

# Everything Is True And Nothing Is Permitted!

## THE TERROR NETWORK

Today's publicity machine is gorged on its own falsehoods. Like a drunken gambler, each successful distortion and spectacular event only spurs it to greater absurdity. Beginning in the last summers of the 90's, the media showed us some large explosions with only the barest rational explanation and with numerous people dying in them. The 747 that exploded over the Atlantic in the summer of 96 was only the start of this drama. The bombing of the American embassies in Africa a murderous preamble. You could almost draw a line of increasing provocation from the Waco massacre to the bombing of Kosova. And undeclared war on Iraq still continues.

These spectacles are ironically intended to show that this world does not intend to change. "Terrorists today do not have to announce their aims or even their existence to achieve their goals" babbles one illustrious expert quoted in all the papers. "How do you fight a terrorist who has no demands?" responds last year's movie poster. Obviously whoever is producing the various explosions must feel well served by the publicity machine since they have not issued any correction to the media's story.

This terrorism is at the vanguard of the unexplainable and unmentionable. Whenever there has been a stop to the explosions, it has only been to focus attention on equally absurd trials around accused bombers. But the trial of Timothy McVeigh and the Lockerbie bombing trial somehow neither showed the logistical support nor the larger motives for whatever horror was on display.

The most advanced tendencies of this society are writ large in this terrorism – especially the advanced state of decay of

human relations. We can see how the bombing of the Oklahoma Federal Building and the American Embassies in Africa shared tremendous structural similarities. In Nairobi, Kenya, massive numbers of bystanders were butchered without a single serious US government decision-maker being touched and it is worth noting that one of the confessed Kenya bombers is a former Marine sergeant now has taken partial credit. In

subject. And naturally, having some idea of its own final direction, one imagines that this system instinctively projects the urge to absolute, irrational destruction onto its opponents. Thus the definition of terrorism today is elastic enough to allow the window breaking of "Eugene Anarchists" to qualify while excluding the murderous rampages of the LAPD Rampart Division.

Dictators and "freedom fighters" are



Oklahoma, all ATF officials were absent on the day of the bombing. And the retaliation attack after the African bombing was rehearsal for the further punishment bombing against Iraq and Serbia.

All official explanations of the current terror system trail off into indecipherable fine-print. If a supposed terrorist is caught, as in the Oklahoma City bombing, their trial is first postponed into the dim and unmentionable future and is then based on off-hand comments made to neighbors. Their execution seals all further information available on the

conjured into the public spot-light one month only to vanish within another couple months. The thugs of the Kosovo Liberation Front being only the latest in a series of "good guys" who are naturally interchangeable with the "bad guys" of other such gangs.

If reality today is different from *Wag The Dog*, it is primarily in terms of things being more boring and incompetent. Each ruler has so much in common with each other ruler that elaborate stunts aren't necessary *except against the peasants*. Hollywood tricks are unnecessary because Washington has

## DEFINITIONS

**Activism:** militancy; The *ideology* of activity or organization for its own sake. The **activist** would moralistically argue that it's better to go on a march that will change nothing than to stay home and consider social reality. In the manner of the religious fanatic, the **militant** (syn) use constant activity as a way of repressing an awareness of their total social condition. "Sure you may have a theory about us never changing the system but at least we do something."

Can be a variety of **leftism**. Activist ideologists tend to spread the despairing counter-part ideology of **inactivism** - which equate any active intervention with militancy "Any sort of political action just inhibits people's autonomy and makes real change harder. Doing nothing is better."

**Atomize:** Originally, the atom was considered the smallest unit that matter could divided up into. Market-place society **atomizes** people by dividing them into purely separate, comparable units. When people circulated from city to city or country to country merely to earn enough to survive, they are atomized strangers.

**Capitalism:** The present world system, that started with the European colonialization of the Americas and has expanded its reach to the entire world and every part of life. It is based on wage labor, exchange, and commodity production on a world scale. This system included the so-called Communist Bloc when it still existed.

**Commodity:** A product, anything bought and sold. A person's labor time can be bought by a capitalist and so their creative power becomes a commodity like sliced bread.

**Communism:** Not the system that once existed in Russia. A social system where human desires will replace exchange and profit as the moving force in society. Communism will be based on people directly controlling their creative activity.

**Deficit:** The difference between what the American government collects in taxes and what the government spends in various evil programs. *Used by politicians* to demand that workers give up wages, jobs and houses to appease their guilt. See also **Myth**

**Democracy:** Any system where the majority shapes the decisions that the government makes. see *Permanent*

always been Hollywood anyway.

