

## **Transcript of Utopia & Revolution Seminar**

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From 1968-1971 I was enrolled in the Starr King School of the Ministry, a Unitarian-Universalist seminary in Berkeley, California. My reason for enrolling, like that of many young men of the time, was to avoid being drafted into the military during the Viet Nam war. For the first two years of my formal enrollment I studied history at Balliol College, Oxford (on a separate scholarship), so I was only actually present on the campus in Berkeley for one year.

In January of 1971 I organized a seminar called "Utopia & Revolution" at the Graduate Theological Union, a consortium of seminaries in Berkeley. No faculty members were involved in the seminar, although we did get academic credit for participating in the course. In the spirit of the times, it was initiated by students for our own collective education. I tape recorded each session of the seminar and then typed up a transcript and made copies for all of the students at the next session so that we would all have a permanent record of what we discussed. Sometimes I added supplementary materials in these handouts, and sometimes other students gave me things to include in the handout.

What follows is the complete transcript of all of the sessions along with whatever else was included.

## UTOPIA AND REVOLUTION

Session I: The Goals of Utopia

January 5, 1971

Introduction (Erik Wright): What I thought that we would do today was to discuss what we felt were the ultimate goals, the highest order of principles which we would like to see accomplished in our ideal society. I think that it is important that that highest level of goals be straight before we start talking about specific institutions and about how to go about achieving those institutions. Part of what is important to straighten out is the difference between values and goals which are really goals, and values and goals which are really means to other goals. As an example, individual freedom, freedom of expression or however you want to define it, is something which I imagine all of us probably value. But some people may see freedom as an ultimate goal, as an end in itself, and other people may see it much more as a means to other goals that have to do with such things as what some psychologists would call self-actualization or the development of a full and meaningful inner life. Maybe that is your goal and freedom is just a means, a technique, to accomplish that goal. I think we should try to get these distinctions as clear as we can in our minds before we actually start talking about Utopia and Revolution.

Steven Hawthorne: I have been thinking along three lines:

1. some basis in education which will help to socialize the child away from competition and in the direction of some kind of real co-operation;
2. a re-structuring of some sort or the breaking away from what has gotten to be called the nuclear family so that relationships can be set up on a broader base which I would think would be healthier;
3. the traditional socialist goal of dealienating the relationship between a person and the job he is doing, of integrating working and living situations.

Erik: The first thing you said was to try to develop an education system which would try to develop co-operation instead of competition. Do you value co-operation per se as a goal, or as a means towards creating a different kind of person.

Steve: I think it is a two way thing. Co-operation is important because of what it does to the individual, what kind of person he becomes, and because of what it means for the larger society. Education now is a tremendously effective socializing force: competition becomes part of you and even when you are intellectually aware of what it is, it is very difficult to get rid of it. I was in the Peace Corps in Africa and saw the way extended family structures worked. Kids had access to a much wider variety of adults and developed I think much greater sensitivities. Authority was not concentrated in a single parent figure but was more diffuse. And along with this I observed a people who were much less aggressive than we know in this society and I can't help but think that there must be some fundamental relationship here. Of course, it may just be their diet, you know. But I think that it is tied into the family.

Erik: Getting back to the question of means and ends, is some kind of extended family something intrinsically desirable to you, or is it really just a means to other ends. Will the child become a better kind of person in a non-nuclear family and is this the reason why you want to change it?

Steve: I think that interpersonal relationships in the direction of a lot greater sensitivity developed in the children I observed in Africa. The kids were always present with adults and all of the adults assumed responsibility for them. I guess it is these relationships and sensitivity which I value. It isn't necessarily that nuclear families are bad, but I think it is bound up with that.

David Borglum: The ends you want are thus co-operation and basic interchange between human beings on a different level. These are the real values.

Erik: It is important to make these differentiations between means and ends so that you know what criteria to use in evaluating the success of institutions. For example, take freedom. If you regard freedom as essentially a means to certain ends, as a technique for developing a certain kind of individual than you may accept certain kinds of discipline and structures which may also help to develop that kind of person. If, however, freedom is an ultimate end in and of itself, then any institution which itself denies freedom in any way is to be criticized. If freedom is merely a means to certain ends then there is no necessary conflict between freedom and authority; if freedom is an ultimate goal, intrinsically valued, then there is necessarily tension between freedom and authority. In the area of education this distinction between means and ends will become very important because much of the argument over institutions like Summerhill occur because of confusion over means and ends.

Betsy DeLaHunt: I have what I think is an important end, which is toleration of differences. Anything which increases pluralism and appreciation and acceptance of variation and diversity is to be encouraged. In almost any group people draw lines so that they can set themselves up as different from other people in the group. This is used as a weapon of antagonism. We need to learn to accept the diversities that exist and not to fight them.

Erik: Does that mean that there is no category of deviant behavior that shouldn't be sanctioned or controlled.

Betsy: I would think that in Utopia that this wouldn't be necessary.

Erik: That really depends upon how you are using the word "utopia". You can use it to mean an ideal society which contains ideal human beings in it, or you can use it to mean the best possible society with real human beings in it. This second way is the way I would like to use it.

Betsy: O.K. I guess it is necessary to somehow deal with people which are really harmful, but this has to be done completely differently from the way it is done now. But we also need to learn to accept many differences which we now totally reject. Like "mental illness". Alan Watts says that there is no reason for us to treat the way a so called mentally ill person sees the world as inferior or wrong. It is different. They are seeing

a different reality. When they are treated now it is to make them see our reality, but there is no reason to say that ours is right and theirs is wrong.

David: I feel the same way. I am very leary about the choice between individual freedom and societal ideals which gives the general societal ideas control over the individual. There may be situations such as murder where this is necessary, but I do think that it is important to abolish the whole idea of "punishment!" You can't make a person a better human being by denying totally his freedom. This only creates more violence and frustration.

Erik: Yes. You would hope that in Utopia you would be able to get rid of institutions that punish, but you will still need some institutions of social control, if only because some individuals will need to be isolated. That is a decision that the community has not only the right, but the responsibility of making. The community has an obligation to protect its children from child killers. You have to be careful where you draw the lines, but that should not keep lines from being drawn. The widest possible toleration is important, but some behaviors can't be tolerated.

Mike Murphey: I found a paragraph in an unlikely book, the Sword of Morning Star, by Richard Needem:

"Not that humanity shall sleep warmer or eat better or have more entertainment and luxury, but that humanity shall know its purpose, what the Gods have put it here for and how it shall be fulfilled. For look a bear requires this and no more: food, mating, a little play, a winter's sleep. Given so much, a bear is content. He wants no more because he has no dreams. But man is not a bear, always restless, striving, daring, risking, seeking the unknowable. And all of this is only to learn his own purpose among the stars. And when he knows this, perhaps he will be ~~at home~~ on this earth like the bear, and among the stars too. Here they seek the answer, what will fulfill man, appease him and give him rest this side of death. In short, answer what the Gods require of him, and though all that is a tall order enough, it is not so far from fulfillment."

That is one way of phrasing what I feel is a pretty ultimate goal.

I jotted down concerns and principles. One concern I have is probably as high as any other is the quality of the relations people have with one another, and I think that another way of saying that is "fun". As far as principles go, one that I found true is that the longer you know someone, the richer and more rewarding it is, whether it is a friend or a lover. Stick together. Don't tolerate this insane level of mobility that is so commonly accepted these days. Another principle, I think, is questioning the commonly accepted forms. The outrageous life is the only life worth living. Another principle is that the small in life contains the great and that we should pay attention to the every day events and that the infrequent so called big ones will take care of themselves, that is, pay more attention to burshing your teeth and tying your tie than to the big prom (much laughter). Maybe that is not such a super-good example.

I would say that revolution occurs within individuals and not within masses. There is really nothing new under the sun: I think that new forms do repeat the old. I think that the essential questions to us, the questions which prompt our strivings and yearning are the questions of meaning: why, why, why me, why this? What's it about? These are theological questions, and I think that to the degree that a man answers these questions to himself, to that degree you have revolution. In short, the goal that is the ultimate goal is Salvation, for me, for you, for us.

Erik: What does this ultimate goal of "salvation" mean in terms of institutions? How can you tell whether one institution or another is better contributing to salvation?

Mike: I would fall pretty heavily on the sub-goal or the means-goal of the quality of the relationships between people. And I also make the assumption, which I guess many of us here do, that the less you limit people and present them with preordained forms the better things will be, the more they will come out who they really are. This has been said before and I think that I agree wholeheartedly.

Erik: Salvation, then, as a theological concept, is something which grows out of that kind of quality of human relationships.

Mike: I think that what you need to do is clear the decks as much as you can, so that people can actually ask the questions. I sometimes almost think that it doesn't matter what the institutions are--of course it matters, but in another sense even though the external forms have a horrifying effect on people's lives, and some are surely better than others, I think that the answer does not lie in the forms.

Erik: But don't you think that there is a negative sense in which the forms are important: although the institutions cannot create salvation, they can act as big blocks to salvations. Some institutions make life so difficult for people that they make it impossible to ask the questions.

Mike: yes. You try to clear the decks. That is extremely important because the decks are so cluttered.

Erik: And at the moment you have to be a fairly middle class person to opt out of the decks.

David Borglum: The Utopian society would be one in which a man's capacities for self-actualization and spiritual development are encouraged and supported and not thwarted. I can't limit self-actualization to inter-personal relationships: it also means an inner fulfillment, which can come through meditation as much as through a community. Self-actualization and spiritual development involve a variety of different things: intimate interpersonal relationships, self-expression and creativity, optimum of personal freedom, a feeling of oneness with nature and with society at large, a sense of wonder and mystery at life, and in a more economical way, a feeling of basic security in having one's basic physical needs met, and a person's real control over his own future.

I am taking personal freedom as an end in itself. Even if personal freedom makes people uptight and anxious, it is part

of spiritual development. The need for personal freedom as a goal means that there should be an absolute minimum of state control and of social control of deviant behavior and thought. The feeling of oneness with society means that people share a common goal and trust each other and co-operate each other. Control over one's own future would entail some degree of political power so that everyone would be part of the decision-making process.

Erik: Is control over one's future an instrumental means to being able to lead a fulfilling life, or is that control somehow intrinsically desirable? This is important, again, because if you regard "control over one's future" as an intrinsic, ultimate goal rather than simply as an instrumental goal, then all forms of external controls, such as parental controls over a child, become intrinsically bad, even if empirically certain kinds of parental control might make the child "happier".

David: I had this listed as a goal, but I see there are difficulties with that. I guess it is really a means. I recant.

Erik: This happens when I talk about these issues as much as with anybody else: a lot of things which you feel a commitment to you feel are ultimate goals rather than simply instrumental means. Particularly when a particular means appears to be a necessary means to certain goals can those means really seem to become ultimate goals themselves.

David: You know, the more I think about it, the more I like Mike's idea of "meaning" as a unifying ultimate goal. Control over your own life is part of that meaning or at least contributes to it.

Betsy: It seems to me that one of the big problems faced by people who live in communes is the pernicious problem of individuals, values, and goals versus the community. It is a constant hassle, a dynamic that is always out of balance. We are a generation that has grown up with an increasing valuation put on individual freedom.

Erik: Yes, but don't you also think that we are becoming more aware of real communal goals, not pseudo-communal goals of the past?

Betsy: I think we are getting tripped up. One reason why communes and free schools have such a hard time is that our sense of individuality is still extremely important to us personally, as an end in itself, and it is very hard for us to compromise that at all.

Erik: Do you think that the reason for this kind of tension between individuality and the community is because we still see individuality as tied to the ethic of competition rather than co-operation? What we mean by individuality is self-assertion over others rather than working out a way whereby you and I can work together as individuals.

Mike Murphey: Another way of looking at this is that about the age of four or five kids begin to establish themselves as separate individuals from their parents, begin to see themselves not just as an extension of Mom. Most of us are raised in such a way that we resent any kind of external control because we see it as destroying that separation which we established as little kids. The parents control the kids, and to the degree that the kid

feels that he is being controlled, he feels that he is not truly himself. So now, as adults, we still feel that to the extent we yield control over our own lives, we are yielding something of our inner selves. That is spurious, but that is the way it is.

David: We don't have the kind of trust by and large which will let us yield that kind of control over ourselves. Really powerful things can happen if you give control over your body to someone else, but it takes real trust.

Mike: One of the spin-offs of this is, as Steve said before, that if you can change the family you can perhaps change people enormously as adults. With many more adults and kids around a child as he grows up he will get a much more balanced view of what it means to be alive. Psychologically and philosophically we only know who we are because of other people around us who reflect ourselves back at us. I don't know how to make this real in a family form, but it seems to me that if we are aware of this, that we only know who we are because of others, then giving control to other people loses all of its meaning. It stops being threatening.

Erik: I think that the distinction needs to be made between given control to other people who share a common goal with you and in which you participate, and giving control to people who are above you and who control you for their own ends, not a communally shared goal.

Mike: I was only referring to giving control at the level of direct inter-personal relationships which are very limited and where there is common shared goals. If there is a pattern of nuclei across the country operating in these ways, then the larger problems of control will take care of themselves. The small contains the great.

Betsy: I would like to know from people who have spent time in other cultures to what extent we are speaking in basically provincial terms. Is what we are saying applicable mainly to the United States or also to other peoples?

Mike McKinley: Every time we open our mouths we are inevitably provincial. When you get outside of the United States you realize when you talk about such things as individual freedom as we have redefined it that that doesn't mean much to a man who is living on \$150 total income. He may not even have enough nutritional intake to have a fully healthy body and mind. For these people, these physical needs would have to be the central goal.

Betsy: That is exactly what Maslow says too. He's got these five stages of self-actualization. We happen to be talking at a stage where basic food, shelter and clothing have been met for most people in our society, but this is hardly the case for most people in the world.

Erik: I do not think that this means we should not talk in the terms we have been about our Utopian ideals, since ours in the society

that is most real to us.

Steve Hawthorne: Utopia in One Country.

Mike McKinley: I think that is really valid because if a real change occurs in our society, it will make it much easier for other countries to work with their problems because we have such control over other countries.

Klaus Jehen: Let me tell you my ideas about Utopia. I am thinking in very different terms from the way you are. For you are much more influenced by psychology than I am. For you Utopia is much more looking for individual happiness, fun, or whatever it might be. So your utopian ideal is self-..what do you call it?

others: self-actualization

Klaus: yes, self-actualization, that's a nice word. So that is your ideal. In terms of goals I would think in a very different way. And I am also a theologian and so I would think in a different way about this. In Old Testament terms, utopia would be what the Old Testament calls "Zedeka". That is hard to translate. In Greek it is "δικαιοσύνη". It is not really righteousness, but rather "justice". The same word is used in the Old and New Testaments, even though in one it is translated "righteousness" and in the other "justice". Perhaps in this language ~~the~~ justice could be determined by righteousness. The way you could become just is righteousness. But that is another story. It is important that in the Old Testament "Shalom" is always a social action, peace is always a social action. And justice is also always a social action. So, in America right now, justice would be the most important utopian goal. To Americans freedom is very important. They are all used to what they think is freedom, and to Americans to be free is to be unjust to their fellow men. Freedom in utopia is to be determined by justice. Justice has to be brought about even by cutting back freedom. That goes almost to the Dictatorship of the Working Class.

Erik: Going back once more to the question of means and ends. "Justice" can be regarded both as a means and as an end. Is justice a goal because it is an end in and of itself, because it is intrinsically desirable, or is it a goal because of how it facilitates human development, self-actualization? I would think justice was important primarily in terms of the latter.

Klaus: I would say that defining a goal at all is unhistorical thinking. I couldn't think unhistorically. Utopia was always unhistorical but Marx and Engles found a way to create an historical utopia. Utopia to Marx is historical. Final goals could thus not be unhistorical. "Justice" as a social goal, as a social process, is an historical goal.

Erik: I agree, that's good. When I said that justice was for me basically a means I would also accept that it is an intrinsic end. Justice is intrinsically good, it is intrinsically desirable to relate to people justly, not only because it enables people to develop themselves.

David: What, do you Klaus, does justice mean?

Klaus: In the Old Testament it is sometimes said beautifully, in the poetry of the Psalms. God, Jahweh, provides for his people



the room to live, and he provides it by providing justice. The throne of the king is on a pedestal called Justice. The foundation of social life is justice; it is a constant social action.

Erik: Is the Marxist notion of "to each according to his needs and from each according to his ability" mean "justice".

Klaus: Marxism is problematic, but I would think that at least in our industrialized society that this would be a way of defining justice.

So, the idea of finding individually some kind of happiness is a good idea. But what I for sure don't like about this idea is the American way of dropping out of society for I think that this isn't responsible in society. Our responsibility should be changing society.

Erik: But if you feel that it is absolutely impossible to change that society, then do you think that it might be justifiable to drop out? You are not under any obligation to do something futile.

Klaus: Well, at least if you had a little utopia it could be a reflection on society. But it doesn't really make a difference, at least in my mind. This goal of finding individual happiness doesn't really depend on me dropping out of society or not.

Donley Smith: You can find it even within society.

Erik: This is related to what we were saying before about toleration. As a central value and goal it is in one sense a highly individualistic goal. What it says is that we have to maximize the possibility of each individual to do his thing rather than saying what we have to strive for is the possibility of the community or the society achieving some level of integrity, of justice, of some collective goal. If it is a collective goal, there will certainly be instances where individual will or individual freedom will have to be subordinated to the collectivity. Each individual "doing his own thing" will often be destructive to the realization of the collective goal. Can you imagine what would happen in China if there was a complete, laissez-faire attitude that each individual should just do his own thing? What appears to be good about China--at least this is one interpretation of what's happening in China--is that this control over individual freedom and individual will is organized from below rather than tightly from above. Some direction is given from the top, but it is really the people at the local level who enforce collective priorities.

Klaus: But it is even hard for them. They have to do every five years a new revolution.

Chris Ward: One of the important goals which I have for utopia is the attainment of physical well being for the whole population. Not just being clothed and fed, but that each person can physically attain the highest degree he can. Another thing would be for people to be able to--I guess this is more of a means than an end--adjust comfortably to changes that will be coming about constantly in society. I've always seen this as a source of real tension and conflict when people cannot adjust to changes around them. I don't know if this should be done as an educational process whereby people are helped to adjust to change, or whether it is better to strive for some kind of real stability in society.

Erik: Yes, the question of change is something which we haven't really talked about and is an important issue. Even when you get to the society which would be in some ways "ideal" you would hope that it would be a changing and a dynamic society. But as you said, that is something that really has to be dealt with.

Betsy: That is one of the funny things about talking about "goals" because we are really talking about a starting point, not so much about an end product.

Mike McKinley: what we are talking about is getting to a society which is self-correcting, so that when it gets out of balance, stale, solidified, when it starts destroying people, it can correct itself.

Erik: It is like what Marx said, that real history in the sense of the realization of human dreams, can begin only after the Revolution: the revolution is the beginning rather than the culmination of history.

Klaus: And that concept is almost exactly opposite of what we usually think of as Utopia which is a final perfected state without any change. It is the reconstruction of the Golden Age, the finding of Atlantis, or building a state ruled by philosopher kings, and so on, which are all changeless. In a religious way it is the millenium. This is very important in our culture.

Betsy: This is really a Judeo-Christian kind of thing to see ~~you~~ things as moving towards something in a linear kind of way. It is part of what has gotten us into a lot of trouble. We always assume that man is potentially perfectable, and that we should always work towards the Kingdom of God on earth. That is very different from the feeling of cycles as in the East.

David: Now you are really like getting into Zen where holiness is not the way things ought to be, but at every instant things are perfect right now with all of their imperfections. Being in the process of working towards Utopia is Utopia itself. Seek and Ye shall Find, and as long as we are seeking, we have already found it.

Klaus: The idea of the "Kingdom" is like that. It is at the same time already here and never attainable: whenever we work for it it is already here, but it is never fully realized.

Donley: I completely buy into what Klaus has called the American system of psychology and realizing Utopia in terms of Self, on an individual basis. On the other hand I see that through other people. I want to read a poem which expresses this:

You can lean on me, softly, she said.

But where shall I rest?

Here, leaning on me.

And what will keep you there,  
me, leaning on you?

Your leaning on me, softly she said.

What I look for in terms of goals is the totality of the individual being able to be completely, fully self-satisfied and at ease with himself--what Mike called Salvation. But I see that in terms of other people. You said that revolution occurs within individuals and not masses, well, so is fulfillment and so is salvation, but individuals are not here by themselves and the only way, like you said, that you come to know yourself is by seeing yourself in the rest of the people around you. That is really important to me, As a goal and as a means to the goal. It is what the Whole Earth Catalogue put down as their purpose of self-education as a growth process.

Erik: Is self-education and growth essentially a means or an end to you?

Donley: I think they are self-sufficient means or self-perpetuating means. They are both means and ends. The means contain the ends.

David: Could you be a little bit more concrete in what you mean by the means embodying the ends, even if they ends themselves are never fully realized?

Erik: I think the question of co-operation with people is that way. Co-operation is both a means and an end: it is a means to creating the kind of non-competitive social environment in which people work together and in which people can develop themselves to their full potentials as human beings, as self-actualized human beings. But co-operation is also part of the end itself, it is part of that utopia social environment you are trying to create. That means that even if you fail in your ultimate objective of creating a utopia, you accomplish something meaningful by adopting the self-sufficient means of co-operation. The act of rebellion, particularly of an oppressed minority is also this kind of at least partially self-sufficient means. The act of rebellion--and by this I don't mean only violent rebellion, but resistance to the system in a broader sense--the act of rebellion is itself a liberating, freeing act. The act of rebellion is itself part of a deep commitment and purpose in life which is good and valid even if the rebellion fails. The act itself can liberate the individual even if it doesn't liberate the society, the act itself embodies the ends for which it is a means even if it doesn't accomplish those ends.

Donley: It is also possible of course that the act of rebellion which is seen as a means to a classless society, could also lead to even greater repressionx instead of freedom. Yet, I

think that the process itself is good, sound. I don't think you shy away from it for those reasons. All of this is I think part of a growth process in the individual, of continual growth and continual change, an openness to change, and not to be too frustrated when directions change before you accomplish your goals.

I don't know how to institutionalize any of this. I hope it doesn't sound like I am being manipulative, that I am talking about using, manipulating other people for individual self-fulfillment. What I mean to say is that there is mutual benefit in a mutual self-fulfillment. But I really don't know how you go about realizing this as a goal.

Erik: I think that this is where the idea of change comes in and is so important, which a couple of people have already mentioned. It would be undesirable, I think, for the task of constructing an image of utopia, as we are doing, to be seen as an attempt to find definitive institutional answers to various problems. We can perhaps determine what kinds of social institutions negate our goals, and which kinds of institutions seem to at least move towards those goals, but it would be impossible to come up with detailed plans of actual institutions which would fully embody all of our ideals. Our real task is to try to think of institutions which themselves are capable of dynamic change, of responding to the needs of the people and evolving accordingly, rather than of institutions which are so perfect that they need no further change.

Mike Murphey: Learning to learn.

Klaus: And once we have learned to learn, we may come up with quite different answers from what we would come up with now. I think that Marx's idea of the unity of theory and practice is important here. A theory says how to act, and an action again changes your theory for you have another situation. And that is exactly what Utopia should be. It changes. That is why the Utopian Nova of Britain of 100 years ago are so funny today in our present situation, because they saw themselves as changeless, but the situation has changed so much.

Erik: So what we need to do is try to see what kinds of institutions encourage a unity of theory and practice. In some institutions people learn from their mistakes, the policies respond to needs and experience. In other institutions, particularly bureaucratic ones, you don't learn from your mistakes. Mistakes simply make you more rigid. What we want to see in Utopia are institutions which are capable of perfecting themselves, not perfect institutions. That is why I think the question of "power" is so important, and why political issues in Utopia are central. Access to power, control over policies and decisions are crucial for this kind of dynamic re-equilibration to occur. That is why in Marxism control of the State Power apparatus is so important as a tactical goal. If you don't control the state, the means of coercion and the means of change, you can't be in a position to create this kind of unity of theory and practice.

Mike McKinley: I've been writing things down as people said them and also thoughts which came to me, and I agree with much of what everyone has said, which means that I am inconsistent. One of the beliefs which I have, which gets more into the realm of faith, is the idea of "universal salvation" which has to do with self-actualization, hope, fulfillment and which means that if we are all not saved, then none of us will be. The more people who are not free, the less free we are as individuals.

As far as one of the things people have said, about getting away from competition and moving towards co-operation, I think that some kinds of competition may really be good. I would stress co-operation and getting away from harmful competition. Co-operation is definitely a positive basis for human relationships, and we should move away from some kinds of competition, especially economic competition and the conception of achievement being based on a pyramid society. With personal freedom, it must be freedom not to the detriment of others which is Klaus' point about justice over freedom. I think that we have to approach all of these things in terms of structures which allow for the maximum amount of fulfillment in the maximum number of people rather than just on an individual basis. I think that in the same way that the original harmony of American Indian groups was so quickly destroyed when their social environment was changed by the coming of white men, people could change very rapidly and their potential could be radically opened up if their environment were changed positively.

David: Could you tell me more about what you mean by healthy competition?

Mike: Well, I was a competitive swimmer for about ten years and I never made enemies with anyone I competed against. I got a great deal of satisfaction in competing both with myself and with other people. It also helped me to develop a kind of personal discipline of setting up goals for myself. As long as you don't carry over the idea like if your football team has got to win, then your army has got to win, then I don't think that this kind of competition is really harmful.

Erik: What can make even a sporting competition bad is that a person's entire sense of worth becomes tied up in winning, in beating other people.

Mike Murphey: That suggests that whatever makes a person put his sense of worth into the competitive situation is the thing in question rather than the competition itself.

Donley: Is this kind of striving for personal excellence over other people primarily biological or is it cultural?

Erik: I would think that it is essentially cultural since ~~many~~ there are culturalists in which this kind of competition is largely absent.

Mike McKinley: I think that the social darwinian notion that this kind of competitive struggle between individuals and groups is biological and intrinsic to human nature is really false and the sooner it dies out the better. There are as many examples of co-operation within species and between species as competition. Co-operation can be even better for survival than competition.

Donley: That is true, but I think that if there is something competitive that is part of man's nature we should be aware of it because in Utopia we would have to make allowances for it.

Erik: I think that this is quite similar to aggression. Aggression per se is probably intrinsic to human beings, but I don't think that destructive aggressiveness, aggression against other people is. Aggression can be channeled into good ways which you find more satisfying and fulfilling,

Betsy: one of which is some kinds of competition.

Steve: Aggression is just biological energy which can come out in a number of different ways.

Erik: and I do not think that the negative ways are intrinsic to the instinct.

I suppose that I should say something of what I feel are Utopia Goals. A lot of what I feel has been said in different ways by different people already. Maslow introduces the concept of "Eupsychia" alongside "Utopia". Utopia means literally, I think, "no-place", but the idea is the image of a society which is not here now but which is desirable. "Eupsychia" refers to the desirable psychological environment for the individual, for individual development. Klaus brought up the point that we were all stressing psychological goals, self-actualization, about finding meaning, personal salvation. These are all really, in Maslow's terms, "Eupsychian" goals. "Justice", on the other hand, is a Utopian goal, a goal which refers to the organization of society itself, to relationships between people, rather than something which is primarily confined within the individual. The kind of society which I would like to see evolve is one which, in a sense, through its utopian structures, accomplishes Eupsychian goals. I would like to have a society which in its structures embodies values like Justice, equality, the ideal of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". Those are utopian goals, referring to the organization of society, and I feel that they are intrinsically desirable. But I also sees these utopian goals as important because I feel that if these goals are realized on a social level, then it will be possible to accomplish what I personally feel to even more important ultimately, which are the Eupsychian goals, the personal existential goals of becoming fully human as individuals, of self-actualization, of coming to grips with problems of meaning and destiny. My Utopian goal is thus justice and my Eupsychian goal, self-actualization of the individual.

I think that it is important to differentiate self-actualization from a number of other concepts which could be confused with it. For example, a word like "pleasure".

My Eupsychian goal is not to simply maximize the opportunity for people to have pleasure, although I think that the full experience of pleasure, the joyous exuberant experience of pleasure is an important part of what I mean by self-actualization. I am not talking about a hedonistic society. I am also not trying to eliminate all sadness and unhappiness from life. Sadness is part of the human condition. There are real tragedies in life, there are real reasons to be sad, to be depressed, to be troubled. The goal is not to eliminate sadness, but to make the individual capable of constructively coping with sadness, of not letting such feelings be destructive for him. Because sadness is part of our humanness, I think that it is something which should not be denied. A Eupsychian human community would not deny human tragedy, such things like death, but make the individual more capable of dealing with them. The individual might be much happier if he thought that he would live for ever, if the community totally isolated him from death from the time that he was born, but I would not see that as desirable, even if it made people happier. Happiness per se is not my goal. Nor is pleasure. It is sort of maximizing humanness--as opposed to the bear in Mike's story in a way. I don't mean denying my animalness--there are things which I share with the bear. To be fully human involves accepting the tragedies of life, sadness, troubles, not in the sense of being resigned to those tragedies, but in experiencing them constructively in some sense.

David: That makes me think along the lines of Buddah who as a young boy was totally sheltered by his parents from poverty and sickness and suffering of all kinds, and then later when he saw that many people were miserable he said life is suffering and he became much more human and enlightened with this realization.

Erik: I don't think what I mean by self-actualization can be defined in any narrow kind of way. Hopefully it will involve a tremendous variety of different kinds of people and behavior. I would hope that our understanding of what we mean by self-actualization would not narrowly define a particular personality, a particular life style, or a pattern of behavior, but rather some kind of quality of life, of inter-personal relationships, of human-ness. I know that this is imprecise, but I think that there is some value in this imprecision.

Mike Murphey: There seems to be a chronology involved in what you are saying, that is, that we need to create certain patterns of social institutions in order to enable people to move in these directions, but I see it as almost exactly the reverse.

Erik: I guess I really think that it has to be both ways. There is an interaction between changes in people and changes in institutions. You are never going to get this new society until people have changed, that is certainly true. Marx's concept of class consciousness has this implication of a necessary change within people before there can be a change in society. But you also need changes in the society in order to facilitate the full development of these Eupsychian goals in people.

A place like China seems to be an example of this kind of dialectical interaction between structures and people--assuming that what I have read about China is more or less accurate. Without significant changes in many people, it would have been impossible for the Chinese revolution to have occurred in the first place. There had to be a real change in consciousness to create the cohesion and dedication to destroy the old social order. But it has only been the structural changes since 1949 which have made possible the further changes in consciousness and human relationships that we see in China today, especially in the cultural revolution.

Klaus: I would think that in a Capitalist society today there is no real hope for a change of consciousness, and so the only hope is for a Revolutionary to take over the government and change the structures first, and then change people through education.

Erik: But a revolutionary force could never gain power unless there was a massive support behind it.

Klaus: That is a problem, I know.



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Donley Smith: Because of the Governors cut backs in funds to hospitals many retarded kids have been forced out of hospitals and back into the community. This would be a good thing normally, but unfortunately, the community was really not ready for it and it is creating real problems. One way in which it is being solved is for these kids to be taken in as foster kids. Many of the women who take these kids in--~~man~~ this is really class-fying people--are middle aged, highly Baptist black ladies from the south who have a real sense of brotherhood of taking care of these kids, and also who have somewhere taken care of white people. This is setting up a new kind of strange family situation.

Steve Hawthorne: We also need to find some kind of meaningful role and place for old people which this society does not provide.

David Borglum: Perhaps we could adopt an old couple in the same way we now adopt a child.

Erik: I think that the changes necessary to make the role of elderly people more meaningful requires a more radical change than ~~simply~~ simply having them adopted by families. The solution lies in the whole concept of retirement and the whole concept of work. The fact that work is something that you retire from means that it is so disgusting that it needs to be retired from is itself a central problem. You know, a painter is not going to retire at the age of 65; he is going to paint until he drops dead. Or a musician, or a composer, or even a Professor continues to be an emeritus and to teach.

David: What is really disastrous is that you are really damned if you don't work until you are 65 and then after 65 you can't work.

Erik: But most of the occupations in which you can't work after 65, you shouldn't have been working in before 65. That isn't always true, but often. The tragic thing is that you had to work for 40 years before you could retire.

Betsy: One thing came to my mind when he was talking about old ~~peo~~ people. A study was done on the relationship of attention given to someone and intelligence in young children. What they did is put a whole bunch of orphans into a reform school for teenage girl. They put one baby into each part of the dormitory and it was the responsibility of the girls to take care of it. It turned out great: they gave the babies loads of attention and it helped the girls enormously also.

Erik: that also shows the idea that if you give a person responsibility, he will be responsible.

Steve: I don't know if anyone knows Ray Nitchinson. She is a black women educator in the Bay Area. She had a totally unruly class of fifth graders, so she brought her two year old niece into the class and within a few weeks the class was completely calm. Everyone was relating to the child and they assumed a responsible role in the class.

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Mike Murphy: I guess I don't really believe things are going to get better for mankind. From time to time I get the notion like in the short run if Dope was legal, and if we revamped the schools and got this nation-state mentality out of the air and five or six other things, by God, things would be good. And I get this rosey glow for two minutes, but then it begins to recede and I'm left the conviction that "shit, if we're not uptight about dope we'll be uptight about something else, we always have been". And when the nation-state goes, there will be something else. It is a sinking sensation that I have.

Erik: That is very much the sort of thing that we will talk about in the second half of the seminar, the Revolution side of Utopia and Revolution. And the question of revolution is not just the question is revolution a way towards these utopian goals, but is there any way towards these goals. ~~It's not~~ The Enlightenment mind which we have all inherited one way or another makes us feel that if there is a problem, there is a solution. You might even be able to think up the ideal social institutions which would solve our social and human problems, but it may be that there really is no way to get there, absolutely no way. Man may be damned in a much more radical way than Adam ever thought.

Mike: Original Sin. Guilty but not responsible.

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Mike: If there is a pattern of nuclei across the country operating in these ways, the whole will take care of itself. The small contains the great.

Erik: Paul Goodman in his second schema in *Communitas* presents a picture like that. You start at the smallest level of organization and make each of those viable in terms of human relationships, and you will suddenly find that the whole system works because there aren't serious competitive antagonisms at the bottom. If you have those at the bottom, then each higher level in the system has to manage those conflicts below them. If you get rid of that kind of conflict at the bottom then super-ordinate systems do not have to be primarily conflict managers but rather simply co-ordinators.

Mike: That is about as promising a notion as I can conceive. The thing that is nice about that is that if you can make a pocket of health for you and your friends and loved ones, then even if nothing else happens, in a selfish kind of way you may be able to make it through anywhere from 25 to 80 years of life on this sphere with some really groovy things going on. And that means a lot to me.

Erik: I am not willing to accept yet the notion that the only thing that we can do is to try to create a microcosm of utopia within the old society. It seems to me that this is one of the crucial issues of the present time, whether revolutionary action has any real hope for success or whether the only thing you can do is opt out of the corrupt society culturally

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and socially. My feeling is that, the way things are going, unless the larger society changes, it will crush that kind of deviance and thus, in order to protect yourself as a viable sub-culture, you have to try to change the larger society as well.

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Betsy: In the tragedy of Oedipus, Oedipus has killed his father, a plague has descended upon Thebes, and he is killed because he did that. In the Greek tradition, that was justice: he killed his father, committed incest, his people suffered and so he was killed. Since Freud it is very important to us to look at the intentions of the person. We say he didn't deserve to be killed because it wasn't his intention to kill his father, he didn't know it was his mother, so it isn't fair. We have almost an obsession with the person's intentions that we have fallen heir to.

David: Betsy, your idea really tripped me off when you were talking about Oedipus Rex and the effect of an unwitting action on society at large. I was thinking of Biblical parallels. Like the introduction to the Ten Commandments, I will visit iniquity on the third and fourth generation of those who do not obey my commandments and not just with you who are responsible. Or Johna being on the ship and the whole ship almost being drowned because of what one man did. And with the Kings: when a king was corrupt, the whole nation was punished. It's the whole Deuteronomic thesis of collective guilt in a way.

Betsy: Another funny thing is the whole idea of Karma. When He punishes the third and fourth generation maybe he is just punishing the same people over and over again because they are coming back. Because of reincarnation you are punishing the same people over and over.

Donley: and then you have to account for the division of souls as the population gets larger and larger.

Steve: Half the people simply become irrelevant ~~shells~~ and are sort of like just shells. That's my theory of reincarnation. (considerable laughter).

Betsy: The whole thing with ongoing "wibes" is related to this: when you do something it sets up vibrations which continue. When you rip off a store that does create a climate that has unending ramifications.

Steve: and those feelings are things which we lay on your kids and thus transfer to the next generations.

Mike Murphy: I just had a kind of flash. You know the early Maps of North America that had the outline of Florida about right but the rest was completely formless and vague. Well, I think that our understanding of physical and psychic is at about that level of sophistication. Things like Karma and other such expressions which seem almost magical to us at times now may really have something.

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Erik: I think that what is being expressed in those terms is being really expressed symbolically, rather than descriptively. Some of the most important concepts can only be expressed symbolically, so that is not a perjorative statement. Often symbolic and descriptive statements get confused and symbols are treated as science.

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Steve: I was going down University Avenue today and I saw that they were gluing artificial grass onto the center<sup>strip</sup>. I thought that they were planting grass: I saw what look like sod, but when I got close I saw that it was plastic. Plastic grass being glued on to University Avenue center strip.

Someone: Plastic Grass?

Steve: yes. They were gluing down plastic grass. Astro Turf.

Donley: In Houston, they do something else. They don't have enough water to keep the grass green, so they spray it green. When you walk on it bare foot, your feet turn green.

Steve: Man has finally conquered his environment.

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Addendum to session I from the beginning of session II

Erik: Before we begin I would like to say something about several things I can realize as I typed out the transcript for the first session and which I think you will realize yourselves as you look through it. One thing I realized was that periodically I had a tendency to cut people off while they were talking. There were times when people would start saying something and I would either pre-empt their thought by finishing their sentence for them, or by saying something which they had triggered without letting them finish. There were a couple of times when I could have really kicked myself when I heard the tape and wanted to know what the person had to say. But it's gone. I'll try to be better at this. The other main thing was that most of the conversations were series of dialogues with me rather than real discussions in the groups as a whole. You can see the way it goes in the transcript: Erik-Steve-Erik-Steve-David-Erik-Betsy-Erik-Betsy-Erik-Betsy-David-Erik-Mike-Erik-Mike-Erik-Mike-Erik-Mike-Erik-David and so on. There were times when there was a wider interaction, but the pattern tended to be someone saying something and then me posing a question or commenting and then they would respond to that and then I would respond to them. Part of that was my fault because I was controlling the discussion more than was necessary. I would like things to be as spread out as possible. I will inevitably say more than any other single person since I am leading the group, but it would be better if the discussion was less dialogues.

Session II: Family Structure and Living Groups

January 12

(Introduction)

Betsy: What I would like this meeting to be is a presentation of the experiences of each of us to the role of men and the role of women and family structure. This whole area is incredibly immediate to me. What I am going to do is to gather together a few strands and present to you my condition and how I see this as a case history of some of the problems which confront people today. I hope that you won't take this as a request for suggestions for solutions; what I would like more is to learn from you how you are thinking on this and feeling on this.

One of the threads which I want to use is from Maslow's questions on Utopia. One of them is number 15:

"How shall males and females adapt to each other, enjoy each other, respect each other?....Is it possible to transcend the simple dominance-subordination hierarchy? What would the Eupsychian marriage be like between the self-actualizing male and the self-actualizing female?... (see pp 7-8 in 'Some Fundamental Questions that face the Normative Social Psychologist')

and number 17:

"The question of intimacy groups, of families, brotherhoods fraternities, fellowships. There seems to be an instinctoid need for belongingness, for roots, for face-to-face groups in which affection and intimacy are given freely.

He says that these groups have to be smallish and he asks must they be cross-generational or can they be peer groups. A problem which he states and one that is really hard to avoid is "Is intimacy possible without sex?" These are the kinds of questions I am wondering about. I would like to tell you about where I am coming from and where I am now. A lot of this I am speaking for myself and sort of for Wendal also.

I grew up in Ohio in an uptight, richy community and High School was really a drag because I wasn't dating and I was smarter than almost anyone else in the class--at least I got better grades than almost anyone else and I was very worried that I was being aggressive and non-feminine. High School was really miserable because of this. The socializing that went on in High School was really dreadful and extremely important. I had to think about it a lot and to distance myself before I could really understand what the dynamics were. I am assuming that these experiences are things which we have all shared to some degree. During college there were a lot of the changes that everyone goes through in college. I went through the process of having crushes on people and falling in love with people and so on. Wendall and I started running around together four or five years ago and have been ever since and in the course of that time for us, together, there have been a lot of changes, a lot of growing up in terms of Wendall in relationship to Betsy and Betsy in relationship to Wendal as well as us as a unit in relation to our families and in relation to ~~our families~~ society. These are what we are dealing with now and they are sticky. They are questions which I do not see any real answers to. For example, Wendal's parents are really neat people and would really be happy if we got married. They like me, and they like him

and they like us being together, but I think that they would be a lot happier if we got married. In a way I would really like to get married because it would be happy for them, but the only thing which I can think which would be worse than a girl friend who didn't pay proper attention to Wendal would be a wife who didn't pay proper attention to Wendal. That is the way I think it would be like because I wouldn't want to assume the kind of marriage situation which they think marriage should bring me into. My parents are perfectly happy with my maintaining my independence, but they want to know what happens if I get pregnant. That is another question that is in my mind an important one even though in a way it is academic at the moment. I don't want to get married because of the things I am afraid would happen and what marriage means in people's minds. The difference in the way I would be treated and Wendal would be treated if I were Mrs Willard instead of Miss DeLaHunt. Even though Wendal and I can set up ways in which we want our marriage to be different from other people's marriages, other people are not going to know that. They are going to react in certain societally accepted ways that we might not like, but there is very little we could do about it.

David: could be a little bit more specific there?

Betsy: Yeah. A really good friend of Wendal and me said "you really should not get married because I really turn off to married women and I wouldn't like you as much" and I feel the same way. You are out of the ~~w~~ running. If you are single you aren't married yet, but you want to be and so you are still in the running, and if you are married you are supposed to want to stay that way. I think those kinds of feelings are really strong in lots of people. It is even hard for me to convince myself that I don't think that way.

Another aspect of this is that I feel that I am somehow beyond just living with Wendal. There is a permanence implied in marriage and a very impermanence implied in simply "living together". I think that he and I now have something going that is not as transient as living together, but I don't want to get married. There is no societal institution which is acceptable to me which would express what we are. There is not a "step A marriage" or something. I need some kind of expression to tell people who we are, and there isn't one.

Wendal: The form is there. The fact that you and I are living in this apartment makes Betsy and Wendal a family unit. People who know us, know that; people who don't know us, society at large, they don't know what to call it except "living together" and that is not what it is all about. One thing that really bothers me about getting married is that she is supposed to give up her name. I don't like that.

Betsy: I am the former Betsy DeLaHunt.

And this gets into other legal things, like Wendal is legally liable to support me. The legal things with marriage become really amazing. From what I understand of it, it doesn't sound too cool.

Another thing which is connected with this and is the thing which concerns my parents is what happens if I get pregnant. It is not clear to me--although it was clear to us a while back--that you get married when you decide to have kids. Especially if it is an accidental pregnancy, if you didn't want to get married before, what is going to be so cool about getting married after you get pregnant? What kind of a marriage is that for a kid to get born into? It is not clear to me that it is a good idea to get married when you are going to have a kid if it was not a good idea before you got pregnant.

It is a lot harder to get unmarried than married because of the way things are set up. That is too bad. I am afraid of getting sucked into it and then finding out that it isn't so cool and then be faced with a divorce.

So, I guess that is pretty much the kind of thing I am thinking about now. I think that we have to become conscious of what kinds of factors we want to encourage and what kinds we want to inhibit in relationships, in marriage or whatever, in man-women relationships, man-man relationships, woman-woman relationships and family relationships. The Women's Lib Movement has brought something important into this discussion through their idea of raising the level of consciousness: we have to become aware of where we come from, what has made us the way we are. This is hard to do. It is completed, and difficult to unravel, and sometimes it is painful too.

This may have been too general and wishy-washy, but I know what I am talking about, and if you don't I will try to clear it up. Otherwise I would like to know what you are thinking about and where you're at.

Chris Ward: Then is the problem which you are trying to come to grips with, is there some third alternative to marriage or just living together?

Betsy: Yes, some kind of form which would provide the kind of social recognition for our relationship that we want. If we had been born ten years earlier, we would have been married now. We just happened to have time to have started asking questions and thinking that marriage would be more of a drag than it is worth. Yet there are certain things which marriage says to people that are good, that you care about each other, that you are committed to each other, that you love each other and that you are willing to stick by each other. Those are all things which we feel and are the kind of symbolic statements which you make when you get married which I would like to have us make, but without the negative things of marriage.

Donley: You want some kind of symbolic expression that the two of you are a family, are you asking for a third situation instead of marriage or living together, or are you asking for a redefinition of what marriage means to you. And if that is the case, can you perform a wedding situation in such a way that it does restructure your ideas of marriage and the ideas of everyone who comes in touch with you.

Chris: It seems to me that a lot of the relationship you are describing is fairly traditional, it sounds to be monogamous and things like this.

Betsy: That is another factor. I value right now the lee-way of being able to leave and take a trip if I want to. We went through a period when we wanted to run around with other people. That is not true now, but it might come back up. That is a lot easier to physically depart and do things on your own and to set up close relationships with other people when you are single, not married. There is just a lot less hassle. I want to have that freedom. It is hard enough to go through those kinds of things without having to be married at the time.

Donley: What I am still hearing is that you are looking for some kind of structure to use. Everytime you talk about "marriage" you flipflop back into something old and archaic and you can't see that you can combine what you want in a relationship with portions of a social



institution that exists already. You are asking for a new kind of marriage, but every time you say "marriage" you flip back into the old idea of it.

Erik: Part of the problem is that in our society marriage more narrowly defines the woman's role than the man's role. When you are married you become a "housewife", or at least a "wife" whereas for the man, he somehow is less simply defined as a "husband". He retains ~~more~~ more of his social autonomy. The world of a woman becomes much more constrained in our society, generally.

Donley: but you don't have to accept those social roles.

Erik: No you don't, but the social pressures on you to behave in certain ways are not insignificant. People will treat you differently. When you are a married woman men in particular will tend to treat you differently from when you are single. I don't mean this simply in terms of flirting and the sexual nuances of relationships, but I think in more general ways men probably treat married women in a different sort of way.

Donley: That is true, but I also think that the way we lead our lives tends to define the kind of society we are living in and the social pressures we experience. We can build our own little sub-cultures of friends and family, but that doesn't always happen.

Let me tell you about my experiences. We talked about these things a lot and we had a special wedding ceremony to get around some of them. We met at a Resistance meeting in 1967 and within three or four months we decided we wanted to live together and about a year later we began to think about marriage and what it meant and how we could express that. Our ceremony was done by a minister, using the most normal traditional language we could use. The way it was done was that everyone came to a large party on December 31 and there was food and drink, and one point my Jewish roommate from Iran walked to the center of the room in his robes and began singing the wedding chants in his formal robes. Everyone formed a circle around him, including the minister. Then the minister stepped back, put on his robes and conducted the ceremony in traditional language. At the point of the rings, the rings were passed around from opposite sides of the circle; each person put the ring on and then took it off and said something; and then we put them on. People gave thoughts on society, love, marriage. The blessings and vows were made, then the whole group held hands and the whole group was legally married to each other. We had felt the same kind of feelings as Betsy about marriage and the ways it is viewed by society and this was a way of saying something else. It was a way of making a public affirmation in front of the community we lived with, and that we wanted these people involved with us in the same way. That is what we were trying to say, and I don't think that we are really treated differently. We wanted to take the traditional vows and tie them to what we felt.

David: You took the regular traditional marriage vows with "till death doth us part?"

Donley: Yeah, the traditional ones.

Betsy: those are nice vows, really nice.

I think getting married would be really great; it is being married that gets me. (much laughter). what was that like.

Donley: For the first two years it wasn't hell for my wife, it was hell for me, because I was going to school and my wife was a psychiatric social worker, pulling in a lot of money which I was living on. It was my feelings that needed working out at this time. I'm slowly getting over them now that I have a job.

Betsy: Is that what it took?

Donley: Well, not that alone. Last year we tried to go into a living experience with another couple. All four of us had been half-way pursuing artistic things which we wanted to explore along with new living situations. We rented a house in Bolinis for this. And it began to fall apart almost the moment we got into the house. One of the things I discovered was that expanding our family unit to include another family unit involved some things which we had given to each other but we weren't quite ready to spread around. To have two couples living that way they have to be very strong and very much together before they try it. In a relationship there are commitments to certain ideas, a certain amount of give and take and a willingness to sacrifice some things for that third entity that begins to develop. When you expand that to four people you have six entities that you have to deal with, and the considerations go in so many ways that the mind boggles. We weren't ready to make those compromises, those shifts in commitment that spell out the success of that new identity that would have been the unit of all four of us, so it began to fall apart. We continued to live ~~as~~ in this new style of living so that we would learn things and develop. We developed ourselves as separate personalities through this experience, and that helped to work things out really more than me finding a job.

Erik: There are of course in between possibilities. You can have a closer relationship in terms of living with other people without merging into one large family.

Donley: We had thought about that originally, but the house that we chose was unfortunately too small to do that.

Erik: The intermediary possibility of not being independent, isolated family units, and also not being one big family, is certainly easier to get into, at least to begin with. It could then grow organically into something closer to a big, integrated family, if that is the way it developed, without trying to impose that closeness from the start.

Donley: That experience in Bolinis was depressing because I had been involved in a family situation in 1965 which had been close in that way. When I was living in Iran in the Peace Corps there was this group of eight of us living in this one city. We began to spend a lot of time together. By 1966 really radical changes began to occur in the group: some marriages were being planned. Since then we have gotten together every New Years because it was a family living situation which really worked. It is not now a close living situation, but it was. We were not actually living in the same house, but we spent so much time together that it was as if we were. This family is still a functioning reality. This made the failure of the other one even more depressing.

Erik: the one in Iran was more spontaneous: it did not involve getting a bunch of people together and saying let's live together. It evolved more organically out of the situation in which you found yourselves.

Klaus: the two situations are very different. In Teheran you were different from the rest of the society and were therefore drawn closer together. Seeing each other once a year is very different from living always together. Being a small minority in Iran made it easier. It might not have functioned here.

Donley: I don't know if it would, but I am getting to think that we will try.

Klaus: Well, you know that that is some kind of vacation. You can do that with almost anybody. Common experience seems to say that a greater family doesn't function very easily while the traditional family does.

Erik: The evidence is that the traditional family doesn't function with such great success either.

Betsy: There is something we should consider here. Margearet Mead points out that the very small family that lives in suburbia where little kids are shuttled around in cars and everyone has there own separate house is only since WWII. The traditional American family is not the post-World War II suburban family. What she is saying is that what we are reacting against is a very recent phenomenon, not really against the "traditional" forms of the family. The traditional family was much <sup>more</sup> closely related to the neighborhood. There were communities of people who really cared about each other ~~onze~~ and on whom you can count.

Klaus: That is really like the old form in Germany, or in general in Europe, of the village where the farmers lived together and constituted a special form of family. The Grandmother and Gradfather lived in the same house as the granschildren. So, you have a bigger family, and they are closer to the other families in the village. The small family of today would be a product of industrialization, and urbanization. This is what made the traditional family come apart.

Betsy: Klaus, what difference did it make growing up in that kind of family?

Klaus: First, I don't know exactly because I haven't been in ~~that~~ that kind of situation. The young couple today has to have their own apartment separate from the rest of the family. On the farms in Germany there is at least two houses on the farm, and when the younger couple was old enough to run the farm, the older generation moved to the other house. People were closer to each other I think in the traditional family. But it doesn't function like that any more, since there has been industrialization and urbanization. Of course we could look for new kinds of structures. Try this one or that one. But in our society, only really mature persons could construct a new kind of family which would really work.

Erik: It is possible, I think, for certain kinds of institutional relations between people to facilitate the growth of other kinds of relationships. Specifically, the ~~fact that~~ the only housing options open to most people now are isolated little aparatments or isolated little houses. ~~mean~~ These are the options. There aren't, for example, apartment complexes that have common dining rooms. They don't exist: you can't chose to live in one, unless you build one yourself or try to convert some kind of house into

one. Because of this, couples might just move in together as some kind of commune and are forced to live in greater intimacy than they are really ready for. We don't have the option of a "co-operative" living arrangement between families living together in a number of small, semi-independent living units which share certain common facilities, unless they build them. This is not at all the direction in which the money going into housing projects is going. Housing projects all reproduce the isolated separated living units.

Mike Murphy: I would like us to state as clearly as possible what the values are that are implicit in wanting some kind of new form, or an expanded family, or what ever. I think that for each of us they may be the same, and that we all have some deeply held reasons which make us dissatisfied with the way things are.

David: Erik, could you describe why you have decided to get married?

Erik: It's strange: you (Betsy) have been going with Wendal for three years; I have been going with Marcia for five years.

Betsy: You're going to get married? Far out.

Erik: There was a period of time when Marcia wanted to think about getting married and it didn't seem to make sense to me. That has changed. The reason why we decided to get married was that there was no longer any ambiguity at all that our commitment to each other was of that order, that it was an absolutely permanent thing barring any changes in each other that we couldn't predict. Our involvement with each other in terms of all of our possessions and all of our activities ~~and~~ were at that level. So, all of those questions were no longer in any conflict with getting married. The questions of personal independence had seemed to me for a long time as somehow threatened or infringed upon by getting married, well, we just don't feel that way now. I think that it has something to do with commitment: because of that commitment to each other, marriage just isn't a real constraint. That is a statement about subjective feeling, but we also want things to be that way objectively in certain ways: this summer I am planning a five or six week trip with a friend from England. Marcia will be working as a clinical psychologist and so probably will only be able to come with us for a short time. We did not want getting married to interfere with the possibilities of doing that sort of thing. I think that that was probably more important to me than to her, partially because I like to travel more. We didn't want getting married to cut off options as individuals. I guess one of the things that was bothering me for a long time was exactly this social thing. I thought that people would think of me differently as a married man. Part of that was that none of my friends were married. I was an undergraduate for four years and then for another two years in England and I was living in a society in which all of my peers were unattached individuals. It was only as I moved out of that and my associations with married people increased that I began to see that marriage was not incompatible with my own social self identity. I hate to feel myself that buffeted about by social conventions and social imagery, but it clearly was a factor. I suppose it is really the social reasons which were why we decided to get married and because how ingrained those feelings are in us. Somehow you feel that no matter how deep those commitments are inside of you, formalizing it through a rite de passage which is religious even if the marriage is secular, religious in terms of our feelings about it, is important. Ritual and myth and that sort of thing, regardless of how rational and analytical I am about the world, are still

part of my psyche in a way which is not undesirable. These things reinforce rather than detract from our relationships.

Mike: Can you say what you look for in a relationship? Married or unmarried I think that there are things which each of us gets in our associations with other people, that are stated in cliched terms in tin-pan ally songs and in heavy laboratory terms in clinical treatises, but somewhere in between there is something which makes sense in our language to each of us.

Erik: I don't think that my relationship to Marcia is going to be totally sufficient for me. In terms of intimacy and sexual relations I think that it will be sufficient, but there are other kinds of social relationships which I very much need and want. I do not think that I will really fill fulfilled in a living relationship which is basically the isolated nuclear family. The reason for that is that I feel a very strong need for what I can only call comradeship, a real depth of exchange with close friends on an informal basis where you just sit around and talk and exchange and do things together on an informal basis. The problem with isolated nuclear families is that it takes all of the spontaneity out of getting together with other people. Of all the things about being an undergraduate for six years which I liked and which I very much I would like to work into my life style in a permanent way is that, like, you go to dinner with a couple of people and you sit around and talk over coffee for a couple of hours. On one level you waste an enormous amount of time, but on another level you share and get into things in your own feelings and consciousness in a way that you could never do if you had to call up someone and say "why don't you come over tomorrow night?", "Oh I can't tomorrow, how about the next night?", "All right, come over at 8:30" and so on. Once it gets arranged, it doesn't work.

Betsy: That is why my aunts say to me while I was in college, "It's great, isn't it? I think back about those days. Those are the golden years of your life."

Erik: But there is no intrinsic reason why those things can't become the stuff of your life for an indefinite period. When I think back--"Think back"? it's only been one year!-- I have such warm feelings about some of those late night sessions and some of those lousy meals we ate. It is almost less the content of what we said, although I think that we did exchange important ideas and thoughts, that was important than the spontaneity and the experience of that kind of process of sharing with others.

Mike: The way I phrase what I find with other people is that in a very real way I find out who I am. This is at the heart of my ideas about Utopia. If you were alone with no one else around to reflect back on you I don't really think that you would know who you were. I don't think that that is just playing with words. In relationships with other people what you are really looking for is yourself. The way I see this as baring on the core of general Utopian concerns is that there seems to be a conflict sometimes between the individual and the collective, that at some points there are trade-offs that are very clear, that you have to give up yourself for the sake of the group. I don't see individuality negatively at all. That isn't very clear I know.

In the Progressive Labor Party Tract the thrust was to expunge the urge towards individual willfulness and to become much more conscious of yourself as one cell in the body of the people; to curse yourself for individual tendencies.

Erik: well, at least, certain kinds of individual tendencies that work against the solidarity and cohesion of the collectivity.

Mike: yes, that's true.

Betsy: I am going to respond to your question about what we look for in relationships. One thing that is an important signal to me that things are rapidly going to become very significant in a relationship with another person is that I really enjoy watching them function, that there is something about the way he or she operates in the world that I really like. This has happened many times to me with people with whom I have become close. It has happened with ~~people~~ men I have fallen in love with, it happened with my parents and it is now ~~even~~ beginning to happen with girls now. I think that there is something about your idea of getting a sense of self identity from other people which is necessary, but I think not sufficient. There is something that you get by being alone, away from people, that is important too.

Mike: In my mind this is not something you look for in a relationship; it is a fact of relationships. It is the stuff that makes meaning out of life. This interchange which Erik talks about over dinner where the content is unimportant; it is the transaction ~~that~~ is important because in the transaction you discover yourself. I think that the times when you are alone that are super-significant, for me anyhow, are periods of reflection over the stuff that has gone on around me.

David: I find that I have a very delicate balance that I have to maintain between being around other people and being by myself. If I am around other people all the time for three or four days I feel that my space has been violated somehow and I can't hack it.

Erik: How important privacy is to a person is dependent upon not only by what they get out of privacy, but also by how much of a social personality they feel the need to put on when they are with other people. Being with people can be stressful if you feel you have to fulfill certain roles or respond in the "right way". But if you are more at ease and untroubled by those kinds of dynamics of relating to others, then I think social intercourse becomes itself less stressful, and the need to get away from it becomes less imperative. But I would agree that quietness and aloneness and privacy is important.

David: Everyone has to find their own balance. Some people are more sociable than others by nature.

Chris: I wonder if you can assume if being in a larger group than a monogamous relationship is going to infringe more on your privacy. I sometimes wonder if the real closeness required of being with one man or one woman is almost more of an infringement than living independently with a larger number of people and just ~~getting together for dinner~~

getting together for dinner. Because in that way it is also easier to retreat into yourself.

Erik: I can happen, and I hope that it does in my relationship to Marcia, that we don't make that kind of demands on the other person that it becomes difficult for them to retreat from contact with anyone if they feel that need. Both of us feel that need sometimes, and luckily our apartment is big enough to make that easy.

Chris: Society still puts real pressure on that kind of relationship. When you show up at a social occasion you are expected to be together and always do things together.

Betsy: Another thing about this which makes me uneasy about marriage is that my mother really has no place ~~that's~~ to herself, she doesn't have any place to call her own, and she really doesn't have any time to call her own. This has a lot to do with the role of women. She responsible for running the whole house. My father has the time going to and from work to himself and he can close himself off in his study doing paper work or whatever he wants to do. And he has his job as another world. She resents this now. I have seen this in many marriages: total commitment by the wife and mother that is maybe too much of a commitment to ask.

Chris: do you think that a monogamous marriage puts more of a pressure on women than on men?

Betsy: I think that is more of a direct pressure. The presumptions are clearer on women.

Mike: When you talk about monogamous marriage you can talk about what it is now or what it was like in the past or what it ought to be like. These are three different things.

The thing that disturbs me is that if I say I find out from my wife who I am a lot of the time and, for example, she says "I want to ball Roger cause I really love him and it is something that I want to do," and that makes me very uptight, why does it do that to me? I don't have a good notion of why that happens. It has something to do with rejection. If you chose A you are rejecting B. It must somehow get into real questions of identity, like it shakes me to the real core of who I am. She is the person who is telling me "Mike you are Mike" in all the ways that that is said between two people, and somehow when she faces a different direction, I lose who I am.

Erik: I think that it is also tied up with what is even less conscious sexual identity. There is something in a stable intimate sexual relationship which at least means that you avoid asking certain questions subconsciously about sexual identity or potency and so. If there aren't any questions raised because the relationship is stable and satisfying, than those anxieties are at least dormant, but if one person goes beyond that relationship, those anxieties as a minimum get raised. I think also that you are right about the feeling that choosing A is rejecting B.

Mike: There seems to me something really screwed up in a culture which makes a love relationship between A and B and a love relationship between B and C incompatible, love expressed in sex or whatever. That is the bag a lot of us are in. Sex is just a ball game where we act out things in this culture, but it is not the basic thing at all. There are real issues of interpersonal power and identity which are acted out ~~in~~ through it. Sex is just the thing we are hung up on because of Cromwell and his boys, but if it wasn't sex it would be something else.

Erik: I think that if you totally trusted another person and felt that the sharing between you of your relationship would not be abused in other relationships, and if you felt a complete trust in their sincerity so you wouldn't feel that when they continued to say that they loved you that it was just a put on, then I think that a love relationship with another person would be less threatening.

Mike: precisely, but how do you get to that point? What are the things that can aid and abet that trust? One of the things is love, but that is too abused a word. The development of this kind of trust and understanding is something which I would like to build into new forms.

Betsy: Sex is a kind of pre-ennial bugaboo. It comes up in myths and stories and fantasies of every culture, but different cultures handle it differently. The institution of marriage based on love is really a very new thing. It used to be that marriages were made for a lot of different reasons, but not love. Identity was thus gleaned from more than one principle in your life. It was not limited to a love relationship. Maybe that is why the monogamous relationship is asked to bear more weight than it can. We find that we need more than one significant person to react to and see ourselves in.

Klaus: In the past it has been that the parents picked the partner in marriage and said love will come later, you will learn to love each other. And that is what most of the time really happened. It shows that you can love almost anybody. After living with someone for quite a while you realize that it could have been anybody.

Erik: I think that what was said about a monogamous marriage as a social form is asked to bear more than it is often capable of. Part of the reason for that is that love is not only supposed to be restricted to that relationship, but sex also, and a one-to-one ~~relationship~~ association of sex and love is made. Recreational sex is not allowed an expression except in the context of the love-marriage relationship, so that you are considered to have betrayed the marriage if you have sexual relationships outside of marriage regardless of the emotional content of those relationships. It is seen as a betrayal of the love of the marriage relationship. I think what you have to think of in terms of a Utopia is real flexibility in this respect. Different people have different kinds of needs. For me, at the moment, I really do not feel any need to go beyond the relationship I am in, not that I ~~wan't~~ want at some point. If that point comes, I would not know exactly what the best thing would be to do, whether it would be to suppress those feelings because they are potentially disruptive



of something which I value very much, or whether it is not. I am not going to face such an issue until, if ever, it comes up. There is no point in worrying about it until then. At any rate, different people need to have different social options to work these things out.

It seems to me that we have expressed about three different values in response to Mike's question. Mike's first value was that in social relationships you discover yourself, both in the most intimate relationships and in more casual spontaneous ones.

Betsy: And the issue of privacy was a second value in relationships.

Erik: Yes, you need a chance to be alone, to pull back. And then there was Betsy's thought of enjoying ~~xx~~ watching certain people operate as a value in a close relationship.

Betsy: Something that that is part of is the feeling that people I like and I can be friends with are people that I feel I can learn something from. That is a very utilitarian motif of wanting to be around people who I can pick things up from.

Erik: People that are interesting, who are stimulating, who are good to talk to.

Mike: Basically you need all of the help you can get to get through life.

Erik: Let's see, that is three: the issue of watching people is tied into the point about being with interesting people who help you to learn. The desirable relationship is thus a social setting in which you can know yourself, which permits the possibility for aloneness, and in which you learn and are stimulated. What I said about comradeship or friendship involves at least the first and the third of those .

Donley: I would like to redirect things for a moment. David said the first night that he was looking forward to living in a commune and I was wondering what he was looking for in that kind of arrangement.

David: What I am looking for, I guess, is a living situation in which I am around a number of people in a fairly intimate basis. At times, living in a dormitory I find that I can become very scattered. It is possible to get to know a lot of people on a very superficial level. In a commune I am looking for a situation where the relationships I have with the people I know the best could be really nourished and fostered. When I look back into my past I do not think that there has ever been anyone with whom I have ever been really really intimate. I was engaged, but when I look back I realize that it wasn't really close. I wasn't really mature then. Now I am, of course (laughter: cheers from Betsy). I am looking for a setting where I can break through some of the barriers to intimacy that have held me back before. I feel closer to Karen than anyone. But I don't feel ready to move into an apartment with her or anything like that.

Chris: You are saying that you want to move into a relationship where you would be closer to a number of people so that you could nourish the relationship. In your case Donley with the other couple you found that there were certain factors of time and space which

effect how many people you can relate to all at once.

Donley: Basically we made a mistake in terms of what we thought were common goals in terms of the ways of living.

Erik (interrupting..): There is something which came to my mind but I'll remember so you can go on. (laughter)

Donley: no, say it now.... (more laughter)

Erik: O.K. Mike said something last week that one of his goals for Utopia was "fun". That is really an important thing about friends. You really cannot have a hell of a lot of fun sitting alone all the time in a room. If you are reading a funny book you might chuckle a little, but you will only burst out laughing when you read it to someone else.

Betsy: It is the same thing with traveling. People have a hard time traveling alone with no one to share things with.

Erik: That is really true. I can't stand to see things alone, especially when they are really fantastic. I don't like secondary experiences, but a big part of the enjoyment in traveling to strange places is remembering about them and sharing them memories afterwards. This ties into something else Mike said last week, about the need for stability in close relationships. That stability is necessary so that you can share these fun times and have that sharing continue to contribute to your relationship through memories and so on. That is one of the things that is important about a marriage--the continuity which goes for a long long time. So that you have the anticipation of sharing things in the future and the memories of sharing things in the past as well as the experience of the present which helps to tie your life together. Maybe that is what makes a marriage special for your sense of personal identity is that it is an ongoing, permanent basis for reflecting your identity and understanding yourself. In that kind of stable relationship your identity can assume a more meaningful time dimension, a process dimension, which it lacks in more transient relations.

Mike: I see all this as basically an interruption of Donley, but with that firmly in mind, can I interrupt again. I have been married for five years. My image of it is that like it or not, most of us have some things we are afraid of. That fear kind of blinds us and we bullshit about a lot of stuff, knowingly and unknowingly. It takes years with another person before you can start cutting through the bullshit--like <sup>dish detergent</sup> Joy/cutting through the grease. You just seem to need some period of time of shared experience. That is when it gets hard, that is why commonly why in marriages people stay together for so long and then they get restless. No matter when it comes, you have gotten past the point where you tell each other the old stories, ~~the~~ where you can pull out your old games. You are starting to call each other and say Hey look you can do better than that. That produces a real threat response, and at that point you either handle it, work through it and go on, or you dissolve the union because it becomes too threatening. These five years have been pure hell for large periods of time, but there has also been times of

incredible periods of joy and very high moments. It has just gotten richer and richer and richer. One of the things that has been in my mind is that if it has been this much work to make it go between two people what a terrific bitch it must be for four, six, eight or more.

Chris: That was kind of my question earlier also: if it takes that much time and work, what is the maximum number you can handle.

Betsy: But we are all from families. There is an ongoing relationship in my case of eight people plus the aunts and uncles and grandparents.

Karen: I would like to go back to Chris' question about the number of people you can have in a close relationship. I don't think that the difficulties in more people than just two would necessarily be that much greater. When we are talking in terms of two people we are talking in terms of two people and their relationship over all of these different aspects. Each person has to deal with all of the facets of the other person, all of his needs, and personality. When you talk in terms of more people, the different people in the group could draw out different things in you. Each person doesn't have to be an expert in dealing with all of the different aspects of the personality. There could be a kind of division of the kinds of emotional support and security you need.

Erik: I am not sure that any one of those relationships would have the depth and intensity and real intimacy that you have when you are with just one other person.

Karen: I didn't mean that a fourth of me would be for this person and a fourth for another. But I think that some of the difficulties could be taken up because some people know how to handle certain situations better than others.

Mike: Is there a corollary to this that if you want to set up with another couple and go through life together that it is more likely to work when both couples separately have shaped themselves up? Would that increase the odds.

Donley: yeah, I think that the couples have to be pretty soundly together themselves for it to work. And I think that it is more likely to work when the couples live separately but share certain common facilities than if they form one big family.

Betsy: You know Communes seem like such a good idea, but they often seem to have real difficulties. Apparently the two big stumbling blocks in a communal situation when, let's say, 14 people live in the same house, are sex and private property, which really extends to questions of private space and private time. Maybe that is an indication of how deeply enculturated we are.

David: or perhaps--this is a terribly unsocialistic idea--there is some intrinsic human need for private space.

Erik: I don't think that that is unsocialistic. A "commune" in the

American sense of a certain kind of living structure, is not necessarily a "communist" ideal. It may be, but I don't think that "communism" as such specifies whether people live in semi-detached monogamous families co-operating collectively with other families or in one big house with 20 people in it. Both could be communist or socialist.

Mike: This question of individual needs is also related to the question of how we define our individuality. Because of the ways we have been brought up, we have always defined our sense of identity and individuality in terms of how we are different from other people rather than how we are the same as other people. You had to do this as a kid just to keep your head up and show that you were not "Daddy's boy". But with a different kind of family, people could define themselves in terms of their similarities, their common humanity.

Betsy: I think that that is another one of the values in a relationship: having that be more possible in a family. Having more people around to talk to, to relate to, to argue with, to learn from, for both the kid and for the adult. This may be one of the reasons why it is a mistake to send grandmothers and grandfathers away to leisure world. With more people around you can develop more easily the sense of your commonness with others as well as your distinctness.

