

## CHAPTER 6: THE (ANTI-)POLITICS OF AUTONOMY

Almost without exception, revolutionary social movements in the twentieth century have sought to conquer national political power -- either to take over nation-states through elections or overthrow them through violence. The goal of autonomous movements is to transcend nation-states, not capture them. Since autonomists are singularly uninterested in what is normally regarded as politics (campaigns, votes, fundraising, party formation, etc.), is it possible to speak of the politics of autonomy? An affirmative answer rests upon a redefinition of politics, one that considers civil Ludditism and confrontational demonstrations to be forms of political action. In this chapter, I compare autonomous (anti-) politics with these those of the Greens and of the Left. In so doing, I hope to demarcate the boundaries of autonomous movements and speculate on their possible applicability to other contexts. As will become clear in the course of my discussion, one of the principal weaknesses of contemporary political movements has been their tendency to adopt ready-made theories from previous waves of activism. In order to mitigate such dogmatic behavior in future autonomous movements, I develop a detailed critique of the theories of Antonio Negri, the Italian autonomist whose notions of revolutionary strategy vary widely from those I understand as most effective and relevant. In contrast to Negri's call to adopt the cyborg as a model of action, I propose a rationality of the heart and a reconsideration of the role of spontaneity and militance.

Unlike Social Democracy and Leninism, the two main currents of the twentieth century Left, the Autonomen are relatively unencumbered with rigid ideologies. The absence of any central organization (or even primary organizations) helps keep theory and practice in continual interplay. Indeed, actions speak for most Autonomen, not words, and the sheer volume of decentralized happenings generated by small groups acting on their own initiative prohibits systematic understanding of the totality of the movement, a first step in the dismantling of any system. No single organization can control the directions of actions undertaken from the grassroots. Although the Autonomen have no unified ideology and there has never been an Autonomen manifesto, their statements make it clear they fight "not for ideologies, not for the proletariat, not for the people" but (in much the same sense as feminists first put it) for a "politics of the first person." They want self-determination and "the abolition of politics," not leadership by a party. They want to destroy the existing social system because they see it as the cause of "inhumanity, exploitation and daily monotony."<sup>1</sup>

No doubt the Autonomen are difficult to define. Neither a party nor a movement, their diffuse status frustrates those who seek a quick and easy definition for them. They appear as the "black block" at demonstrations, in "autonomous assemblies" that are regionally organized or oriented around specific campaigns, but they have no fixed organizations or spokespersons. In an age of sound bites and instant coffee consciousness, the propensity for quick fixes on fragmentary factoids often leads the media to use (erroneously) the term "anarchist" to refer to them. Their political terrain lies somewhere between that of the Greens and the RAF, somewhere between parliamentary participation and guerrilla struggle. For the **Taz**, they were the "residue of radicalism" in the early 1980s.<sup>2</sup> In 1986, Hamburg's police chief described the Autonomen as that part of the post-1968 New Left which refused to accept the discipline of Marxist-Leninist cadre parties. "Their development was accelerated by the new strength of the ecology movement...They stand up for spontaneity, self-organization and autonomy." He also discussed their refusal to accept leaders and their lack of coherent theory. At the beginning of the 1990s, a sociologist referred to

them as "a mixed product of different movements, like Spontis and Metropolitan Indians, neighborhood and prisoner solidarity initiatives, squatters, the anti-nuclear movement and continually appearing, marginalized and strongly apolitical youth."<sup>3</sup> Another definition focused on their tactics: "Autonomen is not more than a catch-all category; it stands for small, well-organized circles of goal-oriented political activists as well as for the highly diffuse ideological spectrum of militant protests, that refers, above all, to the forms of the protests (including youthful subcultures). Autonomen propagate -- with and against non-violent activists -- the free choice of their forms of resistance, under the difficult to guarantee condition, that endangering human life must be excluded."<sup>4</sup>

The Autonomen themselves have been none too eager to define precisely who they are. For **Radikal**, itself one of their more important zines, "Autonomy was a notion that overnight gave our revolt a name...Previously we understood ourselves as anarchists, spontis, communists or had diffuse, individual conceptions of living freely. Then we were all Autonomen."<sup>5</sup> In 1982-3, when various new social movements had passed high points (squatters, anti-nuclear and peace movements), a group of Autonomen in Hamburg organized a series of national meetings for autonomists to discuss their future. In their preparatory materials, one of the clearest statements from the movement can be found:

The aspiration for autonomy is above all the struggle against political and moral alienation from life and work -- against the functionalization of outside interests, against the internalization of the morals of our foes...This aspiration is concretized when houses are squatted to live humanely or not to have to pay high rents, when workers call in sick in order to party because they can't take the alienation at work, when unemployed people plunder supermarkets...because they don't agree with the absurd demands of unions for more jobs that only integrate people into oppression and exploitation. Everywhere that people begin to sabotage, to change, the political, moral and technical structures of domination is a step toward a self-determined life.<sup>6</sup>

In early 1995, when over 2000 activists gathered in Berlin to discuss the "autonomous movement in the 21st century," one of their principal themes was the concept of autonomy. Although there were numerous attempts to define it, no one even attempted to develop a rigid definition of autonomous politics that could be used with precision to explain it to the world. Apparently the indeterminacy of the Autonomen is one of their defining features, a facet of their mysterious anonymity that permits a wide range of fact and opinion to coexist alongside a diversity of action. Are they a determinate negation of consumer society or simply its militant outsiders? Are they the long-term form of anti-systemic movements in the core of the world system? Or is their civil Ludditism due to become an obscure historical footnote like the original machine-breakers of England? I leave it to the reader to answer these questions.

Hundreds (sometimes thousands) of people participate in analyzing and directing autonomous movements independently of existing parties. Their theory is not that of isolated activist-intellectuals searching for academic clarity. Rather they focus on specific problems and insist on understanding the rapidly changing character of contemporary society and its shifting constellation of power. The names of some of their more internally relevant statements reveal the decentralized and pragmatic character of their theoretical work: the Lupus paper against the

ritualization of violence, the Rote Flora's (a squatted center in Hamburg) collective critique of alcohol, and the Heinz-Schenk debate, an orthodox Marxist critique of the Autonomen.<sup>7</sup> At a 1995 Berlin conference on "autonomous politics in the 21st century," preparatory materials included proposals for workshops on the relationship between punk and critical theory (especially Adorno and Horkheimer), a reexamination of the role of violence, man against patriarchy, the politics of drugs, and art and activism.

The most obvious problem associated with such an informal relationship of practice and theory, action and ideas, is that the movement might be unable to provide itself with direction and coherence since so many divergent viewpoints exist. Resistance to centralized leadership and to uniform theory are often regarded as weaknesses. Many people in the autonomous scene think of the movement's decentralization as a blessing, however, making it more difficult for police to infiltrate and easier for grassroots initiatives to develop. As the magazine **Radikal** put it: "The Autonomen movement is not a party and it consists of a minimum of organization if we make an historical comparison. This fact can be an advantage as the jailers search for structures and leaders which are not to be found." The magazine had asked local groups to send them brief descriptions of activism in their areas, and they prefaced the responses from 23 German cities by stating that their goal in reprinting the material was not only to inform each other but to help people think about organization at the regional and national levels. (Evidently, a dose of German pride more often than not prevents such discussions from considering international dimensions.)

Like **Radikal**, many collectives communicate with each other through magazines, newspapers and brochures distributed in more than 50 cities by a network of informally linked information shops. Most "info-shops" have archives dealing with local struggles, and on various days of the week, they are reserved solely for women or gays. Collectives working on single issues often hold their meetings at these shops, providing connections between groups which might otherwise not meet each other. Many shops have copy machines, making the purchase of expensive books or magazines superfluous when only a few pages are needed. Information is not treated as a commodity to be bought and sold, nor is it passively scanned by spectators looking in from the outside. On the contrary, hundreds of pamphlets, position papers, articles, magazines and newspapers are created by the users of these shops, making them less consumers in a store than part of a network within a movement. In this context, the info-shops organically connect ideas and action. A variety of other forms of alternative media also functions to integrate the movement's diverse and disconnected base. Autofocus video collective in Berlin has also helped to overcome the fragmentation of the movement by collecting videos from Germany and from insurgent movements around the world. The relatively cheap costs associated with home video production allows grassroots groups to produce their own videos. Autofocus's collection can be rented for a night, copied or reserved for public events.

International associations have linked info-shops in Germany, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland, and communication at the grassroots has also been facilitated through a variety of conferences like those in Venice in June 1992, when hundreds of people gathered to "build a Europe of social movements, not elites," **Class War's** (a British anarchist organization) international congresses, those at the Hafenstrasse in Hamburg, or the Easter 1995 gathering in Berlin.

In many cities, squatted and legally purchased movement centers exist to provide further

space for movement networks to expand. One of the largest of the latter is Mehringhof in Berlin. A huge building and courtyard provide office space for activist groups, meeting rooms, a women's center, a theater, a bookstore/cafe, occasional dance parties and a bar. The Hafenstrasse has a people's kitchen and a bar with dancing every couple of weeks, and a group of Turkish activists also had a cafe there. Hamburg's *Die Fabrik*, Copenhagen's *Ungdomshuis* (Youth House) and Amsterdam's Palace Revolt (a squatted bar/restaurant) are other centers where public space for activist groups exists. Like the women's centers of the 1970s, these meeting places are an alternative form of organization that provides more flexibility and decentralized networking than traditionally centralized organizations as well as facilitating the movement's survival during periods of state repression.<sup>8</sup>

The horizontal -- even circular -- collective structure of the Autonomen facilitates discussions and actions whose sources are numerous and diverse and whose approval depends upon the agreement of others, not directives from above. The structure of autonomous movements facilitates individual decision-making and political development. With initiative coming from many sources, collectives are able to act immediately and decisively without waiting for a central committee to deliberate and approve ideas. The diagram below approximates such a movement structure.

## STRUCTURE OF AUTONOMOUS MOVEMENTS

Source: Adapted from Hanspeter Kriesi, *Die Zürcher Bewegung: Bilder, Interaktionen, Zusammenhänge* (Campus Verlag, 1984) p. 213.

Within the activist core can be found crystallization points whose variety is indicated by different symbols: collectives, action-committees, coalitions, squatted houses, activist communes, and in cases where their sectarian tendencies are under control, even formally organized groups with ideological underpinnings. Together with unaffiliated individuals, they constitute the base from which actions and programmatic impetus are initiated. They rely on the next level, the scene, for their everyday political/cultural sustenance. Alternative institutions with no explicit political content are part of the scene as are cafes, music clubs, street hangouts, and parks. Active sympathizers include people who are caught up in movement mobilizations and occasional meetings. Passive sympathizers refer to financial supporters, readers of the alternative press,

professors who discuss ideas and actions in their seminars and classes, workers who contribute ideas to colleagues, etc. The fluid character of these movements mean that people often move between levels or even participate simultaneously at many different points.

Theoretical statements aimed at generalized explanations are not one of the strengths of autonomous movements, but increasingly, activists have sophisticated views of the history of radical politics, international economics, patriarchal forms of sexuality and gender relations, and racism and xenophobia. Though generally hostile to "scientific" analysis (i.e. analysis which dispassionately discusses human relationships as though they are things), theoretical issues are debated in informal papers which get passed on and xeroxed by collectives in different cities. The variety of views within the movement makes for lively debates and continual discussions that, since there is no need to fixate on developing a correct line, are more often oriented to action than ideology. Since no one is required to adopt certain viewpoints or read particular texts, individual consciousness is deeper and carries none of the standardization so common among members of cadre groups.

The movement's norms and values help transcend some of the worst aspects of a dogmatic reading of history. The nearly universal practice of signing articles in movement publications with pseudonyms emphasized ideas not personalities. Readers are thereby compelled to consider arguments on their own merit rather than for the prominence or ideological allegiance of their author. Frozen positions based on personal feuds or rigidly "anarchist" or "anti-imperialist" positions are subverted since it is often unclear who or what the affiliation of an author is. German activists make a concerted effort to prevent the emergence of individual leaders ("*promis*" or prominent people). At demonstrations, speakers are either masked or sit inside the sound truck, out of public view. While this is rather strange, since one hears a voice that cannot be matched to a face, individuals can not be identified by the police or right-wingers nor can "leaders" be made into celebrities by the media. When the media spotlight focuses on an individual, collectivity and democratic organization are obscured, sometimes even destroyed. Such attempts to forestall the creation of individual leaders reveal how much the movement stands against not only the established system of wealth and power but also opposes any sort of differential status.

For many people, the radicals' rejection of traditional ideology implies the elevation of pragmatic values and the isolation of activism from theory. Neither of these appears to be necessary consequences of autonomist politics. Theory is contained within the actions of autonomists rather than being congealed in rigid ideologies that precede action. Preparations for actions, the actions themselves and the inevitable (and often prolonged) soul-searching afterwards involve intensive theoretical reflection. Flexibility of action means the Autonomen are capable of lightning swift responses to public events. When neo-Nazi gangs go on a rampage and the police are slow to respond, the Autonomen have been able to mobilize hundreds of people within a few minutes, providing immediate assistance to foreigners. The ability to contest skillfully both government policy and incipient right-wing violence as material conditions change is a great strength of the Autonomen. After German reunification, the movement redirected its energies to confront neo-Nazi groups. Nazi demonstrations allowed by the police were closed down by Autonomen, and at least four different anti-fascist publications provided quality exposes of the New Right, helping skillfully direct the movement's energies.

An indication of the participatory framework for action was the wave of more than 130

squats in the old eastern part of Berlin after the fall of the wall. Despite being defeated after the mammoth battle of Mainzerstrasse and generally rebuffed by a public anxiously awaiting the advent of consumer society -- not the radical politics of the counterculture -- the self-directed action of hundreds of people (thousands if we include the concomitant student strike at the universities as well as the solidarity demonstrations) provides a model for political organization and action. In Italy, autonomous movements were inseparable from the working class. No doubt the relative quiescence of German workers is due, at least in part, to their materially more prosperous and politically more stable conditions of existence relative to their Italian counterparts.

Orthodox Marxists and anarchists alike have criticized autonomous decision-making as "spontaneous," lacking organizational direction and the "conscious element."<sup>9</sup> In the dialectical relationship between movements and organizations, the question of participation is vital. Organizations that impose impersonal structures onto collective movements can short-circuit popular involvement, replacing movements with sects whose preoccupation is theoretical correctness (a contemporary version of the medieval problem of how many angels could dance on the head of a pin). Beginning with the New Left, contemporary social movements have provided astonishing evidence of the spontaneous creation of participatory forms. In the U.S., four million students and half a million faculty organized a coordinated strike in May 1970 in response to the invasion of Cambodia and repression of the Black Panther Party with no central organization bringing them together.<sup>10</sup> The next year, a researcher visited 150 communes and reported that none used majority votes to make contested decisions. All used consensus.<sup>11</sup> When not intruded upon by traditional Left ideologies, organizations like SDS practiced consensual decision-making that they reinvented from their own needs rather than inheriting from the Old Left or gleaning from a reading of anarchism.<sup>12</sup> I do not wish to suggest that their internal process was exemplary, merely that it was developed by intuition. Nor do I think that movements should fetishize intuition as their source of political insight. Looking back at the history of the New Left and radical social movements since 1968, I for one cannot help but be amazed at how distorted political conceptions have become when political ideologies are grabbed wholesale and applied by activists. Like many autonomists, I am inspired by a variety of thinkers from previous waves of action and find their insights extraordinarily important to my own development.<sup>13</sup> Unlike many people I have encountered in what is called the Left, however, I do not seek to construct a set of categories that serve as a prism for my friendships and alliances, preferring instead to form these on the basis of feeling and action, not ideological purity.

