

The End of Utopia

Today any form of the concrete world, of human life, any transformation of the technical and natural environment is a possibility, and the locus of this possibility is historical. Today we have the capacity to turn the world into hell, and we are well on the way to doing so. We also have the capacity to turn it into the opposite of hell. This would mean the end of utopia, that is, the refutation of those ideas and theories that use the concept of utopia to denounce certain socio-historical possibilities. It can also be understood as the "end of history" in the very precise sense that the new possibilities for a human society and its environment can no longer be thought of as continuations of the old, nor even as existing in the same historical continuum with them. Rather, they presuppose a break with the historical continuum; they presuppose the qualitative difference between a free society and societies that are still unfree, which, according to Marx, makes all previous history only the prehistory of mankind.

But I believe that even Marx was still too tied to the notion of a continuum of progress, that even his idea of socialism may not yet represent, or no longer represent, the determinate negation of capitalism it was supposed to. That is, today the notion of the end of utopia implies the necessity of at least discussing a new definition of socialism. The discussion would be based on the question whether decisive elements of the Marxian concept of socialism do not belong to a now obsolete stage in the development of the forces of production. This obsolescence is expressed most clearly, in my opinion, in the distinction between the realm of freedom and the realm of necessity according to which the realm of freedom can be conceived of and can exist only beyond the realm of necessity. This division implies that the realm of necessity remains so in the sense of a realm of alienated labor, which means, as Marx says, that the [p. 63] only thing that can happen within it is for labor to be organized as rationally as possible and reduced as much as possible. But it remains labor in and of the realm of necessity and thereby unfree. I believe that one of the new possibilities, which gives an indication of the qualitative difference between the free and the unfree society, is that of letting the realm of freedom appear within the realm of necessity--in labor and not only beyond labor. To put this speculative idea in a provocative form, I would say that we must face the possibility that the path to socialism may proceed from science to utopia and not from utopia to science.

Utopia is a historical concept. It refers to projects for social change that are considered impossible. Impossible for what reasons? In the usual discussion of utopia the impossibility of realizing the project of a new society exists when the subjective and objective factors of a given social situation stand in the way of the transformation--the so-called immaturity of the social situation. Communistic projects during the French Revolution and, perhaps, socialism in the most highly developed capitalist countries are both examples of a real or alleged absence of the subjective and objective factors that seem to make realization impossible.

The project of a social transformation, however, can also be considered unfeasible because it contradicts certain scientifically established laws, biological laws, physical laws; for example, such projects as the age-old idea of eternal youth or the idea of a return to an alleged golden age. I believe that we can now speak of utopia only in this latter sense, namely when a project for social change contradicts real laws of nature. Only such a project is utopian in the strict sense, that is, beyond history--but even this "ahistoricity" has a historical limit.

The other group of projects, where the impossibility is due to the absence of subjective and objective factors, can at best be designated only as "provisionally" unfeasible. Karl Mannheim's criteria for the unfeasibility of such projects, for instance, are inadequate for the very simple reason, to begin with, that unfeasibility shows itself only after the fact. And it is not surprising that a project for social transformation is designated [64] unfeasible because it has shown itself unrealized in history. Secondly, however, the criterion of unfeasibility in this sense is inadequate because it may very well be the case that the realization of a revolutionary project is hindered by counterforces and countertendencies that can be and are overcome precisely in the process of revolution. For this reason it is questionable to set up the absence of specific subjective and objective factors as an objection to the feasibility of radical transformation. Especially--and this is the question with which we are concerned here--the fact that no revolutionary class can be defined in the capitalist countries that are technically most highly developed does not mean that Marxism is utopian. The social agents of revolution--and this is orthodox Marx--are formed only in the process of the transformation itself, and one cannot count on a situation in which the revolutionary forces are there ready-made, so to speak, when the revolutionary movement begins. But in my opinion there is one valid criterion for possible realization, namely, when the material and intellectual forces for the transformation are technically at hand although their rational application is prevented by the existing organization of the forces of production. And in this sense, I believe, we can today actually speak of an end of utopia.

