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the growing power of the centralized nation-state and centralized economic corporations.

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pass away, even when they are successful. They lack the institutional underpinnings that are so necessary to create lasting movements for social change and the arena in which they can be a permanent presence in political conflict.

Hence the enormous need for genuinely political grassroots movements, united confederally, that are anchored in abiding and democratic institutions that can be evolved into truly libertarian ones.

Life would indeed be marvelous, if not miraculous, if we were born with all the training, literacy, skills, and mental equipment we need to practice a profession or vocation. Alas, we must go though the toil of acquiring these abilities, a toil that requires struggle, confrontation, education, and development. It is very unlikely that a radical municipalist approach, too, is meaningful at all merely as an easy means for institutional change. It must be fought for if it is to be cherished, just as the fight for a free society must itself be as liberating and self-transforming as the existence of a free society.

The municipality is a potential time-bomb. To create local networks and try to transform municipal institutions that replicate the state is to pick up a historic challenge - a truly political one - that has existed for centuries. New social movements are foundering today for want of a political perspective that will bring them into the public arena, hence the ease with which they slip into parliarnentarism. Historically, libertarian theory has always focused on the free municipality that was to provide the cellular tissue for a new society. To ignore the potential of this free municipality because it is not yet free is to bypass a slumbering domain of politics that could give lived meaning to the great libertarian demand: a commune of communes. For in these municipal institutions and the changes that we can make in their structure - turning them more and more into a new public sphere - lies the abiding institutional basis for a grassroots dual power, a grassroots concept of citizenship, and municipalized economic systems that can be counterposed to

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remains ”more” of a state or”less” - no trifling matter to radical theorists as disparate as Bakunin and Marx - depends heavily upon the power of local, confederal, and community movements to countervail it and hopefully establish a dual power that will replace it. The major role that the Madrid Citizens' Movement played nearly three decades ago in weakening the Franco regime would require a major study to do it justice.

Notwithstanding Marxist visions of a largely economistic conflict between ”wage labor and capital,” the revolutionary working class movements of the past were not simply industrial movements. The volatile Parisian labor movement, largely artisanal in character, for example, was also a community movement that was centered on quartiers and nourished by a rich neighborhood life. From the Levellers of seventeenth-century London to the anarcho-syndicalists of Barcelona in our own century, radical activity has been sustained by strong community bonds, a public sphere provided by streets, squares, and cafes.

The Need for a New Politics

This municipal life cannot be ignored in radical practice and must even be recreated where it has been undermined by the modern state. A new politics, rooted in towns, neighborhoods, cities, andregions, forms the only viable alternative to the anemic parliamentarism that is percolating through various Green parties and similar social movements - in short, their recourse to sheer and corruptive statecraft in which the larger bourgeois parties can always be expected to outmaneuver them and absorb them into coalitions. The duration of strictly single-issue movements, too, is limited to the problems they are opposing. Militant action around such issues should not be confused with the long-range radicalism that is needed to change consciousness and ultimately society itself. Such movements flare up and

cal vitality. From the Castilian cities that exploded in the *Comunero* revolt in the early l500s through the Parisian sections or assemblies of the early 1790s to the Madrid Citizens' Movement of the 1960s (to cite only a few), municipal movements in large cities have posed crucial issues of where power should be centered and how societal life should be managed institutionally.

That a municipality can be as parochial as a tribe is fairly obvious - and is no less true today than it has been in the past. Hence, any municipal movement that is not confederal - that is to say, that does not enter into a network of mutual obligations to towns and cities in its own region - can no more be regarded as a truly political entity in any traditional sense than a neighborhood that does not work with other neighborhoods in the city in which it is located. Confederation, based on shared responsibilities, full accountability of confederal delegates to their communities, the right to recall, and firmly mandated representative forms an indispensable part of a new politics. To demand that existing towns and cities replicate the nation-state on a local level is to surrender any commitment to social change as such.

