

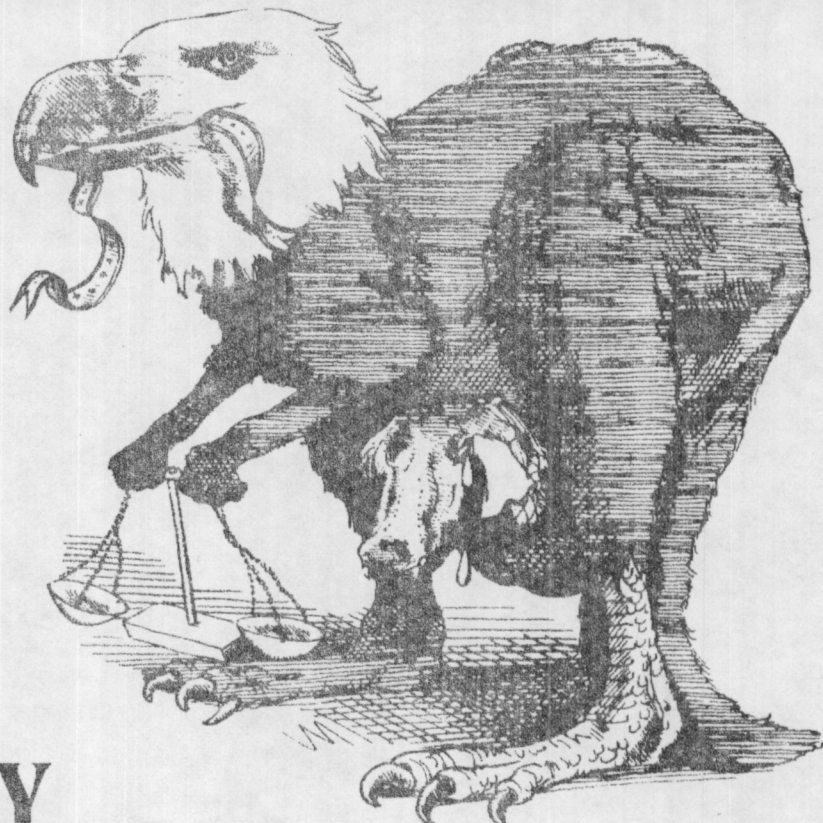
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OCT 1972

**THE
SICK**



**SOCIETY
by MICHAEL TANZER**

A DISCUSSION WITH
HARRY MAGDOFF

WITH GUEST SPEAKER


DAVID DELLINGER

Tuesday October 10, 1972

CONTROL CONFLICT & CHANGE 3

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THE SICK SOCIETY

A Speech by Harry Magdoff

Harry Magdoff is a Marxist Economist, an editor of Monthly Review and the author of The Age of Imperialism.

The subject of his speech was THE SICK SOCIETY by Michael Tanzer (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972).

The speech was delivered to attending members of Control, Conflict & Change 3 on Tuesday, October 10, 1972 at Central Methodist Church, Detroit, Mich.

The Sick Society was the second presentation of the third year program of Control, Conflict & Change 3, a contemporary education program sponsored by the Motor City Labor League and the Alliance.

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THE SICK SOCIETY

by Michael Tanzer

Presentation by
Harry Magdoff

INTRODUCTION by David Dellinger

Thank you. I don't really have any business being here tonight because I'm overdue in Ann Arbor, but I came anyway. Partly because I have fond memories of when I was here last and I was very impressed by the nature of the program you're doing.

Secondly, I came because I consider it an honor to introduce Harry Magdoff. To be frank, I only met him personally for the first time tonight; but as he said to me and I could have said to him first, we think of each other as being in the same family. I've admired Harry Magdoff from afar for a long time, his work on imperialism and other things. One of the shortcomings of the anti-war movement and the liberation movement, apart from the fratricidal problems and the sectarianism, is its lack of doing its homework, its hard research and its hard work. I think that Harry Magdoff has been an example in terms of the kind of digging out facts and analyzing them that he's done and I think that you're very privileged to have him here tonight. That's going to conclude my introduction and I'm going to go on to other things, but I really consider it an honor to be able to say those few words of tribute to him.

The third reason I came, despite the shortness, is because I have just been to Hanoi and I have a tremendous sense of urgency. It gives me a sense of frustration to have to deal with it in about eight or ten minutes, but I'll try to sum up some things and forgive me if I leave some of the connections and some of the explanations and proofs aside. But just in outline form I want to make some brief points.