All the material and intellectual forces which could be put to work for the realization of a free society are at hand. That they are not used for that purpose is to be attributed to the total mobilization of existing society against its own potential for liberation. But this situation in no way makes the idea of radical transformation itself a utopia.

The abolition of poverty and misery is possible in the sense I have described, as are the abolition of alienation and the abolition of what I have called "surplus repression." Even in bourgeois economics there is scarcely a serious scientist or investigator who would deny that the abolition of hunger and of misery is possible with the productive forces that already exist technically and that what is happening today must be attributed to the global politics of a repressive society. But although we are in agreement on this we are still not sufficiently clear about the implication of this technical possibility for the [65] abolition of poverty, of misery, and of labor. The implication is that these historical possibilities must be conceived in forms that signify a break rather than a continuity with previous history, its negation rather than its positive continuation, difference rather than progress. They signify the liberation of a dimension of human existence this side of the material basis, the transformation of needs.

What is at stake is the idea of a new theory of man, not only as theory but also as a way of existence: the genesis and development of a vital need for freedom and of the vital needs of freedom--of a freedom no longer based on and limited by scarcity and the necessity of alienated labor. The development of qualitatively new human needs appears as a biological necessity; they are needs in a very biological sense. For among a great part of the manipulated population in the developed capitalist countries the need for freedom does not or no longer exists as a vital, necessary need. Along with these vital needs the new theory of man also implies the genesis of a new morality as the heir and the negation of the Judeo-Christian

morality which up to now has characterized the history of Western civilization. It is precisely the continuity of the needs developed and satisfied in a repressive society that reproduces this repressive society over and over again within the individuals themselves. Individuals reproduce repressive society in their needs, which persist even through revolution, and it is precisely this continuity which up to now has stood in the way of the leap from quantity into the quality of a free society. This idea implies that human needs have a historical character. All human needs, including sexuality, lie beyond the animal world. They are historically determined and historically mutable. And the break with the continuity of those needs that already carry repression within them, the leap into qualitative difference, is not a mere invention but inheres in the development of the productive forces themselves. That development has reached a level where it actually demands new vital needs in order to do justice to its own potentialities.

What are the tendencies of the productive forces that make this leap from quantity into quality possible? Above all, [66] the technification of domination undermines the foundation of domination. The progressive reduction of physical labor power in the production process (the process of material production) and its replacement to an increasing degree by mental labor concentrate socially necessary labor in the class of technicians, scientists, engineers, etc. This suggests possible liberation from alienated labor. It is of course a question only of tendencies, but of tendencies that are grounded in the development and the continuing existence of capitalist society. If capitalism does not succeed in exploiting these new possibilities of the productive forces and their organization, the productivity of labor will fall beneath the level required by the rate of profit. And if capitalism heeds this requirement and continues automation regardless, it will come up against its own inner limit: the sources of surplus value for the maintenance of exchange society will dwindle away.

In the Grundrisse Marx showed that complete automation of socially necessary labor is incompatible with the preservation of capitalism. Automation is only a catchword for this tendency, through which necessary physical labor, alienated labor, is withdrawn to an ever greater extent from the material process of production. This tendency, if freed from the fetters of capitalist production, would lead to a creative experimentation with the productive forces. With the abolition of poverty this tendency would mean that play with the potentialities of human and nonhuman nature would become the content of social labor. The productive imagination would become the concretely structured productive force that freely sketches out the possibilities for a free human existence on the basis of the corresponding development of material productive forces. In order for these technical possibilities not to become possibilities for repression, however, in order for them to be able to fulfill their liberating function, they must be sustained and directed by liberating and gratifying needs.

When no vital need to abolish (alienated) labor exists, when on the contrary there exists a need to continue and extend labor, even when it is no longer socially necessary; when the vital need for joy, for happiness with a good conscience, [67] does not exist, but rather the need to have to earn everything in a life that is as miserable as can be; when these vital needs do not exist or are suffocated by repressive ones, it is only to be expected that new technical possibilities actually become new possibilities for repression by domination.