What is of immense practical importance is that prestatist institutions, traditions, and sentiments remain alive in varying degrees throughout most of the world. Resistance to the encroachment of oppressive states has been nourished by village, neighborhood, and town community networks, witness such struggles in South Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America The tremors that are now shaking Soviet Russia are due not solely to demands for greater freedom but to movements for regional and local autonomy that challenge its very existence as a centralized nation-state

To ignore the communal basis of this movement would be as myopic as to ignore the latent instability of every nation-state; worse would be to take the nation-state as it is for granted and deal with it merely on its own terms. Indeed, whether a state

Defying all the theoretical predictions of the 1930s, capitalism has restabilized itself with a vengeance and acquired extraordinary flexibility in the decades since World War II. In fact, we have yet to clearly determine what constitutes capitalism in its most "mature" form, not to speak of its social trajectory in the years to come. But what is clear, I would argue, is that capitalism has transformed itself from an *economy* surrounded by many precapitalist social and political formations into a *society* that itself has become "economized." Terms like *consumerism* and *industrialism* are merely obscurantist euphemisms for an all-pervasive embourgeoisement that involves not simply an appetite for commodities and sophisticated technologies but the expansion of commodity relationships - of market relationships - into areas of life and social movements that once offered some degree of resistance to, if not a refuge from, utterly amoral, accumulative, and competitive forms of human interaction. Marketplace values have increasingly percolated into familial, educational, personal, and even spiritual relationships and have largely edged out the precapitalist traditions that made for mutual aid, idealism, and moral responsibility in contrast to businesslike norms of behavior.

There is a sense in which any new forms of resistance - be they by Greens, libertarians, or radicals generally - must open alternative areas of life that can countervail and undo the embourgeoisement of society at all its levels. The issue of the relationship of "society," "politics," and "the state" becomes one of programmatic urgency. Can there be any room for a radical public sphere beyond the communes, cooperatives, and neighborhood service organizations fostered by the 1960s counterculture - structures that easily degenerated into boutique-type businesses when they did not disappear completely? Is there, perhaps, a public realm that can become an arena for the interplay of conflicting forces for change, education, empowerment, and ultimately, confrontation with the established way of life?

Marxism, Capitalism, and the Public Sphere

The very concept of a *public realm* stands at odds with traditional radical notions of a *class realm*. Marxism, in particular, denied the existence of a definable "public," or what in the Age of Democratic Revolutions of two centuries ago was called "the People," because the notion ostensibly obscured specific class interests - interests that were ultimately supposed to bring the bourgeoisie into unrelenting conflict with the proletariat. If "the People" meant anything, according to Marxist theorists, it seemed to mean a waning, unformed, nondescript petty bourgeoisie - a legacy of the past and of past revolutions - that could be expected to side mainly with the capitalist class it aspired to enter and ultimately with the working class it was forced to enter. The proletariat, to the degree that it became class conscious, would ultimately express the general interests of humanity once it absorbed this vague middle class, particularly during a general economic or "chronic" crisis within capitalism itself.

The 1930s, with its waves of strikes, its workers' insurrections, its street confrontations between revolutionary and fascist groups, and its prospect of war and bloody social upheaval, seemed to confirm this vision. But we cannot any longer ignore the fact that this traditional radical vision has since been replaced by the present-day reality of a managed capitalist system - managed culturally and ideologically as well as economically. However much living standards have been eroded for millions of people, the unprecedented fact remains that capitalism has been free of a "chronic crisis" for a half-century. Nor are there any signs that we are faced in the foreseeable future with a crisis comparable to that of the Great Depression. Far from having an internal source of long-term economic breakdown that will presumably create a general interest for a new society, capitalism has been more successful in crisis manage-

given to the fact that the capacity of states to exercise the full measure of their power has often been limited by the municipal obstacles they encountered.

Nationalism, like statism, has so deeply imprinted itself on modern thinking that the very idea of a municipalist politics as an option for societal organization has virtually been written off. For one thing, as I have already emphasized, politics these days has been identified completely with statecraft, the professionalization of power. That the political realm and the state have often been in sharp conflict with each other - indeed, in conflicts that exploded in bloody civil wars - has been almost completely overlooked. The great revolutionary movements of the past, from the English Revolution of the 1640s to those in our own century, have always been marked by strong community upsurges and depended for their success on strong community ties. That fears of municipal autonomy still haunt the nation-state can be seen in the endless arguments that are brought against it. Phenomena as "dead" as the free community and participatory democracy should presumably arouse far fewer counterarguments than we continue to encounter.