Klaus: I would like to say something about human destiny or something. I told you already about Lorenz, a man from Vienna, and he says that humans are originally made to live in tribes. These tribes used to live in small groups and hunt. The kids were educated altogether in the tribe. Every family had their own tent. Privacy was part of it. Having ~~axxow~~ something private for oneself lies deep within us, and so even communist countries today have had to acknowledge it. So people have a cow or a little plot or something. Communes try to come to close to these primitive ~~x~~ tribes, but as a Utopia it is so unreal today. There is no longer space for tribes. You can't go and shoot deer or live on roots. You can't educate your kids yourself. So, it is nice to think about this and how nice it would be to live in little tribes, but we live in the Bay Area and that can't be a tribe.

Erik: But it is not impossible to capture some of the social relationships that existed in a small organic community like that in the context of a larger society. Some of that I think I experienced when I was an undergraduate. There is some part of that tribal sharing, co-operativeness that was just part of your normal life there. And loyalty also: people sticking up for each other.

I would like to back to the accounting and count up the values we seek in a relationship and living style so that we can keep them straight. There is the value of gaining your identity from the group of people you are in; there is learning from others and the group you are in; the need for privacy for self-evaluation to define yourself away from the group; there are such things as joy and fun and exuberance; there is the whole question of a constructive setting for child rearing which we haven't really dealt with very much except for what Betsy said about having many people around to help the child grow in a more balanced way.

Betsy: I see the family as a kind of building block towards the society that I want to see emerge as Utopia, and it is important to me that I become part of the right building block. I am not at all sure that marriage is a building block in the kind of society I would like to live in. The kind of families we form will imply and help to create the kind of society we build. An authoritarian, competitive bunch of families will be part of an authoritarian, competitive society.

Erik: I am not sure if the technical act of marriage necessarily defines the kind of building block your family becomes.

The Israeli Kibbutz tries to realize in certain ways some of the values we have been talking about. They haven't tried to reproduce an American undergraduate college exactly, but they have embodied certain aspects of that kind of life. The basic structures vary--some are more communalistic and other more co-operative--but the basic structure, as I understand it, and I really do not know that much about them, is that the children are raised after the first year or so in a common nursery. They spend a great deal of their free time with their parents, who, depending upon the affluence of the Kibbutz live in small apartment, a single room or some kind of semi-detached cottage. The mother does not have to worry about the basic child care; that is taken care of in the co-operatively run children's housing. I am not sure exactly how they are run, but the primary responsibility for raising the child is the community's responsibility, not the parents. The children, however, still have a special relationship with their parents, they spend considerable time with them, go on outings together, and so on. Similarly, ~~social~~ functions like eating are taken care of by the community and not by individual households, although apartments do have small kitchenettes so that people have the option of having a private dinner or cooking their own breakfast. I think that that kind of community relationship is possible not only in the context of a Kibbutz, which is a total almost self-sufficient community off by itself, physically separated from the rest of the society, but is also something which could be replicated in other kinds of communities, in urban communities.

Klaus: You know, the kibbutzim are located mainly near the borders where the pressure is greatest. We have to create some borders, maybe.

Erik: I wouldn't think that the Kibbutz model when applied here would have to be that kind of totally self-contained community. I am not sure if I would even consider that the most desirable because it can become drawn into itself and lack ties to the rest of the world.

Klaus: But all of the Utopian communities that architects and planners think up involve a close integration of the working place and living place and they see the community as somehow isolated from the rest of civilization. That is like the kibbutz idea.

Erik: I am not sure how I feel about that, about a person living and working and doing everything in a small self-contained unit. Personally, one of the reasons why I always like living in big cities is that I like the wildness of having so many different milieus and settings near by to put yourself in if you want to.

Betsy: And a few crazy ones that you have to.

Erik: I think that ~~there~~ it may be possible to have a kibbutz-like living structure without the isolation as a self-contained total community. You could have a kibbutz-like apartment complex organized around certain communally shared facilities like dining rooms and nurseries and so on.

Betsy II (from downstairs): You know the problem with the Kibbutz is that it was founded by people who shared a common goal, the goal of setting up a country. They shared hardships together. They were outcasts from many countries. When we were building our country we had wagon trains and the like. But here we are now, the Top Country and now we have time to sit back and reflect and get dissatisfied because we have nothing more to work for that can unite us behind a common goal.

David: What you are saying is what has been shown to make or break most communes. Growth communes like Synanon or like resistance communes and the like, which share a common goal or a common strongly held religious or political philosophy, seem to work much better than more anarchical communes which are not bound together by common goals.

Karen: I think that one of the reasons that the commune David was talking about has never really gotten off of the ground is that we never really did manage to get together to ~~wazzzout~~ agree on a common goal or purpose.

Donley: Erik, do you consider the kibbutz as an attempt at a Utopian society?

Erik: well, it is definitely an attempt by these people to at least embody certain Utopian ideals. The Kibbutz is not seen as a half way house, as a stop-gap, but as trying to construct an ideal community.

Donley: But the kibbutz doesn't seem to me as a utopian society but rather as a utopian enclave, like the wagon trains. It is a more a way of settling a country than a system of society for a whole people.

Erik: I am not talking about building kibbutzim in the United States so much as modeling certain aspects of living arrangements on the kibbutz. The kind of living setting I would like would have private apartments which they were responsible for and would have to keep up, but in which there were common dining rooms in which people rotated cooking responsibilities and clean up responsibilities, in which there is a day care center and various recreational facilities. There would be communal facilities, co-operative economic relationships and private apartments. Such a setting would seem to restore the possibility for spontaneous comradeship relationships developing along side a stable, intimate relationship.

Donley: In a lot of areas in the United States there are these idiot ruch country club estates developing. There are private, detached houses, and when you buy that you get automatic membership in all of the communal recreational facilities and other facilities. Architecturally is that a system you would want to move into?

Erik: The reason why I don't like country club estates is that they are so classist in their social makeup, and the fact that they really don't involve much collective co-operation. What you do is buy certain facilities by hiring people to do them. If it was meaningfully co-operative, and not restricted to a financial elite, then I think I would like it. It would seem to me that this sort of thing would be almost ideal for public housing projects. In many ways it might be cheaper since you wouldn't have to provide a big kitchen set up for every single apartment. But it would certainly be more human.

Betsy: There are three examples of this kind of thing which I would like to throw in. One is in Berkeley. Two blocks on Channing Way have gotten together and are part of a "food conspiracy". They are trying to really share all of the resources on the two blocks and become as self-sufficient as possible. People who sew sew for other people and teach other people to sew; people who fix cars, fix cars and help other people learn to fix cars. They are trying to not only live together, but to become a working self-sufficient economic unit, a co-operative.

Another thing I have heard of is a block in Sacramento. A guy had moved onto a normal, average, suburban Sacramento block, with normal, average suburban Sacramento neighbors. They didn't like him much because he had a beard and his kids left their bicycles around on the lawn. He felt that they weren't too happy about having him as a neighbor. He also felt the need to experiment with some kind of co-operative set-up, so what he did was go around to his neighbors and say "Hi, I'm Bob Hileman and I'm your neighbor and you know my kids play with your kids and I would really like to get to know you." Over the past little while things have really begun to change. They now have open-houses for the kids. The child care is being spread around. They are trying to set up a corporation in which the block would incorporate and would eventually buy up all of the property on the block. They are thinking of setting aside one house for the children of a particular age group who will take care of it and furnish it and so on. It is the kind of thing that is in a way really simple to do, but which we don't even try usually.

Another example is Reston, Virginia, which is a planned community. The original idea was to build housing of very different kinds in the same area: big suburban houses and small cottages, all with common play areas for the kids. The houses would have a fairly wide range of costs so that everyone who worked in the community could live there and live next to each other. The place is very lovely and you can walk anywhere without crossing a street with cars.

Wendal: The problem with Reston was that it was started by a multi-millionaire that had this plan in mind, but he either ran out of money or he mishandled it, so an oil company bought the whole thing. Gulf Oil now owns Reston, and the original plan has been discontinued. It will now all be high cost housing and so janitors and the like will live outside the community. This illustrates the problems that happen when such a thing is attempted in America.

Betsy: Reston could be happening elsewhere instead of cities like Pac-

ifica.

Erik: But if you are trying to maximize profits as you build a community, not social profits but cash profits, you are unlikely to build integrated low cost and high cost housing sharing common free facilities.

Betsy: yes, that is right, but I do think that a reallocation of the same money in such projects and a reorganization of the profits could lead to the same profits but good communities maybe. It's in planning living areas. It is becoming unrealistic for two people to have their own isolated living space, private house. Some other kind of living space plan is necessary, where you share green space.

Erik: But the problem now is that there is realistically not the option for most people to live in that kind of sharing, co-operative setting, at least not with an enormous hassle. The option just physically doesn't exist unless you build it, and most people cannot afford that.

Betsy: That is not really true. That is what they are doing in Sacramento. The houses are still separate but the people can share them if they agree to. And that is what we could do in this apartment also. One thing that is appealing about that approach is that it is immediately accessible. It is a matter of doing it. Another thing is that it goes against one of the basic tenets of forming a commune which is that you have to have the "right" people, you have to choose the people before it will work. In the block in Sacramento it was a more or less random bunch of people.

Erik: The other thing about the Sacramento project that is good is that it is a very organic type of growth. It starts with minimal changes like letting kids run around in a freer way, and it builds from that into a greater scope of co-operation, rather than trying to jump immediately into the final stage of full co-operative living. If he had gone around to all of the houses saying, "Hi, let's build a socialist block" he would have been arrested, but maybe that is what the block will end up to be.

Betsy: Another good thing about this sort of pattern is that it doesn't require any money from the government or any new resources other than human energy. And it can have tremendous results in terms of making a person feel like he belongs in a community, in a caring neighborhood.

Chris: Are the kibbutzim self-selected groups or are they like the Sacramento block?

Erik: I am not sure, but I don't think that there was in most of them any systematic screening process, except the self-screening of being committed to that style of life. There is an interesting thing that happens on Kibbutzim, I think, when they grow to large, or if some kind of internal conflict occurs in the group, if a consistent faction develops over some crucial issues. The way these problems are resolved is for parent kibbutzim to set up new kibbutzim where the dissenting group can set itself up if the division is serious enough. This is the pattern of conflict resolution when a consensus breaks down.



Klaus: All of these groups, like the kibbutz, have a problem of leadership or authority. There is necessarily leadership in some way. They also want all people to be equal, should have equal chance of being happy or having fun or self-realization of whatever. Obviously in these groups there are some characters that are stronger than others and try to make decisions for others and create unhappy relations. These are problems which are natural in all such groups.

Erik: I think that one of the things you have to come to grips with is that although I might find this kind of setting a pretty ideal living group, that doesn't mean that it isn't going to have problems and tensions. Conflicts and problems and tensions are always going to be there; it is not going to be constant peace and harmony. I hope that the balance would be in the direction of friendship and co-operation rather than tension, but I think that tension would be there and people would have to learn to come to grips with it. One of the things which they do on a kibbutz that helps this is the idea of rotating leadership and management functions among as many people as possible. By the simple act of rotating the manager of a factory every so many months, you at least reduce the problems of institutionalizing domination of one person or group over others. But still, those are on-going problems and require attention. You know how long meetings take at Starr King to resolve problems. It takes a lot of time, but allowing that kind of time is part of the social structure itself.

Mike: Working out those kinds of tensions and conflicts that you end up learning the most, although I wouldn't argue that that justifies the conflicts as such.

Erik: I think what is Utopian about such a structure is not so much that it is a final perfected state, but that it is capable of change and that it is moving in the right direction. What makes it Utopia is that striving in that setting leads to constructive improvement most of the time, rather than frustration. We talked about this last week.

Betsy: Good Judgement is the result of Experience; experience is the result of poor judgement.

Erik: that'll be the closing statement. Each week a different person gets to have the last word.

several miscellaneous thoughts after the session, Erik Wright.

1. It is always important when thinking about such things as utopian family structures and living structures to have as part of the utopian image maximizing alternatives for people and making it easy for people to move from one option to another. Some people, at some times, will really be most happy in the setting of the traditional nuclear family in which larger groups make minimal demands on the individual's time and energy. Other people will need, at certain times, a more totally communalist living style. And others (like me at the moment) would prefer some kind of co-operative or collective arrangement that would involve private more or less autonomous apartments combined with communally shared common facilities such as dining rooms, nursery and child care, etc.

2. Some of these options might be particularly appropriate for different age groups. Teenagers might like the communal type living setting best. Young families with young children, the co-operative pattern. (I personally do not see at what age the isolated nuclear family model would be best, but it might for some individuals).

3. As was implicit in much of the discussion, questions of family structure and living structure are really not independent of other social structural problems. This is true even though certain patterns of change, perhaps even radical change, can occur more or less in isolation of larger changes (as in the block in Sacramento or some of the collective experiments in Berkeley). Patterns of family structure and living groups, particularly when they involve problems of building on a wide scale new patterns of communal facilities for living groups, and crucial issues of women's liberation for family structures, are intrinsically bound up with social and political change outside of the family and living group. New facilities for living are predicated upon reordering productive priorities away from cash profits in favor of social utility and human welfare, and this requires fundamental changes in structures of power and decision-making; and women's liberation, not in the narrow sense of "equal opportunity to compete with men", but in the sense of creating a non-competitive social environment where women and men work together for common goals, also involves fundamental change in the social system. These changes cannot be thought of in isolation to the rest of the society.

Week IV.

Work and the Economic System

The crucial questions to think about include such things as:  
How are products to be distributed?  
How is the value and remuneration for work to be determined?  
How is production to be controlled?  
What style of work and leisure is most desirable?  
What will be meant by "ownership"?  
What are the goals of economic activity?  
How are individual vs. collective economic goals set?

There are several things that would be good to read for this:

1. Communitas, by Paul and Percival Goodman, especially part II.
2. Looking Backward, by Edward Bellamy: this is a novel written in 1887 describing the world in the year 2000, which Bellamy thought would be a kind of Communist society. Many of his images are quite thought provoking and the book is quite enjoyable and easy reading.
3. Two articles in Patterns of Anarchy, ed. by Krimmerman and Perry are worth reading on this subject:
  - i. "The Pattern of Life under Decentralized Communism" by Alexander Berkman, pp336-345
  - ii. "The Organization of Anarchy", by Colin Ward, pp.386-396

Week V.

Political Power

I think that it would be an interesting process for each person in the seminar to sketch in greater or lesser detail what he would consider to be a "Utopian Political Constitution". This should include some kind of Preamble stating the political objectives of the Constitution and some kind of outline of the structures of such a political system. This outline can include city and neighborhood political structures (nonstructures?) as well. And if the spirit moves you, the outline can be filled in in places with as much detail as possible. Pretend that this is The Day After The Revolution and you are going to a Constitutional Convention. How will you regulate central authority? Will there be central authority? How are different social functions to be run? How are decisions about change to be made at different levels? How is conflict between political units (eg. neighborhoods or cities) at the same level and between levels to be regulated?

How is dissent to be handled, even if decision-making is fully participatory? What will be the role of political parties? elections? How is "backsliding" to the pre-revolutionary era to be avoided?

These questions need to be thought of both in terms of Today (i.e. The Day After The Revolution) and in terms of some point in the future--Utopia. (You can restrict the constitution if you want to the point in the future, but make this clear).

I think that rather than reading very much on this, it would be best to try to think through through, and write them down. The written Draft Constitutions can be included in the seminar transcripts if you want them to be.

If I could get the written Constitutions by the Monday before class (i.e. Feb.1), or even better, by the Friday before that (Jan 29) I could have them duplicated before we met.

If you want to read something on these issues, Patterns of Anarchy contains numerous articles concerning anarchist political images, especially Goodman's article pp379-385 and some of the attacks on centralism earlier in the book. Maximoff's The Political Philosophy of Bakunin contains numerous attacks on Marx's political concepts and some discussion of the Anarchist political future, esp. pp210-225, 248-258, 283-289. For the Marxist view of the Revolutionary political system, Lenin's the State and Revolution is probably the best thing to read (it is quite good).

SESSION III: Education and Child Rearing

January 19, 1971

Betsy: Erik told me about a meeting being held by the April Coalition on education which I went to last Saturday. The room was packed and the meeting was really terrible. I would take any group of five year olds over that group of people to run the schools.

Erik: Part of the problem was that, unlike the evening before<sup>in</sup> the restructuring of city government session and unlike the session on community control of police which Chris went to, real ideological splits occurred in the education meeting and the meeting began to center on those ideological issues. There was just no way in which we could get together on substantive issues. The split between people who could be called anarchist-individualists in the view towards education and people who you could call collectivists in their views. The anarchists felt that all schools should be basically run along a Summerhill model, tomorrow, and that this should be the plan for education. This meant specifically that public agencies should have no role in education, no positive role, whatsoever. Schools should all be basically "free schools," privately run but financially supported by the community. The collectivists felt that we should be concerned about radically restructuring education in the public schools, transforming that education into something constructive and positive, but not eliminating it. Another side of this issue was compulsory education. The anarchist-individualists wanted to abolish compulsory education and the collectivists wanted to maintain compulsory education, but make it real education, not miseducation. These were issues which we could not bridge. Some people felt that any coercion at all defeated any validity to education, and thus they wanted, immediately, a totally non-coercive system, whereas others felt this just did not make sense under present conditions and that coercion could not be eliminated now.

David: Perhaps those are just two different means to the same ends.

Erik: Perhaps, but I am not sure--we never got far enough to know whether our ends were the same or not.

Betsy: Funding was also an important issue while I was there, especially the question of the funding of free schools by the city.

Erik: This was part of what is called the "voucher" plan, a system in which the city provides a certain amount of money for every student which the student--or his parents--can put into any school the kid goes to. The city thus does not directly support schools, but rather the schools are financed indirectly through the students who are attracted to them. That means that if kids go to free schools they bring with them \$500 a student, or whatever the rate might be, and if they go to military academies they bring the same rate and if they go to catholic parochial schools they bring the same rate. There was a great deal of disagreement in the meeting over this. I felt quite stringly that the negative consequences of this scheme far outweigh the positive side. The positive side is that the scheme makes free schools financially viable, it means that they can pay their teachers decent wages and all of that is really good. The bad thing about it is that white middle kids will be sent to white middle class conservative

where there would be no black kids. Big corporations would move directly into the school system, establish schools and "sell" them to parents with all of the PR and advertising nonsense that they sell other products. The long run effects would not be a liberating force for most children, but have the end effect of making constructive education less possible for most children. Instead of using that kind of approach which the anarchists supported--I don't mean to sound like I am using anarchist in a perjorative sense: I think that it is a label which they would accept--I felt that what we had to think about was concerted collective action to make the public schools into something positive and constructive. We need to learn from free school experiments and try to bring those principles into public learning environments.

Steve: What we are discussing now is really the question of goals and values on Erik's sheet "Central Issues in Utopian Education" [see page 44] which is pretty basic to the whole thing. What do we want from education? Why are we educating people anyway? The educational system now is set up to provide technicians for an increasingly technological society. Education formally socializes people into building a nation and into a consensus of goals and ideals. The basic question is what kind of education do we want? Why do we educate? To create an enlightened citizenry? To deal with the government? Do we want to socialize children or do we want education in a free development?

Erik: Why don't we try to handle that question. I think a lot of other questions, such as the role of teachers, the role of public schools, the meaning of coercion or authority, and the control of education, all of those things hinge on what you feel the goals of education to be.

David: I think that the goal of education should be to increase consciousness, at as many levels as possible. That is an exciting process and people will naturally want to learn, to become more aware of what is going on in the world and in themselves.

Erik: Are you talking about a first grader when you say "increased consciousness" or are you talking about something more like a high school student? In a sense first graders have, for their level of development, a lot of consciousness and spontaneity, it just gets trained out of them in the schools.

Donley: "Increasing consciousness" is really what you described as "free development", of giving total freedom of expression to self development, of learning about himself and others too. I see those as essentially the same thing.

Betsy: I think that you can't help but educate and be educated, regardless of whether or not we every go to school. You learn, period. So what we are talking about is how best to handle that phenomenon in the human animal. One thing which have got to do is set up some kind of system whereby people can be educated to handle uncertainties, handle ambiguities, complexities, problems. People have to be taught in such a way that they can handle new problems that we haven't even imagined yet.

Central Issues in Utopian Education

- GOALS,  
VALUES
1. Do we want educational processes to socialize children to certain positive values? Or do we want education to in some sense to be more directed towards the "free development" of the child into his own personality? Is the ethic of "free development" any less value-oriented than the view that education should socialize children consciously towards certain values? Are these two goals necessarily antagonistic?
- COERCION,  
AUTHORITY
2. What is the appropriate role for coercion and authority in education? Should there be any restrictions imposed on children? Should this vary with age? Should coercion be limited to conflict resolution rather than forcing a child to do something he doesn't want to? Should any academic subjects (even reading) be required?
- TEACHERS
3. What is the appropriate role of the teacher? Is the teacher primarily a resource the child can use, or is his role more active? Should the teacher be primarily a model for the child, or should he try to be more or less neutral? Should the teacher actively try to encourage a certain kind of social environment in the classroom (eg. co-operation, spontaneity, etc.) or should he be more passive and let the children establish a certain social milieu themselves?
- SCHOOLS
4. What is the appropriate role for institutionalized education (schools) in an overall learning process? Should attendance at a school be compulsory or should children have the free option to go or not to go? Should the emphasis be on "incidental education" to use Paul Goodman's phrase (i.e. education that a child picks up from his surroundings), or should the emphasis be more on the systematic transmission of knowledge and skills?
- CONTROL  
OF  
EDUCATION
5. Who should control educational processes? What say should students have in educational decisions? Parents? Teachers? People in the community not directly involved in education? The children who come out of school will have an impact on the entire society/community; does this mean that the society has the right to say how they should be run and what kind of people it wants to produce? How can goals of individual development and goals of social needs both be met in the school? Should parents and teachers have the right to raise kids to become Fascists? If control over education is decentralized and in the hands of the community, what is to prevent some schools from becoming ultra-right wing indoctrination centers? Would that make any real difference?

David: John Holt talks about that sort of thing in How Children Learn and How Children Fail. Learning is not so much having knowledge in your head, but rather a basic attitude in the way a person approaches something which he might not know. It struck me at PLTS that many first year men say that they would prefer more structure. They wanted people to tell them what to do and what courses to take. Throughout life we are confronting new situations with uncertainties and new variables, and education has to help people to deal with them.

Erik: I agree with what has been said. I agree that it is important for children to grow in self-awareness of his own personality and the world around him, and that the need to help people learn to cope with uncertainties is important. But I also feel that it is important that a certain kind of adult comes out of the educational system, not narrowly defined, but still a certain kind of person. I would like to see education systems produce people who were co-operative and not competitive, unselfish rather than greedy, loving rather than hateful, and so on. I am not neutral about these values. I really feel that anything that contributes to strengthening these traits and values is probably good, although there might be some things which I would oppose even if they somehow contributed to these values. But in general, things which contribute to an authentic lovingness, an authentic unselfishness, an authentic co-operative nature are good things. It is not clear to me that this is the same thing as saying free development.

David: I believe that it is the same thing. I have this optimistic view of man. I think that that is the truest nature of man.

Erik: That may be true. It seems to me that there is a myth of free development in education, a myth that adults can not interfere with children. Not interfering is itself a kind of interference. Not giving a child social support, encouragement for certain things, refusing to give a child encouragement because you are afraid of coercing him into a particular mold is itself coercive. You really cannot really opt out of coercion.

Betsy: I don't think that that is what free development really means. I think that Erik and David really agree.

Mike McKinley: I think that David is making the same assumptions that Neill makes and that Unitarians generally make, namely that Man is basically good, not that Man's nature is basically neutral, and that if you put men into an environment which is basically good you will come out with good people. What Erik is saying is that be that as it may, there are a lot of influences that are flowing in from one side or another and that it doesn't really matter if the intrinsic nature of man is good or neutral, all those influences come in anyway and they should be given a positive direction, if you want people to become co-operative and so on.

Erik: Children if left totally without adult influences might somehow turn out good and beautiful. I don't know, but maybe that is the case. But that is not the situation. There is a real responsibility for adults in a world where that is not the case, for teachers and parents to try to intervene in a constructive way.



David: I agree with you. What you are talking about is a laissez-faire approach which a teacher might take as opposed to a more positive approach. I don't support a laissez-faire approach either. What is important is the relationship between the student and the teacher above all else.

Klaus: The kind of adult that appears finally is the result of the relationship between the child and adult, and is not that much a part of education. If the mother cares for her child--I don't know exactly why, I am not a psychologist--but if she cares for her child the child when he becomes an adult will care for other people. That kind of education happens everywhere, in side of the class and outside. It happens more in the family than in the classroom, but it should happen also in the class. But education has another part too. We have to pass over some information. That is a real problem, for we don't know exactly what direction and what kinds of information and what forms.

David: And also, does the information that the child learns necessarily have to come from his own desires to learn it. Is it important for a child to want to learn the alphabet, or should you say, "listen, you've got to learn this because all reading and learning depends upon it."

Erik: Before we go on to discuss the question of means, I think that we should discuss a little more the question of goals. Klaus has given another important goal: the goal of actually transmitting from one generation to another a corpus of knowledge and skills and understanding. This includes basic ones like reading and more complicated ones like Plato and even in a sense more complicated skills like a critical view of the world, a challenging, analytical mind, or in more political terms perhaps a revolutionary attitude towards the world as opposed to a more resigned accepting attitude towards the world.

David: I don't see necessarily a connection between a critical view of the world and a body of knowledge.

Erik: A critical view of the world is, I guess, a combination of what you said about consciousness earlier and the transmission of a body of information.

Klaus: You need basic knowledge, some understanding, before you can be critical of things.

Betsy: what you know is important in your understanding of yourself and the world. If you know that the world is flat, then you know that ships fall off of the edge. If you know that in 1607 the first people landed in America, then you know that the Indians don't count for much. You can't separate the body of knowledge from the critical view of the world.

Erik: Yes, you need both the information and the skills to exploit them. The two are dependent upon each other.

It may be that there really isn't any conflict between any of these goals. Perhaps children will spontaneously want to learn the things which are important to transmit if the material is made intere

esting enough. They will want to learn the important information and skills because they are important and as the children grow up they will learn that they are important if they are not coerced into them.

Betsy: I think that that is true. Children really want to learn to read and write. White from Harvard had a theory of competence motivation. Kids really have a motivation to become competent in their environment. This is something which is natural. Talking is part of it. In this culture reading and writing are part of it. Kids really do want to learn that kind of stuff. Problems in a child learning certain things may have more to do with problems in the way we think that they ought to be taught rather than problems in learning as such. In school kids lose a lot of natural enthusiasm for learning which they have.

Erik: Can we say as a generalization that here we have a situation in which the means and the ends are identical? The desirable end is an individual who is spontaneous, free, interested in exploring the world on his own. Is this also the best means: i.e. is the best way to accomplish this to give the individual maximum freedom at all times for children.

Donley: That is not totally what was found out in some of the studies done on Summerhill. There was an article in Transaction magazine by a former Summerhill student. With no preconceptions he went back to find out what was happening and where graduates had gone. Some had left Summerhill to go to highly structured schools which they chose themselves, others went into highly structured jobs, while others didn't. They also varied in their ideas about Summerhill: some thought that it was a good thing, some thought that it was marginal and others thought that it lacked structure. It seems to me that Summerhill really does have a lot of structure just by the students themselves. This guy remarked that in the common meetings there were some 150-300 odd rules, some more general than others, which the kids had established.

Erik: Let us take a very concrete example. One of the things that I would like children to grow up to be is not greedy, not selfish. It would be a good thing for the world and for human beings if this were the case. What do you do in the up-bringing and education of a child that contributes to him becoming ungreedy? Whenever he does a selfish act do you scold him? Do you physically punish him or do you just inform him that you think that is a lousy thing to do? Or do you just let him do whatever he wants to? If he takes an apple away from a littler kid, do you just let him do it and not say anything? If you do say something, you are being implicitly coercive assuming that there is a real love and respect between you and the child. To tell a child "that is a bad thing to do" is a form of coercion.

David: I'll take another alternative: instead of saying "That is a bad thing to do" which is a value statement, how about you becoming a human being ~~asaying~~ and saying "I get very angry when you do that." So you don't make a value judgement on the child but are simply responding on the basis of your own feelings.

Erik: But isn't that really the same thing in terms of intervening and coercing the child or not coercing. That is a better way to do it--to react to the incident rather than to the child as a person. But in either case you are pushing the person into a certain mold which you desire.

David: Are you pushing him into a mold?

Erik: I think so if he loves you and respects your judgement and you love him. He's a little kid and he needs your social support. Your ~~criticizing~~ criticism is coercive.

Donley: I did not hear David say that you criticize the child. I think you let him know how his actions affect you just as they let us know how our actions affect them.

Betsy: It is very simple to say to a kid "that really makes me angry to see you" two kids quarreling over something as little as that" and then they will come right back at you and say "Yeah, but yesterday you let him do such-and-such" or "Yeah, but you've got your such-and-such". It is really a problem of setting examples. You bring up your kids to have their "own" bedrooms and lollypops and their own place at the table. When you do all that it doesn't mean much to say don't be selfish.

Donley: What you should be trying to do is to deal with the kid as honestly as possible, so if he does something that makes you mad, you should express that to him.

Erik: I agree with you that that is what you should do, but it should be recognized as a kind of coercion of the child. You are intervening in his life.

Donley: yes, but we do that with each other also.

Erik: Ok, but we are really much more resilient to that kind of pressure most of the time.

Anne Smith: I agree that not to say something may be just as coercive to the kid as saying something, especially if he feels any internal feelings that he shouldn't be doing that. If he feels he shouldn't take the appeal, and you don't say anything and he knows that you feel otherwise, you may indirectly increase his sense of guilt rather than reduce it.

Erik: That is really crucial: you cannot opt out of affecting other people. The question is what that effect is going to be, not whether or not you are going to affect them.

David: I feel very uncomfortable when I don't know where I stand with someone. That is one of the things which I do not like about the ungraded system at the seminary. It is good that they eliminated the archaic, graded system, but they haven't replaced it with anything so you do not know where you are. I would prefer a mutual evaluative interaction between student and teacher. The teacher has to respond, but there are different ways of doing this. I think that there is a real difference between coercion and intervention. When you intervene it is still up to the student how he wants to respond: the

choice is his, whereas when he is coerced, he doesn't have a choice.

Erik: For an older person who already has that kind of autonomy I think that that is probably true, but it is less true for a five year old.

Betsy: We're bigger than they are, and that makes a big difference. There are lots of fears in little kids, and it is really hard to interact with a child in a way which can let him be completely fearless. He's a little guy in a bog people's world, and he knows it. He knows where the power is.

Erik: Again, I think that there is a myth about Summerhill and other free schools that they somehow avoid that kind of adult intervention in a child's life, of adults giving direction and a certain kind of style to the child's life. There is a myth that what you see in the child's behavior is somehow spontaneously the child coming out of nowhere and not being a question of the child reacting to adults and other children in various ways. ~~Hexx~~ The reactions and non-reactions of adults become part of what the child becomes.

Chris: So what you are saying is that it is impossible for the adults that are around the child not to affect the child. It is a matter of how they are going to affect him.

Klaus: But how do you influence a child in any way? Obviously you want results. You want the kid not to be selfish, so how do you do it? You can't say: "Kid, don't be selfish." The only way to make a child no to be selfish is to yourself not be selfish, although you are yourself selfish--you should fight your own selfishness. That is the only way to make the child unselfish.

Mike MacKinley: And you have to be honest to the child so that he knows that you also are fighting your own selfishness and trying to become unselfish.

Donley: I agree with Klaus that we are going through a conflict of selfishness-nonselishness outselves and that we should not hide this from the child. If we realize that we are going through that kind of striving, it seems to me really hypocritical when you see a child being selfish to come down on him hard. He has the same two factors going. Selfishness is a valid part of him and it is something that has to be played out within him. You need to react, but you need to be careful and understanding about it.

Erik: Bettelheim says something good on this in Summerhill: For and Against:

"The child will learn that (i.e. things like unselfishness) only if he is surrounded by the right human examples which are so attractive to him that he will want to copy them, to shape his personality and values in the image of those he admires and identifies with. But he will identify out of anxiety, out of fear of losing the goodwill, or the presense, or the respect of the loved person. There is no socialization or any learning without fear.

He is using the word fear not in the sense of being beaten over the head, or in the sense of a pervasive anxiety which eats away at you, but in the sense that it is only because the child sees something desirable in another person, in a model, and feels bad when that is not in himself, that he learns and changes. I guess Bettelheim would say that this kind of growth depends upon building a superego

or something like that.

Anne: This is part also I think of the psychoanalytic idea of fear in the Oedipal crisis where the boy identifies or begins to identify with his father out of fear in a complicated way.

Erik: And what Bettelheim says is that kind of fear is present no matter what you do, and it needs to be dealt with.

Mike: I need to step back about 15 steps to the thing of sharing and being greedy and coercion. Last summer Elaine and I took a course in Cuernavaca on education in Cuba. The first premise was that when you talk about education you are talking about the whole society as a school. Institutionalized education began with small babies whose parents were working. They were left in the equivalent of day care centers. They dealt with problems of sharing and possessiveness in an interesting way. For example, they taught small kids that when they weren't playing with a toy it was no longer their toy, but someone else's toy. If he tried to take a toy away from another kid when he wasn't ~~uses~~ using it, they would explain to him that it was not his toy when the other person was playing with it. They would intervene to protect the kid who was actually playing with the toy. Another thing which they use is older children to teach younger children. The educational system is really very free up until the age of 12. But at 13 they run into a big wall: then they go into the school system that was set up in 1959 to satisfy the parents. These schools are very militarized and they separate the boys from the girls off in boarding schools. This does create real problems which they are trying to work out. The whole system tries to realize Che Guevara's thing about creating the new man who cares for others and is selfless, but who also creative and spontaneous. They are finding it difficult to institutionalize these ideals.

Erik: This goes back to the very first issue of socializing the child to be a particular kind of adult or having free development. They seem to try to combine them: they are using education deliberately to create a particular kind of person, and in that sense it is coercive. They are definitely not allowing a laissez-faire atmosphere to exist in the schools.

Mike: definitely not.

Erik: But it is coercive for the end of spontaneity and making that more possible.

Betsy: Why is it that when we talk to kids it is coercion but when we talk to adults it is interchange?

Donley: you answered that before when you said that we were bigger.

Erik: Interchanges among adults can also be fairly coercive. You know how important interactions can be for you: other people can make you feel miserable, role pressures can terribly change a person without any overt act of authoritarian coercion. But the reason why it is stronger on kids I think has to do with this thing about competence that Betsy mentioned before. Adults are just much more competent in their environment than kids are in many ways. You are so manifestly more potent than the child in handling his environment, that he looks up to you as a model in terms of mastery of the environment if for no other reason. So in social interchange the child also models himself after you.

David: I still think that "coercion" is not really a good word here and that it is different from intervention. If you express your feelings about an action, the child is still not forced to go along with you. Expressing your feelings honestly and directly is being human with the child and treating him like a human, but I don't think that it is the same as coercion.

Erik: Well, if a big kid takes an apple away from a little kid are you going to take it back and give it to the little kid? Or are you going to let the little kid try to get it back on his own? If you don't do anything aren't you implicitly supporting the notion that might makes right? I would take the apple away from the big kid and give it to the little kid.

Mike: I would like to interject Montague's thing in the Summerhill book. Montague gives four truths from Neill's book: necessity of love; the only healthy discipline is self-discipline; freedom is a great responsibility; and that among other things, teachers should teach their children these specific truths as well as how to teach themselves. He says: "I agree with Neill that the only discipline that matters is discipline that comes from within, self-discipline. But this is something that one must learn, and certainly it is best learned within the experience of love. Indeed, love has a firmness and a discipline which nothing else can equal, for love clearly recognizes when something is undesirable or harmful to the welfare to the individual, and therefore love forbids such conduct."

David: Yes: love includes justice. It is not letting you do everything.

Mike: Love includes a sense of values which you are passing on to the kid and which you are doing because you love the kid. This has to come across in your actions.

Erik: And this may mean that sometimes you have to physically intervene and take an apple away from one kid and give it to another. There are people who would say that that is a bad thing to do, that you should not take the apple away. The adult should not intervene, because that is a coercive, adult-type authority thing to do.

Steve: We have really gotten stuck on the word coercion. I don't define all adult interference as coercion. The attempt has to be made to help the child see, not to make the child see. Trying to make the child into something isn't going to lead to good people. Maybe you have got to take the apple away, but if it stops there the child will see it as a large person taking the apple away from a medium person who took it away from a small person. That isn't a learning experience unless the child sees that there is something inherently undesirable in what he did. I think that maybe that is best done with children taking care of children, where the learning situation is more of a peer group.

Erik: And in that situation the older children learn also because they are responsible for the younger children.

Betsy: Another thing that we have that kids don't is an overview of the whole situation. Let me illustrate this: you are a kindergarten teacher. Sally is sitting next to Joanne. You give them milk and cookies and Sally eats her two cookies and then takes one of Joanne's cookies. There is a hassle. As a teacher you happen to know that Sally's mother doesn't prepare her any breakfast and that is the reason she wants the other kid's cookies. She is really hungry, while for the other kids the cookies are treats. You can see this, but they can't. You have to treat these things as serious events in these people's lives, and it is too simple just to say "you should not do that because it is selfish." We have a tremendous amount of power and we have to be careful not to wield it too quickly. And there are other things in the child's world: they are afraid of other things which are very very real to them that don't bother us at all. Like fires and dragons and witches. These are horrible realities to children which we have forgotten.

Mike: We have forgotten them, but we have plenty of new ones.

Betsy: And when a child has these fears, it doesn't help to preach to the kid in any way. These fears really trouble children. It is a reality that becomes their universe. You have to get inside that Universe and see the problems, the incongruities. That doesn't tend to happen in formal education.

Chris: This is really interesting: are these fears innate in the child, or are they brought about by the child's reactions to his parents and other adults. Maybe this is getting back to the idea that it is impossible for the child to be around adults and not be influenced. So maybe what we have to do is counterbalance the bad things.

Erik: Steve, do any of the Berkeley Free Schools try to cultivate this thing about older kids being the direct teachers of younger kids?

Steve: You get it in the ungraded systems where you eliminate traditional grade divisions. But I don't know anywhere where it is used more directly.

Donley: There is a move in the established education to get paraprofessional help in the classroom and this would include older students, at least college students.

Steve: The paraprofessional programs I am acquainted with get parents and community people in the classroom.

Donley: In Richmond they do hire undergraduates for that.

David: teaching is certainly the best way to learn a subject.

Erik: And it is also a terribly good way to develop self-discipline, at least good teaching is.

Betsy: We have only been talking about the very most progressive end of educational ideas. The other kind says that it is good to wield the kind of power we have been talking about and really plays on fears all the time. Like Max Rafferty. Instead of setting up a situation in which when a Child becomes interested in something he goes to a good teacher who has the "sapiential" authority to teach because

he knows what it is that the child wants to learn and knows how to reach the child, there is a "structural" authority where the child learns in a structured situation where the teacher is a teacher "because", just because. This is one of the most important things taught in the schools: to accept structural authority. It seems to me that the kind of individual the public schools produces now are the kinds of people who have the compassion and the humanity to say "I don't like the Viet Nam War" yet have the lack of trust in themselves and the belief in structural authority to say "but the President knows more about it than I do, he has more facts than I do and therefore I can't really criticize him." I would like to have an educational system in which people come out with a real trust in their own capacities and their own impulses, their own selves.

Chris: One of the problems for that to work on a mass scale is that you need teachers who will make good models for the children, and if you don't have those models to begin with, where do you begin?

Erik: You need Neill's to produce Neills.

Mike: Where did Neill come from?

Erik: That is really important. Every sensitive person, every caring person that you see, basically became caring and sensitive and unselfish in spite of all these bad influences. Most people haven't gone through constructive educational experiences. Most co-operative people have become ~~good~~ co-operative in spite of a competitive education system, not because they went to a co-operative school. This means that either there is something else which is more important--perhaps their parents or their earliest experiences--or something genetic which I doubt very much.

Betsy: A lot of it has to do with those few teachers you have who treat you differently and constructively.

Donley: There are really three different kinds of authority I seem to have read somewhere: Legitimate, expertise and influential. The present school system really only deals with legitimate power, structural authority, not with expertise or influential authority, authority from people you are close to and want to emulate. We need to bring the other two into the schools. Some times the free schools go to much in the other direction and deal only with the influential.

David: and not enough with the expertise.

Mike: yes--you are supposed to offer the child as many choices as he wants but when he makes it he finds that it is just as boring as if he had no choice. Like television: you keep changing the channels, but there is nothing there.

Klaus: From psychology we know that the development of a child into a certain kind of person happens mainly in the first four years and so by the time he gets to school it is already too late. When an older child takes an appeal from a younger child it is already too late. This kind of education happens in the family. It could be by being a model, but it is mainly that whatever we do to the child, what we put into the child, that is what he becomes. I don't know enough psychology to say why.



That is one part. Another is that we have to prepare the child for society in some way. Whatever we teach him is some kind of preparation. That is our problem. We know that the things that have a big influence on us are almost accidental: a few teachers that you happened to have, a book we read, a person we met, a movie we saw. School can't deal with this: it tries to prepare to make humans fit into society. What society you want is another problem. The easiest life for a human being is to accept the situation and to fit into as best he can and not be angry with it. That might make you most happy. On the other side we know exactly that human life is a sum of conflicts and a real human being is one who has the power to go through these conflicts and find ways of salvation or solving these conflicts. But this involves a deep trust in oneself, and this develops, as far as we know, during the first four years or five years.

In America a student in college studies what he wants to and afterwards he hopes to find a job if he can. Might be they don't and they strike out. We don't know if we will be happy with our choice in 30 years. It could be an accident that we chose it. It might be better if society gave direction to people. In socialist countries at least they make a plan and say we need so many doctors and engineers in ten years and so we train people for them. Is that better or should we have complete freedom like we do here.

David: There is a certain amount of expertise required for certain things like being a doctor or an ~~engineer~~ engineer, but I don't think that there is a tremendous amount of experts that have to be trained in particular areas.

Erik: I don't think that in any of the socialist countries they have trouble getting people to apply for medical school, so I do not think that they have to put real pressure on students to go in that direction. On the things that need expertise I think that in general there will be enough people who want to do them, perhaps not always but generally, because they are fulfilling and desirable things to do.

Klaus: Obviously we have too many ministers in America. Should we tell them not to come to seminaries?

David: I don't know if we have too many ministers....

Mike: Maybe we have too few parishoners.... (laughterhahaha)

Klaus: We have to prepare people for something in school, or at least that is what we do. What is the aim of that? It is different from making human beings that are capable of care and love.

Mike: I would like to pick up on some of what Klaus has been saying, and something I heard on a radio broadcast of Alan Watts. Regardless of whether we have been talking about adults and children or teachers and children we have been talking about schools fulfilling the function of education, which as Klaus said, means two things: to make people cope with their environment in a general sense and to train them for professions that are needed. The thing Watts was saying is that we have created "childhood" and "adolescence" as something outside of the rest of society. Children really shouldn't be separated in that way from adults. They learn from older people what they are doing by watching them do it.

Erik: That is what Paul Goodman refers to as "Incidental Education" I think.

Mike: We have been talking about education in terms of the same structures that have been given to us. Contrary to Goodman's model in Communitas where there is a real restructuring of work, education, and other institutions.

Erik: That is an important issue which we need to discuss. It is the fourth general point on the "Central Issues" sheet: "What is the appropriate role for institutionalized education (schools) in an overall learning process?" You can really think of education and learning and education as a life-long process in which perhaps between the ages of 3 and 15 the individual spends more time in specific learning and skill training than later, but he is also contributing and spending a lot of time playing. And adults are spending a lot of time playing and creating and learning too. And the institution is not isolated from the rest of life either.

Betsy: There is a whole question in my mind about the prospect of talking about schools at all. It seems to me that any public school system is an immensely depressing prospect, even if it is a good one, because it is a functional part of a society which is a tremendously depressing prospect.

Erik: Since we are talking about Utopia we can assume for the moment that the society is a nice one.

Betsy: Somebody proposed something about camps once over an inspired undergraduate dinner. They were recreational centers in the real sense of re-create, where families could come together and live and work together and learn. That could combine all sorts of nice things. It ties learning into the family; it is decentralized; it is noncompulsory.

Erik: For somethings, like learning a foreign language or learning to read, it just may be easier for the kid to do that in a room with other kids around him, more or less a regular classroom.

Betsy: Maybe it would be better with just a few kids finding an adult who can teach them what they want.

Klaus: But classrooms are practical. They make it easier for people.

Betsy: yes, its practical, but it is not nice.

Mike: One of the models which Ivan Illich came up with--and I am not necessarily in agreement with it--is that you take part of a city and in that section there are little shops where people work who know and do certain things. The kids have vouchers and can go to these people and "purchase" apprenticeships with these people.

Betsy: And with that you do not need classrooms, and you don't need maintenance and you don't need bathroom passes.

Erik: But all of this assumes that the kid is going to have the judgement and wisdom to do what is best for him.

Betsy: That is an assumption which a lot of people are now making. The kid can choose. He knows what he wants to do.

Erik: I am not sure if that is really true. For example, on foreign languages we know that it is much much easier for a child from the age of 6-9 let's say to learn a language than an adult, and that it will be much easier for him to learn additional languages later if he learns one new one as a child. That is true.

Steve: Your ability to learn foreign languages is highest while you are learning your native language and it diminishes rapidly after that.

Erik: I am not saying that a kid should be forced against his will to take a foreign language, but I would think that it would be important for kids to be strongly encouraged to do this. It shouldn't be just that there are places where he can go to learn a foreign language, and that is it. You can go or not go, and there is no social support given for that endeavor and no strong encouragement. Learning a foreign language is a frustrating experience under best of circumstances, and for a person to cope with that frustration and continue at the task in spite of the frustration, particularly for a younger child, he needs social support. He needs positive encouragement rather than "neutrality".

Betsy: But there are a whole lot of ways you can do that. The way it is done now is that in college you have to take a foreign language. What is learned there is how to pass the course, not the language. That is a real danger in any kind of formal education system where you are telling people what to do.

Erik: That is an argument which I would support against having strict compulsory requirements, but I am not sure that that is an argument against certain kinds of formal classes and against encouraging people to go to them.

Betsy: Something else that Illyitch has said is that there are three things that an educational center has. One is that it should make easily available tools for learning: libraries, labs, factories, the mayor. It should be a clearing house for people who want to learn something and for people who have learned something which they want to make available to others. Those are the three things that are necessary.

Mike: In Illyitch's system, there is really a capitalistic relationship between the student and the teacher through the vouchers. The kids give the teacher a voucher which the teacher can redeem. If he goes out of business, that shows no one is interested in what he has to offer.

Chris: That seems to pose lots of problems, like people offering all kinds of inducements to get more vouchers.

Erik: You give a chocolate bar with your French lesson.

Betsy: This is being tried on the High School level in Philadelphia in a thing called the Parkway Program. The Parkway is a large plaza area in Philadelphia around which are some of the best public educational resources--museums, libraries, etc. The idea of the program was that there would be teachers and there would be students, and the city of Philadelphia as a classroom.

They met in ad hoc buildings. And it worked OK. There wasn't a voucher system. People were generally glad to have a few students learning with them in various ways, like on WFIL radio station.

Klaus: It seems to me that the process of actually learning is surprisingly unknown. We don't really know how it functions, and that is one of our problems here. It is hard to talk about a new kind of school when you don't really know how learning functions. We do know that a young child learns much more easily than an older child and that we are much too old to learn anything.

David: I think that I know enough about how I learn in the present time to know that I learn very little unless I am really motivated internally.

Erik: One theory is the very simple operant conditioning, Skinnerian view of reward and punishment. You reward certain behaviors--I guess when it is applied to schools the emphasis is now heavily on the reward mechanisms. You reward the child for those behaviors that shape the child in those directions which you consider desirable. In my home town there is a school which is being run systematically on operant conditioning techniques. There is a very elaborate token system in which the principle is that you systematically reward all the desirable behavior and not other behavior. This is combined with rewarding the child's best efforts so that every child will get rewarded, but he gets rewarded for his best performance so that the rewarding begins to shape his behavior in a certain way. In terms of such things as learning how to read this has proven to be enormously successful among certain children. This is a school in the poor part of town, and many children are learning to read much better than they were learning before. And apparently, before very long, the tokens become less important as rewards. They begin to like to read, because if you are doing it with less effort, it becomes more fun. Now, people who use open classroom, non-coercive techniques report that if you wait until the kid shows an interest in reading and don't push him to do it before he wants to, that he will also learn effectively to read. If you wait until it resonates with his own needs, he will learn willingly and happily. Both approaches seem to work, although the research is probably more systematic on the behaviorist techniques since it is so much easier to control. But I find something objectionable about it.

Mike: Yes. You have to also consider what other values he is learning in the process. He is learning the method as well as the reading.

Donley: And he is probably learning the technique more thoroughly than the actual reading.

Erik: I do not know what the research shows in those terms. The people who believe in operant conditioning in education feel that all behaviors are learned this way anyway, so they are merely focusing the technique towards a particular learning goal.

Donley: especially a more intelligent child will learn to play the game of coping with the system rather than learning the task itself.

Erik: Another thing about this system is that it allows the kids to move at their own pace.

Donley: Do they get more tokens if they move faster?

Erik: I am not really sure. They get tokens for accomplishing particular tasks and those tasks are probably somehow adjusted to the level of the kid.

Donley: It seems to really support a capitalist mentality.

Erik: I think that it certainly does teach a lot of things about rewards for specific accomplishments, about manipulation, about material rewards. And it doesn't seem to teach much about self-growth and spontaneity.

Donley: It seems to me that even if the Neill method is slower than this operant method, it is a much more valuable process for the person.

Mike: I think that one of the problems with schools that have tried to adopt the Neill method is that they do not offer real options to the kids. Part of wanting to learn something is knowing that it is there to learn, that it is fun, trying it. That means that you need persuasive resources, which doesn't mean that they are coercive but that they are attractive.

Steve: One of the problems that we are having at the New Community School in Oakland is that it is really an ad hoc group. There isn't a history and a group sense and feeling that there is at a place like Summerhill. Whereas in Summerhill the older kids can act as guides to help the younger ones, we don't have that in the transitional period when kids are coming from traditional schools. Maybe it simply takes time. I'm not sure if it is even really possible at the High school level because the transition takes so long.

David: I saw a movie on Summerhill and I was told that it sometimes takes up to a year for someone to make the emotional adjustment to the school, because we are so structured.

Betsy: That is what happens I have heard in whatever school situation where the teacher decides that the class should be run on an open classroom basis. Almost invariably there is six months of sheer hell. That is a long time to keep saying I believe that this is right and is going to work. Either the person quits, or he gets out and returns to a normal class. Gradually the children begin taking real responsibility for their own class. It is a fascinating kind of experiment if you are ever in the situation, to give that kind of freedom to any group of people. When I was in college people would always ask when offered that kind of freedom, "when are the grades due? What do we have to read?" and so on.

Erik: Part of that is because people don't really believe those situations. If they believed it, they might act differently.

Betsy: They believe there is a catch. That conditioning is really strong.

Chris: That raises an interesting question that is related to something we said right at the beginning about education as a way for people

to adjust to changes and uncertainties. On the one hand we tend to see this type of free education as necessary for people to gr come to grips with the idea that they have to deal with their freedom; bu then, you can really question how many people are going to have to face in our society the total type of freedom. A lot of people will go through their whole lives without ever having to confront that freedom. Is it therefore a goal of education to teach people how to handle freedom if that society will never allow people to have that kind of freedom?

Betsy: I think that this operates on a number of different levels. I would like for us to have an educational system whereby people turn to themselves for answers rather than to answers. Regardless what the society will be like in 20 years, if the kids who are in school now are trained to look to themselves for answers, to decide in a free, open classroom situation what they are going to do with themselves and each other, that in 20 years, regardless of where they are in the society and what that society is like, they will have much greater options for their own lives.

Erik: Another possibility is to work with others for answers. One of the dangers which I feel, particularly when anarchism is expressed in very strong individualist terms almost approaching laissez-faire, is that what you produce from that is very self-confident, autonomous individuals, very concerned about their individuality and their own individual freedom, spontaneity and creativity, but really very unconcerned and unrelated to other people. They are not competitive, but not particularly co-operative either. This is one of the things I think that has been reported about people from Summerhill: they are people who are not buffeted about by the outside world. They are pretty strong individuals in that sense, but they are also not particularly concerned about the outside world.

Betsy: Maybe giving children the taste for a free environment at such a school will mean that when they get outside into the larger society that they will seek out such environments or create them.

Erik: I would like to discuss the question raised in the first issue of the "Central Issues" sheet a bit more, the question about building a social, or socialist ethic in people so that you have adults who really care about people and about society. And about changing that society so that it moves in a Utopian direction, and are able to function in that kind of world. Or whether you are building laissez-faire individualists who are maybe good, strong, interesting people, creative people, who just don't particularly give a damn about the rest of the world.

Steve: Erik, you seem to have set up a dichotomy at the beginning, and I really wonder if that is the way things necessarily happen.

Erik: I didn't mean it so much as a prediction, but as a potential problem that had to be considered. One empirical fact is that the great revolutionaries and reformers of the world, the people who have fought and struggled for change, were people who were brought up in more or less structured, authoritarian families and schools, rather than in libertarian atmospheres. That me be

a causal statement. It may take the experience of depression, not necessarily social but at least psychological, to become deeply concerned about change and working for a desirable society.

Betsy: How many Libertarian societies do we know so that we can know about this? There is the Tiwi in North Australia. But they just don't cut it.

Erik: I guess there aren't enough instances to really draw conclusions about this. Maybe Steve is right that it is a false dichotomy, that there isn't an opposition between free, libertarian education and radical social activism.

Betsy: what we are wishing on people are social consciences like we are burdened with and I am not sure if that is a fair thing to do.

Erik: Well, I'm not sure, but I think it is a fair thing to do if it leads somehow to constructive change. If it isn't going to help anything, than it isn't fair.

Steve: I see the dichotomy that we are talking about now as part and parcel of the one we were talking about earlier about free development or directed socialization. That is what I am questioning. Does free development & necessarily lead to autonomous individuals with no social conscience, or does some kind of meddling by adults stifle that kind of creativity and caring. I don't know if we can say that these two theories of education produce two different kinds of persons in this way.

Betsy: One of the really depressing things about this, but on the other hand one of the really heartening things, is that out of any situation you get a really incredibly diverse bunch of people. In one sense there is a hell of a lot you can do and in another sense there is nothing you can do.

Erik: I wonder if in a place like Cuba, especially in the first years of education up to the age of 12, where a freer more spontaneous kind of education is combined with co-operative work and education is not isolated from the rest of society, if this helps to integrated the dichotomy we are talking about? You learn from experience. One of the ways you become co-operative is to find yourself in situations where it helps you and others to co-operate. One of the things about Summerhill is that everyone seems to be always doing his own thing. There isn't anything that is being done that I know of that requires collective co-operation.

Mike: There is something called Pacific High School, started by a guy named Peter Marin, down near Santa Cruz. Ed Setchko's second son was or is there. When the kids got down there, there aren't any buildings and you have to build your own classrooms and dormitories that you are going to live in. In doing that you learn things about geometry and architecture and carpentry and so on. This is a co-operative activity.

Betsy: I've heard some really funny things about Pacific. I think there is a heavy heavy drug scene there. It's a mixed bag.

Erik: You know, drugs are an example where a kid can really hurt himself and where adults should not leave the matter to the kid's own discretion. If a nine year old kid uses heroine he could really seriously hurt himself. Should a parent simply encourage him not to try heroine which he wants to try because all of his friends are trying it? Or should a parent try to intervene in a more serious way, i.e. by trying to cut off the source of heroine to the kids, by taking away supplies if he finds them, and so on. Should the parent act in an authoritarian way to try to stop drugs like that?

David: Part of the problem is, of course, why are the kids taking heroine anyway.

Erik: Yes, but a perfectly happy, normal kid might want to try heroine because he doesn't know what the hell it is and because of peer pressures.

Mike: Also, once all drugs are classified together as having the same liability--everything from marijuana to heroine-- then kids figure if one is all right the rest must be also.

Erik: I suppose that the problem with heroine and the like doesn't generalize very well to other things. Deciding to intervene coercively in this situation doesn't tell you much about what to do in other situations.

Chris: For a lot of people other things are just as bad as heroine, like sex.

Mike: Yes, but you have to realize that some things really do present a real hazard and you have a responsibility to try to keep people from making those mistakes.

Chris: And part of that responsibility comes from the fact that as an adult you know more and are aware more of the consequences of these things than are kids.

Mike: I don't think that that follows from being an adult. Maybe it should follow from being an adult, but I don't think that it does. I think what has happened is that adults use all kinds of scare tactics, fear, to get kids to do things and that the kids don't buy the fear on anything. They feel that if adults lie on some issues they will lie on others, so why should I believe them on any. So it is difficult for kids to make discriminations on any scale of values.

Erik: I guess that gets back to what we were talking about a while ago about love and trust and the relationship between the adult and the child as being the key. If you are honest in general, then your authority will be respected when a serious situation like this comes up.

Betsy: You should just say "don't do it". When a person who rarely says "don't" says "don't" he is apt to be listened to.

Erik: Don't you think that sometimes a kid wants to be told unambiguously "don't" do this? On something like this they may feel all sorts of pressures to go ahead and do it, and they feel ambiguities within themselves because they like being experimental and trying new things. They may just



feel so much more comfortable if they know that somebody who they really value and respect unambiguously says "you should not do this", and explains why.

Steve: Possibly. I think that everyone feels a lot better when they are being told what to do. I think there is a need for people to know that the environment has a definite shape and that it has certain bounds and limits and to know what those are. In this specific instance where there is peer pressure and self-doubt, there is probably a real need to balance that peer pressure with something else.

David: I just feel that we have to be terribly cautious because authority has been so abused and coercion has been so abused that part of me wants me to say "NO!" to all of it, that coercion is never legitimate and that you have got to trust other people, even young people. In 99% of the situations I think it holds.

Erik: My mother is a psychologist and deals a lot with rehabilitation and the like. She was in a situation that raised a lot of these issues. She took a very different stance from the people who actually made the decision. The situation was that there was a little boy who was enormously fat, not because of any physiological problem but because he ate constantly. The psychoanalysts felt that he should not be prevented from eating because this was the way he acted out certain fantasies and hostilities and that they should try to relieve these anxieties through psycho-therapy and that once the "causes" were removed, that then the boy would eat normally and lose weight. My mother felt that it was terribly important to directly attack the weight problem, even if that meant making it difficult for the boy to eat so much and in other ways forcefully cutting back his food intake. She felt that this was important because his fatness itself was such a social block, made it so difficult for him to be friends and get along with other little kids that the fatness per se was an obstacle to any readjustment, to changing his behavior. She argued that in this case, if it is the interests of the kid that we have at heart, we had to be coercive. This was necessary so that the kid could get back into a socially functioning relationship to other children. I would tend to agree with her.

David: The other thing you could do is try to get the kid to admit that his fatness is hurting him and get him to want to reduce, then the intervention wouldn't be so coercive.

Anne: With kids like that it can be terribly difficult to even get that far. You probably would have real problems even establishing that level of trust. The kid was probably not that open with anyone. He would probably deny that his fatness interfered with his relationships to other kids. I haven't the foggiest idea what he was like, but I have dealt with a number of kids like that.

Erik: This again indicates that the simple formula: "Don't coerce because coercion is Evil," since it is imposing one person's will and way of life on another, is not adequate. You have to be aware of what the consequences are of non-coercion as well as coercion and not reduce human relationships or education to a simple idea of "freedom".

DIGRESSIONS of various and diverse sorts

Betsy: There is a problem I have with this [the question of the relationship of information and critical skills discussed on page 46]. Piaget has a system of four or five stages of development. One of the classic experiments that you do with a child of about 4 years who can reason in a concrete way, is to take a tall skinny glass and a short fat one that have the same volume, pour the same amount of liquid into both and ask the kid which one has more. Generally he says the tall skinny one. Piaget then says, ah-ha, that shows that the kid cannot reason well like we can because he can't understand that the two glasses contain the same amount. The argument against this is that although the kid doesn't think like Piaget does, that doesn't mean that the kid was wrong. You were stupid enough to ask the question which glass had "More" and that may not mean the same thing to the child. Maybe to him "more" means "tall and skinny".

Erik: There was an experiment done by a psychologist who disagreed with Piaget. Piaget says that kids cannot make this kind of distinction or learn this kind of distinction until about 5 or 6 I think, and he wanted to show that you could teach a three year kid these logical concepts of conservation of volume. He said that the problem wasn't a lower stage of rationality, but that the child hasn't yet been taught the principle. So he set about to teach his kid the principle. He said, "All right, here's a coke. Right?", "Right". "Here is a tall skinny glass and a short fat glass. I pour the coke into the tall one. You see it? And I pour this other coke which is exactly the same into the tall glass. Right?" "Right". "They were both the same to begin with, Right", "Right"; "So which is bigger now?" "The tall skinny one". He went through this routine for several months and finally one day the kid gave the right answer: "Here are two cokes, Right", "Right," "The are both exactly the same, right?" "right," "OK, I pour this one into the short fat glass and this one into the tall skinny glass. I've changed nothing, right?" "right" "Well, are the same?", and the kid replies, "Yes, I guess they are the same....But can I have the tall skinny one?"

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Betsy: I would like to tell a story about how fear can become part of the life of a little kid, my four or five year old brother John. One night he said that he would not eat supper. He was really unhappy. The family asked him what the problem was and he said "I don't want to eat because if I eat I'll get bigger and if I get bigger I'll die." He saw Peter Pan and felt that the only way he would live forever was to stay a kid and go to Never Never Land. My Parents did not know quite how to handle that because in a way he was obviously right. The compromise now is that Dad asked him to eat until he was 7 years old. He remembers that now. It is a live bargain to him.

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DIGRESSIONS

Erik: Is this thing on the cup for mustaches?

Mike: That is known as a mustache cup.

Erik: I noticed I wasn't dripping down after a gulp like usual.

Donley: That goes into the digression bag.

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Betsy: I want to tell you something that doesn't have much to do with anything except it is about kids. Jeffery is about six and his friend Colin is about five. I baby-sit for Jeffery on a regular basis. He announced with Colin that they wanted to go to Tildon Park but they couldn't cross that big street by themselves. So I had to come. We were walking down a long steep hill that went to the tennis courts and they were picking up sticks and pieces of eucalyptus and dragging them on the ground and running on down the hill from where I was. I heard a funny squeaking noise which I diagnosed to be two branches of two eucalyptus trees rubbing together. So I stopped and was going to be Miss Cool and get them to do a bit of analytic thinking about the noise. So I said, "Hey, come on back here. I just heard a funny noise. What do you think it is?" They stopped and listened. Colin said, "Maybe it is a Giant Mouse!" and Jeffery said, "I think it is a door". So they came up and we waited for it to happen again, and Jeffery said, "Yeah, its a door." And I said, "Now Jeffery, how can it be a door since there is no door any where." And he said, "Oh, you can't see it because those bushes are in the way." I said, "well, what I think it is is those two trees over there rubbing against each other." They looked at it and then at each other, and Jeffery said, "no, no, cause look see when I rub two sticks together it makes a different noise." So, I guess it was a door.

Mike: I like the Giant Mouse theory myself. I think it really was a giant mouse. I was reading in Wriggley's Fun with Facts in the Sunday Chronicle Comics that in South America there are frogs as big as house cats. I can see it hopping down the street with you on a leash.

Betsy: Gerummmmmmpfh.

SESSION IV: The Economic System and Patterns of Work in Utopia

January 26, 1971

Erik: I have prepared an introduction on the Economic Goals of Utopia which I think will be a good starting point for this discussion:

Economics and Politics can never really be separated. When we talk about economic goals we must also talk about the power to implement those goals and the political structures necessary to sustain those goals; when we talk about political power, we also must talk about the economic base for that power. There is a real dialectical relationship between economics and politics: political power is a means to economic ends, and economic structures are the basis for political power. Still, it can be useful to try to articulate economic goals independently of political realities, for in so doing you may come to a realization of the political requirements for the realization of those goals.

The following are the central economic goals which I feel should be realized in a Utopian society:

1. Economic justice: "to each according to his needs; from each according to his ability." This is the basic economic goal which I would like to see realized in a Utopia. As a goal it unites two principles, one for the distribution of goods and services, and one for the production of goods and services. The distribution principle is not an absolute economic egalitarianism. Goods and services are distributed according to the "needs" of the consumer, not according to an a priori egalitarian standard. A skilled photographer may need more in economic terms than a gardener, and a person who likes to travel may need more than a person who prefers to stay in one place. The ultimate goal would be that the economy would move as close as possible towards fulfilling the individual needs of each person rather than being an external constraint on those needs. For this to occur, of course, the economy has to be essentially an economy of abundance, one which can accommodate the rational needs of all the people. An economy of scarcity has to impose certain kinds of restrictions on consumption, on the fulfillment of individual needs.

It is also necessary for the economic needs of the people to be in some sense rational: no economy will ever be able to produce a level of consumption like that of a Rockefeller or an Onassis for all of the people (and even if it could, I am not sure that it would be desirable). How "rational needs" are defined and how greed is handled are important political problems in a utopian economic system. Just as a capitalist economic system involves legal institutions which protect greed in various ways, a utopian system which created economic justice would have to create legal institutions which would prevent greed.

The production principle in economic justice is that the individual contributes to society according to his ability, where "ability" includes such things as interests, personality motivations, skills, talents, etc., and "contributes" is given

the widest possible meaning. If the economy is sufficiently affluent, this latitude could even include total laziness, but it would be unlikely that many people would opt for total passivity if they had real opportunities for self-development and for seeking meaningful patterns of social action.

Essential in this concept of "economic justice" is the value of co-operation over competition. If people feel the need to compete, if the structures of the economy and of society make it necessary for one person to advance at the expense of other people instead of through the help and co-operation of other people, then economic justice is impossible. At best a competitive system means "To each according to his ability; from each according to his competitiveness." In reality, most competitive/<sup>economic</sup> systems eventually equate "ability" to "power" (market power--i.e. wealth), and so distribution becomes a function of previous distribution more than anything else. If you are wealthy, it is easier to grow wealthier; if you are poor, it is difficult to gain more. Economic justice is thus the denial of an economic system that relies on competition as an organizing principle and requires structures which embody co-operation.

2. Work as a positive, fulfilling part of life. This is the central goal in the second community paradigm in Paul Goodman's Communitas, what he terms "the elimination of the difference between production and consumption." Work, says Goodman, should be "a way of life", not the denial of life, not an alienating, unpleasant experience. Work should not merely be a means towards acquiring the end of consumable commodities, but should become an end in itself, "satisfying in itself and satisfying in its useful end."

One of the problems with seeing work as a self-actualizing experience, is that some work is clearly not fulfilling, at least for most people. Some work is drudgery, unpleasant. Washing dishes is not particularly fulfilling for most people; working on an assembly line is alienating to virtually all people. And yet these tasks do need to be done, even in the most utopian of societies. It is an important problem how these tasks are allocated, and much of the political system will, one way or another, be involved with dealing with this problem. Under existing situations the problem is handled very simply: the most alienating and unpleasant jobs are handled by the poorest members of the community. One possible alternative would be the "industrial army" proposed in Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward: every citizen is obligated to spend four years in an economic service to the society in which he is engaged in producing the goods and services which are necessary for the society and which otherwise would not get done. In Bellamy's scheme the service could be much much longer than this if the individual did not find something else to do, but the scheme could be modified along the lines of Goodman's third community paradigm ("planned security with minimum regulation") so that the service would be more limited. Another possibility is that each year every individual participates in the less pleasant jobs for a certain period of time. There is an important sense in which, if unpleasant jobs became part of a <sup>communally shared</sup> responsibility, they would also become less unpleasant. At least part of the unpleasantness of certain jobs comes from their low social status and the fact that it is a major part of a person's life rather than a small part. But regardless of how this problem is solved, it would be one of the crucial political problems in a Utopian Economy.

3. As many commodities and services as possible should be free. One of the ways in which the distribution of goods can reflect individual needs rather than individual market power is by having as many things as possible be free. Schools are already free, as are libraries, roads, some museums and so forth. Basic foods should certainly be free as should transportation, housing (at least adequate housing), medical care, higher education, and most recreation to name only a few areas. Eventually, in the Utopian Utopia, all monetary exchanges could perhaps be eliminated and consumption could be completely in response to needs, but whether or not such an eventuality would be ever possible is an open question.

One of the major problems faced by a system of free goods is that if a good is scarce, lines or rationing tend to develop. In an economy of abundance, many of these lines would be eliminated, but there would always be problems of scarcity for certain recreational activities (theater, films, etc.) and perhaps certain luxury commodities. Again, such scarcities pose a political problem (i.e. a problem of power relationships) that has to be dealt with. Tickets to performances could be handled much as they are handled now: some seats could be ordered in advance for reserve; others could be obtained in a first-come first-serve line. In certain circumstances there could be rationing of some sort: you could state your priorities for a number of events, and a computer could work to maximize everyone's options. At any rate, however these problems are solved, the solution should be in the direction of providing free goods and services and away from having access to certain goods and services be a function of individual market power (i.e. wealth).

4. Consumption and production should be oriented towards collective needs rather than simply individual needs. This goal does not say that individual consumption--private consumption--should be eliminated. It does not even say that individual consumption should always be sacrificed in favor of collective consumption, although there are times where this will be the case. What it says is that we need to think of production and consumptions not only in terms of satisfying our own personal needs, but the community's needs as well, other people's needs as well. This is particularly important where focusing on individual needs may hurt the community as a whole. Transportation is a good example of this. In terms of personal convenience, an automobile is obviously the best means of transportation. But in terms of the entire community, a good, rapid, efficient public transportation system (which would be free) is preferable. This does not mean abolishing cars (although they too could be communalized for shared use), but rather diverting resources from automobile production to public transportation production.

In a more complicated kind of way, resources should probably be diverted away from building small, independent houses in urban areas and sub-urban areas (e.g. Daly City) towards building living complexes along the lines of Habitat 68 (at the Montreal World's Fair): housing should be produced in a way that avoids the destruction of all open areas and the vast spreading out of megalopolises. Each family might prefer to have a little house to themselves (although I am not sure of this), but as a community a more collective living pattern is clearly more desirable.

The relationship of collective to private consumption poses perhaps the most difficult political problems for a Utopian economic system, for it raises fundamental questions about decision-making. As long as we are talking about private consumption, the basic problem is producing enough goods of enough variety so that people can meaningfully choose what they want to consume. Although there are political issues involved in such production, the basic locus of choice, of consumption-decision-making lies in the individual. For collective consumption fundamental political structural issues are raised about how resources are controlled, what collectivities make what decisions, how they allocate that decision-making power, and so forth. These problems are only partially resolved by saying that "the people own the means of production." This is important--I think a necessity--for a Utopian Economic system, but it does not say how that ownership is translated into decisions, into consumption priorities, economic planning, and so forth. Similarly, simply saying "economic decision-making should be decentralized and should be made by the people the decision affects" does not say how decisions get made, how it is decided what groups of people are affected in what ways by what decisions and how different kinds of decisions get co-ordinated and executed. Without going into detail, the answer to these questions lies in a combination of real decentralization of power with centralized administrative and co-ordinating institutions. Paul Goodman would describe such a system as a form of "anarchist federalism": power is built up from below by people at the smallest level of community organization--factories and neighborhoods--having real power over the running of that level of organization. They appoint a representative to sit on a council which co-ordinates and administers action at a higher level of organization, and so forth. There are problems with this kind of schema, especially in terms of mechanisms for conflict resolution between different groups, but these issues should be discussed elsewhere. The important point here is that decisions have to be made about collective and individual consumption priorities, and that such decisions involve very important political issues.