We already know what cybernetics and computers can contribute to the total control of human existence. The new needs, which are really the determinate negation of existing needs, first make their appearance as the negation of the needs that sustain the present system of domination and the negation of the values on which they are based: for example, the negation of the need for the struggle for existence (the latter is supposedly necessary and all the ideas or fantasies that speak of the possible abolition of the struggle for existence thereby contradict the supposedly natural and social conditions of human existence); the negation of the need to earn one's living; the negation of the performance principle, of competition; the negation of the need for wasteful, ruinous productivity, which is inseparably bound up with destruction; and the negation of the vital need for deceitful repression of the instincts. These needs would be negated in the vital biological need for peace, which today is not a vital need of the majority, the need for calm, the need to be alone, with oneself or with others whom one has chosen oneself, the need for the beautiful, the need for "undeserved" happiness--all this not simply in the form of individual needs but as a social productive force, as social needs that can be activated through the direction and disposition of productive forces.

In the form of a social productive force, these new vital needs would make possible a total technical reorganization of the concrete world of human life, and I believe that new human relations, new relations between men, would be possible only in such a reorganized world. When I say technical reorganization I again speak with reference to the capitalist countries that are most highly developed, where such a restructuring would mean the abolition of the terrors of capitalist industrialization and commercialization, the total reconstruction of the cities and the restoration of nature after the horrors [68] of capitalist industrialization have been done away with. I hope that when I speak of doing away with the horrors of capitalist industrialization it is clear I am not advocating a romantic regression behind technology. On the contrary, I believe that the potential liberating blessings of technology and industrialization will not even begin to be real and visible until capitalist industrialization and capitalist technology have been done away with.

The qualities of freedom that I have mentioned here are qualities which until now have not received adequate attention in recent thinking about socialism. Even on the left the notion of socialism has been taken too much within the framework of the development of productive forces, of increasing the productivity of labor, something which was not only justified but necessary at the level of productivity at which the idea of scientific socialism was developed but which today is at least subject to discussion. Today we must try to discuss and define--without any inhibitions, even when it may seem ridiculous--the qualitative difference between socialist society as a free society and the existing society. And it is precisely here that, if we are looking for a concept that can perhaps indicate the qualitative difference in socialist society, the aesthetic-erotic dimension comes to mind almost spontaneously, at least to me. Here the notion "aesthetic" is taken in its original sense, namely as the form of sensitivity of the senses and as the form of the concrete world of human life. Taken in this way, the notion projects the convergence of technology and art and the convergence of work and play. It is no accident that the work of Fourier is becoming topical again among the avant-garde left-wing intelligentsia. As Marx and Engels themselves acknowledged, Fourier was the only one to have made clear this qualitative difference between free and unfree society. And he did not shrink back in fear, as Marx still did, from speaking of a possible society in which work

becomes play, a society in which even socially necessary labor can be organized in harmony with the liberated, genuine needs of men.

Let me make one further observation in conclusion. I have already indicated that if critical theory, which remains [69] indebted to Marx, does not wish to stop at merely improving the existing state of affairs, it must accommodate within itself the extreme possibilities for freedom that have been only crudely indicated here, the scandal of the qualitative difference. Marxism must risk defining freedom in such a way that people become conscious of and recognize it as something that is nowhere already in existence. And precisely because the so-called utopian possibilities are not at all utopian but rather the determinate socio-historical negation of what exists, a very real and very pragmatic opposition is required of us if we are to make ourselves and others conscious of these possibilities and the forces that hinder and deny them. An opposition is required that is free of all illusion but also of all defeatism, for through its mere existence defeatism betrays the possibility of freedom to the status quo.

The End of Utopia - Questions and Answers

Question. To what extent do you see in the English pop movement a positive point of departure for an aesthetic-erotic way of life?