Action defines the autonomous discourse, not the sterile contemplation of its possibilities or categorization of its past occurrences. Since the mass media focus on the movement's militant tactics, not its unobserved internal dynamics, the public's sole definition of autonomous politics is arrived at through deeds. This is not a trivial point. As we saw in chapter 3, militant opposition to nuclear power and the resolve of squatters to seize and defend houses were crucibles for the galvanization of the Autonomen. Their ability to provide a confrontational cutting edge to larger movements helped radicalize thousands of people and was crucial to stopping the Wackersdorf nuclear reprocessing plant (and Germany's possession of bomb-grade plutonium).

Confrontational politics invigorated Germany's political debates, compelled the established parties to change policies and programs, and deepened the commitment of many people to fundamental social transformation. Militant resistance to local instances of the system's

encroachment upon previously autonomous dimensions of life propelled many people into resistance to the system as a whole. Within broad campaigns, the role of the Autonomen has often been to extend the critique enunciated by single-issue initiatives. In their 1989 annual report, the German federal police recognized this crucial role within movements against nuclear power and genetic engineering: "As soon as protest movements develop, above all Autonomen and other 'New Leftists' press for 'direct resistance' against 'the system.'" By raising the level of discourse from specific institutions to the system as a whole, a radical critique of the entire system of capitalist patriarchy gets wide discussion and is sometimes transmitted to new sectors of the population.

The Autonomen seek to live according to a new set of norms and values within which everyday life and all of civil society can be transformed. Beginning with overt political beliefs, they seek to change isolated individuals into members of collectives within which egalitarian relationships can be created, relationships which subvert the traditional parent-child, husband-wife, couples-singles patterns that characterize patriarchal lifestyles. In place of the hierarchies of traditional political relationships (order-givers/order-takers, leaders/followers, media stars/media consumers), they strive for political interactions in which these roles are subverted. Their collective forms negate atomization; their activism transforms the passivity of consumeristic spectacle; their daily lives include a variety of people (immigrants, gays, lesbians, "others") -- indeed they themselves are regarded as "other" by most Germans -- thereby negating the reification and standardization of mass society; their self-determination negates all too prevalent alienation from products of work. They seek a context that encourages everyone to think and act according to their abilities and inclinations. Of course, no self-respecting autonomist would claim to speak for the movement or to be its leader, but most people are part of groups of some sort, and horizontal linkage between collectives creates councils capable of coordinating local actions and integrating a variety of constituencies into ever-widening circles of thought and action.

### **AUTONOMY AND THE GREENS**

Many Greens sympathize with the feminism and egalitarianism of such an autonomous vision, but others do not--nor are they required to in order to be part of a political party formally constituted to participate in government. Like all parliamentary groups, the Greens aspire to create legislation and allocate funds to meet the articulated needs of their base of support. Of necessity, they must conform to the hierarchy of the state on two dimensions: Within the context of carrying out governmental duties, they must accede to the dictates of higher officials; within the party, some members are elected representatives and sit in parliament while others do not; millions pay dues to or cast votes for the few who are paid to carry out party policy. These hierarchical imperatives were recognized by the Greens even before they formally organized themselves. One of the threads woven into the discourse of this book has been the relationship of parliamentary and extraparliamentary forms of political engagement. In this section, I trace the history of the Greens and analyze some of the issues that animated their development from an "anti-party party" to the third largest party in Germany. Although the Greens grew out of the same milieu as the Autonomen, as time passed, the two formations became increasingly embittered and estranged from each other, and today few Germans treat them as connected. From my vantage point, they are each crystallization points within a diffuse continuum of opposition to behemoth nation-states and multinational corporations. Whether or not their efforts are successful depends, at least in part, upon

their synergistic impact.

In the category of parliamentary parties that participate in elections, the early Greens were unique. They manifested many of the same qualities as the German New Left and new social movements like feminism, the anti-nuclear movement, squatters and alternative institutions: grassroots initiative (*Basisdemokratie*), consensus, antihierarchy and countercultural lifestyle. Indeed, the Greens grew out of these movements, not the other way around, as many foreign observers assumed.<sup>14</sup> Within Germany, few people would even attempt to pose the existence of the Greens without acknowledging their having grown out of the extraparliamentary *Bürgerinitiativen* and movements. More commonly, the Greens are conceived as representing these movements:

The Greens were first made possible through the new social movements; with their 40,000 members, they have become no more and no less than an additional, institutional leg for these movements within the parliamentary system of the FRG...Not the Greens but the new social movements are the forerunners of the new political landscape in the FRG.<sup>15</sup>

From their inception, the Greens were beset with the contradiction of dealing with power as participants while trying to prevent the emergence of leaders, media stars and a new elite. To mitigate the abuses associated with power, the party demanded strict rotation of elected representatives, formulated precise provisions for the equalization of salaries, and made major decisions subject to direct democracy. For a decade, the "anti-party" held together with its original principles intact, but they were finally jettisoned, leaving the Greens looking like any established political party. While for some members, grassroots democracy was an essential part of the reason for the party's existence, for others, it was a "green hell, as dangerous as the tropical rainforests of the Amazon."<sup>16</sup> Joschka Fischer penned these remarks in 1983, long before the Greens even considered ending internal direct democracy. As prominent leaders consolidated their hold on media outlets and party positions, a silent end to rotation was instituted by 1987.<sup>17</sup> Rotation only insured the ascendancy of the star system since the media were free to appoint whomever they pleased as prominent Greens. No countervailing power of elected leaders in a stable organization existed to prevent individuals like Daniel Cohn-Bendit or Petra Kelly from speaking for the Greens at the national or international level. Rather than eliminating the star system, rotation displaced it, and the contest between these two structures became increasingly vociferous. Two days after the 1990 elections (in which the party failed to maintain any of its seats in the Bundestag), party leader Antje Vollmer declared rotation part of an antihuman "mistrusting culture of the Greens."<sup>18</sup> Tired of attacks on herself, Petra Kelly criticized the fetish of the "grassroots sport of hunting" prominent members of the party, and Gert Bastian also spoke up, labeling rotation a "dictatorship of incompetence." Finally, in 1991, Ulrich Beck put the finishing touches on the assault on rotation, calling it a "sado-masochistic" Green syndrome that included "publicly carving up leading candidates" and "a preference for rotating incompetence."<sup>19</sup>

The Greens are now the third largest political party in Germany with publicly recognized leaders, one of whom served as Vice-President of the Bundestag. Running for office in national, state and local elections, they have won thousands of seats at local levels by surpassing the 5% needed for representation.<sup>20</sup> As the chart below summarizes, they have held dozens of seats in the Bundestag on three different occasions.



### GREEN VOTES IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS

	Percentage of Vote	Seats in Bundestag
1980	1.5	0
1983	5.6	27
1987	8.3	42
1990	4.8 (West)	0
	6.0 (East)	8
1994	7.3	49

Sources: Markovits and Gorski, p. 290; *The New York Times*; *The Week in Germany*.

Besides winning elections, the Greens have developed a national constituency that has remained faithful through a variety of trying situations and major political transformations. In 1983, they counted 25,000 members; five years later, about 40,000, a level they've maintained into the 1990s.<sup>21</sup> Their annual revenues were approximately \$28 million in 1993 (42.5 million DM).<sup>22</sup>

As they consolidated themselves after their initial electoral successes in the early 1980s, two predominant viewpoints emerged within the party: fundamentalist and realist. From its origin in 1982 in Hesse, this dispute dominated the Greens' existence for years. The fundamentalist wing (or "fundis") demanded that the party serve only as a parliamentary opposition, i.e. that they refuse to form coalition governments with other parties in order to maintain their integrity as an anti-party aimed at fundamentally transforming the political and economic structures of the world system. They believed major social decisions (to rely on nuclear power or to favor absentee landlords and a housing shortage) were made by corporate executives and government bureaucrats, not by elected representatives. Fundis were more interested in putting out a radical message and mobilizing social movements than getting votes. They felt compelled to act in parliament as one movement arena among many. In effect, fundis wanted to represent protest movements (which they considered to be vehicles of change) in parliament. Petra Kelly was one of those who insisted:

Within their parliamentary process, the Greens should not enter into the old established structures or take part in the powers-that-be, but should do everything to demolish and control it. Accordingly their role remains one of fundamental opposition that depends upon the success of grassroots movements in the streets.<sup>23</sup>

Kelly called for a non-violent global general strike to uproot militarism and war,<sup>24</sup> and maintained the integrity of her fundamentalism until her tragic murder in 1992. Another fundi, Rudolf Bahro (who helped found the party soon after his release from an East German prison) insisted the Greens represent voiceless animals and plants and called for the party to embrace all "people of goodwill," especially social dropouts and marginalized youth.

The realists (or "realos") maintained the need to act pragmatically within current economic and political structures. By appealing to middle-class employees, women and youth, they hoped to gain wide public support for an ecological restructuring of Germany. The failure of the SPD and other parties to enhance popular participation in government and to integrate the demands of emergent constituencies in new social movements helped motivate the realos' attempt to reform the existing system. They sought to design programs oriented to regional planning and short-term

amelioration of specific crises linked to broad structural issues like nuclear power and patriarchy. They also wanted to build a national consensus on the need for a new steering mechanism for the political system. Entering the Bundestag as a committed but loyal opposition corresponded to a strategy dubbed the "long march through the institutions" in the 1960s by Rudi Dutschke. According to this idea, when possible, a revolutionary movement should introduce its values and ideas within established political forms, thereby reaching millions of people and setting in motion new possibilities for change. The continuing process of reforms unleashed by this strategy is supposed to encourage popular participation and to raise consciousness and expectations. If the existing institutions can be shown to be incapable of creating, in this case, an ecologically viable society, then many people might be persuaded of the need for a whole new system with reasonable economic and political policies (or at least of the need to vote Green).

Besides the fundi-realo schism, more traditionally defined cleavages, along the lines of Left vs. Right (neo-Leninist ecologists vs. conservative conservationists) also made inner-party discourse either refreshingly dynamic, hopelessly argumentative or boringly trivial, depending on your perspective. The tension between realos and fundis was a favorite subject of the conservative German press since they expected the internal bickering would alienate voters. Instead, extensive commentaries on the internal problems of the Greens actually explained the intricacies of the debate within the party to a wide circle of Germans, thereby helping to inject substance into ritualized pronouncements and comings and goings of the established political elite. As fundis and realos pounded each other in seemingly endless and, at times, pointless debates, however, activists within the party tired of obsessive struggles led by media stars. Women finally upstaged the entire fundi/realo show. Beginning in 1984, a "feminat" of women held all major national positions, and their effect on the party was enormous.

The previous disputes became the backdrop for full-scale clashes, however, as the Greens' historical impact made the party a major player in national power. As many people expected, once the Greens entered parliament, the radical character of the party was constrained. Besides jettisoning visionary demands, the Greens ultimately could not maintain robust ties with radical social movements. As realo cooperation with established politicians estranged the Greens from their activist base, the fundis also cut themselves off from supporters when they insisted on preaching to others rather than participating as equals. An enormous gulf appeared between direct-action movements and what some insisted was their parliamentary expression. In 1983, after autonomists attacked Vice President Bush's limousine with stones in Krefeld, Green spokespersons denounced the Autonomen as "police agents" seeking to undermine popular support for the party. On the other side, Autonomen came to regard Greens as government agents. The identification of inner-movement "enemies" with the government was a telling indication of the wide gulf that opened in this period between progressive forces within the system and radical critics outside it.

For years, the positions taken by the first Green city councilors in Hesse served as a model for Greens around the country. They showed concretely how the Greens could serve as a regional planning mechanism. The fundi-realo debates in Hesse were particularly prolonged and ultimately carried into the federal levels of the party. Like the elections in Berlin in 1981,<sup>\*</sup> the Hesse events bring considerable light to bear on the relationship between electoral and extraparliamentary tactics.

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\* See chapter 3 above.

The battle over the Frankfurt airport's expansion (Startbahn West) propelled thousands of people into action and hundreds of Greens into elected positions. In the towns of Büttelborn and Mörfelden-Walldorf, the communities most immediately affected by the new runway, they won 25.2% of the vote in local elections in 1981, and in some other districts, ecologists did even better.<sup>25</sup> Buoyed by this success, the statewide Greens won 8% of the vote in 1982, enough to enter the Hessian parliament. Their platform had insisted they could not form a coalition with the SPD, "a party which, when wielding governmental powers, has not shrunk from implementing civil-war like measures, has completed projects such as Startbahn West with brutal police violence against the will of the population, and criminalized citizens' initiatives."<sup>26</sup> For its part, the local SPD refused to work with the Greens. The following year, when the Greens won barely enough votes to remain in parliament, the party's realists argued that a coalition with the SPD was necessary for their future electoral success.

As long as the question of coalition with the SPD concerned the future, the debates between fundis and realos had seemed abstract or personal, but the brutality of power soon changed that. On September 28, 1985, Günter Sare, a participant in a demonstration against one of the neo-fascist parties holding its national convention in a Turkish neighborhood in Frankfurt, was killed when a police watercannon ran him over. The Hessian state budget (which the Greens had approved) included money for this watercannon. To many people in the autonomous movement, the Greens were thus part of the forces that killed Sare. At a mass meeting at Goethe University in Frankfurt, sixties veterans and former Spontis Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Joschka Fischer defended their realo politics, but enraged activists threw eggs and tomatoes at them. Across Germany, more than 60 demonstrations protested Sare's death.<sup>27</sup>

Riding the wave of resentment against the realos, fundi national spokesperson Jutta Ditfurth, one of three members of the party's federal presidium, went on the offensive. Known for her sharp tongue, Ditfurth was alternately a media darling and their favorite target. As the Hessian Greens moved closer to a coalition with the SPD, Ditfurth and the fundis tried to orient the national party apparatus toward extraparliamentary movements. When 50,000 people protested in Munich against the Wackersdorf nuclear reprocessing plant on October 10, 1985, the Greens were the only national organization that helped mobilize for the action.

