to run amok in order to discredit the protest and justify the billion dollar security budget for the event. In order to provide a counterpoint to such a misleading explanation of the events in Toronto, the Vancouver Media Co-op published a firsthand critique in which the analysis of events seems congruent with the concept of mutual acquiescence. According to Zig Zag, "Liberal reformists do not believe that the state can be fought through militancy... when militants carry out an effective attack, especially against such a massive security operation, it shatters the defeatist premise upon which reformism is based. The liberal response to such attacks is that they must be part of a 'greater conspiracy.'" [18] Putting that analysis in the context of global civil war, rather than a convoluted understanding of the image of flaming cop cars in Toronto being construed as evidence of the omnipotence of the police, we might instead recognize it as what A.G. Schwarz has termed, with reference to the Greek insurrection of December 2008, a "signal of disorder." [19] In this more empowering analysis, such intentionally unsettling gestures of "performative violence" as the burning of a cop car can break the spell of authority and have a ripple effect in spreading revolt because they fuel the notion that "anything is possible." [20]

In contrast, the aforementioned conspiratorial explanation of events in Toronto by the liberal left can be seen as evidence that mutual acquiescence is so deeply inculcated in authoritarian society that not even protesters are immune from its mental fetters, especially if they are demanding reforms from the global corporate state rather than seeking its dissolution. Not only did some Toronto G20 protest leaders among the social democrats simply dismiss the results of such black bloc militancy in conspiratorial terms, but, in hindsight, they even went so far as to publicly suggest that the police should have preemptively arrested the bloc before the march had even begun so as to separate the good demonstrators from those bad apples who, strangely to those practicing liberal democratic protocol, were willing to directly challenge the state's control of the streets and yet made no demands of it. As A.G. Schwarz has noted, "It is oxymoronic to make demands of something you wish to destroy completely, because the request for change transfers agency from you to that thing that receives your demands, and the very act of communication grants it continued life. Our attacks aim to destroy authority, to open up spaces in order to recreate life, and to communicate with society." [21] While such insurrectionary tactics

need not be privileged above all other approaches to direct action, they can be seen as part of the larger puzzle of building a culture of resistance. In eschewing the lifelessness of mutual acquiescence, one can become receptive to the capacity for radical festivity associated with mutual aid, whether it takes the form of the creation of autonomous zones, squats, supermarket expropriations, pirate radio, TV station takeovers or torched cop cars. Both tactical and principled differences might still occur among anarchist strategists in relation to each of the above arenas of direct action, but they are less subject to assumptions of mutual acquiescence that can paralyze such action by playing upon our fears.

Beginning with Occupy Wall Street on September 17, 2011, the spread of the occupy movement throughout North America has both challenged mutual acquiescence in some ways and demonstrated the limits of liberalism in others. Many in the occupy movement have explained their involvement as an "awakening." That metaphor is not just about personal revelation regarding the inequities of society, but refers to an awakening to the combined power of self-determination, mutual aid, spontaneity, and solidarity that gushes forth when the bonds of mutual acquiescence are broken. Naturally, anarchists within and without the occupy movement have been critical of the liberal reformist discourse of many of the participants with its emphasis on corporate greed rather than outright opposition to capitalism, and such highly questionable occupy movement tropes as patriotism, citizen rights, celebrity endorsements, the populist fetishizing of democracy, the dogmatic use of the term non-violence at the expense of a diversity of tactics, and the simplistic idea that those people that are cops are part of the 99% without a corresponding recognition that when in uniform their job is to serve the interests of the 1%. Yet the occupy movement has also opened up fluid spaces of possibility that had previously been locked down. In this regard, it has acted as an umbrella site for specific forms of anarchist intervention, practical experiments in counterpower, a vehicle for the radical imagination to take flight, and a compass pointing in the direction of limitless horizons.