There are other goals which could be mentioned, but these seem to be among the most important: economic justice, work as a rewarding part of life, movement towards free goods and services and the general priority of collective consumption needs. All of the goals have ultimately one aim: to liberate people, to increase the possibilities of their self-actualization, to create an economic system which serves them rather than having them serve the system.



Betsy: The goal concerning money and making goods free intrigues me from another point of view. There are people who enjoy nothing more than making money. It is like a game. There are people for whom money is a sign of personal value. There is a feeling in this society that the man who wins in something comes out richer and that makes him a better human being. One thing which I feel in my own life is that it would be a whole lot better if we exchanged goods for services and services for goods and didn't have to hassle with money. I don't know about making everything free, but I would be interested in the potential of some kind of barter system.

Erik: One possibility for that is that everyone is paid just in terms of hours worked; every hour of human labor time is considered equal instead of having wages determined by social status, social position and power, or even qualifications, wages are determined simply by the amount of time put into a particular task. You just don't worry about the different values of ~~human beings~~ an hour in the life of different human beings. I suppose that that is fairly equivalent to making goods and services free. Fay Stender, the lawyer, has just had her legal office communalized which means that everyone is paid the same basic rate, with additional wages given for dependents. This means that the highest paid person in the office is one of the secretaries. The increments are determined by the number of dependents, not the skills, status or the time spent in the office. That is basically on the principle that an hour's time spent by a secretary is just as valuable as an hour in the life of a lawyer, particularly since the lawyer would have to do what the secretary did if the secretary didn't do it. The secretary is essentially saving time for the lawyer and thus should get the same pay.

Returning for a moment to the question of collective consumption and individual consumption, this seems to me to have been one of the most difficult problems faced by revolutionary societies. How do you make decisions about collective consumption? In the case of Russia, China or Cuba, extremely underdeveloped countries at the time of the revolution, this question created enormous political problems about how to make decisions to defer from consumer production to necessary capital production. Most revolutionary societies have ended up with very authoritarian mechanisms in the form of centralized bureaucracies in order to ensure that collective consumption got emphasized. But that was at the expense of a tremendous loss of individual freedom politically. That solution I find unsatisfactory, but the alternatives are not really clear. In the Soviet Union people in some sense own the means of production--at least there is formal socialism--but they do not "own" the means of making decisions and so you have in a sense a socialist system of production with ~~axzapix~~ what could be called a capitalist power structure: that is, the country is ruled by a small elite that controls decisions.

Pat (Betsy's friend who spent five months in an Israeli Kibbutz): The Kibbutzim movement in Israel has dealt with each of the g points. These are all things which they think about, and about which they have come to some sort of solution. And I would say that in general they are being successful in ~~these~~ dealing with these problems. For instance, the decision-making mechanisms of a Kibbutz--at least the one I was on--are very decentralized. There is no elite, except for those who are elected for a two year term, and they have no greater economic power, or any other power, than is defined by their office. The mechanism for making political and economic decisions is the general meeting of the kibbutznicks, the members. If it is a large kibbutz they have to break things down into committees which come up with specific recommendations which narrows down the role which each individual plays. But even then, each individual has an important part in the process and has an opportunity to speak his piece and cast his vote on all decisions. They try to be as unanimous as possible, although that is not always possible.

As far as eliminating money, on the kibbutz where I was, it was completely eliminated as far as things on the kibbutz were concerned. Everything on the kibbutz was free. However, sometimes it was necessary for someone who was going into town to be given some money by the kibbutz. The way the kibbutz I was on worked this was that each kibbutz was given a certain amount of credit and you could use it either to pick up certain kind of goods at the kibbutz store which were considered extra to basic needs. All basic needs, like food, shelter, clothing and even postage were always completely free. But some consumer items like ~~deodorant~~ deodorant or fancy shaving cream and certain fancy cloths that are not considered real necessities and which the person can acquire by using his allotted credit. This worked pretty well, I thought. It didn't by any means completely eliminate the natural greediness of human nature, but it certainly de-emphasized it because of the way the system was set up. There still was an urge to consume: people liked to look nice, to have nice things in their house. When people join the kibbutz they have to sign over expensive items such as automobiles to the kibbutz. In the past when a relative would give a kibbutznick a large sum of money, there was no question but that it would be given to the kibbutz, but more and more there seems to be a shift away from this, towards more privacy and more ownership. The older kibbutznicks do not really dig this because it is not part of the ideal which they worked so hard for to become a reality.

Chris: What were some of the specific mechanisms that they used to try to control or lessen greed?

Pat: Mainly just the fact that everything was free except for certain things. Other than that I think that it was mainly the attitudes and emphasis in the Kibbutz, like on work as a socially redeeming value. Work was a good in itself, almost to an extreme degree. For instance, a volunteer who was in the kibbutz who might have been an obnoxious person, but who worked well and did not complain would be accepted and loved. But someone who might be a very warm and likeable human being, but who was a little bit lazy, would very quickly be rejected and asked to leave.

Chris: Are there specific kinds of educational programs and programs which are used to deal with the problem of greed?

Pat: There is very extensive upbringing techniques which are educational in both an informal sense and a formal sense. The children are brought up separately from their families, their parents. They are brought up in a separate building from their parents. They live in a children's house from immediately after birth. It was a hassle at first to go to nurse the baby, but overall it was less exhausting than having to do everything yourself. Of course there are pros and cons to the whole idea of separating the children from the parents but it seems to be a pretty good vehicle for propaganda. And it is not really a cold situation at all. The children spend from 2-4 hours a day exclusively with their parents. The time is set aside specifically for this, for the family to be together. It is a very close relationship. Kids probably spend more time really together with their parents than in the standard American family.

Chris: Do you have any evidence that children who are raised this way have less problems with greed than those who join the kibbutz as adults?

Pat: What I have read is that children raised on the kibbutz are really well adjusted to the kibbutz life when they reach adulthood, although they may be somewhat more dependent upon group situations and other people than a person who was raised in America. But this only raises a real problem when they are away from the kibbutz. I think in general everyone, both the newcomers and the people raised on the kibbutz are becoming somewhat more consumption oriented, but I think it is partially only the influence of the outside world.

Erik: And also the kibbutzim are becoming more affluent and so there is greater possibility for greater consumption. The possibility in a sense creates the need.

Pat: That is true. They have more money now and they have to make decisions like whether or not to put air conditioners in the housing units or not. On the kibbutz I was in there was a very lengthy and excited debate about air conditioning. There wasn't enough money to give everyone air conditioning and so they had to make a decision about how to decide who should get them first. They finally said that the older couples would get them first. Such a decision would be made at a community meeting of all members. That excludes volunteers, people who are going to be members and children. Children do not automatically become members; they have to decide that they want to. At 19 years of age, everyone goes into the army, without exception. At that point they leave the kibbutz and see a bit of the outside world and when they come back they make the decision to join or not.

David: Can the kibbutz become a really sheltered type of situation?

Pat: It sure seemed that way to me. They do make an effort to give the kibbutznicks vacations so that they can go and be less provincial, but often when they have vacations they prefer to spend it on the kibbutz because they are so used to it. It is a very

sheltered sort of life. For the volunteers it becomes sort of like a womb-like community. It becomes very hard to break loose from when you have to leave because you do not have to make any decisions except small ones.

David: What were your own reactions? Did you find that you were more consumption-oriented than the other people there?

Pat: I am sort of a weird case. I grew up on a co-operative farm in Modesto, California, so it seemed very natural to me. A lot of people who I knew who became volunteers did have some trouble adjusting. Little irritations like not having hot water bothered some people.

David: You say "volunteers": were these like Peace Corps people from other countries who came to help out of specific programs?

Pat: The Kibbutz Movement is very interested in letting other people know what they are doing and want to get new members. They want to perpetuate their existence and to extend the ideal, and one of the ways they do this is through volunteers. They live for a period of time on the kibbutz, do work, become part of the kibbutz society. They are provided with all of their needs, but are not paid anything. Most of the volunteers are not Jewish. Many were from America, a lot were Dutch, from all over the world.

Betsy: Could you sit in on meetings?

Pat: Not a real member meeting, but I could sit in on open meetings. When they make important decisions not even prospective members are allowed to sit in. That is a very rigid rule.

Erik: Are managerial positions rotated, or are they elected?

Pat: They are elected for a two year term. The highest positions are elected and they appoint lower positions. But people don't clamor for these jobs. They are not paid any more than any other job; you just have to work harder. There is some status attached to it but the kibbutznicks are not very status-oriented since status doesn't really get you any where. You don't get more things for it or anything like that. It seems to be possible to sit back on the kibbutz and become a bit lethargic because things are so nice.

Erik: When you are full member and are thus actively participating in decisions in a way that you were not, there would probably be less of that.

Pat: That is true, but I think it is still a factor. It is certainly very true for volunteers. We became very bored sometimes because we didn't have to make any decisions since everything was taken care of for us.

Erik: Kibbutzim in Israel have almost all been rural. There have been attempts at urban, industrial kibbutzim, but I don't think that any of them have been very successful, I understand.

Pat: I think that they are beginning to have more success.

Erik: One of the things that is an important question is the extent to which as a model this is something which can be used in larger communities and in urban communities. Many of the things like being provincial, slow-paced, boring and the like probably have

as much to do with being isolated and rural instead of urban and industrial. Particularly if you have grown up in an urban-industrial place, these aspects might contribute to it seeming boring. Do you think that the kibbutz model could be used for urban areas or for an entire society?

Pat: I don't know. It seems to me very doubtful. There is some sort of practical limits on the numbers, the size of a functioning community. Once you get passed a certain size it is no longer possible to have ever individual participating as a functioning member of the community. The kibbutz I was on had about 350 members, but the largest have about 3000. From my own experience I would think that 3000 would already stop functioning as a real decision-making body. You would start having to have an elite group of people run things. I don't think that the kibbutz is only rooted in agricultural activity and I do not think that it has to be an isolated, rural society either. It has traditionally been that way because a rural existence is more basic, simple, needing less complex decisions. There are fewer pressures and so it is easier to get along with other people.

Erik: And being isolated also reduces the pulls away from the community. When you are in a city people will tend to become involved in various activities outside of the kibbutz boundaries and that could begin to create cross-purposes.

Pat: The social sanctions on the kibbutz are very strong for members to stay. Occasionally a member will decide to leave and that is a very rough decision to make. If he leaves he will be totally rejected by the kibbutz community. A child who decided he did not want to become a member would not be totally rejected like that, but there would be some estrangement.

Chris: In terms of using the kibbutz as a model, I wonder how important the idea of Israel's mission and building a new country is. How much of that helps the kibbutz keep together?

Pat: That is a good question. We discussed that quite a bit. It was obvious that the fact that Israel was doing such a vital survival function for Israel had a lot to do with how well it worked. There was a kibbutz next door that split up for ideological reasons into two kibbutzim before 1967 when things were quiet on the Jordanian frontier. After the six day war the two groups pulled back together and started functioning as a unit again. Since then, as things have ~~fall~~ calmed down again, it has begun to split up again.

Only 4% of the population in Israel is from kibbutzim, but they have vastly more influence than that. They have a large over-representation in the parliament and 30% of the army officers are kibbutznicks.

David: How are undesirable jobs allocated?

Pat: There is really very little agricultural or industrial work which is intrinsically all that rewarding. Kibbutznicks realize this and so they try to make things as enjoyable as possible.

They have lots of breaks in the fields. They talk a lot as they work. There are some jobs like shoveling chickenshit ~~which~~ or dish-washing, which no-body like and which are rotated.

Erik: Does the manager also do these jobs?

Pat: Dirty jobs are rotated every six months, but the manager would not have to do any of them during the two years while he was a manager. But it would be worked out so that he would do his fair share as soon as he was done. These jobs are really shared by the entire kibbutz. It was really strange to go into the dining room and be shared by someone who you found out was a member of parliament. There were several artists on the kibbutz who spent most of their time, except when it was their turn to do the dirty work, doing their art. There was a little bit of resentment against them, but not too much.

Betsy: You mentioned boredom among the volunteers. What can you say about the quality of life there? Would you like to spend more time on a kibbutz?

Pat: Not as a volunteer. I enjoyed it tremendously, but as a volunteer without any responsibilities it does get to be a drag after a while, at least for me. I like to be doing things that I am responsible for and have some say in.

The kibbutznicks have set things up so that they have tremendous opportunities for cultural development. They have good libraries, cultural events, but for one reason or another interest just seems to fade somewhat.

Erik: I have been told that there is an undercurrent of anti-intellectualism on the Kibbutz.

Pat: The people who founded the kibbutzim were very intellectual. It was clearly ~~an utopian ideal~~ a utopian ideal that was being established, and I think that the undercurrent was a reaction to that.

Erik: If the Kibbutz got very affluent and could maintain the same standard of living as now with only a 20 hour week, do you think people would opt for the shorter work week?

Pat: Yes, I think so.

Erik: And that might really change the cultural and social atmosphere of the place. If people had more time to learn instruments and the like, they might develop those sorts of things.

Betsy: There is something that keeps coming to my mind, which I have heard critics of Sweden say, which is that once you get a socialist state where everything is taken care of for you, life gets dull. That is why Swedes get drunk so much of the time: they are bored and they do not have anything to challenge them.

Erik: In Sweden things are done for people and they really do not have any real responsibility for what happens, whereas in a Kibbutz every member is on the council which decides things, so it is not ~~not~~ really the same.

Betsy: Still, it is scary to hear that people find them boring since the Kibbutz and Sweden are really Utopian places.

Steve: Is that because this is a generational which is transitional? which is used to having to fight to make things go, but now has things easier? Maybe succeeding generations would be able to find more things to do.

Erik: What is it about life that makes it boring or interesting? Is what makes life interesting for us conflict rather than self-actualization?

Chris: It seems to me that for us conflict is really what makes life interesting, at least for many people. In Israel maybe you see that in the conflict with the Arabs. That doesn't mean that conflict is better than self-actualization, but for an awful lot of people, fighting for or against something is what keeps them from getting bored. An maybe fighting or working for a Utopia or a better standard of living is what has kept many people on the kibbutz from being bored. Once you get there, once you reach what you have been fighting for you may have a real problem. It is pretty hard to switch from the conflict type of mentality to self-actualization.

Mike Murphy: I think that it probably has something to do with internal and external kinds of goals. I've heard stories of men during the Second World War where men in a fighting outfit had tremendous comraderie and closeness and a feeling of total involvement where there was no question that life was meaningful and that every moment was precious, and yet by 1946 many of these same men were on the bottle, because they suddenly did not have something outside which justified their existence and they had to start trying to find meaning for themselves. When that meaning is lacking and you don't have the resources, good-bye.

Mike MacKinley: I am not sure about Betsy's statistics about drinking in Sweeden. People drink any way, and you drink from frustration as well as boredom.

Betsy: Whatever life in America is right now for me, it is not boring. I would not want to live in a place which was boring and maybe if I lived for a long time in Sweeden I would be.

Erik: I think that whether or not a place is boring has a lot to do with what Mike said about internal and external goals and rewards. If you are always geared to the accomplishment of some externally defined, objective goal, like a certain standard of living, or like the "success" of a kibbutz community, then if that becomes accomplished things can become very blaise and boring if you don't have as strong goals personal development. That is really unlimited. You can never fully realize your own potential. You have a whole lifetime to explore whether you are an artist or a poet or a gardener or what have you.

Klaus: I think that the problem in Sweeden is not so much the Welfare State which takes care of you so that you don't have anything to do. I think that it is rather the high standard of living on the one side, and industrialization on the other. Although Sweeden was once an agricultural country like the USA, you have now a very developed industry which destroys all real relationships between humans. That is the problem. If you have a real community in the countryside like Kibbutzim, you can establish good human relationships, but in a highly industrialized society those relationships break down.

When you work on a production line it is almost impossible to keep up a relationship. Your job is designed so that you have no time to keep up a relationship. You are a machine. On a farm if you are picking up grapes or something, there is less pressure and you can talk, you act together, really work together.

Erik: Do you think that there is a solution to that? There are benefits of industrialization which most of us would like to keep. I would not want to return to a primitive economy if these problems could be solved in a human way. One possibility is that you shorten as much as possible the amount of time people spend in those terribly alienating positions. You rotate management and supervisory positions among people so that authority is shared. And then you create other kinds of co-operative human activity which is not involved on the production line, even if perhaps it is less "efficient" in simple in-put/out-put terms.

Klaus: That is for me perhaps the main problem of Utopia: the fact that you have to deal with industrialization. For such an economy you must have central planning. There is no way out of that. Even in a capitalist country today you have planning. And that creates so many problems in terms of human relations. The best thing would be to tear down all factories, but nobody wants to do that. No revolutionary wants to get rid of factories. They want to keep them.

Erik: Let us try to talk on this specific issue. One of the things we will have to talk about when we discuss politics is that certain kinds of planning can only be done effectively from the center because many activities have to be co-ordinated. How is that planning mechanism going to be controlled? But that is more of a political than an economic problem of industrialization. The economic problem is that working in a factory destroys people in terms of their relationships to each other, even if it is a "socialist" factory. A production line is an alienating thing for human beings to do.

Steve: It has to do with your relationship to yourself too. Relating to a cold machine is much different from working in a field, even by yourself.

Klaus: I am a welder. I work in a factory. And it took me a really long time to convince myself that I was doing a creative job. I have to make myself aware of it over and over again, and then I can enjoy myself. Right now I enjoy it even more than studying, but that is a language thing. I have to use English to learn but I weld in German. At least what I do is interesting. I cannot see how people stand the really boring jobs, like watching instrument panels all the time.

Chris: One traditional answer to these problems is that you try to shorten the number of hours you are actually in the factory. That seems to be the traditional union approach.

Erik: Another aspect of that is that in our society there are millions of people involved in ridiculous nonproductive jobs like advertising and producing war materials and others employed in building obsolescence in cars and the like. We could spread out the alienating work in factories if useless things like advertisement on a vast scale were eliminated and wasteful production like war and obsolescence were eliminated so that no one would have to work more than, let's say, ten hours a week at alienating labor. Everyone would spend 5-10 hours a week doing that



sort of thing, including kids. Why not? I doubt if it would take even ten hours of a week if the alienating labor was really fairly spread out among everyone in the society and if waste and absurdity were reduced from the system.

Mike McKinley: You could probably get away with only the present workers working ten hours a week if we made appliances and things which would last.

Erik: This is only half of the problem, however. Reducing the number of hours spent in a factory is only half of a solution. It is also important to know what is going in to the liberated time.

Steve: It is also important to consider the number of jobs that are highly skilled and which the average person could not simply step into and do for ten hours a week. Highly skilled, but still boring and alienating. And also you have to consider that by shifting around management and authority that efficiency will decline somewhat.

Erik: Although that might be made up by reducing obsolescence.

Mike McKinley: That is an interesting thing in terms of the articles in Patterns of Anarchy, where there were workers collectives and workers made the decisions. There wasn't lower efficiency, just less expensive management. You make up in enthusiasm what you lose in managerial efficiency. You sometimes need highly skilled managers because people don't want to work; but if people managed the work themselves they would want to work.

Mike Murphy: I worked for a year last year in a computer company. I had a professional job with other professional people. The salary was very good. The thing that surprised me was that out of an eight hour day no one worked more than about four hours as the company defined work, that is productive labor to the end of marketing a product. The other four hours went to people talking to each other, talking about the new tires which they got for their car, or the vacation they took, or the new girl they just laid, or the new guy they just laid, or doesn't Nixon have his thumb up his ass or isn't Nixon just great. In other words, they were trying to find meaning with each other. That is a fact of life: people will seek meaning, right where they are. Work quotas be damned.

Erik: But that is much easier for professional people; on a production line your time is much more routinized.

Mike Murphy: Even on an Assembly line people work much less than an eight hour day and are seeking the same things. It is not just professionals.

Mike McKinley: Five years ago I worked for Shell Oil Company as a geophysicist and I found the same thing. I don't know if people were really trying to find meaning; most of them were just trying to keep from being bored because you couldn't leave even if your job was finished. It got so ridiculous after three months that I decided to go to graduate school.

Erik: Mike (Murphy), is what you mean by "meaning" what tied in to what you said before about internal vs. external goals? If you are in a company and paid well with lots of benefits, and are not particularly committed to the goals of the company, your external goals are largely met and so you turn towards internal goals, which

you are calling "meaning".

Mike Murphy: Yes, I think everyone of us has questions about who we are. We want to be validated as people by the people around us. We to make some sense out of our lives, and you don't make sense out of your lives designing a two nano-second Mallory (??ed.). You make sense out of your lives in the most crippled way imaginable, talking all around the things which are bothering you. Like, you can't ever say "My marriage is breaking up, Charlie," but you can say, "I got a really nice buy on this car, and things are not really going so good, but the wife and I are going to take a trip in this car and maybe they will be better." I think that this is the basic question which faces Utopia or any institutions in society, that is, to deal with these questions of meaning in human beings. We have talked around this in various ways tonight. For instance, you said that one of the things you would like to see in an Utopian economy was the elimination of greed. But functionally, what is greed? What is going on inside of a person who is greedy? I think that there are some real needs that are being met and we describe that behavior as "greediness". If you outlaw greed, I think that those needs are going to be met in some other way. Greed has something to do with personal power, effectiveness, some sense of self-assertion, potency. These all touch questions of meaning. The forms can vary, but I think these are the essential human issues, and although the new consciousness is about them, I do not see anything basic has changed.

Mike McKinley: I think that the trouble right now is that the way things are set up, in the job you described and the job I was in, the structure of work and life prevents working through these problems. In a Utopian society all of these needs are not going to be automatically met, but you create a structure which allows that possibility. You allow time for people to work out their personal relationships.

Mike Murphy: I don't think that it is a goal which is ever attainable; you can never be a polished person. I think that that is part of the promise and part of the paradox of being a human being.

Erik: That is true, but I think that there are certain things which you can do--and perhaps a kibbutz will move in that direction when the work demands drop when there is greater affluence, and thus greater leisure is possible--which can facilitate the opportunities of people developing meaningful activities and relationships to other people which can help them develop as individuals inside, find meaning.

Mike Murphy: do you have an example?

Erik: Well, for me it would include groups like this, for example. If I worked a forty hour week in a factory it would be very hard to get together and have a four hour evening discussion on these problems. You would just be exhausted.

Betsy: But you might spend four hours bowling with the men.

Erik : But I don't think that that serves the same purpose.

Betsy: sure it does for the people who did it.

Pat: I don't think it is primarily a matter of time, of being tired. People do bowl and do things like that, which they wouldn't do if they were exhausted.

Mike Murphy: There is a tremendous amount of fear, of free-floating nebulous fear about getting close to one another that is important in this culture. People are afraid of taking chances with each other.

Betsy: I would like to approach this from the other side: people should spend ten or twelve hours a week in self-actualizing, "character building" activity. One example would be for people to work a few afternoons a week in an elementary school. That would be non-alienating activity for most people, and would also help out the school. In addition to trying to figure out how to minimize anomie and alienation and bad economic vibes, we should try to figure out how we can capitalize--that is a bad word--on the few things which are real bright spots in our lives and try to widen those.

Erik: It seems like there are ~~3~~ different sorts of things which are being addressed to here: one was what Klaus said, that the kinds of relations which evolve out of industrialized society as we know it today are alienating and isolate people from one another, and so one problem is how to reduce the importance of that kind of activity in people's lives; a second question is how to positively create activities which are alternatives to alienating labor; and a third issue is the one Mike has focused on, namely how to create situations which help people to seek out meaning, to work through their own development.

Klaus: Now, wherever you work, you do unreal work to make it possible to make real life. Well, Marx at least said that the solution was socializing the factories, give the ownership of the factories to the people who work them, but obviously in an industrialized society that does not work.

Erik: Or, at least it isn't a complete solution. People on the kibbutz own everything on the kibbutz and run it all. But there is much more to a kibbutz than simply communal ownership.

Pat: They do things like not trying to be particularly efficient in their production line. They take it easy and bullshit a lot. They do rotate managers positions, and that helps. But even so, just the fact of being in-doors and working with machines is still alienating.

Erik: Mike, what kinds of activities would you see as positively contributing to the individual's quest for meaning? Some things clearly hinder that quest--like a 90 hour work week. But what things positively contribute to it.

Mike Murphy: I think that a formal encouragement for shooting the shit, or whatever you want to call it, between people in a work area. A block of time to spend together. But actually, my response is that I really do not think that changing forms is where it is at at all. Within reason, reducing the work week and making leisure time more available is not really central. I don't think that that

gaurantees you anything. I think that the issues of meaning for human beings are like quicksilver and about the time the kibbutz starts to roll one way, you have people more interested in personal property, and as soon as that changes, I have every confidence that there will be new issues, new moves in other directions. There will never be any stasis or equilibrium, and you shouldn't expect it or really work towards it. And you really should not preoccupy yourself with changing forms. The things that are really central are not unrelated to forms in people's lives, but worrying about forms is really putting the cart before the horse. The things which are really central I think are basically religious questions. Not that they have to be treated in a church context at all, but I think that there are moments when people come together--and it can be on an assembly line, it can be in a forest, it can be in a co-operative farm, it can be in a this room--there are moments that are very High Moments when suddenly you catch a glimpse of what you are after. You can feel you are approaching it. It is almost a magical thing in a way. The variety of experiences in which this can happen are infinite. But I think that a concern with form, with changing the work week or something, is totally secondary or tertiary to what I consider to be the primary issue.

Erik: I think that you are right that changing work patterns is secondary in the sense that changing that is not itself the desired end goal; it is a means. It is terribly important in facilitating the goal.

Mike Murphy: No, I don't think that it is really terribly important in facilitating those goals.

Erik: I just think that working a fourty hour week on an assembly line and getting yourself cut off from other people the way it happens on a highly automated assembly line interferes with your being able to relate to other people even outside of the job, and that interferes with your being able to relate to yourself. Seriously interferes.

Mike Murphy: I don't deny that, but if people spent less time in factories they would spend even more time in front of the TV. If we went to a 20 hour week, I do not see any gaurantee that anything different is going to happen.

Mike McKinley: I don't think that we are talking of just going to a 20 hour week., of just changing forms in that way. In companies now the central issue as you know is profit, and it is only a secondary issue what happens to the people in the company, their humanity, and even that is an issue only in that alienated individuals are less efficient in production and management. So you have a situation in which the coporation is concerned with the inner-lives of the employees only to the extent that it helps their profits. I think that that kind of format and attitudes tremendously influences the way the employees relate to each other. The values which pervade the whole situation and all relationships are competitive. If they had considerably more lesirue time at least there would be the opportunity for more

constructive activity. Changing that form is not going to guarantee that people find meaning, but the way things are made it much more difficult. The forms foster alienation, not creativity.

Mike Murphy: I don't think that a corporation, or any institution, can take on human values. Anything like that takes on a life of its own and its own values. As soon as an institution is created, the people and the institution diverge.

Erik: I think that that has something to do with questions about how the institution is controlled. For example, Starr King is by and large controlled by the students, it is certainly very responsive to the students, and as a result, it is basically in tune with the students and will continue to be, I think, even though the student body has changed and will continue to change. That has a lot to do with questions of power and responsibility, and I think that those questions link up with problems of personal meaning. If a person has no control over his own life--let's take a super-extreme example, a Black slave on a Southern Plantation--if he is totally manipulated and powerless, it becomes really very hard to come to grips with questions of your own meaning, of your inner life. The focus of your energy and emotions become the way you are treated, the nature of the outside forces, not your inner-existence. All sorts of bad vibes are created, to use the California Lingo. And being liberated from that situation in the sense of being real power and autonomy and control over things that affect you, I think also liberates possibilities for growth within the individual.

Mike Murphy: I don't think that the Starr King analogy really holds because Starr King exists almost purely for human potential, not for human potential and the production of cuckoo clocks.

Erik: Human potential and the production of ministers.

Mike Murphy: I would argue that

Mike McKinley: I think it is very much oriented that way.

Mike Murphy: For cuckoo clocks?

Mike McKinley: No, for the production of ministers. I think there really is a dual goal at Starr King: people finding themselves and producing ministers for the church. At Starr King those goals are probably much more closely related than in most industries.

Mike Murphy: I was asked before what forms I thought would help the individual seek meaning. I guess I don't really see anything new under the sun in terms of forms. In one sense the kibbutz is different, but in the long run, what is really new?

Pat: The feeling that I had when I first moved in was, where is the Utopia. Later. I started noticing that certain things were absent: the kibbutz lacked certain forces and pressures which we take for granted. Like status competition and the like.

Betsy: One of the things that is terribly important to me is nature. One of our problems today is that we have lost touch with the earth, with our origins, and I think that that is one of the reasons people have trouble with finding meaning in their lives. I am not advocating blowing up the factories and going back to the farm that we never came from. But it is tremendously important that we have wilderness. Something happens to me when I am next to the Ocean, and I learn from that. I grow from that. In my Utopia I would like to maximize people's opportunities to discover themselves again in some kind of real natural surroundings. I think that is really important.

Klaus: I am not so sure. That is very American. Every American needs his little house with a little yard around him that he thinks is nature. It is important to him not only that it is a little bit of green, but of course, that it is mine. This whole idea of being close to Nature you see in American suburbs, but still people aren't more happy.

Mike McKinley: Concerning what Betsy said about wilderness, I was reading in a fall issue of Natural History about the parks in Cuba. One of the first things which they did in 1959 was make all private parks and beaches public and gave access to all estates and the like to everyone.

Chris: I read an interesting article yesterday about Man's relationship to nature, which traced the whole ecological crisis we have today back to Christianity and the way in which Christianity has taught man to be the conquerer of nature to further his economic goals. The whole Christian way of looking at nature is to exploit it, instead of the whole cyclical, on-going types of religions that you have in some other places.

Erik: Perhaps, but Japan, which has presumably a more organic religion in that sense, has Tokyo which is the most polluted city in the world.

Klaus: Japan is the victim of Christianity.

Mike McKinley: I think it has more to do with pressures of industrialization and population. In India there is a terrific problem of deforestation just because of the population pressures. These pressures are stronger than whatever you may have been taught, and you do what you have to do to survive and rationalize it somehow. I am not denying the importance of the Christian attitudes of man over nature, but these pressures are also very important. You can easily alter your theology to go with a new situation.

Erik: I would like to return to the question that concerns the difference in orientation of Mike and myself, because I think that it is important. I do not think that there really is any difference between the kind of life and development of meaning which we would like to see happen in people. The ultimate goals are very similar. But there does seem to be a difference in the perception or interpretation of the impact of your social environment on that development within the person. I feel that an alienating environment can seriously interfere with that kind of development within

a person. But even leaving that question aside--the question of how we can reduce alienating activities and spread them around more evenly in a community--the question still remains whether or not there are things we can do, social work settings and so on, that can positively contribute to people making contact with each other and developing themselves.

Mike Murphy: It struck me that by the time someone is in a factory the game is over in so many ways. We need to consider the forms involved in helping people to be resilient in the face of a totally fucked up world. This resilience I think comes from your relationship to other people, and the answers to many of the questions each of us have are found in other people, a very few other people in your life. That doesn't justify a ripoff mentality or the corporate state, but I think that it is possible to find meaning and make progress towards self-actualization right in the teeth of it.

Erik: It is possible. There are people in prison, like George Jackson and Malcolm X, who in the midst of the incredible brutality and alienation of a prison setting have managed to come to grips with their own lives and the meaning of their aliveness in a real way. You can't say that prisons really facilitate that process and that we don't have to worry about radically changing prisons, or getting rid of them.

David: What Mike said is really one of my immediate goals--to relate intensely to 5 or 6 individuals in a commune setting, but economically we are finding that almost impossible, because of the cost of a house. Dormitories to me make it difficult to develop a real sense of intimacy, but it is the cheapest place to live.

Erik: Pat, what do you think about the way the kibbutz fostered close and personally constructive human relationships?

Pat: I think that it did foster close relationships, but not extremely intimate ones. There was a great deal of family feeling among the kibbutznicks, but as in a family, there is often friction and people do not realize how close they are until they are separated for a period of time. There is a real family closeness, but it may not be the same intimacy that some people are seeking. But between a husband and a wife on a kibbutz that kind of intimacy does emerge, and it seems to emerge much more often than in our society. The reason for setting up the kibbutz originally was very much the desire to create a setting for real personal development rather than simply to create an efficient economic system, and although economic development was still important to them. The founders were terribly idealistic in these terms. One thing that I should say is that for some reason, although the kibbutznicks are terribly close to each other, they are not very warm and open people to outsiders or volunteers. You really have to prove your worth before they will go out of their way to be nice to you.

Erik: That may result in part from their feelings about the hostility of the rest of the world towards them, especially in the past. In terms of what we have been talking about, it seems to me that

the kibbutz is a social setting which encourages co-operation between people and discourages competition between people. An environment which encourages real co-operation fosters meaningful contact and interchange between people, whereas competition--when I am concerned about my status with respect to you, when I am concerned about your status in the rest of the community--when that becomes a central axis upon which you relate to other people, that seriously interferes, hinders the development of meaningful and constructive human relationships. And competition between individuals, between people struggling with each other to move up in a hierarchy, is at the very core of the economic machinery of our society.

Mike Murphy: I would like to talk about the values that are behind the desire for co-operation. Co-operation stands for a lot of things.

Erik: Right. Much of what it means to me is a negation of what competition is. If I am relating to you in a competitive way, it becomes of great importance to me which of us has higher status, which of us is better. It is important, for example, if we are in a discussion and there is a teacher that I impress him more than you. It becomes important that I put down your ideas so that he will see me as better than you. I know that in my own biography that is something that has been a problem. And I feel bad about it when I am competitive in that way. One reason that I feel good about this seminar is that I think that I have not been putting down people. That is exciting to me. In college, in seminars, it was often a problem because in terms of my values, that kind of competition was against what I felt was a good and decent way to relate to people. When I would be in a discussion I would say to myself when someone said something I thought was silly: "Ah-ha, I can really get him on that one." And I did it. I would sometimes really demolish something someone said, but I felt real conflicts later. That kind of competitiveness also <sup>can</sup> interfere with ~~me~~ becoming close to other people, becoming friends and comrades in the way that makes it possible to really share of each other and grow from that sharing. I do not think that whether or not you are competitive is simply a function of the economic environment which you are in, but I think that social structure, the way you survive and make it in a community, can have a tremendous impact on how your behavior changes and develops. The fact that now we define human worth in terms of "success" in a classroom, in a discussion--your worth as a human being becomes defined in terms of the grades you get.

Betsy: Especially because it is not just your grade, but your grade with respect to other people: how many people are beneath you determines how "good" you are. Let's run it from the other direction: what things is cooperation an affirmation of instead of a negation of.

Pat: On the kibbutz there still was competitiveness to a certain extent, but I noticed it more on a group level than on an individual level. The kibbutzim would be competitive with each other, but the individuals would be very co-operative. Success was measured as a group thing and that fosters inter-individual communication and people really working together.



David: Eric Hoffer says in the True Believer says that one of the greatest unifying factors of all is a common hate object. Maybe we are really missing the boat. What we really need for effective co-operation is a good old-fashioned war.

Erik: That is true historically that war has been a tremendous basis for subduing internal conflicts, for creating at least superficial class harmony instead of class conflict. But I do not think it is really necessary. A common goal, love, can become as good a basis for co-operation as hate against an out-group.

That is the other thing I was going to say about the meaning of co-operation. What it says in interpersonal terms is, "Look, I'll help you and you'll help me." That is not an exchange: it is not I'll help you because you'll help me, but rather we help each other because that is a good way to live and relate, and because of our mutual love as human beings. Relating that way helps you to grow in yourself as well as helps you to achieve whatever community goals you might have. But when you are competing you say, Well, I may like you, but I will have to act as if I didn't because if I help you it will hurt me. So, I think that co-operation, and a social setting which facilitates co-operation, really helps personal growth.

Mike Murphy: I think that the important thing is that in either case, whether you have co-operation or competition, everyone is really personally working for the same thing, working to define their identity, with no exceptions. That is the primary dynamic for every human being, whether it is acted out co-operatively or competitively. It is not clear to me that a co-operative style is going to get you any further in terms of genuine intimacy or an approach to the central issues in your own life. Every person's primary battle is to find out who he is, and the best way to find that out is through other people, but I don't see that co-operation necessarily facilitates that.

Erik: But if that is true, doesn't it mean that the things which cut you off from other people and make you antagonistic to other people, interferes with your ability to work through your own identity and meaning.

Mike Murphy: But the lack of that doesn't guarantee it.

Mike McKinley: Yeah, but we are not talking about guarantees, but rather about facilitating things. The system that we are in almost guarantees that for most people it is impossible to form the kind of relationships which are personally constructive. I am not saying that changing the system will guarantee that people will find those relationships, but I think we should find the things in the present system which cause these things to fail in terms of people finding their purpose, meaning in life and relating to other people in a loving way. We should work to eliminate those obstacles because right now it is really an uphill battle. Few people can get by some of the values in society which separate everyone out

Pat: It seems to me that there are two different ways you can go about defining your identity. The first is that which you are born

with and feel is intrinsically you--I don't know if that really exists or not. The other is that which you find reflected to you from outside of you. If your experiences are predominantly competitive, then you are either a person who does very very well, and there are not many of us around like that, a person who has predominantly successful experiences, or else you are a person anywhere on a continuum below that.

Mike Murphy: I don't think that "success" or "failure" is really germane to identity. Sure, it effects it, but identity is more basic than that.

Pat: Yes, but it is an important part. The amount of positive or negative feelings of identity that you have in a competitive society is largely related to the number of successful or failure experiences that you have. In a co-operative society, that point at least, is different because success is not measured in the same way, or maybe not even measured.

Mike Murphy: I really don't think so. In a co-operative situation there is clearly a value placed on being co-operative, and some people are clearly more successful at that than others. That is not just semantic. Co-operating can be a really loaded situation because of the pressures to work well with others. There is a definite sense of failure I am sure for people who find, for whatever reasons, that they just cannot seem to get along with others.

Erik: Yes, but by the nature of the activity, more people can co-operate successfully than can compete successfully. In competition only one or two people "win", but everyone can co-operate in principle.

Mike Murphy: Why is it do you think that we, for so long, have insisted on defining ourselves as different from other people. We define who we are as different from other people instead of defining who we are as similar to other people. Why is that? Everyone says "I am me because I see myself as distinct from you," instead of saying "I am me because I see myself as a part of you, similar". Where does this stress come from?

Chris: Well, part of it may be biological: we all are genetically different and you cannot say that we are identical.

Erik: Yes, but we are also the same: there are more genes that are the same than are different.

Betsy: Each person is a different combination of reflections.

Erik: You can give some kind of social structural explanation for this. In a primitive society and economy, everyone basically has a common identity. There is no division of labor within the economy except for male-female differentiations which are probably the very earliest to appear. There is little individuation of self-consciousness. There is an organic solidarity in which your identity is that of the village or tribe, and not that as you as an individual. As you move from that to a greater division of labor--whatever the cause for the initial changes--and particularly as a division of

power begins to occur, the people at the top have to differentiate their identity from the people at the bottom, in order to tolerate that position and to tolerate what he does to people below him. It is like that at a prison: if a guard saw himself as basically the same as a prisoner, he could not treat the prisoner that way, he couldn't do those things to him. It is only because he makes the prisoner utterly different from himself that he can brutalize him the way he does.

Steve: People are, after all, separate, distinct, biological beings. If you go back far enough, we couldn't even speak to each other, we could not communicate to each other and were judged naturally hostile to each other. We have evolved a certain degree of communication where you can let me know and we can take it out to really very convoluted and intricate and delicate nuances now. If you go back far enough that was really not possible. I go from there to say that that kind of primal antagonism is fostered by a competitive situation, and that if you can put yourself in a situation where you do not have to fear the other person, you can let down some of the defenses in which you are very busy defining yourself as "you" because if you don't he will suck you in. If you can let those defenses down, then you can arrive at a situation where there can be real, constructive interchange between people, and I think that a co-operative situation can help that.

Pat: There is a need in people for some kind of autonomy, maybe not different, but autonomous. It seems that the children who are raised on a kibbutz do not have as strong ~~need~~ a need, but it is still there. They are willing to be similar and are not afraid of being similar.

Erik: One possibility for the initial origins of competitiveness could be something like this: you had two villages, both internally non-differentiated, both co-operative. Then a famine occurs because of the weather or something, and one village attacks and conquers the other village in order to survive. Then you suddenly have the situation of one village ruling the other village, of one group of people being the masters and the others the slaves. They don't know quite how to handle this new situation, but they work out some kind of ad hoc relationship which eventually leads to a differentiation of identities in the village in subsequent generations, and this eventually leads to the emergence of a real individually self-conscious identity. Such events must have happened many times in the distant past.

Klaus: I think that the history of Palestine can say something about this. As the population grew it eventually became necessary to build a real town. Jericho was the oldest of these, 3000 years old. And in the town it was necessary to specialize: the baker, the blacksmith, and so on. That was the event in which competition appears in the town, with the division of labor. There is no way out for us because we have such a big population that we cannot help having that kind of division of labor and competing with other people.

Betsy: You can also say that because we have so many people we have to co-operate with other people.

Erik: The other possibility is that we cannot return to the co-operation of the primitive tribe based on total non-differentiation of functionx--I don't think that we can recreate that prehistoric basis for co-operation--but I think that there is a new basis for co-operation, which has to do with the development of human consciousness.

Betsy: It has to do with what the primitive consciousness had to do with also, namely basic survival.

Erik: Not just absolute survival. I think that things will basically muddle through even without any fundamental changes, muddle through more or less even if things become tremendously repressive. But even though I think that things could muddle through without real co-operation between people...

Steve: they might muddle through without people...

Erik: I think that there is a new basis for co-operation in the changes of people's consciousnesses. There are more people alive in the world today who passionately believe in the value of human beings co-operating and working together, than at any other point in man's history. There are 700 million Chinese, and regardless of what else you may feel about China, many of them are committed to a life style of real human co-operation.

Steve: with other Chinese.... (much laughter)

Erik: Maybe so. But even here, there is a tremendous change in many people about their feelings about competition and co-operation.

Betsy: I wonder if it is possible to have a completely competitive or a completely co-operative society.

Erik: Well, I think that American society is really pretty thoroughly competitive, not in the sense that companies are really all that competitive--after all monopolies are not very competitive--but that as individuals within companies there is constant competition for positions and status.

Betsy: Yeah, but not completely competitive. It takes a lot of co-operation to keep the United States running the way it is, tacit if not active.

Erik: that's true.

Mike Murphy: There is one thing I wanted to say earlier. There is this line in the first part of St. Augustine's The City of God, which says: "I will be restless until I find my rest in thee." It seems to me that each person has to make this struggle to know his place in the universe. That is primary. That struggle is shot through every human activity, but at the same time it completely transcends it and has nothing whatsoever to do with it. I hesitate to say much about this because it is entirely new to me: I have been an atheist for a long time. I think that that was at the core of what I was saying: "we will be restless until we find our rest in thee," and I would be content to leave that with a small t.

Klaus: You are trying to find yourself, finding meaning of life. I would think that co-operative man would not try to find himself,

but would understand himself as a summary of human relationships.

Mike Murphy: I think that that is a fact. Who I am is a composite of everyone I have ever know. I don't disagree with what you said at all. I do not think that individuality is at all alien to co-operation. They are of the same cloth: to understand yourself you have to understand yourself in relationship to other people.

Erik: I put the emphasis the other way: not only does understanding yourself help you to co-operate, but co-operation can positively help you to understand yourself.

Betsy: Co-operation is saying I'm different from you, but I need you. Competition is saying, I'm different from you, but I don't need you except to step on you to take a step up.

Mike: I think that the process of finding meaning is exactly the same in either a competitive or a co-operative society. You are saying that that may be true, but that it is easier in a co-operative society. I am just not sure if that is really right. I guess I am just in a modd to push this position really far because in most discussions I always defend co-operation.

Steve: I think that I have a specific example that can illustrate this. The collective taxi company I work in was coming to a very touchy point. It is a driver managed cooperative company that is totally anarchic without any structure at all. Everyone does everything and nobody does anything. It is very inefficient, but it functios. A real problem occurred over one individual which the group was considering to fire. He was a real ass. He had tremendous drive to succeed, and produce and to run things. He kept picking up jobs and responsibilities until he felt he was running things. This was totally out of the spirit of the whole venture. And besides, he was terribly difficult to get along with. So things got worse and worse and a lot of people wanted to get rid of him. It was coming to a vote about firing him, which we don't like to do because votes are really divisive. But the whole thing got headed off and the vote was not held. It was decided that nothing would be accomplished really by firing: he would be out and we would not really have dealt with the problem. So the idea evolved to restruct him from the office so that he could drive but it could not do managerial things. We also said that someone has to say to him, "you may need some help but you are alright as a human being. You don't have to be producing all of the time to validate yourself as a human being." So now there is a group of 4 or 5 people who spend time each week talking with him to try to help him work through these problems. In a straight business company, he would just have been eliminated but here we could work towards a collective solution because collective values are so important.

Mike: The picture I have is of ~~simple~~ co-operation as a form, ~~just~~ just as competition is a form, a description of relations between people. I would say that what was happening between these folks and this fellow as some kind of basic, human meeting that doesn't lend itself to being described as "co-operative" or "competitive".

Steve: yes, but it is possible because of the co-operative context of the organization. It would not be possible in Yellow Cab where profit is the main goal.

Erik: If your values and organization is competitive, then it hurts you to spend the time and energy to help someone out like that. But if the organization is co-operative, it positively helps the organization and the people to show that kind of concern and to work things out rather than to beat other people down. I guess ultimately you have to rely on your own experience to see if co-operative settings are more personally constructive to you than competitive ones. In my own experience I think that this is the reason why I have always found bull sessions with friends so much more constructive than seminars. Seminars have almost always an implicit competitive ethic whereas bull sessions don't.

~~Exfeatzthatzinzmanxyxwazszizhavexzizwazszhadzazhzhgk~~

Pat: It seems to me that man's eternal struggle for identity, is not really a struggle to know himself, so much as a struggle to be easy with the self he knows. In Israel I noticed that the young kibbutznicks were easy with the selves they knew.

Erik: One thing which I feel in myself is that I have been, and still am I guess, an individual with a very high need achievement, to use the psychological expression, and part of what that means is not being at ease with myself for the level of success, or achievement, or recognition that I have. Somehow, I have defined myself in part in terms of achievement, that is part of my identity, in such a way that I feel a tension or a drive to publish books, to gain recognition, and so forth. I also get intrinsic enjoyment I think from these activities, but I wish that my emotional stakes in the success per se be minimized. And that is not really true right now. I think that I would probably still do most of the same things even if my need for achievement were less because I do enjoy study and other intellectual activities. But I would feel less pressure.

Chris: It sounds like there is almost a real need to achieve the lessening of the need to achieve.

Erik: I think that ~~axzatzxzf~~ the economic goals which I mentioned at the beginning of this discussion really late to much of what we have been saying. One of the reasons I want goods and services to be free is so that commodities cease to be a basis by which people differentiate themselves, ceases to be a basis of antagonism. It is a goal because I will relate to you in a more human way if we don't have to relate to each other in terms of commodities, goods, services. It is the same thing with collective consumption instead of just individual consumption, or rather individual consumption at the expense of the collectivity. Again, this means thinking of consumption and production in terms of ways that help both of us and our relationship, instead of each of us consuming at the others expense. Of course, Economic Justice, the first goal, is directly concerned with reducing conflict between people and increasing the real chance to make contact with each other. Finally, the other goal was for work to be a positive fulfilling part of life. If work is not alienating, people will be able to relate much better to each other and to themselves, and thus be able to move in the direction of self-development more constructively.

addendum by Mike Murphy

between people

cooperation fosters trust  
trust fosters openness  
openness fosters meeting  
meeting fosters meaning

competition fosters distrust  
distrust fosters guardedness  
guardedness fosters distance  
distance veils meaning

Erik: Last week I suggested that people might want to write up some kind of sketchy outline Utopian Political Constitution. I turned out, at least for me, that when I sat down to do that, that it was a much harder task than I had expected. It seemed that whatever I wrote down raised more problems than I solved. It was hard even to do the job superficially. One of the things that I began to realize more and more as I proceeded was that I was trying to create a political system that would solve all of the problems which exist in a political system; I was trying to create institutions which would themselves, automatically, solve their own problems. I was constantly running up against the wall that they couldn't do that unless the people in those institutions were capable of solving the problems. You couldn't create mechanisms which would solve those problems in spite of the people. Specifically, a lot of the things which I felt had to be involved in a Utopian political system could be included in the word "democratic", but in a radical sense, not in the way it is used in present society. But the problem with a democratic society is that there is absolutely no way to guarantee in a democratic society that the majority of the population isn't going to oppress the minority. Any mechanism which you set up to protect minorities then becomes itself anti-democratic. That was a contradiction which I would not resolve. I wanted to figure out how you could set up a Supreme Court type institution to protect minorities, but then what is to keep the Supreme Court from becoming an elitest organization which oppresses the majority as well, or uses its power to protect its own power rather than to protect minorities. The basic problem is that before a Democracy, a true Democracy, can work, you basically need democratic people, people who have that kind of socialist-humanist consciousness that will make a democracy viable. Then it occurred to me--and this is in a partial way the resolution of the contradiction--that the only way that you could get people with that kind of democratic mentality was through a democratic system. While it is true that there is no mechanism which you can build into the system which is going to itself resolve the contradictions, the kind of people that are going to emerge in a society that is really democratic, in which people really do have power, is one that will help mold people in that kind of humanist socialist direction. That is the feeling that developed as I worked on this Constitution (it appears in the addendum to this session). The trick then is to see how you can devise democratic political structures which will work in that direction, to develop people with that kind of radically democratic, humanists, socialist consciousness, so that they will in fact use democratic power for humanist goals rather than for dominance or exploitation. You have to think of structures which help to develop people in that way as well as structures which are themselves politically desirable.



Klaus: A centralized, bureaucratic dictatorship could really force all parts of the state to really live parts of the revolutionary life that you want them to lead. So perhaps a strong dictatorship would be the best way to force the institution of a revolutionary society.

Erik: That is one possibility, but it is something which I rejected because I feel that you can't develop the kind of people that will make a Utopia work through a centralized bureaucratic dictatorship. I don't think ~~you're going to~~ that the kind of people that are going to emerge in a society run by a centralized bureaucracy are the kind of people that will make a Utopia function. What you develop in that kind of society is obedient people, uncritical people, not democratic people.

Klaus: But in the United States, in order for it to become more democratic, you would have to have a centralized state that could force people in certain ways. For example, you would need a strong centralized power that would force parents to have the children educated in a revolutionary democratic way instead of a conservative or racist way against Black Americans or Mexican-Americans. In the democracy we have right here you cannot do that because everyone can do whatever he wants to and can educate his children however racist a way he wants to.

Betsy: What Klaus is talking about is really the only solution which I see, which is a Benevolent Dictatorship, an all-wise, all-knowing, all-good Guy who could live forever and live the Right Way.

Erik: Or a revolutionary party that was sufficiently cohesive to perpetuate itself in that way, with that kind of benevolence without being limited to one person.

Donley: But how does the party perpetuate itself as that kind of benevolent committee?

Erik: I am not particularly advocating that as a solution.

David: I think that there is something else wrong with an benevolent dictatorship beyond that it is difficult to perpetuate itself. It is more psychological, along the lines Erik was talking about, of creating obedient people. There is a book out called "I'm OK, You're OK" which talks about the parent, child and adult aspects of the personality. The parent is all of those things which we have internalized from our parents ~~and~~ and from society; the child is the spontaneous, the impulsive and the obedient; and the adult is that part of us which can objectively use our past and the world around us to make decisions. It is only through the adult part of our personalities that we are able to somehow transcend our own past. What scares me about a benevolent dictatorship is that you are relating on a parent-child level which in turn will train the new children in that way. What is needed is an atmosphere where people are encouraged to be adults, to be able to objectively view the world around them and to trust themselves to be able to act. I think that a Benevolent dictatorship would be a self-defeating cycle which would hinder the development of a real revolutionary consciousness.

Donley: I agree. My question to Erik is how does a revolutionary committee differ from that?

Erik: I am not sure that it does. David mentioned once that one problem he saw in Utopia was that it was boring, or might be boring, uninteresting. The more successful a benevolent dictatorship is, and asritit manages to provide a peaceful, tranquil existence for people in which they are not involved, well, I think then things do become uninteresting. What makes a revolutionary or a Utopian society not boring is the deep individual involvement in that society and its political processes rather than the fact that everything is taken care of for them by an all-knowing, all-wise dictatorship.

Mike: This is a problem that I have been struggling with for a long time. I do have the ideal, if everybody were good, of having a confederation of small communities of participatory democracy out of which policy would emerge. That is more of an anarchist ideal. This is very different from what is going on in a place like Cuba today, where you do have a group which is perpetuating itself in power, and is a dictatorship in the sense that it doesn't have elections, although it does have support which is shown in other ways. But that dictatorship doesn't make all of the decisions. Just because you have that power doesn't mean that you have to make all of the decisions which govern people's lives. In fact, the goal of the Cuban Revolution is to create people who don't depend on a Central Dictatorship. Whether it will succeed or not is another question, but it is probably the closest thing there is as an experiment in which you have a dictatorship trying to create people who rely on themselves for decisions. People are directly involved in the educational system, in making decisions about the neighborhoods in which they live, but at the same time, the Communist Party plays a central role in these decisions. Still there are a lot of contradictions, Contradictions between such things as spontaneity and conformity in education. When a dictatorship wants to create people who are spontaneous, hopefully those people will want to overthrow the dictatorship.

Erik: One of the problems in Cuba now is, of course, that it is very much in a transitional state. We are talking about Utopian political structures which has more to do with their goals towards which present things are a transition. Later when we talk about the means towards accomplishing Utopia we will talk about such things as the role of a Revolutionary Party, or of a revolutionary vanguard elite. But I do not think that anyone in Cuba would see the present situation as embodying the political goals of the Cuban Revolution, that is the way things should be, but rather that this is a necessary half-way house towards some non-bureaucratic ~~xxx~~ democracy of the future.

Chris: We often think in terms of instant solutions in the United States. We decide that if there is going to be a Utopia, then it has to be Instant Utopia, and the kinds of things Utopia is going to contain have to be contained in all of the means we use to get there. People tend to judge the Cuba situation by saying,

OK the society they have now is the society they want and are going to have in the future. The whole thing is really a process.

Betsy: I feel very much at Sea in thinking about political structures. One thing that particularly bothers me is what Erik said about needing certain kinds of people for a democracy to work. One thing that John Adams said was that we want a Government of Laws, not of Men. ~~Erzing~~ This is what John Adams and that crowd tried to do: set up a Government that would provide structures which would work regardless of what men were living within those structures. The problem is that what they created is still a Government of Men. One thing that we could aim for is having an ideal government of Laws whereby no man or group of men could muck it up. The alternative is to find a man or group of men and women who are able to run things in an ideal way.

Erik: There really is a third possibility. You have given two possibilities. One is towards perfecting structures and laws so that we do have a government of laws and not of men. The second possibility is having really good people form a Government of Men not of Laws. And a third ~~of~~ possibility is one which is incapsulated in an oversimplified way in the expression "power to the people". That is, a system in which you have a government which functions not in the name of the people, but in which the people actually run the government~~x~~. You cannot do that if you have a centralized bureaucratic government in which the most important decisions are all discussed and made at the center, from the top down. You can only have such a system when the basic decision-making is decentralized. You still have to consider what structures would exist in this third alternative, but it is really different from the other two. It is much easier said than done.

David: I really dig the idea of decentralized government, but I always wonder why the Articles of Confederation in this country were such a failure, such a total disaster, in contrast to a more centralized and bureaucratized Constitution.

Erik: The Articles of Confederation were decentralized, but they were ~~de~~centralized in a way that gave tremendous power in the confederates states to the local banking and merchant elites. It wasn't decentralized democratically in the way we are talking about. It wasn't any kind of People's Democracy.

David: One important thing about the Constitution is that it was much easier for the people who were there at the Constitutional Convention to have the original Constitution ratified than to have it amended. The people there had everything to gain in having that Constitution go through and protect their private property, the status quo, their power and in making it very difficult to change after it went through.

Erik: Our Constitution is not a democratic one in the sense that for a Constitution to be democratic, it has to be easily changeable.

You can't have the kind of supreme court that we have in a really democratic system, and you can't have a Senate which gives 2 votes to Nevada and 2 votes to New York

Klaus: Well, at least in the last century nobody really talked of the United States as a Democracy, but as a Republic.

Erik: Klaus, what would you consider to be the final political structures for Utopia?

Klaus: I would like to remind you of Marcuse who thinks of many of these problems. He says that we have the technology today to establish the ideal state, Utopia. The real problem is how to get there. I would propose something along the lines of the Soviet System, not as it has actually developed in the Soviet Union, but the principles behind it. The ideal is that it starts at the bottom in the village, in your community. There is a local council there which chooses a representative which meets at a higher level, the state level, in another council. These councils meet all across the nation and they send representatives which meet in the central council of the highest soviet. That is the theory. Every representative is responsible in all of his decisions to the group which he represents. He can be called back at any time and he has to make every decision according to the orders he gets from his group. We need a state. We need some kind of order for things to function, and this could be a way to make sure that we have a government by the people. The problem again as Erik said is what to do with minorities, and I do not know how to deal with that. In Germany we don't have that problem as much as here where there is a much more pluralistic society, many more minorities. We would still have problems of richer areas, more educated people, etc., but the society is more homogeneous than here. Maybe you could handle this by having these minorities themselves have representatives on the councils, but if you do that then they would have two votes and that is undemocratic again. You know, in Germany in 1918 we had a revolution and Soviets were set up all across the country for one year. But after a year they gave up power without any pressure to Berlin because they felt that they needed a more centralized power, and they felt that this could be better done ~~than~~ in a parliamentary democracy than in a Soviet democracy. I am not so sure about that, and ideologically I feel that government by the people is much more possible in a Soviet system.

Erik: It is strange: I hadn't consciously considered the theoretical model of the soviet system, but it resembles in many ways the patterns which I present in my outline of a Utopian Constitution: the idea of combining democratic centralism--as opposed to bureaucratic centralism--with some kind of decentralism. What has happened in the Soviet Union is that what is on paper an extraordinarily democratic system through the system of soviets was transformed ~~it~~ into a bureaucratic, elitest centralist authority primarily, I think, because of the requirements of rapid industrial development. There was such pressures on the Soviet Union to industrialize in order to survive, that the leadership felt that they couldn't afford the slower pace that

they thought would happen if they had followed the original ideals. And also I think that the leadership simply didn't trust the people. They felt that if the people really had the power, they would misuse it, backslide into the old society. A developed economy like the United States wouldn't have all of those stumbling blocks. It would have others, but at least it wouldn't have the pressure to rapidly develop. If anything it has a need to undevelop a bit. That is what Marcuse means when he says that we really have for the first time the technological possibilities of having a really democratic society. We don't need authoritarian power relations just to survive.

Chris: These pressures still very much exist in many developing countries. It is pretty hard for them to take things slowly, the way they want to. Like in Viet Nam where the enormous military pressures push them in a particular direction.

David: Right. And I think that we have to consider when we talk about the political structures we want to see within nations, the types of relations we want between countries.

Betsy: Ah-ha! I have a proposal. One of the few things that was pretty clear to me was that nations cannot continue to exist. That what we need is a world federation. The nation-state idea is as obsolete as the city-state idea. Some kind of real pulling together is necessary. There can no longer be any war. We cannot tolerate it. The expenditures on developing and producing weapons, offensive and defensive, are wasted resources that have to be placed elsewhere. I think that this is absolutely essential. There is the seed of it in the UN. The thing which tears up the UN is that it is a gathering of strong autonomous nations that are ~~sort~~ free to do whatever they want to.

Erik: But even more than that, I think that the problem with the UN is that the constituent countries are not really democratic. As long as you have a collection of authoritarian regimes, you cannot expect them to get along together in a democratic way. Unless you had a centralized, bureaucratic, authoritarian world government, these authoritarian members could not really get together constructively, as long as they remained authoritarian themselves.

Betsy: Erik, I'm confused about what "Democracy" is, I guess. Maybe it is because I have soured on the one I am living in.

Mike McKinley: But you aren't living in one.

Betsy: A friend of mine who is the chairman of the Democratic Party in Cincinnati said that "It is a great system if only it would work." Is that what we are aiming for?

Erik: No. I do not think that if all the ways in which the present system doesn't function well in its own terms--like the way machine politics are run and the way the media influence political life--even if these things were eliminated, you would still not have a real democracy.

Betsy: I sort of like our Constitution. I sort of do. There are a whole lot of things that have happened since the Constitution that have become a sort of unwritten constitution, like the two-party system, that have undermined it in many ways. It seems to me that

there are the seeds of things in our Constitution and there are the seeds of things in the UN, that are good, and we need to build on them.

Erik: I wouldn't say that everything in the Constitution is bad by any means.

Mike McKinley: That is very good because you are being taped....

Erik: But I do think that before democracy is possible, really fundamental changes in that Constitution would have to be made. Here is something which I feel is really essential. It is the first article in my Utopian Constitution: do you think that a democracy is possible with private ownership of the means of production?

Betsy: No.

Erik: But that is something fundamentally protected by our Constitution.

Betsy: Then they are wrong.

Erik: This is something which I feel quite strongly: a democracy cannot really be meaningful unless it is a socialist democracy, for as long as the economy is capitalist--in the sense of having an elite control the means of production--power will not be really in the hands of the people, but in the hands of that elite.

Mike McKinley: What you have to do is wait until companies become bankrupt and then have the government buy them up.

Erik: But the state buying corporations doesn't make the economy socialist. If the American government went into the stock market and became the majority owner of every corporation, it would still be basically capitalist, only state, centralized capitalism rather than private, decentralized capitalism. The state owning everything doesn't make it socialist. It has been argued that the USSR is now capitalist rather than socialist because the economy is run by an elite. What makes an economy socialist is not that it is formally owned by the state, but that it is owned by the people. The state does not equal the people, either in the United States or in the Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union, a bureaucratic elite own the means of production, particularly since the reforms of the past decade when bonuses, material incentives and profit incentives have been gradually introduced into the system. The salaries of the managers increase with the profitability of the industry, and this does indirectly reintroduce capitalist patterns of relations even though technically everything is owned by the state.

Donley: Do material incentives in a publicly owned factory necessarily off-set socialism?

Erik: I would think that it tends to. If I, for example, am a worker in an automobile plant, to the extent that my well-being economically, my level of consumption is tied to the profitability of that industry, I am going to work and strive, politically and organizationally, for that industry to make as high profits as possible. I will want to sell as many cars as possible; to build as many cars as possible. To the extent that my standard of living is tied to the profits of one industry, I will side with the interests of that industry whenever a conflict occurs between the profits of the industry and the needs of the community. In the Soviet Union what happened, I think, is that material incentives,

were introduced in order to increase production and efficiency. But the original ideal of having power really in the workers' hands had been destroyed already over a long period of time. When that was destroyed, and when a bureaucratic elite was running things anyway, then it probably is true that material incentives make things run more efficiently. Material incentives are probably necessary for a bureaucratic economy to function well since the bureaucratic elite does not have any other particular reason for running things effectively. But I do not think that it necessarily follows that if workers have greater control over factories, and especially if communities have greater control over factories, that material incentives would remain as important. People's enthusiasm and commitment to what they are doing would make up for whatever losses in efficiency there might be because of non-bureaucratic patterns of organization. If the economic standard of living of the individual is not tied to the particular industry in which he works, there is no particular reason why he should react negatively if the community decides that the factory should close up or reduce production. I suppose if the community wanted them to increase production they would have the right to demand that more workers work there or the community not make that demand. At any rate, the Soviet Union is not an example of why Socialism can't work, it is an historical example of where it didn't work.

Chris: When you talk about the "community" that can be a fairly broad thing. In terms of planning the production of cars, for example, there are important questions about how broad that community is going to be. Is it the whole nation? How centralized does that planning have to be? You produce cars for the whole world, is that the "community?" Do we have factories that only service a single small community?

Erik: It seems to me, as Betsy said, that nations would not exist. ~~It~~ They are really the least natural unit around. Cities are pretty natural, functioning units, and regions may be functioning units. But countries really aren't functional divisions of the world.

Betsy: They are historical mistakes.

Erik: A world Federation should not be a federation of nations, but of regions and cities.

Chris's question is really an important one I think: how do you decide at what level of a democratic political system certain kinds of decisions get made.

Chris : that's right, especially on a world level. If you do not want a centralized bureaucracy, how do you decide how many cars should be made for the world and where they should go?

Betsy: I think that there are really two basic levels of government which we have to think about: some kind of administrative bureaucracy and decentralized decision-making groups. The first is a big bunch of people deciding how many cars there should be and where they are needed, keeping mercury out of tuna fish, being a regulatory agency protecting the lives of the people it governs, dealing with mundane things like making sure there aren't rat hairs in candy bars. That is one level. But then there are a whole lot of little groups of people in different places who should be governing themselves. They are doing it in all different ways. I would think that

the community which was involved in any one geographic area or subject area should be the people who are interested in that area, and they should make the decisions for that area. Say if it was a decision concerning schools in New Haven, the people who should decide the question should be people interested in the problems.

Erik: the people interested in the problem rather than the people affected by the problem?

Betsy: See Erik, I do not think that it is going to be possible to get people involved who do not want to be involved. It is possible to encourage them to be involved, but that is all. I am really impressed with the power of apathy.

Erik: But one of the reasons why people are apathetic now is that they do not have real power. And they don't have time.

Mike: I agree with Erik. One of the reasons why people are so apathetic McKinley is because they don't have any power and another is that we have been so conditioned to be apathetic. The way that we are all taught what "democracy" means is by the lack of democracy. Democracy is something that is supposed to come at the next stage of Nirvana, and that stage is always the next stage as we move along. We never get to that point where we are really allowed to participate in these decisions.

Mike: There is something by Durkheim on the wall: "It is an ideal that Murphy we only approach ceaselessly, not one that is possible to obtain."

Mike McKinley: Yeah, but that is different from when you are in grade school and they teach you about democracy and say in Junior high you will have democracy, and in junior high they tell you that in high school you will have democracy and so on. And when you go out to get a job they tell you to shut up and work because you are not the one who owns the corporation anyway.

Donley: This is something which came up the very first night we met, whether Utopia was really a goal or whether it was more a process of living that we approached.

Mike McKihley: But you do have to have the feeling that you are approaching something in order to not be apathetic.

Mike Murphy: When I think about these things I always realize that the times I learn the most are the times where things have been the most problematic. The high moments, the utopian moments are not unconnected with trials and tribulations.

Dabid: This may be what I was saying to Erik earlier. Perhaps if there are no basic problems, if things are running even moderately smoothly without the crises we have now that bring out the greatness of human beings, things would become even more apathetic and uninteresting, sterile.

Betsy: wrong, wrong, wrong.

Erik: I don't think that these crises are what brings out the greatness of human beings. No social changes and political changes are going to eliminate the intrinsic trials and tribulations of being a human being. Such changes will just get rid of the grosser things which hurt people rather than help them be truly human. I don't think



that pollution as a problem is something that really enables people to rise to greater heights.

David: But that is a problem which is causing a revolution in consciousness.

Erik: But it would be even better that we didn't have the problem. Without pollution and poverty and exploitation to occupy people's attention and consciousness, people could get down to the important things, like Mike's "meaning"--I don't mean the Meaning of Mike, but the meaning he is concerned about.

David: But maybe part of my meaning is found in the battle against problems, whatever they might be. I am not speaking out in favor of problems.

Donley: This is beginning to sound like my 1958 Youth Sunday Sermon.

Betsy: I was thinking of dear old Maslow who said that it was really impossible for people to do a lot of things towards self-actualization until certain things were taken care of including basic food, shelter and clothing and some kind of physical security and some sense of psychic security. Those are problems which I sure wish there was a strong World Government to take care of. Those are all problems which I am glad that I personally do not have to hassle in the way some people do. I agree that people develop best when they confront rather than avoid problems. That is why I prefer a free school to an authoritarian school, but I think it is important that those problems occur in a particular kind of atmosphere.

Erik: Another thing is, I think, that the intrinsic paradoxes of being a human being, the puzzlement of just Being, are things which will be clarified rather than obscured by solving some of the social, economic and political ills. Getting rid of those ills will mean that people will be able to be less preoccupied with the terrible miseries of the world and will be able to get down to relating to each other and relating to each other in positive ways.

Mike Murphy: I think that you are exactly right, but I still have the feeling that...

Erik: the forms don't matter....

Mike Murphy: yeah. Old Man River just keeps rolling along without much change.

Erik: I would still like to talk a little about politics.

Klaus: Well, going back to the question of democracy, I think that if in the States today we had a real democracy, things would be even worse politically, even more conservative and racist. On the average Congress is ~~even~~ more liberal I think than the average population. So you better be careful.

Erik: I don't know if that is really true.

Chris: I wonder if the phenomenon Klaus talked about is the result of the fact that the Congress has power and the people don't. If you don't have power that might tend to make you more conservative.

Mike McKinley: Another issue ~~this~~ is that in the media there really isn't enough information for most people to make decisions. Without that information people are much more conservative than they would be otherwise. There is a kind of innate conservatism in most people in that they want to ~~x~~conserve what they feel is good, but I

don't think that we would have the misdirected conservatism if people had power. I don't think that we would have a lot of waste in spending, for example, like in military, if people had to grapple with those decisions and that money. But now we are educated not to make decisions and to have people make them for us, and not to seek information about how to make decisions.

Erik: Don't you think that in the theoretical Russian model--the system of Soviets that Klaus talked about--that the soviet councils are an enormously effective educational device. If people in a factory meet regularly and have the power to make important decisions about that factory, that that is one of the best ways for people to learn how to make decisions. The problem is that if they do not have real power, but only power on paper, if they know that any decision that they make can be (and probably will be) counter-manded from above, then people get apathetic because they don't see any point in spending the time at meetings. But if they really do have the power to make decisions, that is something which itself encourages people to develop a more responsible attitude towards political activity.