Later in October, the Hessian Greens formally approved the formation of a coalition government with the SPD. Although the realos did not succeed in being promised any major concessions (particularly an immediate moratorium on Startbahn West or closure of the Biblis nuclear plant), the first "red-green" (SPD-Green) state coalition government was nearly a reality. Calling Joschka Fischer a "Green Machiavelli," *Der Spiegel* reported that 80% of the 2000 members present voted for his proposal. Responding to the Hessian vote, Ditfurth released a biting public statement:

Only eighteen days after the murder of Günter Sare by the police, the Greens in the state parliament in Hesse have decided to go into coalition with the SPD, to join sides with the rulers...The Greens in parliament haven't even demanded a parliamentary committee of inquiry...The coalition in Hesse is not realism, it is the pathway towards integration into the ruling system.<sup>28</sup>

In December 1985, when Fischer was sworn in as Hesse's first Green Minister of the Environment,

a chorus of warnings about a "Green nightmare" unified the voices of the president of Hoechst chemicals (the largest industry in the region), executives from the nuclear industry, conservative politicians and even the president of the chemical workers' union. On the other side, the **Taz** jubilantly declared "The long march through the institutions -- one has made it."<sup>29</sup> The disparate character of these responses reflected the uncertainty of the path the red-green government would take. Seeking to assure his new-found allies, Fischer humbly promised the established powers that he was willing and able to enter into a constructive dialogue with industry.

Ditfurth and the fundis were caught between the rocks of the Autonomen and the hard benches of endless meetings with their realo colleagues. They called for anti-nuclear demonstrations, but they belonged to an organization with Joschka Fischer, whose service as Minister of Environment in Hesse made him responsible for the controversial Nukem and Alkem nuclear facilities as well as transportation of nuclear wastes on Hesse's highways. To offset the rightward drift of Hessian realos, fundi Greens deliberately scheduled the party's national convention in the vicinity of Wackersdorf. At the Offenbach conference, they orchestrated a fundi coup, winning control of the party's executive by a wide vote (468 to 214) after shuttling hundreds of delegates to a demonstration at Wackersdorf.<sup>30</sup>

When disaster struck the Soviet nuclear power plant in Chernobyl on April 28, 1986, differences within the Greens threatened to tear the party apart. Fundis proclaimed that all "374 nuclear installations on earth are declarations of war against us."<sup>31</sup> Condemning the "nuclear mafia" and "atomic terrorists" comprised of everyone from the SPD to the Pentagon and its Soviet counterpart, the fundis reflected the radicalization of ecological activists after the Chernobyl catastrophe. The next month, demonstrations at Brokdorf (due to go on line) and Wackersdorf were particularly militant, and the media dubbed the "violent" autonomists leading the confrontations "the Greens' steel-ball faction," a reference to the sling-shot ammunition used by some Autonomen. One characterization of these demonstrations focused on their militance:

In scenes resembling "civil war," helmeted, leather-clad troops of the anarchist Autonomen armed with sling-shots, Molotov cocktails and flare guns clashed brutally with the police, who employed water cannons, helicopters and CS gas (officially banned for use against civilians).<sup>32</sup>

Those Greens attempting to maintain ties to militant movements paid a heavier than usual price. Press reports (later shown to be false) charged that hundreds of Greens applauded the injuries suffered by police during the demonstrations. In response, many Greens tried to distance themselves from "violent" protestors (and subsequently called for an entirely different relationship between the party and social movements). At Brokdorf, the Greens and their pacifist allies cooperated with the police search of automobile convoys, leaving those who refused to submit to the searches sitting ducks for police violence.

At the party's federal level, the fundis pressured for a stand for termination of all nuclear power plants and an end to the Hessian coalition. With 80% of Germans reportedly wanting to end the use of nuclear power after Chernobyl, the Greens won a larger electoral victory than ever before (or since) in the national elections of January 1987 with 8.3% of the vote (44 seats in the Bundestag). Almost immediately, the fundi/realo schism was reinvigorated. Fischer and the Hessian Greens were compelled to pull out of their coalition with the SPD. The fundis, in control of key

committees including those which allocated money, were unable to keep track of hundreds of thousands of marks, leading to a financial scandal. While they conceded that mistakes were made, fundi leaders insisted that no one had personally profited from the embezzled party funds. Nonetheless, they lost a vote of confidence during a party convention at the end of 1988 and the entire national executive committee was compelled to resign, paving the way for real control of the party apparatus. On March 12, 1989, a red-green coalition government was voted into power in Frankfurt.<sup>33</sup>

The fundis' fall from grace was presaged by disturbing events. In November 1987, the bitterness of those marginalized from mainstream parties was a factor in the shooting of 11 policemen (two of whom died) at Startbahn West. More than any other event, the media seized that opportunity to dramatize the split in the Greens. Hardliners like Thomas Eberman and Ditfurth refused to condemn the killings while the party's majority loudly vilified the shootings. In a context where the state was actively attempting to criminalize militant opponents of the system and a few extremists were seeking a shooting war, the Greens' existence as part of the governing structure complicated their ties to extraparliamentary movements. For Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the antagonisms between him and the Autonomen reached a breaking point. In 1987, Cohn-Bendit was invited to speak at the Free University of Berlin, but he canceled his appearance after leaflets were distributed threatening to disrupt his speech (as had already happened in Karlsruhe with stink-bombs). Many Autonomen considered Cohn-Bendit to have "informed" against suspected "terrorists" through his participation in the government's amnesty plans, to have uncritically supported Israel in the pages of his Frankfurt magazine, **Pflasterstrand**, during the bloody invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and to have refused to abandon the male chauvinism of his magazine. Even in the eyes of sympathetic observers, he was a "cultural relic of the revolt of 1968...integrated into the management of urban conflict."<sup>34</sup> In the mainstream media, Cohn-Bendit was either a favorite son used by liberals to discredit the Autonomen or a scapegoat used by reactionaries to vent anti-semitic, red-baiting sentiments. The depoliticization obvious in the subsumption of vitally important political issues to Cohn-Bendit's personality was one dimension of the Greens' dilemma. Embodying the generation of 1968, he opposed revolutionary (and even radical) politics. For the Autonomen, Cohn-Bendit proved that the entire New Left sold out. The Greens were proof of their political cooptation; their nuclear families and the Mother Manifesto<sup>\*\*</sup> indicated their cultural conformity; and their professional jobs and condos were proof enough of their economic integration. As one Autonomen put it:

A little more than ten years after its founding phase, this party, consisting of a core membership of technocratic ecology managers, has become a political mouthpiece for reactionary conservationists, epicureans, and upwardly mobile petit-bourgeois citizens.<sup>35</sup>

Increasingly distant from insurgent social movements, the Greens' inner life was consumed by the obsessive conflicts between realos and fundis. With their membership calling on the party leadership to stop its "disgusting quarrels," a new pragmatic strata of professional politicians emerged within the Greens reflecting the conservatism of the Mother Manifesto. By 1987, all but one of the state (*Länder*) candidate lists in the national elections were headed by women, the first

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<sup>\*\*</sup> See chapter 4 above.

time in German history that a party's parliamentary representatives had been a majority women.<sup>36</sup> (Only in the city-state of Hamburg was a man awarded the top spot, and that was predicated upon the fact that in the state elections of November 1986, an all-female list had run successfully.) Echoing realo themes, the new pragmatists called on the party to abandon "utopian dreams" and offered a new slogan of "ecological capitalism." According to that notion, because of the existing system's wholesale destruction of the biosphere and the remoteness of any genuine alternative, the Greens needed to put forth proposals for making the market system responsible for the preservation of the environment. Is it any wonder that many ecologists considered the Greens to have betrayed the vision of a qualitatively better society? The parallel with the opportunist history of the Social Democrats at the beginning of this century is striking.

If nothing else, the Greens provide a bridge to millions of Germans, some of whom subsequently find a way to participate in the movements which originally helped create the Greens. As the third largest party in Germany, the Greens afford visibility and dissemination of ecological, feminist and progressive ideas that otherwise would simply be ignored by most Germans. Since the Greens easily access the media, they have been able to publicize alternative viewpoints on a regular basis. From 1983-1987, for example, they introduced 53 bills, made 367 parliamentary proposals, participated in 87 inquiries, and flooded the media with position papers and press releases.<sup>37</sup> Their chief political success was to prod mainstream parties to include many Green issues in their platforms.<sup>38</sup> Soon after the Chernobyl disaster and the renewal of the anti-nuclear movement, the Social Democrats shifted their policy and decided to oppose all nuclear power plants within ten years. Even the sclerotic German bureaucracy has been slowly transformed. In June 1993, the same month in which more than 10,000 people marched through Berlin to mark Christopher Street Day, the Alliance 90 (eastern Greens composed of groups like New Forum, which had been a leading force in the last days of the East German government) were able to introduce for the first time a proposal to the *Bundestag* which contained the words "gay" and "lesbian" in its title. In March 1994, the *Bundestag* finally removed Paragraph 175 of the legal code (which had made all forms of homosexual relations subject to prosecution). For a long time, lesbian and gay leaders had called for such a move, and without the pressure from the Greens inside the parliament, it is doubtful that they would have had even this small success. The German Association of Gays also called for the right of gay people to marry as well as for a status equal to heterosexual marriages for unmarried gay couples regarding tax, inheritance and rental laws.<sup>39</sup> Their spokesperson Volker Beck explained that, "we will no longer be satisfied with simply being tolerated by society."

Feminism is another of the party's saving graces. Although women were only about 35% of its members, they are a required 50% of all party posts, and candidate lists observe a similar quota. Women have veto-power within the party, and essentially rescued it when it appeared on the verge of self-destruction in 1988. In 1995, the parliamentary fraction of the Greens consisted of 29 women and 20 men. At the same moment, however, women have sometimes uncritically accepted the new found power within the established system.<sup>40</sup>

Concrete gains that can be traced to Green participation in governments have been minuscule. On the national level, the first four years of Green representation produced only one successful bill dealing with a ban on the importation of sea turtles. In Hesse, no major concessions were granted: Startbahn West was in full use and fission power proceeded unabated. Even in the area of women's rights, the red-green coalition produced only minuscule changes.<sup>41</sup> In Frankfurt,

plans for a Greenbelt were repeatedly shelved, and the red-green government was regarded by many as an exercise in frustration. Although minor gains in parks, minority rights, and regulation of Hoechst were made, the Greens became targets of newly-emergent citizens' initiatives in the northern part of the city. In Berlin, twenty months of a red-green government produced only small reforms: Major electrical power lines from a nuclear plant were buried in the ground to mitigate the harmful effects of overhead lines; a two kilometer stretch of the road around Lake Havelchau was closed to traffic; speed limits on highways were lowered (angering many motorists); and new lanes exclusively for buses were designated in the city.

Reforms won must be balanced against the longer term strengthening of the system accomplished through Green participation in government. Local party branches have some autonomy from the national office, but they are compelled to act in accordance with national party policy. Even more significantly, all officials are obligated to conform to federal government dictate. In Lower Saxony, the state interior minister, herself a Green and prominent member of Greenpeace, called in police when anti-nuclear protesters blocked the entrance to the Gorleben nuclear waste site. She had originally forbidden the assembled police from clearing the blockade, but when she was specifically ordered by the federal interior minister to end the standoff, she was compelled to relent. Under her administration, arrests were made, and more nuclear waste was buried beneath the earth at Gorleben. As demonstrated by the participation of the AL in the Berlin government at the time of Mainzerstrasse, red-green coalitions have not functioned any differently with respect to social movements.

Since they play the parliamentary game, the Greens had to operate at the national and even international levels like any other party. In order to be seriously considered by the electorate, they are compelled to take positions on a wide range of issues and to formulate national or regional policies based upon the continuing existence of the established political structures. Unlike the Autonomen who are free to build (or dissolve) their own groups and create their own scale for political engagement, the Greens must accept the formal aspects of the political status quo. Self-righteously sermonizing from their non-violent podium, the Greens vilified mercilessly "violent" Autonomen. For many pacifists, non-violence is itself revolutionary and any deviation from it only reproduces the power relations of the established system.<sup>42</sup> Autonomists, for their part, have little respect for the Greens, whom they all too often view as government agents. Their mutual antagonisms are reminiscent of the tragic split in the German Left in the 1930s which provided an opportunity for the Nazis to seize power.

The future of the movement as a whole (Green and autonomous) may well be tied to the continuing tension between parliamentary and extraparliamentary actions. By preventing even a discussion of such a concept, the movement's own internal feuds are internal obstacles to its own future success. If the German movement is unable to accommodate itself to its own internal contradictions, its fate may mirror that of the Italian upsurge of the 1970s, today little more than a memory. I am not arguing for formal ties or even informal meetings between people involved in these various forums. Nor am I assuming the Greens are the representatives of the Autonomen in parliament or that the Autonomen are the militant arm of the Greens. Each of these formations has its own inner logic and reason for existence. I am, however, highly critical of the Greens' arrogance of power and the Autonomen fetishization of marginality, each of which contributes to the attenuation of the other, not their mutual amplification. If the Green can stomach working with the

SPD and the Autonomen can support hierarchical Marxist-Leninist organizations from Turkey and Kurdistan, why can't they hold their noses and stand next to each other? At a minimum, the Greens should abstain from criminalizing radical activists, who, for their part, should refrain from denying progressive parliamentarians public space for discussion. So long as activists make the assumption that the movement is defined by one set of values or tactics (non-violent elections vs. militant opposition) and that those outside the chosen values are not part of the movement, they fetishize their own positions and ultimately reproduce the very system they oppose.

Defeatism and sectarianism remain formidable internal obstacles standing in the way of continuing activism. Buying the government's version of the closing down of Wackersdorf as related to technical issues, many people refuse to understand it as a movement victory. Among those who do project the movement as the driving force behind victories not only at Wackersdorf but also at Wyhl and five other nuclear facilities,<sup>43</sup> they claim it has been social movements, not the Greens, that have been responsible. In my view, it is impossible to separate the combined effects of these two formations.

The Greens' reformism is not their main shortcoming -- their inability to act responsibly as part of a larger movement is. Their failure to keep proper financial records is trivial when compared to far more serious political problems. They could simply adopt a policy of non-compliance with particularly odious federal laws like those authorizing the transport of nuclear waste to Gorleben. Rather than act resolutely after the dissolution of East Germany, they refused to participate in the "annexation" of the East. In 1987, they had won 8.3% of the national vote in one of their best efforts, but after Germany reunified, they decided to watch from the sidelines. Opposed in principle to the "colonization" of the East, they insisted on running as a separate slate from eastern Greens (Alliance 90) in the national elections of December 1990. As a result, the national Greens did not surpass the 5% needed to remain in the Bundestag, although Alliance 90 did receive sufficient votes governing the first elections since reunification to have parliamentary representatives. If the two parties had run together, they both would have been over the 5% mark (although some insist that the Greens would have swallowed up Alliance 90). The West German Greens "principled" stand cost them their 46 seats in the parliament, a staff of 260 and millions of Deutsche Marks in income. Speaking at a post-election gathering of their former representatives in the environmentally sound conference room they had built with government money, Petra Kelly angrily denounced the "mullahs of the party factions who have coagulated in dogmatism."