When thousands of rebellious people storm Times Square, the Brooklyn Bridge and Foley Square in New York City who never would have dreamed of doing so just a few months earlier, or when Occupy Oakland refers to itself as the Oakland Commune, shuts down the ports and mounts a successful general strike, the foundations of mutual acquiescence have been shaken, and we find ourselves in a potentially anarchist moment. As of this writing, the wheel is still in spin and the future trajectory of the movement remains unpredictable. Will the occupations become less like spectacles of symbolic dissent and more literally transgressive in relation to

the institution of private property as has been the case with the squatted buildings that have sprung up in the wake of occupation camp evictions from more public spaces? Will permitted occupations increasingly give way to unpermitted ones? Will the momentum shift from asserting civil rights and liberties to practicing civil disobedience? Will civil disobedience morph into uncivil and willful forms of disobedience? Will the occupied spaces increasingly become bases of operations for an ever-widening and interweaving array of oppositional tactics by rebellious individuals and uncontrollable groups? Will the tired politics of the liberal left co-opt a vital heterogenous movement that steadfastly and uncompromisingly has refused to make demands of the powers that be but rather has sought to satisfy their needs without intermediaries by means of direct action? Will the consensus decision-making process of open assembly be one that emphasizes empowering forms of participatory coordination among autonomous affinity groups and individuals rather than resorting to massified forms of managerial pseudo-governance?

Beyond all these specific questions, the overriding question is whether the occupy movement will ultimately become a safety-valve or a launching pad. From the start, it has been both, and many anarchists involved in the movement have gravitated to those groups of individuals that show an affinity for direct action. Accordingly, on October 8, 2011, the Occupy Wall Street Direct Action Working Group stated in a call to action which was livestreamed from Washington Square Park, "The future of this movement lies in our commitment to create the world we want to live in: a world where people are not commodities; where attaching value to our natural environment doesn't lead to its destruction; a world without hierarchy and oppression; a world of mutual aid and solidarity; a world of self-determination and direct democracy within our communities; a world where foreclosures, empty buildings, abandoned schools and parks are occupied by the people. Start in your own community and occupy your own spaces. Occupy everything!" While not calling for anarchy per se, the above statement can be read not only as a call to action, but a refusal of the somnambulance of mutual acquiescence and its replacement with a lively vision of social change that contains the seeds of anarchy.

However, despite such growing resistance, mutual acquiescence has not disappeared. Even as we witness Arctic ice caps melting, offshore oil wells exploding, species disappearing at an alarming rate, ramped up state terrorism, a widening net of surveillance, and an economy that is crumbling all around us; mutual acquiescence allays our uneasiness. Laurance Labadie once conceptualized this capitulation process as being partly rooted in "gregariousness" itself. As he explained, "People can suffer almost anything

as long as they see that the other fellow is suffering the same ills." [22]Alone-together in the welcoming arms of mutual acquiescence, we accept that we are disempowered to do anything meaningful about our rapidly deteriorating situation. In fact, we no longer even see it as a problem to be overcome, but a plight that must be endured or adapted to by self-managing our own despair. In order to more fully accomplish the feat of denying our own agency, we must assure ourselves and one another that resistance is futile or even crazy. We are not only surrounded by, but seek out, relationships that do not question these authoritarian assumptions. Increasingly, we become accustomed to reluctantly accepting, unenthusiastically adjusting to, or even longing for the coming apocalypse rather than being inspired by the possibilities of a "coming insurrection" [23] or desiring a "communion of revolt." [24]

In historical conjunction with the occupation movement's attempt to pose a challenge to such miserabilism by embracing a liberatory response to the debilitating effects of mutual acquiescence, the book Desert [25] emphasizes another alternative, "active disillusionment." Faced with the reality of environmental devastation and the perceived improbability of global revolution as a corrective, those who favor a strategy of active disillusionment eschew both what they consider to be the naivete of false hope and the cynicism of inactive despair. Such a strategy instead posits that the abandonment of evangelical utopian illusion need not be disabling. To be disillusioned with the possibilities for full-on anarchist revolution does not preclude mutual aid and/or anarchist resistance based on a "non-servile humility" that seeks to outwit the state even if it cannot abolish it. This is a strategy that indigenous peoples have long employed in their struggles against the domestication of industrial civilization. Accordingly, Desert places Landauer's notion of "behaving differently" in an anti-colonial context. It says, "In many places we are 'behaving differently' by spreading love and cooperation AND resisting and/or avoiding those who would be our masters." [26] This approach is what James C. Scott has called in a non-Western situation, "the art of not being governed." [27]