The rise of the great megalopolis has not ended the historic quest for community and civic politics, any more than the rise of multinational corporations has removed the issue of nationalism from the modern agenda. Cities like New York, London, Frankfurt, Milan, and Madrid can be politically decentralized institutionally, be they by neighborhood or district networks, despite their large structural size and their internal interdependence. Indeed, how well they can function if they do *not* decentralize structurally is an ecological issue of paramount importance, as problems of air pollution, adequate water supply, crime, the quality of life, and transportation suggest.

History has shown very dramatically that major cities of Europe with populations approaching a million and with primitive means of communication functioned by means of well-coordinated decentralized institutions of extraordinary politi-

to participate in political affairs, leisure that was probably supplied by slave labor, although it is by no means true that all active Greek citizens were slaveowners. Even more important than leisure time was the need for personal training or character formation - the Greek notion of *paidaeia* - which inculcated the reasoned restraint by which citizens maintained the decorum needed to keep an assembly of the people viable. An ideal of public service was necessary to outweigh narrow, egoistic impulses and to develop the ideal of a general interest. This was achieved by establishing a complex network of relationships, ranging from loyal friendships - the Greek notion of *philia* - to shared experiences in civic festivals and military service.

But politics in this sense was not a strictly Hellenic phenomenon. Similar problems and needs arose and were solved in a variety of ways in the free cities not only in the Mediterranean basin but in continental Europe, England, and North America. Nearly all these free cities created a public sphere and a politics that were democratic to varying degrees over long periods of time. Deeply hostile to centralized states, free cities and their federations formed some of history's crucial turning points in which humanity was faced with the possibility of establishing societies based on municipal confederations or on nation-states.

The state, too, had a historical development and cannot be reduced to a simplistic ahistorical image. Ancient states were historically followed by quasi- states, monarchical states, feudal states, and republican states. The totalitarian states of this century beggar the harshest tyrannies of the past. But essential to the rise of the nation-state was the ability of centralized states to weaken the vitality of urban, town, and village structures and replace their functions by bureaucracies, police, and military forces. A subtle interplay between the municipality and the state, often exploding in open conflict, has occurred throughout history and has shaped the societal landscape of the present day. Unfortunately, not enough attention has been

ment in the last fifty years than it was in the previous century and a half, the period of its so-called "historical ascendancy."

The classical industrial proletariat, too, has waned in numbers in the First World (the historical *locus classicus* of socialist confrontation with capitalism), in class consciousness, and even in political consciousness of itself as a historically unique class. Attempts to rewrite Marxian theory to include salaried people in the proletariat are not only nonsensical, they stand flatly at odds with how this vastly differentiated middle-class population conceives itself and its relationship to a market society. To live with the hope that capitalism will "immanently" collapse from within as a result of its own contradictory self-development is illusory as things stand today.

But there are dramatic signs that capitalism, as I have emphasized elsewhere, is producing external conditions for a crisis an ecological crisis - that may well generate a general human interest for radical social change. Capitalism, organized around a "grow-or-die" market system based on rivalry and expansion, must tear down the natural world - turning soil into sand, polluting the atmosphere, changing the entire climatic pattern of the planet, and possibly making the earth unsuitable for complex forms of life. In effect, it is proving to be an ecological cancer and may well simplify complex ecosystems that have been in the making for countless aeons.

If mindless and unceasing growth as an end in itself - forced by competition to accumulate and devour the organic world - creates problems that cut across material, ethnic, and cultural differences, the concept of "the People" and of a "public sphere" may become a living reality in history. The Green movement, or at least some kind of radical ecology movement, could thereby acquire a unique, cohering, and political significance that compares in every way with the traditional workers' movement. If the *locus* of proletarian radicalism was the factory, the *locus* of the ecology movement would be the community: the neighborhood, the town, and the municipality. A

new alternative, a political one, would have to be developed that is neither parliamentary on the one hand nor confined exclusively to direct action and countercultural activities on the other. Indeed, direct action would mesh with this new politics in the form of community self-management based on a fully participatory democracy - in the highest form of direct action, the full empowerment of the people in determining the destiny of society.