Many prominent fundis had left the party even before the 1990 elections, believing the Greens had become part of the social repair mechanism of the established system. At a party congress in Frankfurt at the beginning of June 1991, the remaining fundis saw their position erode completely. When delegates voted to give more power to individuals elected as parliamentary representatives (including an end to rotation), more than 300 fundis decided to leave the Greens and reconstitute themselves as the Ecological Left. The resulting acrimony prompted one of the leaders of the Alliance 90 to call the Greens "a pubertarian association." The departure of the Ecological Left removed the last major internal opposition to coalitions with the Social Democrats and left the realos in control. After merging with Alliance 90, the combined list (known as Alliance 90/Greens) won over 7% in the national elections of 1994, enough for 40 parliamentary seats. Despite their inability to gain a majority coalition with the SPD, the Greens are stronger than ever at the state level, where they have formed a handful of coalition governments with the Social Democrats. Now



that rotation is a memory and the Hessian experiment has become the Greens' model, Fischer has his eyes on a national office. In the future, traffic light coalitions (red for the SPD, yellow for the Free Democrats, and green) are envisioned for every state and the national government. If the Greens succeed in forming a national coalition with the SPD in the future, Fisher's ambitions may net him control of a federal ministry, propelling him (and a few other Greens) even more into the national spotlight and endowing them with power -- more of a compromise of the party's founding principles than the maintenance of state coalitions has already demanded.

Robert Michels developed his concept of the "iron law of oligarchy" in a study of German Social Democracy and trade unions, and to many people, the dynamics in the Greens again validates his hypothesis that all organizations inevitably produce elites. Awareness of this hierarchical imperative helped motivate many Greens to infuse a critique of hierarchy into their first program and organizational form. Far from their origin with egalitarian rules aimed at preventing the emergence of an oligarchy within their organization, the Greens today appear more to be a monolithic party controlled by a few people. Their failure to mitigate the insidious appearance of elites within the party only alienated them further from the social movements from which they emerged and on whom they depend for their future vitality.

### **AUTONOMY AND THE LEFT**

As it is commonly understood, democracy means majority rule. Whether a government is considered democratic depends upon its ability to sponsor free elections between more than one political party with access to the media. Elections are the specific mechanism through which conflicting interests are thought to be "democratically" mediated. When suffrage is distributed according to the principle of one person/one vote, representatives are considered "freely" elected. In the modern period, representative democracy supplanted less democratic forms of political decision-making (monarchies, dictatorships and tribal chieftains). Never has the international legitimacy of this type of democracy been greater than today. Francis Fukuyama believes existing democratic states are as perfect as possible, that we have arrived "at the end of history."

An alternative view posits consensual, direct-democratic forms of decision-making as having constituted the earliest, most robust, and by far, the longest lasting democratic form of government known to human beings. Exemplified in Athenian democracy and Renaissance *popolo*,<sup>44</sup> participatory democracy demands more involvement of citizens in their political affairs and affords them more input into decisions affecting them.<sup>45</sup> Communities of hunter-gatherers, in which humans lived for 99% of our existence, almost universally resolved issues of group importance in face-to-face meetings where they more often than not made decisions through consensus. This earlier form of democracy, far from having disappeared, survives in a variety of settings: local town councils and village councils in rural areas, family meetings, cooperatives, collectives, and (as discussed in this book) within various social movements.<sup>46</sup> Political scientist Jane Mansbridge maintains that for most people, face-to-face consensual decisions occur far more often than majority rule.<sup>47</sup> The differences between these two forms of democracy, summarized in the chart below, help us understand some of the reasons for the emergence of autonomous movements (as well as their differences with the Greens).

### **FORMS OF DEMOCRACY**

## PARTICIPATORY REPRESENTATIVE

Assumption:	Common interests	Conflicting interests
Central egalitarian ideal:	Equal respect	Equal protection
Decision rule:	Consensus	Majority rule
Level of intimacy:	Face-to-face	Secret ballot

Source: Adapted from Mansbridge, *Beyond Adversary Democracy*

In the table above, participatory democracy corresponds to what most people refer to as "direct democracy," thought to exist as an institutional form in some New England town meetings. It is also akin to the original form of German decision-making observed by Tacitus nearly 2000 years ago:

On matters of minor importance only the chiefs debate, on major affairs, the whole community; but, even where the commons have the decision, the case is carefully considered in advance by the chiefs...they do not assemble at once or in obedience to orders, but waste two or three days in their dilatory gathering. When the mass so decide, they take their seats fully armed. Silence is then demanded by the priests, who on that occasion have also power to enforce obedience...If a proposal displeases them, the people roar out their dissent; if they approve, they clash their spears.<sup>48</sup>

Since Tacitus penned these lines, the world system has destroyed regional autonomy, and various forms of governments (the most recent type being nation-states) have encroached upon indigenous forms of governance. Contemporary aspirations for autonomy attempt to reverse this process by enlarging the scope of direct-democratic forms of decision-making. In contrast to groups like the Greens who struggle within the domain of representative governments ostensibly to reverse their powers over and above people, the Autonomen seek to defend and extend the independence of civil society, to safeguard their neighborhoods and collective relationships from the existing system's ever thicker web of hierarchy and commodity relationships. Essentially, the world system evolved according to the same process by which the human species emerged from Nature -- an unconscious struggle to survive and prosper. Never did the species rationally or democratically agree how to structure our social relations. Partial attempts to redesign freely the structure of society, like those reconstituting national power in America (1776), France (1789) or Russia (1917), produced results that ultimately were subordinated to the structured logic of the global economy.

Although the 1960s paradigm shift from "bigger is better" to "small is beautiful" signaled a transition from "modernist" centralization to "postmodernist" decentralism, the increasing concentration of power and resources in giant nation-states and transnational corporations has yet to be reversed -- with the notable exception of the Soviet Union (and nearly Canada). As an organizing principle of society, autonomy provides a means of restructuring governments and corporations, of reversing the modernist imperative for uniformity. At its best, autonomy means all power to the people. Communities, institutions and regions would be governed by their inhabitants, not by managerial prerogatives. To give one example, the now-empty idea of the "autonomy of the university" would be reinvented by the student/faculty/staff self-management.

Autonomy is the political form appropriate to postmodern societies (whose contours are discussed in the next chapter). Already autonomy has emerged as central defining feature of social

movements, revealing the phenomenological form of freedom, not in speculation, but in the concrete universal of history. Autonomous democracy means more freedom, not only for those who are judged to be politically correct, but for all citizens. No longer should adversary, zero-sum solutions be necessary to social problems. Autonomist solutions to poverty, for example, include creating cooperatives, self-help programs and direct aid to the poor, not disenfranchising the comfortable majority of people in the industrialized societies. Nelson Mandela's limited endorsement of a white homeland for those South African whites who insist upon one is another example of how autonomy is a new solution to age-old problems. In his day, Black Panther leader Fred Hampton similarly endorsed the idea of "white power for white people." Autonomous communalism, developed from the Black Panther Party's "revolutionary intercommunalism," might obviate the need for centralized bureaucracies and giant nation-states by devolving power directly to people affected by specific decisions. For autonomists, the republican form of government provides too little space for broad participation in decisions affecting everyday life. By subjecting everyone to the same uniform standards, modernist political forms are seen as denying differences, rather than enhancing the unique attributes of groups and individuals.

The distance of this conception of freedom from that of the Old Left is quite great. Both Social Democracy and Leninism were predicated upon the need for centralizing control, not deconstructing it. In the case studies in this book, I have been careful to point out how parliamentary and "revolutionary" Leninist party politics continually threatened the vitality of popular movements. In the following pages, I discuss the distance between autonomous movements and these Old Left currents, a distance at least as important as that between the Autonomes and the New Left Greens. In contrast to the Old Left, autonomous movements have criticized representative democracy as being too little democracy, not simply because it is a system of democracy for the rich, but because it is not a system for direct popular decision-making. Soviet Marxism's critique of representative democracy produced a "dictatorship of the proletariat" (originally a concept, anomalously enough, that was supposed to mean an extension of democracy).<sup>49</sup> A dictatorship of the Party, not the rule of the vast majority of workers and peasants, the Soviet Union nonetheless created a social system that negated the twin extremes of great wealth and dire poverty. The Leninist curtailment of liberty for the rich, however, led to the reduction of liberty for all, a drastic step that doomed the Soviet system (and too often gets reproduced within popular movement organizations open to Leninist groups).

For the first half of this century, freedom either meant liberty in what used to be called the "Free World" or equality in the "socialist" countries. Neither bloc embodied social orders in which fundamental social antagonisms were resolved. Because Soviet Marxists mechanically defined freedom as equality rather than liberty, one result was the uniform design of apartments, each one containing precisely the same number of square meters and, in many cases, the same exact layout. Mammoth concrete jungles built under "socialist" architects differed from their Western counterparts only by their dull uniformity and inferior building materials. In both the East and the West during the Cold War, gigantic projects epitomizing the centralization of power were the rule, not the exception. More significantly, at the same time that the gulags killed millions and "socialist equality" debased egalitarian ideas, capitalist "liberty" enslaved tens of millions of individuals at the periphery of the world system. Making both liberty and equality preconditions for freedom was a defining feature of the New Left.<sup>50</sup>

The lessons of the Soviet Union have not yet been fully distilled, but one thing has always been clear: Governments can be overthrown and new ones established, but they remain part of the world system, subject to its economic cycles, military impulses and political initiatives. The failure of the Soviet Union and Leninist strategy to provide a materially satisfying and more democratic way of life was partly predicated upon its obsession with national power. At least as we have known them, nation-states must maintain sovereign control over their land and people, a necessity which contradicts autonomous notions of self-government, particularly when centralized decision-making and a command mentality are enshrined in the canons of government.

In much of Western Europe, elected socialist governments, long part of the political landscape, have failed to alter significantly any of capitalism's essential features. In France, Mitterrand's socialism privatized banks and large corporations, demonstrating anew the tendency of social democracy to aid corporate accumulation of wealth, not society's most needy or insurgent popular movements. As discussed in earlier chapters, German Social Democratic governments and Italian Communists, though often less repressive than their Christian Democratic colleagues, have never hesitated to use force to maintain order when faced with domestic insurgency from autonomists. These were not accidental occurrences, thrust into historical relief by coincidence or particularly bad leaders: The PCI in the 1970s was renowned as one of the most liberal Communist parties in the world, and Hamburg's mayor Dohnanyi had literally written the book on the disruptive effects of youth unemployment.<sup>51</sup>

The clear line that divides both Communists and Social Democrats from the Autonomen means the latter are often described as anarchists, a label which is not entirely accurate. For the most part, Autonomen do not understand themselves as anarchists, and the movement is often indifferent to and sometimes hostile to individuals and groups who call themselves anarchists.<sup>52</sup> "They (anarchists) are scared of us," is how one autonomous activist put it, "because we do the kinds of things they only talk about." To accusations of being anarchists, autonomists sometimes reply they believe in freedom. Autonomists exemplify self-discipline and self-organization (not imposed from the outside). As radical critics of the Soviet system, some Autonomen did consider themselves anarchists. Anarchism provided a coherent theory explaining the bankruptcy of "real existing socialism." Its insights rang true to many activists beginning to assemble an analysis of their own political experiences as squatters or anti-nuclear activists. After the demise of the Soviet Union, anarchist theory is consumed eagerly by many in a quest for theoretical clarity and assistance in making strategically viable decisions. While the anarchist critique of authority may provide understanding of problems of Communism as they existed in the countries controlled by the Soviet Union, libertarian Marxism and other currents of Left thought undoubtedly contain important insights as well. To name one, the Marxist ability to analyze the economic forces at work in the existing world system (exemplified in the work of Immanuel Wallerstein and **Monthly Review**) has no parallel in anarchist thought. Judging from the movement's posters and activists' ideas, Rosa Luxemburg (a turn-of-the century Marxist with an incisive and radical critique of Lenin as well as a deep appreciation for the autonomy of popular movements) is as highly regarded as any political figure.

In contrast to Communist party organizations consisting of cells of three to fifteen individuals arranged hierarchically under the rigid authority of a central committee, autonomous movements are structured horizontally, or as discussed above, even circularly. One reason for the

organizational differences between Leninists and autonomists is that the goals of Leninism are starkly different from those of autonomous movements. Unlike the communist dream of insurrection aimed at capturing and centralizing the political system, many Autonomen believe that as the system destroys itself, whether through ecological degradation or economic stagnation and crisis, the government will become irrelevant to more and more people, and collectives will become the new form of the social organization of civil society. Those autonomists with a less passive understanding of the future of the existing political system see the role of the autonomous movement as being to subvert current conceptions of politics, to critique mercilessly the lack of substance in representative democracy's claims to facilitate popular participation in government.

Just as there is no central organization, no single ideology is vital to the Autonomen, but this does not mean that the movement is atheoretical or anti-theoretical. Activists there read -- or at least have read -- Left classics from Bakunin and Marx to Mao and Marcuse. Although they seem to agree on very little, the Autonomen have a profound critique of authoritarian socialism and refuse to permit Stalin posters and paraphernalia at their annual Mayday demonstrations. Many people have had their limbs broken or been seriously injured by Stalinists swinging steel bars to assert their "right" to lead the march with their banners. These injuries are testimony to the vital importance of the movement's critique of Left authoritarianism. The Autonomen distance from what used to be called "real existing socialism" in East Germany and the Soviet Union was vital to the movement's identity. Just as *Autonomia* in Italy existed in opposition to the Italian Communist Party, the Autonomen's political universe shared little with East Germany. At one point, when a squatted plot of land adjacent to the wall was invaded by West Berlin police, the occupants jumped the wall into the East to escape arrest, but they were promptly expelled by the Communist authorities. Although the RAF received aid and sanctuary from East Germany, the autonomous movement was despised and vilified by Communists.

Outsiders can easily misconstrue this relationship -- all the more so since the movement plays with its radical critique of the conservative Left. Using irony in a fashion reminiscent of their predecessors in the Metropolitan Indians of Italy, some activists in West Berlin habitually dressed in old Communist military attire on Mayday and positioned themselves in a balcony overlooking the route of the annual autonomous demonstration from Oranienplatz. As the marchers passed, they held out their arms or saluted, mimicking Soviet generals and party hacks on the review platform in Red Square. Similarly, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Pinux (a collective bar originally squatted) prominently displayed a glossy photograph of former East German chief of state Erich Honecker, as much of a joke about him in those days as Teutonic humor would allow.

One of the reasons the movement in West Germany so successfully maintained its impetus when the upsurge of 1968 vanished in so many other countries is because Marxist rule in East Germany provided ample daily evidence of the bankruptcy of the Soviet system. For forty years, an everyday political problem for Germans was how to grapple with Soviet control of the eastern part of the country, and radical social movements necessarily differed sharply from its Communist rulers. Many Germans were able to watch nightly news from both sides, daily witnessing the bureaucratic style of Communist control so obviously foreign to concepts of individual liberty. In the early 1960s, key activists in German SDS came from East Germany and were able to infuse an informed critique of Soviet Marxism into that organization.