Klaus: But at all levels of decision-making people will come to problems they know nothing about and which should be dealt with by specialists. Like how to build a power plant in a community. Nobody would know how to do it. You need a specialist committee to prepare some kind of report that would make it possible for the people in the community to make decisions. I agree with you that if you gave people good information and power, then they would make better decisions. I have this same experience myself in the seminary in Germany. No one was very interested in student politics. Then we changed the whole system and created a student council at the lower level which made decisions. Then we had a meeting every week and 90% of the students came to them, whereas before the students had any power and power was in the hands of an administrative council, we had meetings every two months and less than half of the students showed up. Before the change, everything was taken care of for the students, and so nobody really cared about student participation; then we changed the system and suddenly people became more responsible, and at the same time there was a value shift towards the left in the seminary students.

David: I would like to see a situation in which all people who were capable of thinking could be considered voting members. Like if a five year old was considered enough a part of the community to be affected by a decision, he should have the right to vote if he wanted it.

Betsy: why vote? A consensus is much better.

David: Consensus is a beautiful idea, but how can it really work?

Betsy: I think voting is terrible, but I agree with your general point that decision-making should involve everyone who wants to be involved.

Erik: One thing which this means is that a city, for example, would have to be broken down into neighborhoods that would not have more than perhaps 400-500 people in them. That is probably about as large a face-to-face group of people that could meaningfully

get together into neighborhood councils. These councils would be functioning groups making decisions about everything which directly impinges on the life of the neighborhood. These neighborhood councils also became the place where policy questions concerning higher levels of the political system--the city, the region, the world--were also discussed. The primary place where people meet to think through and work out these issues should be at the bottom rather than at the top. The people who sit on the city-wide council would not be elected in a vote of the people at large, but rather would be appointed by a consensus of the people in the neighborhood councils. If we were a neighborhood council of several hundred people and we choose Betsy to be our delegate to the city-wide council, she would not have power in the same way as a present city councilor. A present representative is elected by people who never see each other, never meet to work through issues, and so he is given our power to make decisions on his own. If we don't like the decisions he makes, we can throw him out and give our power to someone else. But if we are a functioning group, and Betsy is a regular equal member of that group along with everybody else, and then we choose her as our delegate to sit on the city-wide council, she really represents us, and it is really we as a group and not so much her as an individual who sits on that council.

David: And the principle of this organization is that the rules and laws are made at the lowest level possible where everyone in that level is affected.

Erik: Yes: you don't make rules about schools in the world government, but rather in the city. The neighborhood may be too small for that, but maybe not. Transit systems ~~may~~ decisions may be made more at the regional, inter-city level. But wherever those decisions are made, they are made by delegates of lower level functioning groups, rather than simply by people elected by people who never meet together.

Mike Murphy: What about disputes? Disputes within a level, or between neighborhoods lets say, or between different layers of the onion?

Erik: That is where I really think that this kind of democracy has to have certain centralist ~~is~~ features, it has to be a kind of democratic centralism rather than a real anarchism. This means that the lower levels of the political system should be bound by the decisions of a higher level, even if they do not like the decision, unless of course it was felt the decision was so horrendous that the lower level would have to fight it. If that happens, the system collapses. The reason we are bound by that decision ~~is~~ that the decision is really a democratic one, and we are operating under the premise that if we do not like this decision, then some other neighborhood or city will not like some other decision which we like. So we put up with and accept decisions we dislike. That is not true now. Now, some people have nearly all the laws against them, and some people have nearly all the laws in favor of them. If that ever happened in a truly democratic system, the system would soon break down. Again, what makes the ~~democratic~~ system I am describing a centralist democracy is that decisions made at higher levels bind the lower levels; they do not have the legal option of opting out of the decision (of course, for certain kinds of decisions, it could be

agreed upon that lower levels could have the option of opting out). I do feel that this is crucial for the system to function and for conflicts to be resolved. The same thing goes for the issue of who decides at what level given decisions are made. Such decisions have to be made really at the higher levels of the system, although again, the essential discussion of the problems occur at the bottom. Whether schools should be decided upon at the neighborhood level or the city level would itself be decided at the city level, because such a decision would have to be a consensus among the neighborhoods, and such a consensus can only emerge at the city-wide council meetings.

Mike Murphy: Do you feel that the single biggest deterrent to a workable, equitable system is sheer numbers of the population? The larger the system becomes, it seems to me, the harder it is to really arrive at a consensus. In your centralist principle it would seem that the world government would be incredibly ~~difficult~~ distant from the neighborhood, and I can't see how it could avoid getting into the same kind of anomie and alienation as we have now.

Erik: That could be a real problem, but the important thing is that another important principle of a real democratic centralism is that the world government would not be making decisions that concerned primarily the neighborhoods or the cities. The number of decisions that they would be directly concerned with would really be minimal.

Betsy: I see the problem you are talking about Mike. What would be hoped for is that the World Government would handle problems that cannot properly be taken care of at any lower level.

Mike Murphy: I can accept that. But there still are some real problems. Like there is this water in Colorado and some of the neighborhoods in L.A. don't have much water. So, up through the chain goes the cry, we need water. Such a situation would create a real mishmash of conflict because the people in Colorado don't want dams and their water diverted, and the people in LA want the water.

Mike McKinley: You are going to have to work that kind of problem out in any system. In the water example now, the decision is made by a bureaucratic water planning board which is beholden to the profits of corporations. The decision is not made by the people in LA and the people in Colorado getting together in some way and deciding how best to work things out. The decisions are now made by real estate developers and the like who think mainly about property values and profits.

Erik: And I would think that if people really had the power to make these decisions, to work them through themselves, that they would change and become more concerned with resolving conflicts through consensus than through power plays. The people in L.A. would be more concerned for the people in Colorado than the developers are now for either the people in Colorado or the people of LA. But it is not like this system is going to eliminate real conflict, and that there will be no bitterness at certain decisions, but I think that the general political atmosphere will allow those things to be worked out much more easily.

Another things which seems to be absolutely crucial, as I said before, is that without having a really socialist system, not just a

formal socialism, I don't think that this is possible. It is also essential that people work short work-weeks, less than 20 hours or so. You can't have people working an 8 hour day and expect them to be able to spend the time and energy necessary for democracy to function meaningfully. Consensus takes time. And this activity has to be seen as not something extra-curricular, but as a central, basic activity of community life. Politics is a basic social activity in the sense of people controlling the decisions which affect their lives in significant ways. That is something which should be a part of everyone's life and not just the responsibility of a specialist elite. Of course not everyone will participate in this way, but it should be the norm. It is like what Mao ~~says~~ said about the Cultural Revolution in China: "Politics in Command", by which he meant that political activity at the grass roots was not something which was left to Communist Party activists, but was something which everyone should do as part of his essential social role in a community. In China people spend incredible amounts of time in political meetings of various sorts. I am not saying that we would want to do it the way that they do it. But the principle is crucial. Politics is everyone's business, not just of "politicians".

Betsy: One thing that we should consider maybe is some place where people can go for judgements of problems, to a person who they can trust to help resolve conflicts, to some kind of Ombudsman. There are going to be conflicts, and there needs to be institutions for handling these.

Donley: In terms of people to go to, I am kind of entranced by what were the roles of the Greek Philosophers and the Hebrew Prophets. They were not lawyers, but gave legal advice, value-advice, philosophical advice.

Erik: One of ~~the~~ the things which might happen in this society is that institutions of higher learning could have as a major area of study Conflict Resolution, in which people are trained in the humanities, philosophy, theology, social sciences, in such a way that they become very good and sensitive as arbitrators of conflicts of various sorts. When a conflict occurs which is not resolvable by the parties concerned, when they cannot reach a consensus, the conflicting parties can come and agree upon a common arbitrator who will work out some kind of solution with them. One of the problems of our present legal system is that it is not geared towards conflict resolution, it is geared towards assigning guilt and responsibility and making a yes-no decision whenever there is a conflict. ~~X~~ You solve a problem of a crime by putting a ~~prisoner~~ ~~in~~ ~~prison~~ criminal in prison, not by resolving whatever conflicts lead to the crime in the first place. Instead of having an adversary system of law as we do at the present time, you could have some kind of conflict-resolution system. I don't really know how you would work that out, but the orientation would be basically different.

Klaus: That is one of the main things that a world government would do: avoid violent conflict on an inter-national level.

Erik: Do you think that meaningful conflict resolution on an international level is possible without democracy in the constituent countries?

Klaus: Well, I am not sure. It might be possible for values like freedom to occur and be protected under some other kind of constitution,

but I would agree that it would probably be best protected under some kind of soviet-system.

David: Maybe it would be a good idea to look at what kinds of decisions would be made at different levels of the system. As many decisions as possible should be decided upon on the community level. As far as work decisions are concerned they should be decided not by the neighborhood or the community level, but by the workers in the factory itself in conjunction with the community which is going to receive those products.

Erik: In a factory, I think that the way in which the factory is run should be under the control of the workers in it--how you rotate managerial decisions, how you organize shifts and coffee breaks, etc.--all of that can be decided within the factory because that really affects the workers in the factory much more than it does the community at large. But how many automobiles you are going to produce, and whether you are going to produce cars or buses, is something which should be decided strictly by the community. The workers should have no more say on that decision than anybody else in the community.

Donley: Except of course that their working conditions will vary by the demands of the community.

Erik: Right. And that would be a constraint on the community's decision. The community could not insist that they make so many cars that they would have to work a 60 hour week. I suppose if no consensus was reached on such a difference of view, if the conflict could not be resolved, that the workers could simply strike against the community in such a situation. But again, if that happens, it represents a very serious breakdown in the organic co-operation of the system.

Donley: But even if the community decided that it wanted busses instead of cars, that would require major reorganizations of processes within the factory. A decision at one level requires a variety of decisions and actions at other levels.

Erik: That is true. And such a change of production would require the factory acquiring all sorts of new equipment and that would require the action of a more centralized, co-ordinating authority to make those arrangements possible.

Chris: That sort of situation would probably require at various points the kind of arbitration we were talking about.

Erik: I am not sure if in the end there would really be that much conflict. The workers in the factory are, after all, also members of the community. They meet in these neighborhood councils and sit on the city-wide council and so on. And, if there are real reasons why the community wants buses instead of cars, the workers in the factory probably share those feelings. At least they are involved in the discussions on those decisions as much as anyone else.

Donley: That is true if the factory is a community-oriented factory. But if the factory produces goods for a major portion of the world, then they are not really involved in the discussions on how much to produce at all.

Erik: That is true, and I guess that does create problems that have to be dealt with somehow. Those goods which are really significant on a world level will somehow have to be co-ordinated by an agency of the world government. That agency might not dictate the number, but at least it would provide data, information to the factory level of the system as to what the needs and desires of other places are. They could at least serve a co-ordinating function, even if they did not have coercive power to make a factory produce so much. If in such a pattern a conflict arises, the arbitration system would have to operate.

David: what about the deviants who really refused to go along with ~~the~~ the arbitration? It would be beautiful if there was no such thing as social deviancy and no need for social control, but that will never be the case.

Betsy: That is where Consensus as a process is so important. If you work at it long enough, you can work it out, get a real consensus.

Erik: At least you can get an overwhelming majority, even if there are a few people who don't fit into the consensus.

Betsy: But as you know, small minorities can really raise a lot of hell. As we are desperately trying to do. The value of consensus cannot be undercut by saying as long as all but two or three of us are agreed it is cool. There has to be full community agreement.

Erik: But realistically there will be situations where there are people in a neighborhood, or neighborhoods in a city, who are not going to like what is going on on particular issues. And there can be real conflicts of interests that cannot be resolved in a consensus. But as long as it is only on particular issues, and not on policies in general, I don't think that this necessarily poses a serious problem. But if a particular neighborhood, for example, is consistently screwed over by the city, then real difficulties can arise. I think that a consensus system will probably prevent that from happening. But these things are problems, especially when you are talking about agreement between cities and regions where there will be real and important differences in needs, resources, interests. It will be impossible to have general consensuses, I think, between regions on such matters for a long long time.

Chris: I really don't see how consensus is possible in a world as polarized in interests and ideologies as we are today. I mean, what are you going to do with the old capitalists?

Erik: That is a transition problem. The transition may be a little rougher than the eventual Utopia.

David: I don't like the idea of a benevolent dictatorship, but that seems to be the situation in Cuba right now, and maybe it is a necessary transitional stage.

Mike McKinley: Cuba was lucky in this regard because so many of the old elite left the country and came to the US. These people lost a great deal in the revolution and could not have been part of a revolutionary consensus, but the rest of the people have all really gained enormously. But in the united States the number of people who would loose by these kinds of changes would be much larger.

Erik: I don't know if that is really true. I think that most people would actually gain considerably. Everyone would gain in terms of the quality of life, I think, but most people would gain in terms of standard of living also, or at least in terms of the personal economic security of their standard of living. Many people who live fairly well today are up to their ears in debt, and that is true for poor people and middle class people alike.

Betsy: It seems to me that there is an enormous wealth of experience and expertise in the present system which should be used in our Utopia. Like, people in Proctor & Gamble know how to make soap. The world is going to still make soap, and the people who now run soap making in Proctor & Gamble maybe should continue to do so, only under new conditions. Like they couldn't vote themselves a raise in salary.

Chris: Is the real source of their fulfillment now because they are in the soap business and like it, or because they are in the World Capitalist Business and like that, the power of that. Whether they could stay in responsible positions would depend somewhat on that.

Erik: One of the things about management now is that an enormous part of it is tied up with advertisement and with labor-relations, or control of workers. Management has to spend a great deal of time and effort just seeing that workers work. If workers had real power in the industry, and a real role in decisions, not just a token role, many of these problems would solve themselves.

Donley: One thing that occurred to me: would social services of various sorts be part of the normal labor force, or would these be things done on top of the 15-20 hours of work a week?

Erik: That is the sort of thing which would be decided on a community basis, I think. There could be all sorts of different experiments in procedures: some communities could rotate that kind of job; some communities could have each person devote part of every week on community service jobs; some communities could have regularly employed people doing that kind of work. It should really be open to each community to work that out and try different approaches.

Mike Murphy: Another thing we should do is really encourage children to work and be part of the community.

Erik: And that would be especially possible if work was not exploitive in the way it is now. As we said last week, if everyone participated in the unpleasant jobs of the society, we could get them done with an average of probably ten hours of work a week, and so people would really be liberated to participate more in political life and other activities.

Betsy: I would like to return this to the global level, because one of the things that has to be done is to think about the resources the world has and how they can be constructively used. A group of people have to be deeply involved with finding out how much we as a planet have and how long it is likely to last. One example of this is oil.

Erik: The sooner they run out the better....



Betsy: another example is food. It may happen that there is going to be a real big war when a country like India runs out of food. And this isn't all that far away, and some kind of global co-operation is necessary for us just in order to survive.

Erik: Don't you think that these problems would be much easier to solve if power wasn't private, but collective, if profit wasn't the criteria for making decisions, but rather the community's interests.

Betsy: But the Global council is going to have to make final decisions that affect the whole world, and not all local or regional communities will necessarily go along with them.

Mike McKinley: Erik has said that these decisions basically come up from the bottom, but I think that there is a real problem with that because of the conditions in certain parts of the world. If all the food in the world were distributed equally, which is what people in most of the world would want in their neighborhood councils, then we would all be equally starving, rather than unequally starving as things are now. This goes for many other resources as well, which is one of the reasons the United States maintains its control in other countries. It wants to maintain our standards and so we have to maintain through imperialism our control of the resources of the underdeveloped countries. If the world was organized into soviets, the people in this country would have to make the decision to starve themselves so that people who are starving in India will starve less.

Erik: I do not think that that is in fact true. Right now there still is enough food to go around if profit was not the criteria for its movement and its production. And if things changed basically elsewhere then the population growth problem would be drastically reduced. The social and economic conditions in India make it imperative that families have large numbers of children. If India had a revolution along the lines of China, which has radically reduced population growth in China because of radical changes of the social pressures on families, then that problem in India would also move in the direction of being solved. The crisis is more of a political crisis than a population crisis.

Mike McKinley: Well, perhaps it would be possible to produce enough food, but there just may not be any ecologically sound way of doing it. If we produced enough food for India we would completely wreck our agricultural ecology even more rapidly than we are doing now. These are unsettled problems which are a great problem in the transition, because even under the best of conditions, the transition will involve real sacrifices for the richer countries.

Betsy: Yes, in the US today we have 6% of the world's population, but we consume 50% of the world's resources.

Erik: And that 50% is not consumed equitably even among that 6%. It is probably 10% of the American population which consumes 50% of those resources.

Betsy: I read that the amount of fish eaten by cats in the United States is the same as eaten by people in Chile or somewhere. That is something which really gives me pause.

Erik: Paws?

Mike McKinley: It is these things in the transition period which mean

that we are not merely talking about a shift in the way ~~decisions~~ decisions are made, but also a real shift in people's values of what is important, and also a shift in the consumption of some large groups of people downwards.

Erik: Those are real problems. Still, in terms of possible transition, I think that if the United States would stop taking resources away from the rest of the world and would end its military domination and presence in the underdeveloped countries, that very quickly they would begin to solve their own problems. If the US pulled out of Latin America and stopped given military support to the present regimes, there would be revolutions in every country.

Mike McKinley: I would agree with you there, that US presence is the first thing that has to go, but there are enough indigenous cultural problems that positive regimes are not going to emerge immediately everywhere.

David: I would like to raise a question which we skirted before. How is social deviancy and criminal behavior dealt with. To be sure, much crime and murder and other anti-social behavior is the result of social conditions, but even in our Utopia there will be people who are just psychologically screwed up. What do you do with them? Do you put them into prison?

Erik: Prisons would be one of the very first things to go. You might need psychologically rehabilitative environments for some people, and there will be some people who are dangerous and would need some kind of physical isolation from the rest of the community. If the ~~person~~ person was psychotic and was not dangerous, then there would be no need to confine them, but even if they were confined, the conditions of that confinement should be as good as the conditions of freedom. There should be the same kinds of material conditions, the same access to sex, and so forth. The confinement should in no sense be punitive. The community cannot abrogate the right it has to control certain kinds of behavior. A pyromaniac cannot be allowed to burn down buildings, and if in the short run he cannot be cured, he has to be put in a situation where he cannot do that.

David: But who decides if someone is destructive in that way.

Erik: That is obviously a terribly difficult question, but I think such decisions should be made by the political councils, again at the lowest level possible, rather than by professional courts, or at least if there were professional courts, their judgements would always be appealable to the political system.

David: But what is to protect people in that situation? You may have to confine a crazy person who disrupts meetings and cannot be kept out, but how do you protect, let's say, a group of blacks in a small Southern Town who might disrupt a racist town council? And how do you protect them from being accused of being disruptive even if they were not?

Erik: I don't think that in a democratic system it is possible to prevent that from happening. Perhaps you could have some protection by having the blacks be able to appeal to a higher level of the political system from the local council, but basically, there is no way that I can see of really institutionalizing the protection.

of groups and individuals from the majority, without the method itself being undemocratic. In the transition period I think that such undemocratic devices will probably be necessary, but they are dangerous and do not themselves resolve any contradictions. In the transition there will have to be some real authoritarianism (i.e. anti-democratic processes), in order for the transition to be a transition. Local communities will have to be prohibited from establishing exploitative factories, for example. That cannot be tolerated, but the actual mechanisms of that kind of control are very tricky and have to be carefully thought through. In the eventual Utopia, the only thing which protects minorities and individuals from oppression by the community is the democratic-humanist-socialist consciousness and values which have been cultivated by the democratic structures themselves: that is a kind of benevolent cycle instead of a vicious cycle: the structures help to generate the kind of people which will make the structures work.

addendum

A POLITICAL CONSTITUTION FOR UTOPIA

introduction

Political institutions ought to serve three essential functions:

1. facilitative function: to facilitate the accomplishment of collective goals, such as schools, public transportation, medical care, housing, etc.
2. protective function: to prevent the exploitation and oppression of one individual by another, of one group by another, of one community by another--i.e. to provide mechanisms which guarantee social and economic justice.
3. judicial function: to provide mechanisms for conflict resolution when socially disruptive conflicts occur between individuals, between groups and between communities.

To fulfill these functions in a meaningful way, the political system must be radically democratic. This means two things:

1. The people (as opposed to an elite) have real power and real control over all political and economic institutions.
2. Although the People have power, the majority of the people does not have the right to oppress and exploit minorities. "Power to the People" is a political formula means that individuals and groups have power over the institutions which affect their own lives, not that the majority has exploitive power over minorities, and certainly not that the "state" has exploitive power over individuals and groups.

There is a real conflict between these two principles. It is not possible in a democratic system to create mechanisms which prevent the majority from oppressing minorities, for any such mechanism would have to be itself outside of majority control and thus could itself become oppressive and authoritarian. If the majority establishes a tribunal--a Supreme Court--to protect minorities from the majority, there is nothing to prevent that tribunal itself from becoming an instrument of oppression, and instrument which oppresses either minorities in the name of the majority, or which is turned against the majority itself. This is a dilemma, a contradiction, intrinsic to political power. It is a contradiction which cannot be resolved by the political institutions themselves through the construction of clever safeguard mechanisms. The only way that this contradiction in a democratic political system can be resolved is through the development of a consciousness of common interests and common humanness among the vast majority of the population, and a willingness by that majority to tolerate deviance within broad limits. It is only when the majority itself refuses to oppress any minority that minorities

can meaningfully be protected, and this can only happen when the majority recognizes its common interest and its common humanity with that minority.

Although political institutions cannot themselves resolve this intrinsic contradiction in the exercise of democratic political power, they can contribute to the emergence of the humanist political consciousness which makes the resolution of that contradiction possible. This kind of political consciousness can be fostered in a variety of ways: through revolutionary political parties, through political education, through co-operative community activities, etc. But above all it is the radically democratic political forms themselves which make possible on a wide scale the emergence of a truly human political consciousness: it is through the exercise of real power that people will develop a meaningful awareness of their collective interests and collective identity with other people.

To the extent that this exercise of power is co-opted by elites-- whether traditional political elites or new revolutionary elites-- the development of this new consciousness on a broad scale will be curtailed. It is this a crucial task of Utopian Political institutions not only to give formal power to the people, but to prevent the co-opting of that power by elites: the struggle against authoritarian political power (i.e. the co-opting of power by an elite) is central in the development of the kind of political consciousness that makes truly democratic political forms possible.

Structures, therefore, do not in and of themselves make a society democratic. But they can help to create a social context in which a dynamic democratization process can occur. A truly democratic society requires democratic people, but only democratic structures can create a society of democratic individuals.

### structures

I. In order for people to have real power it is essential that the means of production be owned by the community and controlled by the people. This means two things:

- (1) those aspects of the running of a particular factory or service which affect only the people working in that factory or service be under their control through some form of workers' councils;
- (2) those aspects which affect primarily the larger community, be under the control of the larger community.

Thus, for example, decisions concerning how many cars to produce should be under the control of the larger community, but decisions about how to rotate responsibilities in the factory, how to run the production facilities, how to organize shifts, etc., should be directly under the control of the workers in the factory itself.

There are situations, of course, where the dividing line is not so clear, and this raises a very important political problem: who decides what lies within the jurisdiction of the workers' council inside of the factory, and what lies within the jurisdiction of the community council outside of the factory? Ultimately, when a generalized collective consciousness has emerged, the problem will not be a serious one; until that time, it is necessary for the larger community to have the power to demarkate lines of jurisdiction. This is in part what is meant by the concept of "democratic centralism" (see article IV for a more detailed discussion of this concept): democratic centralism is not opposed to democratic decentralism; it merely states that centralized authority (although still democratic) must decide what decisions can be dealt with in a decentralized way and what decisions must be handled by a more centralized power.

II. As a corollary to communal ownership of the means of production, individual levels of consumption should not be tied to the profitability of his particular work. Personal material incentives for productive activity should be phased out as rapidly as possible. This is important, for as long as the individual's well-being is tied to the profitability of his own activity, conflicts will occur between the individual's own self-interest and the community's interest, even if the factory is formally owned by the community. Thus, in the case of automobile production, if the worker's standard of living is tied to the profitability of the automobile industry, he will have a stake in maximizing the mark-up over costs of car prices, rather than working towards the community's transportation needs. If the standard of living is tied to profitability, there will be a conflict between the community's desire for cheap transportation and the auto-workers' desire for maximum sales and prices of cars; if his standard of living is not tied to his particular factory--if he, and everyone else, simply receives an annual income from the community--this particular conflict of interests would be eliminated and the emergence of a democratic consciousness facilitated.

[It should be noted that the question of tying the individual's personal welfare to profit is distinct from the question of income differentials, and even rewarding people materially for activity which the community values and wants to encourage. Ultimately it would be hoped that the pattern of income distribution would become completely egalitarian in the sense of "to each according to his needs, from each according to his abilities", but this is a less serious political problem than the relationship of individual interest and community welfare.]

III. Political activity should not be considered a job for an elite, but should become an important and normal part of the lives of as many people as possible, and thus work patterns have to be changed to make meaningful political activity possible for everyone who wants to participate. In an advanced economy this would be a relatively easy task: it would probably be possible in the United States today for most people to work less than 10-15 hours a week if massive waste were eliminated, if obsolescence and war were eliminated from the economy, if the massive superstructure of advertising and

public relations was eliminated, and if we spread out the work load more evenly among the population (including children). With a 15 hour work week people would have the time and energy to participate in neighborhood councils and to become fully involved in political processes. Day care centers, collective dining arrangements and the like would also help to liberate people so that they could participate responsibly in political life. As long as political activity is something on top of a full-time job for most people, it will not be possible to involve most people actively in political processes, and without active involvement, true democracy is not possible. And when political democracy becomes impossible, some kind of elite necessarily assumes power.

IV. Political power should be built from the bottom up rather than descend from the top. Political democratic centralism should be built upon a federated decentralism. This is a key issue and has much to do with the direction political development can take. What it means is that political power should ultimately rest on immediate face-to-face groups and associations (neighborhoods, factories, schools, etc.) rather than large scale groups (nations, industries, school systems, etc.): in order for people to meaningfully participate in political life, the lowest level, face-to-face political organization must have real power.

In a neighborhood, as an example, this means that the people in the neighborhood have the power to determine the use of revenues supplied to neighborhoods for improvements and development; they must be able to determine the way day-care centers are run for their children, and how the police force is operated (community control of the police), and so forth. [In order to make these decisions, it is imperative that neighborhoods have resources at their disposal, and this should be one of the central facilitative functions of higher levels of political organization: higher levels of organization should help to redistribute funds from richer to poorer neighborhoods (and regions), provide necessary advice and skills for accomplishing certain local projects, and in other ways facilitate the process of community control by making resources available to communities.] This kind of neighborhood control would involve some form of neighborhood council, involving as many of the members of the neighborhood who were interested in attending. [And again, work conditions would be organized in such a way as to facilitate rather than hinder such involvement.]

Such a neighborhood council would be an on-going decision-making body. It would choose delegates to sit on some kind of a city-wide council. This council would handle decisions appropriate to the city level of political organization, co-ordinate activities between neighborhoods and be directly responsible for providing working resources for the neighborhoods. The central political character of the relationship between the city-wide council and the neighborhood councils is that the neighborhood councils would be the primary locus of debate and discussion on issues, and that the delegate would be a representative of the views already worked out in the neighborhood council rather than an elected official of the neighborhood who assumed the responsibility of thinking and acting for the people of the neighborhood. The delegate could be changed at any time by the neighborhood, and he would necessarily continue as an

active member of the neighborhood council as well as a member of the city-wide council.

In a similar way, members of the city-wide council would choose delegates for the regional councils, and members of the regional councils would choose delegates for the higher levels of the political system (national councils or world councils). Since the delegates to the city-wide council are directly responsible to a functioning neighborhood political power, they would essentially be mandated by that neighborhood council to support a particular candidate for the higher councils. Ideally, decisions made at every level of the political structure would be on a consensus basis, but if a consensus was not possible, councilmen could cast votes proportionally to the number of people they represent at lower councils (i.e., neighborhoods and cities are of different sizes and some kind of allowance has to be made for this.)

Along comparable lines, individual factories could have factory-wide workers' councils which choose delegates to industry-wide councils, and academic departments in universities and colleges could have student-faculty councils which choose delegates for university-wide councils. It might also be desirable for such occupational councils to choose delegates to city, regional and national councils as well to participate in decisions which affect their occupation.

Such a pattern of councils operating at different levels of the political system in which the members of the councils are themselves delegates of more decentralized political councils is fundamental to the notion of a system of "democratic centralism" (as mentioned in article I. above). This is an important concept and needs to be clarified since centralism has so many bad, authoritarian connotations. Democratic centralism is differentiated from both bureaucratic centralism and democratic anarchism. It is "democratic" for two basic reasons:

- (1) The decision-makers in the central councils--whether the city-wide council with respect to the neighborhoods, or the regional councils with respect to cities and neighborhoods--are delegates from actively functioning political councils below them in the political system, and are removable at any time from office by that lower council. The ultimate ideal is that such delegates embody the consensus of the lower council rather than represent the members of the lower council in a position of elitest power.
- (2) It is also democratic because the fundamental locus for political debate and discussion is not the highest council, or even the regional and city councils, but rather the local neighborhoods. It is here that the important issues which are raised in the higher council are discussed, and fundamentally worked through. The higher councils serve the function of essentially working out a meaningful consensus (in the Quaker sense, not the LBJ sense: a consensus of highest aspirations rather than of the lowest common denominator) among the views of the lower councils rather than being the initiator of discussion and thought on the issues.

But such a system is also "centralist", not merely democratic. It



is not democratic anarchism. The decisions reached by the central councils are binding on the lower councils. They have to follow them even if they do not like them, (although of course they can oppose the decisions politically). This is necessary in order for the central authority to co-ordinate the needs of different areas, to help redistribute resources from rich to poor areas, to help to work towards the collective interest when there is a conflict with individual and regional interests. There are going to be conflicts in any system, and if a democratic system is to function without destroying itself, it is necessary for smaller units in the system to co-operate with higher levels of power. But again, the essential reason why they ought to co-operate with the higher levels is because the total structure is radically democratic.

This system can break down in several ways. If the central councils assume too much responsibility and policy-making for themselves and thus deprive the lower councils of any political significance, then the essential premise of the whole structure--that individuals are actively participating in politics at the neighborhood level--is undermined. Or, if somehow the delegates to the higher levels become professionalized and become stable representatives rather than more ad hoc delegates, then the centralist elitism can emerge which undermines the viability of the democracy. On the other hand, if the central power refuses to resolve conflict between lower levels, refuses to work for a consensus, refuses to play a meaningfully co-ordinating role, then the system can break down into mutually hostile and uncomprehending sectional sources of power.

The obvious ultimate conclusion from this analysis is that a World Government on the same basis of delegates from lower councils is necessary, and that eventually the level of political organization of the nation would hopefully disappear. Regions with region-wide problems would probably still be desirable, but nations are an artificial political unit of little functional value. They are often too big to be easily controllable democratically, without being big enough (continent-wide or world wide) to meaningfully handle important sources of conflict resolution. But the premise for a meaningful world government would have to be local democracy, radical local democracy. A World democracy resting on local autocracies is patently unworkable.

V. All bureaucratic structures should be strictly controlled by the political system. The bureaucracy should be seen as simply administrative, carrying out decisions made at each level of the political system, not as initiating decisions. There may be certain kinds of issues where the political system may want to give some discretionary latitude to particular bureaucratic structures, but such discretion should never be seen as institutionalized power in the bureaucracy. It is rather temporarily loaned power which would be revokable at any time (in the same way that delegates are removable at any time). It should be realized that such tight political controls on bureaucracies might lead to some inefficiency, although bureaucratic structures are so inefficient under present conditions that they might well become more efficient as people saw that they were really working for the community's interest. Basically the bureaucracy

should be seen as a resource of expertise, equipment, facilities, to be used by each level of the political system as it sees fit, rather than as an autonomous agent of action in the political system.

VI. Individual civil liberties should be respected by all levels of the political system. The freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, of religion, of assembly, etc., must be guaranteed for without them democracy can quickly deteriorate into authoritarian political forms. Any attempt to restrict civil liberties, to curtail certain individual freedoms, raises very difficult problems about how to control the coercive force, how to control the controllers. During the transition period certain kinds of constraints will unquestionably be necessary, and the community will have to be constantly aware of maintaining tight political control on whatever restrictions on individual liberty that it established (e.g. the prohibition of KKK marches and other incitements to racial hatred). But even when it is decided constraints are necessary, the community should always try to minimize coercion, both because coercion is not a good thing in and of itself, and because coercion is so difficult to control.

Civil liberty, individual freedom of action and thought (as long as it does not hurt another individual's freedom) is essential to a radically democratic system. But it is important to realize that it is also only possible in a radically democratic system. Freedom of speech is a hollow freedom when there is enormous differentials in access to the media. True freedom of speech can thus involve denying some people a certain amount of access to the media so that they do not dominate the means of mass communication. [As a very mild example under present conditions, the equal time doctrine on television is a partial restriction on Nixon's freedom of speech, in the sense of his freedom to dominate or monopolize the media. In a truly democratic society this principle would be carried much further towards real equality of access to the media.] As long as power is concentrated in a few hands, regardless of the formal democracy of the political structures, civil liberties cannot be a meaningful reality.

VII. Mechanisms for social control should not be punitive, but rehabilitative in a meaningful way. Prisons should be completely abolished. When some form of social control is used, techniques should be used which minimally deprive the individual of his freedom. In most cases real freedom of movement probably would not have to be restricted, although there would be instances, in the case of dangerous individuals, where some restrictions on movement would be necessary. None of the physical comforts of the outside world should be denied, including, of course, sex, books, alcohol (although alcohol or drugs could be restricted if for medical reasons if this were part of the problem), and the confinement should in no sense be seen as "punishment."

If the broad outlines of a utopian society emerged, the need for the community to coerce the individual would be greatly reduced. A great deal of current "crime" (although not all) stems directly from problems of social and economic justice and the dominant

social values of status and competition. If these are eliminated, or greatly reduced, crime would undoubtedly drop considerably, and as a result, control and crime prevention would not become central problems in the political system in the way they are today.

Nevertheless, socially disruptive problems will probably always exist, and thus some kind of coercion by the community will continue to be necessary. A truly democratic society cannot tolerate private sources of power (e.g. owning a factory privately); it cannot tolerate individuals who deliberately disrupt democratic councils (whether because they want to subvert the political processes or because they are simply crazy); it cannot tolerate individuals who do socially destructive acts (like burn down buildings) and who seriously attack the freedom of others. All of these actions have to be dealt with in some way, and some element of coercion is inevitably involved. The crucial point is that this coercion be directly controlled by the democratic political structures.

At each level of the political system--neighborhood, city, region, nation, world--there should be courts directly responsible to that level. At the neighborhood level it could be simply a committee of the neighborhood council, or perhaps even the entire assembled neighborhood council (i.e. a kind of People's Court). At the city level it could be a more professional bureaucratic court (where bureaucracy is defined as in article V above). The courts at each level would handle socially destructive deviance that affected that level of political organization. Thus neighborhood courts would deal with deviance on a neighborhood level (excessive noise, destruction of neighborhood facilities through mistreatment, etc), and city courts would deal with larger community problems. As with all such demarkation questions, the central authority would have to resolve questions of jurisdiction (e.g. who should handle a murder case). Appeals in such a system would not be generally to a higher court, but to the political structures itself, either to the same level or to a higher level.

Such a pattern of legal-judicial institutions would help to keep the judicial system under democratic control and would help to prevent that system from becoming an elitest tool or an instrument of oppression. But as was discussed in the introduction (p.113), there is ultimately no way in which the political institutions themselves can guarantee that the judicial processes, the machinery for protecting the society, will not become oppressive. That can only be guaranteed by the development of a certain kind of democratic-humanist consciousness among the people who run the system: The People

VIII. The Political System should encourage experimentation at all levels of society as much as possible. There should be no single pattern for the organization of neighborhoods, cities, regions, nations. Experiments in different ways of running things should be tried. People should have the maximum range of options of the kinds of environment in which they want to live. Some neighborhood councils should be small and be organized around a Neighborhood Commune. Others should be larger and have more autonomous household units.

Some cities should have professional-bureaucratic courts structures (still controlled by the city-wide council) and other cities should have council committees fulfill the court function. Some factories should have rotating management with every worker being maximally involved at different times in all phases of decision-making; other factories should try workers' council direct management; and others should try workers' council election of management. It is not possible to anticipate which specific forms will be the most successful in liberating people for socially and individually constructive and full lives. Undoubtedly, different patterns will be most creative for different individuals and different groups. The important point is that the political foster all of these forms, that people be able to learn from their own mistakes and the mistakes and knowledge of others, that the system be responsive to people's desires for change, and that all of the forms be basically democratic in their ethos.

SESSION VI: MARXISM AND ANARCHISM

February 9, 1971

Erik: I thought that as a bridge between our discussions of Utopia and talking about Revolution, we would discuss Marxism and Anarchism because they raise issues which fall on both sides.

Steve: I wonder if we could talk a bit Marx's idea that the Proletariat will realize itself and come into power, and what has happened to the American working class, which really seems to me to have decided to opt for material goods. It doesn't seem to me that it is ever going to realize its revolutionary potential in the American scene.

Erik: I think that it is a real question whether or not you can say unequivocally that the American Working Class has opted for material goods over political power. In the short run that is certainly true, I think, but I am not sure that you can say that this is a real prediction about what the preoccupations of the American working class is going to be in the future, in the long run. The direction that the working class will take depends to a large extent upon the way the total system will be able to satisfy those material needs. If you believe that the economic system is fundamentally capable of keeping the vast majority of the population in sufficient material comfort for that to happen, then I think that you are probably right and the American Working Class is unlikely to ever be a revolutionary force. But I think that this is a real question. What a Marxist would say is that there are certain contradictions in the functioning of the system such that the capitalist class will create problems which are categorically incapable of being solved within a capitalist framework. Some of those problems we see happening right now, like ecological problems. It is probably impossible for the total scope of ecological problems to be solved while at the same time maximizing profits. But the Marxist would also maintain that there are straight economic problems which will in fact lead to a deterioration of the working class in the long run. This doesn't mean that there will ever be actual starvation on a mass scale or even utter destitution.

Steve: But what is that level? It didn't happen in the Depression, so why should it happen in the future? It sounds good and I would like to believe it, but I simply don't.

Erik: I don't believe it either as a definitive prediction. There are things in the analysis of society, in the critique of society as it is and in some of the conceptual categories for looking at society, that I find very useful in Marxism, but I do not share the Marxist optimism of the inevitable collapse of capitalism through its own contradictions. Systems have an enormous capability of muddling through in spite of contradictions.

Steve: America is in a special position because it has managed to create such an incredible wealth of material goods that the rest of the world has never seen before.

Erik: That is true, but there are several factors which are important to realize. Marx felt that a capitalist system would be, at the time of its collapse, also at its wealthiest point. It is not that the total system becomes impoverished, but that the mechanisms for distribution break down because of the internal development of capitalist society,

and so the fact that the US is enormously wealthy is not in and of itself a contradiction of the Marxist thesis. There are two things which seem to me to be enormously important in the Marxist view of the situation in the United States today. First of all, the dependence of the United States upon the rest of the world, even though we are at the moment in a controlling position. If the sources of raw materials which we control around the world were cut off through revolutions or what have you, that would seriously interfere with the possibilities for American prosperity. The other thing is the whole question of shrinking profits in an advanced, monopolistic capitalist structure, and the impact which that has upon the whole dynamics of the economy. If American businesses don't make profits, and if they don't make sufficient profits for it to be worth while for people to invest in them, it doesn't matter what their productive capability is, the system is not going to function in a capitalist way. If in a capitalist society profits are the *raison d'etre* of economic activity, investment decisions, corporate motivations, and so forth, then, if for whatever reasons the economy as a whole ceases to be profitable, the system can no longer function. This is really quite central to Marx's argument: he feels that as a capitalist economy moves towards full monopolistic capitalism it becomes progressively unable to maintain profit levels. The argument is quite complicated and technical, and I really do not understand it all. My economics are really not good enough for me to follow all of the nuances of his argument. I had an interesting experience on these lines over the weekend: My brother-in-law's father is a very wealthy New York Stock Broker. I was talking to him and he said that he was very pessimistic and felt that American business was no longer really able to produce real profits. He said that for the first time in the history of the stock market there was the phenomenon of an incredible volume of stocks being sold but without the stock market really moving up or down very dramatically. What that means is that there is a high level of selling and buying without people having any intuitive sense of what the economy is going to do in the future. Like today the volume was 28,000,000 shares sold and yesterday it was 25,000,000: those are the two highest volumes in history. Looking at this situation he said straight out that he did not think that American industry is capable of being profitable any more. One of the reasons why this may be so is because of the enormous growth of monopolies, in the concentration of economic control and organization away from any semblance of a competitive system. In a competitive economy things like advertising become important in the profitability of any given industry, and so a large infrastructure of advertising gets built into the system. As the economy becomes more and more monopolistic, advertising becomes less and less helpful in supporting the profits of an industry (because it is no longer competing against others) and it gradually becomes a real drag on the profits of the industry. My Brother-in-law's father said that American business could not make profits because it had such high built-in costs, and one of these costs is advertising and an enormous technocratic-managerial staff, which absorb resources but progressively contribute less and less to profit. The growth of conglomerate industries has accentuated this process. Another issue is that the economy has got to be constantly growing for people to make investments: if the situation is static there is no basis for investments. So it is necessary that markets constantly expand in order for the economy to keep

running at a given profit rate. This, says the Marxist, is one of the central motives for imperialism: the necessity for expanding markets. Well, I don't really understand all of the details of the argument, but it was interesting that this Stock Broker was so pessimistic about the potentialities of the economy.

Steve: I wonder how this ties in to what is called the Pacific Rim strategy, in which the United States, in realizing that the domestic market is flooded and reaching saturation is trying to dominate the Pacific area as a new market.

Erik: I don't know. One of the problems with those countries is that at least at the moment they constitute a limited market since the people are still so poor, and in order for them to be able to afford to purchase things on a mass level requires revolutionary changes in their own economic conditions. And of course, the US opposes such revolutionary changes because it needs to protect its own economic interests in these countries.

Mike McKinley: Yes, because if they have a revolution they will use those resources for themselves instead of for us.

Erik: All of these things raise the basic question of whether or not the system, the economic system, has the capability of muddling through, perhaps developing into some sort of state-capitalism, but never becoming a revolutionary socialist economy. A state-capitalist system may be able to provide some kind of resolution of some of these contradictions, at least enough so that the basic power structure would remain unchanged. I do not see any compelling reason why that is not possible, whereas an orthodox Marxist-Leninist would say that that was impossible. They would say that the only way that the serious contradictions of capitalism can be solved is by eliminating the capitalist class. Since the capitalists themselves are unwilling to do this, the contradictions cannot be resolved without a revolution.

David: One of the things which Marcuse stressed was that there has been a vast increase of people who are employed in the service area rather than in productive activities. In the past the class structure consisted of workers, farmers, the bourgeoisie and I guess the petty bourgeoisie. But now there is an incredible growth in such things as social workers, psychiatrists, ministers and other kinds of non-productive people, which are kind of a new kind of middle class.

Erik: Did he give any statistics on that. I have heard this said several times, and I am sure that the absolute numbers of people in non-productive activities has increased, but I do not know if the proportion has changed all that dramatically, as a percentage of the population.

Mike McKinley: I think that the percentage of people in service work reached about 50% by the late 50s and continued upwards until we entered Viet Nam.

Erik: I would think that many of the people who would be classified as service workers would really be part of the working class, like mechanics in a garage. They are in a sense producing repaired cars, but I guess that technically that is not "production".

Steve: In a Marxist concept of working class they would be proletarians because they are selling their labor.

Erik: That's right. A Marxist doesn't really make the distinction between simple productive activity and service activity. The crucial point is that both are selling their labor and producing goods or services that generate profit for someone else.

David: How does management fit into this? My father is a controller for a factory. Is he part of "management"?

Erik: Managers are not necessarily "capitalists" in the Marxian sense. The person who directly runs the factory is not necessarily the person who really owns the means of production. That depends upon the manager's economic relationship to the industry. In our economy people who run factories get tied into the ownership of the factory through stock options and the like without ever really owning the factory: they can still be fired and thus they are really technocrats more than they are capitalist-owners.

I think it would be good here to add a post-session note. Because of the system of stock ownership in factories there is the appearance of a considerable confusion in class structure and the appearance that class lines are vague, overlapping and extremely complicated. While not denying that there is complexity, it is important to avoid missing the forest because of the trees. The concept of "ruling class" helps to clarify the situation. Technical participation in "ownership" of industry does not necessarily give the individual any greater personal role in political power, in "ruling" the country. Even being the manager of a big factory does not necessarily mean that the individual is a member of the ruling class. You can have considerable power over people directly ~~over~~ under you in a factory (as a manager) without having very much power on the state apparatus itself. It is control of the political machinery that constitutes a ruling class. Now, one of the basic ways--the basic way--that people are part of the ruling class in the United States is through economic power. At the local level, this may mean the economic power of being the biggest businessman and employer of the community. But on the national level it means having economic power at the center of the large, ~~concentrations~~ concentrated corporate monopolies, and this probably means having power in the largest financial agencies. While there may be many people with localized power within individual factories and regions, there are relatively few people in the top centralized levels of the economy that can exert control on the top of the political apparatus. While lower level "ownership" may have the appearance of being diffuse and confused, this highest level is fairly well defined and highly concentrated. (see Lundberg: The Rich and the Super-Rich, and Domhoff, Who Rules America?)

Steve: That class of technocrats has itself grown considerably in recent years. It was really an unknown group a while back, and they surely seem to have sold out for purely material gains.



Mike Murphy: Is economics the prime determinant of these things, or is it a kind of barometer that fluctuates with other factors? I guess I don't know very much about Marxism.

Erik: In the Marxist conception, the control of the means of production is absolutely central. The pattern of control of the means of production is the basic definition of the essential structures of society. To a Marxist, the political structures are the legal forms which are created to protect that particular pattern of ownership of the means of production. Thus in a feudal society, some kind of semi-absolutest monarchy combined with a powerful baranage is the best way to protect the manorial system of production, whereas in a capitalist society a bourgeois democracy is the most effective political form for protecting the capitalist pattern of ownership of the means of production.

Donley: What happens when a worker, like in a GM plant, uses his money to buy stocks in the ~~plant~~ industry so that he gradually develops a real stake in it? He works on the assembly line and is thus a worker in the factory, but owns stock also.

Steve: But that is irrelevant in terms of the decisions made in that company, in terms of power.

Erik: Marxists would argue that in the initial stages of capitalism power lies basically in the hands of merchants, and that it progresses from there into the hands of industrialists (during the industrial revolution) and from there into the hands of centralized bankers, financiers. These are the people who control the sources of borrowing by industrialists, and in controlling the sources of loans, they control the industry as well. This development occurs because with the development of large monopolies, the sums necessary for investment become so huge at any moment in time, that such funds have to be borrowed. You don't invest basically from the profits of the industry (particularly as profits decline), but you invest by borrowing money from a bank and then paying off the interest from the loan with the profits, and gradually in this way the banks gain effective control of much of the economy.

Mike Murphy: It seems that the take-over of the means of production would be something which you would have to be patient about, wait for, that you would have to let the thing collapse rather than try to foment on your own.

Erik: A Marxist would say that, but he would add that it would be important to organize the working class, to educate the proletariat and develop its class consciousness so that they would be ready to assume power if a revolutionary situation develops. And they would also feel that they can aid the process of collapse along by organizing a struggle against the system through strikes and eventually revolutionary action.

Mike Murphy: So, to the Marxist, there is some point where you have to start taking up guns and shooting people.

Erik: I think that a Marxist who follows a consistently revolutionary line would have to say that. The Ruling class, the Capitalist class, is not going to voluntarily give up its power, even after an economic collapse, and so the actual seizure of power by the proletariat would involve, necessarily, revolutionary violence.

Donley: The point you made about strike, though, is very interesting. You said that the strike advanced the collapse of the system in that society, but strikes can also advance the education of the proletariat in the opposite directions, towards materials goods. The reason for the strike is not to destroy the corporation but to gain certain demands for the workers.

Erik: I think that that depends a great deal upon the leadership of the strike, how it is organized, what kind of propoganda goes on inside of the strike organization during the strike, and so forth. In the United States now, the leadership of most strikes is totally apolitical or anti-political, conservative. They constantly emphasize that the only reason for strikes is narrow economic gains and that strikes have nothing to do with politics or political power at all. But this may not always be the case. It seemed to me that in the GM strike there was a great deal of more radical activity going on and that many union members were quite disenchanted with the conservative stance of ~~zyz~~ the leadership.

Klaus: In the Marxist system in the last century, one always thought of the proletarian as someone who did not own anything but his own labor. The Capitalist system in the Western World prevents the worker from being revolutionary, for to be really revolutionary you have to be in a position where you cannot loose anything by revolution. Like Marx said "we have nothing to loose but our chains." Western Capitalism prevents the development of a revolutionary worker because it tries to convince everybody to own at least a house and a car. In the US, therefore, a worker will turn against a rioter who burns cars or anybody else who attacks property.

Erik: And also, since most workers, most people, who buy these things have to buy them on credit, on installments, they have to keep paying the installments and so they cannot risk radical political activity which might threaten their jobs and their ability to pay for what they already possess (but do not really own).

Klaus: In Germany what you had was that the biggest car producer, VW, was owned by the Government rather than stock holders. What the Conservative party in Germany did when it was in power was to change VW into a stock-holder company. The stocks were thus sold to the common people so that they would not turn against a company that had their own money in it.

Steve: It looks like a very left-wing thing to do: to give the people part ownership in a corporation, but what it really does is gives people a stake in that government and is thus really reactionary.

Donley: And this is what really fucks up the possibility of calling a class really a proletariat.

Erik: Well, it does and it doesn't. I do not think that these gimmicks change in any way the basic structures of power in the country at all. What it does do is changes the psychological awareness of that structure, the class consciousness of the workers.

Donley: which may be much more powerful than the actual structures.

Klaus: What I wanted to say was that although every individual stock holder technically has one vote in the company, it is the banks which have

the real power because they administer the stocks for some 500,000 stockholders. It ended up in Germany exactly the same way as here even though the company was originally owned by the government. Power really lies in the banks, and ultimately in the bank directors who control the banks, and the financial ~~management~~ power of the banks. The whole system is so tied up that it is almost impossible to make a revolutionary situation the way you might have been able to do 100 years ago. The problem is that Marxist dogmatism as we have it in the Soviet Union right now does not make it possible to see the real nature of the revolutionary situation we might have now. Things are different from the situation 100 years ago and so we have to analyse the situation differently.

Erik: And also it is important, especially if you are a Marxist, not to judge the revolutionary potential of the situation simply by the present conditions of the society, and assume that these conditions are themselves not going to fundamentally change. Industries in the US still do make profits now, but imagine what would happen if, for whatever technical and economic reasons, it became impossible for the great corporations to be profitable? This has already happened in the rail roads; it could happen throughout the economy. What would happen then?

Donley: Has anyone heard the theory that the reason why we are in Vietnam is to keep the Japanese out of SE Asia? The Japanese are much more prone to fill power vacuums than the Chinese, not militarily, but economically. We set China up as a paper tiger because what we are really afraid of is our friends the Japanese.

Erik: I am not sure that US and Japanese capital are that independent that we can really call them rivals.

Donley: I don't know about that. I think that the Japanese are pretty much in control of their own businesses.

Mike McKinley: The Japanese Government is very strict in keeping down the level of foreign investment in Japanese companies, so that companies like GM cannot buy into them the way they did in Europe.

Donley: And just the same way that individual businesses get mortgaged to a bank, individual countries can get mortgaged to another country. England is certainly mortgaged to the US, and so is India, although Japan is moving in there.

Erik: One very important concept in Marxism, which I think has value regardless of your predictions for the future or your optimism about the working class, is the Marxist concept of the role of the State. This is the central locus for the historic conflict between the Marxists and the Anarchists which has been going on ever since Marx and Bakunin first yelled at each other. To the Marxist, the State is the coercive arm of the ruling class, whatever that ruling class might be. If the ruling class is the bourgeoisie, the state and its courts and its laws, are all geared fundamentally towards the protection of the ruling class's position of power and control. Part of that involves having a State that is responsive enough to conflict that it can try to co-opt conflict in various ways. The

Government has to be responsive to the situation so that it knows when to make promises, when to make minor concessions, how to create the appearance of harmony, how to create diversions from class conflict, and so on, so that explosions are avoided. That is why democratic forms are so useful in a capitalist economy, so effective. For a long time in the 19th century workers often felt that all that they needed was the right to vote and they would automatically gain power. As it turned out, that was not at all the case: the right to vote did not give political power because the right to vote became the right to choose who was going to be the guardian of the interests of the capitalist class. You could not elect a government which could overthrow that class. Democratic structures have historically been a fairly effective conflict camouflaging mechanism, if not really a conflict-resolution mechanism. This is basically the Marxist view. I feel that the state is really a more complicated reality than this, and that it has a certain independent ~~an~~ autonomy, independent of simple class rule. I guess that that has elements of the classical anarchist understanding of the state.

The Marxist concept of the state is closely tied into the Marxist concept of revolution. To the Marxist, what happens in a revolution is that one class is removed from the position of being the ruling class and another class takes its place. In the case of the bourgeois revolutions in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries and in England in the 17th century, this meant that the Old Landowning aristocracy, which had already lost a great deal of its real economic power through the development of urban merchants and manufactures, were displaced from political power. Their control of the state had outlived their economic dominance. In the revolutions, the state became transformed from the guardian of the static landed interests, to the guardian of the dynamic, emergent capitalist interests. A dictatorship of the landowning elite was replaced by a new dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The concept of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" is that in a socialist revolution, the bourgeois ruling class is replaced by the proletariat, and the State accordingly becomes the coercive arm of a new class, the working class. It is a dictatorship not because it is more authoritarian than the bourgeois state had been, but because it is ~~azd~~ the coercive arm of a different class. What that coercive arm is doing, if it is truly a dictatorship of the proletariat (and not of a bureaucracy) is coercing the control of the means of production away from the hands of an elite and into the hands of the workers in the factories and services. Ultimately, once this structural transformation is complete, and once the consciousness of people has also been transformed to correspond to the new structures, then the glorious "withering away of the state" occurs, because a coercive state authority is no longer necessary. Once there is only one class and it does not need to subjugate any other class, the state is unnecessary.

Steve: That is another area I have trouble with....

Erik: Yeah. The Anarchist critique of this is that first of all the state is not going to wither away, it is going to get stronger, and secondly, that the state has a reality more or less independent of its class base. This doesn't mean that the State doesn't serve class interests, but it also serves its own interests. People want political power, and hold on to political power, not only because

they are serving a class, but because they are serving themselves and serving a political machine which has its own autonomous existence which in certain circumstances can even begin to dominate the class economic realities. That is the anarchist's view. They say a revolution can not, or should not, seize power and create a dictatorship of the proletariat; it has to destroy the State per se, not capture the State and give it to another class, but smash the whole machinery of State coercion. The Marxist answer to that is very simple: if you do that the Revolution is going to fail. The old capitalist class will remerge, the old pattern of social and economic relationships will re-establish themselves. The Marxist says you have to gain power and use it to prevent backsliding to the Old Order as well as to forge the institutions of the New Order. The State is a necessary means to the real liberation of the people. The Anarchist answer to that is that this will not happen, that in the exhilaration of the Revolution there will be voluntary, federated units that will spring up throughout the society that will on a voluntary basis exert that kind of control, but from the bottom up rather than from the top down.

Donley: It seems that at least in the case of Russia the Anarchists were right because in Russia there is re-emerging a new kind of capitalism

Erik: But also in terms of Russia the Anarchists were wrong. If Lenin had been an anarchist it is unlikely that the Revolution would have survived. It would not have survived the Second World war and probably not even the internal forces of the Old Order.

Mike Murphy: It seems to me that from either point of view what is needed is a radically new outlook on the part of large numbers of people, a whole new perspective on what it is all about. And it is very hard for that to happen, to reach that point.

Erik: Marx agrees with you. In the Manifesto of the Communist Party Marx says that "the immediate aim of the Communist party is the formation of the Proletariat into a class." By that he means that the Proletariat as individuals has to be made aware of their common class interests and they have to develop a new kind of class consciousness. That is the crucial role of the CP to Marx, for if that kind of dynamic, co-operative class consciousness is not developed, then they cannot assume the necessary role in the new society.

Mike Murphy: Did that ever happen in the Soviet Union? A really widespread new class consciousness.

Erik: In 1917, at least among workers, there was a real leap in class consciousness, but they were a small minority of the whole population. I really don't know. In China I think that this principle has been pushed much farther than it ever was in the USSR. Mao is enormously concerned with changing people's fundamental view of the world. I think that the cultural revolution was precisely that: a concerted national effort at all levels to change people's attitudes and feelings, their views about power and authority.

Donley: We have been talking so far about older philosophies, Marxism and maybe Adam Smith, and probably neither of them is very relevant to the present. Maybe Maoism has a greater validity in its approach because it has been worked out more in practice than the others, although it built on earlier philosophies.

Klaus: There is something Erik wrote in this paper I think is good. Bakunin and the anarchists say that what they want to reach is freedom for everybody, and Erik says that they felt "the best initial setting for the development of liberty is provided by the very act of revolt." That means that while revolting I am truly getting liberty: the means themselves give you the end. That is what Mao says also: we have to revolt and revolt again to make sure that we are liberated.

Donley: Jefferson somewhere talked about the need for continual revolutions. Supposedly the people who developed the American Constitution thought that that kind of revolution could be accomplished through a system of voting every four years. But of course that didn't happen: the system stagnated. But still, we symbolically go through an empty Revolution every four years.

Erik: I think Jefferson also felt that every new generation should rewrite the Constitution completely. The Constitution should have only a 25 year life span, and every 25 years the new generation that grew up under the previous Constitution would write the new one. The logic behind that was that you needed a new social contract every generation, a new revolutionary commitment to the country, and that a stable Constitution made this impossible. He did not see any basic class interests preserved in a Constitution, but still he did see Revolution itself as part of our political life, and I think that that is part of our tradition, even if it has been distorted.

Chris: How do current thinkers in the Soviet Union answer some of these questions? How do they deal with the fact that after 50 years the Soviet State seems far from withering away?

Erik: I do not know really how they deal with these issues. But regardless of their answers and rationalizations, I think that in the USSR today there is clearly not a Dictatorship of the Proletariat in any real sense of the term. There are two questions: if you have a dictatorship of the proletariat, how does it wither away; and secondly, what happens if the dictatorship of the proletariat changes into something else, into a dictatorship of a technocratic elite. In the Soviet Union, and probably everywhere else in Eastern Europe as well, although I am not sure, the second case is the situation. But I do not think that any of the theorists (with the exception of certain Yugoslavs like Djilas) have recognized this. In China, even though Mao is personally enormously important, I do not think you have a stable bureaucratic dictatorship as you do in Eastern Europe. The Cultural Revolution at least was a challenge to that kind of elitest bureaucracy. What I have read on China--non-Maoist but friendly writers--indicates that the Culultural Revolution was a real attempt by Mao to get the new generation involved in a Revolutionary process. They had grown up under the new system, had never experienced the trials of the Revolution, had never challenged power, had never attacked an existing structure, and Mao felt that this was absolutely essential. He felt that there was a real danger that people would begin to assume that the structures that existed were the correct ones simply because they existed, and that people would gradually fall into the trap of giving up power to a progressively stronger bureaucracy. And he also felt that it was necessary to shake up the bureaucracy a bit, to make them more humble and less

self-satisfied as Omnipotent Power. I don't think that the Cultural Revolution was spontaneous--it could not have happened without the encouragement of Mao at the top, but I also do not think that it was merely a power ploy on his part. It was really a process of mass involvement and mass education through direct political action, that, once initiated from above, was to a large extent controlled from below.

Klaus: The situation in China is also different because China has not entered industrialization in the same way that Russia has done. In China the economy is much much more decentralized than in the USSR. Many of the communities are basically self-sufficient, so that even if part of the country were attacked by the US or the USSR, the rest could really keep going. This is one of the ~~ways~~ reasons why a constant revolution could work because it would not so seriously disrupt the economy. Right now there is a different situation a bit, since for three years they have been trying to strengthen somewhat industry. That is a step forward, but it may result in building up more centralized industrial centers.

Erik: China, or rather China's political leadership, particularly Mao, made the decision not to give absolute priority to rapid industrialization and efficiency over all other values. They refused to push development at the expense of the political life of the People and of power being less bureaucratized than it otherwise would have been. There are certain sacrifices as result--development is probably slower as a result than in the USSR in the first 20 years after their revolution.

Mike Murphy: Is the goal of a Marxist Revolution ultimately for men's lives to have more meaning?

Steve: The whole thing about alienation concerns this, alienation from the products of his labor and from his self.

Mike Murphy: But does he allude to the kind of meaning there might be?

Erik: I do not think that he ever actually uses the word "meaning", or says that in a Communist society man's search for meaning will be facilitated. What he does say is that alienation between men and alienation within each man will be eliminated, and that the individual will have a maximum of real personal freedom, all of which are related to questions of meaning.

Steve: Does Marx base his whole concept of alienation upon the alienation of man from his own labor?

Erik: Marx discusses most of these issues in his early writings and never gives them a very systematic treatment, but I think that that is right. Man is part of a machine when he works and he has no personal connection between his labor and what he produces, both because what he produces is given to someone else, and because he is one little cog in the productive machine. That alienation is not contained in the time spent on the job, but pervades his whole life. A man's labor becomes a pure money value, not a human value; all relationships, to Marx, in a capitalist society, are cash relationships, including the relationship between a Man and Wife. The Communist Manifesto has a whole Women's Lib section.

Klaus: The problem of alienation, as far as I can see, is that man is separated from his sources, like the soil. The trick that Marx wanted to use was giving back the ownership of the means of production to the workers, of giving the factories back to workers. He felt that this would put men back in touch with their sources, with nature. But of course it is a trick which doesn't really work. Marx does not want really to bring all men back to the soil--he needs factories in the system.

Erik: Marx didn't ever really want to bring men back to the soil. His Utopia is not an agrarian one, but a highly automated industrial one based on industrial prosperity. I think what he feels is that after the revolution no person would spend more than a marginal part of his working time in jobs which could be considered alienating. That kind of labor would be spread out. He says something about that in the Manefesto itself when he says that one of the basic programs of the CP was "equal liability of all to labor".

Klaus: Let me try to explain it in a different way. In the ideal situation of man he would go into the fields, grow his wheat, and eat it. Production and living of man would be the same. In a factory this connection of production and life is disrupted because the individual does not produce from his fields for his life. In a factory he produces for other people who he doesn't know, even if he owns the factory, and that is alien-ating. Marx wanted to repair that wrong situation just by giving back the ownership to the workers, but I do not think that that works. I do not think that that really gives meaning back to life. But that was the trick he wanted to use.

Erik: Giving ownership was also meant to be giving power. "Meaning" doesn't come from formal ownership of the factory, but from being actively involved in the running of that factory, in processes of design and organization of the factory, and so forth.

David: It seems that in talking that way Marx is moving away from a strictly economic point of view.

Erik: Marx is not an economic reductionist in the way some Marxists are. Marx once said "I am not a Marxist", and what he meant was that the people who popularized his ideas oversimplified them enormously, whereas Marx himself has a very subtle and sophisticated kind of analysis. The Communist Manefesto is really a political document, not a philosophical or sociological treatise, and most people read this and judge Marxism as a whole from it alone. This is really the least subtle of any of his work. In his more sophisticated analysis, Marx is not an economic reductionist; he gives the superstructure an important role.

David: What do you mean by "superstructure"?

Erik: It has to do with what, in your theoretical schema, you think is basic and what is derived. Marx regards economic structures, defined very broadly, as in some sense "basic" in the social structure, and that ideas, political structures, and so on, in some sense spring from that economic base. That means that the change from feudal



society into bourgeois democracy was not the result of the idea that feudal monarchy was bad, and that men saw the "truth" of this idea and thus rejected feudal monarchy in favor of democracy. Rather, Marx would say that the pattern of economic relationships in medieval society evolved, over a long period of time, into something quite different. Through the growth of trade and urban centers, the economic hegemony of the landed elite was undermined, and eventually a new class became economically dominant, economically most powerful. Once this economic change occurred, the original medieval equilibrium between the political system and the economic base was destroyed, and it took a new revolution to re-establish a new equilibrium of sorts. The revolution created a new political structure which would serve the needs of the new ruling class more effectively than the structures of the ancien regime. That is what makes the political institutions a "superstructure", being derived from the economic base of the society. But that doesn't make the superstructure unimportant, irrelevant. Many people have assumed that because Marx says the economic system is the base, that he doesn't think ideas are important. I think that Marx feels ideas are tremendously important, and that is the whole reason why he was a Communist and why he wrote political pamphlets and propaganda. Marx spent months and months in the British Museum combing through tombs of statistics because he felt ideas were important and could influence people and movements. He just felt that they were not independent and that they were important because of their relationship to the economic-social reality.

Klaus: I think that although Marx had a kind of analysis for his situation when he wrote, that it doesn't really work today because the situation is so different. We could use his method still, but not so much his ideas or his system. His method of critique is still valuable, but it might bring us to very different conclusions.

David: One of the things which struck me about Marcuse's speech was the way he constantly kept quoting Marx. It reminded me of one of those pentacostal street people who keep quoting the Bible all of the time.

Erik: The thing is that Marx was really a very perceptive person, and much of what he wrote is useable today; it just depends upon how it is used, whether it is used literally or as an approach to a social analysis.

David: Right. I agree: I think that a lot of the things in the Bible were also tremendously profound...

Erik: and maybe occasionally relevant...

David: but you can get hung up on the letter and forget the inner spirit of what it is trying to say.

Klaus: That is part of the problem in Russia today: they are dogmatic, they are hung up on the letter, but they do not have the spirit of Marx any more.

Erik: And China may have more of the spirit of Marxism, which may be why the Russians are so anti-Chinese.

Klaus: That is true, but I think it may be in part because of the level of development. Russia is more worried about economic security and prosperity. This is also connected to the difference of anarchists and Marxists. And that has to do with the question of the personal meaning of life, what we come back to every two hours here. This kind of meaning of life you find more in anarchism, but that is somehow more Utopian, more unreal. In a nation you no longer live in small groups which can constantly do their revolutionary acts and find in those acts their freedom and their meaning. This cannot work on a national and international basis. Individual acts of revolt may give your own life meaning, but it doesn't generally help a revolutionary situation, and it doesn't help to bring the whole society into a better state of living.

Erik: I like what Klaus said about the appropriateness of some of Marx's critical tools, even if some of his concrete analysis may be outdated. What do you think some of these methodological tools are in Marxism?

Betsy: I would like to know if Marx's concept of "dialectical materialism" is a specific idea or a method.

Erik: Well, I think it is both. It is a technique of looking at any society, of approaching any social situation, but it is also a specific interpretation of historical development. I think it is basically a technique.

What I see as being the central methodology of Marx is to look at a society not in terms of the belief structures of that society, not basically in terms of culture--although these things are not unimportant--but rather, basically looking at society in terms of who has power and what he is doing to maintain it. By "power" Marx would mean primarily economic power in the sense of who has control of the means of production and how they maintain that control politically, but that can be broadened to a wider concept of "power". The integration of the political apparatus and the economic structures are such that it can be difficult to say if an individual has economic power because he has political power, or whether he has political power because of his economic power. We don't have to get into that issue to be able to say that Marx's central approach towards social analysis is in terms of who has Power and the mechanisms they use to maintain it, and who does not have power and what they have to do in order to get it. That analysis is then broadened into a class analysis: what class of people share a common interest in maintaining a given power structure, and what class of people are out of power and have a collective interest in gaining power.

Donley: To describe our system in those terms would be extremely difficult. You have legitimate political power and financial power behind the scenes. And then you have a power block like the South which is not really economic power but which has been very influential in stopping various political actions of the central government, like education laws and civil rights. There is as strong a power block that emerges from the South as the economically based power of the North.

Erik: I think what you said is right, but it needs to be put into a broader perspective. There are many aspects of the functioning of the system that you can look at which makes the whole structure seem tremendously complicated, with a wide variety of different competing sources of power. That is more or less the official image of the United States: a pluralistic society in which there are competing lobbies of equal and competing sources of power. Labor and Management are seen as equal opponents in their "fight" for power and influence in Congress. This is the official image, rather than seeing the political structure as being enormously lopsided in which there is a high concentration of power in the hands of a small group of people who allow certain issues to be fought over in a more pluralistic way, but who retain essential power in their own hands. The important decisions and the overall direction in which society moves--the direction of maintaining corporate profits by any means--remains tightly controlled by the power elite.

David: In the present state of things there are many people who are not a part of either labor or management. There is almost a class of the unemployed, the poverty-stricken, and other oppressed groups. They are almost forming what Marcuse talked about as the Vanguard of the Revolution, much more so that the traditional unionized working class.

Erik: That is what the Black Panther's say. They maintain a modified Marxist-Leninism in which they say that it is the Lumpenproletariat which is the vanguard of the revolution in the USA, that is, the hard core unemployables, the marginal workers, and particularly the ghetto blacks are the potentially revolutionary force in this country. Progressive Labor rejects that view totally and sees that doctrine as basically reactionary. That is primarily why they are so opposed to the Black Panther Party. PL insists that only the working class can successfully organize and lead a revolution towards socialism, and thus an ideological position which says that the lumpen should lead the revolution is basically a counter-revolutionary ideology. The Black Panther's see the lumpenproletariat, the sub-proletariat, as a growing class in the United States and as the objectively and subjectively most oppressed class in the US, and thus as potentially the most Revolutionary force in the country.

Steve: Are the Panthers and PL going to be able to get together now that the Panthers have come down so hard against the drug culture?

Erik: I don't know. It will be interesting to see. The Progressive Labor Party has for a long time seen the drug culture as a de-radicalizing force in the Movement, and has been militantly against the drug culture.

Klaus: I think that in many ways this whole subculture is really counter-revolutionary.

Steve: I am not sure about that: I have seen a lot of people that have been heavy into drugs in Haight Ashbury go on to communal things, to alternative forms and structures, which the strict politico doesn't explore usually. I am not sure if that is counter-revolutionary.

Mike McKinley: But that is really different. The original drug culture was not into that: these are people who have really gone beyond it. I also think that these communal forms have been picked up by more political types as well.

Donley: How do strictly revolutionary groups view communal forms and experiments? Do they think of them as copping out?

Erik: I would not think so. I would think that they would support the communalization of various activities, but I think that they would think that communes that isolated themselves from the larger society and were not geared towards changing that society were non-revolutionary or even counter-revolutionary. They would regard the view that solutions can be found by individually dropping out of the society, by individually creating a "counter-culture" society out in the woods somewhere, ~~as~~ as counter-productive, and probably as actually slowing down the possibilities for revolution.

Donley: But if you create a new form that is itself viable, why does it matter if you are not directly affecting the system around you?

Betsy: What is wrong with it is that you are not directly affecting the system around you.