The Green Movement and the Public Realm

The Green movement, in general, is remarkably well positioned to become the arena for working out such a perspective and putting it into action. Inadequacies, failures, and retreats like those of *die Grunen* do not absolve radical social theorists from the responsibility of trying to educate this movement and give it the theoretical sense of direction it needs. The Greens have not frozen into hopeless rigidity, even in West Germany and France, despite the enormous compromises that have already alienated the radicals in these countries from their respective Green parties. What is important is that the *ecological crisis itself* is not likely to permit a broad environmental movement to solidify to the point that it could exclude articulate radical tendencies.

To foster such radical tendencies, to strengthen them theoretically, and to articulate a coherent radical ecology outlook is a major responsibility of authentic radicals. In an era of sweeping embourgeoisement, what ultimately destroys every movement is not only the commodification of everyday life but its own lack of the necessary consciousness to resist commodification and its vast powers of cooptation.

"stranger" totally disappeared with the rise of cities and politics. During the most radical and democratic periods of the French Revolution, for example, Paris was rife with fears of "foreign conspiracies" and a xenophobic mistrust of "outsiders." Nor did women ever fully share the freedoms enjoyed by men. My point, however, is that something very new was created by the city that cannot be buried in the folds of the social or of the state: namely, a public sphere and a political domain. This sphere and this domain narrowed and expanded with time, but they never completely disappeared from history. They stood very much at odds with the state, which tried in varying degrees to professionalize and centralize power, often

becoming an end in itself, such as the state power that emerged in Ptolemaic Egypt, the absolute monarchies of seventeenth-century Europe, and the totalitarian systems of rule established in Russia and in China in our own century.

The Importance of the Municipality and the Confederation

The abiding physical arena of politics has almost always been the city or town - more generically, the municipality. The size of a politically viable city is not unimportant, to be sure. To the Greeks, notably Aristotle, a city or *polis* should not be so large that it cannot deal with its affairs on a face-to-face basis or eliminate a certain degree of familiarity among its citizens. These standards, by no means fixed or inviolable, were meant to foster urban development along lines that directly countervailed the emerging state. Given a modest but by no means small size, the polls could be arranged institutionally so that it could conduct its affairs by rounded, publicly engaged men with a minimal, carefully guarded degree of representation.

To be a political person, it was supposed, required certain material preconditions. A modicum of free time was needed

Cities that are perfect models of such a public space do not exist in either history or social theory. But some cities were neither predominantly social (in the domestic sense) nor statist, but gave rise to an entirely new societal dispensation. The most remarkable of these were the seaports of ancient Hellas and the craft and commercial cities of medieval Italy and central Europe. Even modern cities of newly forming nation- states like Spain, England, and France developed identities of their own and relatively popular forms of citizen participation. Their parochial, even patriarchal attributes should not be permitted to overshadow their universal humanistic attributes. From the Olympian standpoint of modernity, it would be as petty as it would be ahistorical to highlight failings that cities shared with nearly all "civilizations" over thousands of years.

What should stand out as a matter of vital importance is that these cities created the public sphere. There, in the agora of the Greek democracies, the forum of the Roman republic, the town center of the medieval commune, and the plaza of the Renaissance city, citizens could congregate. To one degree or another in this public sphere a radically new arena - a political one - emerged, based on limited but often participatory forms of democracy and a new concept of civic personhood, the citizen.

Defined in terms of its etymological roots, *politics* means the mangement of the community or *polis* by its members, the citizens. *Politics* also meant the recognition of civic rights for strangers or "outsiders" who were not linked to the population by blood ties. That is, it meant the idea of a universal *humanitas*, as distinguished from the genealogically related "folk." Together with these fundamental developments, politics was marked by the increasing secularization of societal affairs, a new respect for the individual, and a growing regard for rational canons of behavior over the unthinking imperatives of custom.