Leninism was built upon the bifurcation of spontaneous popular action and theoretical

consciousness, a split that Lenin felt necessitated the creation of a vanguard party to bring revolutionary consciousness to the working class. The edifice upon which Soviet Communism was built included the defamation of spontaneity. What I have called the "conscious spontaneity" of the autonomous movement reflects the vast difference of opinion regarding popular movements and crowds. Innovations in communications and the immense differences in literacy between the beginning and end of the twentieth century are material conditions that change the character of popular formations. Contemporary cultural-political movements comprised of collectives, projects and individuals that assemble sporadically at conferences and act according to local initiatives might very well represent future forms even "normal" politics might take.

A century ago, similar initiatives existed. Thousands of people in Paris, Barcelona and Berlin lived differently, associated as radicals and even created a counterculture. In Spain in the 1930s, anarchism was an important political belief, yet all these groups were eventually compelled to take up arms, many activists lost their lives, and these movements seldom receive more than an occasional reference. Are autonomous movements doomed to a similar fate? A negative response might be argued on the basis of the fact that contemporary nation-states have diminished powers to use force domestically (although they often do whether at Kent State, Tiananmen Square, or South Central Los Angeles). The diminished capacity of governments to intervene militarily within their own borders and the declining legitimacy of established forms of politics precondition autonomous politics -- or, as I like to call it, the subversion of politics.

In the nineteenth century, both anarchism and Marxism developed from the need to sum up the experiences of vibrant movements and to find avenues for their own future success. Both were responses to the advent of the industrial revolution and its profound transformation of the world. The failure of these movements can, in part, be traced to their theoretical inadequacies, but their shortcomings need to be understood through historical analysis, not simply through the prism of their theory. The history of the 1848 uprisings throughout Europe is unknown to many people who appropriate the theories which these movements developed a century and a half ago. Severed from their historical genesis in the 1848 movements, such theories become empty shells of formal logic, everywhere applicable but nowhere vital. Transformed from an on-going process to a finished product, such theory is then mechanical and weakens the ability of social movements to find appropriate means of action under contemporary conditions. When ideologies are appropriated as labels, the intellectual process of questioning, probing and coming to an independent and fresh understanding is short-circuited. Dogmatic recitations of texts and pledges of allegiance to one theorist or another replace careful consideration of immediate issues.

For much of this century, a standardized rendition of Marxism produced by party hacks provided workers' movements with an already constructed, supposedly universal analysis. In some cases, movements around the world were able to use Marxism as a tool in their revolutionary projects. As time went on, the Comintern's domination of theory and practice undermined the vitality of most popular movements, either by bending them into appendages of Soviet foreign policy or by compelling them mechanically to apply lessons gleaned from the Russian revolution. Beginning with China and Cuba, revolutionaries broke with Soviet Communists and embarked on fresh paths toward revolution. At the end of the 1960s in both Germany and the U.S., Maoist and Guevarist sects stifled the popular upsurge and contributed to its internal collapse. Although opposed to the Soviet Union, the second wave of radical Left activism in this century (the New

Left) self-destructed in large measure because many within it adopted wholesale stale theories of revolution. Revolutionary movements adopt their slogans and identities from their predecessors, and in a world changing more rapidly than ever before in history, this tendency is part of an internally conditioned defeatism. In order to consider how this same dynamic may affect autonomous movements, I consider the theories of Antonio Negri in the next section. Drawn from Italian *Autonomia*, Negri's analysis is workerist. By limiting his theoretical framework to one category, Negri is unable to attain the universal species level of praxis realized by autonomous movements at their best.

### THE POLITICS OF SUBVERSION?

A veteran of the Italian autonomous movement of the 1970s, Antonio Negri has remained concerned with revolutionary change -- not participation in the existing political system. He has rethought problems that will confront social movements in the next phase of revolutionary struggles. I share with him the conviction that it is only a question of time before such movements emerge. It is easy to sympathize with Negri because he was unjustly imprisoned in Italy for many years after a dramatic trial in which he was (falsely) convicted of inciting the Red Brigades. He eventually was voted into parliament as a means of freeing him (since elected officials automatically receive immunity) and now lives in France where he follows in the footsteps of his mentors, French structural-Marxists Nicos Poulantzas and Louis Althusser.<sup>53</sup>

No doubt Negri's experiences in the Italian autonomous movement situate him to pose theoretical insights from the point of view of practical action. His modesty ("We are not inventors of anything. We are just readers of Marx, and political revolutionary agitators in our time.") belies many important conclusions that go far beyond Marx. His concept of the "social factory" and his insistence on understanding workers' struggles as sources of capitalist crisis are important insights. Negri was also able to be critical of what he perceived as his own shortcomings. In 1989, he and Felix Guattari wrote that "It is clear that the discourses on workers' centrality and hegemony are thoroughly defunct and that they cannot serve as a basis for the organization of new political and productive alliances, or even simply as a point of reference."<sup>54</sup> In a self-critical section of a postscript to this same text dated 1989, Negri acknowledged his failure to understand the "participation of the Soviet Union in integrated world capitalism." Although the term differs, he employs the concept of *Gesamtkapital* (capital as a whole), that Herbert Marcuse analyzed as subordinating the particular enterprises in all sectors of the economy.<sup>55</sup> Moving away from his former workerist politics, Negri now considers intellectual work to be at the "center of production." Together with Felix Guattari, he thinks he "ought to have noted more clearly the central importance of the struggles within the schools, throughout the educational system, in the meanders of social mobility, in the places where the labor force is formed; and we ought to have developed a wider analysis of the processes of organization and revolt which were just beginning to surface in those areas."<sup>56</sup> Negri developed the term "social factory" to include "producers" such as women in the home and students in schools and a vast number of other people.<sup>57</sup> He went on to discuss capital's own destruction of its conditions of production (what Jim O'Connor has named the second contradiction of capital<sup>58</sup>) as another dimension of the struggle that he had overlooked:

We ought to have acknowledged not only the necessity of defending nature against

the menace of destruction and the imminent apocalypse that hangs over it, but also the urgency of constructing new systems and conditions for re-producing the human species as well as defining the modes and timetables for revolutionary action in this direction. It is easy to see that our text was written before Chernobyl."<sup>59</sup>

His text was also written before the tumultuous events of 1989, when the Berlin wall came down and the Soviet Union dissolved. In reviewing this history, Negri discovers that it was not mainly the working class nor the middle classes linked to the bureaucracy who revolted, but intellectuals, students, scientists, and workers linked to advanced technology. "Those who rebelled, in brief, were the new kinds of producers. A social producer, manager of his [sic] own means of production and capable of supplying both work and intellectual planning, both innovative activity and a cooperative socialization."<sup>60</sup> While he doesn't say so in so many words, he essentially adopts the New Left idea of the "new working class" formulated by Serge Mallet and articulated more fully by Andre Gorz and Herbert Marcuse.

Despite his own self-criticism, Negri has become an infallible thinker for many academic Marxists in the U.S. Harry Cleaver, for example, asserted: "If Marx did not mean what Negri says he did, so much the worse for Marx."<sup>61</sup> Like Althusser and Poulantzas, Negri's proteges often invoke the authority of Marx to prove themselves correct. Negri has adopted many of Marcuse's political positions (the centrality of students and the universities to the system being only one) but he retains ideological categories from Althusser and the Third International that lead him in the same directions he took in the 1970s and 1980s that he now characterizes as erroneous. As I discuss below, Negri's ability to analyze flexibly is bounded by his dogmatic reliance on Marx's texts, a profound problem that interrupts the formulation of historically specific analysis so vital to revolutionary movements. Negri's new system would not be one in which a diversity of views were welcomed. Far from it, he continually insists on enunciating positions as though his correctness and the unity of the working class were a given, and many Negri supporters refuse to consider alternative perspectives. Negri's followers seek to portray autonomous movements solely as workers' movements and to invest Negri with the authority of THE correct theorist. My own distance from Negri is great, since to me, he represents forces of the dogmatic Left that took over popular organizations like SDS in both Germany and the U.S., leading them to irrelevance and dissolution.

Collective reinterpretation of Marxism is long overdue, especially now after the end of the Soviet experiment. After history has revealed the tragic miscalculations of Lenin, definitions of politics derived from his tradition should be particularly suspect. That many Leninist notions are so easily accepted by his contemporary party members is only an indication of their distance from freedom. The Left's distance from freedom begins within its theories. The entire corpus of Leninism -- particularly its one-point perspective that denied multiplicity of perspectives within the revolution -- needs to be fundamentally reconsidered in all its permutations. To name just one area needing attention: the role of spontaneity should be reopened with a fresh sense of its importance. With their Leninist critique of spontaneity, Soviet Communists continually sought to bring correct ideas to popular movements -- whether in Russia, China or anywhere, their theories were assumed to be universally applicable. Seeking to impose on the "masses" their own particular version of the truth, they mobilized some of the fiercest programs of death of the twentieth century -- and we have had



more than our share of these!

My critique of Negri is divided into four parts: his fetishization of production, his retention of dogmatic features of Soviet Marxism, his reduction of patriarchal domination to categories of capitalist exploitation, and his failure to enunciate fully the need for cultural as well as political forms of resistance.

### **From the Fetishization of Production to the Production of Fetish**

For Negri, the "collective work experience" is more than primary, it is the only real activity of humans. He organizes his own theoretical schema according to his notion of production and every arena of interaction is understood through that prism: "Production and society have become one and the same thing."<sup>62</sup> In contemporary societies, he understands an extension of the principles of production: "Work and life are no longer separate." Negri's mentor Althusser saw theory as a form of production; Deleuze and Guattari portray the unconscious as the producer of desire;<sup>63</sup> and now Negri tells us that revolution is a production led by "machines of struggle."<sup>64</sup> Metaphors for revolutionary organizations have had interesting formulations: *organs* of dual power, *vehicles* for the propulsion of revolutionary consciousness, a *transmission belt* of revolutionary ideas to the working class, and now Negri's "*machines of struggle*," or better, his new formulation, "*cyborg*":

The techno-scientific character of the AIDS movement and the increasingly immaterial character of social labor in general point toward the new human nature coursing through our bodies. The cyborg is now the only model available for theorizing subjectivity. Bodies without organs, humans without qualities, cyborgs: these are the subjective figures today capable of communism.<sup>65</sup>

His choice of words reveals a fetishization of the labor process also present in his idea that human beings can be so easily emptied of qualities by the social economy, so easily turned into cyborgs.<sup>66</sup> Because Negri can only think in terms of this one dimension, even his political strategy is transformed into a type of production:

Instead of new political alliances, we could say just as well: new productive cooperation. One always returns to the same point, that of production -- production of useful goods, production of communication and of social solidarity, production of aesthetic universes, production of freedom..."

Common sense interpretations of recent history called for Negri to criticize his mistakes in the past, but his *method* remains fundamentally unchanged. In the 1970s, he discovered in the *Grundrisse* the basic outlines of his theory. He quickly came to the conclusion: "Here we have a definition of the new social subject."<sup>67</sup> Using Marx as a master text, he poured reality into Marx's categories, despite Marx's own insistence that his categories existed in history, not as universal truths. No matter that Marx distanced himself from his contemporaries who, like Negri today, appropriated the mantle of Marx's thought. Marx's own insistence that he was "not a Marxist" was as much a rejection of the extraction of an abstract system from his historically-grounded analysis as it was a distancing from their political programs.

Marx's own work contains major problems. He himself acknowledged that he could not solve the problem of expanded reproduction in Volume 2 of *Capital*. No matter that over a century after Marx wrote his analysis it is abundantly clear that only by adding the "third person"<sup>68</sup> (those at

the periphery of the world system) as well as the continual incorporation of domains of life outside the system of commodity production could his model be completed. Negri ignores this problem, blindly fetishizing Marx's category of production.

In a society overwhelmed with the fetishization of commodities, is it surprising that labor-power, the essential commodity of capitalism, is itself fetishized? I feel toward Negri much as Andre Gorz wrote in another context: "The philosophy of the proletariat is a religion."<sup>69</sup> His attempt to analyze all reality from within the category of production is part of his systematic reduction of life to work, of the life-world to the system, of eros -- the life forces -- to production. That is precisely the reduction of human beings made by the existing system. If revolutionary movements in the future were to adopt these categories, they would be rendered incapable of going beyond the established system. Negri makes the whole world into a factory.

At first glance, Negri's point is well taken: women, students and other constituencies have had their everyday lives penetrated by the commodity form and mechanization; as he himself recognized in 1990, he was long overdue in understanding them as a central part of the transformative project. But he understands feminism as having demonstrated the centrality of the issue of wages, not of questioning patriarchy. Although race and patriarchy need to be understood in their own right, as autonomously existing, not simply as moments of capital, Negri's abstract categories impose a false universality: "The proletariat exists wherever labor is exploited; it therefore exists throughout the whole of society."<sup>70</sup> His understanding of production as the central category from which to understand life and the (self-)constitution of the human species reproduces the very ethos of production which he claims to oppose.

Soviet Marxism's reduction of Marxism from a revolutionary philosophy to the science of the Party led to the labor metaphysic and the fetishization of the state as the embodiment of the rule of the proletariat. To make the argument that the organization of labor is one of several species-constitutive activities (art, revolution and communication being others) does not necessarily mean abandoning the Marxist project<sup>71</sup> -- nor does adopting an anti-state position tied to conceptions of autonomy.

### **Neo-Leninism and Revolutionary Rectitude**

If all that were amiss with Negri was that he wore productivist blinders and hence was unable to understand adequately feminism and other autonomous movements, his theories would not be so problematic. But he travels quite far down the road of revolutionary rectitude, condemning those who rethink obsolete categories of analysis. He continues to regard Russia as his Mecca -- calling it, of all things, an example of democracy to be emulated in the 1990s.<sup>72</sup> Mired in the tradition of Russian Sovietism, he cannot comprehend the dictatorial character of Russian politics from Lenin and Trotsky's assault on Kronstadt to Yeltsin's turning the military loose on parliament and subsequent attacks on Grozny. Negri's perspective should be understood as part of the reason why the Left has been so singularly irrelevant in nations where democratic civil liberties exist.