Steve: Yes, but who is? Tell me who is, and I'll join 'em.

Chris: There was a good example of the conflict between the Cultural thing and the Political in a rally we had at Sproul Plaza last Friday. The rally had quite a large crowd until a band started playing over by Zellerbach, and then people gradually began drifting over there. You really get the feeling that an awful lot of people have given up on the kind of thing PL supports and they feel that the only real revolution is the Revolution in their Heads. In their own heads: they do not particularly care if others agree or follow them.

Erik: I think that this is basically a middle class phenomenon. People who are basically not personally oppressed, but are revolting because they do not like oppression, are much more prone to becoming frustrated, to resist the kind of organizing dedication necessary for real political activity, to avoid drudgery, and to dropout into a personal, individualistic revolution when they feel that a social revolution is unlikely. Whereas, a person in the ghetto is much less likely to do that once they have become politicized. They are much more likely to stick with it in spite of the frustrations, and are much more likely to maintain an optimism of eventual revolutionary success.

Klaus: I agree completely with that. Here everybody feels that if he makes his own little revolution in himself then he has really done some+ thing. He is not really concerned about other people, he is concerned about himself, and about his revolution, not the Revolution of the People. That is a real problem.

Erik: This was true in Marx's time as well, and he was always suspicious of middle class radicals, even though he himself came from the middle class. Middle class people are always preoccupied with the morality of what they do as individuals. They feel that they will be sinful or bad if they do the "wrong" thing, and they support revolutionary activity because it is "good". To Marx such considerations are largely irrelevant: he works for the Revolution not because it is personally moral in terms of some abstract set of morals, but because he feels it is socially necessary, socially imperative. His is a morality of collective action, not individual deeds. Oppressed people are preoccupied with ending their oppression; middle class people are more concerned with expiating their own sins. They feel guilty for benefiting from the system, and so they want to "do something" so that they can feel better about their own conditions. I know that this is a real feeling for me, and that I do at times feel guilty in a way for my own affluence.

Steve: I wonder: even in a Marxian framework, if you have a group which sets itself up in a counter-cultural kind of way against the traditional financial and economic structures of the society, then isn't it creating a new kind of class or base of some kind that could be the base for revolutionary action?

Donley: That sort of thing happened last year with a bunch of my friends in San Francisco. Without really planning anything people began to say "You're not using your loom, and you need this, why don't I use it for a while."

Erik: That is very good, but the United States is killing thousands and thousands of people around the world and controlling oppressive regimes in half the world. Sharing looms is fine for yourself and your friends, but it doesn't really move you any closer to a situation where you can challenge the power of the United States to do those things.

Donley: Well, let me ask you exactly what does. We are spending eight or nine weeks here developing a Utopian Manifesto that I am beginning to feel is very impossible. The question is what value can we take out of this and what can we do.

Erik: Obviously, I really do not have an answer to that. I can articulate some of the apparent alternatives, but I do not know which is best or how really to evaluate which has the best chance for meaningful success. Tonight we have been talking about the Marxist-Revolutionary alternative, which is that energy should be directed towards organizing a political movement of the working class, or the working class and the lumpenproletariat, and that eventually this will constitute a power base that will be able to seize state power when a Revolutionary Situation arises. In France in 1968 there was something which resembled that kind of Revolutionary Situation--a massive general strike which lasted nearly a month--but there was no party of the working class to take a leadership role in directing that crisis into a political revolution. The French Communist Party

had for a long time abdicated that role, and there were only small, decentralized militant groups around in May 1968. Well, at least that is the interpretation of events of the French Maoists, who hope to build from that experience so that when the next such crisis occurs, they will be organized on a national scale in such a way that it will be possible to really challenge the power of the state and transform the general strike into a revolutionary state. That is their hope, but I really do not know how to make a real assessment of its possibilities.

Donley: But if that happened in France, then the US and Nato would just enter in and smash it and put back the old regime.

Erik: That is probably true, and that is why such a development probably has to happen all over the developed world more or less simultaneously. It is part of the Marxist position is that the Capitalist system will collapse not only in one country, but because of the integration of the capitalist economies, it will collapse universally. The Revolutionary Marxist-Leninist position is that, no matter how small and frustrating the Movement is now, you have to organize and move towards the position that when such a collapse occurs, you will be in a position to act decisively and take power.

## MARXISM AND ANARCHISM

by Erik Wright  
Balliol College  
November 21, 1969

Before discussing the serious disagreements between Marxists and Anarchists, it will be helpful to briefly examine some of the issues in which they were in substantial agreement.

First of all Anarchists--at least as exemplified in the writings of Bakunin--are in general agreement with Marx in their conception of the economic dynamics of Capitalism. Although they differ, as we shall see, in the importance of the state as an element in their general analysis of capitalist society, anarchists agree in the Marxist analysis of the bourgeoisie as a class living off of the exploitation of the labor of the working class, they agree in the historical explanations of the genesis of the bourgeoisie and capitalist society, and they see the "contradictions" of capitalist society that will lead to its breakdown in much the same terms of a progressively impoverished proletariat facing a progressively narrow and wealthy capitalist class. Secondly, they both see the bourgeois state as an mechanism--regardless of its particular form--~~xxx~~<sup>for</sup> the domination and oppression of proletariat by the capitalist ~~xxx~~ class. Both reject bourgeois democracy as a sham and both feel strongly that no reform of that state can possibly really change the/<sup>basic</sup> conditions of the proletariat.

Thirdly, both Marxists and Anarchists hold the same general conception of the ideal society. Bakunin uses the exact expression of the early Marx--the "truly human society"--to describe

the ~~ixxxxx~~ ideal eventually to be established after the revolution, and he feels with Marx that it will be a society in which the individuality of each man will be allowed to grow and develop, in which there will be no exploitation of man by man, and all men will be free, ~~not~~ in the sense of self-determined.

Fourthly, both Marxists and Anarchists are determinists and materialists. Both reject idealism as a conceptual framework for understanding the world. Both feel that human behavior is determined by the social environment in which he lives. But, as will be discussed below, Marx's social determinism is considerably narrower than Bakunin's, and this has very important consequences in their general interpretation of revolution, the state, and society.

Finally, in their conceptions of revolution and the emergence of the ideal society, both Marxists and Anarchists have a conception of a transition period. In Bakunin's writings it is always a very vague formulation of conditions during the "more or less prolonged transitional period which is bound to follow the Social Revolution," whereas in Marx it is a very precise notion of the period between the destruction of the bourgeois state and the final development of Communism in which there will be a "dictatorship of the Proletariat" and the first phase of Communism. But again, the differences in their interpretation of the problems and dynamics of the transitional period are ~~enormous~~ enormous and crucial to the ideological conflict between Bakunin and Marx.



If these similarities between Marxists and Anarchists meant that they could both legitimately call themselves socialists (although at times they denied this legitimacy to their opponent), the differences between them meant that co-operation between them was virtually impossible. Of the many differences between Anarchist and Marxist thought, two seem to me to be particularly important: their differing conceptions of social determinism and human nature (i.e. their different social psychological theories if you will) and their different conceptions of the problems and dynamics of the transition period from capitalist to communist or the "truly human" society. The second of these constitutes the central split in formal ideology, but the first is, I believe, the more basic source of disagreement between the two.

What then are the crucial differences between Marxists and Anarchists in their conceptions of social determinism and human nature? Bakunin has quite a bit to say on this subject.

Every human individual, says Bakunin, from the moment of his birth is entirely the product of historic development, that is, of the psychological ~~development~~ and social development of his race, of his people, of his caste (if there are castes in his country) of his family, his ancestors, and the individual natures of his father and mother, who have directly transmitted to him ~~his psychological and social development~~.... as the determination of his individual nature, all the inevitable consequences of their own previous existence, material as well as moral, individual as well as social, including their thoughts, their feelings and their acts..."

This is a view of socialization very close to much of modern social anthropology: the personality, and behavior and ideas of the individual are to a great extent the result of early socialization

and the process of socialization involves a whole spectrum of social influences from the narrowly material and economic to the ideational.

But Bakunin goes beyond this. Not only is the individual socialized by a whole spectrum of social factors, but his later behavior is also influenced by a whole spectrum of social factors. Particularly, the behavior of the individual is tremendously influenced by his structural position with respect to power and authority:

The instinctive aims of those who govern, says Bakunin, of those who frame the laws of the country as well as those who exercise executive power, are, because of their exceptional position diametrically opposed to the instinctive popular aspirations. Whatever their democratic sentiments and intentions may be, viewing society from the high position in which they find themselves, they cannot consider this society in any other way but that in which the schoolmaster views his pupils...On one side there is the feeling of superiority necessarily inspired by a superior position; on the other side there is the feeling of inferiority induced by the attitude of superiority of the part of the teacher exercising executive or legislative power. Whoever says political power says domination..../there is a necessary/ Change of Perspective induced by possession of power. Such has been the eternal history of political power since that power was established in this world. It is ~~this~~ that also which explains why and how men who were democrats and rebels of the reddest variety when they were part of the mass of the people, became exceedingly moderate when they rose to power. Usually these backslidings are attributed to treason. That, however, is an erroneous idea; they have for their main cause the change of position and perspective.

~~Exchange~~ Bakunin thus has a rather sophisticated role theory of behavior: political power changes men, because of the role pressures on an individual with institutionalized power irrespective of the conscious intentions of the individual. These role pressures have

such a decisive impact on the individual because according to Bakunin: "All men possess a natural instinct for power...Everyone carries within himself the germs of this lust for power." And thus, he concludes, "No one should be entrusted with power, inasmuch as anyone invested with authority must, through the force of an immutable social law, become an oppressor and exploiter of society."

There is one further important element in Bakunin's conception of the ~~Marx's formulation of social determinism is much more~~ relationship of social conditions to behavior. Not only does he see socialization in terms of a rather broad spectrum of social forces, and not only does he feel that institutionalized role pressures have a decisive impact on personality, but he feels that a society organized on moral lines would have a decisive ~~and almost immediate~~ therapeutic effect on individuals:

Whatever depths his intellectual and moral degradation may reach at any particular moment, unless congenitally insane or an idiot--in which case he should be treated not as a criminal but as a sick person--...then his human character, amid the most monstrous deviations still exists in him in a very real manner, as a possibility, always present with him so long as he lives, that somehow he may become aware of his humanity if only a radical change is effected in the social conditions which made him what he is.

"To make men moral," Bakunin says, "it is necessary to make their social environment moral." ~~and this is accomplished~~ Once this is accomplished, ~~and at times Bakunin gives the impression that~~ as the result of the Social Revolution, men will undergo a moral regeneration, ~~and~~ which, implicitly in Bakunin's argument, should occur almost immediately.

Marx's conception of social determination of behavior is significantly different from Bakunin's. Like Bakunin he categorically rejects the notion of free will, but unlike Bakunin, he narrows his determinist field considerably. It would be unfair to call Marx an economic reductionist, giving economic factors and structures total influence in determining behavior, but he stresses economic determinism considerably more than does Bakunin. Marx would feel that political institutions as such have a much more marginal influence on the individual than the economic substructure under them. This would be true for two reasons: first of all Marx would feel that the political structures are themselves ultimately caused by the economic conditions, and thus to say that holding power changes an individual is attributing the impact to an intermediary cause, the ultimate cause still being the economic one. And secondly Marx would feel that directly economic factors impinge on the individual's consciousness, on his personality, far more than other institutions and structures of society. He does not feel that men have an inherent lust for power, and he certainly does feel that it is possible to hold a position of authority without becoming psychologically corrupted by ~~the~~ power. I do not think that Marx would deny the existence of role pressures on the individual in a position of power, but he would feel that they were of decidedly less importance than the economic environment in which that power was exercised. The basic difference between Marx and Bakunin on this point is that whereas both recognize that political institutions

are not causally independent of economic structures, Bakunin feels that they have an independent impact on the individual while Marx feels that they do not.

Marx also has a far less sanguine conception of the immediate moral regenerative impact of the social environment after the revolution. Of course he ~~feels~~ felt that changed social and economic conditions would ultimately change men, but he felt that the habits and consciousness of bourgeois society were extremely ingrained and that the moral regeneration would not happen overnight, but rather ~~would~~ be a very gradual process.

This brings us to the second main source of disagreement between Marx and Bakunin: their conceptions of the transition period between Capitalism and the truly human society. It was on this issue that the most violent ideological battles between the Communists and the Anarchists were fought. The positions are fairly straightforward: Marx and the Communists insisted that the revolutionary goal of the proletariat was the seizure of the state power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The control of the state's power, says Marx, is vitally necessary to "crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie", and in Lenin's analysis in The State and Revolution is necessary in the first phase of Communism for ~~the~~ "safeguarding the common ~~means~~ ownership of the means of production...and safeguarding ~~the~~ equality in labour and in the distribution of products." The dictatorship of the proletariat is a necessary means of protecting the accomplishments of the revolution

and for presiding over and helping to engineer the development from a socialist to a Communist society, from ~~thaxsaxialix~~ a society based on the dual principles, in Lenin's words, of "He who does not work, shall not eat" and "AN equal amount of products for an equal amount of labor" to a society based on the principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." To Marx and the Communists, political power is a necessary element in this transition.

To the Anarchists, ~~the~~ political power makes the transition impossible. Bakunin does in fact envisage a transitional period, which he admits may be "more or less prolonged," and he also admits that in this transitional period occasions will arise when some kind of social control or regulation will be necessary. He says:

During the more or less prolonged ~~period~~ transitional period which is bound to follow the Social Revolution society, having to defend itself against incorrigible individuals--not criminal but dangerous--shall never apply to them any punishment except that of placing them beyond the pale of its guarantees and solidarity, that is, of having them expelled.

Bakunin also explicitly says that the workers will need organization, but he rejects any kind of organization from above. Presumably, although he never actually articulates what he means when he says that "society" will have to defend itself, he means that at the grass root the people will form spontaneous communal courts to cope with problems of sanctioning the behavior of "incorrigible individuals". It is clearly this kind of decentralized federalist spontaneous organization that he envisages when he talks

about certain necessary regulatory functions in the socialist society.

Bakunin totally rejects the idea of a transient revolutionary state that is so central in the Marxist revolutionary theory for several reasons. First of all he believes that since power intrinsically corrupts the ruler regardless of any attempts at democratic controls on him or of his good intentions, that once in power, the state will never "wither away". <sup>centralized</sup> The/political power will become institutionalized, and the men who have a vested interest in it will do whatever they can to protect their power. To destroy it will take another revolution; it will never disappear on its own spontaneous accord. Secondly, ~~Bakunin feels that the actions of such a state would themselves be undesirable, even if ultimately that state would disappear.~~ The state means oppression and the dictatorship of the proletariat, far from meaning the emancipation of the majority, will mean its re-enslavement under the despotism of the Savants of the Communist Party. But not only will the state not disappear in time, it will not even do good things. In order to safeguard its own power, and because of the insidious influence of power on personality, the post-revolutionary state will not even act in the interests of the people. Finally, Bakunin feels that by issuing commands through the state, even if by chance they were good demands, they would not bring the population any closer to freedom, to the realization of their humanity. Only freedom, to Bakunin, can teach and create

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freedom. After the long period of the Communist state, even if the rulers decided to yield power, even if they had done reasonably good things while they held power, the people would be no more capable of natural social intercourse than before. And what is worse, since ~~xx~~ to Bakunin the very act of revolt provides the best initial setting ~~xxxx~~ for the development of liberty, the people will be even less receptive to freedom after a long period of Communist rule than before.

Marx ~~xxxxxxxi~~, Engels and Lenin's answer to Bakunin is not that his fears about the transformation in personality caused by power are unjustified, but simply that the revolutionary society could not survive without the armed power of the workers and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that the strong state is vitally necessary for creating the necessary material and technological preconditions for Communism. Bakunin, for his part, never answers these questions: he merely reiterates that power and authority work against the ends of the revolution and prevent the realization of the ultimate goals. If anything, history has proved both sides of the controversy correct: it is difficult to see an anarchist Soviet Union surviving the civil war, the imperative needs for rapid industrialization, and so forth. But equally, Bakunin's fear that the vested interests in the state and bureaucracy would make the withering away of the state impossible, and that the state would be oppressive not only to the enemies of the state but the people in general, seem also to have been born out.



## MARX'S CONCEPT OF CLASS

by Erik Wright  
December 3, 1969

There are two broad uses of the concept of class in Marx's writings: as an analytical category or typology, and as a concrete dynamic social force. By "analytical typology" I mean a descriptive category based on certain objective criteria, but which may or may not be an actual social force at a given time. Thus, for example, it is possible to establish criteria for being a proletarian such as selling one's labour, being propertiless, etc., regardless of whether or not the proletariat as a class is a meaningful social force at the time. An analytical typology represents a conceptual system of slots into which you can place individuals and groups, but which does not necessarily imply that those slots are actually interacting forces as such in the society at the time.

There is another, conceptually more complicated basis of differentiating the two uses of class in Marx, but which correspond to the distinction made above between class as an analytical typology and class as a dynamic social force. Class ~~is used~~ is used in Marx ~~both~~ on the one hand to designate certain characteristics of individuals, and on the other, to designate the collective action and life of associated individuals, or organizations. A <sup>proletarian</sup> peasant is a <sup>proletarian</sup> peasant because he fulfills certain criteria

concerning his relationship to production, the kind of work and life he leads, and so forth; but the proletariat may still not exist as a class in the sense of collective action. ~~Yanuxean~~ An individual may be a proletarian with<sup>out</sup> the existence of a proletariat; an individual may be a peasant without the existence of a peasant class. The use of class to designate individual life situations corresponds to its use as a simple analytical typology; its use to designate collective action corresponds to its use as a dynamic social force.

One of the main difficulties in understanding Marx's concept of class centers on the problem of differentiating between class as a typology and class as a dynamic force, and in understanding their conceptual relationship in Marx's theories of society. This problem of differentiation is made particularly difficult since ~~xxxx~~ an important part of Marx's theory of class, as we shall see later, is precisely that in the development of capitalist society there is a progressive convergence of the analytical and dynamic concepts of class until eventually they are indistinguishable (i.e. eventually a statement about an individual's personal life situation is also a statement about his role in collective action; the categories defined by the analytical typology become the central forces of actual social interactions). In this essay I will explore both the analytical and dynamic uses of class in Marx and attempt to show how they are systematically

related in Marx's overall theory of society.

### I. Class as an Analytical Category

As Ossowski so well points out, Marx uses the term "class" to denote a variety of schemes of analytical typologies of society. Most often, however, Marx uses it ~~as an analytical category~~ as an analytical category designating a common structured relationship to the means of production in a social system. There are several specific sets of criteria for determining the relevant dimensions of this "common structured relationship":

1. ownership vs. non-ownership of the means of production;
2. working vs. non-working for one's living;
3. hiring others to work vs. working oneself vs. working for others.

These criteria are combined in various ways to produce <sup>at least</sup> three general class categories: the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, live by non-working and hire others to work for them; the proletariat who do not own any means of production but their own labour, who work for their living and who work for others; and the intermediary category of the petty bourgeoisie who own their means of production, work for their own living and do not hire others to work for them.

There are other criteria and other permutations of criteria in Marx's typologies of class as a "common structured relationship to the means of production", but they are well discussed by Ossowski and so I will not go into them here. There is, however, one other

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more general kind of typology of class that needs to be briefly discussed. Marx not only uses "class" to denote the "various relationships to the means of production", to use Ossowski's formulation, but also the "relationships to the various means of production." This latter use is most clearly stated in the final chapter of volume III of Capital when Marx defines great classes of modern society the three/~~xxxxxxxx~~ "The owners of mere labor-power, the owners of capital and the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ landlords, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground-rent." Throughout his writing when Marx refers to "peasants" as a separate class from the "petty bourgeoisie", and landlords as a separate class from Capitalists, and even financial capitalists as a different class from industrial capitalists, he is making his class differentiations ~~xxxxxx~~ according to this second typological scheme, i.e. defining classes in terms of their relationships to the various means of production.

Taken together all of these analytical, typological categories of class create a very complicated, and at time contradictory image of society, but they represent only part of Marx's overall use of the concept of class, and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in many ways, the less important usage.

## II. Class as a dynamic force in society

The duality of Marx's conception of class is perhaps best seen in a passage from the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte:

In so far as millions of families live under economic con-

ditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely local inter-connections among these small holding peasants, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not form a class.

or in the Poverty of Philosophy:

Economic conditions had in the first place transformed the masses of the people into workers. The domination of capital created the common situation and common interests of this class. Thus this mass is already a class in relation~~x~~ to capital, but not yet a class for itself. In the struggle...this mass unites and forms itself into a class for itself.

Peasants are members of a class in that they find themselves in a common social structural position in society, i.e. they fall into a common analytical category. As individuals because of their social position they may express opposition to other classes, but this opposition does not become a class opposition because of the isolation of peasants, i.e. the peasant class per se is not a dynamic social force. Similarly with the proletariat: initially the class exists only as an objective relation~~x~~ to capital, as a category of common situation and objectively common interests. It is only in time that the individuals sharing this "common situation and common interests" unite and ~~xxxxxxzazaz~~ and make/class as such a social force.

In order to fully understand the meaning of class as a dynamic force in society, it is necessary to look briefly at certain aspects of Marx's general theory of society, particularly what might be termed Marx's "structural-functionalist theory of dynamic disequilibrium." Marx is a structural-functionalist in the sense that he

sees society as a system of functionally related parts or sub-systems. Like Talcott Parsons, <sup>Marx</sup> ~~he~~ feels that changes in one element of the system necessarily have repercussions in other elements, as when he states in Class Struggles in France that "the development of the industrial proletariat is, in general, conditioned by the development of the industrial bourgeoisie", ~~and in general when he sees developments in one part of the social system has influencing and changing other parts.~~ The dominant motif of the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte is precisely how changes in the pattern of political rule of the bourgeoisie made their oppression more apparent to the Proletariat and thus contributed to the development of a more revolutionary and more united working class, while at the same time making the bourgeoisie more aware of the contradictions of its <sup>own</sup> position and making it withdraw from direct political rule. It is an historical study of how changes in different elements of a functionally-related system interact with each other, and change each other.

But unlike Parsons, Marx rejects the notion that the social system is basically a static structure, that it can be characterized by strong "integrative" <sup>mechanisms,</sup> and what Parsons calls "pattern-maintenancy" mechanisms, which have the ultimate effect of creating a system of dynamic equilibrium. Parsons sees social disintegration, breakdown, as representing deviation from the normal development of a system, and he feels that there are usually ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ mechanisms for re-establishing "equilibrium" in society. Marx feels, to the contrary,

that there is a natural tendency towards disequilibrium, and that the dynamic forces in a social system do not tend to push that system towards progressive stability, but rather to progressive instability and eventually revolutionary social change. The treatment of the Division of Labor by the two men illustrates their different conceptions of structural-functionalism: Parsons, following Durkheim, feels that the division of labor is essentially an integrative force in a social system by creating patterns of mutual dependence, by establishing contract relationships <sup>among</sup> ~~between~~ human beings in which ~~both~~ <sup>all</sup> have a stake, and so forth. Marx feels that the progressive division of labor represents the progressive disintegration of society because the division of labor involves the division of class interests, and the sharper the division, the ~~xx~~ sharper the antagonism.

Class plays a crucial role in Marx's ~~xxxxxxxx~~ theory of dynamic disequilibrium. Let us look briefly at the various stages and processes in this development:

1. Initially, in the early stages of capitalist society, class is not a particularly dynamic social force. It is still, of course, a relevant typological category: there are still bourgeois and proletarians, peasants and landlords, but they are not yet classes in the sense of dynamic social forces. In this early stage the overall social system is very complicated. There are vestiges of the feudal system overlaid with the emergent capitalist system. Political systems do not necessarily correspond in a simple way to patterns of exploitation. Thus, in the 18th Brumaire when Marx discusses the consequences of the advent of the "pure form" of bourgeois rule, he implies that before the 1848

revolutions that rule was not pure, and that in fact although the bourgeoisie was just as oppressive, the nature of the political system tended to obscure this fact to the mass of the people:

(i.e. the bourgeoisie),  
Instinct taught them, says Marx, that the republic true enough makes their political rule complete but at the same time undermines its social foundation since they must now confront the subjugated classes and contend against them without ~~mitigation~~ mediation, without concealment afforded by the crown..."

Earlier, in ~~the~~ Class Struggles in France Marx had ~~even~~ further indicated the complicated nature of early/capitalist social system:

What succumbed in these defeats (i.e. of the proletariat in the 1848 revolution) was not the revolution. It was the pre-revolutionary traditional appendages of social relationships which had not yet come to the point of sharp class antagonisms--persons, illusions, conceptions, projects from which the revolutionary before the February Revolution was not free, from which it could be freed not by the victory of February but only by a series of defeats.

Finally, in an article written in 1844, and cited in Bottomore and Rubel, Marx states that: "What constitutes the proletariat is.. not the mass of the people mechanically oppressed by the weight of society but the mass resulting from the disintegration of society and above all from the disintegration of the middle class." Such a statement necessarily implies that there was an earlier state of ~~capitalist~~ society which could reasonably be described as "integrated". And on the basis of Marx's writings in Class Struggles and the 18th Brumaire, this earlier integration was in part the result of the particular kind of political institutions in the social system, in part because of the culture and ideology (religious and otherwise) of the social system, and in part because of the lack of development of certain



economic and social forces that were to lead to the later disruption of the system. In this initial stage the structural-functionalist image of society implicit in Marx is closer to that of a writer like Parsons, to the extent that Marx recognizes the existence of social integration, cohesion that transcend class lines (class defined in terms of analytical categories), and so forth.

2. But there is a vital difference: the internal contradictions of capitalism, the internal mechanisms of its own material, technological, organizational development means that this initial apparently stable integrated system begins to change. As quoted above, society disintegrates; more and more people fall into the category of the proletariat; the "lower strata of the middle class," to quote the Communist Manifesto, "sink gradually into the proletariat". More and more wealth becomes concentrated in the hands of the capitalist class, ~~and so forth~~ and so forth.

3. In the process of these ~~gradual~~ gradual changes certain ~~transformations~~ transformations of revolutionary implications begin to take place. First of all, not only does the size of the proletariat increase, but its material conditions deteriorate and it becomes spatially more and more concentrated. As a result of these developments, the proletariat begin to develop "class consciousness", a self-identity ~~defined~~ defined in terms of their social situation, an awareness of their shared interests and the antagonism of those interests with those of the bourgeoisie. Events like June 1848 are seen by

Marx as crucial in this development, for they make the proletariat aware of the utter antagonism of their economic and social interests from those of ~~the~~ even the progressive wing of the bourgeoisie. It is the development of this "class consciousness" which gradually creates the proletariat as a class in the sense of a dynamic social force, which gradually transforms the typological category of the individual's ~~his~~ personal situation, into a real social force. Similarly, the bourgeoisie also develops its own class-consciousness and class-organization, ~~although Marx tends to feel that~~ although the internal antagonisms between different factions of the bourgeoisie continue for a long time.

4. This development of a positive class-consciousness, is accompanied by, and itself creates, a real breakdown in the earlier integrative forces in the social system, of the various institutionalized links between the bourgeoisie and the Proletariat, on both the ideological and structural level. Religion deteriorates as a cohesive link, patriotism and nationalism decline in the proletariat as they realize the international meaning of their class, and so forth. The apparent stability of society is maintained progressively by greater and greater repression rather than by the earlier milder "integrative" mechanisms.

5. Finally, the originally very complicated social system of multiple patterns of stratification, of integrative forces transcending

class lines, and so on, completely disappears, and the social system is simplified into the total cleavage of society into two hostile camps, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. There is ~~finally~~<sup>thus</sup> a complete identity of the purely analytical typology of class and the social reality of class. And as a final touch to the conception of dynamic disequilibrium, Marx states that once ~~this~~ total polarization of society occurs, once the complicated social structure of early capitalism is reduced to the simple social structure of bourgeoisie and proletariat, the capitalist class also becomes functionally unnecessary and the revolutionary emancipation of the oppressed proletariat occurs.

To briefly summarize this discussion, Marx ~~uses~~ uses class both as an analytical category and as a concrete social force. It is only in the course of the historical development of capitalist society that class emerges as a concrete social force, although from the start it is a relevant analytical descriptive category of the social system. Progressively the internal dynamics of capitalism lead to the development of class-consciousness among the members of particular ~~categories~~ class categories, until eventually the social system is reduced completely to ~~class~~  
a <sup>dichotomous</sup> simple/class structure.

February 16, 1971

SESSION VII: Paths to Utopia: Revolution, Reform or Counter-Culture

Erik: I thought that tonight we would discuss alternative paths to Utopia, centering the discussion around three paradigms of how you go about changing society: reforming the institutions that you already have, either from within or by pressure upon them; destroying those institutions through revolution and then creating new ones; or creating new institutions within the old society and in spite of the pressures of the old society with the vision that eventually the counter-cultural institutions will spread and take over the whole culture. Those are three fairly distinct approaches towards change and I think that they reflect as much different mentalities towards change as different theories of change, although of course there are a variety of combinations which are possible.

Donley: I would like to read something which I wrote after the last session. It is a non-intellegent paper and highly emotional, but it sets out some basic ideas about how I feel and how I think about keeping myself together while trying to do something.

general comments for personal direction  
toward self discription in terms of  
utopian identification, part one

Quite simply, I believe in the possibility for a poetical world. Poetry is the embodiment of beauty, imagination, emotion in appropriate language or physical form expressed rhythmically, metrically, spiritually and calculated to arouse in man emotions and feelings of humanity, the very core of his being.

I believe in the lost humaneness of humanity, and in the same breath, man's lost divinity. We are man--fully, only sometimes incompetently--and we are also as gods. We need to be both, fully, incompetently and without hesitation. Man; to be aware of our humanity, faltering, lonely, needing help, seeking love as it is; and to be such proudly, unquestioning, yet not vainly. Gods; to bring our remote humanity and power sharply into focus, to develop the power of the individual to express life and love, to guide inspiration and environment to be able to live full and poetic lives in response to personal needs and the needs and lives of others.

To feel the suffering within that is the antithesis of all this and to express it in such a manner that is harsh is to deny the poetic experience. To be involved in the extensions of life as a poetic experience then is to be positively involved in a re-adjustment, re-structuring of society. It is a common belief, that as a society we have progressed in a manner that has sometimes been personally destructive, and at best has never afforded for the majority of the people a means of self satisfaction or personal achievement. As a society we have formed government, economic structure, religious and ethical conduct, and mass education; but have found that rather than freeing the individual, these have hindered and held back. A new realm of personal power and understanding is of a need to now develop; a power through which man can conduct his own education and in turn share his knowledge with others who willingly accept it; an understanding through which man can control his own destiny and find his own inspiration in the act of its creation; a link through which man can develop his own adventure and share it with those interested. Each of us must seek this for ourselves and in the effort be also a catalyst toward the corporate realization of these ideals; a re-alignment of the basic thrust of community development.

There are four essential aspects of the community in which it is essential to be involved: cultural, educational, institutional, and economic. In the first of these our inter-cultural backgrounds have so far tended to isolate themselves through fragmented community barriers. The task is to begin to link ourselves back together through common yet diverse heritages. Art, music, history, ethnic interests need not be unitized nor should they be stabilized in a gross common pot, yet communication should flow freely between communities and individuals in these realms as a means of broadening our perspectives as fellow men and as neighbors.

In terms of education, there seems to be no basic interchange of information and abilities so that these resources are at a common cause in the community. Basic ground work in some instances has been partially accomplished, but a program of suitable action needs to be undertaken to utilize information and skills on both a local and a non-provincial basis. Education itself will need to be approached at a more humanistic level. The public school will need to be disassembled not only physically but conceptually and restructured at a more basic level in terms of need, projected need, and personal satisfaction.

Institutionality has been the big bugaboo in our society; our institutions have grown grossly impersonal; where is the where-with-all to re-vitalize them, re-focus them to the needs of the people whom they serve? And for the new breed of institution subjectively oriented to the community, what are its needs for better accomplishing its purpose? The community has to function more appropriately for human need. A new non-political system of growth for the individual within the community must be founded that is independent of economic mis-direction.

Economically we have ravaged ourselves with no let-up. Problems of people and culture are becoming far more complex than ever conceived; the distance between resource havers and resource needers is beside itself in quantum jumps; our ability to conceptualize an economic system that is humanistic has been left in the realm of the finite while our complexities of life have become infinite. Here is an apartness that cannot be re-created whole by any known concepts. For the non-theoretical there is only the personal.

In an endeavor to live peacefully and harmoniously in a society that has become not so finely tuned there seems to be much need of a personal reformation; realizing one's own identity in terms of the rights and responsibilities of human beings. Not to strike a pose of man's fading shadow, self-confidence girding for freedom's battle; but to strike a pose of beauty and courage lending cause and effect to that which we can touch, ourselves and the common community that we create around us.

unfinished.

Erik: That doesn't really tell you very much about what to do.

Donley: That is why it is unfinished. But it does tell me somewhat about what to do. The key phrase that got me the first night was about ~~setting goals and then not offsetting those goals when we do actual work.~~ I don't know if this puts me in the reform camp or even in the status quo camp. But it seems to me that there is a place for working inside of agencies even if you know and understand that those agencies are completely misdirected and caught up in their own institutionality. That is what I mean by being able to create around you a community that ~~you~~ can touch, that can change things around you.

Erik: I think that that is an important position and it is a position that lots of people take in different ways: what you set yourself out to do is to get yourself into a local poverty program, or an administrative position or a teaching position in an educational system, and then within that setting try to change forms and relationships in the directions which you feel are desirable.

Donley: And the 'but' that you are going to tack on to that is that you are always limited and that pretty soon you come to a position more of stabilizing that position and putting off your change.

Erik: One of the premises of this strategy being able to eventually change the whole society is that this process needs to occur at all levels in all institutions, and somehow the institutions are capable of having that happen, that is, the institutions have to be capable of allowing radical reformers to function within them. And a related premise is that while you are trying to instigate these reforms from within you are not going to get so royally screwed that you are not going to be able to do anything, and that your time does not become completely preoccupied with simply staying in the institution. Those are pretty big

Donley: I have really been encouraged by some things which I have seen in the last year or so. We talked about reducing the working time to about 15-20 hours per week and then spending the rest of the time working on community problems and in maintenance of the community other than economic maintenance. Well, you are now seeing people do that, and it seems to me that that kind of action has a wealth of gain from it. Sure may not ever affect anybody else in that institution, but you touch people all the time and you can never really know how. I guess I put more stock in that kind of individual touching rather than in the mass. It is very hard to organize a mass of people around a single cause and to sustain that energy for more than a few hours at a demonstration. But revolution within our own selves is possible and has far more reach than I ever considered before.

Erik: That is in a way more the "counter-cultural" position than the "reformist", although there is an overlap since you see yourself as working within institutions.

Let us try to build some scenerios of what each of these three approaches would involve. Be the most optimistic that you can be without being absurd. Construct a scenerio if you can of what the possibilities are of changing the whole society through this kind of personal revolution ~~through~~ personal life style combined with active involvement in agencies of existing institutions.

Donley: First, let me bring up one things thing that bothered me last week. When I mentioned this personal reformation that a person goes through and tries to find alternative ways to do things for himself and gave the simple example of sharing a loom, your throw to me was "but, we are killing thousands of people daily, how can we talk about sharing looms?"

Erik: I really meant how can we only talk about sharing looms; I didn't mean to put down the idea of sharing looms, but merely say that that wasn't sufficient.

Donley: Yes, that is a good point. It is funny that the ideas of personal reform which I expressed are more ~~par~~ refuted by people who I think to be in the same camp, at least in terms of vision than the ones whom I am against. That has always been very dismaying to me. I know that I am blowing this up out of proportion and that you did not mean it as a put down. But it is an example of an issue. David has talked about communes and has shown extreme interest in that and he is seeing some of the problems in organizing that sort of thing; I saw some of the same kinds of problems when I tried to make up a communal living situation. But all of these ~~part~~ are part of trying to approach life in a new sort of way. My idea of life now is certainly not the same as it was when I was a sophomore in college.

Erik: Could you construct a scenerio of the next fifty or so years using your approach. I want it to be open-ended, but I would like it to show how you see this style making any dynamic changes in the society.

Donley: No way.

Erik: well, be the most optimistic that you possibly can about these activities being attractive to people and catching on.

Donley: O.K., SCENERIO 1:

What is going to happen is that my wife and I are going to tie-dye something and send it to Tricia Nixon and she is going to be so entranced with it that she is going to ask us to dinner at the White House and we are going to explain our whole philosophy of life to Nixon and it is going to be so mind-blowing that he is going to change his entire outlook on life, and the world will change over night.

Steve: Out of sight....

David: Good luck.

Donley: there is scenerio number one. And it is highly optimistic.

Erik: Alright, that is one scenerio. To put it in more general terms, it expresses the view that there is the possibility of "blowing the mind" of the power elite in the sense of making them see the light, of showing them what a lousey society they have helped to create and what they are doing to it, and that if they did "see the light", then they might change their ways and move the society towards Utopia.

Donley: That was absurd scenerio number 1, absurd SCENERIO 2 is:

I throw my complete all into a social agency right now that I think has possibilities of being moved into relevant programming for individuals and communities. I am working my heart out at it. Next year my director, who is a Women's Lib fanatic, dies, and they put a Fascist in as my boss. I become completely frsutrated and angry. Some guy bangs my car and I get arrested for this and I finally say "I am dropping out of this mess totally and I am going up to Mendicino and I am going to build a house and I am going to sit there and create all of the things that I need and share them with the people around me who are my friends." I would live a completely utopian life off in the wilderness and would just not worry about all of the things out in the rest of the world.

Erik: That is scenerio number two: that there is absolutely no way that Utopia on a social level can be reached. No matter how hard you and others try, your efforts will be frustrated. Therefore, let's go off and do the best we can. Maybe we can do a damn good job of it because we are cool and friendly people, but let's create out own utopia and not worry about others.



Donley: O.K., SCENERIO 3 is:

Exactly the way things are now: I have flashes of real brilliance in the things that I can do, and they generally peter out, but not before I have gotten to four or five people, including myself, and have done something dynamic which has changes their lives in some significant way. I will work in the job that I have got now for two or three years until that project is finished, and then I will become very frustrated with the YMCA, at which I presently work, because it is an archaic institution. But right now given the job I am doing, it has got some relevance to it. So, in three years I will leave, and maybe go through another writing period, and then do some urban consulting work of some sort or go into sensitivity training for a while. I am going to find a myriad of things to do, all of them seemingly irrelevant, all of them in idiotic institutions that have been around for a long time, but in which it is possible to do something relevant for a period of time. I am going to continue to do that and be completely frustrated and the whole fucking world is going to fall down around my knees, but every two or three months I am going to get a real flash of what Utopia is really like. It is going to be like that for the next fifty years.

Erik: So, as a scenerio, that is the involved-muddle-through scenerio.

Donley: Yeah. There will be periods when I am a political activist, like when I handed in my draft card, and periods when I don't want any of that and prefer to just be me very nicely, as nicely as I can be.

Erik: As an image of what is going to happen that means that there are going to be marginal, temporary, short-run improvements through different people being involved in different ways, which may have a net positive effect slightly over a period of time, but that basically things are more or less going to remain pretty much in a confused, lousy kind of way.

Donley: There is never going to be an ideal system, or anything really very close to it. There is something I said here which I really believe: the complexities of our lives now have so outdistanced our ability to conceptualize institutions and systems which will encompass them safely, justly, nicely. There is no hope of ever doing that with the philosophies that we know now, be it Aadam Smith or Karl Marx, or Lennin, Trotsky, or Pete Stark or whatever. There ain't none of them that can handle the situation. You cannot convince me that socialism drawn up as carefully as we can right now is really going to mean good things for everyone in the society. It just won't do it.

Erik: We talked about this in the very first session--whether what we mean by Utopia was the "perfected" state, or rather the context in which meaningful improvements became a real possibility.

Donley: But if you relegate it to that level, then it really doesn't matter what you've got. You are working in different contexts, so you approach problems differently.

Erik: But in our present situation, our present context, constructive change is extraordinarily difficult. The system practically does not facilitate change at all. At least under socialism it would be easier to mobilize the society's resources for social change.

Donley: Perhaps, but I think that fifty years ago, even if we have a different social system, I will still be frustrated and doing more or less the same things I am doing now.

Erik: Well, what other scenerios do people have. I don't think that those are the only three possibilities. The third one of Donley's scenerios is probably the most likely actually: things just aren't going to move particularly one way or the other; that there will be periods when we are optimistic and feel that there is a real chance for things to really improve, and other times when we think that the whole thing is crashing down. But there are other possibilities.

David: Well another possibility might be SCENERIO 4:

along the lines of The Greening of America by Charles Reich, which is this fantastically optimistic view that young people are really getting their heads together, at least unconsciously, and slowly but surely are articulating the absurdities of the system. They realize that people are starving and that people are being slaughtered and killed in Vietnam, and that people are living in a hierarchical basis without getting any fulfillment. And so they are starting to wear blue jeans and defy the status trip and the money trip, and there is no one who is really that desperately in power who is trying to maintain the system, and so, in like about twenty years the whole revolution will sort of take place with fresh blood coming in and just sort of taking over the whole country.

Erik: How does that actually happen? Does it happen because the people who move up in business organizations have this new consciousness, or because the whole thing collapses and some kind of party takes over, or what?

David: It is like a "revolution of consciousness," a cross between the counter-culture and reform in a way. New people in the institutions are changing them, a lot of people are just doing their thing outside of the institutions, and the old fuddy-duddies are just dying out. Young people are being more and more turned on.

Erik: But are the turned on people going into organizations like General Motors, or does General Motors eventually just find it impossible to find anyone who wants to run the corporation?

Betsy: Only 60% of the graduates of Williams went into business last year whereas in the past it was always around 90%. That really reflects the revolution of consciousness.

Steve: Graduate schools in Business Administration are having real trouble recruiting people.

Erik: As a scenerio that says that over time it becomes harder and harder for businesses to get effective management because no body wants to do the job, and because of that profits deteriorate even more rapidly.

Donley: We have talked about profits disappearing before. What happens then? What are some scenerios of what would happen if the economy stopped running at a profit?

Erik: Well, what ~~might happen~~ is: SCENERIO 5:

Like what happened in Eruope: when the trains stopped making profits they were nationalized; when steel stopped making profits it was nationalized. The Government in the US is fighting like hell now to keep from nationalizing the rail roads and other public transportation, but eventually it will have to come. Gradually, and in more or less an evolutionary sort of way, the big Conglomerate industries that are developing are nationalized because they cannot be profitable, and thus the only way to keep them running is at a deficit, and only the government can run things on a deficit without immediately going bankrupt. The government can borrow indefinitely from itself whereas private businesses can't. The national debt then grows and grows and grows, the interest rates on the debt become virtually the whole budget. Political parties then emerge and point to this and say: look how ridiculous the situation is. We have enormous inflation and are just muddling through. So these parties say that what we need is to jump from State Capitalism to State Socialism in which people control the state-owned industries rather than a state bureaucracy. Then the Government says: no no, this would be Communism; State Capitalism is still sacred capitalism. But the parties grow daily because the people see the light, and eventually what happens is that either through a revolution, or elections afterwhich the army for some strange reason does not decide to stage a coup d'etat, you have a radical-revolutionary party gaining real political power, which takes this highly concentrated economic structure and changes it from state capitalism to socialism. Either that happens, or state capitalism prove to be a stable-muddle-through system and just continues to muddle through.

Betsy: I don't know if we will last long enough for that to happen.  
Here is SCENERIO 6:

In 15 or 30 years, the incredible proportion of the people in the world who have nothing now and are going to have even less then, are going to have no food. There is going to be an incredible global war between the many many people who have no food and the few people who do have food. That is going to be pretty devastating. The population growth rate is far outstripping the potential of the earth to produce food, and there are going to be governments in places like China or India who will fight other governments to get food.

Mike McKinley: They won't fight; they will starve. They have been having famines in India for centuries. That is nothing really new. I don't think that famine will happen everywhere in the world at the same time anyway, and when it does happen you are more likely to have riots like in Calcutta than wars. Whether that happens or not, I think that the important issue is that the US needs their resources to keep growing at our present rate. That is going to be a problem before other things become a problem on a global scale. That is SCENERIO 7:

You have underdeveloped countries which decide that they want to develop and use some of their resources for themselves. As a result you will have more and more imperialistic wars in which the US goes in to protect its resources. If there was a Black Revolution in South Africa for example, the first thing we would do is go in to support the white regime. We will continue to do that until we decide that we cannot afford to fight that kind of little war anymore, at which point we will probably decide to bomb the hell out of every group that threatens our interests. Without destroying the mines of course.

The problem here is that people will not want to give up their present standard of living and will support these wars to support that standard.

Betsy: One thing which is a strong symbolic influence in my thinking is that I cannot conceive ~~in terms~~ of thinking in terms of grandchildren. If I were to have a child nine months from now, I cannot conceive of raising that child to be 25 years old. It is beyond me. And a lot of my own thinking about what is good to do and what is good to have other people do, is strongly influenced by that feeling of rapidly running out of time. The problem with the political structures that we have now is that they are about 60 years behind the problems which they are creating.

Erik: But don't you think that on an international level the reactions in most countries to starvation or impending starvation is going to be revolutions rather than invasion of other countries. How is a Government plagued by starvation going to mobilize the resources for a war? In Calcutta the result of starvation is absolute chaos, revolt. The Indian Government is not moving those people into East Pakistan. I agree with the element in the scenerio that the problems of population and of food and of resources are going to escalate enormously in the next decades, but I do not draw the

conclusion from that that it necessarily follows that catastrophe is inevitable. The response of people to those conditions can be as much to overthrow the regimes which prevent the proper management of the resources and the proper control of population and use of foodstuffs as to go to war. I just do not see how India could wage a war against anybody, and the population growth rate of China has been dropping fairly steadily since 1950 so that it is now around 1.4%/year which is more or less the same as in the United States. In India the growth rate has only dropped marginally.

Betsy: I don't have the sophistication I guess to put all of this together to see how it might happen on a global basis, but I do have a real strong and present feeling of impending doom and I have very little faith in politics of any form to solve anything. I guess that puts me on the side of personal reformation and counter-culture.

Erik: Except, if things really go that far it won't matter what personal changes you may have made, you will be wiped-out with everyone else.

Mike McKinley: I also have a feeling of impending doom, but I don't think that everything is going to happen at once. I agree with Erik that there is going to be more internal strife. You will be coming up with countries like Chile and Cuba and eventually Uruguay and other Latin American countries which are presently resource countries for the US, in which the governments will change radically. The impending doom is that in desperation the United States will try to preserve the status quo at all costs. The United States and any other European power, including Russia, is capable of doing that and will do it, if it has to to preserve its own standard of living.

Erik: But if these things do happen all over the world, it would be impossible to effectively put them down. The United States, being the richest and most heavily militarized country in the world would be incapable of putting down revolutions all over the world. We simply do not have the resources to do it. We barely have the resources to fight in Indochina.

Mike McKinley: Unless we use nuclear missiles or germs.

Erik: If the United States decides to put down revolutions with nuclear weapons, that is the apocalypse.

Mike: As an aside, guess who has the four largest armies in the world?  
miscellaneous people: China...the US...Russia...which other? West Germany (no)...France (no)...

Mike McKinley: South Vietnam. It has the fourth largest army in the whole world.

Erik: As a scenerio, if the United States decides to use nuclear weapons or germ warfare to stop revolution, that is the Apocalypse. But, if it doesn't do that because of the political conditions at home or the pressures from Europe, if it stops short of that, then I really do not think that in the long run the USA can stop revolutions abroad.

Mike Murphy: Do you think that the reasons why the US might do that are basically the same reasons why the people in those countries would be revolting? Would the ends be more or less the same?

Erik: No. Our physical survival is not at stake in stopping revolutions, but the real survival of the people revolting may be. Our standard of living might drop, but we would hardly be wiped out.

Mike Murphy: Could you phrase it more precisely: for what purpose would the US resort to these grave measures and for what purpose would these populations be revolting?

Erik: The populations would revolt primarily because of their real oppression, both politically and economically. And they would be revolting for some kind of socialist state, at least according to their formal ideology. You might, of course, end up with a regime just as repressive and oppressive as before.

Mike Murphy: And what would the ~~raz~~ rhetoric of the United States be?

Erik: well, the United States would say that we were protecting the country from Communist aggression, that we were protecting our legitimate business interests there, and so on. The US would intervene in these countries essentially because the power, the positions of control of the present "ruling class" in the United States, however you define that class, is contingent to a substantial extent upon imperialism. The Domestic power structure within the United States depends upon the American control of resources abroad, because if those resources were cut off, it would be much more difficult for the American ruling class to maintain its present position internally. At least it would have to use much greater internal repression to maintain its internal dominance and this they do not want to do, either out of liberal principle or because overt repression is inherently less stable as a long-term political structure. If American businesses cease to make profits, or even if profit rates drop significantly--and this would be one likely result of the cut off of foreign resources--then it will be hard for the present business and financial elite to maintain their positions in the ways they do at present.

Mike Murphy: So, in no way would you say that the ends of the two forces are the same?

Erik: I don't think so. It is like saying that the ends of the feudal landlord in oppressing his peasants and the ends of the peasants in revolting against him are the same because if the landlord doesn't squash the peasants then the peasants are going to squash him and therefore he might starve. So his oppression and the peasants' revolt are both in order to prevent starvation. There is some sense in which the ends are the same, but there is a more fundamental sense in which they are almost exactly the opposite: the landlord wants to use force to maintain his position because he wants to defend his privileges and affluence, and the peasants are revolting because they are oppressed.

Mike McKinley: It is like this. We presently get raw materials terribly cheaply in foreign markets because we control those markets. If suddenly those resources were taken over by those states and they

demanded a fair price for them, it would become impossible for us to get the products that we get today at anything near our present prices. The inflation you see right now is nothing compared to what it would be if we had to pay reasonable prices for raw materials. Therefore, for us to maintain our present standard of living that we are at, we have to have control over those resources and their prices.

Erik: The other element which might contribute to this kind of extreme military action to repress revolution is the paranoia and the fanaticism of the military and the more right-wing elements of the ruling class. That is what got us into Vietnam and pushed it to the extremes of the present situation. We entered that country in such a big way because of the military's paranoia and deliberate distortion of the realities of the war as well as because the war ~~was necessary~~ was in the interests of the American ruling class. It was in their interests not so much for the resources in Vietnam itself, but because the war was a message to revolutionaries, or would-be revolutionaries elsewhere in the world. We were putting an official price-tag on attempted revolutions: ~~official~~ massive intervention, destruction and potential genocide.

Mike Murphy: Well, given that the ends are ~~g~~ so different, I am curious about the means. The ends of one side are far more appealing to me than the other, but the means on both sides are equally gruesome. What can be said about that?

Erik: I think that the means are fundamentally different. It is fundamentally different for the peasants in a village to get arms and to go and knock off the local police chief and capture the local garrison and to organize a guerilla force operating in the mountains, than for Jet Bombers to drop Napalm on that village.

Betsy: I disagree.

Erik: A true Quaker talking.

Betsy: There might be a difference between those two kinds of violence, but there is a bigger difference between any kind of violence and non-violence.

Erik: But there are situations where there is no such thing as non-violence when being non-violent means starvation. That is not not non-violence. Refusing to fight back, when refusing may mean that more people are killed and hurt than if you fought, is not non-violence.

Betsy: there are ways of being nonviolent and there are ways of being non-violent.

Erik: India is a classic example of an attempt at non-violent change, and I think that it is a tragic catastrophe of political change, at least when compared to China, in which the political change occurred violently. China offers much greater hope for the future

of the Chinese people than Gandhi opened up for the future of the Indian people.

Betsy: But I think that that is partially because of the very large acceptance and justification for violence that exists, in all countries, in all men. Any kind of slow, non-violent mode of change is likely to show far fewer obvious results and is a lot harder to manage given the context in which it has to operate.

Mike McKinley: What are you defining as violence?

Betsy: Killing people. I don't think that any kind of action which involves the murder of human beings is really justifiable.

Erik: Even if that really does save lives in the end?

Betsy: That has been the justification for not having left Vietnam.

Mike McKinley: What if you have Indians in South America working 16 hours a day in the mines who are kept high on cocaine so they work longer. Would you say that that is "non-violence"?

Betsy: No. I guess I am on shaky ground when I try to define nonviolence. It just doesn't seem true to me that people who are going to fight and to kill in order to achieve their ends are going to create a much better situation than they had when the people they fought and killed were above them.

Klaus: The argument which America gave for bombing Hiroshima was to save lives.

Erik: But in fact that argument was false because the Japanese had already ~~xx~~ agreed to surrender if the emperor would be maintained. We bombed Hiroshima in order to have an unconditional surrender, not to save lives.

Donley: But the question is at any time when you use that argument is it really true?

Mike McKinley: One question is, is it true or not, and another is, what ways are there to minimize the total violence. I do not think that there is going to be in a human context in the foreseeable future nonviolent changes coming in most of the world because ~~of~~ most of the world is living daily in incredible violence. You cannot convert people to non-violence when their very survival is at stake. In Cuba, for example, there were far fewer people killed in the Revolution and since the Revolution than in the ten years when Batista was just keeping change from occurring. It is known that at least 100,000 people were killed at various times by Batista; there were very few people ~~killed~~ executed as political criminals when Castro took over, less than 1,000. In Colombia, from 1958-1968, 135,000 people according to official Colombian Government figures were killed in the countryside the majority of them by the army.

Erik: Camillo Torres who was a Colombian revolutionary priest who eventually took up arms against the regime, said that the Colombian Revolution would be non-violent if the ruling elite in Colombia did not mobilize violence to exterminate the revolutionaries. But because the ruling class is willing to go to the most extreme means to prevent revolution, to prevent social change,



because they are willing to go as far as genocide against their opponents, the only way Camillo Torres felt that the revolution could protect itself from genocide was by attacking and if necessary, killing the perpetrators of genocide. That elite in Colombia is really very small, probably only a few thousand individuals at most. But they have enormous power because of control of the army, the police and the Church, although that control is weakening now. I do not see how you can say that people do not have the right to protect themselves with violence from genocide.

Betsy: I just cannot condone an action which involves killing human beings. Period. I am stymied when faced with some kind of tally of here is what happens under a short violent revolution and here is what would have happened otherwise.

Erik: But it is not just a question of numbers. Not only did Batista systematically murder thousands of people more than the present regime has ever dreamed of doing, but the lives of Cuba now are filled with enthusiasm and are moving in a much more positive direction than would have ever been possible under Batista.

Betsy: And you say that that was the result of a violent revolution.

Erik: It was the result of a revolution which could not have been non-violent.

Mike Murphy: The picture that comes is that to foster an environment with a reverence for life and the value of living, you have to kill?

Donley: But at what point do you ~~have~~ decide that it has to be done violently or nonviolently?

Erik: The point when it is clear that you will be mowed down in the street if you do not take up arms. You do not have to necessarily go out into the street to know that that will happen.

Betsy, I really do feel the concern that you are talking about, and I feel the ambiguities of what I have said, because I really absolutely cannot imagine myself ever killing another human being. I suppose that I can imagine an extreme situation where some guy comes in with a machine gun to shoot all of my friends and I was in a position to push him off of a ledge, well, then I might do it. I can envision that. But I cannot see myself taking a machine gun myself and attacking a police station and shooting down the policemen, and yet I can advocate such action in certain situations that have occurred and will continue to occur.

Betsy: A lot of people in the United States, especially the more violent elements of the Left and the Right, have it in mind that by murdering the particular individual who fulfills a particular role you can eradicate the oppressiveness of that role. So you are not murdering a person, you are murdering a role, a symbol. I don't think that that happens: you murder a person, not a symbol.

Erik: But in a real revolution that is not what you are doing. You go into an area which you want to gain control of. So you may have to shoot the people who are guarding the supply depots and the radio station because they won't let you take them over nonviolently.

What you are doing is taking over the radio station, not shooting symbols. What you are trying to do is "liberate" areas. There are, I think in Colombia or Bolivia or one of those countries, large areas of the country which have been liberated and are no longer under the control of the government. The reason why they are not under the control of the government is that the government cannot send soldiers to those areas to control them and the people in those areas. If they sent soldiers into those areas, they would be shot. That is what makes it possible for the people in those areas to establish a sort of counter-culture within the boundaries of the old country. Or as another example which we never hear about, in Portugese Guine about 80% of the country is a liberated, Communist zone. Only the capital city and its immediate vicinity is still controlled by the Portugese. In the liberated areas there are now doctors which are returning from China and Russia and very substantially improving the lives of the people in those areas. So you have two regimes there--the liberated zone and the part controlled by the original government--and the only way the liberated areas can defend themselves is violently. If they lay down in front of the Portugese tanks, they would get run over. Armed force is the only way to protect the liberated areas.

Betsy: I am really sorry to live in a world where that sort of thing works. Because in the long run, I do not really think it does. I don't want to live in a place where the people who control a supply depot control it because they have killed people. I don't like living in the United States because the people who rule it have a very very low regard for the significance of human life. That seems to be a fairly universal characteristic, and I don't see much hope for creating a world where people can live together peacefully unless they move towards that goal peacefully. I strongly believe that the means have to be consonant with the ends.

Erik: You do not think that you can outlive the means?

Betsy: I don't know. Not if they are violent: that is a really hard one to kick.

Erik: Maybe I have an overly idealized vision of Cuba, but it does seem to me to be a place where people are living pretty harmoniously now. There are certainly problems, especially of the political relationships of the central power and bureaucracy to decentralized political units, but it seems to me that even though it took a violent revolution to get there, that it is an enormously improved living situation for people. At least in that case.

David: Another example of violence and non-violence is Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Nazi Germany who had been a pacifist, but felt that violence could be justified against Hitler. My guts sort of bleed when I think that perhaps violence is legitimate some times, but you know, hunger is violence. Who can say what would have happened if Hitler was assassinated, but I really think that it would have been morally justifiable to do so.

Betsy: Yes, hunger is violence, but you can work against hunger in nonviolent ways.

Mike McKinley: You can't work for hunger in non-violent ways if, let's say, the grain is coming into an area that is starving and is being diverted by the officials to other markets which are more profitable. If that was happening you might decide that you had to attack those officials to get the grain for your village and your family, which happens in India.

Erik: You may be able to work against hunger nonviolently in the short run, but you may not be able to work against the system which creates hunger non-violently.

Betsy: I guess I feel that there are more options to solving problems than that, and that it is in our own minds exactly what the problems are and what we decide are justifiable means towards solving ~~it~~ them.

Mike McKinley: I think that what we have in the United States among middle class whites is the option of talking about these differences between non-violence and violence, between reform and revolution. When you are in an actual situation where it is a matter of life or death, or whether you are going to become actual slaves, then these things are not options. You choose your means by what will be effective and by what is at your disposal. And that often means picking up a gun and shooting the people who are perpetuating violence upon you. In the United States when you go to a demonstration, you can go ~~home~~ home to a comfortable middle class home, whether it is a hip pad or the middle class home of your parents--excuse me if they are hip--you have the option to step out of the conflict at any time you want. That is very different from the situation in the rest of the world outside of the US and Western Europe. I can't see myself picking up a gun and shooting someone. But there are situations if I lived in a Latin American country where I would do that. Here in the States we had four people killed at Kent State and others at Jackson State and there was a big uproar in a large minority of the population. That is a very different attitude towards life than you have in Latin America, like in Mexico City where in 1968 there were several hundred students killed and there was very little uproar. Life really is given less respect there than here. There is a a very different attitude towards life there, and in most of the rest of the world, then in the United States where we have the luxury to sit back and talk about the value of life. Still, here, there is abigger uproar about the death of four students or the treatment of a couple of hundred POWs in North Vietnam than about the millions of people we have dessimated who do not happen to be American citizens.

Donley: Fine, but I have a question about all of this. Every time I turn around my mind is completely expanded about all of the atrocities that are happening all around the world today, and all of the different ways people give value to life and the fact that we can go home and sit back and discuss these problems, but none of that mind expansion gets me any closer to finding out a relevant way to respond to all this. I don't think that my responsible way would be to go down to Bolivia with a machine

gun and try to help overthrow the regime. That is as absurd as anything else.

Erik: And equally, I think, that the weatherman's solution is absurd because it is not justified to use violence just because there is violence used against you. The fact that the ruling class uses violence for oppression justifies using violence against the ruling class only if that violence is really an effective means towards the ~~and~~ revolutionary ends you seek. The only reason violence was justified in Cuba was because it could be effective, it could lead to the success of the revolution. [The only thing which can justify the "means" are the "ends", unless the means are totally innocuous. But the ends justify the means only if the means are in fact means to those ends. Violent means are not intrinsically justifiable unless they are effective means. (post session comment).]

Betsy: It could.

Erik: And it does sometimes. But in the United States, I do not think that the Weathermen's violence is justifiable because I think that it is violence that is stemming purely from frustration and anger and does not contribute to the possibilities for real change.

Donley: I agree with that. Except that there is a whole hypocrisy in this kind of view: we live our life violently all the time. We turn on a light switch and we are creating violence somewhere. We drive to work and that is violently taking someone's life who has lung problems and is dying from it. We permit these things to happen and we do violent things every day. How can we be justified in saying their violence is not justified but ours is. It gets down to Mike's thing: how do you keep your head together while you are doing all of these things.

Betsy: Robert Bly in a poem called "The Tooth Goddess Stands Naked" claims that in many cultures there is a Mother Earth which gives life and a Mother Death which takes away life and that people are accustomed to living with that reality. But in our culture there is no Death Goddess, no Tooth Goddess, and as a result we take out those feelings in other ways, and one of those ways is by fighting wars. That is an innate part of life, of any life, ~~and~~ In the United States, in our culture, "violence" is a dirty word, yet we are the most violent country in the world. It might be that this is getting down to something which is in all of us, which is some kind of death pull. I am willing to agree that violent acts occur all the time and that is real and inevitable, but I am not willing to agree that to encourage those acts is real and inevitable and necessary.

Chris: I am not sure what you mean by "encouragement". You can take up arms in a revolution to capture a power station without that being in any way an encouragement of violence. You can do it with sadness in your heart because it is something that has to be done even if you might not like to do it.

Erik: There is even a way in which that might discourage violence. If you go to that station with sixty armed men, the guard may

not shoot back and just surrender the power station, but if you went to the station without any arms, with sixty unarmed men, and asked nonviolently if you could take over the power station, or if you staged a sit-in in the power station, all sixty men might get killed. Non-violence can encourage violence more than force in some situations.

Betsy: But I never said that non-violent modes of action are going to bring about immediate change. It is a much slower process. They might in some situations bring about more violence and more killing in the short run. But what I am saying is that for some individuals it is beyond their conscience, it is outside of their ability to live with themselves, to engage actively in killing other people and in encouraging killing.

Chris: Then how can they turn on a light switch, to use Donley's example? It seems to me that they are getting caught up in a very immediate thing of refusing to actually pull the trigger. but being willing to all sorts of other things in their lives which bring about violent acts or encourage violent acts. They just won't themselves pick up a gun and shoot it, but that doesn't make them less violent.

Betsy: I may be wrong about this, and I don't want to test it out, but I have a feeling that it makes a difference to have actually personally killed a human being. To have done it directly changes you as an individual.

Erik: It makes a difference to you, but obviously not to the people who were killed. To the dead person it is irrelevant whether you pulled the trigger or whether you did things which encouraged someone else to pull the trigger.

Betsy: Yes, I guess I am talking about what it does to the individual.

Klaus: Well, I have to try to make some kind of Theological application of all of these statements. One thing that I wanted to say is that whatever you do, you are not less guilty. In Theological terms you are always a sinner, so there is no way out. If you try to live a "pure" life, if you try to live a "sacred" life or whatever, well, if you live among other people you are exactly as guilty as others. The first thing you have to do is live with this, knowing that you are guilty. It doesn't matter too much if you pull the trigger yourself or let somebody else do it. But knowing that you are guilty, knowing that you have dirty hands anyway, might make you work for a new society in a revolution or at least understand people who are revolutionaries.

post session comment: another way of looking at this is that it is society which is "guilty" rather than individuals, it is the system which should be the focus of moral judgement rather than the actions of specific individuals in the system. All individuals living in that society share the guilt of that society because they make up that society; it is only by working to transform the society that you can transcend that guilt.

Donley: Except I am not sure if a revolution has ever been the result of guilt feelings. It has always been through feelings of righteousness. I doubt if there has ever been a violent revolution founded on guilt.

Erik: Although the leadership of most revolutions have been Middle Class it is likely that the reason why they became committed revolutionaries had to do with feelings of guilt of living in relative luxury, of coming from the oppressive class. Lennin, Mao, Castro, Ho Chi Mihn were all Middle Class, from prosperous families of the more or less privileged classes.

Donley: But they became revolutionaries out of a righteous feeling about the revolutionary cause, although I don't know exactly where that came from.

Erik: Maybe righteousness in that sense grows out of guilt. But getting back to the question of personal guilt and action, I doubt if Nixon has ever personally killed anyone, and Johnson probably never personally killed anybody. I don't even know if Hitler ever personally killed anyone, but that doesn't in any way make their actions less guilty.

Klaus: Well, Hitler killed when he was a soldier in the First World War.

Mike McKinley: I for one do not want to personally contribute to violence in the world, but at the same time I want to see effective social change to reduce violence and oppression. I am caught between those two feelings, of how to do effective social change without getting caught up directly in violence. So, we all try to change people and change institutions without using violence ourselves, but I think that we have to realize that all of that may prove ineffective and we may be forced to go to another level. We have to decide what we will do if we are personally in the situation where people are being mowed down as Erik pointed out. Until that point we can discourage violence in more or less non-violent ways, like by trying to cut off US military aid to the rest of the world through political pressure. But there may come a time when it is necessary to pick up a gun because other actions are totally futile, and I need to have thought out in advance what criteria I will use to judge whether I will do that or not. I saw an underground movie called "Ice" which present this kind of situation: the US has become basically Fascist. Everyone has registration cards and can be stopped on the street by the police at any time. There are organized urban gurreillas in every city and elsewhere. There is a full US intervention in Mexico to put down a Vietnam-type revolution there. And the film explores the lives of people that are involved in these various groups in terms of what this situation does to them as individuals. It is really a heavy thing, because it is not so far-fetched. We have to project ourselves into those situations as well as working in the present as best we can.

Betsy: Yeah, I agree. I just want to know enough and work in such ways that the option will always be open to me against having to take up a gun. So far, at least, I have never confronted that kind of

extreme situation, so it is a pretty intellectual thing to talk about it, for me, compared to what it is for a lot of people in the rest of the world. It is just something which I value so much, to try to find non-violent, non-gun solutions to things rather than gun-solutions.

Erik: Earlier you painted a very bleak scenerio, the most pessimistic side of all of our fantasies--there is no hope of having a grandchild because in 25 years the world will be destroyed. The scenerio you painted was of the upmost, catastrophic violence. Can you paint a scenerio in which non-violent means of organization and political action or life-styles, have some possibility of preventing that from happening? It doesn't have to be a prediction that this is in fact what is going to happen, but just an image of how it could happen.

Betsy: O.K. SCENERIO 8:

If the UN had the power to eliminate the time and energy spent on defence and on protection of national resources and at the same time had the power to manage and reallocate those resources, it would free a tremendous amount of energy and resources towards solving those constant daily violences that occur in ghettos and in underdeveloped countries. Like, in the United States, if we didn't have a defense department, if the 2/3 of the budget which goes to defense went to solving our problems, we might be in a little better shape.

Erik: Now, let us suppose that the way to prevent this horrible catastrophe from happening is for the United Nations to assume that kind of authority, what kind of scenerio can you create from today in 1971 to the time when the UN would be in that position?

Betsy: I can't. I don't see any real way to get there.

Klaus: I'll try. I am proposing the view that the Pietists had 200 years ago. The revivalists, for example, at the beginning of the ~~Nineteenth~~ 19th Century in the United States produced a lot of social action and things, but it didn't change Capitalism; it made it even worse. You know, the Jews here in America came here at the turn of the century and they went into the system in such a way that made it automatic that America would be a friend of Israel. There are so many Jews in leading positions, that automatically America is made a friend of Israel. There are only a few Jews in America compared to the whole population, but their influence is much greater because they are in so many leading positions. And that is how revolutionaries can gain influence. SCENERIO 9:

Revolutionaries in this country could change the country if they went into leading positions. That is possible within the next 20 years. The students who are part of the counter-culture, who know what is wrong with the society, should go into leading positions in society, in economy, in politics, in the parties. That is my idea of Betsy being President. That is the way that could really bring us social change.

Erik: What would these people do when they got into positions of importance?

Klaus: Well, for example, reform the Constitution towards socialism. People now in the United States cannot even think of Socialism, but if the leaders in Communications, in the economy, in politics were for it, they could convince the people of it and then they could reform the Constitution. Under Roosevelt we had a little bit of that, but after the Second World War more conservative people gained power. Students today who have good ideas of what Utopian society could be should, instead of going into the country and building communes, go into leading positions and try to achieve this.

Chris: By deception, or how?

Erik: But in the United States now, there really are political criteria for moving up into positions of leadership. The board of directors of GM would never appoint a left-wing radical to the position of President of the Corporation, unless they didn't know that he was a left-wing socialist radical. You would have to hide it.

Klaus: I am not so sure: all of the people who will be available will be socialists, so they won't have the choice.

Erik: I kind of think that there will always be at least 15% who won't be and that is all that they will need to choose from.

Donley: I would like to Say Something. I don't know of any people with left-wing ideas who would like to become president of General Motors. We have got to make that position irrelevant, as a waste of time because that sort of thing is going to crumple and fall through other processes. In politics it is another issue and there are people in politics who are presenting those positions, like Ron Dellums and Julian Bond and others. There are people who are moving into positions of authority in various institutions who came out of the civil rights movement of the early 60s and who are in positions to change things. This is not going to save the world, but at least something is happening.

Erik: This is the most optimistic reformist position, that it is possible for radicals, socialists, to infiltrate positions of authority and by a gradual process simply become the power elite. That is one view.

Betsy: But power corrupts.

Erik: That's right; that is what the anarchist would say. To work your way up in an organization you have to make so many compromises of principle, that by the time you get to the top you may not longer be the same person.

Donley: I don't know if that is true. The pattern of advancement in organizations has changed, at least according to a Playboy article I read called "Executive Chess." The traditional way was to marry the major stock holders daughter or to stay in one company and make a splash. But now there is much greater movement between companies and greater flexibility. Take Peter Stark: here is a president of a Bank who is not at all a status quo, traditional banker.

Mike McKinley: He married the Bank.

Donley: the point is, if you want to take the reformist position, that those sorts of things can happen.