Marcuse. As you may know, of the many things I am reproached with, there are two that are particularly remarkable. I have supposedly asserted that today the movement of student opposition in itself can make the revolution. Second, I am supposed to have asserted that what we in America call hippies and you call *Gammler*, beatniks, are the new revolutionary class. Far be it from me to assert such a thing. What I was trying to show was that in fact today there are tendencies in society--anarchically unorganized, spontaneous tendencies--that herald a total break with the dominant needs of repressive society. The groups you have mentioned are characteristic of a state of disintegration within the system, which as a mere phenomenon has no revolutionary force whatsoever but which perhaps at some time will be able to play its role in connection with other, much stronger objective forces. [70]

Q. You have said that technically the material and intellectual forces for revolutionary transformation exist already. In your lecture, however, you seem to be speaking of forces for "utopia," not for the transformation itself, and this question you have not really answered.

M. To answer this question, of course, a second lecture would be necessary. A few remarks: If I have put so much emphasis on the notion of needs and of qualitative difference, that has a lot to do with the problem of transformation. One of the chief factors that has prevented this transformation, though objectively it has been on the agenda for years, is the absence or the repression of the need for transformation, which has to be present as the qualitatively differentiating factor among the social

groups that are to make the transformation. If Marx saw in the proletariat the revolutionary class, he did so also, and maybe even primarily, because the proletariat was free from the repressive needs of capitalist society, because the new needs for freedom could develop in the proletariat and were not suffocated by the old, dominant ones. Today in large parts of the most highly developed capitalist countries that is no longer the case. The working class no longer represents the negation of existing needs. That is one of the most serious facts with which we have to deal. As far as the forces of transformation themselves are concerned, I grant you without further discussion that today nobody is in a position to give a prescription for them in the sense of being able to point and say, "Here you have your revolutionary forces, this is their strength, this and this must be done."

The only thing I can do is point out what forces potentially make for a radical transformation of the system. Today the classical contradictions within capitalism are stronger than they have ever been before. Especially the general contradiction between the unprecedented development of the productive forces and social wealth on the one hand and of the destructive and repressive application of these forces of production on the other is infinitely more acute today than it has ever been. Second, in a global framework, capitalism today is [71] confronted by anticapitalist forces that already stand in open battle with capitalism at different places in the world. Third, there are also negative forces within advanced capitalism itself, in the United States and also in Europe--and here I do not hesitate to name again the opposition of the intellectuals, especially students.

Today this still seems remarkable to us, but one needs only a little historical knowledge to know that it is certainly not the first time in history that a radical historical transformation has begun with students. That is the case not only here in Europe but also in other parts of the world. The role of students today as the intelligentsia out of which, as you know, the executives and leaders even of existing society are recruited, is historically more important than it perhaps was in the past. In addition there is the moral-sexual rebellion, which turns against the dominant morality and must be taken seriously as a disintegrative factor, as can be seen from the reaction to it, especially in the United States. Finally, probably, here in Europe we should add those parts of the working class that have not yet fallen prey to the process of integration. Those are the tendential forces of transformation, and to evaluate their chances, their strength, and so forth in detail would naturally be the subject of a separate and longer discussion.

Q. My question is directed toward the role of the new anthropology for which you have called, and of those biological needs that are qualitatively new in the framework of a need structure that you have interpreted as historically variable. How does this differ from the theory of revolutionary socialism? Marx in his late writings was of the

opinion that the realm of freedom could be erected only on the basis of the realm of necessity, but that probably means that a free human society could be set up only within and not in abstraction from the framework of natural history, not beyond the realm of necessity. In your call for new biological needs, such as a new vital need for freedom, for happiness that is not repressively mediated, are you implying a qualitative transformation of the physiological structure of man that is derived from his natural history? Do you believe that that is a qualitative possibility today? [72]

M. If you mean that with a change in the natural history of mankind the needs which I have designated as new would be able to emerge, I would say yes. Human nature--and for all his insistence on the realm of necessity Marx knew--this human nature is a historically determined nature and develops in history. Of course the natural history of man will continue. The relation of man to nature has already changed completely, and the realm of necessity will become a different realm when alienated labor can be done away with by means of perfected technology and a large part of socially necessary labor becomes a technological experiment. Then the realm of necessity will in fact be changed and we will perhaps be able to regard the qualities of free human existence, which Marx and Engels still had to assign to the realm beyond labor, as developing within the realm of labor itself.