While Negri insists he has gone beyond Leninism,<sup>73</sup> written a "black mark through the Third International," he retains its vocabulary and grammar. Like Soviet Communists, he employed notions of "mass and vanguard" in 1971,<sup>74</sup> and together with Felix Guattari, he reformulated their

conception of base and superstructure in 1985 as "molar antagonisms and molecular proliferation":

...one can distinguish: 'molar antagonisms': struggles in the workplace over exploitation, criticisms of the organization of work, of its form, from the perspective of liberation; 'molecular proliferation' of these isolated instances of struggle into the outside world, in which singular struggles irreversibly transform the relations between individuals and collectivities on the one hand, material nature and linguistic signs (meanings) on the other...Social, political and workplace advances condition each other. But, and this is our point, the revolutionary transformation occurs in the creation of a new subjective consciousness born of the collective work experience -- this moment is primary, all stakes are won or lost here...<sup>75</sup>

Make no mistake about it: Molar antagonism and molecular proliferation are simply new ways of articulating the Comintern's notion of base and superstructure, cadre and mass, party and class. They are a signal that his "politics of subversion" are still a politics that remains hierarchical and ultimately statist. He ends up worshiping power, not seeking to dissolve it:

After centuries of capitalist exploitation, it [the working class] is not prepared to sell itself for a bowl of lentils, or for hare-brained notions that it should free itself within the domination of capital. The enjoyment that the class seeks is the real enjoyment of power, not the gratification of an illusion.<sup>76</sup>

Here in this formulation of the "real enjoyment of power" do we see the real Negri. In the same breath, he dismisses some "attitudes as incorrect"<sup>77</sup> and believes that joyful participation in revolutionary struggle is opportunism. No doubt his fascination with power is one reason for his constantly invoking the authority of Marxism as though his interpretation of this tradition were the only correct one. By claiming Marx as his private property, he denies eros and the possibility of sensuous reason.

Fashioning himself correct, he follows in Lenin's footsteps, insofar as the Bolshevik Party refused to tolerate dissenting views within its ranks. Unlike the Leninist assumption of the vanguard party's correct line, the structure of autonomous movements -- as clearly evident in both Italy and Germany, is multi-pointed and multifarious. Negri defers discussion of Lenin's notion of the vanguard party<sup>78</sup> even though this idea wrecked havoc on the diversity of the revolutionary movement, caused monocentric leadership to crush others, and led to the crimes of Stalinism. Today, multiple centers and tolerance are fashionable and Negri appropriates them formally without substantively understanding their meaning.

Apparently he has not yet begun to rethink some of the specific ideological legacies of Soviet Marxism: I think in particular of its defamation of spontaneity, its reduction to absurdities and -- tragically for Negri -- to what he calls "red terrorism." He refers to spontaneity as "immature." Soviets in 1905 and workers councils emerged organically from autonomously-generated upsurges not led by centralized parties. Luxemburg drew an opposite conclusion from Lenin. She referred to mass strikes as:

not a crafty method discovered by subtle reasoning for the purpose of making the proletarian struggle more effective, but the method of motion of the proletarian mass, the phenomenal form of the proletarian struggle in the revolution.<sup>79</sup>

Of course, revolutionary leadership is an important factor in the outcome of spontaneously generated struggles, but first of all and primarily, popular movements must awaken according to their own timing and choice of position. As Marcuse recognized, the function of revolutionary leadership is to transform "immediate spontaneity" into "organized spontaneity,"<sup>80</sup> not to control or defame it.

Building from a model in which organization creates the revolution, Negri would analyze the "objective structures of capital" in order to find how it has molded the revolutionary subject. While that is one important dimension of such subjectivity(s), by definition, another is precisely its transcendent revolutionary theory and actions -- or else there would be no revolution. In contrast to analysis of the phenomenal form of activated tens of thousands of people as an indication of essential features of social reality -- features that potentially can transform the structure of capital -- Negri understands social movements as merely reflecting the motion of capital. In my view, social movements are creative action representing our species' urgent need to go beyond given social structures. They exist interactively with categories of production, not simply as passive molds stamped into existence by production according to determinist theory. To give one example, "autonomous work groups" were instituted in Volvo's production plant in Kamar, Sweden, as part of an attempt to devise alternatives to the alienation and heteronomy of the assembly line -- blamed for high rates of absenteeism and poor product quality.<sup>81</sup> Clearly the concept of autonomous work groups (or "self-managed teams") appeared in response to new needs appearing among the population -- best demonstrated by the New Left's impetus to self-management and group autonomy.

The historical experience of autonomous social movements beginning with the spontaneous creation of soviets in 1905, to the industrial working class expressing its autonomy in general strikes, and finally in the nascent new working class contesting control of entire cities (including factories) in 1968. In the latter case, both from within and outside the system, an assault was mounted that spontaneously generated new strata of supporters.<sup>82</sup> For example, during the massive strike of May 1970, Federal Employees for a Democratic Society appeared in Washington D.C., modelled on SDS, but not created by any revolutionary control center. Although FEDS was spontaneously formed, government officials credited it with being capable of constituting a "shadow government."

Ironically, Negri's unreflexive extension of the concept of working class to include everyone participating in radical movements permits him to rewrite history. Looking back at 1968, his history becomes a history of "workers movements." Negri postulates the emergence of the "socialized worker" in 1968.<sup>83</sup> Rather than deal with any substantive histories of these movements, he locates his analysis in the categories he imposes. Much like the various M-L groups that sought to appropriate popular New Left organizations like SDS into their parties, Negri seeks to appropriate the history of these popular upsurges into his theoretical schema.

While postmodernists insist on the unique particularity of social action and insist there is no universal, Negri's false universality destroys the particular history of the 1960s. While workers participated in these struggles, they followed the lead of students and the revolt's epicenter was in the universities, not the factories. While these struggles were not proletarian in appearance, their universality resided in the concrete demands that spontaneously emerged, in the New Left's notion

of self-management and international solidarity -- the twin aspirations of popular movements of millions of people throughout the world in 1968. They acted concretely in history, not as workers no matter how much Negri bends this category and abstracts it from any particular meaning. Immediately after the events of May 1968 in France, Marcuse was one of the few theorists who recognized the newness of the subject and was able to connect it with a theory of history:

...the location (or rather contraction) of the opposition in certain middle-class strata and in the ghettos population...is caused by the internal development of the society...the displacement of the negating forces from their traditional base among the underlying population, rather than being a sign of the weakness of the opposition against the integrating power of advanced capitalism, may well be the slow formation of a new base, bringing to the fore the new historical Subject of change, responding to new objective conditions, with qualitatively different needs and aspirations.<sup>84</sup>

Unable to deal with the practical movement of history, Negri (like Althusser and Poulantzas before him) makes shallow theoretical responses to Marcuse, invoking his own rectitude and the authority of Marx in place of substantive discussion and debate. When referring to Marcuse, Negri (just as Althusser did) scoffs at "humanism" and calls for the "the exclusion of this insipid blubbing from theory."<sup>85</sup> In his attempt to critique Marcuse and the Frankfurt school, Negri's American protege, Harry Cleaver, asserts a military analogy, certainly a context in which it is normal to stifle independent thought. Remarkably he draws upon the movie Patton to develop a critique of the Frankfurt School:

If Patton had read that book of his declared opponent [Rommel] the way Critical Theorists read bourgeois authors, he would still have been sitting in his quarters writing 'critiques' of this point or that when Rommel rolled over him with his army.<sup>86</sup>

Cleaver's reliance on the military analogy is a projection of his masculine identity onto the "working class" and in so doing a perversion of the revolutionary project into a simple question of brute force. Precisely such reduction of the working class to brutes is part of the reason why autonomous workers' movements appeared: Normal working-class people refused to tolerate their being treated as foot soldiers by self-appointed Leftist generals. The working class rejected idiotic Left theory whose permeations and twists excluded them from being considered human beings with needs outside those of the factory and minds of their own. At a time when working people want to escape the engulfment of their lives by the system, workerist ideas of revolution do little more than assert the omnipresent character of the system of production. The refusal of autonomous movements to be led by vanguard parties reveals the primacy of self-organization and politically defined self-activity.

### **Patriarchy and Capitalism**

Negri's fetishization of production reifies Marx's notion that the working-class was the transcendental subject-object of history. In the 1970s, workerism was an obstacle to the autonomous movement's unity and progress (as I discussed with respect to the Rimini conference of Lotta Continua.)<sup>87</sup> Interpretations of the autonomous movements pose the same problem because

some historians insist on interpreting *Autonomia* as a workers' movement, ignoring women's struggles and the counterculture as other sources of autonomous politics, in part because of Negri's writings. His reliance on the prism developed by Marx for the industrial phase of capitalism means he understands the vital post-Fordist forces of militant opposition as "workers" whose aims are economic. If the cultural dimensions of this movement had been comprehended as potentially revolutionary in their own right, without trying to fit them into his category of production, it might have been possible to root strategic energies in these counterinstitutions and autonomous formations. In an interview with **Le Monde**, Negri showed he was aware of his failure in this regard:

We were too extremist and that hindered us in creating a real alternative movement like the one the Greens in Germany built, which best survived in Europe. We didn't always understand the meaning of a strong anchoring in the masses and certain links with institutions.<sup>88</sup>

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 above, Italian and German feminists were compelled by the self-righteousness of their male "comrades" to assert their autonomy from the Left. The significance of feminism to the subsequent workers and youth movements in Italy and Germany is noteworthy and could not possibly be ignored unless one's categories of analysis obstructed one's vision.<sup>89</sup> Feminists spoke in the "I" mode, not on behalf of others (the "workers" or the "people") and their ability to return continually to the reality of their own needs became an essential feature of autonomous movements. Feminism was exemplary, particularly in Italy, where as early as 1966, women articulated their need for autonomy.<sup>90</sup>

One of the needs of revolutionary theory today is to understand patriarchy's inner laws of motion with the same rigor Marx applied to those of capitalism. By failing to incorporate an analysis of patriarchy that treats its forms of domination as significant alongside but not reduced to capitalist exploitation, Negri obviates the urgency of such endeavors. Just as capital has various phases (primitive, industrial, post-Fordist) so patriarchy has its own history which only recently fused with that of capital.<sup>91</sup> Patriarchy has at least two different forms in history: Originally, the man owned his wife and children and was entitled to trade them or sell them. Hegel reminded us that fathers in Rome had the right even to kill their children.<sup>92</sup> In the second form, the wife and children are not legally owned but they reproduce the legal structure of domination within their own character structures.<sup>93</sup>

Another issue needing consideration but short-circuited by Negri is the relation between the many kinds of oppression. Radical feminists generally argue that patriarchy is the original form of domination from which capitalism and all forms of domination originate. Most ecologists disagree, asserting the domination of nature as the original form, and Marxists have traditionally understood class exploitation as fundamental. The interplay between all of these forms of domination is what is brought to the table by the rise of new social movements and identity politics (as I discuss in the next chapter). From the perspective of insurgent social movements, none of these forms of oppression can be prioritized as more important than others. All must be understood and subverted for a free society to exist. Workerism is a partial understanding of the universe of freedom. By positing revolution only in terms of categories of production, Negri contains social movements within the process of production, thereby destroying their autonomy from that logic. His mechanical

subsumption of all forms of oppression to the category of work negates the need to abolish patriarchy and the domination of nature alongside capitalism. His workerist politics are thus a suppression of a different form of class politics (a universal class politics) that understand the importance of all these forms of oppression and seeks a common resolution of them. Negri's fetishization of production categories is the theoretical equivalent of Soviet suppression of women's issues as a "secondary contradiction." His one-dimensionality magically makes issues of racism and sexism within the ranks of the working class vanish.

He collapses all categories of crisis into a single concept of exploitation, just like he understands all of society through the prism of production. But his facile incorporation of all life to that category is problematic. He subsumes the patriarchal **domination** of women into the phenomenological form of **exploitation**. The latter is distinguished by a different object: the private cannot simply be made public (as Stalin sought to collectivize land) by fiat. It has its own particularity, its own laws of motion. Patriarchal oppression is not equivalent to class exploitation, no matter how much the concept of the social factory is invoked. What occurs between men and women under the name of patriarchy is not exactly the same as what bosses/owners do to workers. What is the difference between the unpaid housewife and maid service? For Negri, they are both part of the system of social labor, and their only difference is that one is paid (reimbursed the exchange value of her labor-power), the other not. But insofar as a person works without pay, two possibilities exist: The work is not alienated because it is her own; or the form of exploitation is non-capitalist -- feudal, for example, where a portion of the income generated is allocated to the tenant. Neither of these options is the same as wage-labor.

Women's liberation from housework will not occur through the path of "wages for housework" but through the abolition of housework as women's domain through the reconstitution of communal households as associations of cooperating equals who share necessary tasks, eroticize them, turn them into play.<sup>94</sup>

### **Autonomy and Freedom**

In 1985 and again in 1990, Negri defined the five tasks awaiting movements of the future in productivistic terms:

- the concrete redefinition of the work force
- taking control over and liberating the time of the work day
- a permanent struggle against the repressive functions of the State
- constructing peace
- organizing machines of struggle capable of assuming these tasks.<sup>95</sup>

In the first place, the system itself has already been compelled to mitigate the insanity of the arms race, and technology (robotics) has led numerous major corporations to shorten the work week. More importantly, where are central issues such as: developing interracial bonds capable of withstanding government manipulation and other stresses of movement activity; creating post-patriarchal human beings with the capacity to live (and work) non-hierarchically; protecting the environment; building counterinstitutions and liberating public space; establishing communes to transform everyday life. He has no notion of changing human beings or of cultural revolution; instead he appropriates "the social" into a schematic productionist model. For Negri, "There exists

no consciousness apart from militancy and organization."<sup>96</sup>

The system's assault on autonomous time and space of the life-world intensifies. Most targeted: the young. Proposals to expand the school year in the U.S. from 180 days to 195 (as in Germany) or 225 days (as in Japan) are gathering momentum. Negri's fetishization of production renders him incapable of comprehending the significance of youth as a non-production strata so vitally important to our future. As young people are drawn into violence and death drugs, Negri calmly remarks:

Let us be clear: violence is the normal state of relations between men; it is also the key to progress in the forces of production.<sup>97</sup>

How could such a statement be published by Negri? In the first place, his use of the term "men" is unintentionally exclusive of women. Moreover he defames nature. Abundant anthropological evidence of cooperation and group life exists. Here is the crucial point: Bourgeois thought takes the categories of capitalism and projects them as valid for all time, a feat accomplished above by Negri regarding violence, since it is capitalism and struggles for scarcity that pit humans against each other.

The subversion of politics -- the complete uprooting of authoritarianism in our everyday lives -- begins by changing our assumptions and includes a restructuring of the ideological categories which prefigure our praxis. Locating the source of revolutionary movements in the circulation and forms of capital, Negri reduces human factors to economic facts. By way of contrast I understand *autonomy as the phenomenological form of revolution*. Emptied of its relation to social movements, autonomy can mean many things unrelated to my use of it: the bourgeois-individualist notion of the individual so essential to the free market and national (or ethnic) independence. As an internal organizing principle of movements, however, it has two dimensions: the appearance of movement constituencies like women, minorities, ecologists, workers and other self-determined identities in relation to parties and unions; and the independence of collective decision-making within these formations. While liberty refers to the freedom to choose between available options, autonomy is an internally generated aspiration that has appeared spontaneously within a variety of movements. Liberty is more a function of the situatedness of the subject and the tolerance of power, while autonomy demands self-movement no matter what kind of society we live in. As such, autonomy is a universal form of revolutionary change, of creation of new categories that go beyond the existing reality. Reducing this human capacity to a categorical imperative of production effectively empties freedom of its sensuous human content. If freedom is to mean anything, it includes the subordination of production to the whole range of human needs, not as Negri insists, the subsumption of revolution by production.