Erik: One of the problems is that although this can happen in isolated instances, it is very unlikely to happen generally in the system, and it is almost impossible to happen in the army. Let us suppose that all of this happened: SCENERIO 10:

Radicals have infiltrated business and other organizations. They move up in institutions ~~can~~ and somehow manage to maintain their committment to their ideology, and are willing to fight from their positions of authority for radical change, both in their institutions and in the society. And then radicals eventually assume some kind of ascendancy in political institutions. The next thing that happens is that there is a coup d'etat and we have an overtly fascist state. This would seem to be a likely outcome of the scenerio since it is very unlikely, even if radicals assumed positions of power in the courts and politics, that they would assume any power at all in the army. The power structure within the army is so incredibly authoritarian and conservative that no radical could survive in it for long.

Betsy: Where does that take us? As long as you have a military it doesn't matter what you do because the military can always take over.

Erik: Unless you have a force which can fight the military and eventually dismantle it. No Revolution has been ~~a~~ won simply by the revolutionary army outright defeating the regimes army. Revolutions are won because of the collapse of the regime's army and defecting en masse, or at least refusing to fight any longer. That is what happened in Cuba. Batista's army disintegrated in a very short period of time.

Donley: O.K., where does that leave you in terms of violent revolution in the United States. I would like to hear a scenerio for violent revolution, just so we cover all aspects of the field.

Erik: All right, here is one scenerio for what a violent revolution might look like. SCENERIO 11:

A scenerio of violent revolution might include certain elements of what Klaus was talking about, of radicals infiltrating existing institutions in various ways, but that would not be the central feature of what would happen. A mass left-wing revolutionary political organization on the model of something like PLP or the Panthers or some other organization of that sort would emerge, in which people would be organized throughout the country in cells or some form of local organization, but united through some kind of central political direction. At the core of this movement would be a tightly organized group of leaders, cadres, which would be basically conspiratorial but with massive support. The key would be this mass support, not necessarily mass membership in the party itself. This people, the dedicated party members and their "fellow-travelers" would infiltrate the lower levels of the army and carry out clandestine propoganda within the ranks. This is the sort of thing which happened in the Russian Army in 1917. Then what happens

is that as conditions deteriorate, as profits drop, the struggle between workers and the power elite, the ruling class, is intensified in the form of strikes, political action, etc. Eventually, some kind of revolutionary situation occurs and The Party calls a general strike. Perhaps radicals have been elected to Congress in sufficient numbers that the army attempts a coup, or perhaps the country invades Mexico and creates a domestic crisis, or what have you. A General strike is called, a provisional revolutionary government is declared, the army tries to call out troops to squash the uprising and the provisional Government, and then, gloriously, the troops turn against their leadership and join with students and workers to form the new society. There would be some period of some kind of armed confrontation, some kind of civil war. Then, depending upon the extent to which the ruling class and the army leadership would be willing to self-destruct by turning nuclear weapons against the cities in the US--which I would think would be unlikely, especially if there was a general amnesty for that leadership to be exiled if they surrendered, or something like that--there would be a more or less extended period of real internal war, like in the case of the Spanish Civil War, and eventually the People would win, unlike the case of the Spanish Civil War. That would be a scenerio for a successful revolution in the United States.

Donley: You said in your scenerio that you felt there would be a right-wing coup by the army which would precipitate the armed conflict with the revolutionary forces.

Erik: I don't know if that is really essential--I put it in more for dramatic effect.

Donley: Well, I am not sure that it isn't essential. I do not know what else would provoke the whole population into open combat.

Erik: I guess I feel that if it ever happened in the United States that through normal political channels there was a real possibility of a socialist or communist government being formed, then the right-wing elements in the ruling class and the army would be forced to try to directly assume power. They would destroy the formally democratic institutions, either through a Macarthy-type purge from within or by a coup d'etat. The reason why these forces have supported democratic institutions for so long is not because they believe in them intrinsically, it is not because they are democratic at heart, but because these institutions have so elegantly served their class interests in general. But if those institutions ceased to maintain their power and began to seriously challenge their power, they would turn the tables.

In France, in 1968, you had a situation which didn't develop into the revolutionary scenerio, but which could have potentially become that. If those workers when they took over so many factories had had a revolutionary political party organization which would have declared a provisional revolutionary government, the Revolutionary French People's Republic, you might have had this kind of scenerio emerge. The army would have marched on the government, there would have been a call to arms of the workers, part of the army would probably have defected, and there would have been a revolutionary war in France. The army would

have been unlikely to bomb the factories because the owners hardly would want their own industries destroyed since those industries are their basic base of power. Bombing their own factories would if anything help rather than hurt the revolution. That might have happened in France. But on the other side, the army might not be sufficiently split and the workers might not feel the sacrifice sufficiently worth while, and so the attempted revolution would totally fall apart.

Klaus: There is one area where I see my idea about infiltration really working, and that is in education. At least in Germany, education and communications are becoming very independent of business. You have publically owned television, and at least there the press is very much influenced by the left wing. And even in America education is surprisingly influenced by rather left-wing ideas.

Erik: The changes we have seen in educational climate in the past ten years are really one of the most optimistic things and give some weight to the optimistic-reformist position that Klaus has been talking about. It is staggering to compare the level of political consciousness now among students with what it was like in the Eisenhower years, and also the level of critique of the general social forms. 15 years ago you would never have conceived it possible that there would be a massively disaffected, alienated student population rejecting the whole society by 1970. It would have been inconceivable in the 1950s that by 1970 there would be openly Communist organizations like PLP holding mass meetings, publishing newspapers with a substantial circulation. In the 1950s they were persecuting Liberals as being Communists; now there is emerging a socialist and communist Left with some following, for the first time probably since the 1930s. If that change of consciousness increases to the same extent in the next 15 years, then who knows what possibilities would be opened up, for either the reformist or revolutionary perspective.

Mike Murphy: I picked out something in Camus' L'Etranger which bears on what we were talking about earlier concerning killing. The part I am going to read involves the main character who is in prison for killing a man who has been sentenced to die. A Catholic priest has been coming around to try to save his soul and is rather dismayed that Merceau's intransigence. Finally Merceau blows up and says: "Then I do not know how it was, but something seemed to break inside me, and I started yelling at the top of my voice. I hurled insults at him. I told him not to waste his rotten prayers on me. It was better to burn than to disappear. I had taken him by the neckband of his cassock and in a sort of ecstasy of Joy and Rage I poured out on him all the thoughts that had been simmering in my brain. He seemed so cock-sure you see, and yet none of his certainties were worth one strand of a woman's hair. Living as he did as a corpse, he couldn't even be sure of being alive. It might look as if my hands were empty. Actually, I was sure of myself, sure about everything, far surer than he. Sure of my present life and of the death that was coming. That, no doubt, was all that I had, but at least that certainty was something that I could get my teeth into, just as it got its teeth into me. I had been right, I was still right,

I was always right. I had passed my life in a certain way, and I might have passed it in a different way if I had felt like it. I had acted thus and I hadn't acted otherwise. I hadn't done X whereas I had done Y or Z. And what did that mean? That all the time I had been waiting for this present moment, for that dawn, for tomorrow's or another day's, which was to justify me. Nothing, nothing had the least importance, and I knew quite well why. He too knew why. From the dark horizon of my future a sort of slow, persistent breeze had been blowing toward me all my life long from the years that were to come. And on its way that breeze had leveled out all of the ideas that people had tried to foist on me and the equally unreal years I was then living through. What difference could they make to me, the deaths of others, or a mother's love, or his God, or the way a man decides to live, <sup>the fate he</sup> thinks he chooses, since one and the same fate was bound to choosenot only me, but thousands of millions of privileged people who like him called themselves my brothers."

Existentialism is one way of facing the paradoxes we have talked about. I have gone back to this particular passage repeatedly. It is not very comforting, but on the other hand it is very comforting. This related to the means-ends issues we're talking about: this is the statement that all acts are equally meaningful.

Erik: And equally good?

Donley: To the existentialist that is not a relevant question in deciding the act. Merceau came to his killing in an absurd situation on a beach and did the act on the spur of the moment without reason. It was a purely existential and wholly "pure" act, if I read Camus right. It was not premeditated nor was there afterthought on it.

Erik: But you choose goals as well as means. You choose a goal and then you choose how you are going to do it. Both can be existential choices

Mike Murphy: It seems to me that what is being said here is that one thing is really as meaningful as another, and the crucial thing is to Do It, whatever it is, for yourself.

Erik: That may be true that all acts are equally meaningful in the sense that what I do is as meaningful for me as what you do is meaningful for you, or what I do is as meaningless for me as what you do is meaningless for you. But I may still try to stop you from doing your meaningful thing. And I may still decide to do certain things because they are effective or necessary rather than meaningful. I could never kill someone because it was "meaningful"--there could never be real meaningfulness in that act, but it might be effective or necessary. I don't know--maybe necessity makes an act meaningful. Maybe that is what Camus is saying: that every man does whatever he does out of necessity, and that that is why it has meaning.

Klaus: The existentialists were never really very interested in society anyway. Revolution and Utopia are both societal acts.

Mike Murphy: I brought this in almost as an aside from everything we have been saying.

Klaus: Not quite. I have seen here in this class every time the problem "could I choose for myself at least some kind of revolutionary way of living." That is individualistic and so it would be existential-

istic.

Mike Murphy: That is implicit in what everyone is saying here, even if it is caught up in societal concerns. Really, I think "meaning" is basic to what Erik is saying, to what Donley is saying, what Betsy is saying, what everyone is saying. Each of us is really seeking meaning for himself. Maybe not as a single man uniquely alone like Kirkegard, but still meaning.

Erik: I think that this is true, but it is at least partially because of our own social situation. I think what Mike (McKinley) said before that for an Indian in Brazil, the question is not a philosophical one about meaning, but rather simply a question of existence, survival. His frame of reference would not be "what can I do to make my life meaningful" but rather "what can we do so that we can survive."

Betsy: I don't know if we really can say that. A B.A. in English Literature isn't worth much; it is worth something in that I think there are some things that are universally true about people over time and space. There are a lot of things that are true for me that are also true for some 22 year old Brazilian Indian woman, really. Some real basic things. Those common things can be expressed in phrases but those phrases cannot encompass the complexity of her life or my life or any of the lives of any of us or what we have in common. Maybe what I am saying is that Mike's motif of the search for meaning and the Brazilian Indian's struggle for survival are exactly the same. I think that we could share the concerns of this discussion with a Brazilian Indian and with anyone else.

Mike McKinley: I don't think that necessarily a lot of concerns are shared. I think that survival for them has "meaning", but our search for meaning is really different. Our search for meaning in life is easily a search from the boredom of not being able to find anything to do that envelopes us totally. Whereas, that question, when you are working for survival, is not at issue.

Steve: I think Mike is right, I really do. I get the feeling very often that the whole reason why we have the leisure to talk about violence and non-violence is because we are not being directly threatened by violence. The fact that we do not experience the violence that at home the Black Community is facing, ~~in~~ or abroad the violence that any number of the large majority of any population is facing, of hunger and want and physical oppression, gives us the possibility to talk about it and to feel about it. While your concerns and the concerns of a woman of similar age in another country may be the same in the same sense that mine and my counter-part in a foreign country may be, that yet, we are much further from the point of impact and thus can afford the rationalization or have time for the rationalization, ~~while where the point of pressure~~ where the pressure is heaviest they really do not have the time for.

Erik: We can muse as to whether we find more "meaning" in revolution or more meaning in reform or more meaning in dropping out. They may be all tied in with the personal search for meaning, and

whatever choice we make may be a purely existential choice. But the issues and process is different for an individual who is directly oppressed.

Betsy: I would like to reverse what Steve said: they live closer to what Steve very aptly called the point of impact, and we live very far from it. Maybe that is not so much why we have the leisure to talk about this, but feel the necessity to talk about meaning and the like. We need to bring ourselves back to the point of impact, to understand where we stand, whereas they are there. Our violence is second hand, indirect; theirs isn't. But still, in some ways we share--yes, we share. Our forms are different from their forms because our living is different from their living in some ways, but a lot of the bases are really shared.

Mike Murphy: I think that we are both trying to make sense out of afflictions, afflictions of a Fascist state, of capitalist society that is demeaning and destructive ~~and destructive~~ in human terms. We are trying to find some way out of it, almost some way to placate the Gods, through our own efforts. We are all trying to make sense out of things.

Erik: But I think that our concern has more of an individualistic frame-of-reference: what can I do to placate the Gods, if you will; or what can I do to provide meaning in my life; or what can I do to change society. The frame-of-reference of an oppressed person is, I think, likely to be much more collective. But I think you are right that choices and actions that these people make, even if they are ~~purely~~ choices and actions for survival for which they have no options, are still tied up with questions of meaning.

post session note: Marx, Bakunin and Franz Fannon all really agreed very much with Mike Murphy. They all felt that one of the key factors which pushed an oppressed individual to revolt or to join a revolutionary party was not simply his oppression, but the state of alienation that resulted from his oppression--the sense of utter meaninglessness and anomie in his life. The act of revolt was an act of creating meaning, of creating direction and purpose to one's life. In a sense, before the act of revolt the individual was more caught up with the necessities of survival than after: he was a farmer, or a miner, or a factory worker totally bound up with the process of providing a minimal subsistence for himself and his family. But upon becoming a revolutionary his horizon expands enormously and his activities become directed not just towards his immediate survival, but towards changing the society, towards helping others, towards liberation for his fellows and himself. While it is true that the oppressed poor may have little time to reflect on questions of meaninglessness of their activities or on what could give their lives meaning, the decision to become a revolutionary is powerfully bound up with the existential questions of finding or creating meaning that we face from a different perspective.

Klaus: I would like to try to make a theological statement about the "meaning of life". I couldn't even try to change myself; I know that. I am the summary of all of the events that change me in different ways. So, as far as I can see, in trying to make an application of the last Commandment, I would say, I can't find meaning for my life, but I can try to bring meaning into the lives of my fellow men, and that makes me a much more collective being than the search for an individual meaning for my own life. I can't change me anyway.

Erik: Somehow, in trying to create meaning in the lives of others, you also create meaning in your own life.

Klaus: It could be; I don't know. But at least it helps you to forget the question.

Erik: Howard Thurman, in his book Disciplines of the Spirit, talks about personal commitment, particularly to social change, to making things better for other people, and says in effect that commitment itself is the stuff of meaning. Even though if you set out deliberately to "create meaning" you would probably fail, the act of committing yourself to others, to a community, to some ideal, that act of commitment itself is meaning.

Mike Murphy: In Chess there is a move where you can capture a piece en passant, in passing. It is almost an after-thought or a side effect. Meaning is almost created that way.

Klaus: The Existentialist Sartre explained the "meaning of life" in terms of the word "freedom", but freedom you have only in short moments. Like living on a hot oven: you sit on the hot oven and then you jump off and are free for a moment and that is life, that is meaning. But at the same moment you are going back to the hot oven, where you stay until you get power for the next jump. But it is only a jump, a moment. It's a flash, but it is those flashes which give meaning. And it doesn't even help you too much for the next time. That sounds like a sermon.

You know, in Germany, in Pietism there was the idea that you could change society by changing the individuals. You have to start with yourself and then the people around you and so on. But Pietism and Fundamentalism and all of the churches never went the way to change society; they always stopped on this individualist way of changing personalities and such. And I really doubt ever and ever again that there is somewhere the power to finally change society.

Donley: It seems to me that it is with most fear and trembling and trepidation that we should approach changing someone else or our community or our society. It is almost an impossibility to think about changing others, and that by becoming full human beings ourselves we will change others en passant.

Erik: In fact that is what we are: all of the en passants of all of the other people we have met.

Mike Murphy: That is the beauty of it.

Erik: I think that all of this is really a separate issue from the question of what course of action has the most realistic chance of being effective towards getting rid of some of the terrible things that are happening. Whether no course of action is remotely possible and therefore all we should worry about is the scenerio of dropping-out to our own little Utopia; or whether ultimately a violent revolution scenerio is the way.

Betsy: You are stacking the question, Erik. I don't think that these ~~iss~~ issues are separate. I think all of this depends upon your definitions of "effective" and "change" and "society" and "course of action" and "drop-out" and "violent" and "revolution" and golly-gee.

Erik: Yes, but we all agree more or less about most of the terrible things that are happening now. And there is considerable unanimity in terms of the kinds of things we would like to have in a society, and certainly an agreement on some of the things we want to not have. But none of us have a very clear understanding about what things would help to move us in that direction. We have articulated ten or so scenerios of the future of greater or lesser absurdity, but we don't have any criteria for choosing between them. We don't know which is most likely which one has the best chance for success, which one we should throw our weight behind and support. But that doesn't mean that there isn't a basis for choosing.

Steve: Could you be a little clearer about what you mean by "drop-out" because that is really a loaded term.

Erik: I don't mean to use it perjoritavely. I mean it as a positive action: instead of trying to chnage the ~~zazger~~ institutions in the larger society you simply try to change the immediate environment in which you live. That can mean going off to Mendicino and building a house with a bunch of other people and forming your own isolated Utopian community. You have dropped-in to that community, but dropped-out of the larger society. It is really more of a drop-in into the counter-culture.

Steve: Do you see this option in terms of political vs. apolitical action?

Erik: well, what I have described is pretty apolitical. You may opt out of politics for very political reasons--that is, you may opt out because you feel any political action is futile. But what you are choosing is minimal involvement in politics.

Steve: I have some trouble with this. I have gone through phases of being political and non-political. I worked some in the South in the early 60s and was jailed and then decided subversion was the way and so went back to work within. And right now, I am not doing anything political. I have ambivalent feelings about it, but at the same time I am working in three distinct areas which to me are important in creating a new society: a new kind of ~~company~~ organization in the cab company, a new pattern of living, and an alternative educational form. None of those things can be termed "political" things, and yet somehow I have this feeling that this is definitely not dropping out. To dropout is to become apolitical in the sense of not caring about being effective.



Erik: Yes. I think that "drop-out" is not a good word because it does imply that. Perhaps the phrase "counter-culture" is a better expression for that approach to changing society. This can either take the form of isolating yourself from the rest of society or of operating as you are doing in the midst of the rest of society. If it is in the midst of the larger society, then I think that it is necessarily more political because it is more visible and is likely to run into more conflict with established structures. There is a sense in which the counter-culture is competing against the larger society for the affections of people, and particularly of the new generation coming up now. Maybe that is another Scenerio: SCENERIO 12:

The counter-culture becomes so attractive as a style of life and a way of relating to other people that eventually most people begin to simply ignore the institutions of the Old Order. People form living collectives, work collectives, farming collectives, within the old society and for progressively for more and more people the old capitalist economic and political institutions simply become irrelevant. It is not that people in GM change their minds, or that GM is taken over by the people, but that it dies from being ignored. [Of course the problem with this is that if ever the counter-culture posed a real, competitive threat in that way to the status quo institutions, the counter-culture institutions would probably be destroyed one way or another and they would be forced to fight--politically or revolutionarily--for their continued survival, much in the way "liberated zones" in certain countries have to fight for survival (post session comment).]

Donley: It is really amazing how these kinds of counter-culture institutions are spreading. We wanted to rent a studio to do handicrafts with some friends and we found a whole large building in San Francisco filled with people doing that. And when I was in seminary I worked in a bookstore that was run in that kind of way, really open and free for the people in it.

Erik: That is like Fay Stender's law office that has become completely communalized. And when this is combined with Klaus' image of people infiltrating the organizations and leadership positions of established institutions, maybe it can have some larger effect. This sort of approach can also be used in politics, like in the Berkeley Community Control of Police issue. In my neighborhood on Cedar Street there is going to be a series of block meetings coming up for people in the neighborhood to meet each other and discuss these issues. It is a very mixed neighborhood of twon people and students and maybe we will have a chance to really meet each other and talk together. I don't know how good it will be, but people will be getting together of the first timex on that street to talk about things which concern them. And maybe if it works out well, people on the block will want to have these meetings every month or so, and then we will have created a counter-cultural institution.

Donley: You can start that kind of thing going on the most innocuous issues, like planting trees on the street instead of concrete.

Erik: One of the hardest things has always been just getting people

to meet together. One of the reasons for that is that the issues have always started out too big and covering too big an area so it was generally a big project to go to meetings. You know, we started by organizing people around the War, and to do that you had to get a lot of people from all over a city to come to some central place for a meeting or a demonstration or what have you. That ~~requires~~ requires a lot of effort and sophistication, a high level of political consciousness, before people are willing to participate in that way. This new shift, to start at the most grass roots level of a block or a few blocks in a neighborhood, and talk about the most concrete and immediate issues, and through these gatherings getting people to care about each other and helping people to develop an understanding, an consciousness of their collective interests. Perhaps this kind of political organization of the counter-culture is the way that the counter-culture idea, scenerio, can spread throughout the society: neighborhood after neighborhood will organize, meet together and talk about their problems. Once this happens all over Berkeley, then neighborhoods can become the real organizational power base for the control of city government. And maybe it will be such an exciting, non-elitist popular movement, that it will spread from Berkeley to Oakland and from there to other places. And it may be that this organization would be strong enough that external forces, corporations, state governments, could not intervene in the city and destroy the neighborhood power. Who knows, by the presidential election of 1980 there will be a Neighborhood Collective Ticket, and peacefully this massive, spontaneous popular movement will take over. Between 1960 and 1970 the critique of the existing society at a system level of ~~pa~~ many people increased enormously; perhaps between 1970 and 1980 people's aspirations for immediate face-to-face cooperative activity will increase enormously and people will become involved in actualizing their critique of society in their own immediate environments. So, a whole new political context will emerge that no one, no revolutionary elite, could have created. That still doesn't handle the problem of a military coup d'etat.

Steve: Well, those collectives could be armed. A lot of people are talking about Urban Guerillas. I'm not one of them..

Erik: Are other neighborhoods in Berkeley having meetings like mine?

Steve: Channing way has been doing this for nearly a year now, very extensively.

Betsy: The girl down the hall came to borrow two cups of milk for a bread recipe which was a real breakthrough.

Erik: Tonight we have someone from the Progressive Labor Party, Henry Potiaccoto, who will talk to us about the Progressive Labor Party's view about Revolution as the path towards significant social change.

Henry: I guess I will try to explain to you both what our view of the world and where it is going is, and what we are actually doing within that world. I think that some of the news stories in our newspaper CHALLENGE would be good to look at to illustrate these issues. On the bottom of the front page of our last issue (Feb. 20, 1971; v.7,n.14), there is a story about 300 members and friends of the "Mothers' Committee to Smash the Flat Grant". I am not sure what that is about, but 300 people joined and followed the leadership of these women on welfare in invading this store. The owner of the store would raise the prices when welfare checks came out and also sell really rotten food to people, so these mothers invaded the store and confronted the police when they came. On page three there is a story about "Black-White Unity Win" in a GE plant in Lynn, Massachusetts. One black worker was harassed and pressured into working in unsafe conditions, and when he refused to do it, he was backed by the rest of the workers in the plant so the plant was just shut down by them until they won the demand. Another story on page 5 is about the rebellions in LA, the Chicano rebellions. There has been a number of these in the past several months where somebody got shot by the cops. All of these three articles have a great deal in common. This is the kind of thing that has been going on for decades in this country: people fighting against the oppression that they have to face, in all these cases, working class people. These are three small events in the general class struggle that is going on in this country and will be going on for a long time. Another thread in all of these instances is the struggle against racism, against the special oppression of black people in this country. It is not an accident that the sharpest struggle is on the oppression of black workers. It is not an accident that the most militant people in this country are black and Latin working class people. Another thread in all of these stories is the roll of the cops in each case, coming down on the side of the capitalists and not of the workers. They entered against the welfare mothers and against the chicanos, and they certainly would have entered against the workers in the GE plant if the situation had escalated that far.

These three articles illustrate three main concepts: one is that there are classes and struggle in this country contrary to the view that is pushed a lot in the University of there no longer being such a thing as the working class any more, that everyone is rich and happy in the United States. Basically we feel that that is a lot of bullshit: there are lots of working people who are oppressed and are fighting back against it. The class struggle is still going on. The second concept is that racism isn't just a question of ideas in people's heads. Basically the essence of it is a very material oppression, which is harsher for black and latin people than for white people. It is physically harsher, like more police, more unemployment, lower wages, lower promotions, etc. Black students were shot on campuses a couple of years before any white students were shot, and no body noticed because of the racism here. Like the "Orangemille

Massacre" which no body knew anything about. It is taken for granted that Black People get shot. That is the way it is. It is a racist thing in itself not to get as mad when black people are shot as when white people are shot. What I am trying to say is that the racism kind of pervades the whole society including ~~the~~ much of the so-called "Movement" organization I am not excluding PL from that: racism is something we have to fight in ourselves also. Those racist attitudes don't fall from the sky; they serve a very important purpose for the ruling class, for the capitalist, because they affectively confuse people and divide people and prevent a stronger unity against them.

The third concept is the concept of the state that Marxists have developed and learned about over the years. Marx and Lenin--especially Lenin in the State and Revolution--developed the idea of the State as the servant of one class. In the United States now it is the servant of the capitalist class and no body else. Any illusions about such things as "community control of the police" and that there are "good" cops and "bad" cops are very naive; basically the cops, the courts, the jails, the senate, the whole state apparatus, the pentagon, everything, are all geared towards serving the capitalist class in this country, and they will continue to do so until that state is smashed. That is the whole Communist perspective: to smash the capitalist state, here in the United States and around the world. This is the essence of Marxism basically: which class holds control of the Government and exercises a dictatorship over the rest of the country, the other classes. The key idea of the Marxists is getting to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, meaning that the working class holds control of the Government and represses those who want to go back to capitalism. That is the "Marxist Outlook"; We believe it is true and that we have to act on the basis of that because it is the only scientific ~~basis for the~~ understanding of society.

That brings me to why PL was formed and role it is playing. In all three of the stories in the paper which we looked at PL was involved in various ways. In L.A., for instance, the people who were leading the Chicano demonstration said that PL should be kicked out. They said that we shouldn't have outside agitators come and raise hell. No non-Chicanos should be there and even if somebody is a chicano, if he is in PL he shouldn't be there because they are trouble-makers. The whole red-baiting thing. What happened was that about fifty people who were inside of PL, including Chicanos and Black and White people, went there anyway, in spite of the leadership of the Chicano Moritorium opposing them. They only succeeded in kicking out four people from the march, and the reason why they did not succeed in kicking out the other 46 members of PL was that they were defended by the other people in the demonstration, the brown berets and Maicha, the Chicano student organization. They felt that it was good for communists and people who oppose nationalism to be part of their struggle, even if they did not agree completely with us. Again, in the Boston struggle against the supermarket, PL was involved and played a major role in organizing the whole thing and participating. The fact that PL is involved in all of these things is fairly important. It is the first time in ages that there is one nation-wide Communist

organization that is involved in working class struggle. It is still very small compared to what is needed. Our feeling is that in the 60s Marxism-Leninism was brought back to the US after about 30 years in which the Communist Party sort of buried the whole thing, first by hiding and not telling people that they were communists and then by supporting the Democratic Party and not talking any more at all about revolution. The Communist Party has basically sold out any concept of smashing the state which is really the essence of Marxism. It was out of that that people decided to form PL, to start some new, revolutionary Communist Organization. Up until about a year and a half ago it wasn't clear that it was going to work. The past year or so has essentially made the coming back of Communism, and of a strong national communist revolutionary party a reality. The 70s will be the decade in which that party develops a really broad base among the working class. So, basically, we are extremely optimistic. Things haven't gone this well for a long time in the revolutionary movement in this country. There hasn't been anyone in an open mass way talking about smashing the government for a long time.

The responses to us in the working class during the past year or so have been extremely encouraging. The main hang up is really in ourselves: we do not yet have a party of the kind of revolutionaries that are needed to make a revolution. We try; but the main hang-ups are inside ourselves, in the fear and other ideas in our heads which are slowing us down. The Progressive Labor party is growing and--I know this sounds arrogant--we feel that this is very important for the whole working class in this country. We say: the coming ten years are the years when we will get a broad base in the American working class, especially in the army and the factories which are the two key areas. Also, the idea of a worker-student alliance is going to be much more concretised. And after that, there is no way to tell what is going to happen. The struggle is going to get a hell of a lot sharper from what it is now, and people are getting shot now. We foresee in the foreseeable future war in this country, and we see that this is the only way that the working class can take power, through arms, violence, revolution. We see that as a very likely, or certain prospect. It is hard to compress the whole world view in a very short time. I have already talked for too long. It is hard not to sound full of rhetoric when you are trying to compress a lot into a small time.

David: Could you give your own and the Party's attitude towards groups like SDS, the US Communist Party, the Socialist Workers' Party, the Black Panthers and some of these other fairly leftist organizations, where you might agree and disagree.

Henry: Yes, that is a big question. One of the things that PL is famous for is raising a lot of open criticisms of other organizations. We criticize the Panthers, and that is sort of a taboo in the Movement. We think that it is really important to have as much ideological debate as possible. We were born out of that, by people who were members of the Communist Party and saw that the Communist Party was burying itself and was being seen by nobody but the FBI. They saw that the CP was hiding itself from the workers and refused to openly say they were communists. Their Party newspaper is incredible:

It glorifies Russia as being the perfect society and says that it has gone beyond socialism and is moving towards the classless society. That is complete insanity. They say that the main force for revolution today is the Soviet Union. To most people it is very clear that that is bullshit. The Soviet Union is pretty much an Imperialist country. There are differences, but that is the case in essence. Czechoslovakia is really very much like Vietnam or the Dominican Republic. That is how PL was formed: out of conflict with that ideology; the support for the Soviet Union, the peaceful transition to socialism, and so on. We say that socialism can only come through violent revolution; the CP says that it can come through elections.

With most of the other groups the main difference is that we say that all Nationalism is reactionary. We say that international class unity is needed, while the SWP and most of the small organizations on the Left talk about "revolutionary nationalism" as a key, important force for change. That is the essence of most of our disagreements. We are active in SDS where we raised the issue of the workers-student alliance. We said that the only productive thing that students could do was to align themselves with workers. That position became extremely popular ~~wizk~~ in SDS and led to what is known as the "split" in SDS when the Weathermen and other factions left the organization.

David: But the Weathermen are really for violent revolution aren't they?

Erik: Yes, but they are really very elitest and don't really care about building any mass support. At least that is my impression.

Henry: The essence of the ideological debate with them was that they were saying that white working class people in this country are profiting and benefiting and reaping the fruits of the oppression of black people and the oppression of Third World People around the world. So, they say white workers are benefiting from US imperialism. They say there is something they call the "white skin privilege" and they say that the only way that white people can support third world people is to reject that white skin privilege and become a terrorist. In the end, all of their actions boils down to a large number of buildings being blown up. They also had some demonstrations in which they attacked people, working people, and called them pigs.

David: And with the Black Panthers, your basic split is that they are saying it is the black people who are not part of the working class that are forming the vanguard of the revolution? They are saying that it is more of a racial thing than a class thing.

Henry: Well, the key dispute with the Panthers used to be that we said that Nationalism of any form was wrong and that what was needed was working class unity, while they were supporting what they called revolutionary nationalism of black people. It seems that by now either we convinced them or they convinced themselves, but Huey Newton seems to have rejected nationalism and now talks about "inter-communalism" which is really the same as our internationalism.

Erik: But they do talk about the revolutionary vanguard being the "Lumpen" rather than the proletariat as such.

Henry: Yes, I think that that is the key difference now.

Erik: I read a recent Black Panther Paper in which Huey Newton discussed this. The Panther's stated that the most oppressed people in the United States were not the working class, but the more marginal, subworking class, black lumpenproletariat. Without denying that the workers in America were oppressed, they feel that the most oppressed people are the blacks in the ghetto who have never had stable jobs, never been working class in the sense of being factory workers. These are the people who the Panthers feel will form the revolutionary vanguard, and lead the working class. In that article they explicitly addressed themselves to PL's criticisms.

Henry: That is the most friendly thing they ever said about PL: that they had disagreements with us.

Erik: It seems to me that part of this disagreement is really a question of the way ~~use~~ you use words. Part of what they were calling the lumpenproletariat, you would probably call the working class.

Chris: I have problems with a position which seems to analyse most of what goes on in the world in terms of economics. Given all of the complexities in the world, can you basically analyse things just in terms of class conflict and economic structures. I am thinking specifically of racism. There are also psychological and cultural things involved there that class conflict and the economic thing doesn't fully account for. How does PL handle this?

Henry: We are not what is called "mechanical materialists." We don't say, you have this economic set up and that is what racism is and that is as far as it goes. Psychological and cultural things are a reality. There is a whole racist culture which takes on all kinds of forms. We take the Marxist position that culture and ideology and ideas reflect the world. Like the idea of sorcery, the idea of witchcraft, does not serve any useful purpose to any class in society anymore and the result is that it has gone out of the window. Science has developed beyond that. Witchcraft has almost disappeared because it no longer reflects any social or economic reality.

Steve: which social or economic reality did it ~~represent~~ reflect?

Erik: I would say that it reflected the economic reality of a very primitive technology which couldn't handle many problems the people faced. In order to cope with the limitations of that technology, people relied on magic to calm their anxieties.

Henry: The way it disappeared was that as capitalism developed, the capitalist class needed science. It was a big struggle in the world of ideas that the capitalist class waged, science against all sorts of obscurantist religious beliefs. They needed that science to develop their industries because they needed a more advanced technology. They didn't need very scientific sociology or economics. The scientific analysis of society, the Marxist analysis, is in the interests of the working class, not the capitalist class, and it is their job to develop it. It is through working class revolution that that becomes part of the dominant ideology. This is getting very abstract. To talk in more day to day terms about where racism comes

from, if you look at the press and TV and movies you can see racism all over the place. It is very clear. Black people are almost always presented in a paternalistic or cliched way. You could always argue about where this racism comes from, but we would say that the people who control the mass media have an interest in having that stuff in there. They probably know what they are doing. A movie which was clearly anti-racist would never get the money to be circulated. The Ruling Class has very direct ways of controlling the way people think, or at least trying to control the way people think. They fortunately don't succeed all of the time. It is ~~also~~ obviously not only economic, but political control as well which allows them to do that.

Chris: If I am correct from some of the essays in Revolution Today, then, one of the manifestations of how racism is related to economics and class and so on, is that racism becomes a way for those who have power to split the working class.

Henry: That is one aspect. The way that takes shape, though, is important. The Communist Party used to say "Black and White, United and Fight," which is a pretty good slogan. But what is important is the kind of basis on which you unite, and what kind of split there is. It is not that there is any kind of equal split. In a place like Lebanon there is a fairly equal split between Christians and Moslems which the ruling class encourages. In this country it is not that kind of division because black people are much more oppressed. The way that you can analyse the way the ruling class divides people is that for instance, the idea that Black People are lazy: this is a typical racist attitude. It has some kind of material basis which makes it credible, like, unemployment is higher among blacks and ~~the~~ so on. People might tend to believe that that is because they are lazy. The truth of the matter is that Black people have the worst jobs and have higher unemployment rates because it is good business for the businessman. It means that if there is high unemployment among Blacks that they will accept lower paying jobs. The way the color thing works now, and if white workers don't defeat their racism, the split will continue and they won't be able to fight together. The most militant workers will always be among the Blacks because they are the most oppressed, but if the racism continues, people won't follow their leadership. It all ties in.

Chris: But will racism disappear after the revolution, when there is no longer any class conflict? That is what I was getting at when I asked about economics.

Henry: No, it won't disappear just like that. That would be nice, but it will stick around a long time. There is racism now in the US which doesn't really serve any particular purpose. Racism against Blacks plays a big role in the society in terms of keeping the ruling class in power, but let's take racism against Italians: it doesn't really serve any purpose any longer. That shows how racism lingers along even after it is no longer really necessary. After the revolution the same will be true. Especially since racism is a very deep thing in this country. And that could even reverse the revolution as a matter of fact, if racist ideas continue to be strong.



Erik: Another thing is that in the Marxist-Lenninist framework, class struggle does not end with the revolutionary seizure of power. That is really more of a beginning point than an end point. It is at that point that you can really begin attacking these problems.

Donley: I would think that the first thing that you would do is to continue to solidify your power rather than begin to end any serious problems. And if in the past, solidifying power has been based on keeping people apart, why is there any reason to believe that any new seizure of power won't rely on the same tactics?

Erik: But the seizure of power by a working class party is itself contingent upon that unity. The working class in the United States doesn't have a prayer of seizing that power unless there is a real unity.

Donley: But you just said that the seizure of power was not an end to this kind of class division. You said that it was only the beginning of solving it.

Erik: That is because when you seize power not all of the forms have ~~ex~~ changed, not everybody in the society is fully changed.

Donley: Right. So it is very crucial to solidify that power which you have just seized.

Henry: O.K., but how do you solidify it?

Donley: Well, traditionally, you did this by the way you described-- divide and conquer. I don't see why it would be any different.

Henry: Well you see, when there is a minority class in power, an exploiting class in power, that is a good tactic. They've used it successfully for centuries. But if the working class is in power, that is really self-defeating. The idea is to divide who you are oppressing--I guess we will do our utmost to divide Rockefeller from other capitalists. But it would not make sense to divide the working class.

Donley: What I am saying is that when what you are calling the "working class" seizes power, it will not really be the whole working class. It will probably be only a small minority of it. If you could effectively organize the entire working class right now, there would be no need for a revolution. Things would just simply change.

Henry: How? By people just changing their frame-of-mind?

Donley: If the whole working class were united, the revolution would happen over night; there wouldn't be any need for a violent revolution.

Erik: But even if the large majority of the workers were united, it might take force to translate that unity into real power.

Steve: They could simply all refuse to work and call a General Strike, and the whole thing would just grind to a halt.

Henry: Well, we've already had that. It's happened before, like in France in 1968.

Donley: What I am saying is that I do not think that anywhere near the entire working class will ever be united behind a revolution, but that maybe a small minority will be. Once that small minority seizes power, they still will not have a united working class, and at that

point they would have to strengthen their source of power. I don't see why they would refrain from using traditional techniques to do this.

Henry: What would happen if it really was the power of a small minority of the working class over the rest of society is that those people would probably become the new capitalists and things would move backwards like in the Soviet Union. And we are not interested in that.

Another example may clarify things. Another idea like racism is male chauvanism, that women are inferior and so on. It has a lot to do with a particular economic relationship, but nobody says it won't stick around after a revolution. It is probably even deeper than racism. So, here we are. This is socialism. The workers have control. Now, Hugh Hefner comes along and says, "this is great, the workers are the ruling power. I have a project: I want to start Playboy again. But I'll do it in true socialist fashion and not make any profits off of it!" Now, there might still be a hell of a lot of male chauvanism among the men of the working class. And he might be able to put out his magazine because a majority of the people might say yes. Now, I would say that a hell of a lot of women and the revolutionary party would be against it, and a lot of men who had seen through male chauvanism would be against it. So, even if a majority was not yet firmly against male chauvanism, a hell of a lot of people will be. So, when Hugh Hefner starts his new Socialist Payboy, there will be discussions everywhere. It would become a big issue. A lot of working class women who believe PL and the revolutionary movement will be raising shit over it because they know that this is terrible. And soon you would have a large majority against Hugh Hefner's new magazine. And if you don't, that magazine would come out. But as soon as a majority of the working class was against it, it would no longer get any funds from the ~~communist~~ government or be prevented from publishing his magazine. The idea is that it would be real democracy for the working class so that they can figure out what to do. It is a dictatorship against the capitalists and the people who are working for them. And so once the people realized that this was working against socialism, against women, against the working class, then it would be dealt with appropriately, but not until the workers themselves realized this.

Donley: But that doesn't really answer my question at all. My question is that I do not see how you can get the entire working class united, at any one point, to make a working class wide revolution against the capitalists. It will only be a portion of the working class who make the revolution. So you do not have the entire working class behind you. So, you are forced into the position of protecting your power from that part of the working class which did not support you in the revolution. And I don't see that the way that you will hold that power will be any different from the way any other government has held power, through racism, through divisions, through any number of things.

Erik: I think what Donley is saying is that the actual machinery of Government will be in the hands of a relatively small elite regardless of whether the government was the result of a working class revolution or not, and that they will try to retain their power through traditional tactics. I think that that is a real problem. It could happen. It has

happened in the Soviet Union in a way. The only way that it is not going to happen is that the rank and file which supported that initial take-over, refuse to let it happen. If people in positions of authority try to take over that kind of power from the people, they throw him out. If the rank and file, the membership of the revolutionary party and the people at large, refrained from fighting against that, then it could happen.

Henry: That is right. There is no guarantee that PL won't imitate the Communist Party or the CP in the Soviet Union. Marx wrote a book in 1871 in which he put down some basic ideas that are still good, that were forgotten by the Soviet leaders but that should be stuck to. Like the idea that no body in a ~~person~~ position of power should make any more ~~than the~~ money than the average working class person. That can make a big difference: why should you want to hold on to that power if all it is is responsibilities and hassles and no extra concrete benefits. Some people would do it for prestige, but still Marx's idea makes the chances much better that power will not be taken away from the working class. Another principle is that if people are upset with someone, they can revoke him from his office, which is like what is going on in the Cultural Revolution in China. These ideas came out of the Paris Commune, the oldest socialist revolution, although it only lasted a couple of weeks. These ideas have been forgotten by the leaders in the Soviet Union. They say this is pure theory. When we put it into practice we have to change it. That began to happen between about 1930 and 1935 and by '36 or '37 they had abandoned most of these principles. Early, after the Soviet Revolution, suppose that you were a doctor and you joined the Party, well, your income dropped to the level of the average worker instead of going up. While, after about 1937, when you joined the Communist Party, your income went up.

Steve: I have a question about racism. I would like to know how you see the fact that now there are more and more role models for blacks that are supposedly making it in capitalist society, the whole thrust of "Black Capitalism".

Henry: Periodically in US history there is a push for black nationalism which means like Black Capitalism, all the way to the idea of building a black middle class. What it ignores is that the vast majority of Black people are working class or unemployed. A tiny percentage make it into the middle class--maybe 5%. That changes nothing for the rest of the black population. They continued to be super-exploited.

Steve: I spent a couple of years in Africa, and one of the things that was discouraging to me was that many of the peasants there were very intent on acquiring material goods. There was a tremendous drive for material wealth, which was viewed as only possible by finding means to the moneyed class. I wonder how much of that is going to go on, or is going on right now, in America amongst the blacks, and where you see that leading.

Henry: Among the whole arsenal of ideas which the ruling class pushes is ~~the~~ "individualism". It might be the key one, I don't know. By individualism I mean saying "the way to solve my problems is by putting my self first; get ahead; screw over others; dog-eat-dog;" the whole thing. To anyone, in the working class and in other classes, you have two choices open to you: trying to make it on your own, or class solidarity. Objective reality sort of pushes class solidarity

because very few people make it on their own. In this country, I don't know the exact figures, but something like 40% of all gas stations go bankrupt. When a working man decides to start his own business, he will probably go bankrupt. It just doesn't work that often to try to make it on your own. Most people don't even know someone who made it on their own. But occasionally you will know somebody whose cousin new somebody who became rich. That is pushed by the ruling class. The whole thing is built up a hell of a lot in movies and so on. The only thing is that it doesn't hold up to reality. So that is why people turn to other alternatives.

Steve: I would hope so, but I am not sure that that will be the case. You know, the first people to get into something like this were white middle class youth. I have the feeling that you have to have tasted of this wealth, of this style of life, before you can decide that it is not valid. My experience of Black people in Oakland is that they are very capitalist oriented. And the people in Africa were really moving in that direction. They wanted the goods that this kind of society produces. I am very discouraged because of this.

Erik: Henry, why do you think that it was in a sense the least oppressed group in the United States, or at least one of the least oppressed groups--white middle class students--who really could make it into good managerial positions with \$20,000/year jobs, why was it this group which developed a radical ideology in the 1960s? Their prospects were very good except for the war...

Henry: ah-ha!

Erik: well, there were many ways to get out of the army if you wanted to. But it wasn't the most oppressed groups that first adopted Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Henry: Well, that is nothing new. In Europe in the 19th century it was middle class intellectuals who first excepted Marx's ideas. The Paris Commune was a working class revolution, but they didn't know where they were going. It was Marx who drew the lessons from that without which we would have been no where. He gave the events a scientific understanding, and that came from a social scientist. The Russian Revolution was the same way. A lot of the leadership were middle class. Lenin stressed how radical students had to spread their ideas among the working class. That has been the case, and will be the case again all over the world. A lot of the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist Movement will come from students. There are many reasons for this. One is that workers aren't really presented with the Communist alternative to the system. Most workers at GM never even hear what the Communists have to say. But students are in a different situation somewhat: they read Marx in some courses, even if the courses are anti-Communist, and a few students out of the millions of students think that it was a pretty good thing. Students have time to read and think about more than working men. The problem is to make the transition from one to the other, to bring those ideas from students to the working class. It is the working class that needs that ideology and is going to be able to apply it. Once they have the ideology, the best Communists have always been the workers.

Klaus: In order to really return Communism to the working class wouldn't we really need a big oppressed class that we don't have right now in Western countries? We have it in South America, but we don't see it here, except for those people on welfare. We don't see a broad suppressed class in America.

Henry: People aren't as oppressed in the United States as they are elsewhere, in Latin America and so on. But that is partially because they fought very hard against oppression and won great victories, especially in the 1930s. I don't think that there is anything wrong in wanting to have a car, or wanting to have a TV set, or wanting to live in a big house.

Steve: But if you are willing to kill for it, then you are willing to serve in the capitalist army in order to do it and you are willing to work in a job which helps to support the whole structure. There are so many people who dig what America is doing because of the material wealth which it can provide. I am really terrified by that.

Henry: But, it is not because of what is going on in Vietnam that American workers are better off than workers in Vietnam. It is because American workers made it hard for American capitalists to make so much profit here. There were fantastically militant and violent struggles against capitalists, against their cops and armies in the 1930s. So the capitalists had to look for other places to invest their money and try to get higher profits. Profits are way higher in those other places, but the problem is that they are running into more problems over there. It is true that people do fight in the army, but I don't think people are really willing to go out and kill people just for a few material benefits. I think that basically people are just drafted into the army. I mean like, look at the way GIs are behaving in the army today. They are giving incredible headaches to the officers. The army is mainly a working class area; a hell of a lot of middle class people get out of it.

Erik: There is one thing that I would like you to clarify, which wasn't clear in the articles I read by PL. I am not sure what PL means when it uses the term "Middle Class." It is relatively clear what they mean when they talk about "ruling class" and about "proletariat." Middle class is not the same as the "petty bourgeoisie"--that is an historic category that has largely disappeared in the United States. There are very few people who are authentic petty capitalists any more. The Middle class, however, has been growing and is distinct from the petty bourgeoisie. Is it meant to be the technical, managerial, professional class, or what?

Henry: The "middle class" is a broad, vague, unscientific term, that serves to group the traditional petty bourgeois--the small shop owner--and the professionals and non-managerial technicians. Our position is that managers are basically against the working class, whereas the middle class is not necessarily.

Erik: But the managers are still not really ruling class to a Marxist-Leninist.

Henry: That is true. But they are closely allied to the ruling class. Even formen are most of the time on the side of the boss, the capitalist. I don't know what class category to call them, but they don't fall in the category of the people who are going to be alligned with the working class.

Erik: Do you have any figures of what you would call the "working class"? We have the impression of a very large professional-technical middle class. It is surely larger here than in most other countries, but I don't know what percentage of the population it is.

Henry: I don't really know the figures. We have published figures like that, but I don't happen to remember them.

Erik: What I was really wondering was this: there is certainly a substantial minority in the United States which really is poor and oppressed, particularly among blacks. But I am just wondering what percentage of people in the United States are sufficiently oppressed that they are willing to make the sacrifices necessary for a revolutionary commitment. In the Russian Revolution or in the Chinese Revolution or in Vietnam, the people who fought in the revolution are desperate. They are desperately poor and oppressed. It is not a question of being well above substance but wanting a higher standard of living. That is really a fairly small minority in the United States that are in that condition, who are desperately oppressed. And although college professors and teachers and engineers are oppressed in this country, there level of oppression is sufficiently less that I am not sure that they, or even steel workers and auto workers, would be willing to participate in a real revolutionary movement. [They might become socialist democrats at some point in the future, but it is hard to imagin them taking up arms and going into the streets-(post session comment)]

Henry: Something which is interesting in this context is that in the Black Rebellions in Detroit a Professor collected the statistics on the participants in the riot, and it turned out that the vast majority were not hard-core unemployed blacks who were really poor. The majority had steady jobs, part time or full time. A smaller percentage of the rioters were unemployed than the non-rioters.

Betsy: It seems that what you mean by sacrifices is that some people really havve nothing to loose but their lives.

Erik: That is what Marx said: "workers of the world unite; you have nothing to loose but your chains."

Betsy: But some workers have much more to loose than their chains.

Erik: yes. They have a television and a car and a semi-detached house and they have to pay installments on all of them.

Henry: You were just talking about how a student who could easily find a \$20,000 a year job might become a revolutionary. I don't see why workers won't make the same choice when they have a hell of a lot less than that to loose. I don't think the question is simply one of the level of oppression. The people in India are very oppressed, and there hasn't been a revolution there yet, although there is now

a strong revolutionary movement in part of the country. Oppression isn't the only factor. There is the whole problem of alienation which is very important. A revolution isn't going to be over standard of living. That is not worth it frankly. The whole question of political power has ramifications for the standard of living, the nature of class oppression, racism and so on. The quality of life in this system is pretty shitty, like working your ass off for a steel plant. In a society that would be organized not on profit, it would be easy by employing the presently unemployables and spreading the work out that people could work many less hours and still end up a hell of a lot better. That is one part of your life which would change radically. Now you come home after work and watch a TV program for lack of anything better to do, or just because that is what you think people are supposed to do, and then on TV being shit on from the beginning of the evening to the end of the evening with racist, anti-working class programs, male chauvinist programs. It gets pretty sickening sometimes. The whole quality of life is really rotten in this society and people can't take it. One of the answers is to go off and try to have a better quality of life with my friends. The only problem is that we think it doesn't work. The society will get back to you in a million ways. You can't really cop-out on the class struggle in the long run and a revolution is really the only way that you can change the quality of life for the whole society.

My feeling is that the weakness of this discussion is that I have been dominating the discussion answering questions that have been directed to me and that also it has been very abstract, like most of the general discussions people get into when they talk about Communism and revolution. Maybe we can try to make it more concrete and specific.

Mike Murphy: Well, in a factory, how do you go about educating people? Like in Lynn, Massachusetts, in the G.E. plant, at some point you had to start with a small, core group of people in PL, while the majority of people ~~byz~~ there didn't know anything about it. How do you move from that situation to a situation where a lot of people are familiar with PL's aims and goals?

Henry: We have had two different approaches to this. One was a failure. Until recently our position was that we took a student who was in PL and we had him get a shave and a hair-cut and get a job and spread his ideas where he worked to the workers very slowly. When the workers would talk about the war, he would say that the war was really shitty and only gradually add a more revolutionary understanding into it. So, very slowly, usually over a period of months, start talking about various issues, and maybe over a period of one year or two years, he would begin to say "I'm a Communist". That used to be our outlook and it was a complete flop. Student after student would go into the factory and try to sneak Communism in. It just didn't work. One of the leaders of PL went around from city to city to figure out what was wrong, and after discussions throughout the party came up with a complete change in the Party's approach. The new outlook which has been in effect for about a year now, is open advocacy of Communism, instead of sneaking it in, and instead of reliance on students, a reliance on working people. Our whole theory says that workers are going to be the best Communists and the best revolutionaries and we should rely on workers to spread Communism to

the working class. So what we have been doing is selling Challenge, the PL newspaper, door-to-door in working class neighborhoods, supermarkets, factory gates, anywhere where there are workers. The reception has been tremendous, incredible. When I first began selling papers door-to-door I was scared shitless. What are they going to do to me when they see I am selling a Communist newspaper. I ~~in~~ thought, maybe we should just say "revolutionary" so that they wouldn't infer Communism. But that was ridiculous: there really was no reason to be afraid. It is not like workers are cops or anything. I don't know personally of any case where anybody has, say, gotten beat up by workers for being a Communist, or selling a newspaper. It has probably happened, but overall, it doesn't happen. The vast majority of people are fairly indifferent. We do get a lot of antagonistic comments. Like, one out of ten people will say angrily "Communists!" and maybe five or six out of a hundred will say something like "Go Back to Russia." But still, that is a small percent of really hostile reactions. Out of all the money that the ruling class spends in spreading its ideas, their efforts have really been a flop. If you are open, if people don't think you are being sneaky, they'll say: "Oh, you are a Communist?" and they will want to talk about it. Most people disagree at first, but they are willing to think and talk about it. The next thing that happens is that most people buy the paper, mainly out of curiosity. They see the headlines "WORKERS REBEL" and that PL is Communist and they want to read it. In the majority of cases, people who read the paper once, want to rbuy it again when we come around. And as they read it, they begin to understand our outlook. There are always editorials presenting our position against racism or male chauvinism or attacking the government. And it talks a hell of a lot about working class problems in a very concrete way, like how people won a particular strike, or how the struggle was lost because of racism. All these things are brought up.

Mike Murphy: With that kind of attitude, do you get heat from the police and the bosses in the factory?

Henry: Yeah! The harassment is at times incredible. It is often the Union which sends out goon squads to attack us. And once we had a confrontation with a so-called "Revolutionary Union" which prevented us, successfully, from selling papers and beat up people who tried. And we had trouble when we tried to sell papers at the Panther Convention.

Donley: Do you choose a specific kind of factory? What kind of people do you go to in this area?

Henry: First I should say that I guess there have been cases when the response was not good. Usually it has been good. There was one auto plant where the response was very bad. We usually get very bad responses from white collar workers, but generally workers are fairly receptive. Anyway, generally we try to figure out in as scientific a way as possible where our efforts should be focused. Big Plants are our priorities. That is where oppression is usually the sharpest and there are more people to organize and also because in a revolution that is where much of the struggle is going to be fought. We are not very big in the East Bay, but we try to focus our industrial concentration on the phone company and on a big US Steel plant



in Pittsburg. We used to go to a GM plant in Freemont, but since PL in San Jose has grown, they take care of that. We also see a lot of papers in neighborhoods and in Junior Colleges where there is a high concentration of working class people.

Donley: What is PL's opinion of labor unions? You said that you have had certain problems with them.

Henry: We feel that they are working hand-in-hand with the companies and have been selling out workers for a long time. Sometimes they bring some benefits to the workers, like slightly higher pay, but over all it is a big snow job. What is needed is rank-and-file organization. In Berkeley the maids are organizing now. It is a very interesting struggle because it clarifies lots of things. The maids are paid \$100 a month less than custodians for doing the same work. It is a good case of mael chauvinism and racism since most of the maids are black. The maids are becoming very militant and want to fight back. They went to the union of non-academic employees on the campus and asked for help. The leadership of that union is largely controlled by the Communist Party which makes it sound very different from other unions because they talk militantly and speak against racism. On the other hand, the Communist Party being what it is, that union is really like all other unions--a complete reliance on labor councils and the democratic party; the whole thing. They try to avert strikes. They don't have a fighting outlook. The demands of the maids are very important for them to win, but the union wants to avoid a fight. So PL is helping to fill that gap and is pushing for real militant action.

Betsy: Could you describe the internal structure of PL.

Henry: The basic ideas of Communism were developed by Marx, but they only really became useful when Lennin developed the whole concept of the Party, and we basically stick to the Lenninist view of the Party. It is what is called a "democratic Centralist" organization. That means that all important political decisions are discussed in the whole organization. What we call "clubs" are the smallest rank-and-file unit in the party. Sometimes there will be a club associated with one factory, or sometimes a whole town will have only one club. Like in Atlanta, there is only one club. Then there is regional committees. And sometimes, like in San Fransioox where we are pretty big, there will be an executive committee for the whole city. It is sort of a pyramid structure. All major political decisions, like what is PL going to say about China--should we support everything that China does, or should we say that China is following the path of the Soviet Union--that is a major political decision which has not yet been resolved--all major decisions like that will be discussed by everyone in the party in all of the clubs. This happened before when we raised the criticism of the National Liberation Front in Vietnam. This involved extensive discussions throughout the Party before the decision was made. The national leadership is in constant contact with the clubs and its decisions reflect the discussions throughout the Party. That is how we made the change from one approach to another in our organizing ~~strategies~~ tactics. ~~The~~ ~~Centralist~~ The Democratic aspect is that everybody participates in working out the position; the Cen-

tralist aspect is that once the new idea is figured out, everybody did it. That is how we found out that it worked. The whole party adopted the ~~me~~ one method and went out openly as Communists. Some people probably dropped out of the party because they were too scared to do that, but to stay in the party you have to support the Party position once it is made. That is how major political decisions are made. But on more local questions, like what to do in San Fransisco, there is no point in raising the question in New York, so it is dealt with only in San Fransisco. And on minor tactical questions, especially when we have to move rapidly and do not have time for extended discussions, we rely on the most experienced and best leaders, and those are in the leadership committee. It is like in any other field: if you are conducting an experiment, let's say, and you don't want to mess it up, you will ask the most experienced scientist around about what to do. It is the same way in the Party. We consider these issues a science. The main problem, contrary to popular belief, is not that there is this tyrannical set-up and that no-body wants to submit to that centralism. The main problem is the other way around. It is easy to say yes to everything, to accept centralism; the hard part is the democratic aspect, to be really critical of the leadership and to always be on your toes. We have to always be conscious of the fact that the leadership might not have the answers.

Betsy: How many of the people that are in regional and national leadership positions are women?

Henry: I don't know about other regions and about nationally, but in this area the majority of all leadership positions are women. Our top leader on the West Coast is a man and the top leader of the Party as a whole is a man, but that is not the main problem facing PL. There is chauvinism in the Party, but there are a hell of a lot of women in leadership positions. The main problem is that not enough of the party is composed of Black and Latin people and not enough of the leadership. If we don't overcome this racist weakness, which is due to us, not to Black and Latin people, it is not worth having a Party really. Since we have had this new open approach, this has changed significantly; there has been a hell of a lot of new recruits among Black workers and Latin workers.

Mike Murphy: Where do you see it going from here? Could you give us a kind of scenerio of what might happen, with the end in view?

Henry: At the moment we really do not have much support in most factories across the country. The GE plant in Lynn is really quite exceptional. In the army also we are starting to have some inroads. At fort Diggs in New Jersey the most widely read newspaper is Challenge, of all newspapers. That is a significant thing. I think that the next step is that some parts of the army, and some factories and some communities will become really strong centers of support for PL. We will get really strong in some working class areas in every big city, especially New York, Boston and San Fransisco where we are strongest already. So, we will get very strong there and in some places in the army. The step after that is that we will then be under really heavy attack, and the big question is how we are going to weather the attack. Like, you have the case of the Panthers who were doing a tremendous job while they were strong. They had the weaknesses of

nationalism, but they still were doing good things. But under the attack, they moved to the right. Understandably, when everyone was getting shot, and sent to jail. Their answer, instead of whole logic of Base-Building which PL has, which means relying on the masses of the People, was to swing over and ally with the CP and Liberal Lawyers and the children's breakfast program. These are all liberal positions. They are trying to stay revolutionary and be Liberal at the same time. That is because of the attack, not because they are corrupt or ~~anything~~ ~~anythingz~~ nasty or stupid. It is tremendously difficult to decide what to do under all of those pressures. We say that the right way is base-building. But we will be in the same situation, and who am I to say that I won't say, ~~that~~ when we get attacked that Shanley, "Well, forget that revolution business, I won't a job in an anti-pov-erty program." I don't know. The point is that we hope that that is not going to happen. We feel that it has a less chance of happening if we recruit lots of working class people into the Party in the near future, because a working class person has much more need of a revolution than somebody like me does. So, that is the next step: how do we respond to the attack. There are really only two ways: either we retreat or we advance. Hopefully we will advance. If we advance, that means we become involved in more struggles, we become more militant, we have more support. And lots of us get killed, but we continue anyway. The next step is really anybody's guess; like, open warfare. Which is good: the start of the real struggle. What happened, let's say in the 1930s, was that the Communist Party went through a number of these steps of building a mass base among the working class, of being really militant, except they forgot the politics. In 1935 when you look at the CP newspaper it is really incredible. They say things like "Roosevelt shouldn't have done that to us". Roosevelt was an Imperialist President--of course he was going to do things like that. They would appeal to the Governor of a state not to send the national gaurd. That is ridiculous; you have to fight them. And so on. So it is important to us not to loose our revolutionary politics. The program of smashing the state must always be there. The whole concept that you have to fight is crucial: when things get scary, people say, let's not fight this time; next year we'll fight. Working class people are always fighting anyway; they have constant struggle whether PL is ~~fighting~~ there or not: strikes, rebellions, black rebellions, probably soon integrated rebellions. PL should always be in the middle of the sharpest struggles, wherever people are fighting. If we keep the whole thing straight, it could be great. It could mean winning, having a real revolution in this country. That is a long ways away, but that is what keeps us going.

Mike Murphy: Aside from a massive military or police put-down, what do you perceive as the most threatening force or power that could co-opt you? Or compromise you?

Henry: It is the fear inside us. Not just the fear, but self-interest. Putting myself first. Tomorrow I am going to go to an Unemployment Office to stage a kind of guerilla theater presentation and there is a good chance that I will get arrested. That is the stage of the movement that we are in: getting busted. Is that going to make me not go? Do I say, well, unemployment really is not such an important issue

compared to the struggle against the war. There is a million political rationalizations that you can come up with in order not to go. On the other hand, a scientific analysis of the situation shows that unemployment is the worst attack on the working class that is going on right now. The whole working class is being affected by this, even those with jobs. And it is a very important thing to fight. Those fears are thus one of the main threats to the Movement. Another danger is when the national leadership stops becoming directly involved in struggle and says "I'm the Leader, it is a waste of time for me to go to a demonstration or something." That is another way that "revisionism" can come about: some people like taking power and stop seeing leadership as a way to serve the people. This is a real problem in the Party, in any party, and we have to struggle against it every day. This is why we don't have millions of people in the party: you really have to change yourself, your outlook, your lifestyle, to be a member. It takes a lifetime commitment. That is the main way that revolutions have been defeated before--not through arms, repression, but through how people responded to attack, how they copped out.

David: I noticed in one of your articles that you talked about Cuba being very revisionist. Why do you see Cuba as being exceptionally revisionist?

Henry: The Revolution in Cuba really was a fluke in many ways. The way it happened was that the United States didn't see how bad it could get, and thus let it happen. For any revolution now to happen in Latin America after that, and to succeed, it would have to be based upon the masses of the people. The one that you had in Cuba wasn't. Since they didn't have their strength in the masses of the people, they had to get it from the Soviet Union. Soviet aid is like somebody giving you a knife to help you fight, but he hands you the knife so you grab the blade and get your hand all cut up. That is what is going on in Cuba and what is going on in Vietnam. The Soviet Union looks like it is helping, but basically it is trying to turn Cuba into a colony.

Mike McKinley: If you were in Cuba, what would you have done? How would you have handled the situation in 1959 when trade was cut off with the Western Hemisphere?

Henry: That is a situation where, if you consider the retention of power at all costs the key thing, then it seems like that is the way to do it, to get help from the Soviet Union or from France or some other Imperialist country. That is, if the key thing is to stay in power. We think that the key thing is not so much staying in power, but keeping as strong a revolutionary communist movement as possible. If you can do that while being in power, by all means yes, but you should never sacrifice the movement for power. What happened in Cuba was that Soviet economic influence has become political influence. Since then Castro, who had been attacking all of the Communist parties in Latin America who were pacifists and against violent revolution, stopped attacking them. He has started glorifying the Soviet Union, supporting the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, and so on. What I would have said in 1959 was: if we can't hold state power, we won't; we'll go among the peasantry and the working class in the cities and build a revol-

utionary movement; we are too weak to hold state power now.

Mike McKinley: And then what would have happened?

Henry: Well, some local capitalist would have looked either to the Soviet Union or the United States for support and would have taken power. But we wouldn't have been a part of that deal. The revolutionary forces would still have been involved in organizing the People, and at some later time when they have the base, they would have seized power.

Erik: Why can't they do that now? The Soviet Union does not have an army stationed in Cuba, so, if Castro could have said "go to hell" in 1959 he could still do it now, only now he would be doing it from a position of greater internal strength than before. And he would have gotten ten years worth of aid.

Henry: But if he does that, the Soviet Union will have an army over there or the United States will. The point is that with time you get more dependent upon aid, not less dependent. It would be nice if you could just take it with no strings attached and just use it the way you want. But that is not what happens. In Cuba, they haven't built up any kind of economy that could sustain Cuba, while a country which is just as small, Albania, has developed in a self-sufficient sort of way. Not that everything Albania has done or is doing is good, but it is at least a socialist country, where, as far as I can tell, the working class still holds power. There they developed a self-sufficient economy; Cuba didn't. Cuba is still a one crop economy based on sugar, very much like it was when it was controlled by the United States. It still doesn't have any kind of industry. Its second crop is tobacco, one of the least useful things that people could ever produce. So, economically it is not feasible to break off from the Soviet Union. I don't mean to say that there haven't been gains in Cuba--there have been great victories. Alphabetization was a great victory and will help build a revolutionary movement. The fact that people eat better and have good health care is good. These are good achievements. But the revolutionary Movement has been set back.

Steve: But don't you think that these reforms, these achievements build a base of support behind the revolution?

Henry: Yes, it builds a base for the regime in power. Basically Castro is very popular in Cuba. Much more than Batista ever was. That is due to the fact that real reforms were won. But the point is that because of the situation, those reforms are not really much more than what was won in the New Deal. It is still reform; political power is not in the hands of the masses of the Cuban people. It is in the hands of a very small clique, around Castro. The same way as in the Soviet Union.

Steve: I get a little uneasy when you say that they should not have seized power but should have built a base among the people in preparation for the eventual taking of power by the people. I don't understand how we get there from here. I don't understand what you do to build this base among the Cuban people.

Henry: O.K., here in the United States, building a base means getting involved in the day-to-day struggle of the workingclass. You join those struggles and bring to the struggle the Communist perspective, and recruit the most class conscious workers into the revolutionary party. It is a slightly different situation in Cuba and other underdeveloped countries, because it is an imperialist colony and there is a large peasantry. That means that the struggles take different forms. I don't know very much about those struggles and how you organize for them. Mao's writings are very important for that. There is a book called Fanshen, about a Chinese village, that is really tremendous and describes how that kind of organizing is done in a peasant community. But still, it is important in a place like Cuba to organize the workers in the cities, and one of the key roles of the Party there would be to unite the workers and the peasantry in fighting against imperialism.

Erik: What you are saying is that if a revolutionary party can take power because of a fluke, as in Cuba, but it hasn't yet built a mass level of support, it should not take that opportunity. Castro should not have taken state power when Batista's forces collapsed. Like, in France, in 1968, if there had been a Progressive Labor Party and they had proclaimed a Provisional Government and for some reason the French army collapsed, or rallied to the revolutionary Government, they should not have done that because they did not have a real base yet?

Henry: I don't know. It's worth doing. The real point is, are you abandoning your principles, your revolutionary communist principles, in order to hold on to power? If you compromise your principles, it means that in the long run you are going to get back to a capitalist set-up. That is what is happening in Cuba. As long as you stick to your principles, you fight as hard as you can and take as much power as you can

Mike McKinley: How is Cuba getting back to a capitalist system?

Henry: I think through the Soviet control of the economy. It is not a capitalist set-up in the same way as we have here, or in the Soviet Union. It is a capitalist set-up in the sense of being a colony of a capitalist country, where the whole economy is geared not to the needs of the Cuban people, but to the Soviet Union. One of the problems in Cuba apparently is that there is not enough Protein in people's diet. Now, Cuba is an Island and there is a great deal of fish around. The Imperialists in the past have spread the belief among the Cuban people that fish is no good, so that all of the fish that was fished was sent back to the United States. What is happening now is that the Russians are doing the same thing. I really don't know much about Cuba, but this is what someone in PL who knows a lot about it told me. And apparently the revolutionary government isn't doing anything to change this.

Mike McKinley: I know something about the fish. From what I have read there has been a lot of propoganda to try to get people to use fish but for a long long time it hasn't been a part of their diet. It is

like trying to get us to eat snails or slugs. It is more of a cultural thing I think, and the Cuban Government is trying to change that and build up a fishing industry.

Erik: I do not see why Cuba's economic relationship to the USSR necessarily means Cuba is on the road to capitalism. Castro takes power, and he decides that during a transitional period, it is important that Cuba not be isolated. It needs the backing of a Big Power, even if that reduces some of its autonomy in the short run. But in the long run, that does not reduce the option of Cuba deciding to break loose. I don't see any indications that in the internal functioning of Cuba the Soviet Union is tightly controlling things. It seems to me to be pretty much under the control of the Cuban Communist Party and Castro.

Henry: Sure, the elite has some power, but they have to follow what the Soviet Union wants. I am afraid that I don't know that much about Cuba, so I cannot argue this very far. I have read articles, some of them in the capitalist press, which have argued that the most powerful man in Cuba is the Russian Ambassador. But the main thing is what is actually coming out of Cuba. Have you read any literature from Cuba? "Granma" is a newspaper which comes out of Cuba and it is really very disgusting, demoralizing. There is ~~axgreatzdeazxof~~ a hell of a lot of male chauvinism for instance. There is a hell of a lot of support for the Soviet Union which is really sickening. Any revolutionary leader that would praise the Soviet Union like that would either be lying through his teeth to the people or be completely politically naive. If you are an honest revolutionary leader you will say "The Soviet Union is an Imperialist country which perpetrated imperialist aggression against the Czechoslovakian People, that is oppressing Russian working people, that is super-oppressing Jews, that is oppressing working people all over Eastern Europe, that is misleading the Vietnamese people. It is doing all that, but for tactical reasons we are taking some help from those pigs which later we will shove down their throats."

Erik: But if he said that, he wouldn't get the help.

Henry: Of course, but at least he would have a revolutionary movement.

Steve: How would he eat? When you talk about building a base, I don't know how you talk to a man who is starving and it is you who have just taken the food out of his mouth because you shut off the Russian aid.

Henry: You think that under the Russian domination people are going to be eating better for a long time?

Steve: I don't see Cuba as being that much under Russian domination. That may be something on which we differ.

Erik: Another view of the one crop situation in Cuba would be that Cuba wants to have foreign exchange in order to buy machinery. It does not have steel, it doesn't have iron mines. It needs foreign exchange in order to move away from a one crop economy. In order to get foreign exchange, you have to trade something which other countries can't produce as well. So, in the period when you need to get that kind of

capital accumulation, you have to emphasize that product which is going to get you the most foreign exchange. In the case of Cuba, that is probably sugar. Independently of whether or not the Soviet Union needs or wants cheap sugar--my impression was actually that the Soviet Union didn't particularly need Cuban sugar--Cuba needs the capital exchange it gets from the sale of sugar.

Henry: I can't really argue about all of the factual stuff because I don't know that much about Cuba. The one important criterion seems to me to be what kind of politics are coming out of the Cuban leaders. Even if the relationship to the Soviet Union was purely tactical, as you suggest, somebody must really be corrupt to say that the Soviet Union is great, and to support the invasion of Czechoslovakia. X The crucial point is that political corruption ends up--like what happened in the Soviet Union and what might happen in China--in a set back to the revolution. That kind of leadership has to be completely rejected.