Within relationships of mutual acquiescence, however, those cooperative acts of creation, occupation, desertion, refusal and insurrection, which each in their own way can undermine the ruling order of capitalist and statist assumptions, are forestalled, abandoned, ridiculed or pejoratively labeled as terrorism. Instead of the construction of relationships that resonate with what the author PM refers to as a process of "substruction," [28] in which subversion and construction go hand in hand, mutual acquiescence is characterized by social relationships that demand varying degrees and kinds of acceptance and submission. Rather

than experiencing the individual and collective uplift of affinity and solidarity in the anarchist sense, under the sway of mutual acquiescence we are urged to escape social isolation by forging the mental handcuffs of our own impotence. Though these manacles might be tricked-out with all the latest in seductive gadgetry, they may enslave us all the more because they can produce a technophoric torpor which can blind many of us to intriguing possibilities for direct action, sabotage and revolt.

In contrast to such passivity, a motley crew of anonymous hacktivists, Wikileakers and Luddites engage in various anti-authoritarian forms of resistance and preemptive attack which seek to challenge the commonsensical social underpinnings of webbed docility and complacency that are among the hegemonic links in the ideological chain of mutual acquiescence. Perhaps Guy Fawkes is the internet joker in the stacked deck of the capitalist state that incites the players to cash in their chips and occupy the bank. His image has successfully been used in Occupy Wall Street propaganda to rally the troops, but the real test of such culture jamming strategies continues to be what those gathered together under the occupy banner actually do to foment a global uprising.

Rather than thinking of the state as a "thing" to be seized in a vanguardist sense in order to counter ideological domination from above, as in the formulations of Marxist cultural hegemony theorist Antonio Gramsci, anarchists do not seek to replace one form of hegemony with another. [29] Instead, we challenge the social processes that constitute mutual acquiescence by practicing direct action from the bottom-up. In so doing, we oppose the passive acceptance of consensus reality with both open and covert forms of solidarity and rebellion that are based upon our individual predilections and shared affinities, and these direct actions can in turn release the inherent power of mutual aid in its most anarchic sense. While the above analysis is not meant to deny the existence of ideological hegemony (no need to throw the Gramscian baby out with the bathwater), it is based on the anti-authoritarian assumption that such hegemony takes many diverse forms beyond orthodox Marxist notions of class and culture as base and superstructure respectively. Further, it maintains that the only way in which dominant ideas can be undermined is from below.

Yet, as history has shown, the destruction of the alienated relationships upon which the state is built remains complicated by the fact that mutual acquiescence has a continuing appeal. When faced with the varied uncertainties and dislocations of life on the sinking ship of capitalism, mutual acquiescence offers those with queasy stomachs a "tough love" seasickness remedy that normalizes "survival of the fittest" competition as a lifeboat strategy, while dismissing the cooperativeness of mutual aid as

unrealistic. The resulting prescription of competition for scarce resources in the face of calamity is combined with an emphasis on only those specific options for action that will not seriously rock the authoritarian boat any further, much less sink it. Moreover, the human impulse toward mutual aid is further suffocated by those in the debraining industry who professionally proselytize on behalf of an apolitical positivist psychology. The latter's emphasis on blaming ourselves for our own alienation and oppression is then reinforced by our everyday relationships of mutual acquiescence in which we are constantly encouraged to "be realistic," get with the program, stop whining, pop an anti-depressant if necessary, and, for godsake, appear upbeat.