First of all, as you know, I was involved in bringing home three POWs. Statistically that release was of absolutely no significance. I was important to the three individuals involved and to their families, but statistically the good of it was undone in less time than it took us to fly from New York to Hanoi and back, because every week under the present American policies, about five other pilots are either killed, missing in action or captured. The only good of the release was its possible political significance, its possible political impact and results. In that respect,

I consider the release to be a token release aimed at very important results. It was intended to be a clear message to the American people that they intend to release all of the POWs the moment the war is over. This is contrary to the warnings of Nixon who claimed that 15,000 French prisoners were not returned after the French-Indochina war. This was immediately denied by the French Government who said that they were all released within weeks. Still, Nixon captures television and the denials of the French Government or the comments of the Vietnamese are virtually lost. In Paris before the release was announced we were given a pre-indication of it and again in Viet Nam on September 25 when we met for two hours with Pham Von Dong, the Prime Minister. We were told that this release was a message to the American people, that the POWs belonged at home with their families, and that the moment the war was settled they would be returned. Unfortunately this clear message was blurred. It was blurred by a combination of statements and actions by the government and by the attitude of the press, which is far too complicated for me to deal with at this time in any detail.

Americans operate on the basis of assumptions which are basically arrogant, basically unrealistic. Perhaps the best way that I could hint at that in this somewhat condensed way is to ask you what you think would happen if the United States were attacked, attacked from the air by a foreign country? If, as on the basis of my recent trip to Viet Nam, there were to be a parallel -- that is, if Detroit were 75 per cent destroyed, so that you would walk for block after block after block after block and see nothing but rubble? You would see old women and young mothers digging in the rubble apparently looking for a scrap of clothing from a loved one or perhaps a piece of hair or some other memento. I ask you what you think would happen if Detroit were destroyed in that manner and the planes continued to come over and attack and the anti-aircraft guns shot down one of the attacking pilots?

Let us say he was of a different race, a different country, a different politics. What do you think would happen to him? I don't want to be too cynical about our culture or our level of human development, but I find it hard to believe that he would not be torn limb from limb. I find it hard to believe that he would find his way into a prison camp. I find it hard to imagine what the reaction of the American people would be if the political leader of that country kept speaking on television and to a world-wide audience and demanding that we give the best possible treatment to this man and that we send him and his fellows home as quickly as we captured them. It would be like death on the installment plan. They keep coming over and bombing, we keep shooting them down, as I say at the rate of about five a week, and then it is demanded that we return them home.

I don't want to go overboard with that because I personally believe that the Vietnamese government did the right thing by releasing these prisoners. I believe it has done the right thing by saying that although they have violated

the Nuremburg Statutes, nonetheless they will not be tried for war crimes, because I find the relationship of an individual to his culture, to his environment, to his society to be a very complicated one. I do not think that as a movement seeking a better world -- not just a better America but a better world -- we do well to punish, to attack, to recriminate against individuals, some of whom have done the most terrible things.

I can't explain why I have received word from Viet Nam on each of the four releases, asking me to come over or to send somebody else to help escort them home. But I think perhaps it's because in 1966 I spoke with the Vietnamese at a time when it was thought that the Vietnamese were going to try the pilots as war criminals, and I raised this issue. To telescope it, after a series of conversations, I ended up talking with Ho Chi Minh who said, "We distinguish between the man in the air who is bombing our cities and killing our people and whom we must shoot down, and the man on the ground who is helpless to hurt us and is deserving of the fullest human compassion and the fullest humanity of which we are capable." I hail that attitude. I'm not talking about what we might do, I'm saying that's what I think we or the Vietnamese or anybody should do. I think individuals should be treated with the utmost compassion and humanity. But it is the most incredible arrogance and a sign of our political underdevelopment that the President of the United States can constantly complain about the fate of the prisoners, constantly demand that they be returned home, and Americans are hardly aware that these are not innocent youth captured by a foreign country while farming their soil in Iowa or building houses in Detroit. They are people who are conducting the most genocidal bombing in human history 12,000 miles from home.

To add to the arrogance, something that again I can only touch on, when we were asking the Vietnamese why the number of letters from the prisoners had been reduced slightly in the last few months, we were told that the reason was that in the letters and packages sent from this country were the materials of espionage. We asked about this and they told us a little, but we said that it sounds terrible but without the evidence it means nothing. A week later we met with them, they came to our hotel and they unloaded briefcases full of material, which included things like soap bars hollowed out and inside them radio transmitters or receivers, chemicals and instructions on how to write secret letters back in the letters that come from them. I'll just read you an excerpt from one of them. I should say that it wasn't just soap. I myself squeezed a tube of toothpaste, a huge super Colgate if I remember correctly, and out came some tinfoil inside of which was a radio receiver.