Q. If the vital need for freedom and happiness is to be set up as a biological need, how is it to materialize?

M. By "materially convertible" you mean: How does it go into effect in social production and finally even in the physiological structure itself? It operates through the construction of a pacified environment. I tried to indicate this in speaking of eliminating the terror of capitalist industrialization. What I mean is an environment that provides room for these new needs precisely through its new, pacified character, that is, that can enable them to be materially, even physiologically converted through a continuous change in human nature, namely through the reduction of characteristics that today manifest themselves in a horrible way: brutality, cruelty, false heroism, false virility, competition at any price. These are physiological phenomena as well.

Q. Is there a connection between the rehabilitation of certain anarchist strategies and the enormity of extra-economic violence which today has become an immediate economic power through internalization, by which I mean that the agents of manipulation know how to internalize bureaucratic and governmental mechanisms of domination? [73]

M. But that's not internalization of violence. If anything has become clear in capitalism it is that purely external violence, good old-fashioned violence, is stronger than it has ever been. I don't see any internalization at all there. We should not

overlook the fact that manipulatory tendencies are not violence. No one compels me to sit in front of my television set for hours, no one forces me to read the idiotic newspapers.

Q. But there I should like to disagree, because internalization means precisely that an illusory liberality is possible--just as the internalization of economic power in classical capitalism meant that the political and moral structure could be liberalized.

M. For me that's simply stretching the concept too far. Violence remains violence, and a system that itself provides the illusory freedom of such things as television sets that I can in fact turn off whenever I want to--which is no illusion--this is not the dimension of violence. If you say that, then you are blurring one of the decisive factors of present society, namely the distinction between terror and totalitarian democracy, which works not with terror but rather with internalization, with mechanisms of coordination: that is not violence. Violence is when someone beats someone else's head in with a club, or threatens to. It is not violence when I am presented with television programs that show the existing state of things transfigured in some way or other.

Q. Is there a connection between the program for a new historically and biologically different structure of needs and a rehabilitation in strategy of those groups that Marx and Engels, with a touch of petit-bourgeois morality, denounced as *déclassé*?

M. We shall have to distinguish among these *déclassé* groups. As far as I can see, today neither the *lumpenproletariat* nor the petit bourgeois have become at all a more radical force than they were before. Here again the role of the intelligentsia is very different.

Q. But don't you think that precisely students are such a *déclassé* group?

M. No. [74]

Q. Under the conditions of maturity of the productive forces, is it still possible or valid to speak of "necessity," of necessary, objective laws or even tendencies of social development? Must not the role of subjectivity be completely restructured and reevaluated as a new factor in the present period, which is perhaps what legitimates the reemergence of anarchism?

M. I consider the reevaluation and determination of the subjective factor to be one of the most decisive necessities of the present situation. The more we emphasize that the material, technical, and scientific productive forces for a free society are in existence, the more we are charged with liberating the consciousness of these realizable

possibilities. For the indoctrination of consciousness against these possibilities is the characteristic situation and the subjective factor in existing society. I consider the development of consciousness, work on the development of consciousness, if you like, this idealistic deviation, to be in fact one of the chief tasks of materialism today, of revolutionary materialism. And if I give such emphasis to needs and wants, it is meant in the sense of what you call the subjective factor.

One of the tasks is to lay bare and liberate the type of man who wants revolution, who must have revolution because otherwise he will fall apart. That is the subjective factor, which today is more than a subjective factor. On the other hand, naturally, the objective factor--and this is the one place where I should like to make a correction--is organization. What I have called the total mobilization of the established society against its own potentialities is today as strong and as effective as ever. On the one hand we find the absolute necessity of first liberating consciousness, on the other we see ourselves confronted by a concentration of power against which even the freest consciousness appears ridiculous and impotent. The struggle on two fronts is more acute today than it ever was. On the one hand the liberation of consciousness is necessary, on the other it is necessary to feel out every possibility of a crack in the enormously concentrated power structure of existing society. In the United States, for example, it has been [75] possible to have relatively free consciousness because it simply has no effect.