Today, a touchy-feely New (W)age form of positive thinking has joined forces with the callous Social Darwinist philosophy of rugged individualism. Both urge us to survive by prioritizing the competitive elements within our human nature repertoire. For example, by seeking to become an entrepreneur, one can attempt to secure a first class waterproof compartment in turbulent seas, hoping to keep the sharks at bay for a while by feeding the less privileged to them, or at least by giving one's tacit consent to that sacrificial slaughter. If such a macabre scenario seems a bit too distasteful, we are encouraged to stop being so negative and accept this impoverished version of social reality as a given. The underlying assumption is that we are powerless to save them anyway and that the leaks will eventually be patched up enough so that those who are "naturally selected" can sail out of troubled waters before it becomes too late.

As the successful entrepreneurs and their professional cohorts in business and government watch the gruesome show from their watertight bunkers, they lament the "negative attitude," "bad karma" or lack of initiative on the part of those who are shark bait since, after all, anyone could obtain a dry berth if only they would pull themselves up by their own flipperstraps. Such a sink or swim ultimatum is socially lubricated by relationships of mutual acquiescence which encourage us to adopt this dog-eat-dog mentality by bathing its harshness in the soft glow of positivity or the dazzling promise of fifteen minutes of fame on the Survivor show. We acquiesce by seeking a privileged status and blaming those, including ourselves, who are drowning for being weighed down by their own "bad attitudes" or "karmic debt." On the other hand, mutual aid relies on autonomous self-determination and radical forms of solidarity to overthrow the entire system of privilege that has proved so perilous to our individual and collective safety in the first place.

In order to maintain legitimacy, the current incarnation of the democratic capitalist state links its strategies of integration not to the

lockstep conformity of the faceless masses, but with miserabilist versions of "individualism." The desire for individuality morphs into a contemporary version of success in which the old Horatio Alger mythology of upward mobility is replaced by the spectacular celebrityhood of YouTube, or the "God Wants You To Be Rich" prosperity gospel preached by televangelistic "pastorpreneurs," motivational speakers, life coaches, and corporate trainers. Given the underlying assumption of equality in a democratic context, those who are deemed "failures" can only blame themselves because of their lack of fortitude, intelligence or imagination. They have not learned "The Secret" of creating their own reality. [30] This feeding frenzy of victim-blaming is in turn socially enforced by relationships of mutual acquiescence. Accordingly, those labeled failures are considered to be the enemies of their own "happiness" as defined by the kind of commodified success that is measured in consumer goods and fleeting fantasies of celebrity status that simultaneously define the good life and confine our imaginal lives.

The problem then is not the sharks in the water, since they are only doing what comes naturally to their species, but the kind of predatory society in which some privileged humans are encouraged to throw those who are more vulnerable overboard and hide their eyes or watch the sport as if there was no other choice. As a result, whether we find ourselves drowning in dangerous waters, or endlessly treading water in the doldrums of alienation, mutual acquiescence reinforces the social acceptance of a very circumscribed set of options. In reactionary fashion, such paltry alternatives are restricted to either the threatened "stick" of drowning or the promise of the socially acceptable lifejacket of competitive survival as a "carrot" (i.e. the stick by other means). In either case, we are expected to psychologically buy into the rules of the game in such a way that if we are winners, it is at the expense of those who might otherwise be seen as comrades, and if we are losers, we are set adrift in a sea of fear and uncertainty.

However, as Rebecca Solnit meticulously documents in her moving book, A Paradise Built in Hell, time and again, when faced with the breakdown of the social order as a result of natural disasters (like earthquakes) or technological collapse (as is the case with "blackouts"); a contradiction appears. On the one hand, there are always some well documented incidents of selfish opportunism, but the less publicized of these involve the aggressive military response of elites who panic about the disruption of the social order which grants them their legitimacy. In the latter case, the public is viewed as an unruly mob to be either controlled by force or else made physically and psychologically dependent on the

institutionalized charity delivered by corporate benevolence or the welfare state. On the other hand, however, in the vast majority of instances, a scenario of solidarity emerges that she characterizes as a "disaster utopia" that combines psychological liberation, social engagement and community-mindedness. In the latter case, forms of self-organization are created amidst disaster that involve heroism, purposefulness, compassion, generosity and the unleashing of desire, transcendence, possibility and agency.