From the vantage point of the 19th century, Marx and Engels understood the relationship between freedom and necessity as vitally important. Viewed from the perspective of the 21st century, the dialectic of autonomy and freedom becomes salient. In the former case, industrialization and automation had yet to transform the species' infantile dependence upon natural cycles. Thus, positivism's insight that human relationships should be modeled upon natural science ones had a material basis. A contemporary understanding of freedom incorporates autonomy as a necessary means of dealing responsibly with our species' new-found capacity for technical domination of nature and society. Without a recognition of the centrality of autonomy, our



destruction of natural ecosystems and social life-worlds is an unreflexive consequence.

### **TOWARD A RATIONALITY OF THE HEART**

In a world where the "sanity" of the monotonous discourse of established politics is as normal as fresh outbreaks of bloody wars in places like Bosnia, as normal as daily misery for hundreds of millions of people at the periphery of the world system, is it any wonder that the Autonomes appear bizarre, even insane, to those bent on enjoying affluent consumerism amid political stability? Within societies of material wealth but spiritual poverty, those who act according to a new logic, an erotic logic simultaneously passionate and intelligent, cannot help but appear as other-worldly. The Greens' integration into the established political system has made them look like any other mainstream party leaving the Autonomes more marginalized than ever, themselves questioning whether their actions will continue, whether their intervention during the pogrom in Rostock in 1992 was their last gasp.<sup>98</sup>

Inner meanings collapse in a world dominated by consumeristic categories of existence, and attempts to engage in autonomous activities become increasingly difficult. As the capacity for autonomous individuality shrinks, inner nature is colonized, turning eros into an arena for profit. The instrumentalization of eros is a theme taken up by Alberto Melucci:

A 'medicalized' sexuality entrusted to the experts, a body which has become a 'scientific' object, an eros reified in the rules of fashion and in the exigencies of industry: advanced capitalism requires the notion of such a body, a body as object, deprived of its libidinal and aggressive charge, of its capacity for eros and delirium...The body as libido must be neutralized and deprived of its potential to menace the system. There is no place for play and eros, but only for the regulated pleasure of a sexuality which has become a kind of gymnastic training for orgasm.<sup>99</sup>

So long as apathy defines daily life for the majority, those who choose to live differently have little choice but the alternatives of confronting the system or escaping it through exhilarating other-worldly states. The "otherness" of autonomous movements is most blatantly clear in their acts of "violence," their outlandish dress and their drug use. Without talking with each other or knowing each other's history, the Metropolitan Indians in Italy, Christiania's communards,<sup>100</sup> and the Black Panther Party<sup>101</sup> all publicly developed identical outlooks on drugs. Embracing "life drugs" (cannabis, mescaline, LSD and mushrooms), they completely rejected "death drugs" (speed, heroin, cocaine and their derivatives) and acted to purge their communities of the latter. No doubt this issue will appear trivial to some analysts, but it is significant since it indicates autonomous -- and illegal -- actions of individuals with regard to themselves and a rejection of government control of inner reality.<sup>102</sup> The preservation and expansion of individual liberty is a beginning step without which no form of autonomy is possible. Without a reworking of the psyche and reinvigoration of the spirit, can there even be talk of revolution?

On the one side, the system colonizes eros, turning love into sex, and sex into pornography. Autonomous movements respond by recusing eros from its commodification, expanding its space, moving beyond patriarchal relationships, beyond conceptions of love as physical love. The politics of eros infuse everyday life with a content that subverts its would-be colonizers and preserves it as a reservoir of the life-force. In contrast to Negri's cyborgs, another view of the role of movement

participation is to preserve and expand the domain of the heart in social relations -- of all that is uniquely human, all that stands opposed to machine culture.

Nowhere in the discourse of what passes for political rationality today does such a notion of politics get validated. Individual transformation of inner reality has been a project of aesthetic avant gardes rather than vanguard political parties. After cubists painted objects as they thought them, not as they saw them, aesthetic rules dating from the Renaissance were shattered, forever altering assumptions about one-point perspective and realistic representation as beautiful. Cubism's transformation of rules inexorably led to more overtly political challenges to aesthetic discourse. Reacting to the brutal application of modern technology to war, Dada broke free of the straight-jacket of deadly seriousness that linked art and war. Holding up ready-made objects as examples of "artistic" accomplishment, the most notorious of which was Duchamp's urinal, Dada mocked the tight-lipped mentality of science, instead emphasizing chance and spontaneity as the basis for rationally conceived normative standards. When surrealists uncovered the realm of fantasy, dreams and the unconscious, they explored terrain that contradicted preconceived notions of the "proper" subject matter of art.

Can future social movements learn from these examples? Will they be able to go beyond the boundaries inherited from previous radicals whose best efforts have only strengthened the engines of government? Socialist realism interpreted the relationship between art and politics to mean reducing art to the level of the mundane, to turning art into an instrument of politics. It may well be that the opposite is now required: engaging aesthetic rationality in the process of political transformation, of turning politics into art, everyday life into an aesthetically governed domain. Already youthful autonomous movements have embodied principles first introduced by artists. From the appearance of costumed Indians in Italian cities to nude marches in Zurich and Berlin, autonomous movements contain elements of improvisation reminiscent of jazz, of absurd transcendence following from Dada, and of release of pent-up psychic needs modeled on surrealism. These actions speak volumes to the idea that a genuine revolution would be one in which art becomes life. Commenting on the youth movement in Zurich, Max Schmid noted that:

Despite all these many congruencies in the motivation, expression and forms of appearance, there exists an essential historical difference between the current movement and DADA: The movement of 1916 called itself DADA; the movement of 1980/81 is DADA.<sup>103</sup>

The cumulative effects of dozens of groups transforming regional culture and daily life along the lines of aesthetic avant gardes could well prepare the majority to take control of their lives. The common acceptance of the status quo, not its rejection, conditions the rough and tinged appearance of autonomous movements. At best, the Autonomes are the kernels of freely determined social relations, but they are also imprinted with the violence and cultural values of the existing social order. They remain in an infantile stage, smearing excrement in yuppie restaurants, betraying friends for small-minded political reasons, and living in groups replete with purges, expulsions and recriminations. Insofar as such dynamics parallel the less well-known history of surrealism,<sup>104</sup> the history of aesthetic avant gardes has already merged with political activism.<sup>105</sup> If the present movement is understood as a small and transitional phase of a larger process in which future autonomous movements can be imagined as involving a majority, the exhilaration concocted

through drugs and the otherness constructed by violent and shocking behavior may become unnecessary.

Although often posed as dark and uncontrollable, inner nature may be an ally in such a revolutionary project. The hierarchical imperative of the existing world system is contradicted by our natural tendencies to favor equality and to love freedom. "Man's law of nature is equality," wrote Euripides, a law obvious to anyone who has ever divided candy or cake among children. Today's vast global inequality contradicts this natural propensity, no matter how rationalized its justification (and structures) may be. The unreasonableness of modern rationality originates in its Cartesian categories, specifically its denial of the body. An important dimension of the project of building a society upon the basis of equality and autonomy is the formulation of a rationality of the heart.<sup>106</sup> The development of a passionate rationality that is reasonable begins with the liberation of passion from the straitjacket imposed by its vilification, of misogynist notions of reason.<sup>107</sup> As action becomes part of theory (an idea I discuss in the next chapter), social movements become vehicles for the release of psychic needs and the healing of wounds inflicted by the brutality of contemporary society. In the words of one psychoanalyst sympathetic to the autonomous movement in Zurich, participation in movements can be itself liberating:

Feelings of depression are going to be acted out in individual and collective actions but also verbalized in small and large groups and *worked through*. Sexual and aggressive reactions are going to be less repressed; instinctual blockage and sublimation are possible but not yet very pronounced...If it is true, that late capitalist industrial society, through the increasing dissolution of family structures, value systems and positive models, destabilizes the narcissistic balance of its subjects, then the youthful subculture and in particular the movements that have emerged from it should be understood as collective self-healing processes. "Only tribes will survive." [a slogan of the movement] From this perspective, I understand better the Great Refusal, the reactive and compensatory overemphasis on autonomy.<sup>108</sup>

Reintegrating emotions and the body into politics demands a reconsideration of the role of militance. Popular violence can function as an important vehicle for the reintegration of happiness into politics. If as Ngo Vinh Long maintains,<sup>109</sup> during the costly struggle by the Vietnamese against the U.S., joy and romanticism were pervasive among the resistance fighters, should we not hesitate to criticize the Autonomes for their joy in street fighting? Political struggle should and can be joyous.

The release of deeply rooted anger and hostility alongside love and solidarity presents specific problems demanding careful reconsideration of the role of violence. Liberating violence, i.e. an entire range of actions not directed at hurting individuals (from active "non-violent" occupation of public space to militant defense of movement spaces like the *Hüttendorf*), reinjects passion and negates the calculating disposition that has made politics deadly serious. The very fact that so few police are hurt in the demonstrations described in this book when compared to any one riot in a U.S. city in the 1960s testifies to their anti-violent character.<sup>110</sup> And who can fault those who fight back against sadistic police armed with riot gear beating up helpless demonstrators? While the immediate benefits go beyond self-defense and protection of friends (i.e. the release of frustrated liberatory impulses), the costs of militance are often paid later, when violence creeps

back into everyday life or paranoia interferes with accepting new friends and relaxing with old ones.

Another problem involved with the tactics of resistance is the escalation of militance: From rallies to civil disobedience, civil disobedience to riots, and riots to armed guerrilla actions, the more militant action grabs the headlines and stakes out the macho high ground. Two watersheds exist: from pacifism to militant resistance; and from massive street actions to guerrilla actions. As we have seen in our case studies, guerrilla actions often function to create spectators out of activists and increase the government's repressive tactics. While some people may celebrate attacks on the rich and powerful, when considered in relation to the building of an activated movement, these tactics are often counterproductive -- even when they are linked to ongoing movements.<sup>111</sup> Militant popular resistance, on the other hand, can function to build up direct democracy and as a motor force driving larger popular mobilizations. In some cases, a willingness to defend neighborhoods militantly has been successful -- as shown by the examples of the Hafenstrasse and Leipzig's Connewitz alternative community.<sup>112</sup> In the history of autonomous movements in the first five chapters, the significance of neighborhoods where the movement has a presence (Christiania and Kreuzberg, for instance) and the usefulness of militance in spreading the revolt and radicalizing it should be clear enough. While the escalating spiral of repression and resistance often leads to armed resistance, subversive movements can reorder this hierarchy of resistance by keeping clear the goal of increasing popular participation in determining the form and content of public space. Rather than conceiving the goal of autonomy as attacking the heart of the state, the objective of revolutionary movement must be to subvert even the forces of order, to win over the police and the army to the idea that they should act (and be treated) like erotic human beings. At a minimum, movements need to split the forces of order.

In another context, Frantz Fanon similarly discussed violence. Approaching the issue from his psychopolitical vantage point, Fanon understood the function of violence as a necessary procedure in the reconstruction of society:

Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organized and educated by its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them. Without that struggle, without that knowledge of the practice of action, there's nothing but a fancy-dress parade and the blare of trumpets. There's nothing save a minimum of readaptation, a few reforms at the top, a flag waving; and down there at the bottom an undivided mass, still living in the middle ages, endlessly marking time.<sup>113</sup>

As Fanon used to say, violence alone makes it possible for people to understand social truths that otherwise remain hidden and to transcend conditions that restrain us -- or rather, that lead to our own self-constraint.

Having made these remarks on the role of violence, I must qualify them. Violence for the sake of violence, whether "Chaos Days" in Göttingen or Devil's Night in Detroit, reproduces the problem of aggression for the sake of itself. Violence for the sake of violence reproduces the oppressor, but violence against neo-Nazis, for example, is a self-liberating act for young Germans. Beginning with the American New Left, the distinction between violence against property and violence against people indicated a rational release of passionate opposition. Despite the seeming irrelevance of such considerations in a context where when the apparent stability of consumer

society has brought us to the "end of history," the historical experiences of social movements at the end of the twentieth century (shown once again in measures that sparked the strikes in France at the end of 1995) leave little doubt that modern conceptions of rationality are often unreasonable.

## NOTES Chapter 6

Part of this chapter was presented at the Rethinking Marxism Conference at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in November 1992 and subsequently appeared as "Alternative Forms of Organization in German Social Movements," in **New Political Science** #24-25 (Spring/Summer 1993). I would like to thank Victor Wallis, Markus Mohr, Susanne Peters, Danny Faber, Roger Gottlieb, Alan Rudy, members of the Boston editorial collective of **Capitalism Nature Socialism**, James Herrod, Gary Zabel and Yaacov Garb for their criticisms of earlier drafts.

- 1..From an Autonomen leaflet in Wiesbaden as quoted in *Verfassungsschutzbericht* (1989) p. 63.
- 2..**Taz**, June 28, 1982, p. 15.
- 3..Matthias Manrique, *Marginalisierung und Militanz: Jugendliche Bewegungsmilieus im Aufruhr* (Campus Verlag, 1992) p. 166.
- 4..Winfried Kretschmer und Dieter Rucht, "Beispiel Wackersdorf: Die Protestbewegung gegen die Wiederaufarbeitungsanlage," in Roland Roth und Dieter Rucht (Herausgeber), *Neue soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1987) p. 150. This definition was written before the shootings at the Startbahn.
- 5..**Radikal** #123 (1983) p. 12.
- 6..quoted in Geronimo, *Feuer und Flamme: Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart der Autonomen* (ID-Archiv, 1990) pp. 103-4.
- 7..Such theoretical statements often first appear as xeroxed essays. If they resonate widely, they then are reprinted in the pages of scene magazines, and if enough discussion of them occurs, sometimes the original text and several responses will be published as a booklet. For the Heinz Schenk statements and discussion, see Geronimo (u.a.) *Feuer und Flamme 2: Kritiken, Reflexionen und Anmerkungen zur Lage der Autonomen* (Edition ID-Archiv, 1992).
- 8..One German Autonomen noted that in Padua, Italy even in 1977, there was not one bar linked to the autonomous movement, clearly a factor aiding repression of the movement. See Tecumseh 2, "Von kulturellen und sozialen Klassen," in *Feuer und Flamme 2*, p. 29.
- 9..Usually associated with Leninism, such a view is starkly mirrored in anarchist Murray Bookchin's magnum opus, *The Ecology of Freedom*. Bookchin concludes that the role of humans is to provide "...the rationality that abets natural diversity and integrates the workings of nature with an effectiveness, certainty, and directedness that is essentially incomplete in nonhuman nature." Bookchin's language, invoking concepts like certainty and directness, smacks of scientific bias. Moreover, his assumption that rationality is essentially unnatural posits humans outside our natural origins. A better understanding of rationality is that it develops out of Nature. Face-to-face democracy of hunter-gatherers is part of the natural ecosystem that should be preserved and expanded. As I suggest below, intuition and cooperation are values that may lead to liberation far more than scientific rationality. Autonomous democracy is a step in the direction of politics becoming based on face-to-face interaction.