Q. The new needs, which you spoke of as motive forces for social transformation--to what extent will they be a privilege of the metropolises? To what extent do they presuppose societies that are technically and economically very highly developed? Do you also envisage these needs in the revolution of the poor countries, for example the Chinese or the Cuban Revolution?

M. I see the trend toward these new needs at both poles of existing society, namely in the highly developed sector and in the parts of the third world engaged in liberation struggles. And in fact we see repeated here a phenomenon that is quite clearly expressed in Marxian theory, namely that those who are "free" of the dubious blessings of the capitalist system are those who develop the needs that can bring about a free society. For example, the Vietnamese struggling for liberation do not have to have the need for peace grafted onto them, they have it. They also have need of the defense of life against aggression. These are needs that at this level, at this antipode of established society, are really natural needs in the strictest sense; they are spontaneous. At the opposite pole, in highly developed society, are those groups, minority groups, who can afford to give birth to the new needs or who, even if they can't afford it, simply have them because otherwise they would suffocate physiologically. Here I come back to the beatnik and hippie movement. What we have here is quite an interesting phenomenon, namely the simple refusal to take part in the

blessings of the "affluent society." That is in itself one of the qualitative changes of need. The need for better television sets, better automobiles, or comfort of any sort has been cast off. What we see is rather the negation of this need. "We don't want to have anything to do with all this crap." There is thus potential at both poles.

Q. If the objective basis for a qualitatively different society is present why place so much emphasis on an absolute break between the present and future? Must not the transition [76] be mediated, and does not the idea of an absolute break contradict concrete attempts to bridge the gap?

M. What I would say in my defense is this: I believe that I have not advocated a break. It is rather that when I look at the situation I can conceive of our definition of a free society only as the determinate negation of the existing one. But one cannot then take the determinate negation to be something that ultimately is nothing more than old wine in new bottles. That is why I have emphasized the break, quite in the sense of classical Marxism. I don't see any inconsistency here. The question implied in yours, namely, how does the break occur and how do the new needs for liberation emerge after it, is precisely what I should have liked to discuss with you. You can of course say, and I say it to myself often enough, if this is all true, how can we imagine these new concepts even arising here and now in living human beings if the entire society is against such an emergence of new needs. This is the question with which we have to deal. At the same time it amounts to the question of whether the emergence of these new needs can be conceived at all as a radical development out of existing ones, or whether instead, in order to set free these needs, a dictatorship appears necessary, which in any case would be very different from the Marxian dictatorship of the proletariat: namely a dictatorship, a counteradministration, that eliminates the horrors spread by the established administration. This is one of the things that most disquiets me and that we should seriously discuss.

Q. Putting aside the choice of dropping out of the system through underground subcultures, how is it possible to engage in heretical activities within the system, for example heretical medicine that does not merely cure people to restore their labor power but makes them conscious of how their labor makes them sick and how they could participate in qualitatively different work?

M. On the problem as to whether and how the elements you have called heretical can be developed within the established system, I would say the following: In established societies there are still gaps and interstices in which heretical methods [77] can be practiced without meaningless sacrifice, and still help the cause. This is possible. Freud recognized the problem very clearly when he said that psychoanalysis really ought to make all patients revolutionaries. But unfortunately that doesn't work, for one has to practice within the framework of the status quo. Psychoanalysis has to deal

with just this contradiction and abstract from extra-medical possibilities. There are still today psychoanalysts who at least remain as faithful as possible to the radical elements of psychoanalysis. And in jurisprudence, for example, there are also quite a few lawyers who work in a heretical way, that is, against the Establishment and for the protection of those accused whom it has cast out, without thereby making their own practice impossible.

The interstices within the established society are still open, and one of the most important tasks is to make use of them to the full.

Q. Is there not a conflict between the sort of needs that arise among the Vietcong and the sort that you have called sensitivity, are they not perhaps incompatible, and does one not perhaps have to choose between them?

M. The first tendencies pointing to a new image of man lie in solidarity with the struggle of the third world. What emerges in the advanced industrial countries as new needs is in the third world not at all a new need but a spontaneous reaction against what is happening.