Like any of the big lies of capitalism, the absurdity of exploding buildings and airplanes, of wars appearing and disappearing out of nowhere, serves to justify the absurdity of the entire

enterprise of this life. This world wants to be judged not on its qualities but on its enemies (to paraphrase Guy Debord). The system of the big lie is the model for any large industrial project today (see "The Realm Of Quality").

The fake wars – the war on drugs, on AIDS, on crime, on terrorism – these wars reinforce the true wars that happen from time to time, in Kosovo, Iraq, or some other concealed location.

American terrorism follows the same recipe as the terrorism secretly organized by the French or Italian states. The only addition of the American state has been to locate the nexus of terrorist aspirations within some ill-specified Middle-Eastern nation – but recently even this has changed.

In "Operation Gladio", a program whose existence was publicly admitted by the Italian state a few years ago, the Italian secret services, with NATO and the CIA organized "left-wing and right-wing terrorism" to distract awareness from growing social unrest centered in series of wildcat strikes.<sup>1</sup>

By casting any dissent as utterly barbaric, France and Italy achieved an otherwise unattainable nirvana of cooperation from the population. Now it is natural that the level of cooperation will now used to sell anything – terrorist threat breakfast cereal.

Any objection to the terror which justifies the organization of things today has retreated into the substratum of the unmentionable. This is the same place where our awareness of the poverty of life lies today. The misery of daily life has the same hidden quality as a sexual taboo.

## THE SPECTACLES' FRAGILE PERFECTION

From where does today's terrorism

<sup>1</sup> See Operation Gladio, David Guyatt, 1997, Available online

flow? Terrorism is an integral product of this world's **fragile perfection**. What does a "faceless terrorist," an efficient manager of a far Eastern Internet startup, the Congo's utterly corrupt Mobutu or a touchy-feely leader of a 12- step program have in common?

They each fully take part in the senseless sensibility and sensible senselessness that is the modern order. Mobutu organized the corrupt, senseless pillaging of an entire country for the immediate goal of money. A more modern manager makes money more sensibly but sees that money vanish within the higher senselessness of international currency and stock speculation. Certainly, every manager today agrees that the stock market must be maintained. Beyond this, every manager today takes an active part in the *free-market of lies*. The glory and purpose of this market is to assure that each lie supports both the stock market and every other lie.

All institutions come closer to merging into generic bureaucracy. Today the Bush administration uses "PC" race quotas to fill cabinet posts while promising further ruthless attacks on the poor.

These generic bureaucrats flow in the stream of images that we are calling the spectacle. They each turn the wheel of publicity with a reasonable faith that the whole ball of lies will turn around and give them profits on each of their turfs.

The unity of the spectacle and the world market occurs at the point of circulation. Each moment where life is falsified by someone selling their life to buy back their survival is a moment that is turned to the advantage of today's rulers. Today's advertising often boils down to the question "would you rather die of boredom or starvation?". The giant and deadly lies of today – terrorism, the drug-war, AIDS, and national liberation – all rest on a series of seemingly harmless falsifications. Each moment that taste is controlled by advertising, thought is moved by mediocrity, and each moment a bored person toils to bring **Diamond Jim** profits, is a moment where a person's intentions are turned

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against them.

For the owners, the quite-reasonable principle is that once people accept an over-all absurd organization of life, they will just as easily accept the absurd scams sold by each particular entrepreneur. And vice-versa.

One of the principles of Norbert Wiener's old *cybernetics* is that every chunk of information is equal to every other chunk of information. While nearly forgotten within the modern babble of "computer science," this principle is more and more put into practice by the operation of the market.

Within spectacular circulation, any piece of official nonsense has the same legitimacy as any other words produced by experts. Moreover, the primary activity of the vast mass of generic bureaucrats is the simple rewriting and fusion of existing documents into further new documents having neither more interest nor more information. College textbooks recycle news stories which recycle scientists press conferences and government press releases. News article cobble together corporate press releases written by scientists paid to make the companies look good. Experiments based on twins share equal space in *Time* with the empty homilies of *Dear Abby* clones.

In one particular absurd incident, former US Cabinet official Pierre Salinger certainly looked silly for having picked-up an Internet document of uncertain origin and then claimed that it proved the downing of flight 800 was a US military conspiracy. But what does it really mean that Pierre

Salinger's "secret document" had been on the Internet for months? Only that NBC feeds more selectively from the trough of press releases than do Internet sources.

The rise of the Internet thus has only automated the existing *spectacular packet-switching* system. The net allows the automatic flow of a mishmash of rumor, observation, statistics, innuendo, and half-truth. This reduces the money paid to scientists, journalists and



government workers for producing it.