I'll just read from one of the things we saw and photographed. "The liner of the candy can is especially prepared chemical paper which functions similar to secretary's black carbon paper. The paper can be used in one of two methods: Method 1 -- place the special paper over the letter sheet,

place another piece of paper over the top of the special paper. When writing, make good contact using moderate pressure. When you are finished writing, examine for any impressions. If you use the special paper prior to writing a letter, take care not to smear your message when you write your letter." This was in a candy can. I myself opened a stick of Wrigley's Juicy Fruit Gum which had one of these messages inside the wrapper. I can't tell you more about that now except to point out again how little we know about what really goes on. Although we released all this material to the press and it was vaguely mentioned in the press, it's not really on the conscience or in the consciousness of America and Richard Nixon continues to say that we must fight the war until the POWs are returned, without any recognition of the context in which they have been captured or of the context in which the Pentagon is operating.

Now finally, I want to say something not about POWs although it relates to them, because they weren't captured in a vacuum, they weren't sent home in a vacuum, even though in this kind of peculiar compartmentalization of America one would tend to think so. As I said, they were over there, 12,000 miles away bombing cities, destroying people. Visiting Viet Nam makes things that are abstract and distant become concrete and personal. Before I went I read some material which had been compiled from the Kennedy Committee on Refugees and the Pentagon statistics which said that more than 6,000,000 Indochinese had been killed, captured or made refugees under Nixon alone. That struck me, because 6,000,000 is kind of a magic figure in my thinking and maybe in yours. That's the number generally spoken of the 6,000,000 Jews who died in concentration camps and it shocked me. I couldn't help thinking how it had taken Richard Nixon less time to destroy 6,000,000 people than it had taken Adolph Hitler.

I wish I had time to talk about that more because I know how tricky and dangerous it is to make any comparisons between the United States and Nazi Germany. People are so sensitive and they think, well, we have our civil liberties and we have our book clubs and we have our papers that print the information, it's not like Nazi Germany. And it isn't in a way, but that's a statistic that's hard to get away from. I shouldn't even personalize it that much because what Richard Nixon does is only what you and I and the American people allow him to do. But anyway, it took us less time to destroy 6,000,000 people than it took Adolph Hitler. Despite all the other circumstances, that's something to deal with.

But when I got to Viet Nam, that was forgotten. It was forgotten because those 6,000,000 people were personalized. Not just that I walked through the cities and saw the rubble and, as I say, saw the old women and the young women seeking mementos from their loved ones. I went to a hospital and they wheeled in a 13 year old boy. They helped him to sit up and they took off enough of his clothes so that we could see the burns on his body, 40 per cent of his body burned. The only thing clear about his, the only clear skin, was his face and his eyes, and they were the clearest eyes I've ever seen. All of a sudden I realized there was a woman standing

beside him. I didn't know where she'd come from, but it was his mother. She must have walked in while we were looking at him. They explained to us that she would never be able to open her mouth again, from what had happened to her in the same raid two weeks earlier in which her son had been burned. Her mouth was partially opened and her tongue partially sticking out. It was grotesque and ugly. I looked at her and I thought of how beautiful the Vietnamese women were and I wondered how beautiful she might have been and what was going through her mind. She couldn't speak to us as she stood there looking at us through those dumb eyes and looking at her son with his wounds.

They're not even in the statistics. We just talk about the dead, the wounded we hardly count. We don't even talk about the dead much more, as long as they're not Americans. We read the statistics every week about the number of Americans. Leave aside the fact that they're not honest. The people who died on the carrier Forestall, they're not included. The people that are shot down are not included. It's just the people in ground combat. Leave all that aside. Leave aside the fact that according to one estimate 24,000 South Vietnamese were killed in two months of the present offensive. If it had been 24,000 GIs dead, we would have had chaos in the streets, we would have had revolt, but since they were 24,000 South Vietnamese, we hardly noticed. The boy I'm talking about and his mother weren't even in those statistics.

There is a lot more I'd like to say but I'll just end up with one thought. When I went over there first six years ago, I felt pity for the Vietnamese, and I don't know if that's the worst feeling to have. I changed over there because I found out they had so much vitality, so much sense of what they were living for and dying for, that I came home feeling pity for Americans. When I went over there again, because I had read the statistics of the air war and the 6,000,000 that I talked about, I was upset again for the Vietnamese. It's hard to put, particularly in a condensed thing of this kind. When I came back again, I wasn't so worried about the Vietnamese. They're being killed, they're dying but they know what they're living for, they know what they're dying for. In a sense that I can't really deal with or explain adequately, I realize they were not the ones to feel sorry for. It is the American people who can be pacified when their government, their country is carrying on these actions.