There is more to the disaster picture than the immobilizing despair experienced by the outside observer witnessing the media spectacle of victimization. When mutual aid is set in motion; exhilaration, or even elation, can be experienced at a visceral level in disaster situations, along with the transcendent realization that it is the alienation of "normal" life that is the real disaster. In this moment of intensity, disaster can take on the radical liminality of a temporary autonomous zone, carnival or revolution. As Solnit explains, "It's anarchic, a joy that the ordinary arrangements have fallen to pieces--but anarchic in that the ordinary arrangements structure and contain our lives and minds; when they cease to do so, we are free to improvise, discover, change, evolve." [31] And this kind of collective evolution is based upon mutual aid rather than being reduced to an individualized version of survival of the fittest.

In such extraordinary situations, it is my contention that what has been referred to here as mutual acquiescence is temporarily suspended, and in its place spontaneously arise those latent and suppressed cooperative aspects of human nature which culminate in acts of mutual aid that often go beyond mere survival. In such disastrous times, we witness and experience collaborative forms of direct action springing up from the ruins and can participate in the fabrication of a more vibrant society. These disaster utopias are not aberrations of human nature. Rather, they are affirmations of what is most anarchic about it. As she concludes, "In finding a deep connection with one another, people also found a sense of power, the power to do without the government, to replace its functions, and to resist it in many ways." [32] It is in this sense that mutual aid may be considered to truly be a "recipe for disaster" in the most affirmative CrimethInc sense of that term. [33] Similarly, beyond "disaster utopias," those engaging in direct action by using the black bloc tactic create the kind of situational catastrophe that locates both the unleashing of a radical subjectivity and the unrestricted flow of mutual aid in the flames of insurrection. [34]

When social calamity or upheaval strikes, we are not alone. We encounter others in a similar situation who may either seek to survive at our expense or else join together to build relationships based upon cooperation which suddenly seem possible when the walls of mutual acquiescence come

tumbling down. However, though the anarchist trace is never completely absent from them, not all cooperative relationships create anarchy in practice. The proclivity for mutual aid, which Kropotkin illuminated as being an aspect of human nature that is essential to the survival of the human species, can instead be channeled into the mutual acquiescence of reformism, where it is systematically degraded and stripped of its anarchist potential. In appealing to those who cringe at the conservative survival of the fittest strategy but who find the anarchy of mutual aid to be a bit too frightening or "unrealistic," mutual acquiescence offers the liberal alternative of reform. Instead of battling for survival against one's peers in Hobbesian fashion or (perish the thought) collectively engaging in autonomous direct action, the reformist version of mutual acquiescence urges us to put our faith in requesting/demanding legalistic remedies from the state or participating in the electoral politics charade by rallying around such Obamaesque advertising slogans as "change you can trust." Radical change is considered (if it is considered at all) to be impossible anyway, and we are instead directed to take a seat on the bandwagon of spectacular dissent. Since both spectacular society and mutual acquiescence are based upon social relations between people that are rooted in passivity, when taken in tandem, they can reinforce one another in undermining the formation of relations of mutual aid, even among dissenters.

Why then is the spectacle itself so alluring? Perhaps it is because, as Georgio Agamben has posited, it is based upon the expropriation of the human desire for community. "This is why (precisely because what is being expropriated is the very possibility of a common good) the violence of the spectacle is so destructive; but for the same reason the spectacle retains something like a positive possibility that can be used against it." [35] All too typically, however, such a quest to detourn the spectacle, and in so doing unleash the communitarian aspects captured by it, is channeled into the safety-valve relationships of mutual acquiescence that characterize reformism. By engaging with the democratic spectacle of reform rather than adopting an ungovernable strategy of "inoperativeness" in order to sabotage or dismantle the apparatuses of power, liberals accept acquiescent roles by becoming "concerned citizens," by writing a letter of protest to a government official or corporate CEO, by electing, or applauding the appointment of, a new charismatic leader to follow down the garden path of "green capitalism," by confining their political zeal to petitioning the powers-that-be for redress of their grievances, or immersing themselves in evermore technologically-mediated forms of communication which can easily lend themselves to appropriation by the market and surveillance by the state.