But the Internet is not necessarily the most sophisticated version of spectacular "spin-doctoring." The old media forms are quite happy to look more reasonable by denouncing this less sophisticated form of rehashing old news.

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### PROVOCATION AND CRISIS

Crisis as a permanent institution was well illustrated when the four-year long stage-managed Starr investigation – then known as the "Whitewater Crisis" – itself had a crisis. A few years before the end, Kenneth Starr actually got tired of the job and announced his retirement to a comfy college presidency. But enough pressure was then exerted on Starr to allow this institution to weather its own temporary crisis and go on to its seamy, steamy finish.

Managed crisis is the alchemy that this entire system is set on brewing today. It is a two-edged sword that is wielded more and more often. The basic rule is "*crisis control always becomes normal control.*" Indeed, this is the most reliable motor of change today.

Crisis is critical for today's system of apolitical politics. When all activities are organized around the current panic, any talk of the larger situation must be abandoned. In America only snatches of right-wing rhetoric survive to constitute America's "political dialogue".

For example, whether the Afghan groups currently blamed for the bombings of the US Embassies in Africa are now rogue or merely seem rogue, is irrelevant

for the general circulation of panic and control. These armed groups were initially setup by the CIA in its effort to attack Russian influence in Afghanistan. While this information was openly stated in the US press at that time, through the

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spectacle's mix-master memory, such information can now be treated as dubious and subversive.

The paradigm of terror has taught today's managers the secret of being "proactive." It is not merely the broadcast media that has become a "seamless stream of images." Real events merge into the theater of crisis which is also the theater of total submission to inscrutable necessity – this is the "propaganda by the deed" of the forces of order.

Terrorists are one of the natural carriers of pure crisis. Like Nazis and child molesters, they constitute a reason to abandon all reason – a hot button that must be pressed at an ever quickening pace.

And the terrorist cell itself is the distillation of panic, irrationalism and sexual repression. So the evolution of terrorism from Marxist-Leninist to Christian and Moslem merely follows the general movement of the managed repression of urges.

Just as terrorist tactics are the ideal justification of state power, the terrorist cell is the ideal method of generic state organization. The terrorist cell can be infiltrated much more easily than it can be smashed. So police have naturally learned the methods of utilizing the action demanded by a group for their own purposes.

The terrorist cell moreover is the most modern addition to bureaucratic society. Terrorism is more than just a product of the bureaucracy. It is an ideal form of the most advanced bureaucracy.

The state wishes to impart the Frankensteinian autonomy of the terrorist cell to all of its parts. The "Year 2000 problem" was treated as a world-wide fire drill, demonstrating capitalism's preparations for any hypothetical collapse. In the US, each institution is expected to achieve some short term autonomy, demonstrating capitalism's superior preparation for abstract crisis (still, this doesn't prove capital's ability to confront a mobilized proletariat).

## BUREAUCRACY

And so what exactly do we mean by bureaucracy? Schools, offices, factories, courts and prisons are today more and more interchangeable social factories – different variations on the human machine. Max Weber documented the progression of bureaucracy as the automation of authority. All those qualities of authority which might have been invested in either tradition or individual personalities can be invested in the possessor of the role of boss, manager and so-on. The cloth of authority makes the man.

Bureaucracy itself is the natural

extraordinary ability they might have. Movie stars claims of unique personalities or powerful presence are so many publicity stunts and well practiced routines.

Bureaucracy is certainly an old story (and has been for at least a hundred years). But all of the dispersed resistance to modern life has served as proof that bureaucracy *by itself* has neither been able to stop rebellion nor fully control its crises. From the sixties to the nineties longer or shorter explosions of spontaneous mass power have wracked this society.



corollary of wage labor. The buying and selling of human labor power implies that a society's rulers must have the means to process people like cogs and process people into cogs.

Just as much as this society is fully capitalist, it is fully bureaucratic. Everyday, we see instances where just the sweep of a pen gives someone qualities of power and desirability that people none the less think of as innate.

Everything is for sale and those in power are interchangeable bureaucrats. The bureaucrat's power comes from the entire power machine rather than any

## SENDERO LUMINOSO

As a leftist outfit operating in the harshest possible condition, the Peruvian Maoist group "Sendero Luminoso" had to discover new methods of organizing what is essentially progressive capitalism against the massively corrupt forces of backward Peruvian Latifundian capitalism.

The drug trade has provided a large enough base of semi-prosperous peasants for Sendero (which itself, per se, does not deal drugs). Faced with the Peruvian and American states working in concert

**(Definitions-continued)**

War, Permanent Elections.