The anti-war movement erratically and not nearly as well as it should has been fighting for five, six, seven years to save the Vietnamese. I came back from Viet Nam this time, back to an America where simply to read one day's newspaper or look at one program on television is a cultural shock and a moral shock. I came back convinced that we shouldn't worry about the Vietnamese, in their own way they'll take care of themselves. Our struggle now is to save America and America's fate hangs in the balance.

Thank you.

PRESENTATION by Harry Magdoff

When the telephone call came asking me whether I would come to speak to you, I asked to be forgiven and tried to beg off, primarily because I'm not a public speaker, and the idea of speaking to a large audience scared me. Let's say it's not my forte. The classroom is more my way of doing things and discussions with a small group of people. The person who called me said, we'll have a staff meeting and discuss it. He took it very seriously. I suggested alternatives, people who I thought would do much better than I. The next week I got a phone call that said, the staff meeting decided that we reject your objections, we want you. Vanity prevailed and I agreed to come. Then I heard that I was to follow a meeting at which Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden spoke, and at this point I was ready to run. Then I reconsidered, first I have to be responsible, I can't just claim sickness or some other odd reason. But also in perhaps the best tradition, whether it's a musical composition or a series of vaudeville acts, there is need for a change in mood. You can't just sustain one type of program after another, and it's in that sense that I at least talked myself into the fact that perhaps there might be some purpose in coming.

This is really the way I would like to see my role here, in some ways to irritate, perhaps say things that you won't like to hear, in some ways to try to bring out some issues that may not have been discussed or analyzed as much in the past. I'm not going to digest for you THE SICK SOCIETY. I think that would be insulting. A group of adult people who have undertaken to read a book don't need a speaker to come up and tell them what was in the book. The assumption is that you've read it, understood it. Nor am I going to undertake a critical review. It's very easy to get up and to pick arguments with another writer. It's a standard practice with professors and makes you sound great when you can show what's wrong in somebody else's writings. It isn't a question of right or wrong. There are questions of emphasis, there are questions of interpretation, but this is the process of learning. Through your own discussions and debates among yourselves, this process should take place, and again, I don't see my role in that position.

I would like to, instead, discuss today my own thinking with respect to the way out of the "sick society." I was going to introduce this talk in discussing THE SICK SOCIETY with some of the things that Dave Dellinger said at the end. As far as I'm concerned, it isn't a question of drugs, it isn't a question of crime, it isn't a question of alienation, it isn't a question of unemployment. The definition of our society as a sick society is the beginning and continuation of the war in Viet Nam. And here, while we can put the blame in various places and talk about analyzing where it came from, why it's being done, the fault is still ours, the people of the United States, and the responsibility is ours. The sickness goes throughout the society. We have to realize psychoanalysts go

through a process of self-recognition before they can really cure themselves. This is the kind of recognition we have to make, we have to achieve, to reach. The sickness is in our society and in our people too, that they can accept it, can rationalize it, can live with it. Now this theme I'm going to introduce again toward the end. Let me however take up what I think is the most important part of it.

My argument is that this type of sick society cannot be cured without a complete, total turnover in the direction and nature of the society, in the power controls and where power rests in the society, and without a change in the people themselves. The latter is as equally important as the power. We are most of us, at one time or another, impressed with the tremendous wealth, with the tremendous production capacity of the United States. Very often, whether we like it or not, we seem to think if only we had some sensible leaders, if only we had some sincere leaders at the top of the society, it would be possible to cure most of our ills with reason, with goodness.

My argument is, you cannot cure this society by moves, by legislation, by changes that will create a better distribution of income, more welfare for the people, despite our richness, despite our wealth. The reason is that our kind of society can only live on the basis of growth, on the basis of expansion. The ability to obtain, if not full employment, 70 per cent, 80 per cent, 90 per cent employment of the available labor supply, depends upon the actions of the business community. And the business community cannot take the actions that are necessary in order to create the jobs unless there is an adequate profit motive. This is not a question of personal blame, this is not a question of evil or good on the part of the business community. We have to understand this as a basic fundamental. You cannot have a capitalist society without having a strong, energetic profit motive.