In terms of such technological mediation, Annie Le Brun has written a devastating critique of the paving over of the convulsive power of what surrealists term the Marvelous by what she considers to be the deadening virtuality of the networked society. In her recent polemic, The Reality Overload: The Modern World's Assault on the Imaginal Realm, she states, "Even as it launches ambush after ambush upon the unreality of our desires, there is nothing 'virtual' about this reality. In fact it is overflowing, a reality overload, coming to besiege us at the very depths of our being." [36] In essence, she contends that we are faced with "a reality that has almost succeeded in making us confuse the virtual and the imaginary." [37] Even those who would not go as far as she does in totally dismissing any radical potential that might be available within the virtual realm might still find it instructive to question the relationship between virtuality and mutual acquiescence.

How many of us are imprisoned in the closed logic of a computer rationality in which appearances are not merely displayed on the screen as simulations of experience, but have become the experience itself? To what extent have we lost our bearings in what is predominantly a cyberspace sea of ersatz realizations of our most radical desires? To what degree has the desire for empowered solidarity upon which mutual aid is built been debased and co-opted by the fan club mentality of the ubiquitous social networking sites that so often act as contemporary vehicles for a mutual acquiescence in which your identity is a form of property that can be assessed by calculating the number of your Facebook "friends."

While not specifically referencing surrealism or Le Brun's book, Franco "Bifo" Berardi uses similar language in tracing contemporary forms of alienation to an "overdose of reality" and an infocratic regime whose power is built upon the creation of an "overloaded" cognitive space in which attention itself is under siege. Going beyond a reliance on the Freudian concept of psychological repression in investigating the cause of alienation, he explains our current malaise as being related to the forms of "over-communication" that characterize the psychologically disaggregating milieu of digital connectivity. Within the context of the Infosphere, he explores the schizophrenia-inducing environment of intense velocity, over-inclusivity and excessive visibility that characterize semiocapitalism. These are the flows that can engender panic and encourage dependence on those institutions of authority that offer to provide shelter from the storm. Even in the activist milieu, the ultimate irony is that though the internet may be strategically used with mutual aid in mind, the result may still be a perpetuation of mutual acquiescence because of the way in which more human-scale forms of communication are overwhelmed by digital hyper-simulation. [38]

Another aspect of the psychological basis of mutual acquiescence is related to the nature of personal identity in the democratic capitalist state. Here, the ownership of property is one of the defining factors in a "successful" or "unsuccessful" personal identity. In any authoritarian society, even one that chooses to call itself "democratic," law and order is policed not just by cops, but by an undercurrent of intertwined relationships of mutual acquiescence that in effect govern daily life. Some of these relationships are codified into law in a way that reveals the ghost within the machine. When I first formulated a rudimentary version of the term "mutual acquiescence" as an anarchist conceptual tool, I had no idea that these two words already had a particular legal meaning in American jurisprudence. I have since discovered that in relation to property law, mutual acquiescence means "an agreement indicating acceptance of a condition by both parties involved or a lack of objection signifying permission" [all italics mine]. [39] Extracting the essence of that legal language for our purposes here, and placing it in the non-legalistic context of mutual acquiescence that we have been exploring so far, it becomes evident that similar relationships of "acceptance," "lack of objection" and "permission" can be addressed.

If the relationships that constitute and perpetuate the state are the negation of mutual aid in the anarchist sense of that term, then the theoretical concept of mutual acquiescence might be the missing link in understanding how Landauer's conditional notion of the state and Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid ultimately fit together.