**Detourn** (de tôrn): v. [situationists Fr *detour*, change of direction (fig) evasion, trick] to arrange disparate elements of the dominant culture together to form a new work, esp. in a way that reveals the true meaning and function of the original elements. Detournment as revolutionary activity reverses the systematic fragmentation of specialists - **n-ement** (-mä) the act of detouring

**Exchange**: giving something of equal value in return for someone giving you an object. The more this sort of apparently simple act dominates the world, the more each person is a purely atomized unit and the more community cannot exist.

**Ideology**: The thought of power - ideas in the service of power. Ideology is frozen thought but not all frozen thoughts are ideology. The **ideologist** develops *empty rhetoric* whose real appeal is to a person's unstated (and often unconscious) interest in maintaining their immediate material conditions - their part in capitalism. When a subjectivist ideologist says "all that matters is immediate pleasure," their rhetoric might be appealing to a student because it would justify their vapid, parasitic existence. "Everyone's got to work, it's only fair" might make those forced to work 60 hour weeks feel slightly better.

**The Left**: The left wing of capitalism. Historically, those involved in the political system who wished to move closer to "socialism." As the political system has become more of a conveyor belt for the capitalist system, leftists have become *spokespeople for the most bureaucratic forms of capitalism*. Leftist have in mind the interests of welfare workers, teachers, prison reformer and professional "facilitators." Leftists range from liberal who want a government that takes care of people better to Leninist of various stripes who still imagine the recreation of a soviet-style welfare-state dictatorship.

**Morality**: See *The Revolutionary Unconscious this issue and Against Capital And Morality, ASAN #5*,

**Myth**: a magical story is used to give meaning to the

with the drug "selling" cartels, Sendero has protected the capitalist economic interests of the drug **growing** peasants through innovative "parallel" forms of organization.

At it's height, Sendero controlled a sizeable portion of the Peruvian countryside on both a village-by-village

basis and in their own armed camps. When Sendero took control of a village, they created two things. One thing was a visible government apparatus - a mayor, vice-mayor, village council, etc. The other thing was a secret committee which directed the actions of everyone in the open government - few in the village were allowed to know the identity of this committee, but its decisions were backed by the threat of other Sendero forces in camps in the hills.

This parallel system made it hard for government forces from Lima to root-out Sendero control from villages. This system is also an ideal, simplified picture of the most modern form of bureaucracy, which could well be called **postmodern bureaucracy**.

Classical bureaucracy is based on a strict hierarchy. Postmodern bureaucracy is based on small teams from above organizing appearances and terrorizing the standard order. But this swirl is generated to increase production and decrease dissent. Order and chaos flow into each other for the benefit of order. The elite further fortify themselves by using invisible agents as catalysts for those changes they desire. At the same time, survival is no longer guaranteed nor is the meaning of any order certain. The reformers, the intelligence services, the media, and the outside investors each appear suddenly to provide a sudden extra meaning to something that previously seemed certain.

Spectacular diseases, energy shortages, social welfare cuts, sudden wars, depressions or company takeovers are described as if they are acts of nature. Naturally, while many of these involve capitalism's absurd production system, capital also amplifies a general chaos within people's efforts to order their lives.

**To give one rough example, the original meaning of the Social Security fund was that it would be safe. This original safety meant the government had the obligation to make the fund safe. But now safety means Social**

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**Security having enough for everyone in fifty years. So this means that this fund must be gambled on the stock market to earn enough for everyone. But, of course this whole line of reasoning is simply a shell game around various funds controlled by the government.**

But this "multiplicity of meanings" only demands a greater conservatism. Each worker is coached to serve many masters. Each of us is expected to hold many jobs and plan and pay now for all future stages in our submission to the order of exchange. TV news tells college or high school students to consider themselves already workers, home owners, parents, retirees and invalids. Each point of escape is sealed off. Pay now for career training, health insurance, auto insurance and retirement and burial costs - soon it will be required (but this insurance still won't guarantee protection from anything).

Reform is constant now that no part of the system can be questioned ("**The good news is that you can find out about electrical rate reform here!**"). The form of the postmodern bureaucracy is the vacant center. When a real power is willing to manipulate the direction of panic, incompetence, and ignorance, this power must remain obscure. Not only does power today remain hidden, its immediate agenda remains just as much hidden.

The modern corporation is a fusion of the corporation of the 50's and the Manson family. The "cults" of the 70's and beyond were an expression of the moment when the liberated fragments of human existence could be resold back to the highest bidder.