Q. It seems to me that the needs determining social revolutionary movements are quite old ones. Industrialization requires discipline. Isn't it a luxury to lump this together with aesthetic Eros?

M. But the need for freedom is not a luxury which only the metropolises can afford. The need for freedom, which spontaneously appears in social revolution as an old need, is stifled in the capitalist world. In a society such as ours, in which pacification has been achieved up to a certain point, it appears crazy at first to want revolution. For we have whatever we want. But the aim here is to transform the will itself so that people no longer want what they now want. Thus the task in the metropolises [78] differs from the task in Vietnam--but the two can be connected.

Q. Does the thesis that the technification of domination undermines domination mean that the bureaucracy or the apparatus provides itself with its own provocation or that it must be permanently provoked as a learning process that makes comprehensible the contradictions and senselessness of this bureaucracy? Or does it mean that we should not provoke it because of the menace of fascist terror that would cut off any possibility of change?

M. It surely does not mean the latter, for the status quo itself must be endangered. One cannot turn the argument that radical action will menace the status quo against the necessity of doing so. Technification of domination means that if we rationally think through technological processes to their end, we find that they are incompatible with

existing capitalist institutions. In other words, domination that is based on the necessity of exploitation and alienated labor is potentially losing this base. If the exploitation of physical labor power in the process of production is no longer necessary, then this condition of domination is undermined.

Q. Are you saying that labor should be completely abolished, or that it should be made free of misery?

M. I have wavered in terminology between the abolition of labor and the abolition of alienated labor because in usage labor and alienated labor have become identical. That is the justification for this ambiguity. I believe that labor as such cannot be abolished. To affirm the contrary would be in fact to repudiate what Marx called the metabolic exchange between man and nature. Some control, mastery, and transformation of nature, some modification of existence through labor is inevitable, but in this utopian hypothesis labor would be so different from labor as we know it or normally conceive of it that the idea of the convergence of labor and play does not diverge too far from the possibilities.

Q. Does not revolution become reified when the oppressed [79] hate the oppressor to the point where the humanistic element gets lost? Is this reification one that can be undone during, or only after the revolution?

M. A really frightening question. On the one hand, I believe that one must say that the hatred of exploitation and oppression is itself a humane and humanistic element. On the other hand there is no doubt that in the course of revolutionary movements hatred emerges, without which revolution is just impossible, without which no liberation is possible. Nothing is more terrible than the sermon, "Do not hate thy opponent," in a world in which hate is thoroughly institutionalized. Naturally in the course of the revolutionary movement itself this hatred can turn into cruelty, brutality, and terror. The boundary between the two is horribly and extraordinarily in flux. The only thing that I can at least say about this is that a part of our work consists in preventing this development as much as possible, that is to show that brutality and cruelty also belong necessarily to the system of repression and that a liberation struggle simply does not need this transmogrification of hatred into brutality and cruelty. One can hit an opponent, one can vanquish an opponent, without cutting off his ears, without severing his limbs, without torturing him.

Q. It seems that you have an ideal of a harmonious society without tolerance or pluralism. Who will determine the common good in such a society? Are there to be no antagonisms? This ideal is unrealistic and, if there is to be no tolerance in resolving antagonisms, it will be undemocratic and require dictatorship.

M. Either a free society without tolerance is unthinkable, or a free society does not need tolerance because it is free anyway, so that tolerance does not have to be preached and institutionalized. A society without conflicts would be a utopian idea, but the idea of a society in which conflicts evidently exist but can be resolved without oppression and cruelty is in my opinion not a utopian idea. With regard to the concept of democracy: that is of course really a very serious matter. If I am [80] to say in one sentence what I can offer as a momentary answer, it is only that at the moment no one could be more for a democracy than I am. My objection is only that in no existing society, and surely not in those which call themselves democratic, does democracy exist. What exists is a kind of very limited, illusory form of democracy that is beset with inequalities, while the true conditions of democracy have still to be created. On the problem of dictatorship: What I suggested was a question, namely, I cannot imagine how the state of almost total indoctrination and coordination can turn into its opposite in an evolutionary way. It seems to me inevitable that some intervention must occur in some way and that the oppressors must be suppressed in some way, since they unfortunately will not suppress themselves.