If such mutually acquiescent relationships are considered "conditional" in not only the legal sense, but in Landauer's sense of being constitutive of the state, then the subversive nature of mutual aid becomes clear. In terms of property, rather than feuding over "acceptance" or "lack of objection" or "permission" in relation to the specifics of property lines, as is the case with the legalistic form of mutual acquiescence recognized by the courts; anarchists question, and seek to directly undermine, private (or state) property as a societal institution. In doing so, we envision not the preservation of social stasis but the emancipatory possibilities of social rupture in relation to the idea of property and the myriad manifestations of enclosure by which it manifests itself in our lives. The anarchist practice of mutual aid allows us to simultaneously challenge the inevitability of a particular social reality and embrace those anti-authoritarian desires that mutual acquiescence urges us to dismiss as contrary to our own self-interest or to deny as unattainable. By rejecting mutual acquiescence and relating to one another differently in the spirit of mutual aid, we open the door to possibility.

NOTES

[1] Paul Goodman. *The Empire City.* New York, Vintage Books, 1942/1977, p. 456.

[2] Robert Walser. "The Street" in *The Walk.* New York: Serpent's Tail, 1919/1992, p. 124.

[3] Peter Kropotkin. *Mutual Aid.* Boston: Porter Sargent, 1902/1955.

[4] Tiqqun. *Introduction to Civil War*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2010, p. 85.

[5] Gustav Landauer. "Tucker's Revelation" in *Revolution and Other Writings*, edited by Gabriel Kuhn. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010, p. 249.

[6] Gustav Landauer. "Weak Statesmen, Weaker People" in *Revolution and Other Writings,* edited by Gabriel Kuhn. Oakland, CA, PM Press, 2010, p. 214.

[7] Gustav Landauer. "The Abolition of War By The Self Determination of the People: Questions to the German Workers" in *Revolution and Other Writings*, edited by Gabriel Kuhn. Oakland: PM Press, p. 227.

[8] Gustav Landauer. "The Socialist Way," in *Revolution and Other Writings*, edited by Gabriel Kuhn. Oakland: PM Press, p. 195.

[9] Peter Kropotkin. *The State: Its Historic Role*. London: Freedom Press, 1898/1987, p. 55.

[10] Saul Newman. "Voluntary Servitude Reconsidered: Radical Politics and the Problem of Self-Domination," in *Post-Anarchism Today* 1.2010, pp. 31–49. Interestingly, though Newman does, at one point, use the term "active acquiescence" (which he has elsewhere referred to as "willful acquiescence") in passing with reference to the micropolitics of submission, he never pursues its theoretical implications in relation to the mutuality of that acquiescence. While I find Newman's work both informative and complementary to my own in many ways, rather than use the unwieldy post-anarchist term "voluntary inservitude" which he has coined as a radical counterpoint to the concept of voluntary servitude, I will here refer instead to the already existing, widely used and more expansive term, mutual aid, in that capacity.

[11] Ron Sakolsky, "Why Misery Loves Company," in *Swift Winds.* Portland, Oregon: Eberhardt Press, 2009, p. 25. This article originally appeared in *Green Anarchy* (Summer/Fall 2006).

[12] James Horrox, "Reinventing Resistance: Constructive Activism in Gustav Landauer's Social Philosophy" in Nathan Jun and Shane Wahl. *New Perspectives on Anarchism*. New York: Lexington Books, 2009, p. 199.

[13] Stephen Shukaitis. I*maginal Machines: Autonomy and Self-Organization in the Revolutions of Everyday Lif*e. Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2009, p. 20.

[14] Penelope Rosemont, "Gustav Landauer," *Free Spirits: Annals of the Insurgent Imagination*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1982, p. 175.

[15] Gustav Landauer. "The Socialist Way" in *Revolution and Other Writings*, edited by Gabriel Kuhn. Oakland: PM Press, 2010, p. 191.

[16] David Graeber. *Direct Action: An Ethnography.* Oakland: AK Press, 2009, p. 203.

[17] AK Thompson. *Black Bloc, White Riot.* Oakland, CA: AK Press, p. 27.