A fragmented self - a total commitment to lies, to absurdity or to cruelty - is the most valuable quality of a manager today. The highest points the spectacle engenders are moments when it engenders a passionate commitment to an acronym, a product or a TV show.

The movement of life into the obscurity of bureaucratic speech is an expression of the capitalization of confusion and schizophrenia. The marketing of fragments of human existence is a natural conclusion to the

## (Definition-continued)

lives of people in a culture. The story of Adam and Eve was a Christian myth. "Anyone can work their way to the top," "America was founded on traditional values," "We have to work twice as hard to pay off the deficit" are modern American myths. Myths dominate people when they are alienated from their lives by wage labor.

**The Nation:** a mythical community supposedly consisting of "people living in the same general location, speaking the same language and having the same general culture." This myth was used to create capitalist governments by the national entrepreneurs of first the US and France and then every region of the developing capitalist world. Since there is no part of the entire world with a homogeneous culture, nationalist ideology is really used to unify people against those who are different. America was founded on murdering native peoples and continues to base itself on racism.

**Oppression:** Being persecuted or subjugated by an unjust force. All specialist of power focus on the unfairness of particular oppressions without admitting the total misery of this society. The manipulators of the most conservative talk of "crime," high middle-class taxes, and inflation. The left talks of racism, sexism, homophobia and classism. But all the specializing of misery makes it harder to understand the total misery of this society.

**Privilege:** A special immunity, right, or benefit enjoyed by an individual. This society grants a vast of array of apparent privileges; home-ownership, whiteness, American Express Membership, maleness, or citizenship. But every "carrot" is only a chance to participate more in the economy or to avoid the social terror of today. Virtually no one gets *real privilege* from being a part of this society.

**Right:** As capital has carved new social relations, the powers that people had kept by using these informal groups has disappeared into formal rights ostensibly granted by a higher power. As the market economy is perfected, rights become simply an abstract form of private property.

**Role:** an interchangeable act that is offered for each person to take up at any given circumstance but is

strange schemes of uprooted individuals. These schemes have the same ambiguous quality of weapon or illusion that every contested arena has today.

## THE EYES OF MORDOR

In Tolkien's *Lord Of The Rings*, the Dark Lord possesses unassailable power but can only direct that power to the point which attracts his attention. Power today approaches this level of fragile omnipotence.

The success of a hacker like **Kevin Poulsen** or **Kevin Mitnick** is based on the absolute apathy that permeates all levels of this society. Mitnick was known for stealing secrets merely by finding the right person and impersonating someone who deserved information. As the order of things becomes more impersonal, the average person feels less and less real desire to enforce society's rules. Even mid-level bureaucrats sleep-walk through their jobs. And sleep-walkers are not good gate keepers.

While the powers-that-be try to counter this with an ever-accelerating array of direct policing and suppression of knowledge, this still leaves an incredible realm of possibilities in between the visible categories of this society.

Modern social machinery is hated consciously or unconsciously by such a large percentage of people that it can only be protected by systems of counter-attack, whirlpools of fear and manipulation. Indeed, the *hacker* plays a similar role to the terrorist – decoy, enemy, cat's paw and excuse.

The imperfection of this control is generally tolerable, often desirable, to the system. At best, today's absurdity functions through a self-justifying randomness: *don't be at the wrong place at the wrong time*. Altogether, this randomness works as a scheme implicating each person in both crime

and enforcement at different levels. Thus chaos is ever-present but absolute refusal only appears at special times.

It has been documented how in the

80's, the Los Angeles court system explicitly cultivated a group of criminals who were permitted to literally get away with murder, specifically so that they would always be on the court's leash. This group of felons was always available to come up with testimony damaging to the cases of those targeted by the police. (we say "documented" because the court system on a larger, more "fair" level is just as much a snitch factory – with the more explicit "quid pro quos" just being a natural temptation).

Through computers, the law is gaining more and more resources to place folks within the realm of judicial control. But this is not a linear increase in repression. The spectacle classifies more and more parts of social life within the illegal sector.

Much of adolescent social life revolves around illegal drugs. Most suburban social life happens in indoor malls which explicitly do not grant the "right" to free expression or free association. Here everything is illegal once the owners of the space tell you to stop.

The randomness and the game of control is encapsulated in the good cop/bad cop dialogue that permeates every part of this society. The constant presence of soft cop social workers in the lives of adolescents can be seen in the fusion of hip phrases and clinical vocabularies.

While the liberals and the left are no match for the right as a social force in America, both left and right have made important contributions to today's ideology of repression – the left appearing to demand more social workers while right demands more police.