Q. It seemed to me that the center of your paper today was the thesis that a transformation of society must be preceded by a transformation of needs. For me this implies that changed needs can only arise if we first abolish the mechanisms that have let the needs come into being as they are. It seems to me that you have shifted the accent toward enlightenment and away from revolution.

M. You have defined what is unfortunately the greatest difficulty in the matter. Your objection is that, for new, revolutionary needs to develop, the mechanisms that reproduce the old needs must be abolished. In order for the mechanisms to be abolished, there must first be a need to abolish them. That is the circle in which we are placed, and I do not know how to get out of it.

Q. How is it possible to distinguish false from genuine utopias? For example, has the elimination of domination not occurred owing to social immaturity, or because its elimination is, so to speak, biologically impossible? If someone believes the latter, how can you prove to him that he is mistaken?

M. If it were demonstrable that the abolition of domination is biologically impossible, then I would say, the idea of abolishing domination is a utopia. I do not believe that anyone [81] has yet demonstrated this. What is probably biologically impossible is to get away without any repression whatsoever. It may be self-imposed, it may be imposed by others. But that is not identical with domination. In Marxian theory and long before it a distinction was made between rational authority and domination. The authority of an airplane pilot, for example, is rational authority. It is impossible to imagine a condition in which the passengers would tell the pilot what to do. The

traffic policeman is another typical example of rational authority. These things are probably biological necessities, but political domination, domination based on exploitation, oppression, is not.

Q. In the advanced sectors of today's industry and bureaucracy there is already, among scientists, technicians, and so on, an alienated form of the integration of work and play--think of planning and strategy games, game theory, and the use of scientific phantasy. How do you estimate the possibility of this activity turning into refusal within the power structure, as suggested for example by Serge Mallet?

M. My objection to Mallet's evaluation of technicians is that precisely this group is today among the highest paid and rewarded beneficiaries of the system. For what you have said to be possible would require a total change not only of consciousness but of the whole situation. My second objection is that as long as this group is considered in isolation as the potentially revolutionary force one arrives only at a technocratic revolution, that is a transformation of advanced capitalism into technocratic state capitalism, but certainly not at what we mean when we speak of a free society.

Q. With regard to a new theory of man: How do the needs of peace, freedom, and happiness concretely become translated into biological, bodily needs?

M. I would say that the need for peace as a vital need in the biological sense does not need to be materially translated because in this sense it is already a material need. The need for peace, for example, would be expressed in the impossibility of [82] mobilizing people for military service. That would not be a material translation of the need for peace but a material need itself. The same applies to the other needs I mentioned.

Q. Back to the problem of the qualitative break. The latter seems to presuppose a crisis, and indeed there is one. But how can we tell when the crisis has progressed to the point of a break? Or does the crisis just turn into a break? How can the minority that has consciousness of what is possible intervene in society to prevent utopia from being blocked off?

M. I would see an expansion of the crisis in certain symbolic facts and events, events that somehow represent a turning point in the development of the system. Thus, for example, a forced ending of the war in Vietnam would represent a considerable expansion of the crisis of existing society.

Q. In connection with the problems of a new theory of man: this new theory has already found its advocates in the third world, namely Fanon, who says, "The goal is to establish the total man on earth," and Guevara, who -says, "We are building the

man of the twenty-first century." I should like to ask you how your ideas of a new theory of man are connected with these two declarations?

M. I had not ventured to say so, but after you yourself have said it, and you seem to know something about it, I can now say that I believe in fact, although I have not mentioned it here, that at least in some of the liberation struggles in the third world and even in some of the methods of development of the third world this new theory of man is putting itself in evidence. I would not have mentioned Fanon and Guevara as much as a small item that I read in a report about North Vietnam and that had a tremendous effect on me, since I am an absolutely incurable and sentimental romantic. It was a very detailed report, which showed, among other things, that in the parks in Hanoi the benches are made only big enough for two and only two people to sit on, so that another person would not even have the technical possibility of disturbing.