Getting back to this country, the question is not one of accepting Soviet aid, but rather the question of working with Liberals. That is like the essence of where the other forces in the Movement really disagree with the PL. We say that the whole Capitalist Class is our eternal enemy and has to be destroyed. That doesn't mean that we are going to kill every one of them. The point is that politically they are our absolute enemies and have to be fought. No alliances whatsoever should be made with the Imperialists, including the Soviet Imperialists. That means two things: politically, in terms of educating the people, rejecting that bullshit notion that some imperialists are for you. That is one of the standard lies that is pushed on people. "You are in trouble? Don't worry, MacCarthy is coming to end the war." Or, "you are starving in this depression? Forget about far-off things like socialism. Roosevelt has it all figured out for you and is going to grant you all of these concessions." This is a very deep thing. To most people who consider themselves revolutionary, practically all liberal working class people, practically every student, there is still the strong capitalist idea that there are good capitalists and bad capitalists. Some of the students who don't believe that are really anarchistic and don't believe in anything. The good capitalists are going to save you from the bad capitalists; the good cop is going to save you from the bad cop. Kennedy, with all of his sweet talk, is as much, or more, of a pig than Goldwater. At first sight that obviously doesn't sound true. After all, Kennedy was for civil rights and so on. I don't know if you agree on this.

Steve: I would agree fully that the Liberal is a large enemy. You don't have to convince me of that.

Henry: But a lot of people still hold faith in "good capitalists". The sneaky thing about it is that a lot of people have lousy experiences ~~after lousy experiences~~ with liberal after liberal, and still think "let's give this one a chance; he looks honest; I've heard him speak. I know that he is with the Democratic Party, but what does that have to do with it. He is sneaking from within," and so on and so on. And here you have Dellums, never saying one nasty thing about one Democratic person in the country. He attacks the hell out of Republicans, but never saying one thing against the Democratic Party.



He never says anything against pigs like Humphrey. If he was half-way honest, he would.

Steve: If he did, it would end his political career.

Henry: Good point. That is the thing, and that makes him somebody that you cannot rely on. But a hell of a lot of people, including students, put a great deal of faith in him, and put in a great deal of work for him and won. I'd like to see what difference it makes.

Steve: Let me ask a specific question about the Panthers. You mentioned their breakfast for children program as being "liberal". How did you arrive at that analysis?

Henry: That ties in very well. When the Panthers first started there was a great deal of co-operation between the Panthers and PL. We supported Eldridge Cleaver for President Campaign up to a certain point. Then Cleaver wanted Jerry Rubin for vice-President, which was totally absurd: to put forward to the working class movement one of the most notorious anti-working class people. Rubin calls working class people pigs, and working people who vote, piggisists. He is just hated by the average American worker. So, at that point we stopped supporting Cleaver's campaign. Later, they became known as the national militant organization because they supported China, and advocated militant ~~s~~ self-defence. It really sounded good, and lots of blacks joined. Then they came under very heavy attack from the ruling class, and that was probably the turning point. The statement "the sky's the limit" if Huey Newton was convicted, was changed by Charles Geary into "the supreme court is the limit." From there it is our feeling that the Panthers went downhill all the way, until recently. In the United Front Against Facism conference, the Panthers invited Black Cops and kicked out PL and PL sympathizers. They had a CP speaker on every panel.

Steve: But what is it about the breakfast program itself that makes it liberal.

Henry: It is a Charity program. It gives food to kids who need it. It reaches perhaps 70 kids if the program is successful.

Steve: But I see that as a very valid way to ~~build~~ establish contact, personal contact, with people in the community, and to build a whole educational program with those children. It can be a whole organizational tool.

Henry: Some of that is going on, and it is good. But they make this into a program. Bobby Seale gave an interview which set the tone for the last two years or so when he said they had four points to their program: community control of the cops, breakfast for children, free clinics and a fourth point which I can't remember. The point is that the Breakfast was part of the major program for the Party. That is ridiculous. If it was a mere organizing tool that would be OK, but it was raised as a great political solution to Black People's problems. If they are concerned about black kids eating breakfast, they could have built a mass struggle of black people in Oakland to demand from the school board that Black kids get served breakfast in school. They had the kind of support at one point to demand that. That would have been using the issue to build a base for militant

struggle. They could have won a demand for thousands of kids instead of just 70. That is why what they are doing is not a revolutionary program, but a liberal one.

Steve: How do you define "struggle" then? I am having some trouble with that.

Henry: In thousands of ways every day, in factories, in ghettos, people are fighting back against their oppression; they are fighting whether PL or the Panthers exist or not. That is the kind of struggle we ~~sh~~ should join. That means strikes, Black rebellions, Chicano rebellions, struggles on the campuses against the war. It means putting physical pressure on the ruling class to gain demands. I am not talking about arms. The degree of armaments depends upon what the People are willing to accept. When the Panthers went out with guns it was wrong because nobody would go out with them. But now, masses of people are willing to use rocks and bottles against the cops. That is the level of armaments that we can use right now.

Klaus: Well, this is something that we have talked about here before: we need after a revolution an educational process anyway. We have talked about whether some of the things that we will have to do after a revolution, we could start right now. You would reject that because it supports the established system?

Henry: you mean like a counter-institution of some sort?

Klaus: Yes. Like, you will have to feed people after the Revolution too, so why not start right now?

Henry: ~~W~~ Like, we will have parks in every neighborhood after the Revolution, so we should set up "People's Parks" right now.

Klaus: you would reject that because it prevents struggle. So, you wait until the future, until after the Revolution. Could you tell us a little more about what you hope to achieve. What would be much different from the situation in Russia or in Cuba or wherever.

Henry: Well, there would be similarities with the Russian Revolution and with the Chinese Revolution. The first step, the "smashing the State" step is a negative one, destroying something. I am not all ~~z~~ that concerned about the specific structures that are set up afterwards. That would be worked out according to the needs of the actual situation. The main thing is going to be that the People control things. The way that the Capitalists can get away with everything that they get away with now is that they have the cops. Let's say, if your rent is too high, you have to pay it, or else you will get kicked out by the cops. That would be turned around after the revolution: the cops would not be used against the People. There ~~won~~ would also be a hell of a lot of immediate changes in the ~~the~~ way society was set up, like there would be child care centers for every neighborhood, and so on. That would have to be decided by the people.

Erik: There will be cops, right? There just won't be cops controlled by capitalists. There will be some kind of coercive arm of the state. And it won't be controlled by itself. And there won't be vigilante groups. So something has to control the police. What is that going to be? Are the cops going to be controlled by the leader-

ship of the Party? Are they going to be controlled by the people in each area?

Henry: The idea is for them to be controlled not by the Party. The Revolution is not to put the Party in Power: the Party is a key tool for making that Revolution. Most people at that point will not agree fully with the Party. They will agree with smashing the State at that point because they will do it, but not everyone will agree that Male Chauvinism is bad, to take one example. After the Revolution, Male Chauvinist workers will have some control over the cops.

Erik: When you say the "worker" will have some control over the cops, does that mean in Berkeley, for example, there would be some kind of citywide council which would be elected by the People and which would control the cops? Is it that sort of thing?

Henry: That would be one way, maybe. I don't really know how it would be worked out. Or maybe, on each block you would rotate a position of people to look into burglaries and the like. I don't know. Undoubtedly, different ways would be tried.

Donley: But if that happened now, you would not support it because it is "within the system".

Henry: But if it happens now what is going to happen--like if the Community Control of Police amendment passes--is that people will still not control the cops. Either nothing is going to happen after it passes, or if boards are set up it will be the same as when we "elect" the President. It will still be the same as it was before for various reasons.

Erik: It seems to me that what is most likely to happen is that people will be elected to these community police boards, and they will honestly try to do something, until it becomes a threat, and then the State will send in highway patrol men and reverse the amendment in the courts and the system will be squashed. That would seem more likely than that those commissions themselves would be corrupt. It is most likely that there would be external intervention. But that would be a good educational event if it happened.

Henry: But the National Guard has been here before.

Erik: But it hasn't intervened to dissolve a city government, a duly elected city council.

Henry: I doubt that it would ever even get to that point, but even if it did, how are people going to react if you and the Panthers and others have been going around to convince people to vote, to sign petitions, and trying to get them involved in all of this electoral work? You even have somebody in Washington who supports this, Dellums. After all this work, when the plan fails, people get really demoralized. They conclude that politics is a waste of time. Not only that, I would say that it is really a wrong assumption that working people, especially Black People, have anything to learn about how vicious the cops are, how bad the Government is.

Erik: But they do have something to learn about the impossibility of working within that system.

Henry: by working within it?

Erik: Well, in terms of a process of political education, this kind of election can almost be a form of revolutionary theater. I don't have any real hopes that it will work, even if it is passed. It would be nice if it did, but there are too many ways that the structure ~~is~~ could be co-opted or simply reversed. But I still am working for the amendment because I think that it is important for this object lesson to be had. Berkeley is the first place in the country that is trying this. If it passes, it will make big news. And if it passes and is then smashed by the State, it will make big news. I think that this is important as a political object lesson. Unless you have this object lesson, many people will continue to feel that it could be reached "if only people would vote for it". If there are illusions in the electoral process, they can only be exposed by pushing the electoral process as far as possible and showing that it can't lead to real change.

Mike McKinley: I have to agree with Erik. When you have something like this, even if it fails, you will have people who previously had no political education getting involved and perhaps going on to something else. If you use the other logic--don't do that because it won't work--people will not learn. You could say the same thing about strikes: don't strike because you can't really gain anything by striking.

Erik: I think that the principle behind a strike is that you build a base by striking, by the action of fighting the company.

Henry: The point is, what is the difference between an election campaign and a strike?

Erik: I suppose that in many ways a strike is a better way to build a base than an election campaign because it deals with more direct, immediate problems, in a less abstract way, than an election. And of course, in a strike you can make real, short-run gains, whereas in an election like this, it is highly unlikely that there be any substantive gains at all. The only gains are in political education. But I think that that educational potential, that radicalizing potential, is important.

Henry: I have heard that argument before, from radicals. I've also heard that argument on other things that have been completely exposed by now as bullshit; like, trying to get a Dove into Congress or into the Presidency, to show that he will behave just like a hawk in the long-run.

Erik: Right. But that is a much trickier operation than this. The logic behind supporting the election may be the same, but the situations are ~~so~~ different. When you elect an individual to an office, it is relatively easy for him to be co-opted by the pressures of the system and for the object-lesson of the election to get totally lost in political rhetoric. But in this situation, it seems to me that the State will have to intervene directly in order to destroy the community control structure, because it will be a threat. If it does that, it will expose the hollowness of electoral machinery.

Henry: The result, if it gets crushed, is that people are going to be saying: Wow, that was really unfair. The main impact is going to be

that people are going to work even harder for "community" control" and the idea will spread to other areas.

Erik: Or you can say to people after it is crushed: what does this say about the nature of elections in our society? Why is community control of Police such a big threat? Why cannot they allow the police to be controlled by the people in a community? Why is this a basic contradiction in the system? You can raise those questions only after the structure has been passed and subsequently crushed. If it hasn't been tried yet, most people will say: well, I think that they would let you do it. It's a free country.

Henry: I have talked about this issue with working people, and not a single time have I met a working class person who believes that the Government would ever grant you things like that. Students think that all the time, and I am sure some workers do, but I haven't met any. Working people have many fewer illusions about the state than middle class people. There are some reform struggles that we get involved in, and some that we don't, and the way that we determine it is whether we think which it is going to raise the consciousness, the revolutionary consciousness, if we get involved in that reform struggle. That is the criterion. Now, a strike, can almost always be used that way, at least if there are Communists around by pointing out: this is the way the cops were used, here is how the union leaders behaved, and so on. But something like the Community Control amendment can build up more faith in the electoral system than there already is because you have to convince people to register, and you have to convince people to vote. I feel that that lowers consciousness. You strengthen the illusion that in an election there is a range of opinion from falming radicals to faming conservatives and that the elections are the way the "people's will" is heard. No body is going to question that, and so consciousness is going to be lowered. You have to give people the feeling that it does make a difference whether they vote or not, and that ~~szmoxkzmx~~ lowers consciousness.

Erik: It lowers consciousness between now and the election in April. But I do not think that the long-run effect of it is to strengthen people's faith in electoral processes. The only way that it could strengthen people's faith in electoral processes would be if it passed and if it worked, if it wasn't smashed. That is almost structurally impossible. What is important is that when this happens, people have to be made aware of what exactly has happened.

Henry: To put this into a broader context, this whole thing has been a serious debate in the Revolutionary Movement for more than these past several months. It has to do with how you go about building a revolutionary movement to smash the State. That is the essence of the question. Communists say: the State has to be smashed and you shouldn't try to reform the State. You should try to win concessions here and there, concrete demands, but structural reforms of the Government or of the Society are a looser. You can make structural reforms a million different times and still end up with the capitalists on top. One form of the anarchist approach has been to talk ~~sk~~ about things like this whole Community Control business: People ~~shom~~ should control the factories, the People should control the school system, the People should control the police. There was a big struggle over community control of the schools in New York, but still within capitalism of course. This kind of emphasis is not on smashing the

State. Like the IWW in the 1920s and 1930s were tremendously militant, but didn't have the outlook of smashing the State. The felt that thing would be taken over one by one: the police in this city, the factories in that city, and so on. One part of the country would be "taken over" before another, and so on. That was the wrong approach to the whole thing. It couldn't work. But that is what the community control movement is trying to do today. You are approaching it very cynically saying that we should work for it because it won't work, but I don't know how much support you can mobilize that way. And anyway, I see no reason why the people elected to the police commissions will be any different from the people elected to the city council, in which case the State won't even need to intervene.

Klaus: As far as I understand, what you are saying is that you try to build up a base among lower class people, and then you hopefully try to reach a stage when you take over in some way the power of the state. And you even say that you would give up the power of the state if you don't have enough support among the People. If the People doesn't want PL anymore, so we give up and somebody else takes over. Is that right?

Henry: I am not sure if I expressed that exactly clearly. I would say: if you can take power without opposition from the working class, you take power as long as you don't compromise your principles. But if to take power you have to abandon important principles, you don't take power. Anyway, what is your point?

Klaus: O.K., you wait until you have the majority on your side, and then you could even gain power by an election. You wouldn't even need a Revolution, at least here in the United States. Revolution is unnecessary if you have the majority of the people on your side. But later on, the majority could leave you and then you would have to say, OK, somebody else will have to try it. So, the system is almost the same.

Henry: There is a major difference: this is a class society. It is a Dictatorship of the Capitalists over the People. If PL was getting elected, or even if some relatively liberal group like the Communist Party, was getting elected into power, the ruling class just would not let them get away with it. They have thousands of cops and soldiers which they would use. They have already sent cops and killed people who were fighting over a little Park here in Berkeley. They have killed people who were fighting to put up a fence between some railway tracks and a playground. It is an incredible thing the way people are getting massacred every day by this government for really small demands, for demands that are not all that consequential. Probably people are going to get arrested over the maids' demands on the campus. If for small demands like these they go around beating people, arresting people, killing people, what are they going to do when people are threatening to take power? When people plan to take everything away from the ruling class, not just something of no consequence? When people challenge their whole power and kick them out for good, they are not going to let that happen.

Erik: If the ruling class were willing to strictly obey the rules which it set up, then it would be possible to "elect" a revolution. But they don't, and they won't. They set up those rules because it creates a political system which essentially serves their interests. If they were willing to accept peacefully a peaceful election which threw

them out of power, then elections could be a revolutionary; but there is no reason to expect that they would accept such elections. Long before that happened, elections would be eliminated, or strictly controlled. ] post session comment: this last point is, I think, crucial. The whole strategy of political action is contingent upon it. If you look at the formal political forms in the United States as set out in the Constitution, without relating the functioning of the political system to the social structure, you might conclude that it would be possible to elect revolutionary change. If a majority of the population in every State in the nation wanted Communism, they could simply make the necessary amendments to the Constitution which would abolish private ownership of the means of ~~the~~ production and transform the political structures into a new system directly in the hands of the People. The formal rules of the Constitution would make it possible for the giants of Capitalist power simply to be peacefully removed from their positions of wealth and power, and if they fully followed those rules, they would yield that wealth and power peacefully. This is certainly the image of the nature of American "Democracy" that is taught in the schools and cultivated in the mass media. The Marxist answer to this is that historically these political structures emerged because they proved to be compatible, to be supportive, of the interests of a particular class ~~of people~~, in this case, the capitalist class. Parliamentary democracy was the best system, historically, of working out conflicts between capitalists, of providing certain kinds of infra-structure for capitalist production, and politically, for making the people feel that they participated in political life. But real power in the system did not lie in the elected representatives, but in the capitalist class. If you accept this view, or some modification of it, then you would predict that if ever the political system seriously threatened the power of that capitalist class, that they would ~~so~~ simply pre-empt the political process in one way or another. They would do this by supporting Communist witch-hunts in the style of the early 1950s; by using the police to attack and kill radicals, as in the campaign against the Panthers in the late 1960s; and eventually, by supporting a military take-over, or at least supporting a quasi-garrison state which might preserve ~~the~~ formal elections but in which serious restrictions on the participation of "subversives" in those elections would be established. If this is your prognosis of what would happen if you tried to use elections to create a revolution, then it follows that there is little point in trying to win power through elections. What is important is to build a base which can defend itself against the attacks of the ruling class, and which can eventually establish a revolutionary political system which would replace the capitalist regime. I think that a great deal of the political anomie that has emerged in the past several years stems from the belief that the electoral system offers no prospect for real change. Such efforts as the Community Control of Police amendment in Berkeley in 1971 are ~~perhaps~~ the last efforts of people who want to re-establish faith in the system to be able to tolerate radical change. If, or when, this effort fails, ~~many people will either feel that all hopes for~~ ~~of change are~~ futile, or they will move in the direction of more more revolutionary political action.

SESSION IX:      The Counter Culutre as the Path to Utopia;  
                  The Counter Culture as Utopia.

March 2, 1971

Erik: Last week we talked about the Revolutionary Road to Utopia, and next week we will talk about the Reformist Road to Utopia, if such a road exists.

Donley: I question if a road exists at all to Utopia.

Erik: Well, anyway, I thought that tonight we could focus in specifically on the idea of the Counter-Cultural Road to Utopia, and all of what that implies. This would include a whole range of concrete activities, ranginf from such things as a revitalized church movement of some sort, to hippy communes, to taxi-unlimiteds, and so on.

Betsy: Or Bombing the Rotunda of the Capitol?

Erik: I don't know if that should really be called part of the "counter-culture" or whether it is more part of the "revolutionary" approach to change. At least it is clear that it isn't reformist.

Betsy: at least it is unAmerican...

Steve: It is American to the core: Violence.

Donley: I would like to see a good Freudian analysis of all of this violence because they are always bombing Men's Rooms.

Erik: I have a written out introduction which I would like to read.

(see pages 201-202)



THOUGHTS/QUESTIONS/ISSUES on the COUNTER-CULTURAL ROAD TO UTOPIA

Different conceptions of what sort of action can lead to meaningful social change are predicated upon different conceptions of man and his relationship to society. The Marxist has the following conception of man and human nature:

Men fundamentally act out of their own self-interest, principally their economic self-interest. But individuals are not isolated, atomistic beings; they share common structural positions in society and have a common self-interest with other men in that same position: i.e. there is some kind of identity between individual self-interest and class interests. The Capitalist thus pursues a very rational course of action to preserve his own self-interest by protecting the interests of his class, and to do this, he established a "Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie". The only way that the masses of the People can change things is to establish their class in that position: the ruling class will never yield power because to do so would be to act against their own self-interest. Man is thus a rational creature, acting out of motives of self-interest.

If this view of man is correct, then the Marxist conclusions are substantially correct--i.e. the working class has to displace the capitalist class from power.

But there are alternative views of man that lead to other conclusions. There are conceptions of man which make the ruling class clinging to their positions of power not out of a rational pursuit of self-interest, but because of anxieties, fears, feelings of competitiveness, etc. In such an image it might be possible to "convert" the ruling class to an alternative life style that would be more fulfilling. Such an image might look like this:

Men fundamentally act out of unconscious motivations, often totally irrationally. All men are in the same predicament--seeking meaning, struggling against feelings of alienation, trying to make sense out of their lives. For someone born into the ruling class, the individual tries to find meaning in competitive status seeking, but such attempts generally fail: they produce anxiety, frustration, insecurity, neurosis. The Great Capitalist class is a class of alcoholics, ulcers, tranquilizer-takers with enormous levels of hostility. For some, escape is found in Power, in manipulating others. For some, escape is found in eccentricity, or in Philanthropy, or in booze. For most, the possibilities of a radical alternative to their life style is never seriously contemplated: they are afraid to change their way of life because they are afraid of losing whatever they hold on to. It is the job of the liberated Younger Generation to demonstrate the beauty and joy of the Alternative Life of the counter-culture. It is a better life for Human Beings to grow and live in, and People will realize this in good time if we throw ourselves into it.

In this view of man, it is not classes per se that are in conflict, but rather cultures which are in conflict. It happens today, according to this argument, that this cultural cleavage breaks down mainly along generation lines, and thus the "Generation Gap". The culture conflict is between the technocratic (or as it has begun to be called, technetronic), mechanistic, competitive life style of the past, and the humanistic, personalized, co-operative life style of the New Age. The ruling classes attachment to its style of life grew out of a previous era when there was an economy of scarcity and people had to be competitive to survive. This is no longer the case, but they cling to the old ways for basically irrational, unconscious reasons. The Counter-Culture will show them the way, and they will voluntarily yield power, stop manipulating and killing, stop destroying the planet and the people of the third world.

Both views are, I think, over-simplifications: men are neither so narrowly rationally self-seeking as in the Marxian model, nor so irrationally molded by unconscious fears as in the counter-culture model. But I think that the Marxian model is probably closer to the political (if not the psychological) reality of the situation: People in power are not going to voluntarily yield that power, and if they feel that power threatened, they are likely to use all the means available to protect their positions. It may be because of irrational fears and anxieties that they hold on so tenaciously to that power, but it is also because their entire world is contingent upon the holding of that power. That world includes Yachts, fantastic estates, unlimited travel, being Top Status in the pecking order, etc. I do not see how the simple life of the co-operative counter-culture is going to have any appeal to these people. So far, at least, the data would seem to be against it.

I've presented these two alternative views of man because I think that they are important in thinking about the possibilities of the counter-culture to radically change the whole society. A lot of people who believe that that is the way seem to feel that if only Rockefeller, if only Nixon, really understood what we were talking about, if only they saw how good it was for human beings to live in these new situations, then they would stop fighting it.

Donley: Do you really think that that is what the counter-culture people believe?

Betsy: I'm a counter-cultural person, and I don't believe that.

Erik: No, I am not saying that everyone who believes in building counter-institutions believes that, but it seems that when it is formulated into a consistent theory of how to change the whole society, this must be part of the conception. If you see the counter-culture as a Path to changing the whole society, and not just changing the people who "drop-in" to the counter culture, then I think you have to assume that it will change people who are in positions of power. If you don't believe that, then it would seem that those people in power would smash the counter-culture if ever it gained any real strength.

Betsy: I think that you have misinterpreted the counter-culture.

Steve: I don't see any person who is locked into the life style of the system at the top, ever waking up one morning and seeing the light. I don't see that happening. Nor do I see, at this point, a violent confrontation in this country getting anything good, succeeding in resting power from those people, or, even if it did succeed in that, really coming up with anything better. So, what I am saying is that I am just going to go do it. Anybody I might run into--in my neighborhood, on my side of town--those people will see something else being done, but it will probably never have any national importance. I have given up on the idea of national importance. So, I am just going to do what I feel I want to do as far as my life style goes, and let it go at that.

Erik: There are people, I think, who do feel that the counter-culture can change the whole society--people like Robert Theobald and Charles Reich.

Steve: I think that it probably will, but I don't care. I mean, I am not strategizing for that, but I think that it probably will. I do not think that you can have the use of drugs that is going on among kids younger than me, or the exposure in the media and so on, without that drastically changing the society. That is certainly to be wished, but that is not part of my strategy. I don't see it in my life time anyway; but if Business Administration Schools are having trouble getting recruits, that is changing the society; if people are refusing to show up for induction, that is changing the society; if more kids are looking at the society and saying this is ridiculous, this is insane, that is changing the society. I don't see this as creating a millenium; I don't see us ~~as~~ as able to pull off a millenium.

Erik: That perspective is in a way the most positive form of cynicism: it is very cynical about the possibilities of stopping things like the war in Vietnam and other such atrocities happening in the future, but it is positive about what you can do in our own life space.

Steve: I spent a hell of a lot of time trying to stop things like that, and I think that it is just impossible.

Erik: So, you are cynical in that respect, but rather than having that result in a total nihilism, you are taking the positive step of constructing around you in your own immediate social environment the kind of social relationships that are constructive for you, personally.

Steve: And I think that a lot of people are doing that. I was trained in a good New England Prep School and a good college to be a Big Executive. And here I am in taxi unlimited.

Betsy: It's great, isn't it.

Steve: Yes--it's out of sight. There was a time when I bought all of that: you know, "you too can have the whole upper middle class trip", and I just decided that I don't want that. A lot of people have decided that they don't, and they are doing other things, and that is changing society, in a very concrete way. More than all of my political action

in jail and in courts. Unfortunately, we are slaughtering people around the world, but I haven't found any way to stop that.

Chris: Erik described yourself as being cynical. I don't see in the personal lives of anyone who is involved in the counter-culture very much cynicism. You can't say that the person is a "cynical person" even though they share the views Steve was describing.

Erik: What I meant was that it was an extreme political cynicism without it becoming an existential cynicism. You are not cynical about the possibilities of you personally being able to lead a decent life with respect to your immediate surroundings, or at least you are acting on the assumption that you can construct in that way.

Steve: That does involve compromises. You have to deal with the other culture and with the Government in some ways. I don't know if "The Counter Culture" really exists anyway. It is a dangerous word, like "The Generation Gap". It is a construct that you can talk about, but I am not sure if "it" exists. I wouldn't want to define it.

Chris: Defining the Counter-Culture is really only something those people outside of the counter-culture would do.

Betsy: It is like saying "are you a hippy?" Anybody who is a hippy would not ask that question.

Erik: But it seems to me that if the counter-culture expect to survive viably and to eventually have an impact on the society as a whole, that it must have some conception about how it will handle attacks from the Establishment. Charles Reich's view seems to be that we can expect some kind of religious conversion almost of the power elite. Something like that seems to me to be essential, for otherwise, at some point, there will occur a massive repression against the counter-institutions.

Steve: well, maybe we will just have to deal with that when it comes.

Betsy: Erik, one of the important differences in the way a person less political than you would speak of these things, is that he would talk in terms of people as individuals, rather than in terms of society. The important thing becomes to change people as individuals radically. There is very little concern with the idea of "society"; that has very little reality to me. That idea of "people" has an incredible amount of reality to me. There was a thing in Abbie Hoffman's book that said "the only way to support a Revolution was to make your own." The way I am trying to live is the way I would want to live if things were the way I wanted them to be for the whole society. That includes things like recycling. It includes things like not slugging people.

Erik: That is an important thing which you just said. I have been very cynical myself about the whole recycling business, primarily because I have looked at it in political terms I guess. Politically, a lot of the ecology movement is pretty phony: it makes people feel that they are doing something about ecology when the big polluters are

corporations and not housewives, and it is a way of diverting people's attention from other issues into ecological issues, and so on. So, I have had lots of negative feelings about the "Ecology Movement" from a political perspective. But when you look at this from your perspective, it has an entirely different meaning: you are recycling cans because that is a good way to live, not because it is an effective political tool or because it is changing the whole society.

Betsy: But there is a lot of overlap: people who recycle are also likely to be people who have "Free Angela" stickers on their bumpers.

Chris: There are lots of other parallels to the recycling thing in this way, things that may not make much difference politically, but which are good ways to live. I think the whole counter-culture--if I can use that word--rests on that supposition. People recognize that what they do may not be effective politically, but they do it anyway.

Mike McKinley: One issue is that this is a good way to live and it changes you if you live that way, but also, the ecology movement is politically a way to get people involved in political issues who otherwise would not have been involved at all in politics. It educates people politically about the way the system works.

Erik: At least it has that potential. ~~The~~ But it can also have a negative affect. The rejoinder to all this that someone from PL or a group like that would raise--and I raise this not because I believe it, but because it is an issue which troubles me--is that there is nothing intrinsically ~~livingzthezifexstyle~~ wrong with living the life style you would like to see eventually in the whole society. That is intrinsically laudable. But, it hurts the chances of real change in the rest of society. If all the people who are presently involved in various aspects of what we are calling the "counter-culture" joined PL actively, the argument would go, that would increase the organizational strength of the revolutionary movement and the possibility of really revolutionizing the society immensely.

post session addendum: it would also be added by a committed Marxist Revolutionary, that the system can accommodate a certain amount of deviant sub-cultures because these do not really challenge the power and structure of the system as a whole, but it cannot accommodate a revolutionary movement which challenges and threatens that system directly. To the extent, therefore, that people opt out of revolutionary politics into the counter-culture, it would be argued, it helps the system to continue along unchallenged.

Steve: I never really understood how PL exactly planned to move to really revolutionize this society. He talked about building a base, but I didn't really understand how it was done, or how that got translated into successful revolution. If I understood how it was done, I would maybe be more in favor of joining it.

Donley: And I didn't understand what was going to happen after he built the base and took power. He always side-stepped the question of what he was going to do after the revolution.

Erik: The reason that he side-stepped those questions was, I think, that he felt those decisions would be up to the People at that time. He just couldn't predict exactly what those decisions would be, what forms they would decide upon. But my feeling is that at least some of the experiments in the counter-culture now would become much more general.

Donley: I am more amazed by the absolute, incredible naiveté of that guy than I am about the small amount of naiveté of a bunch of kids that go off and start a Commune.

Erik: well, it is either incredible naivete or incredible sophistication. Things which might seem naive, like there is a possibility for workers to defeat the army or the workers can hold power once the revolution take over, may seem naive because we are naive.

Donley: I asked him a question about what he would do to consolidate power, and he side-stepped that issue completely. It is very naive for him to assume that he would have sufficient support so that he would not have to make compromises to hold power. He just says "that will get worked out", but never indicates how.

Erik: The way he would answer that is by saying that power would be consolidated by the People actively exercising that power. He specifically rejected the notion that it was an elitest Communist Party that was gaining power, but rather the Party was the tool for enabling the People to take power. The Party is the organizational basis, at least theoretically, for the creation of a radical democracy of the People. But getting back to what I was saying before, irrespective of whether he is being realistic or not, whether his views on how power could be gained and held are naive or not, there is an important issue being raised about the differences between a revolutionary-political approach and a counter-culture approach to the world: he believes that there is a real chance of changing the whole society. He doesn't have Steve's political cynicism; he is enormously optimistic politically. But he feels also that the only way that this can happen is if people who are alienated from the society, who share the critique of the existing system, join forces behind the revolutionary movement, not necessarily as ~~political~~ members of the Party, but as political co-workers. Such a view says that to the extent that we opt out of real political activity, to the extent that we are preoccupied with building counter institutions in various ways, we are opting out of that struggle and are making it more difficult for that struggle to succeed. So the end result is that we are hindering the chances of real revolution.

Betsy: I think that ~~that~~ hinges upon what he means by change and what I mean by change. I am ecumenical enough to say that PL and I have a good deal in common. They might not think so because I am not willing to do the kind of activist organizational things that they might want. It seems to me that the United States, if you want to define that as the "society", is made up of 200 million individuals, and there are fewer individuals than not who would sympathize with me or PL now. In that sense, PL and I are on the same side of the line. The most

profound kinds of changes that I have seen happen have been on a very very small, slow basis, individual basis. Those are the one's that stuck. I don't have much confidence in Big Changes. Like legislating for Civil Rights when the climate in Alabama is the way it is. I would be more interested in not having that legislation be necessary, and that takes a lot longer. I am more concerned about the long, slow processes of changing people's minds, of changing people's consciences. That is the kind of thing I have the most faith in, and the most hope in.

Erik: And you think that that can be done by living that life yourself.

Betsy. Yes. It happens all of the time regardless. People affect other people all the time. For me it becomes a question of how and where I affect people, and how I want to do it. And it is also a matter for me to try to maintain some integrity in my life so that I don't feel guilty about the stuff I am doing. That is kind of a negative way to operate, but that is kind of how it is. Wendal and I live in a very small apartment, but I don't mind that because I feel that given the population density, that this is about what we deserve,

Chris: Somehow it seems to me that there has been an assumption here, at least in a vague sort of way, that the kind of things that PL is looking for and the kinds of things that counter-culture people are looking for, are somehow the same. But I really wonder if the way the people in the counter-culture are doing things really in a way puts PL much closer to the Established System of technocracy and the Government of the United States than to the people in the counter-culture. The guy who talked to us last week still held a lot of the values of the Liberals, the Fulbrights of this country: the scientific world view; the idea that you can analyse a problem and solve it through the empirical method and the use of reason. Maybe the counter-culture goes even deeper and calls even that into question. So it comes down not to a question of which kind of life are we going to reach through the use of reason, but rather the conflict between a life based ~~reason~~ on reason and a life based on emotions, or feelings.

Steve: Or rather, seeing a life based solely on reason as inadequate.

Donley: I don't think that at all. People see science as simply ill-used.

Erik: There are some people who go far beyond that and really do reject science and systematic rationality altogether. as unimportant. The sort of thing I would mean would be to put more reliance on Astrology than on other ways of evaluating the world, and taking Astrology as literal predictions of the future rather than as symbolic poetry.

Betsy: It seems to me that that is simply opting for one way of ordering the Universe over another. ~~One~~ The person who orders reality on the basis of the way the universe was conjoined at the time of their birth is ordering reality in one way, and the way people did it at ~~Swarg~~ Swarthmore when I was an undergraduate is another.

Erik: That is true--they are both ways of ordering reality, but in terms of what we mean by "rationality", one of these is a rejection of rationality. That doesn't make it less meaningful for the individual who accepts it. It is not a rejection of meaning--if anything it seems to me a desperate attempt to create meaning. But it is a rejection of reason.

Donley: There is a misunderstanding somewhere about what the counter-culture means in my mind and what it means in yours. I just do not see it the way you are painting it. I find the biggest hero in what I see as the counter-culture as being a prominent scientist, Buckminster Fuller.

Erik: What about Timothy Leary, at least a while ago? Or Alan Watts? But I think what you are saying is valid: there really are very different tendencies in what we are labling the "Counter-Culture" which include science-oriented people like Fuller and drug-culture people like Leary.

Donley: Well, when I talk about the counter-culture, I mean things like the "Whole Earth Catalogue". That is not mystical at all. It is very factual, down to earth, trying to utilize effectively the best of technology. What the counter-culture really does not include, it seems to me, is politics and power and that kind of theory. What everybody says is fuck politics.

Erik: This is getting back to what Steve said about it being wrong to talk about The counter-culture in a simplified way. What unites them is that they are all seeking alternatives to American society in their own life styles.

Donley: And that is where I would see the guy from PL really embracing the American System. He's on a political trip; he's on a Power trip. He is involved in organization-economic theory trying to organize and control people. The trend I see in the other way is let's do away with organization.

Betsy: Not even do away with it; just forget about it. President Nixon is not the President of Me. He might be the President of the People who think he is the President, but he is not the President of Me. If he wants to think that he is the President of Me, he can.

Erik: But how do you cope with the situation when he comes to arrest you?

Betsy: I guess I will deal with that when it comes. It's like this: It's hard for me to work for an end, a goal, when I am having such a hard time with the means, and making them be ones that I can live with. The important things in my life, I guess, are mostly People and books: watching them grow, being friends with them, and paying attention to the Earth I live on pretty much takes up most of my time. I guess that is where I place my priorities. I don't see any better way for me to stop the war in Vietnam than for me to try to live in a way that would prevent that sort of thing from happening, if everybody lived that way.

Erik: That is sort of a social categorical imperative: if everybody lived the way I do, it would be a pretty fantastic world.

Steve: That is almost PLs position: they feel they have to win everyone



over to their line before we can move. I just don't think that that view corresponds to what PL does. At a SDS Convention a few years ago they were certainly maneuvering for PL and their line, and the result was that they split an awful lot of the left. When PL says that they are not interested in propagating the party per se, I don't believe them.

Klaus: Betsy, do I understand you in the right way that you are not interested in effectiveness at all?

Betsy: I'm interested in effectiveness, but on a very small scale, on a person-to-person scale, and not on the scale of society at large.

Erik: Is that primarily because you feel it is impossible to be effective on a larger scale of the society?

Betsy: No, I guess not. I feel that the concept of "the society at large" has very little meaning to me. The concept of person-to-person has a great deal of meaning to me. I have a sneaking suspicion that there is a society at large and that the way I am going to be able to change it is on a person-to-person level.

Erik: That is a little different from what Steve was saying, in which the reason for his reason for dealing on the person-to-person level was because of his sense of the impossibility of dealing with the society at large effectively.

Steve: Yes, I would have to say that I have no real hope, or I haven't seen any real way, to be effective on a national scale; I just don't see how you can change policy or affect on people the seriousness of the situation. Since that is not possible, the next best thing is dealing on the person-to-person level effectively.

Klaus: I have the feeling that this whole individualistic ideology is really the same as psycho therapy and is very American. I read a biography of Sinclair Lewis and when he was our age he traveled all across the United States visiting communities that were very much like Communes today. They all collapsed, like today, communes collapse. This approach is almost a tradition in America and it really hasn't had an affect on the greater part of the people at all. The counter-culture as an alternative doesn't really affect the mass of the people.

Erik: There is a sense in which I agree with Chris that PL in a sense shares some of the dominant values of the system they oppose, but there is also a sense in which the whole range of things we include in whatever we define as the "counter-culture" is also very much within the American tradition. The counter-culture stresses the American myth of individualism, of going off and "doing your own thing", in distinction to PL's collectivist, communist-revolutionary attitude which in that sense is very unAmerican. Going out and building your own counter-institution is very much of a rugged-individualist's way of bucking the system.

Donley: I don't know about that. I think that some of the aspects of the counter-culture are more collectivistic and communistic than what PL is talking about.

Erik: Maybe, but I think it is collectivist in a very individualist way, that is, it is collectivist for me, not for the rest of the society.

Donley: I don't think it is approached that way. It is done with all of the people who come together to share, and if the whole society came in to share that would be acceptable. People withdraw from the larger society because the rest of society is not ready for what they want.

Erik: I guess I may be making an over-generalization, but what I am saying ~~that~~ is that most people who opt for various counter-institutions or life styles are disillusioned with the patterns in the larger society--they haven't found meaning, or satisfaction or gratification or whatever, in their participation in the institutions of the established system--and so they look for an alternative in terms of what is in it for me. "What is in it for me" may be defined for them in terms of sharing in a commune; the form may be very collective, but the frame-of-reference seems to be fairly individualistic. There seems to be very little self-sacrifice in the counter-culture. I don't mean that as a criticism, but rather that that is an American thing.

Betsy: Self-sacrifice can be extremely selfish.

Steve: But Sacrifice to what, Erik? I know that when I went off to jail in the South I felt really good and really noble. I am not sure how valid all of that is either.

Erik: Well, that is like what Mark Tawin said--that all actions, even the most noble and self-sacrifice, are always basically selfish. All actions, almost by definition, he said were selfish, because you did them because they were gratifying, or gave you meaning, or made you feel good, or something like that. I guess what I would say about the "counter-culture" is that irrespective of individual motives, the behavior of most people who opt for alternative life styles is still very self-centered rather than involving a giving of the self to others.

Betsy: You know, the best sections of our sessions have been, I think, when people have felt lines being drawn in the group. I feel that there is a kind of line going on here, most against Erik, and there was a line that emerged on the violence-non-violence thing. When that happens we begin to invest a little bit of ourselves into what we are saying.

Erik: I think that is true, and what makes that constructive in the sessions is that there is something underlying which was not a question of that division and which is allowing us to talk and communicate to each other. You know, I feel a lot of ambiguities about a lot of what we have been talking about. I'm not a revolutionary, and I'm not about to become one in the immediate future as far as I can tell.

Betsy: Ah, come on Erik, you're a "revolutionary".

Erik: No, I'm really not, and I haven't also in any significant way contributed to the building of any counter-cultural institutions, although I suppose that this seminar is a counter-institution of sorts. I just don't feel comfortable with any of the options at this point. I don't feel comfortable opting for the small scale, person-to-person level of effectiveness because I really feel, based on the political understanding that I have, which may not be true, but I do feel that in the not distant future, the efforts of the counter-culture will be put under severe controls unless there is a level of organization which makes that control more difficult.

Donley: Where I always see you most comfortable is when you are talking Old Line Marxist thought. That is what you seemed about to hit us with then: the repression is going to happen because of the whole Marxist thing.

Erik: I don't think that is right. I am not "Old Line Marxist"; I don't hold any Marxist orthodoxy.

Donley: Well, this is a personal comment, but it seems to me that whenever you start talking about politics your voice becomes very unemotional and uninflectional and it is just like it comes out of you in a pre-patterned program.

Erik: If that is true, I think that it is because I have thought about most of the issues a great deal already and my ideas are in a fairly well-formulated series of thoughts, but not because it is a memorized pattern. I do see a lot of value in what is generally labeled Marxism, but I do not accept all of it by any means. And sometimes if I raise the narrower Marxist perspective here in a discussion it is because I feel it needs to be raised and thought about, not because I am personally committed to that position. What you say is probably somewhat true, that I feel comfortable with that political position, but I feel comfortable with it because I have not encountered any effective arguments which would invalidate it, not because of any rote acceptance.

Donley: I think that the highly political, highly theoretical position is almost as untenable as any of the others we have talked about, especially when it is combined with no action. The counter-culture position is highly unpolitical and untheoretical, but it very activist. PL is highly political and highly activist, almost militaristic.

Erik: In those terms, I think that I share much--not all--of the understanding and critique of society of contemporary Marxism, but I don't share the understanding of what actions can change that society.

post session comment: this is why I do not consider myself a revolutionary: I do not have any optimistic faith that a revolution could succeed in the United States, nor that it would be able to stay revolutionary even if it took power. Nor am I really a Marxist, even though I accept the Marxist notion of class as an important social reality, and I accept some of Marx's political analysis resulting from that notion. In the addendum to this session I will present some of my thoughts on these issues.

Betsy: It is a whole mind-set that is involved here. I was looking through a number of our earlier sessions. You always talk about these problems in terms of goals and means, and you use an in-built jargon and approach that is really different from the jargon and approach that I would use. My jargon and approach is less political, more humanistic or whatever. If we were saying exactly the same things, I think that we would say them with very different slants. That is something which keeps coming up. It is interesting to me because you are really good at what you are, and it is consistent and I learn a lot from it, and I am learning where I differ from that perspective.

Donley: I could probably say something very heavy politically and it would come out sounding in a different manner ~~because~~ from Erik because of the different jargon I would use. While Erik might say something very...what should I say?...you might say something very humane and I couldn't even recognize it, (super laughter).

Erik: I don't think that it is true that everything I say is highly political and that I am never concerned with humanistic issues. When we were talking in the first five sessions about Utopia, I didn't ~~str~~ stress politics, at least not all the time. Or at least, I hope that I didn't.

Betsy: Yes, but "ends-and-means" presumes a perspective, and talking of ends and means presumes a perspective. Not talking of ends and means presumes a perspective. There we have two perspectives; there are many.

David: In other words, like you're saying, "live now as if this is the life that I want"; this is the way people should live is saying that the ends and the means are synonymous.

Betsy: Yeah, I guess I'm saying that.

Donley: That is one of the things that I found I disagreed very much with the guy last week. If something good is happening now, they view it as something as should not be happening. That is totally mind-boggling to me that if we are striving for a good, sensible free life that makes sense and is whole in some way, if we are able to grasp on to that now, then I have to throw everything I can behind that. I can't deny this because it is in the wrong place.

Erik: The rejoinder would be--and this is where the question of individualism comes in--that the statement "we're looking for a good and free life" can mean two different things: "we", meaning me and my immediate friends, or "we" meaning me and the rest of "mankind".

Steve: But I just have trouble relating to the "rest of mankind". How do you work for the rest of man kind.

Betsy: Wendal wrote a 13 pages in his C.O. form about mankind, and he said, "here read this, I don't think it is very good". I didn't think it was very good either. He's a cool guy and he does cool things, but he never does them for "mankind", he does them for other people. The thing is, Erik, that by God there is room for just about every body...

Mike McKinley: The Pope said that once, too...

Betsy: and just keep doing it!....What I was going to say was that there are a lot of different ways to do a lot of different things, and one way isn't any better than any other a lot of times. People can work in different ways towards sortof the same things.

Chris: I think that traditionally there has been a sort of moral sanction to what Steve was talking about. That somehow, if you said, "I have trouble relating to all of humanity", that somehow that was wrong. That is where the individualism of the people in the counter-culture is: to see that you can't put that sort of moral judgement on people. I think that PL still does that: that somehow if you are not out manning the barricades or handing out leaflets, that that makes you an inferior moral being.

Erik: Yes. But they would probably insist strongly that they weren't making a "moral" judgement, but rather a "political" judgement.

David: There is something beginning ~~in the~~ called the New Seminary which is in the process of being created. The twenty people who got together could say, "OK, we are going to do our thing; we are going to create a new seminary". Or another approach would be to try to work within the larger context of the whole Graduate Theological Union, and make the New Seminary a significant voice within that which would have a real influence on the GTU, without necessarily trying to ~~nk~~ change the whole society or the whole world.

Steve: That is a problem which you have to deal with--how much do you try to do; how much of the universe do you think that you can reasonably affect. I have come to the conclusion that I cannot affect a very large portion of it, without just fucking my head completely, without just getting sucked in over my head. It is very hard to describe. I think ends and means comes close to describing it. Or, you become what you do. I would much rather work in an area where I feel that I am ~~making~~ establishing real contacts and real changes in people. I guess I have just become very wary and very cynical about politics. I guess in a way I accept the Marxist idea that people act in their self-interest, and that pertains to PL also, and they will come to the point where they will have to make a very fine line decision between what is effective use of their power or a compromise of some kind on some issue. I promise you that they will opt for their political power being more effective in the long run, and they will make that compromise.

Erik: That is certainly the decision--to compromise to hold on to power--that other Communist Parties have made.

Steve: I think that's the way politics run. To get up there you have to in some way sell out. Then, where are you? Who are you to be leading "the Revolution"? I have never seen it work any other way.

David: I think that the counter-culture leans much more towards the anarchist model instead of the Marxian model.

Steve: I certainly do.

Betsy: I don't think that it leans towards much of any model at all.

Erik: The anarchist model is just that: not much of a model at all.

Chris: The irony of this is that maybe by opting out of the traditional political structures you ~~gōz~~ are going in the long run to create more political change. When you think of how much affect PL is having in radicalizing people compared to, let's say, the whole question of marijauna, maybe there are more people in this country being radicalized by their involvement in drugs than PL can ever hope to influence.

Mike: Maybe that is a good argument for opposing the legalization of Marijuana.

Steve: I don't know. Think of Richard Nixon stoned.

Mike McKinley: The only problem with that is that, like with the GIs, marijuana helps them cope with killing people.

Steve: yeah: it helps you to really get into whatever you happen to be doing.

Chris: Well, there are other examples, like the draft.

Erik: There are enough sources of conflict in this society that even if marijuana is legalized and the draft is eliminated, there will still be ample ~~sources~~ forces for radicalizing people, and of disenchanting people with the system, that they will join the burgeoning ranks of the counter-culture.

David: We have been talking about "The Counter-Culture" and "The Revolutionary approach". Of course these are just lables and abstractions, and why don't we try to discuss for a while what groups of people or types of people form both of these. Like for the Revolutionary approach there would be SDS, PL, the Panthers...

Betsy: Women's Lib I would submit.

David: the draft resistance and groups like that....

Erik : Some of those groups, like the draft resistance, are sometimes really more "reformist" than "revolutionary". And different people will be participating in these different groups for different reasons. The same is true for the counter-culture. There is really a huge range of people and activities and forms in what we are calling the counter-culture.

Betsy: Hitch-hiking isin the counter-culture.

Klaus: You mean, when I pick up people, I am part of the counter-culture?

Betsy: sure.

Klaus: yea, Great!

Steve: But the real hard-liners are those out there hitching.

Chris: But if you are really in the Counter-Culture, you don't even ride in automobiles.

Erik: There are very few hitch-hikers who refuse to ride in cars and only get picked up on bicycles.

Chris: There are some hitch-hikers who sit down on University Avenue every morning in the sun with a sign to some impossible place, like the North Pole.

Mike: I have had a lot of experience working in an organization called SRL (Student Religious Liberals) which thinks of itself as kind of a counter-culture institution. One of the things about it is that often they don't deal with each other in a very people-to-people way. They sometimes handle other people in very bad ways, and not even understand what they are doing.

Erik: There is a lot of hypocrisy and shallowness in the counter-culture like there is anywhere else.

Betsy: Mediocrity, too.

Donley: One thing which is bothering me out of this whole conversation is that there is about twelve different stereotypes given out so far for the Counter-Culture; I don't feel like plugging into any of them, but I really like the Counter-Culture. Let's stop calling hippies "hippies" and counter-cultural people "counter-cultural people."

Erik: All that I mean by the "counter-culture" is opting for a way of life that is a real alternative to the norms of American Society.

Betsy: Does that include you? Does that include PL?

Erik: Well, I guess in a way it does include PL--they have opted for a way of life against the norms in America.

Betsy: Does it include monks?

Erik: I suppose so, at least it might. It depends a lot upon your self-image also. ~~The~~ The counter-culture is very much of a consciousness thing. Monks don't see themselves as representing an option of a counter-culture; they see themselves as part of a traditional option, not a counter-culture option.

Betsy: Maybe an important thing is that question of "opting": a lot of people don't have the opportunity to opt. And there are a lot of people who do have the opportunity to opt, but they don't.

Erik: And it is a question of positively opting, rather than just dropping out of the established culture. I see the "counter-culture" as an affirmation and not just a negation of the larger culture. It is not just a radical skid-row. It represents a positive commitment rather simply the utter lack of commitment and that is what

may differentiate it from the hard drug scene, drop-out culture which is not an affirmation. It is much more of a counter-skid-row.

Mike McKinley: I wonder how different certain counter-institutions really are to the system they are against. Like you set up a health food shop or a small business which you run on counter-cultural lines, but you still have to hassle insurance--like taxi-unlimited has to do--and you still are subject to the economic pressures of the rest of the society. So when those pressures build up, I am not sure that people in counter-institutions really will respond differently. It is like the unions who want war production because it produces jobs and that is all they care about.

Steve: Under those circumstances, Taxi- Unlimited would fold. As soon as it becomes more important as an institution than the people in it or around it, and if there is ever a choice between its inner style and its survival because of external pressures, it would simply fold, hopefully. A lot of people would dissolve out of the institution rather than have it be co-opted into an established business. We have already said no more media because the stories never come out right.

Erik: I would like to follow up what David was saying about visiting different counter-activities. Hitch-hiking is one clear alternative which many people have chosen as an alternative transportation style and as part of an alternative life style.

Donley: But it is not a rejection of cars; that is the real problem. Why don't they take the bus?

David: because they don't have any money.

Klaus: But people here would rather hitch hike four blocks or five rather than walk. They wait half an hour to get into a car rather than walk.

Betsy: I meant hitch-hiking across the country as a real sport.

Erik: I think what makes it counter-cultural is that it is free transportation and that it is sharing.

David: One significant thing is that the legislators in Sacramento are getting uptight enough about all of this hitch-hiking that they are thinking of making it illegal.

Betsy: Maybe that is one sort of distinguishing characteristic of counter-cultural institutions. Most of them are either illegal, or soon to be illegal, or on the fringes of legality.

Chris: But a lot of the things in the counter-culture really come out of the culture of America, like this thing with cars: instead of walking you still use an automobile, you still use some form of motorized transportation. Or the whole drug scene, which is closely connected with the American thing of using chemicals to relieve certain problems. Or Rock music, which uses certain technological advances without really being into that technological ~~mid~~ mind-set. There is this kind of strange relationship between the counter-culture and the established culture, almost a symbiotic relationship.



Erik: Well, hitch-hiking is one counter-cultural form, sort of counter-travel, or at least it can be that. What other counter forms are there?

Donley: Another counter-form is more people living in a single housing unit than the unit was designed for. At least that is the way the cops put it. Not just communes, but a group of people getting together to live together.

Chris: How do you distinguish that from traditional poverty?

Donley: Well, that is another counter-cultural thing we see: voluntary poverty.

Steve: That means you work for 80¢/hour in taxi unlimited...

Erik: when you could get a really good paying job.

Donley: There is a whole range of ~~these counter-living~~ things from the really efficient communes that are an entire self-sustaining community to collectives like taxi unlimited.

Erik: So, there are counter-living styles and counter-work settings that are in the counter culture.

Steve: There is a lot of this in Berkeley, of collectives that live and work together like the "Great Shanghi". There are lots of work collectives that are developing as people decide to start to live together because when they do that it also makes sense to try to work together.

Donley: At one point I would have been willing to say that part of the counter-culture was the proliferation of freak shops, but I have been burned by so many long-haired businessmen now that I don't think so now.

Erik: Lots of those stores are really parasitic, commercializing the ~~the~~ counter-culture for profit. This is part of a real danger in what we are calling the counter-culture: the co-opting of counter-institutions by the established system. You see that in the freak shops all the time. They are really soaking people.

Betsy: I think that almost any kind of resistance to the Government is counter-cultural activity. I was thinking mostly of refusal to serve in the armed forces and refusal to pay taxes.

Erik: I would think that that would depend upon how you did that which would differentiate the activity from revolution or reform.

Chris: I have some trouble placing those people all into the counter-culture. I think of farmers back in Minnesota who are very much into not paying their taxes, but I am not sure that you can include them in the counter culture.

Betsy: And there there are also people like Rockefeller who sort of ~~are~~

refuses to pay taxes because he has a smart lawyer.

Erik: Yes. That is why I think the intention is important in defining the counter culture, why consciousness is important and the free opting for the activity. Freely opting for poverty because you reject a preoccupation with material wealth is a counter-life style; whereas being forced to live in poverty is not. I guess this means that the counter-culture is almost, but not necessarily, limited to middle class people. Their positions give them real choices.

Donley: Another counter-cultural thing that I would go into was the whole group of people that was characterized by Filo Farnsworth and Dave Gard and the guy who runs the Whole Earth Catalogue, Stuart Bran. Especially Filo Farnsworth who developed the "Antra House". He invented the most far-out, furthest advanced, extra-special, wowy-zowy, zoomo sonar gear for the Navy. Then he said that he didn't like that he did that, or rather he liked the invention, but decided to go on to something else. So he has begun to put technology and science into a logical, human use in creating a super-cheap kind of low-cost housing, the Antra House. It costs \$300-400 for a three story house. It is made out of acrylic plastic and steel cable and uses tinsil structure to support the thing. Stuart Bran is part of the counter-culture because of the Whole Earth Catalogue, and Dave Gard, because he has come out with a new, sensible, counter-cultural way of learning to play the guitar. He attacks the way we tune the guitar and makes all of the strings tuned in fifths, and then he devised a system of replacing notes with colors to make it easier to learn to play. Instead of playing C-G-F you would play something like Sunrise-Sunset-Afternoon.

Erik: I am not sure if I would call that really counter-music writing. Any new invention is not necessarily part of the counter-culture just because it is new.

Betsy: No, it is a matter of how it questions assumptions. It is like questioning the assumptions that houses have to be built in square, rectangular geometric forms. Like someone says, people are not rectilinear, why are houses rectilinear? So I am going to make a foam house. A lot of reason why people opt for the counter-culture, whatever it is, is that they ~~are~~ seriously question assumptions.

Erik: Yes, that's true, and to the extent that this new schema of music writing is part of a questioning of assumptions I guess it can be called part of the counter-culture. You know, there is a Volkswagon repair manual out called something like Volkswagon Repair for the Complete Idiot. That is a counter-cultural repair manual, and it is much because of its intention as its formal style. What he is doing is saying "You've got this Bug and you are friends with it and you don't know what the difference is between a wheel and a piston, so I'll tell you, and then you can make your Bug happier." It humanizes both the task and the machine Bug.

What other counter-forms are there? There are ~~some~~ free churches and free clinics; they are counter-institutions.

Betsy: Anything which is free is likely to be counter-cultural. There are very few free things that are in the American tradition.

Erik: Well there are libraries. They are kind of a counter-cultural, anti-American institution of sorts.

Mike McKinley: That is why they put reactionary librarians in them. I would like to say something against things which are "free": the problem with them is that they are rarely self-sustaining institutions. They always depend upon the same people putting money into them so that they continue, and they always are directed at the same people.

Chris: In a sense what you are saying is that these kind of institutions are parasitic on the rest of society.

Mike McKinley: And they are also parasitic on the subculture. Like, most of the free clinics that you see around here are ~~parasitic~~ used for middle class dropouts. The people in other areas still cannot get good medical care. It is like the idea of "helping people" means helping ourselves first and then if there is anything left over, we help others. That is the way it has always been. And since we don't make much money, it means that we mainly help ourselves.

Steve: But you have to start some place. This very definitely has its drawbacks, but you do have to start someplace, and I have to begin working where I can see some kind of result. Maybe I need immediate gratification, but I don't think it is quite that: I have to see some results, and I don't see it when I am helping "mankind."

Mike McKinley: That's fine. I didn't mean "mankind"; I meant poor people on the other side of town.

Davdid: Well, it's like when you give money to save starving children in Biafra, you never know if the money is actually going to help anyone or if it is just going to be eaten up by bureaucracy.

Mike McKinley: If I have an extra buck, I always give it to the free clinic or the free church and not to an individual who is palming on the street because with the free clinic I know where the money goes. I don't want to support somebody's drug habit. I would much rather give someone a sandwich than money. Or, like when I am in a fish and chips place, I will pick up the left-overs and go outside and give it to someone.

Erik: That is kind of the attitude in Abbie Hoffman's article in Ramparts about how to live in America on \$0 a day. It is a counter-cultural handbook for freeloading.

Chris: That is another characteristic of the counter-culture. We talked about its symbiotic relationship to the established culture; it can become a kind of parasitic relationship in which the counter-culture lives off of the regular culture. It depends upon people in the regular culture who happen to have cars, picking up hitch-hikers; it depends upon the availability of food to be ripped off, and things

like that.

Donley: That is not always the case. There are a lot of people who not only are divorcing themselves from taking part in the society, but also divorcing themselves from needing society. So, if they do need something from society, they counter it with something else, they give something.

Chris: I guess I was guilty of what you were talking about before: of zeroing in on too small a group of people and calling them the counter-culture. I was thinking of the Abbie Hoffmans and the people you see on Telegraph Avenue panhandling.

Betsy: It is like the whole thing with food stamps. I guess that I am too proud to use food stamps, and I think that part of the rationalization for that is that someone told me that people who are trying to create an alternative culture should try to do that without having to depend on the established culture.

Steve: Yet that is part of the old American thing of "if you don't like it, get out."

Mike McKinley: But Betsy, there is another possibility: that is for me to get food stamps and to give them to someone who really does need them. You can give them to a family that has lots of children and really needs more food. That is a valid way to go about using the system and is not parasitic in the way that living off of food stamps yourself when you can sustain yourself without them is.

Erik: I would like to return to something that we were talking about earlier when we were focusing in on a difference in perspective between Betsy and me: the whole question of means and ends and the identity of means and ends. Betsy said that the very way that I articulated the course--"Utopia and Revolution"--represents a perspective that is different from hers, a perspective that makes a real distinction between ends and means. Perhaps this is part of me being so much more political than Betsy. This may have a lot to do with what may be distinctive about the counter-culture as an approach to life, if not as an approach to Utopia, in comparison to both Revolution and Reform. Both of these set up goals, ends, and then think through strategies to accomplishing those ends, either reformist or revolutionary strategies. Much of your activity thus becomes absorbed in working through those strategies, in lobbying or organizing or striking or what have you. That mentality is very different from a mentality that doesn't establish that kind of goal and think about strategies or ways of getting there, but rather simply decides on the way that you want to live, and you live it to the best of your ability. That's it.

Donley: I wish Murphy were here. He said something the other night that just encompassed all of this, when he said something about this goals business being a bunch of shit. I don't know if he said that, but it is what comes to my mind. What I am looking for now is basically good, wholesome means, and not goals. I have been looking at where I have been in the past eight years or so, and I have found myself being lead along much like Marceau in Camus' book. I am being lead

along by my means, by the means that I have chosen. The means that I have chosen in the past at some point begin to articulate the next set of means that I will use. There was a time when I was intent on setting goals, like when I was in High School and decided to become a Minister. When I was a kid we ~~xxxxx~~ were told all the time that we had to decide on goals and that the only way we could make it in this society was to go to college. College was to help us articulate our goals and give us meaning and put us there. If anything happened to me in college it was that I decided that what I thought I wanted, I really didn't, and my motto became: "Gee, I wish I was now what I was when I wanted to be what I am now". Instead, everything just fell apart, and it has been happily that way since. If I try to articulate the last four years, they just don't make any sense: I come back from Iran and I enter seminary, then I go to graduate school in Semitics and then I end up doing city organizing and planning. That doesn't make any sense at all, except that it is a thoroughly enjoyable system of working.

Erik: I guess this is ~~xxxxx~~ related to what Betsy said that the very way I set up the seminar and the way I have phrased the problems represents a distinct perspective. Several sessions ago we had a session in which we discussed various scenarios of the future. I labeled that session: "Paths to Utopia: Revolution, Reform or Counter-Culture". I saw those as alternatives, as options of paths to Utopia. In fact, what some people are saying here, now, is that the counter-culture is not an alternative road to Utopia, but that it is, in a sense, Utopia. It is that in spite of the fact that the rest of society may be completely messed up. The "counter-culture" tries to work out some kind of modus vivendi with the rest of society so that it can survive, and then it tries to create Utopia here and now. That is a different conception of the problem than the way I phrased it.

David: Or, it may be saying that there isn't a problem.

Steve: Nope: there is a problem, there is definitely a problem.

Donley: I remember that when I saw the course in the mimeograph hand-out I got very excited. I was thinking about goals, and objectives and design and going off on all sorts of organizational trips. I thought Wow, Utopia! Then that first session when we started talking about each of our conceptions of Utopia, I realized that right from the ~~xxx~~ start the class had gotten completely out of hand. ~~xxxxxxx~~ I knew that it was going to be a nice eight weeks, sort of a utopian eight weeks, but as for designing Utopia, we have sort of missed the boat. Except that, through talking about all of these things, and all of the things we have done, sometimes we seem to be getting a little nearer to something. It seems to me now that Utopia is the flashes of brilliance of Utopia that we hit now and again in our daily lives. Every once and a while you know that Utopia is here. This is really good, what is happening right here. And in this class there are times when the dialogue becomes very good and it is almost like Utopia. Wow: it comes a little closer: now that I have begun to think about Utopia and about the means and the goals, I begin to

see the flashes of it more readily. But as to actually creating A Utopia, no, there is no way; it is only the glimpses of it, and what is important is holding on to those.

Betsy: I was thinking ~~what~~ I would have said if I had been running the course. Instead of talking about means and ends I think I would have been talking in terms of flow and process. That is not how I was brought up. I was brought up to think in terms of means and ends. One of the big changes that has happened in me is finding out that I didn't have to judge people, that things didn't have to be ascertained as good or bad. Things were, just were. There is a tremendous continuity in the way things affect each other; sometimes they affect me and I judge them to be good or bad, but that was me doing the judging: they weren't intrinsically good or bad. It is more important to me now to become really aware of the flow and my place in it, than to set myself apart from it and try to structure it into means and ends. I don't know if that makes sense.

Erik: Do you see the orientation of being part of a process or flow as being somehow antithetical to the orientation of means-ends?

Betsy: I don't think that they are necessarily antithetical, but I do see them as different. Did you have the New Math? Well, I see the difference as like the difference between a line and a ray: a line is like this:  $\longleftrightarrow$ , and a ray is like this:  $\longrightarrow$ . A line is infinite in both directions but a ray is infinite in only one direction and has a stopping point in the other. I see means-ends sort of like a ray and process sort of like a line.

Erik: The way I thought of these issues was that our goal, "Utopia", was really a process. We are not there now, certainly as a society. Most people are not into that kind of utopian-process. We are not there, so I tried to think in terms of what ways could be adopted of getting people into that kind of constructive, utopian-process instead of the present destructive, death-process, or whatever you want to call it. Now one of the things about counter-cultural institutions is that people say, well, I don't see how I can move the society in that direction, but I at least can opt for life-processes. We can opt for a flow, for a processural pattern of life. But not everybody has that option, and you individually opting for that process does not necessarily move the larger society any closer to that option. So, the means-ends thing is ~~saying~~ asking the question, are there means to the end which is this life-process. One view might be that the style of the counter-culture, of individuals opting for life-processes, is also, at the same time, a means of getting other people to change, the rest of the world to change. One of image of how that would happen is that the counter-culture would be so attractive progressively to people that eventually regular institutions like business schools would not be able to get any recruits, and eventually the counter-culture would become The Culture.

Klaus: I see it a little bit differently. I am some kind of churchman and so I would like to use a biblical picture: the Kingdom of God, which is like Utopia, is like a mustard seed. It is the smallest kind of seed that you have, but when it grows you have a big tree. So Utopia is like this big tree which comes out of a tiny little seed. There are different kinds of interpretations to this. It could be that this is a process going towards Utopia, and it is only a matter of time when we reach the point where we have the Big Tree and Utopia is Here. Or you could interpret it differently, that Utopia is not only an end, but it is always here in a little seed. Even though it is just a little tiny seed, Utopia is present. I don't know exactly how to make an exigesis for today, whether to see the counter-culture as an alternative which says Utopia is already here, or as an alternative which tries to develop a Utopia. You surely will never get a Utopian society, for it isn't human, it isn't real. You have to deal with real persons, so it can't be a utopian society. But it could somehow be already present, in my idea or... I don't really know how. That is not an interpretation of "means" and "ends": I would think that the idea of a means or a way which finally ends in Utopian Society is unreal.

Betsy: I wouldn't think of this process as ever coming to an end, but as just going on. I presume that this is a process in which we are all involved, whether we like it or not. Each in our own different ways, see it and call it by different names. That is the reality that we all have to come to grips with. I think that the part that Klaus was saying about the seeds of utopia being here, is in the small, very significant moments ~~when things click~~ for each of us when things click, the very short times when things really fit together. And it's great, really fine. Life isn't always like that, but life is sometimes like that. It could be watching little kids playing in a park or it could be falling in love or it could be writing a poem. They just come from all different places. The thing which ties all of these things together is the effort of each person who is haunted by the memories of these good moments to try to optimize the chances for those moments for himself and for other people. That is the underlying feeling, and that is the kind of process that I am caught up in, to try to create the conditions for those moments to happen. I think that those are the seeds.

Erik: That is really like thinking of the counter-culture almost as a religious reformation. What you are describing as a high experience, or what Maslow would call a Peak Experience, is really that kind of incredible awareness of holiness or sacredness or whatever kind of language you can use to describe it. ~~And~~ One of the things which is being objected to the most about the life in a mechanistic society is the fact that it destroys that, it destroys the magic in the simple things of life. It even destroys the sacred in a compartment on Sunday. It seems to me that a lot of the counter-culture consists of bringing back that sacredness of just sitting around with friends, back into the stream of life. I was typing up the transcript for last week and I began just watching my fingers type, sort of transcending the immediate task and becoming really fascinated watching

those fingers in front of me, that I knew were connected to the rest of me by sinews and blood and bones, typing away. I listened to the stuff coming out of the tape recorder, passing ~~through~~ into my ears, and coming out on the paper through my fingers hitting the keys on the typerwriter. It was like I was standing aside and watching this whole operation in which ~~my~~ I was the intermediary part of the mechanism that was necessary to take sounds and make them visible on white paper. The tape recorder didn't know how to type, and the typerwriter didn't know how to listen, so I was just sort of helping them out with their difficiancies I didn't feel that as a depersonalized, mechanized thing, but rather as a kind of enthralling magic. That is really a high moment, being totally fascinated by something that you are engrossed in. I think that there is something in the way that we are trying to do things, trying to live our lives, that makes that kind of fascination more possible than for most people in the regular culture. Maybe that isn't true. Maybe there are lots of people who have created their own personal counter-culture in their heads without changing their life styles. But somehow I think it is harder when you work a 40 hour week, watch TV all of the time, worry about keeping up with the Jones and so on.

Betsy: My little brother stayed with us for about a month. He's 7. I learned a lot from him. He says that he remebers his earlier life before he lived on Earth. He lived on a star called Von. And the times he was happiest were the times when he talked about his life among the Planets when he played meteor baseball and things like that. To me this raises lots of questions. It is possible that he is going to be szchizophrenic, and that brings into question whether or not that bothers you. It is possible that he is right, that he was in fact on a Star named Von. He doesn't know it, but he affected me and Wendal too in large and pretty profound ways. It is kind of that new awareness coming, that sort of stepping back from the world that we take for granted and somehow seeing it from different eyes.

Erik: There is an issue which I would like to raise which we talked about somewhat earlier. How do you conceive of the way people who have opted for what we are calling the counter-culture will cope with what will be a political threat to their survival? They may not want to be involved in politics, but that doesn't mean that politics is not going to impinge on them. It happened in a small way in Berkeley over the People's Park thing. People's Park was a counter-institution. The Street People took over the land and made it into a park. It was a non-power trip for them at first, just making that lot into a park. It was the larger society which transformed the Park into a power-confrontation. It was the political forces outside of the counter-culture which decided to use force to protect that private property. That kind of political threat cannot be avoided, as far as I can see. It is going to happen in communes when laws are passed prohibiting them. There are state laws which are being planned to prohibit people living together in a single unit under certain circumstances.

Donley: That has already happened in some areas like Mill Valley.



Erik: Right now, when that happens there is still enough flexibility for people to cope with that without having to fight back. But eventually it is going to be much more difficult. Like, it was very difficult to be in the counter-culture in Nazi Germany. At the moment, at least for middle class counter-institutions, that kind of repression is not very heavy, but it could really get heavy, particularly if it grows enough and involves enough people that it becomes a real threat to the existing system. Maybe the answer to this is that until that happens, people will continue to opt for the same kinds of things that they are doing now, and that when they ultimately have to confront this repression, they will have to make a decision, either to drop back into the society, or to respond politically to the threat, perhaps by becoming involved in revolutionary politics.

Chris: You know, another factor in all of this is that people in the ~~same~~ counter-culture are getting a taste of this kind of individualism that we have been talking about, and so when political repression comes down on them, they will feel it very intensely. When there is no way out, when all the options of escape are closed, the kind of person who is imbued with a sense of personal self-worth, who hasn't had his senses dulled by technocracy, will lash out at the institutions that are doing the repression.