Feminists have joined with right wing ideologists to use genetic testing as a way of forcing fathers to pay for a mother's welfare. And both right and left have pushed an ideology of enforced community as the answer to modern society's alienation. "Weed and seed" = "stick and carrot."

In the conservative, "bad cop" version of reality, all those who are convicted of

marketing of everything needed to live.

The flip side of this is that human existence is always at play in all of these possibilities. The Internet is full of the



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the smallest crimes are tortured in prison – but that would leave too few workers to keep society going. The law has sufficient records to place a good percentage of the entire population in jail. In the liberal, “good cop” version of reality, each person would be rehabilitated from each of their sins by their own social worker (more radical liberals even go to length of demonstrating for each person’s right to rehabilitation – which is also protecting rehabilitation jobs).

These lies fuse to create the (real) racket version of reality. The uncertainty of each person’s position is used to intimidate them into a submission to every scheme of this society. “Legal limbo” is very calculated. Everyone winds-up subject to many flavors of threat, harassment and conformity.

The courts cry crocodile tears about “inefficiency,” yet this serves the powers-that-be perfectly, more perfectly even through it having come about by accident. The “break-up of the American family” is often blamed for the present judicial invasion of daily life. While we want no part of the nuclear family, we know the police state takes part in the break-down of human rapport even more so than the nuclear family.

What really happens is that just the need to survive puts a large number of people in “legal limbo.” This limbo ranges from being in jail, to being on the streets but always subject to arrest to being out but always needing to “watch your back,” to being on the street and force-administered “mind healing” drugs.

Moreover, when a person is in this limbo, one duty they have is as cat’s-paws to lure more people into the rackets. Each DUI convict is strongly pressured to join the ideology of Alcoholic Anonymous – and thus to pull more “users” in with them. Homeless people who “get off the street” by gaining employment within the homeless service provider apparatus need to mouth the recovery jargon derived from AA. Each convict is pushed to testify against another to lessen their sentence. And the lyme disease hypochondriac feels

pressure to evangelize more victims.

## OBSCURITY AS METHOD AND CASTE

Obscurity is the leading edge of capitalism. The churning of social life becomes the organization of conformity through accelerating lies and accelerating atomization.

Obscurity as a system is spread equally through every layer of society, from corporations which hide their hierarchy from their own minions to an ambiguous, all-encompassing illegality that those on the bottom use to survive.

This is the spectacle’s most modern form, which is reproduced in all systems of administration. Behind whatever tawdry story is coming from the White House, the Senate or the papers in a given week, confusion and incompetence as methods are visible as the marching orders.

This twilight world meshes perfectly with bureaucracy and capitalism because the “ideal” of equal protection is kept. Every dollar of a bribe is approximately equal to every other dollar.

The world of police records, credit records and security systems is a caste system by default, by a “happy accident.” In theory, someone without much money, without insurance, credit, a driver’s license and so forth could function without breaking the law. But in reality, they can’t. The chaos of capitalism makes it both impossible and absurd for the majority to do so.

## VERONICA JONES

In Philadelphia, in early 1996, Miss Veronica Jones was arrested in open court in retaliation for her refusal to put forward the prosecution’s version of its case against the well-known framed leftist journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Jones was arrested on an “open warrant.” It seems that she had been charged with writing bad checks two years previously in New Jersey. However, the judicial machinery had made no particular effort to find her up until the point of Abu Jamal’s hearing.

This situation is the situation of many, many poor people and people of color. From warrants to parole violations,

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court-ordered 12-step programs, restraining orders, Child Protective Services regulations, psychiatric interventions, and welfare regulations, there are an uncountable number of control systems arrayed around the lives of the poor.

Modern bureaucratic society has enough absurd complexity that a large percentage of people have a certain number of various “strikes” against them. But class, race and the strategies of capital’s bureaucrats together determine whether these strikes will be fatal or ignored.

An “open warrant” can sit for year if a person does not attract the attention of the authorities. It is only one part of the obscure judicial bureaucracy that many people can thankfully ignore only as long as they either fail to attract the attention of authorities or if they kiss the asses of said authorities.

## PEOPLE’S PARK

We can see how the expansion of the present order makes repression the only real new product. The world of judicial repression also creates a new terrain of struggle, one in which our side is still fighting for its voice. Certainly the attack on the justice system had much expression in the LA riots.

Another example is “People’s Park” in Berkeley, California. People’s Park is a hang-out of the unemployed, social drop-outs and low level drug dealers. This group is at the center of an entire social vortex. This low-level drug economy is the center of the unsaid, the accumulation of outlawed activity everywhere in this society.