[18] Zig Zag. "Countering Conspiracy Theories on Police Response to Black Bloc," *Balaclava*! (July 16–31, 2010), p. 2.

[19] A.G. Schwarz. "The Spirit of December Spread Round the World," in *We Are An Image From The Future: The Greek Revolt of December 2008*, ed by A.G. Schwarz, Tasos Sagris and Void Network. Oakland: AK Press, 2010, p. 221.

[20] Panagoitis Papadimitropoulos. "You Talk About Material Damages, We Speak About Human Life: Perceptions of Violence," in *We Are An Image From The Future: The Greek Revolt of December 2008*, ed by A.G. Schwarz, Tasos Sagris and Void Network. Oakland: AK Press, 2010, p. 71.

[21] A.G. Schwarz. "The Logic of Not Demanding," in *We Are An Image From The Future: The Greek Revolt of December 2008*, ed. by A.G. Schwarz, Tasos Sagris and Void Network. Oakland:

AK Press, 2010, p. 193.

[22] Laurance Labadie, "On Competition" in *Enemies of Society: An Anthology of Individualist and Egoist Thought* (Ardent Press, San Francisco, 2011) p. 249. The underpinnings of Labadie's point of view, which are similar to those of many other authors featured in this seminal volume, are based on the assumption that communitarian forms of mutual aid do not necessarily lead to individual emancipation. Rather, from this perspective, their actual practice involves the inherent danger of creating an even more insidious form of servitude based upon a herd mentality that crushes individuality in the name of mutuality, even when their practitioners intend or claim to respect individual freedom as an anarchist principle.

[23] The Invisible Committee. *The Coming Insurrection.* Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009.

[24] Anonymous. "Taking Communion at the End of History" in *Politics is not a Banana: The Journal of Vulgar Discourse.* Institute for Experimental Freedom, 2009, p. 70.

[25] Anonymous. Desert. St. Kilda: Stac an Armin Press, 2011, p 7.

[26] Ibid, p 68.

[27] James C. Scott. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

[28] PM. *Bolo Bolo.* Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 1995, pp 58–60.

[29] Richard Day. *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements.* Toronto: Between The Lines, 2005.

[30] Barbara Ehrenreich. *Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America.* New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company, 2009. An interesting debunking of the cult of positive thinking, though her conclusions are ultimately reformist.

[31] Rebecca Solnit. *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster.* New York: Viking/Penguin, 2009, p. 117.

[32] Ibid, p. 144.

[33] CrimethInc Workers Collective. *Recipes for Disaster: An Anarchist Cookbook.* Olympia, WA: CrimethInc. Far East, 2004 (www.crimethinc.com).

[34] AK Thompson. *Black Bloc, White Riot.* Oakland, CA: AK Press, pp. 122, 148.

[35] Giorgio Agamben. *The Coming Community.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 79 and *What Is An Apparatus?* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009, pp. 2–24. Whether it is possible to effectively engage in resistance within what Situationists refer to as "the spectacle" without having those efforts recuperated, or rebranded in reformist terms, is a question at the heart of two recent thought-provoking books. See Stephen Duncombe. *Dream: Re-Imagining Progressive Politics in an Age of Fantasy.* New York: New Press, 2007 and Brian Holmes. *Unleashing The Collective Phantoms: Essays in Reverse Imagineering.* Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 2008.

[36] Annie Le Brun. *The Reality Overload: The Modern World's Assault on the Imaginal Realm.* Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 2000/2008, p. 4. Though little known within the North American anarchist milieu, this book by surrealist defender of the "ecology of the imagination," Annie Le Brun, is rich in anarchist references and allusions.

[37] Ibid, p. 68.

[38] Franco "Bifo" Berardi. *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy.* Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009, pp 106–183.

[39] "Mutual Acquiescence Law and Legal Definition," US Legal, Inc. http://uslegal.com/ Aug 21, 2010.

ANARCHO-SURREALISM IN CHICAGO

SELECTED TEXTS