David: If there was a real clamp down on <sup>and hitch-hiking and drugs</sup> communes in Berkeley, there could be something very close to a violent overthrow of the city government.

Erik: Well, if that happened, a lot of students would ~~have~~ get shot. I'm not sure if many students at this point would be willing to become guerillas to fight that, and so, eventually there would be a kind of totalitarian repression in Berkeley against those people.

Steve: Well, what happens when, say, PL becomes effective and is in that same situation? I think they'll get really stomped, they really will.  
*what will they do then?*

Erik: Their image of what happens is the one that Henry Potocoto suggested last week: that at that point you can't really predict what will happen--whether people will opt out of the struggle and respond to their fears rather than their aspirations--but the theory is, and this is what they believe in, that that will lead to open warfare.

Steve: Yeah, PL versus the US Army.

Erik: Right, except they want to infiltrate the US Army. There are PL people in the army now. That is what they are banking on. They have no illusions that now, in 1970, if they tried to pull off a revolution they would be totally crushed. The whole premis--and if this premis is wrong, there is no hope for them--is that in the 70s they will build a large base for a revolution.

At any rate, I think the general point that Steve was making is that the question of how you will cope with political repression is something which faces all groups, not just the counter-culture. It is something which faced the civil rights movement in the early 1960s, and they made the choice of non-violent civil disobedience as a way of approaching that problem. The logic behind Martin Luther King's whole ~~stance~~

stance of nonviolent civil disobedience was basically a highly reformist ethic towards change, rather than a counter-cultural ethic towards change or a revolutionary ethic. Martin Luther King was no where nearly as disillusioned with American society as the average resident of Berkeley is today. He felt that basically Laws should be respected even if you disagree with particular laws, and so civil disobedience was what he advocated. I don't know how many people in communes today, if ~~the~~ communes were outlawed and the police started moving in, would believe in civil disobedience.

Mike McKinley: A question that I have had for a number of years is that I see that ~~there is a growing~~ growing unrest, which is already in a state of civil war in some areas at sporadic times, is going to become more intense, and my fear is that as it grows as I think it will, and I'm not optimistic about the result, that, assuming that "our side" is winning, that what happens then is that the factions that are the most organized will take power and be in charge. That always is a big fear to me and is the only reason why I can't completely opt out of politics, although some of it I detest. Because I think that I would probably react as much to PL-type Government as to a Richard Nixon-type Government. Or maybe more so. And I think that it is my responsibility to make that unlikely, so that when the situation does come, that the people in political positions are humane and more flexible in handling people and societal problems. I don't think that this is a groundless ~~or~~ fear, on the basis of what happened in Russia, for example.

Erik: That is getting back to what Steve said about PL (p209). If PL did exactly what they say they would do if they gained power, this really would not be a problem. But sometimes it is hard to believe that that is what would happen. There are people in all revolutionary movements who are authoritarian in their outlook to power rather than democratic, even though the ideology is very anti-authoritarian.

Mike McKinley: This has to do with what we said about process, when we talked about "process" in terms of means or in terms of ends. The way that you do what you are doing has a lot to do with your future actions. If you get into a situation where you are not worrying about the means, then bad things come out.

Erik: I think that one thing that all of this says is that the options which I posed at the beginning--counter-culture, reform, revolution--are false options; they are not mutually exclusive choices. Maybe the sort of thing that has to be thought about is organizing your own life and your own social environment; here and now, in a Utopian way without cutting yourself off from the political realities of the world you live in. That doesn't mean that you become totally involved in politics necessarily, and it doesn't mean that you politicize your own daily life in the sense of interacting with everyone in terms of power, ~~it~~ but it may mean trying to organize a political base, a political force which has the real capability of defending the counter-society as it develops.

Betsy: I went to a seminar at the Quaker Yearly Meeting called "Quaker Life Style in a Collapsing Civilization." One of the things discussed was that there is something about the Quaker life style, whatever that is, that has low visibility. It doesn't try to do too much

too fast. It seems to me that in the face of a repressive movement, that the people who are living least visibly, closest to the ground who ~~get along~~ can get along with the least, are the ones who are going to survive.

Erik: If you have low visibility that also means that your potential impact in terms of spreading and influencing ~~your~~ a new life style is also reduced.

Betsy: Yes, that's right. That's why the people who are most likely to survive are the people who are taking the smallest steps. The leaders are going to get picked off. It's dangerous to be a leader.

Erik: One of the things about most counter-institutions, except for the very political ones like the Black Panthers or PL, is that they don't have any feal leaders.

Betsy: Yes, they have heros, but not leaders.

Klaus: I would like to express a little bit my feelings. When I heard about Berkeley and had the chance to ~~go~~ there, I was glad to go to Berkeley because here started all the student revolutions. It was here that American students first joined to fight against American Imperialism, especially the Vietnam War. So we felt that we were not alone: even ~~Americans~~ some Americans felt that the Vietnam <sup>war</sup> was wrong and joined in the fight against it. And I also heard of organizaed movements like SDS and so on. It ~~had~~ this really Great Idea that finally Americans were getting away from all this just "doing your own thing", of earning their money to build their house. Finally they were going to see their life as a Political Life. Then I came over here, and the more I saw, the more I was disappointed. A Revolutionary in America means to hitch-hike and live in a Commune and sm~~ake~~ pot. That's Revolution in America, and I'm really a little bit disappointed. The question that I have is, is there still a chance that life for Americans could be more a political life than is happening right now? Could it be that even the majority of Americans see their selves as part of a society more than ~~themselves~~ just seeing life as a nice try to achieve as much as possible for themselves. There is still a chance, at least in a student community, that they will absorb some of this revolutionary ideas and have a more political life? I don't know.

David: I guess much of what we have been talking about today is another example of the general apolitical nature of the American student nature.

Erik: Historically most Americans have been incredibly apolitical in their view of this society. The majority of Americans have never seen this society in terms of an elite with power or in terms of classes or of any of the things which are standard in Europeans, among everybody-- Conservatives, liberals, revolutionaries--they all see ~~the~~ society and the world in these kinds of political power terms. Historically these conceptions have been very alien to American life. The dominant social image has been much more individualistic, in the sense that we saw politics as being off in one courner and that people could more or less ignore politics and "do their own thing", whether it be starting their own business and making a million dollars or going off to the

frontier and killing Indians or whathaveyou. It was always the rugged individualist, doing his own thing and competing against other rugged individualists. But now, there has developed very strongly, among students and among Blacks and part of the working class maybe, an awareness that power is a reality and that there are people who use it to do terrible, and sometimes not so terrible, things with it. There is emerging an awareness that Power is an important element of living in this country. But very few people have translated that new awareness into a life style, a political life style. Rather, they have said, "My God, this is really terrible. Nothing can be done. This is an impregnable, monolithic power structure that is really beyond my control. Nothing we can do can change it". So, out of the new political understanding has come a whole culture of nonpolitical action, although some people are turning to real political action.

Klaus: I would like to here the answer from one of you who doesn't understand me anyway, who feels completely different from Erik about this.

Betsy: I understand you, and I have heard you talk before about people being affective by getting involved in the political system, by infiltrating it. That is one of the most basic, central decisions that most college students in America have to make: are they going to work in the system or out of the system. Am I going to spend my time going around ringing door bells for MacCarthy, or not? Am I going to spend my time getting people I trust elected to run the country, or am I going to spend my time doing something else? I have chosen to do something else simply because I have found that for myself, I feel more effective working directly with people. I feel less effective when I am trying to get someone elected. I think that it is pretty difficult to avoid completely living a political life in this country right now. And that is partly because of the media; the media that was able to convey to you an image of Berkeley, no matter how oversimplified and distorted that might have been. It would be very difficult for me to drive through Oklahoma I suspect without being considered a hippy, because of the media. The media is what puts people so much on the defensive constantly just because of the way they live. And so, I of necessity have to live a political life because of the conditions of the country I live in. The fact that I am not working in a political organization as such is because I don't feel that that is where I fit best, but I do feel that I am part of the politics of the country.

Klaus: Another thing that I have found very frustrating here is that the few groups which try to organize themselves on a socialist level are split so much that they become really uneffective.

Erik: That is true in Europe too. That is a problem of the Left everywhere in the Western World.

Klaus: Yes, that is true. But another thing is that in Germany, at least, the students are able in the Universities to really have their influence felt and to change the laws of the university. We don't have anything like the Regents, so that makes it easier. The Faculty, students and assistants are the three powers in the University which make up the government of the university.

Betsy: The factionalization that Klaus is talking about is really striking, like when SDS split up into the Weathermen and Revolutionary Union #1 and Revolutionary Union #2 and the Progressive Labor Party and so on. It seems to be a lot of it from this whole syndrome of individuality. It is very difficult for a college trained American to be able to say, "Well, I disagree with some of what he is saying, but he seems to be working for something good, so I think that I will go along with him." It is incredibly important to us that we maintain at all times our individuality and that we not give an inch.

Erik: And what that means often is that although we may agree on fundamentals, I will decide to raise secondary issues to the level of fundamentals because that is the only way that I can establish my individuality. That is very much of a "power trip": you show your own power essentially in terms of how well you can break up a group.

Betsy: And how many people you can get on your side.

Erik: Of course, you don't see that as trying to break up the group, but that is what it comes to. You see it as mobilizing support for the Truth, which means Your Truth. I am certainly guilty of that. It is a problem that I have had in seminars sometimes, in terms of wanting to state a position and then demolish all other positions to establish the precedence of my views. I hope that I haven't done that so much in this seminar. That is the same kind of dynamic: wanting to establish yourself, your own autonomy, your own power. That is sort of what I meant before when I said that I didn't see much self-sacrifice in the counter-culture, and that I saw a lot of "putting myself first".

Betsy: It is really hard for kids who were brought up in Suburbia to cooperate.

Donley: We were brought up in participatory authoritarianism.

Betsy: I think that one of the reasons that I am apolitical now is that I am really tired of going to meetings. There were two times in college when there were real crises: one was when the blacks sat in in the admissions office and the other was over Cambodia. And I went to an amazing number of meetings. Swarthmore ~~was~~ is a Quaker school, and there was no violence, but there was a lot of talk. And everyone is articulate. And in these sessions of 700 students, there would be 700 articulate individual snobs who would insist on airing 700 different view points. That took a long time. People would always keep saying: "It is clear that..." or "What you have been overlooking is..." or "It is simply a matter of..." or "There are only three things that" and so on. Everyone would present very clear statements, and it went on for days. It wore me out, it really did.

Erik: One of the things that is happening now, which has to do with Klaus' question about people opting for a political life, and which is happening now in Berkeley in a new way for the first time, is the process of bringing politics down to the neighborhood level which is coming out of the Community Control of Police Campaign. Instead of having a meeting with 700 people, you go around your block and have a meeting on a Sunday afternoon. This is a new thing, and it may allow for an integration of a counter-cultural life style with politics in a way that wasn't

really possible when the only options <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ attending huge meetings with 700 people and endless frustration, or not really being involved at all politically. In my neighborhood now there have been block meetings every Sunday afternoon for several weeks, and it is a great opportunity not only to talk local politics, but to really get to know the other people who live around you. It's moving slowly, but maybe it is moving. Another issue involved with this concerns the question of defending the counter-culture from repression that we were talking about earlier. If politics is brought down to the neighborhood level in a real way, with those people meeting regularly and talking about these problems, and if those neighborhoods are themselves organized along principles of an alternative life style, then those neighborhoods could become the basis of support and sustenance and protection of the counter-culture itself. That kind of attack will surely come it seems to me, and perhaps this could provide a political base for defense.

Steve: Perhaps by the time the attack comes, there will be ~~such~~ so many counter-institutions that they can't be destroyed.

Mike McKinley: I also feel a frustration that was brought by Klaus that has to do with the difference between being political and not being political. Part of it has to do with what people say about living the life now that people should be living: to do that totally means to withdraw from the political arena, and that seems to have been the trend.

Erik: I would say that for me, at least, part of the life that I want to live is one that confronts the political realities that impinge on me, to fight things like the war in Vietnam and to think about how we can organize to make that more difficult. That is part of the way I want to live, to be concerned about those larger issues.

Mike McKinley: I agree with that totally.

Erik: But that means becoming involved, to a certain extent, in a "power trip" because you are fighting a structured Power.

Donley: I was beginning to feel that I had somewhat short-circuited the revolutionary side of this discussion, but then I thought that if I talked about revolution, I would have to do so hypothetically whereas I could talk about the counter-culture in terms of concrete things that were happening and I was doing. Anyway, I guess what I object to out of that whole PL thing is that the revolutionary aspects of it seem to short-circuit any means of good-living now. You mortgage the present for the future and for something that may be even less attainable than Utopia.

Mike McKinley: I hadn't finished my thought of a few interchanges ago. A lot of the frustration that people feel in young people when they get into some kind of political confrontation, is that there is a tendency for people to withdraw from the politics totally because an immediate change did not come, rather than trying to find different means of achieving a longer range political objective. Politics is really a constant life-time struggle, and people in this country are really more attuned to instant solutions. And what happens to people is that when they don't get the instant solution, when a group of students doesn't single-handedly overthrow the state of California by a strike, then they give up rather than seek other means.

Betsy: Vietnam marches are a good example of that.

Mike McKinley: But what a march is anyway is a kind of communion. Other kinds of political action are necessary to convert people. Most people on marches agree with each other generally. You cannot expect the Government to change its policies because you have a parade on Saturdays. What is important is that people do things in between the marches, but the trouble is that people didn't.

Erik: The counter-culture itself has a bit of the instant solution mentality about it: It is a long hard slog to change the whole of society, and no one knows if in fact it will work, but at least I can here and now, instantaneously, create a counter-institution, a good thing for myself.

Betsy: Well, "instantaneously" is a bit of an overstatement.

Erik: Yes, what I meant was that we know what to do and we can start getting results right away. And also, as soon as communes run into difficulties, they often break up rather than people sticking around and really trying to work out the problems.

Betsy: But maybe itx is not that important for them to work it out. They tried a commune and then decided to go on to something else. Freud said that maturity was the ability to delay gratification.

Chris: I think that we should make a distinction between the instantaneous solution in the Political realm that Mike was talking about and the instaneous solution of wanting enjoyment now. I don't think that you can describe what the people in the counter-culture are trying to do as instantaneous solutions to happiness in their own lives in the same sense that people who go on peace marches are trying to achieve instantaneous solutions to political problems. The counter-culture is not so much of a "solution" as just becoming involved in a process.

Erik: I guess that that is true. But the lack of a willingness to stick with a commune and to work through difficulties may be connected to the instantaneous solutions mentality. When people run into difficulties, not just in communes, they often feel that the difficulty itself invalidates the process, rather than being part of the process itself and as something which has to be overcome. That is the same sort of thing that happens in politics: people feel that difficulties invalidate the process of political action. There is sort of a low frustration level, frustration tolerance in a lot of Americans, maybe people in general. ~~Which~~ That might be called being spoiled.

Mike Mckinley: But it is also, as Betsy said, that it doesn't really make that much difference to people whether they work through problems or not. It is seen as a game, and when you find out that you can't win, you decide that you don't like that game, and so you look for another one.

Donley: That is really a prejudicial statement.

Mike: I am not saying that that is true for everybody, but it is very true for a lot of people. But if you are committed on a deeper pysbhol-ogical level to what you are doing, you won't stop doing it the moment

you run into difficulties.

Betsy: But people may be really experimenting. You don't have a commitment for the experiment to turn out right, but you do have a commitment to experimenting. If it fails, it fails. You say, "Ah, that experiment failed, but I am going to try another one."

Erik: But there isn't a commitment to really try to work through things to see if they will necessarily fail.

Betsy: That's right, if it is an experiment. It is like the difference between having a permanent relationship with someone and saying to each other that you will stick together and try to work out whatever difficulties might arise because you are committed to the relationship, and just saying, well, I think I love this person and I would like to try out a relationship as an experiment.

Erik: But don't you think that a commitment to experiment, in the sense of it being a commitment to not being committed to anything specifically, can end up being noncommitment. I think that that is rampant in what we are calling the counter-culture: a lack of any deep, positive commitment to anything.

Betsy: That is true, but I think that it is in part because mediocrity is rampant in the ~~swkzks~~ counter-culture.

Donley: But there can still be a real commitment to a way of life that is behind all of those things that you try, even if you can't articulate it. That is why I would be unwilling to attribute any failure in a commune to simply "I'm tired of this, let's try something else."

Erik: You're right, it doesn't have to be that.

Betsy: You could say that ~~blind~~ a commitment to a failing proposition come hell or high water is an unfortunate adherence to the Protestant ethic.

Erik: Blind perserverance is not what I am valuing. I do value people taking a task which they begin seriously and not just as something to do because you are bored. I value being able to tolerate the kinds of sacrifices in short-run ~~personak~~ gratifications that you may have to make to make something work, to make a relationship work between two people for example.

Betsy: the search for identity...

Erik: Murphy's meaning.

Betsy: Maybe this kind of dillentantism is a very sincere search for identity. It's a sophomore identity crisis that is extended into your whole life. The extended childhood of the American youth.

Klaus: I always had the feeling that all of these experiments and nice ideas are for people who did not have the chance in their childhood to be in the boy scouts or something. You know, all of this experimenting, going out on your own, that is like boys clubs or campfire girls or whatever.

Donley: I really have to object to you calling the series of going through many things in your life an expansion of childhood because that is a derogatory term.



Betsy: I called it that.

Donley: Well then, I object to you calling it that. It is an oversimplification.

Erik: Well, it isn't always that, and it often isn't. But I do think that there is an element of that and that there is also a certain blaise lack of passion in people. People are really tired; they are tired of society and they are also tired of trying to find something interesting in life.

Donley: And there is also often a lack of humanity in revolutionaries.

Erik: sure, I'm not holding them up as ideals. And there are also lots of conformists in the Counter-culture: people who have not opted for a freer life style, but people who have ~~zigzix~~ opted for a new set of ~~skz~~rigid norms.

Donley: Why don't we stop battering the Counter-Culture, and just say that there is a lot of conformity in the human race and a lot of dillettantism in the human race, and there is a lot of lack of passion in the human race. Let's stop trying to batter these poor people who are looking for something, whatever it is.

Mike McKinley: We are talking about all this as if everyone was making rational decisions. What I find in lots of people is just a total disorientation and alienation from any direction rather than a real searching, ~~axz~~ and all that they are doing is looking for some way to relieve the suffering before they die. When we were in high school, it was never a question of whether you would go to college or not if you were in the top 50%, but rather which college. It was only in my last year that I began to ask any questions about whether or not that made sense, and so on. But at least I had developed some discipline and something to fall back on. Now you have 16 year old kids who know that everything is fucked up and he doesn't have anything to hold him together and so he is totally freaked out. They are not Consciousness III; they may be Consciousness IV which is total Unconsciousness. There is a new generation gap between the people sitting right here and the 16 year olds.

Betsy: That relates to something we haven't really talked about: the whole youth orientation of the counter-culture. There is something that is shared by people under around 30 or so that people over 40 or so just don't share. They have just had different kinds of experiences, and that very much helps to define what the counter-culture is.

Erik: In some ways I think that that might be breaking down. I have somehow gotten the feeling of greater empathy and understanding among some older people than in the past for the whole range of the counter-culture. I don't know where I am getting that feeling. Maybe it is just living in Berkeley. I had this strange experience with a prison official who in a conversation with me suddenly said that he really felt that the only hope for mankind was China. He is a very straight guy, he feels American society is going to the dogs, he describes his thinking as being socialistic--not socialist--and he said that he really felt that China was the only country that was moving in the right direction.

It was absolutely astounding to me that he held that opinion. I am sure that he doesn't tell that to other officials at the prison or other colleagues, unless things are really different in those groups than I imagine. But he was willing to tell me that because he sensed that I was a student-type who would not dump on him ~~from saying~~ for saying that. I wonder how many people in positions of authority of various kinds might not hold views that are not so different from ours, only that their positions are very different, their responsibilities very different, their pressures very different. But many of their intuitions and feelings may not be so different from ours as we think they are.

addendum: Thoughts and Confessions of the political-Me.  
(see especially page 211)

I.

I was troubled during the discussion when people saw me as having a "political mind-set" instead of a "humanistic mind-set" or something like that. A political consciousness, a concern for political issues is certainly part of me, but it is only one dimension of me and my thoughts, and I am saddened that this is the person that has been most clearly communicated to others. The reasons why this has happened are not hard to find: I am interacting with most of the people in the seminar almost exclusively within the context of the seminar, and so they do not really know me in other situations. I conceived of the seminar as focusing critically on the questions of how we can go about working towards Utopia, how we can build a society more in tune with our ultimate values. In the first half of the seminar we were primarily concerned with those values and the image of a society that would embody them; now we are centering in more on the questions of how to get there. I felt that such questions necessarily involve crucial political problems. I assumed the role in the seminar as the individual who more or less tried to focus the discussion around what I felt were key issues, and so I put myself in the position of constantly raising "political" questions. When we talked about building counter-institutions, I asked, "What are you going to do when the police come to arrest you?" I posed the political problem in the building of the counter-culture. I could have asked psychological questions, like, "How will you work through problems of adjusting to the hang-ups of individuals in a commune?", or I could have asked organizational questions, "How will you distribute responsibilities within taxi-unlimited?" or I could have asked architectural questions, "How will you design the houses of a counter-village?", and so on. But I decided that the political questions, in this context, were the most important to raise (or at least for me to raise). I felt that, not because they are intrinsically of any ultimate value; I do not see politics as being "good". Rather, I brought up these issues because I feel that they are a real and immediate threat to the world we are trying to create and that we cannot insulate ourselves from that threat if we want to survive. In a sense I bring up politics not because I value politics, but because I value the nonpolitics of what we want to create: the brother/sisterhood, the co-operation, the love, the life of our aspirations; and I feel that those values are deeply threatened if we do not confront fully the political realities of our world. I may be wrong in that assesment. The threat may not be so great or so immanent. But I feel it is.

So, I have come off as Erik-the-Politico. Not only that, I have come off as Erik-the-radical-Marxist-Politico. I am not a Marxist, certainly not a mechanical old line Marxist, but I guess that it is reasonable to lable (if lables are necessary) my political thinking as "radical". It is radical because the values I would like to

see embodied in politics are radical-socialist-humanist values (see my Constitution in session V) and because I feel that there is a fundamental incompatibility between those values and the present structures of American Society. If I have sounded at times like a Marxist, it is because there is some overlap in language and because I find some elements of the contemporary Marxist's analysis of that incompatibility--particularly the concepts of class and the State--useful in understanding our predicament. But I do not share the Marxist view of man, and I do not share the Marxist-Leninist conception of what action may effectively change the direction of our society. I do not have their optimism about the prospects of Revolution in an advanced industrialized society, or the possibilities of that Revolution successfully realizing revolutionary ideals after it took power. But I think that most basically I am not a Marxist because at the gut level, in my inner awareness of the world I live in, I do not experience life in essentially political terms (or class terms). Love and beauty and joyousness; friendship and humor and laughter; sleeping and loving and dancing; theater and movies and literature; happiness and sadness and just living: all of these are central to my life and the reality of my world. But so is the despair and horror of the war in Vietnam; the ruthlessness of the oppression of poor people in this country and around the world; the incredible wealth and greed of the ruling class of the developed world; the misery and hopelessness of the lives of most human beings in the world. Those are part of my awareness of the world, and they are terribly agonizing for me. At times these things fall my consciousness and become a preoccupation; I almost feel overwhelmed with the bitterness of the brutality of this country, of some men against others. It is out of these feelings that my world view becomes highly political at times. But my world view is not at all limited to that, and I hope that my communications with my friends and my interactions in their lives contains more of the love and humor and play than the anger and despair and politics.

## II.

There is something in my intellectual interests which reflects some of the feelings that I have been trying to express. At the moment I am involved heavily in two major intellectual endeavors: this seminar on Utopia and Revolution, and a study on Prisons in California (which is combined with my work at San Quentin Prison). Both of these are very "Heavy" subjects, and raise, at least to me, enormous political issues. Both of them, particularly the work I am doing on Prisons, raise problems that I find very depressing at times. Last year, at Oxford University, I studied European history. The bulk of my work was done on medieval history, especially the Crusades, and English 17th century history, especially the life and times of Oliver Cromwell. I really totally relished that work. I enjoyed spending a great deal of time reading, particularly primary documents, and writing essays on the world of centuries past. And never, even when I was reading the chronicles of the ghastly Crusades, did the material depress me. I could read of the antics of the ruling class of 12th century England, and see their humanness, their folly, as well as their maliciousness and brutality. I could laugh at them. I could empathize with them. And I could read of the life

of a simple peasant, and feel the dilemmas of his existence, the limited horizons of his life, and empathize with him. And through it all was the pervasive sense that life goes on; that people live and love and die; that hope is always reborn and always trampled on and always reborn again. When I read of the past it is not burdened with the heavy moral judgement with which I read the present: I can laugh at William the Conqueror; I cannot laugh at Richard Nixon. Of course, I take sides when I study history: I root for the good guys (like Simon de Montfort, my hero of the 12th century) and hiss the Bad Guys (like Henry III). But there is no anger, no rage in my reflections on the past; that anger and rage is an important part of my feelings about the present. I think that if I wasn't concerned about trying to change the world, I would prefer to study the esoteric, the irrelevant, the distant part. I think that I would get more delight and sheer enjoyment studying Elizabethan England than studying Prisons in California, or ~~is~~ struggling with the philosophical and political questions of what is Utopia and how can we get there. Nevertheless, last year, when I was studying these delightful things, I felt somehow incomplete--perhaps a little guilty--about being so absorbed in the socially irrelevant, and so this year I am engulfed in the heavily relevant. Someday maybe I will find a happier balance.

One of the reasons why I feel that my political perspective may have been somewhat resented by some people in the seminar is that it really does constitute the imposition of this kind of heavy "anger and rage" into what might otherwise be an exploration of positive aspirations, hopes. There is a great deal of exhilaration among people involved in the range of things we are calling the "Counter-Culture", an exhilaration that comes from feeling that you are building something good and beautiful. That exhilaration is something that we want to hold on to because so much of life can be unexhilarating, despairing. And when I come in with my question: "What will you do when the cops come to arrest you?" what I am saying in effect is, "Your exhilaration is a fantasy in this crazy world of ours. Be more realistic: be angry, be depressed, confront the horrible political realities that are soon going to confront you whether you want them to or not." That question is really unfair. It is like asking, in a way, that a person despair at living because he is going to die eventually, instead of relishing the fantastic beauty of life because of its finitude or in spite of its finitude. Betsy and Steve's answer to my question, "well, I guess I will have to deal with that when the time comes," is a good one. It says, we must opt for life-processes now, even if death-processes threaten in the future. If we worry too much about those impending threats, then the present becomes co-opted by the future, and we die now instead of later. That does not mean, I think, that political issues are shut out of your mind, but rather that they do not become a central focus of activity and consciousness. That is a legitimate position, even if in some of the sessions I have been somewhat critical of it. But it is not the position which I feel comfortable with, at least not at the moment. I still feel that it is possible to significantly change the society as a whole, and that politics are an essential part of this. I must admit that I do not have the answers: I do not see what to do to really have that impact. But

as long as I feel that political action can somehow be effective in preventing things like Vietnam in the future, as long as I feel that it may be possible to radically transform this country, I will continue to try to come to some realization of what kind of action can accomplish that.

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compliments  
of Betsy

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and perhaps Taxi Unlimited



SESSION X:

Utopia via Reform

March 9, 1971

guest speaker: Fortney (Pete) Stark, President of Security National Bank, reknowned as a Left-wing Bank President in the Bay Area.

Erik: What I had in mind for tonight was that last week we spent the evening talking about, among other things, the ideas of what is commonly called the "counter-culture" as a route to Utopia, and the week before we had a visitor from the Progressive Labor Party who gave us the hard-line revolutionary image of how you go about constructing the kind of society that embodies the kinds of values we hold, and I think we shared more or less with him. I thought what would be good tonight would be to discuss a whole range of things that would fall under the word "reform", but by which I mean working "within the system" as a way of changing society towards a utopia. I figured-- maybe I'm wrong--but I figured that since you are a Bank President and you are also for things like ending the War in Vietnam immediately and the like, that of the three categories, you would probably be more or less a reformist. I didn't think that you could be a Bank President and a Revolutionary at the same time, and as a Bank President you are obviously working within the system. At any rate, the reason why I felt that it would be good to have you come to talk to us is that that image of how you can go about changing society-- through working within established structures and institutions--that is an image in which I think all of us are ~~dis~~ disillusioned, some of us extremely disillusioned and others only moderately disillusioned. So, we thought that it would be a good idea to bring somebody in from the outside who might have a little more faith in the possibility of change within the system, and could present some image or scenerio about how that could happen and how energies could be directed in that way. So, that is what you are laden with.

Pete Stark: I assume that we share a lot of the same ends, if not a lot of the same dissatisfactions with what is wrong now, and ~~that's what we want to talk about tonight~~ the correction of those ills is where we all want to go, with perhaps more or less degrees of impatient impatience. I have always been on the left-wing of the Coulter Vocational Preference Test, very into people, very much a product of a program--you know, Midwestern parents who were sort of college and a half, who told my brother and I to go to a good school, get married and live in the suburbs. In that background, I have seen my dissatisfactions grow, seen lots of things become questioned, and now here I am saying what I feel has to be changed. I am convinced that there will be a good deal of change. I wish that I was convinced exactly how. I sometimes get worried. I don't get so worried about ecological problems at this point--I have some kind of a faith of our ability to meet that kind of challenge, that kind of technological challenge, somehow more faith than I have in our ability to meet the challenge of how to keep ~~all~~ our heads all together. I don't think that we have put that much emphasis on where we are going.

As far as "the revolution" and "the system" goes, I think that the system, establishment structure, capitalism, free enterprise, that whole bag, is really a good kind of grid iron to play our game in. There is some useful things about money, as information systems. It's probably a super-good information network, with lots of quick feed-back, good response, ~~lots~~ broad scales in which people can find out if they like things better, all kinds of empirical data to measure that sort of thing.

David: Are you talking about capitalism or structures in general?

Peter No, just a structure. I could be socialism I suppose. What I mean is a structured system. My gut level feeling is that there is a new feeling among, and I hate to use the word, ~~Organization~~ the next "generation", wave of people that are going to come in to control of all institutions. If I have a generation, it is a very thin one. There are a lot of guys older than me and a hell of a lot younger, but I am a depression child and there are few of them. There are a ~~few~~ <sup>lot of</sup> old guys in control of institutions now who I don't think will change. And I guess that I feel that if they are not retired out that maybe the radicals that are pushing up from below will be frustrated and the frustration will take the shape of violence and bad things. On the other hand, maybe they'll just move in. I'm very positive on the prospects for that kind of change; I think that we are having it. I think that there is a revolution all around us. I would just hate to see a situation develop like in Greece, or even parts of Canada. That makes me very nervous. At the moment we have a neat, delicate balance: I think that the old guys are getting out; a lot of people are being radicalized by their children whether they know it or not; 60 or 70% of the people are now consciously telling Mr. Gallup or Mr. Roper, ~~that~~ I'm against the War. That doesn't excuse them for not having said that earlier, but it is a positive sign.

So, that is more or less where I am. Business is to me the thing I do. It is relatively remote from all of this. I do what I am doing to keep body and soul together. I have a certain power, a certain public visibility from being a Bank President. If you say something as a Bank President it is different than if you say it as a student or a guy who works at Pacific Telephone or something.

Betsy: Are you happy with what you are doing?

Pete: I'm doing a lot of things. I'm not content with everything I'm doing.

Betsy: What I meant was, do you wish you were doing what you are doing now better, or do you wish you were doing something else?

Pete: Both. Short of fantasy. I'd like to be Secretary of Health Education and Welfare. I'd like to think that I have some balls in getting ~~in~~ things done, and that is something which needs some shaking and getting something done. I like to be doing things, and if I am not, then I would be unhappy. I am discontented. I am going through all kinds of questioning wondering who I am. Changing my life style ~~and~~ doesn't seem too attractive to me because I don't have the kinds of ~~experiences~~

constraints of most businessmen. I've got it pretty good. ~~It~~  
But to answer your question, no, I'm not content. I'm not sure that  
I will know when I am ~~unhzz~~ happy, but I know when I am unhappy.

David: Do you think that it is possible that you as a Bank president  
could do much with your employees as far as creating a climate  
of consciousness expansion, or creating an environment in a business  
setting where they can be part of the decision-making process as far  
as salaries, as far as hours, and such things?

Pete: No. I guess that I am a horrid snob that way. I guess that I am  
patronizing with employees perhaps. Relative to them I must think  
that in many cases I am pretty hot stuff and I don't have a lot of  
patiences and a lot of involvement with them. They are doing, unfor-  
tunately, a lot of things that are pretty mundane. Banking is at the  
low end of the scale as far as the interest-level of businesses. It  
is a very plodding type business.

Betsy: What would a high-interest-level one be?

Pete: Oh, working for Arthur D. Little as a Consultant and running around  
the world, and working in the high technology area, or Rand, or  
certain sections of Wall Street. Then you would be getting into fairly  
creative sorts of things. I suppose advertising could be much more  
stimulating and challenging world than banking.

Erik: If the majority of the people in the United States decided that  
~~the majority of the~~ all of the banks in the United States should be  
nationalized and that Bank Presidents should be paid the same as the  
head teller in the bank, how would you react to that?

Pete: If that happens, I will be the guy running the bureau in Washing-  
ton, to make sure that it was properly enforced.

Erik: So, you would support such a thing.

Pete: I'm being facetious. It is just that I am competitive enough in  
a bureaucracy <sup>and</sup> ~~that~~ there is still going to be some kind of a way to  
measure who should lead and who should follow along behind. I  
probably wouldn't still be in it at that point. I would probably do  
something else like teach.

Erik: OK, let me put the question in slightly different terms. If the maj-  
ority of the people in the United States felt that incomes should be  
distributed in an egalitarian way, which would mean a very substantial  
reduction in your income, and other people in the Upper Middle Class.  
Would you support such a move? Would you think it was basically a  
goo thing or was it undermining the functioning of the system?

Pete: I don't know how to answer that. It is something which is diffi-  
cult for me to imagine. People have asked me if I would like to  
see a leveling off. Just the other day some business students asked  
why I didn't pay Vice-Presidents and tellers the same. I enjoy going  
to Hawaii, traveling, having my own airplane, and to the extent

that what you are saying means would I like to give that up, the answer is no, I wouldn't. Would I fight it? No, I wouldn't. I think that we are going to move towards that anyway. Here is an example of what I see is likely: I owned property in 1960 and a freeway came through it later and it became worth \$100,000 extra to me. The same freeway went to Oakland and they had to rip out houses and the like that a lot of those people lost a great deal. To me, a very radical change, which already exists in Denmark, would be to say that I do not have any right to make \$100,000 because my piece of land happens to be well situated next to a freeway any more than those people moved by the freeway should suffer any kind of loss. The loss should be compensated out of the community, and anything I make because of the freeway should go to the community. We may not do away with the right to private property, but we might really change our notions of what is private and what is public property. For the average businessman, that get's pretty revolutionary. Those kinds of changes are things that we will all see in our active lives. I don't see the day when Bank Presidents and tellers would be paid the same salaries, but I do see that level of change.

Erik: Do you see that kind of change coming through political parties moving slightly to the left and legislating that kind of change?

Pete: Yes. But also I suspect that we are at a level of materialism and technology and we may be right there, at the apex of the pyramid right now. From now on gains will be marginal. How many cars can you drive and cloths can you wear? So, I think that there will develop a willingness for people to change their priorities. I think we can abolish poverty in this country. I think that materialism will become less important, things are becoming less important because lots of people don't want to consume any more, and ideas are becoming more important. The differentiation of wealth will go away to some extent.

Erik: I don't think that the income distribution has noticeably changed in the past 30 years. The whole level has moved up all around, but the distribution has remained about the same I think.

Pete: I don't know about that; I think the distribution has changed, since the 30s. People have become urban. More people have had college education. Poverty is with us, but it is not as widespread.

Erik: Undoubtedly the whole economy has moved up, but I am not sure if there has been any significant flattening out of the distribution itself.

Pete: Those figures are always from the guys who want to make that case. I can make no case for the Agnew view of a conspiracy of the Weathermen, and SDS and the Berrigans and Angela Davis, but I also can't make a case for the conspiracy of the Eastern Prep School, Ivy league, Wall Street Establishment. I think that they are all accidents of people getting together on various issues, but I don't think that it is any kind of conscious conspiracy to husband all of this stuff in a box on Wall Street for a select few.

Mike Murphy: What is your view in terms of how we are battling in terms of the quality of life in this country? In spiritual, or whatever terms you would like to phrase it in. I am interested in how you see this ~~and~~ now and whether you see that by changing forms there is a chance of altering it.

Pete: I feel that it can be made better. What I am not sure is whether I am going to be involved in it, or whether I will just make a lot of noise and watch what the next wave is going to do and enjoy it. My parents are not going to understand it, the change in the style of life from a highly structured progression in which the ultimate goal is a house in the suburbs. This has been the "standard" American dream and that is really beginning to change. It was the dream from let's say 1920-1970 or so, and now it is really changing.

Mike Murphy: What I feel is extant in the country is a ~~pretty~~ <sup>really</sup> profound spiritual malaise, ~~and~~ I don't think that it has to be connected with churches. It is not spiritual in that sense. But I think that the eternal dream has been that as men have been freed from the burden of a 12 hour day, seven days a week, in an agricultural economy, and have moved into a situation where they had more leisure time, that they would be able to devote themselves to the classics, to the finer things in life, but what you see is that a lot of men go bowling and watch TV all the time. I wonder if you see a way of changing this?

Pete: Out of the bowling allies and into the libraries.

Murphy: Well, not just that particularly, but to make people really aware that there is more to life than that, there is more than a bowling ball and a TV set that can be of deep concern to them.

Pete: I hate to get hung up on generations, but the idea of reading the classics in my day was pretty much reserved for people who were either pretty fruty and intellectual or people who were going to good colleges. People who did this sort of thing outside of good colleges were called beatniks or Bohemians if you were doing this same sort of exercise in the 30s. I think that that is gone. I think that having a car and a television set and being able to bowl whenever you wanted to may have been the dream of lots of people, the hard-hats of suburbia who beat their way into those stucco boxes and now that ~~the~~ they are there, one, they are afraid that they will loose it and, two, they don't know where the hell they are. But that is changing.

Murphy: So, you see that we are in the middle of Change that is really irrevocable and inevitable, and in a Reichian sense, that there is a "change of consciousness" afoot, and that however long that is going to take, that is really going to happen within the existing ~~in~~ forms.

Pete: It is either a change, or I have been sucked into a fad like ~~zoot~~ zoot-suits which I was once when I was 17 and got out of when I was 19. I can't believe that this whole things is a fad.

Murphy: Would you see it as changing the forms, like of capitalism?

Pete: Yes, I really do. We might differentiate over how large a degree. But in your context and mine, even if I am a liberal banker, yes, wildly. I think we will see some big changes in priorities. We will devote, whatever it is in America that makes us go to the moon, we will devote that--whatever it is--to solving the problems of this world, the social problems rather than the technological problems. When that happens, I think it will pick up excitement.

Erik: But can it? Even if we no longer have a system of untrammelled free enterprise, it is still a system which basically requires businesses to make a profit. They can't function on a loss.

Pete: Go to visit the offices of the Rolling Stones in San Fransisco, see it and feel it; it works. They're making money.

Erik: Sure, counter-institutions of sorts can make money. Freak shops are making money all the time off of people. And drug pushers make a lot of money too. In the United States today, the production of automobiles plays a very crucial role. It is one of the pivotal industries in the economy in terms of things like employment and the like. How could the resource allocations be fundamentally changed, so that we weren't producing 10 million automobiles a year, without there being such a total dislocation of industry that those industries would go broke, and unemployment skyrocketing.

Pete: I hate to make it sound so simply, but it will happen when whoever, "whoever" is, changes their priorities, gets their head into gear and decides that that is the way it is going to be.

Erik: But they have to make money off of it as well. It is not only priorities. You have to change priorities and still make as big profits.

Pete: I don't know that we made any money going to the moon, for example.

Erik: The companies who made the component parts for the moon shot certainly did.

Pete: But they aren't the people who made the decision.

Erik: But those companies would not have made those components unless they were paid enough to make them at a real profit. And ultimately it was taxpayers, the American people, who provided the money to pay GE to make money off of going to the moon.

Pete: But who got that money out of you to pay for going to the moon? Why couldn't they have made a five-hundred mile an hour railroad car or something? All I am saying is that if people decide to get something done, they do it somehow.

Erik: But things like mass, low cost public housing that is really decent, how can you do that and still make the kind of profits that are made by producing cars and guns and moonships? You could do that by the Government artificially creating profits by continually borrowing from itself, but then you have super-inflation. You may be right. I am just stating this position because I feel that it needs critical answering. The position draws attention to what are called

"contradictions" in the system, if you want to use that language. That says that the reason why we are not reorienting our priorities is not that leadership in politics and business lack wisdom and insight but because they realize that certain kinds of changes of priorities will create problems which they cannot cope with, such as mass unemployment, such as high inflation, or both like we have now.

This is related to the question of Imperialism also. One view is that in an advanced, monopolistic, capitalist economy requires the domination of cheap sources of raw materials and potential markets abroad. This says that Imperialism is not an accident. It is not just that there are some wicked people who want to wage a wicked war in Vietnam, but that there is a real need to fight to protect American investments abroad and our sources of raw materials. To protect those interests, you have to raise the ante, you have to make it difficult for revolutionaries to threaten those sources of raw materials.

Pete: That is possible, but I am fairly convinced that it is not the case. I think that the whole thing which holds our policy together is the old China policy that we must Stop Communism at any Cost. The nuances have changed. It used to be the threat of International Communism. Now, of course, it is Nationalistic Communism. Although very recently Ky has put out bids for off-shore oil lands, I can't believe that we have been there since 1965 just so these idiots can go drill some oil.

Erik: That is not the argument anyway. But we might be in Vietnam because we have interests in tin in Bolivia and oil in Venezuela. If the US was not willing to intervene to prevent the national takeovers of American investments abroad, if we were unwilling to use coercion, which doesn't have to be like Vietnam, it can also be by supporting Juntas and coup d'etats, if we didn't use that kind of coercion around the world, don't you think that that would have a serious impact on the domestic economy in the United States?

Pete: No. That is what I would refer to as the Daddy Warbucks-Spiro Agnew-William Noland school of Economics. We have a productive machinery in this country that could fit into a completely free trade economic situation. I don't know that we need the kind of economic imperialism that we have now. I don't think that this has to be. There is a lot of protectionism that should really go: we are still making steel, and maybe we shouldn't; we are still tanning leather and we sure as hell shouldn't. A good free market would give us more opportunity than the present situation. I really do not think that running around and rattling the sword really helps anything here. That sort of view that we need that kind of thing is always a conspiracy theory that is really paranoid.

Erik: I don't think that you need a conspiracy to explain this, in the sense of a clique of people ever getting together and pulling all of the puppet strings. It has much more to do with the functioning of the economic system as a whole: if the supply of cheap raw materials like tin from Bolivia, were cut off, or their prices significantly raised, we would have serious problems of inflation beyond what we even have today. Or at least that is a possibility. (post session comment: the question of a "conspiracy" needs to be taken more seriously. There are many kinds of conspiracies, in the sense of the collusion

of people in power, and it is not necessary that people actually get together in a smokey room and make the Big Decisions. There can be what could be called a consensual-conspiracy, in which it is the general consensus that decision-makers make decisions in the interests of the profit of private business. Communism is feared because as a system, at least in its theory, it is radically opposed to that consensus. Politicians need large campaign funds to be elected, and the large donors to political parties wield considerable influence in the selection of candidates. This helps to cement the consensual-conspiracy, but it is never necessary to actually get all of the "conspirators" together in one place, because they already agree on the fundamental premises of policy-making (that agreement is the essence of the conspiracy itself). I don't like the word conspiracy at all, but the central point is that the system as such functions on the premise of maximizing profits, and decision-makers function on the premise of making the system function smoothly. If Imperialism helps that process--as I think it does--then the decision-makers support Imperialism, at least in its more subtle forms.

Pete: The point is that all of that is really so unimportant. It is like rubber. We don't need rubber any more. Technologically we are not dependent upon those raw materials now. As I said, I don't worry about our ability to survive technologically; I only worry about our ability to survive with ourselves, with our heads. I don't mean to say that we are omnipotent and can invent anything, but I don't see the vital dependency on such things as a source of iron ore. Japan is the best example. They have not had to go and imperialize anything. They have been able to develop just through technology really. Germany is another example maybe.

Erik: But they have had a Big Brother which has done that for them maybe.

Pete: They have a Big Brother which is screaming at them for dumping television sets on the market, and because of their textiles. I don't think that that kind of economic relationship is the real danger. I am more concerned with institutions and the people who are going to be in them and how those institutions are going to become Responsive to people, at all levels. There are some institutions that are going to become more responsive more quickly. If they don't, then I see that they are going to get burned down.

Erik: You see the problem as being "don't" rather than "can't". You don't feel that certain kinds of institutions require certain kinds of behavior to exist. It is not a question of people being malicious necessarily, or people just being stupid, but that the institution itself, to exist, is necessarily unresponsive.

post session comment: from the Marxist perspective, a good example of what I mean would be capitalism itself as a system or set of institutions: Capitalism, by definition, functions on the basis of profit, and profit, in the Marxian understanding, rests ultimately on exploitation in the sense that profit comes from paying workers for less than they produce. If this analysis is correct (and there certainly are problems in it), then it is intrinsically impossible for capitalism not to be exploitive. It is was, it would cease to be capitalism.



Pete: Yes, in a sense traditional forms require traditional behavior in order to exist as traditional forms, but that doesn't mean that they are always going to go on in that form. And if there is real resistance to change in the institution, and it really loses touch with its constituency, then it may either be abandoned and could just atrophy, or it may get burned down. Or they change and it will get a little burned and a little disappointment and it may emerge as a new institution. And out of this process the changes will come closer together and further from the present norms because we are getting more and more receptive.

Donley: I would like to go off on another tack for a moment. In the last few years there has been a lot of antagonism towards the Bank of America and towards banks in general because they invest their money in things that support the war and military procurement. Are their reform movements in banking that would move them away from this?

Pete: No. I talked with some students at Cal who wanted to see about radicalizing Banking, and my feeling was that Banking was so far beyond the pale that we might be able to create a new institution, but that banking itself is so traditional as a piece of business that it cannot really be changed too much. Banking is a clumsy social tool. Banking relies on its customers being programmed and steeped in a tradition for it to work. It depends upon a level of trust in paying debts back and being thrifty. If you move that into a more free form culture where those traditional values do not exist, then it just falls apart. But some of the skills and techniques of banking could be transferred to new institutions. The bank's minimal functions are really information transfer and those techniques could be used in a new kind of co-operative bank. I play with those ideas, but that is about as far as I can see them going.

Donley: Was the Savings and Loan Association idea a reform movement in banking or was it a new thing altogether?

Pete: The history of the Savings and Loan Associations is very interesting. They were founded in Philadelphia around 1800 and were really money co-operatives. They were societies designed to build homes. The members would meet and put money into the society and then take turns building their houses from the common resources. That was really a co-op thing. But since then it has grown into Big Prestigious organizations that are basically money-making institutions rather than co-ops, especially in California. But originally it was a very pure co-operative concept, that we all get together to help each other build a house because it was too big an undertaking for any one of us.

Mike Murphy: Would you hazard a Scenerio for the next 25 years in the United States? Giving the way ~~things~~ you wish things would go, your optimistic image of the future.

Pete: OK. In 25 years I see emerging some strange bedfellows, coalitions. People who work in factories with suburban waspish kids and things

like that. I see in 25 years, poverty eliminated in terms of some kind of guaranteed minimum income. Nixon talks about \$1900; I would think more in terms of about \$3000/year per person, plus good medical care and things like that. \$3000/year in terms of our present dollars, is enough to have a car and a decent apartment and to have some discretionary power of what you want to consume above the bare necessities. Health care and social services, the kinds of things people say are socialistic about Scandinavian countries, we will have worked out so that you won't have to consciously watch people suffering. There may still be people suffering in terms of psychological problems, but materialistic problems will ~~not~~ be solved, and we will certainly be into solving the other problems. We will still have some kind of capitalism. Probably in 25 years we will have gotten rid of any serious inheriting of large funds. The big foundations will probably escheat to the State. Tax reform will equalize incomes to a greater extent. I don't know if we will be all the way there by 25 years, but we will be close. Any way, it will be less important to redistribute material wealth by then because we won't have serious poverty.

David: Mike asked you earlier if you saw any connection between the spiritual situation and the forms. Take a bank situation: the teller has to follow a pretty regulated, structured patterns that are given him from above. Do you think that this kind of hierarchical arrangement in which one person is dependent upon another person for maintaining their position, can destroy creativity and the possibilities of a person getting into contact with himself, can destroy what could be the germ of a consciousness expansion?

Pete: No, I don't think so. I can't say that I have ever gotten very ~~heavily~~ heavily into that, but I can't say that every kind of imposed hierarchical structure is destructive or restrictive to expanding consciousness. We will learn how to deal with these problems more competently, how to deal with the problems of parents and children and so on. But there will always be structures with hierarchy. There will always be traffic cops.

Erik: Fay Stender, George Jackson's lawyer, has a law office which they have recently communalized, so that they all have the same basic salary, with a secretary getting the most pay because she has the most dependents, and they all share the real shit-work. The secretaries are involved in legal research work, and they may do more of the typing than the lawyers, but that is because the group decided that that was the best way to allocate the work responsibilities. They have abandoned a hierarchical basis of organizing the work in their law office, and the level of enthusiasm in the office has increased enormously. That is the kind of structure David was talking about.

David: Right. I think that it is easy for you, Pete, to talk about getting your head in shape because you have the potential of being creative, you have the ability to make a decision and say we are going to put a big peace sign on our new bank. It may be that someone at the bottom of the hierarchy believes in this just as strongly and

with as much conviction, but because they don't have the power of self-expression, they become apathetic.

Erik: It is like the way Starr King is run and the way most of the other seminaries are run, in terms of the real responsibility and participation of students in all of the processes at the school.

Pete: But in 25 years there is still going to be that difference. There will still be traditional schools, there will still be catalogues describing courses, and so on. I see room for both. I don't see in my world of banking that kind of change happening. I don't see myself in a Banking commune.

Erik: Do you see the \$3000/year--or \$5000 a year by 25 years from now because of inflation--do you see that as a State guaranteed income that everyone is given whether they work or not.

Pete: Right: everyone would make his own decision. You could be a \$250/month wino if you wanted to. You could save it and get rich on it I suppose.

Erik: And you do think that it is possible that the American economy could give every person in the United States that much money a year without super-inflation.

Pete: When I am King, or Secretary of Health Education and Welfare, I really see this as a kind of negative income tax, so it progressively becomes less significant as you earn more money. Otherwise the cost is simply too high. Some kind of delicate balance has to be worked out, but at some point if you are working for money, you start paying back into the system.

Erik: I am sure that your economics is more sophisticated than mine, but why don't you think that there wouldn't be phenomenal inflation from this? We have high inflation right now, without a guaranteed income. ~~anythingznsanz~~

Pete: We could do this just with what we are spending on the Vietnam war. At the moment, just with the saving from ending the war, we could initiate Nixon's plan, giving everyone \$1900, we could give rent subsidies to everyone in substandard housing, we could provide a couple of billion for job retraining, and 4 billion or so for education. And that is not as inflating a type expenditure as war.

comment: I think that Nixon's plan is \$1900 per family, not per individual member of the family. It is also not at all clear that war creates more inflation in these terms since the profits from war production go to people who are already fairly rich and not into consumer-consumption, but a guaranteed income would directly increase the demand for consumer goods on a mass scale which, at least in the short run, would necessarily be highly inflationary.

Erik: But if a consumer has \$2000 more a year to spend than he does now prices are going to go up unless the supply is increased at least as much as the demand.

Pete: But the same people who are making the guns and bombs now would be making those things.

Erik: You think that the economy can realistically reorient itself in that way? It is after all in the interests of the producers to produce military goods---they are high-profit goods, there are no guesses that have to be made about the probable market demand for the product, and the built-in obsolescence is fantastic so they have to keep producing year after year. It is to the advantage of the producers to increase military spending; not to the society as a whole of course.

Pete: It is really more advantageous to the producers also to produce things for domestic consumption, except maybe for the ecological problems of producing junk. We now create a national debt, inflation, by a war in Vietnam. If we built a building, a bridge, a hospital, there is still a national debt, but there is also a real national asset. That is what I am getting at. The second is regenerative instead of absolutely useless. We then have an asset that we can use. We can produce a machine instead of a gun, a machine which can produce goods for people, then we get some real benefit out of it.

post session comment: These issues are really at the very heart of the question of whether reform is possible or whether revolution is necessary for significant change, and I don't have the information to make a critical evaluation. If in fact it would be possible for the American economy to:

1. function effectively without control of cheap sources of raw materials abroad, i.e. to end all forms of economic imperialism abroad;
2. Give every American a guaranteed adequate income without generating catastrophic inflation;
3. reorient productive priorities from military production and waste (in such things as obsolescence and shoddy work) to socially useful production;
4. and do all of this while still maintaining sufficiently high profits for the corporate structures that they can continue functioning effectively;

if all of that is possible (and probably a few other points that I have not mentioned), then Pete Stark might be correct that American Capitalism can meet the challenge and cope with our problems if only the right reforms are instigated. But I think that there is serious difficulties in the premises to the conclusion (although I do not personally have the knowledge and understanding to clearly demonstrate their incorrectness or their validity): While American investments abroad may not be a large percentage of the total GNP, they may still be of crucial importance to the smooth running of the economy, and they may be an important source of profits. It is entirely possible that they provide a substantially larger proportion of the profits of large corporations than would be predicted by their proportion in the GNP as such. If this is so, American Capitalism may require economic

imperialism in order to survive. Secondly, there is no apparant reason why a gauranteed income of anything approaching \$3000/capita would not generate a phenomenal inflation. The demand created by such an income would be concentrated in mass produced consumer items, not in the large, technologically expensive items of military expenditures. And furthermore, labor costs for mass production would also increase substantially because people would not be willing to work in factories unless they were very well paid (since they would have an adequate income anyway). So inflation would seem to be likely. More arguments could be given. If these arguments are wrong, if the economy could more or less muddle through while making the transition of Pete Stark's 25year scenerio, and if that scenerio does not contain internal contradictions (as I have indicated it might), then his prognosis might be correct.

Klaus: I see in the history of America at least two periods when the intellectuals had the kind of optimism that you are talking about today: the period of the first world war and the period of the second world war. The issues that you raise have been issues in the past: for example, the question of whether it is right or not to earn money by buying and selling real estate without really working for it was a real issue at the turn of the century, or tax reform like the Single Tax was a real issues in the 80s and 90s of the last century. In all of these times there was the optimism that America has the power to meet all of these problems and will soon have the ability to solve all of them, like poverty. But all these optimisms didn't help a bit. You have still the same system: you can still make a lot of money without working and using other people to make money for oneself. It hasn't changed a bit. So I think something else besides just optimism in reform is necessary, other forms are necessary to change society. It must happen something else.

Pete: You say "must", and I would say that it "may", but I can't give you a scenerio of what that would be like. I can't see it any other place in the world. It is hard for me to conjure up a completely different, sort of Orwellian system, that is new and different, outside of getting a kind of ~~Scizantiffix~~ Science Fiction view of the future. But I don't see any pragmatic way of getting there. I just think that we have to mature, we have to get a changed set of goals. For some people that means new structures like in communes and synanon and the like, but I can't point to those and ~~say~~ say: it will be like that.

Klaus: But obviously things like the Loans & Savings Associations end up making profit for siggle persons. That is what happens with that approach. I don't see in this way anything really changing in a direction that brings more opportunities to more people; I see it only changing to bring more opportunity to a very few people. And these few people may even get fewer and fewer. History at least tells us that this way doesn't work too wellso there must have to be some kind of Revolution in order to change things radically.

Pete: Maybe, but I don't see it here, and I don't see it having worked

anywhere in a particular way. I can think of a lot of revolutions. Some have led to naught, and some have maybe accomplished some change and then returned to where it was before. The American Revolution, the French Revolution, Marxist Revolutions, I don't know.

Klaus: At least these revolutions changed the minds of the people more than this kind of Optimism ~~than~~ in reform.

Pete: But I don't know if these revolutions came up with anything better than we had in the first place. They may not be any worse, but I don't think that they are any better.

Erik: One of the problems with that is that there has not yet been a real revolution in a developed, industrialized country. Revolutions have so far occurred in conditions of relative non-industrialization. I don't think that it is reasonable to judge the prospects of revolution in the United States or Western Europe on the basis of the results of Revolutions in the past. I am not saying that it could happen or that it would come out differently, but the conditions are so different that you cannot really make that judgement.

Pete: But then you can't judge Optimism that way either, you can't put reform-Optimism before the court on the basis of its past performance. We are now Optimistic within a new frame of reference also. I think that change is going to be revolutionary, but it is going to be nonviolent, I think. How encompassing it will be, I don't know, whether it will be simply the ability to tolerate revolutionary bodies within the system or change in the structures themselves.

David: In our class we have been talking a lot about means and ends, and I am not sure if really our ends are the same as yours exactly. We have been talking about capitalism tonight a little, sometimes about whether it was a means to this utopian end and sometimes like our end was different from your end.

Pete: I don't think our ends are so dissimilar. I don't think that you can say that "Capitalism" is a better or a poorer means to an end. In America it is here, just like in Africa it isn't, and certainly in China it is not and never has been. I don't think that Capitalism would work any better in China than a collective type of situation would work in this country. Both could make a go of it, but I just don't see any point in trying to make a capitalist country out of China. It is there. It is the system that they have, and if ever I was asked to come into the China to make it a better place, I would opt for doing that within the context of their system. It is what they are used to, what they move with. I would work within that system rather than try to redesign it in a way that has no meaning to what is going on there.

David: That is where I disagree with you I think. Like, I really wanted to see the Frazier-Ali fight on TV, but I couldn't because the promoters realized they could make more money by showing it in closed-circuit theaters. Or today, I had to rent a U-Haul Van and the guy

renting it really tried to make a quick buck off of us. He was really more concerned about making a buck than he was about me. I always have that feeling when I take my car to a mechanic to get fixed. I don't like that, that there is never that basic trust, that you always figure that you are going to be screwed out of your money.

Erik: Different systems are not only the result of different values and patterns, but it creates different values and patterns in people.

Pete: Don't you think that suspicion of people's motives and trying to make what you can are just part of being people?

Erik: But those traits are really cultivated by the current structures in the United States. There is a real premium on screwing other people. There is a real premium on mistrust because you get screwed a lot. It is a very good survival mechanism not to trust a mechanic. The same is true for medical care. When I was in England for two years it was a real joy to have absolutely free medicine. The fact that here it is a cash relationship between you and a doctor, that you are buying his services and not that he is a healer who helps you, changes the whole relationship.

Pete: Somehow I want to say, I've heard all this before, but I don't want it to sound as crass and crummy as it sounds. It comes out in talks about the war or any kind of discussion of problems where people are looking for good solutions. The question always comes back to "will it change, can it change" when you are talking about any institution, and then the question is, "will it change fast enough", and people always say, look at what a horrid mess has resulted in the past when people tried to change things. I guess it is blind optimism; I'm not willing at this point to give up. I think that positive changes will come. It is a question how rapidly and how well, and I can't answer that. I guess my resistance to change comes in going too far because I am not sure what would happen, ~~sez~~

Erik: In your scenerio of ~~reform~~ change through reform, do you see the agents of change being basically political or organizational? Will it be the new generation working its way up through the myriad of hierarchies that we have in the society, or is it going to be new people elected to political positions and they will legislate these changes?

Pete: I think that it is going to be an accelerated combination of all of that.

Erik: Like a Congree full of Ron Dellums, for example.

Pete: Yeah, and a half a dozen black majors across the country, and young people radicalizing their parents creating a kind of upward mobility of radical ideas. At the same time the John Birchers aren't going to become any less active or less militant. There must be a crop of latent young fascists somewhere.

Betsy: Before you said that you have a private plane. Well, If I were running things, Pete, I don't think that you would have that plane,

and I think that you might have to wait your turn to go to Hawaii. This ties in to something else. It seems to me that if anybody is going to muddle through in the next 25 years people in the United States are going to have to learn to get along with less. It may even happen that the Gross National Product may go down, which would have cosmic implications for most people in the United States. A drop in the GNP is like the end of the world. It seems to me that what Erik was driving at about equalizing incomes ~~zzzzzz~~ would hit in many other more subtle ways. Like, if I were running things, no one would have two cars and cars would probably be completely zoned out of San Francisco and you would have to suffer the inconvenience of traveling with the peons on public transportation in order to get places. Some people, who enjoy the fruits of the present system, would have to give things up. That is a kind of change that is going to have to happen.

Pete: You have taken away some of my play things, but you haven't really threatened me very greatly, seriously.

Erik: But there are a lot of people that that would ~~ht~~ threaten pretty greatly.

Pete: I don't think so. As long as my head and my body were in good working order, I don't think that there are any things that you could ~~h~~ take away from me that would really threaten me, as long as I had alternative things to do.

Betsy: I guess what I was trying to pull together was some notion ~~of~~ that there is going to have to be a ~~sigzperzasiuz~~ lessening of very basic and pervasive kinds of materialism in all of us, and this is going to affect people's lives very deeply. This is necessary because of the notion of "trade-off", I think: because of the cost in Oakland Ghettos that it takes to support people with private planes and traveling around the world. Those kinds of things are going to have to be equalized, whether it comes through wage equalization or something else.

Pete: They will, they really will. It may not happen as fast as you would like, but it will happen a hell of a lot faster than most people expect. The problems are becoming apparent and I think the reforms will come. Taxes are one way to do this. Like there will be a \$100 tax on every five horse powers in a car above some kind of minimum. So you can make the choice whether you want to pay that tax to have air conditioning in your car or whether you want a sailboat. What will probably happen in fact is some kind of a compromise between allocating the resources necessary to solve the problems and letting people have the air conditioning in their cars. But actually, for ~~amok~~ a number of reasons, I don't think that these issues will be so important in the next generation. College educated people now feel much less pressure to get into the high paying jobs; there is much less urgency than there was. The really bright lawyers are now looking for jobs that are interesting, or they are insisting that they be allowed to do one day a week in public interest law or something. That is something new in the past five years. Ten years ago it was unheard of. The the image was to go to a good law school, Law Review,



a clerkship for a Supreme Court Judge, and then into a good law firm and on into a judgeship or into politics. Now good lawyers are going into OEO things or CRLA. They don't think in terms of moving up in a career in the same way. 25 years ago after WWII, guys worked feverously in college to finish quickly and get ahead in a career rut. Now that is all gone, and it's beautiful. That is a radical change in the lives of people.

Erik: Well, at least it is a radical change in the lives of some middle and upper middle class educated people.

Pete: But it is also a radical change in the lives of working class people; the economic strata of students has expanded tremendously and that has really changed things. It is not all that it ought to be, but the change is important. And that change has had an impact on the institutions, like Cal. I'm not sure that ~~Cal~~ Cal can digest all of the changes in its students; ~~but~~ it still has a lot of the Old Institution in it even though it has very different people in it. I am not sure that you can really radicalize the University.

Betsy: That is a real concern that I have with a lot of institutions. Like with the Pentagon: people may come and people may go, but the institution just goes on. It shapes the people that come into it. Decisions are made when no responsibility can be put. Institutions have a reality that is pretty scary.

Erik: Pete, you gave us your optimistic scenario, that people would come to realize the seriousness of our problems, that we would reorient our priorities, that the economy could handle this constructively, that political reform would enable this to happen. What is your pessimistic scenario?

Pete: I see the possibility in the next ten years or so that there could be real political repression, that liberal minded people like myself would have to keep quiet, that we could steadily move towards a kind of police state that would be a reaction to revolutionary activity, to a kind of urban guerrilla movement, a very shallow reaction to outcroppings of violence.

Erik: You would see that repression being a reaction to violence per se rather than a reaction to a political shift to the left.

Pete: It would be talked about as a reaction of a threat from the Left, but I think that it would be a response to violence in reality.

Erik: In Greece the coup d'etat was not a reaction to any particularly high levels of violence.

Pete: Well, there was enough violence/that people were willing to tolerate repression to maintain order. There wasn't as much violence in Greece as in the US; we are a very violent people.

What I see that might happen in the United States is that people would become completely paranoid and afraid of change so that they would do nothing until a real catastrophe occurred and then respond to a crisis impulsively, blindly. I see that groups which might

be disaffected, the intellegentsia, will become isolated. They will be able to live in communes, but will have no influence on the society. Policy will be made by a real sick kind of traditional "nobility" in America. The people will be divided and be afraid to do anything.

Erik: In that scenerio, you saw this shifting to a police state being a reaction to violence and unrest rather than being a reaction to the optimistic scenerio you presented before. One possibility is that a police state might occur because nonviolently, insidiously, these kinds of changes would begin to threaten established positions of power and privilege. The threat would not have to be violent for a police state to occur.

Betsy: Remember last week you asked us "what would we do when the repression comes?" Well, this week the FCC past a ruling censoring songs with drug lyrics. And I would like to announce that the Repression is here, and that whatever we are doing now is what we are going to do "when the repression comes": talking about it. There is a certain pathetic absurdity about the kind of reaction that is happening now. It has an odd, scary kind of logic. I don't think that the action-reaction model is really ~~xxxxxxx~~ what is happening; the reaction really has its own dynamic.

Mike McKinley: In Greece I think that the take-over occurred because a left-wing government was about to take <sup>by elections</sup> power. That is the reason for most coups that we support in Latin America, that there is a possibility that through an election a socialist government will come into power. It is the same reason that we intervned in Vietnam when we realized that Ho Chi Mihn would have won the elections in 1956. Also, about the question of violence in America: violence here is nothing compared to Latin America. We scream about four people getting killed at Kent State, but in Mexico in 1968 there were several hundred students killed, shot down by the Mexican army, and in Colombia there were thousands of people killed over a period of a few years, mainly by government raids. I don't think that the police state will be primarily a reaction to violence. I think that it will come from the fear of the people in power of loosing their power. I think it will be closer to the kind of thing that you find in the Junta in Greece.

Pete: I agree that there is that fear, but violence escalates it, and makes it easier to gain support. They masquerade their real fears by talking about violence.

Erik: In the early 1950s in the MacCarthy witch-hunts, there wasn't any real violence. And the whole country sat back and was willing to have a wholesale witch-hunt of liberals, let alone real @ommunists. It was only when he started attacking the military that there was a sufficient reaction to stop the hearings. It was only then that the "establishment" itself felt threatened by the investigations.

Pete: I don't believe that it was because MacCarthy attacked the military that he was stopped. If he had started on the military earlier rather than on the state department, then he would have been stopped when he got to the ~~stat~~ state department. He was stopped because it became clear that he was totally irresponsible.

Erik: That's right. But if he hadn't been so ~~zazazky~~ crazy, so paranoid, if he had been more like Nixon--a cooler, more level headed red-baiter--then he would not have been stopped. Nixon after all had been conducting his own witch-hunt before McCarthy began. If Nixon had been running the show, it probably would have gone on much longer. I would like to share your Optimistic scenerio, that we can make real social changes through reform, because it is the scenerio that offers the most peaceful kind of change with the least dislocation and disruption. It is the nicest scenerio in a way. But I am afraid that a MacCarthy type reaction is as likely ~~as~~ from a nonviolent threat from the Left as from a violent threat. Anyway, even if the main body of the left would be nonviolent, there would be plenty of room for agents provocateurs to create enough terrorist violence to "justify" repression.

Pete: Don't you think that even though the current MacCarthy is Spiro Agnew, that the country has matured, that we are generally more liberal than in 1950, that the country as a whole puts less stock in Spiro Agnew? Their approaches are remarkably similar, but I think that as a whole people take Agnew less seriously. They have gotten used to that kind of political rhetoric that appeals to base fears.

Erik: But don't you think that it would be possible to drum up a "Communist Scare"? Don't you think that that kind of McCarthy hysteria could be generated again?

Pete: I think that there could be a "Weatherman" scare or something like that, but not a "communist" scare on the James Bond image. No. I think that most people would see through that.

Betsy: One thing that scares me is that ~~there is a reality of fear that exists in~~ the United States and all that it stands for is still a strong reality for lots of people. The motto of West Point is "Duty, Honor, Country", and the Boy Scout oath says "On my honor I will do my Duty to God and My Country..." I think that there is in the hearts and minds of many of our Men in Uniform the feeling that the country is really going to the Dogs, and they are the Only Ones who can really do something about it. Anything that those guys see as a radical threat to the American that they want to live in, that they want to fight for and protect, they see as a threat to themselves in their own minds. Even though I can say, "look you guys, I am not a threat, we can live together", they don't have to listen and they won't believe me. It is a question of a very different mind-set and a different idea of what kind of a society we want to live in, and they see my mind-set as a threat to their ideas about society.

Erik: And those soldiers were willing to shoot students at Kent State and Jackson when the students didn't pose any real threat to the system. I think that that does show what they would be willing to do, that

they would be willing to follow orders to set up an overt police state, if it ever came to pass that the left did pose a threat to the power structure.

Pete: I guess that things could go that way. But I think that if we put the kind of energy into dealing with these problems that we have put into going to the moon, that we can handle them. There is the mentality around that if you won't do it my way then you won't do it at all. It is like Herman Kahn's image of building a Doomsday Machine, which we could do, that would destroy the world automatically if we were ever attacked. I guess I am just assuming that that kind of mentality won't win out.

Erik: What sorts of actions do you see as making the difference between your Optimistic and your Pessimistic Scenarios? Is it whether or not there are Black Rebellions in the ghetto which will scare people?

Pete: No, I think that somehow it has to do with communication. If the people who are stretching their concepts of the world, who have an idea of how to change things, fail to communicate that, if they become isolated, then I think that real brakes can be put on change. And if that happens, then the shooting may start. It is important that those people do not cop out and isolate themselves from dialogue with middle America. I would much rather see people involved in the Community Control of Police issue where they are talking with the people of Berkeley and communicating their Alternative to them, than to have those people isolating themselves in communes not speaking to anyone else. That is disenfranchising yourself, making yourself powerless. If people do become involved directly in politics and work towards a real dialogue and communications of their ideas, then I think that change will occur and move in the right direction.

Erik: Well, if all of your premises are right, and your analysis of the capability of ~~American~~ the American capitalist economy to handle all of this is right, and your view of the power structure adaptability and openness is right, then this is a very nice, optimistic scenario. But I am not sure if the assumptions are in fact right.

(due to a miserable recording on the tape recorder of the second half of this session, it has been considerably shortened and a number of unintelligible sections have been completely eliminated.)