Telegraph Ave., in that same area, is patrolled by uniformed police, undercover police, roving “mental health counselors” and assorted other obscure human relations professionals. This repression laboratory points to a future where the normal citizen will at the same time have a job, be in school, and be under some kind of judicial sentence.

This less controlled area of Berkeley allows experiments where the role of cop, merchant and social worker grow closer together. And repression is sold

directly: the police herd a noticeable number of the disturbed onto Telegraph Ave. to convince people how a firm hand is needed against these same disturbed.

The aura of Telegraph is “the weird”, that which is different from “the real world.” But each part of this world: factory, office, mall and bohemian hang-out, feeds off of the other. Telegraph is one of the main outlets for social contact for working and middle-class people for a twenty or fifty mile radius. It’s the absolute zero of social interaction generally that makes Telegraph critical as a zone of social interaction and as a zone of managed contestation.

The hierarchy of social privilege enforced by the judicial system is the defining quality of the present real world. In People’s Park, the regular police patrols stop various individuals whose terms of probation allow them to be searched arbitrarily or whose terms of probation prevent them from going to People’s Park at all. This is similar to the order of Serbia, Bosnia or Kosova, where the police both make sure that different groups fight each other and make sure that everyone has different rights assigned to them.

As the arbitrary power of the police/social service sector expands, those at both the top and the bottom of society have more ways and more incentive to break the law. And this allows the authorities to exercise wider arbitrary power over those who can be justly arrested for their violations.

This power is naturally unleashed whenever the planners issue a new order: In the summer of 91, when the University Of California was installing a volley ball court in People’s Park, **police arrested several people for breaking the rules during a ball game.** (Breaking the rules of the volley ball game disrupted the intentions of the civic planners. At that time, they planned to improve the quality of the park by expelling homeless people and attracting athletic yuppies. Later, these same volleyball courts were removed due to their failure as a tool of

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expected to be discarded just as easily. When we are at the mall, we must be consumers, at a cafe we be intellectuals. At work, we are expected to be happy

**Recuperate:**(re cu’pär at) v. [situationist Fr *recuperer* to retrieve] to put spontaneous or revolutionary elements back into the language of the dominant culture and thereby trivialize them and negate their creative or revolutionary power - **Coopt, n. -ation** (a-shun) the act of recuperating.

**Specialist:** one who studies, works with, and by extension tries to *own* any single category of knowledge; **an expert.** A biologist is a specialist on animals. A manager is a specialist at giving people orders. A political consultant is a specialist at manipulating the passive opinions of voters. Ralph Nader is a specialist on consumer rights. Ronald Reagan, *the great communicator*, was considered an expert at communicating the orders of the government to the population.

As this society reduces life to a machine-like order, its rulers become bureaucrats/specialists who operate interchangeably in the corporate, governmental or university bureaucracies. *All specialists become specialists in ideology.* The ruling bureaucrats thus generically manipulate people, information, and rhetoric according the economy’s orders. A logging company president becomes the California State Universities president and then could conceivably become a politician. Jerry Brown began as a Jesuit, became governor of California, then was the left-wing cameo presidential candidate and now is a radio talk-show host.

**Specialize, Specialization:**

**Spectacle:** (Spek tä kul) n. [situationist Fr *Spectacle* show, movie, play etc.] A fusion of form and appearance. A form of accumulation under late capitalism. See also “*How To Go Beyond The SI In Eight Simple Steps*” in *Against Sleep And Nightmare* #5. and “The Realm Of Quality,” this issue.

**Star:** Any arbitrary focus of spectacular attention.

**The System:** A vague term that became popular in the sixties and seventies. The know-it-alls of today attack this vagueness because the vague can still be useful. It’s true that talking about the system makes it harder to blame any one person or group. But the term system speaks to the instinctive feeling people have that all the apparently unrelated parts of this society form a single whole.

Big talkers of one sort or another naturally attack the idea that TV stars, politicians, corporate managers, college professors and the big talkers form a single, invisible class of ruling experts.

**Terrorism:** The use of bombs, armed attacks, fear and secret cells to wage *conventional warfare* against an existing state. Terrorist ideology always winds up using the methods of the capitalist state; the specialization of power and a population that is kept passive spectators. And the terrorist group generally aims to recreate a new capitalist state on the basis of “national liberation.” (see nationalism)

**Union:** An organization that acts as a broker between labor and capital. Thus, any organization organized to explicitly accept the conditions of this society while ostensibly demanding more. It is no surprise that

social reconstruction).

In earlier issues of this zine, we talked often of the symbiotic relationship between suburb and city for constructing shopping-mall social peace.