Bookchin has never tired of criticizing the Autonomen, although many younger German activists elevated him to a father figure. In 1980, Bookchin obliged his admirers, making an appearance at the UFA-Gelände in Berlin in which he went on at length about the "anarchist movement in the U.S." being massive and active when he referred to local activists whose

ideological affinity had nothing to do with anarchism. In the same fashion, Progressive Labor Party members used to arrive at large demonstrations with their banners, take photographs and then publish them in their party newspaper with a caption naming all those present as members of PL. Like these Leninists, anarchists like Bookchin apparently also feel a compulsion to justify their political ideology through a presentation of political reality that is less than accurate. This is another instance where anarchism and autonomy are exceptionally incompatible. More often than not, autonomists understate their own movement's value, bemoan its setbacks and fail to comprehend their victories (like Wackersdorf).

Like autonomous movements, anarchists seek to dissolve the state, but since the early part of the century, with the notable exception of Republican Spain, anarchism has not developed popular participation. The "other international," founded by anarcho-syndicalists in Berlin in 1922 had a third road strategy that was neither Leninist nor Social Democratic.

10..See my *Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (South End Press, 1987).

11..Benjamin Zablocki, *The Joyful Community* (Penguin, 1971).

12..Jane Mansbridge, *Beyond Adversary Democracy* (University of Chicago Press, 1983) p. 21.

13..For a concise and insightful understanding of the value of Marxism, see Victor Wallis, "Marxism and the U.S. Left: Thoughts for the 1990s," **Monthly Review** (June 1991) pp. 5-14.

14..The earliest book to attempt to transplant the Greens without their social movement creators was Fritjof Capra and Charlene Spretnak, *Green Politics: The Global Promise* (Dutton, 1984). The authors also failed to discuss American racism as a dynamic factor and to include considerations of Rainbow electoral politics here.

15..Lutz Mez, "Von den Bürgerinitiativen zu den Grünen," in Roth und Rucht, p. 276.

16..Joschka Fischer, "Für einen grünen Radikalreformismus," in Wolfgang Kraushaar (Herausgeber) *Was sollen die Grünen im Parlament?* (Verlag Neue Kritik, 1983) p. 35.

17..Andrei Markovits and Philip Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (Oxford University Press, 1993) p. 217.

18..Antje Vollmer, "Das Privileg der ersten, viele Fehler zu machen," in Ralf Fücks (hg.), *Sind die Grünen noch zu retten?* (Rowohlt, 1991) p. 15.

19..Ulrich Beck, "Die Grünen in der Weltrisikogesellschaft," in Fücks, p. 186.

20.. In the United States, there was prolonged debate about whether or not the German Greens were simply the product of the 5% rule. While there is considerable evidence that they are, one is still left with the problem of explaining why in Germany there are also vibrant autonomous, feminist and other "new" social movements.

21..Werner Hülsberg, *The German Greens: A Social and Political Profile* (Verso 1988) pp. 108, 118; **The Week in Germany**, January 20, 1995.

22..**The Week in Germany**, February 24, 1995.

23..Petra Kelly, *Um Hoffnung kämpfen* (Lamuv Verlag, 1983) p. 31. Unfortunately this section, like many others, was deleted by her English translator and publishers.

24..Kelly, pp. 92, 165.

25..Thomas Scharf, *The German Greens: Challenging the Consensus* (Berg Publishers, 1994) pp. 67-8.

26..quoted in Markovits and Gorski, p. 203.

- 27..Brand, p. 257.
- 28..as quoted in Hülsberg, p. 173.
- 29..A more judicious account of Fischer's politics can be found in Wolfgang Kraushaar, "Realpolitik als Ideologie: Von Ludwig August von Rochau zu Joschka Fischer," **1999** (3/88) pp. 79-137.
- 30..Sara Parkin, *Green Parties: An International Guide* (Heretic Books, 1989) p. 135.
- 31..Markovits and Gorski, p. 212. There are 105 nuclear power plants in the U.S.
- 32..Markovits and Gorski, p.213.
- 33..For an analysis of this government, see Klaus Ronneberger and Roger Keil, "Riding the Tiger of Modernization: Reform Politics in Frankfurt," **Capitalism Nature Socialism** #14 (June 1993) pp. 19-50.
- 34..Ronneberger and Keil, p. 33.
- 35..*Feuer und Flamme* 2, p. 157.
- 36..Parkin, p. 130.
- 37..Markovits and Gorski, p. 220.
- 38..Markovits convincingly argues that nearly all major shifts in SPD policy in the 1980s have occurred in response to pressure mounted by the Greens. See "The German Left: Between a Crisis of Identity and Orthodoxy," *New Political Science* (#24-25) Spring-Summer 1993.
- 39..In the United States, no state recognizes marriages between couples of the same sex, and the controversy which would engulf the proponent of such a measure in Congress no doubt helps to prevent it. Here is a strong indication of one of the advantages of the system of proportional representation.
- 40..See M. Weg und O. Stein (Herausgeber) *Macht macht Frauen stark: Frauenpolitik für die 90er Jahre* (VSA-Verlag, 1988).
- 41..See Marita Haibach, "Rot-grüne Frauenpolitik in Hessen," in Weg und Stein, pp. 172-179.
- 42..Petra Kelly, pp. 33-52.
- 43..Borken, Biblis-C, Kalkar, Nukem (Hanau) and Hamm's thorium reactor.
- 44..See Max Weber, *The City* (Free Press, 1958).
- 45..For one of the most coherent analyses of participatory democracy, see Carol Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1970).
- 46..Examples in the U.S. include the Clamshell Alliance, an anti-nuclear power organization in New England, in which consensus decision-making was regularly used. For discussion of its merits and problems, see Barbara Epstein, *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution: Nonviolent Direct Action in the 1970s and 1980s* (University of California Press, 1991) and Denise Levertov, "With the Seabrook National Guard in Washington, 1978," in *Light Up the Cave* (New Directions, 1981).
- 47..I am indebted to Mansbridge for her excellent book, *Beyond Adversary Democracy* for providing insight into these issues. See pp. 10, 32.
- 48..Tacitus, *On Britain and Germany* translated by H. Mattingly (Penguin Books, 1965) pp. 109-110.
- 49..See John Ehrenberg, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (Routledge, 1993).
- 50..See Chapter 2 of my book, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968*. From the Reformation and the English revolution, the synthesis of liberty and equality defined the



meaning of freedom. In the twentieth century, however, with notable exceptions like council communists and Luxemburg, the two concepts became increasingly opposed to each other.

51..Klaus von Dohnanyi, *Education and Youth Employment in the Federal Republic of Germany: A Study Prepared for the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education* (1978).

52..See *Feuer und Flamme* for a typical example.

53..See my critique of Althusser in Chapter 6 of *The Imagination of the New Left*.

54..Felix Guattari and Toni Negri, *Communists Like Us* (Semiotext, 1990) pp. 122-3. Hereafter referred to as CLU.

55..Herbert Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Beacon Press, 1972) p. 9.

56..CLU pp. 153-4. He is referring to a text he published together with Felix Guattari in 1985. Long before that time, the Autonomen had consolidated themselves throughout central Europe (Holland, Switzerland and Germany). The autonomous women's movement had also created counterinstitutions and campaigns against criminalization of abortion. Negri's silence about these movements is predicated upon his failure to yet internalize an understanding of the importance of non-factory based movements.

57.. "On Capitalism's Present Crisis...Danger and Opportunity," Harry Clever debates Hillel Ticktin (London: **Radical Chains**, 1994, #4) p.15.

58..Jim O'Connor, "The Second Contradiction of Capital: Causes and Consequences," (CNS Conference Papers, 1991).

59..CLU p. 155

60..CLU p. 172.

61..Clever's introduction to Toni Negri, *Revolution Retrieved* (Red Notes, 1988) p. xx. Hereafter referred to as Rev. Ret.

62..CLU pp. 22 and 119.

63..Mark Poster makes this point in his introduction to Jean Baudrillard's *The Mirror of Production* (Telos Press, 1975) p. 3.

64..CLU pp. 111 and 120.

65..Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Labor of Dionysus: A Critique of the State-Form* (University of Minnesota Press, 1994) p. 13.

66..Negri is not alone in his cheerful adoption of the cyborg identity. See Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Routledge, 1991).

67..Rev. Ret. p. 137.

68..See Rosa Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* (Monthly Review Press, 1968).

69..Andre Gorz, *Farewell to the Working Class* (South End Press, 1982) p. 21.

70..Negri, *The Politics of Subversion* (Polity Press, 1989) p. 178.

71..This is where Baudrillard ends up in *The Mirror of Production*.

72..CLU, p. 170.

73..CLU, p. 103.

74..Rev. Ret. p. 132,

75..CLU, pp. 18-9.

76..Rev. Ret. p. 138.

77..ibid.

- 78..CLU p. 163.
- 79..Rosa Luxemburg, *The Mass Strike* (Harper and Row, 1971) pp. 44-5. Emphasis in the original.
- 80..Marcuse, CRR, p. 47.
- 81..After a decade of experimentation, it was determined that such autonomous work groups helped Volvo reduce variable capital by 40%, increased inventory turnover from 9 times/year to 22 and cut the number of defects by 40%. A new plant in Uddevalla was designed where work teams will be responsible for an even a greater variety of tasks. See Jeffrey Davidson, "A Way to Work in Concert," **Management World**, March 1986, pp. 9-12.
- 82..I consider this an instance of the "eros effect."
- 83..See Negri, *The Politics of Subversion*, p. 141 and CLU, p. 68.
- 84..Herbert Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation* (Beacon Press, 1969) p. 52.
- 85..Negri, *Marx Beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse* (Autonomedia, 1991) p. 154; also see *The Subversion of Politics*, p. 25.
- 86..Harry Cleaver, *Reading Capital Politically* (University of Texas Press, 1979) p. 42.
- 87..For discussion of workerism, see Sidney Tarrow, "Constructing Meanings Through Action," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* edited by Aldon Morris and Carol Mueller (Yale University Press, 1992).
- 88..quoted in Bodo Schulze, "Autonomia--Vom Neoleninismus zur Lebensphilosophie," in *Archiv für die Geschichte des Widerstands und der Arbeit* (Bochum, 1989) pp. 141-170.
- 89..Michael Ryan's introduction to Negri's *Marx Beyond Marx* completely ignores feminism's influence on Italian *Autonomia*. He does not even understand the meaning of autonomy to include the autonomous women's movement.
- 90.."DEMAU (Demystifying Authority) Manifesto," in *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader* edited by Paola Bono and Sandra Kemp (Basil Blackwell, 1991) pp. 34-5.
- 91..See Mary Lou Emery's work in *Introduction to Critical Sociology* by George Katsiaficas and R. George Kirkpatrick (Irvington Publishers, 1987) pp. 66-131.
- 92..Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (Oxford University Press, 1952) p. 266.
- 93..See Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory* (Herder and Herder, 1972) pp. 105-106).
- 94..*Farewell to the Working Class*, p.6.
- 95..CLU, pp. 146-7.
- 96..*The Politics of Subversion*, p. 148.
- 97..Rev. Ret. p. 131.
- 98..See *Autonomie-Kongress Reader*, Teil II (1995) p. 10.
- 99..Alberto Melucci, "The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach," **Social Science Information** 19,2 (1980) p. 221.
- 100..At every entrance to Christiania, signs are posted which read: "Speed, heroin and cocaine are forbidden..." At the same time, Christiania is one of the few places in Denmark where hashish is publicly available for sale.
- 101..See pp. 265-279 of *The Imagination of the New Left* for the complete documents of the Revolutionary Peoples Constitutional Convention. The reference to drugs is on pp. 267-8.
- 102..In 1994, Germany's high court adopted the "Amsterdam solution," ruling that small quantities of hashish should not be criminally sanctioned. Apparently, these jurists hope that other-worldly

states might channel energies away from activism.

103..A lengthy comparison of Dada and the Zurich movement, including the participation of old Dadaists, is contained in *Die Zürcher Unruhe 2: Analysen, Reportagen, Berichte* (Orte-Verlag, 1981). Schmid's observation can be found on p. 42.

104..Helena Lewis, *The Politics of Surrealism* (Paragon House, 1988).

105..Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture: Utopian Currents from Lettrism to Class War* (Aporia Press, 1988). Although often overlooked, Kommune 1 and Subversiv Aktion were noteworthy formations in the early stages of the German movement.

106..In two insightful articles on a seventeenth century African philosopher, Teodos Kiros shows that Zara Yaqoub developed such a rationality during the same time Descartes split mind and body. See "The Meditations of Zara Yaqoub," Boston University African Studies Center, 1994 and "Doing African Philosophy: Claude Sumner's Work on Ethiopian Philosophy," **New Political Science** #32 (Summer 1995).

107..When the autonomous women's movement refused to work with men, Ingrid Schmidt-Harsbach organized feminist adult education classes in Berlin. She wanted to get "women to speak and perform together with men." In this context, she felt that women's envisioned goals "still corresponded to received sex-specific ideals, to the extent that the 'logic of men' was to be opposed by a 'logic of the heart.'" In so doing, she sought to break with the reasonableness of male discourse from within its reality. See Ingrid Schmidt-Harzbach, "Women's Discussion Groups at Adult Education Institutions in Berlin," in Edith Altbach, et. al. (editors), *German Feminism: Readings in Politics and Literature* (SUNY Press, 1984) pp. 342-348.

108..Psychoanalyst Emilio Modena in *Zürcher Unruhe 2*, p. 12. Susanne Peters helped with the translation. When movements are vehicles for working through psychic issues, it follows that the repression of such movements results in neurotic symptoms and even psychotic behavior. Yesterday the Black Panthers were all but exterminated. Today the violence of young people in the ghettos is apolitical, out of control.

109..Conversation with Ngo Vinh Long and Billy Nessen, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Summer 1995.

110..Kriesi (p. 220) points out that in Zurich in 1980, only 120 minor police injuries were reported during over 250 special details involving 244,000 overtime hours. Only 33 officers missed even a few days' work because of injuries. Moreover, in a country where the majority of young men had weapons at home, never did any of the so-called "Chaoten" use them.

111..In the widely-discussed Autonomes "Lupus" paper, a similar point was made regarding the wave of sabotage that destroyed more than 150 power pylons carrying electricity from nuclear reactors in the mid 1980s. While not against sabotage as a mass action, the authors worried that isolated small-group actions took energy away from developing a militant movement. See "Stand autonomer Bewegung: Langlauf oder Abfahrt im Sturz," xeroxed manuscript, p. 8.

112..A description of this countercultural haven in one of eastern Germany's largest cities can be found in Susanne Koelbl, "Sog der Freiheit," **Der Spiegel** #48 (November 27, 1995) pp. 76-82.

113..Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Grove Press, 1968) p. 147.