I do not wish to suggest that privilege, inequality of rights, supernatural vagaries, custom, or even mistrust of the

Society, Politics, and the State

There is now a great need to give this conciousness palpable form and reality. If the 1960s gave rise to a counterculture to resist the prevailing culture, the closing years of this century have created the need for popular counter-institutions to countervail the centralized state. The specific form that such institutions could take may vary according to the traditions, values, concerns, and culture of a given area. But certain basic theoretical premises must be clarified if one is to advance the need for new institutions and, more broadly, for a new radical politics. The need once again to define politics - indeed, to give it a broader meaning than it has had in the past - becomes a practical imperative. The ability and wilingness of radicals to meet this need may well determine the future of movements like the Greens and the very possibility of radicalism to exist as a coherent force for basic social change.

The major institutional arenas - the social, the political, and the statist - were once clearly distinguishable from each other. The social arena could be clearly demarcated from the political, and the political, in turn, from the state. But in our present, historically clouded world, these have been blurred and mystified. Politics has been absorbed by the state, just as society has increasingly been absorbed by the economy today. If new, truly radical movements to deal with ecological breakdown are to emerge and if an ecologically oriented society is to end attempts to dominate nature as well as people, this process must be arrested and reversed.

It easy to think of society, politics, and the state ahistorically, as if they had always existed as we find them today. But the fact is that each one of these has had a complex development, one that should be understood if we are to gain a clear sense of their importance in social theory and practice. Much of what we today call *politics*, for one, is really statecraft, structured around staffing the state apparatus with parliamentarians, judges, bu-

reaucrats, police, the military, and the like, a phenomenon often replicated from the summits of the state to the smallest of communities. But the term *politics*, Greek etymologically, once referred to a public arena peopled by conscious citizens who felt competent to directly manage their own communities, or *poleis*.

Society, in turn, was the relatively private arena, the realm of familial obligation, friendship, personal self-maintenance, production, and reproduction. From its first emergence as merely human group existence to its highly institutionalized forms, which we properly call society, social life was structured around the family or *oikos*. (Economy, in fact, once meant little more than the management of the family.) Its core was the domestic world of woman, complemented by the civil world of man.

In early human communities, the most important functions for survival, care, and maintenance occurred in the domestic arena, to which the civil arena, such as it was, largely existed in service. A tribe (to use this term in a very broad sense to include bands and clans) was a truly social entity, knitted together by blood, marital, and functional ties based on age and work. These strong centripetal forces, rooted in the biological facts of life, held these eminently social communities together. They gave them a sense of internal solidarity so strong that the tribes largely excluded the "stranger" or "outsider," whose acceptability usually depended upon canons of hospitality and the need for new members to replenish warriors when warfare became increasingly important.

A great part of recorded history is an account of the growth of the male civil arena at the expense of this domestic or social one. Males gained growing authority over the early community as a result of intertribal warfare and clashes over territory in which to hunt. Perhaps more important, agricultural peoples appropriated large areas of the land that hunting peoples required to sustain themselves and their lifeways.

It was from this undifferentiated civil arena (again, to use the word *civil* in a very broad sense) that politics and the state emerged. Which is not to say that politics and statecraft were the same from the beginning. Despite their common origins in the early civil arena, these two were sharply opposed to each other. History's garments are never neat and unwrinkled. The evolution of society from small domestic social groups into highly differentiated, hierarchical, and class systems whose authority encompassed vast territorial empires is nothing if not complex and irregular.

The domestic and familial arena itself - that is to say, the social arena - helped to shape the formation of these states. Early despotic kingdoms, such as those of Egypt and Persia, were seen not as clearly civil entities but as the personal "households" or domestic domains of monarchs. These vast palatial estates of "divine" kings and their families were later carved up by lesser families into manorial or feudal estates. The social values of present-day aristocracies are redolent of a time when kinship and lineage, not citizenship or wealth, determined one's status and power.

The Rise of the Public Sphere

It was the Bronze Age "urban revolution," to use V. Gordon Childe's expression, that slowly eliminated the trappings of the social or domestic arena from the state and created a new terrain for the political arena. The rise of cities - largely around temples, military fortresses, administrative centers, and interregional markets - created the basis for a new, more secular and more universalistic form of political space. Given time and development, this space slowly evolved an unprecedented public sphere.