When the geography of outlying areas has been altered, the context of Berkeley and of any “college town” also changes. The semi-official permission given for weirdness justifies the highly sophisticate repression that constitutes “Berzerkeley.”

The police more and more hold the electrodes for these experiments. The churning quality of the modern urban area softens people up for repression.

Certainly, the authorities tolerate the

various milieus partly because they have to and partly because these milieus serve as something of a laboratory to see how well the control systems work. The informal milieu is at the knife’s edge of the possibilities of world change. Certainly, the fact that critical people are getting together by itself guarantees nothing. This group must decide to act.

On one hand, capital’s world is incredibly fragile. The LA riots showed how much this dreary world is held together only by people’s inability to simultaneously think of an alternative. On the other hand, this informal opposition must systematically oppose the system, otherwise it merely winds up



**(Definitions-continued)**

unions act against the working class.

**Wage labor:** when a person sells their activity for money. This seemingly simple operation is the basis of our society's power, growth and decay. One person paying another to work is an apparently simple relationship that hides how the workers' own power to create becomes something that confronts them as a commodity, something external, outside their control.

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**Note:** Marx, Mumford, and Nietzsche are important and widely available. The work by Richard Bandler and John Grinder together constitute the basic texts of NLP.

as an experiment in discovery what and how much is tolerable: "direct democracy", "self expression," or "community empowerment" have all be given a part within capital's final frontier; the self-policing society.

**TV SMASH**

An encounter during a "TV smash" is instructive. Several park regulars, mostly white, are loading television onto the stage in People's Park. They are

accosted by a black, City-of-Berkeley-paid "caretaker." He claims to have a mandate for authority from the city and "the activists" and mentions the name of a long-time activist. He especially notes that while the university "is bad," the city has been working with the activists and "now everyone is together on this."

The various folks there wind up confused and paralyzed by this little speech until a certain communist militant asks the caretaker what he will do if his authority is broken. He mentions calling the police and thus is exposed for what interests he really serves. It should be noted that this fellow's speech had the quality of a bit of freeze-dried ideology dreamed up by a committee and most-likely dished at a "park sensitivity" workshop given for Berkeley City social workers (social cops). It should be noted that the activist mentioned by the caretaker had no connection with these Berkeley City schemes: her name was merely picked out as part of the illusion of participation.

Since we live in the world of conspiracy/anti-conspiracy theory, we should note that within this scenario, there is no absolute difference between the open activities of social service agencies and the hidden, "conspiratorial" activities of the police. The supposedly benign activities of the social service agency essentially involve the perspective of treating a group of people as patients to be cured of their ills – "mainstreaming," giving people "the choice to enter normal life" (as if this society ever offers any other choice). The difference between a paid agency representative and the cop who secretly attends a meeting is then only a matter of degrees and public relations. This social worker is just as likely to take any communication as a tool to be used for control.

Note here that various freeze-dried ideologies are fragile and can disintegrate when challenged in even a small way. This incoherence within this society means there are often situations where a single challenge can become widespread mayhem.

**Against Sleep And Nightmare  
CLOUD TRACING**

It is useful to trace the smallest breaks in the world exchange system. But the actual level of working class combativity is often invisible in similarly organized spectacular pseudo-events. The many apparent conflicts you see are certainly important but what they mean for any more fundamental challenge to this system must be balanced against the continuing of *capital's normal life*. Each point where a person submits to work, school or mall life is a real if invisible event. And many people fight invisibly against the order of things as well. Class struggle is constant because people constantly resist work and commodities. But to become a movement, this resistance must gain coherence.

When we actually see explosions of real activity, it often has little to do with the usual headline. It means many invisible refusals have come together. Just as much, explosions do not follow any fixed pattern. Rather than being gradually building movements, most threats to the present system have come from sudden explosions of hope and anger (May 68 in France, the LA riots, the unknown revolution in Kurdistan, the riots in the US after the assassination of Martin Luther King, and more that are less known).

Even a more definable movement like the Seattle 2000 WTO protests had their impact because of the unexpected factors involved – the black bloc and especially the impoverished youths who joined the black bloc looting. And the movement of assaulting large gatherings of capitalists just as much is likely to dwindle if it allow itself to fight in playing field that is set by capital.

If the world stock market is finally falling after ten years of artificial growth, does this mean a period of explosions like the 89-92 recession is on the horizon? If world capital is paralyzed just as it must deal with the results of global warming, does that mean that we are reaching the end of cycles of capital? We can't tell but predicting isn't our main job. Acting to further counter-tendencies is.