But profit motive alone is not enough. There has to be a spirit of excitement, an area of speculation, of inflation, to keep the economy going upwards. The best illustration we have of this, and the clearest illustration, is what happened during the depression. When I talk about the depression, of course, it's the great one of the 1930s. When you had a decline in the economy in the 1930s, the major decline was not in consumer goods. People ate less, but people ate. Real starvation, if it did exist, existed in small numbers. There was a great deal of hunger but not real starvation. People helped each other, neighbors helped each other, there were charities, families helped each other; somehow or other they managed and, despite the fact that we had the kind of massive unemployment we had, the consumption of goods and services declined about 20 per cent. That's bad, that's serious for a society. But that's not what made the great depression. What made the great depression was the decline in capital goods.

The engine of a capitalist economy, the thing that brings about the big booms and the busts, is the behavior of the investment goods industries. The construction industry had

a peak in 1926, something like \$11 billion. In 1932 it was down to \$1 billion. From \$11 billion to \$1 billion, at the same prices, leaving out of account the effect of prices. If you look at the other capital goods, or the capital goods as a whole, instead of the 20 per cent decline I talked about before in the consumer goods industry, there was a decline of 80 per cent in the capital goods industry.

The New Deal brought about tremendous reforms. You had a New Deal that said we have to think about people and not about property. The New Deal in my opinion was a sincere operation, they were concerned about people. One may argue about their motives, I won't debate them, I would assume the best for the moment. They created jobs, they created a flow of food of various kinds, other activities that were needed, in order to start the engine moving again and to meet the basic needs of the people. As such, it was a tremendous and great effort, but it couldn't solve the problem of capitalism. By 1939, when consumers' consumption had come back to 1929 levels, when the economy seemed to be rolling again, it was still with some 10 to 12 to 13 million unemployed out of a total of 40 million: the reason, the capital goods hadn't started up. Population had increased in ten years, labor productivity had increased in ten years, but the capitalist engine had not started up. The capitalist engine did not see enough incentive, did not see enough profit, did not see enough opportunity. It's only when it has the excitement of new opportunity, when there is support, as I said, for speculation and inflation and the possibility of making ever larger profits, that you get the society moving.

That's why for all reformers there is the basic issue between how much welfare can you achieve, can you grant, how much can you improve the society without interfering with the profit motive, without interfering with that stimulus for the capitalist society. In other words, there is always a conflict between how much of your total product goes to consumption, how much goes to investment. Without investment, without sufficient investment (it may not be investment created by the private industry, it may be investment created by the war industry, it may be investment created from other sources, expansionary sources into new fields and foreign fields) you cannot keep the economy going. You will get disagreements between Democrats and Republicans, Liberals and Conservatives, because the conservatives say you have to protect the profit motive to the utmost, and the liberals say you have to keep social stability. You have to maintain a certain level of acceptance on the part of the population to have an effective society, and if you're going to have an effective society, you have to give in to a certain extent. You have to have welfare, you have to provide benefits for the population, you have to take care of sickness, if possible, on the part of older people and others. Still, reforms can't go too far because of the limit on the needs for investment.

Recently, in the Morgan Guarantee Survey, there was a statement which is much sounder. Very often when you go to the conservatives and the businessmen you get a much more realistic picture of the society than from the liberals. The

liberals in their wish to improve, in their wish to make things better, become muddle-headed in their thinking. When you talk with the straight businessmen they are quite conversative, they understand the need for concessions. In the Morgan Guarantee Bank Newsletter, more appropriately an economic survey, was an article by a professor of finance who talked about the need for reordering the priorities of society. He began discussing how much was needed to get better education, better health, cleaner cities, pollution control, and so on. Forgetting how he arrived at the figures or whether they are too large or too small, he talked about \$30 billion needed. Now \$30 billion is peanuts in a society that can produce \$1000 billion. He makes a statement about this \$30 billion that I think is basically true and important. He says, "a resource diversion as large as about \$30 billion a year, to take that away from consumption inevitably must come mainly from restraint on the expenditure of middle income families."

Now, what do we mean by middle income families? I'm not reading from him now, I'm just interpolating. You're talking about people, as you will see, making between \$8,000 and \$15,000. The rich, the top 20 per cent of the population, makes almost 50 per cent of the income. That 50 per cent can't be touched, according to his theory. You can't touch the lower end because they're at subsistence level, and the lower end accounts for about 13 per cent. So he says as a practical matter, it cannot be accomplished solely by increasing taxes on businesses or the rich. "Business investment in new plant and equipment is a necessary precondition for the attainment of an adequate growth rate. Despite recent questioning of some byproducts of economic growth, the fact remains that it is still the most important single source of usable resources." And soaking the rich cannot come anywhere close to freeing sufficient capacity, nor can the resources needed be expected to come from reducing the consumption of those already close to the subsistence level. The conclusion is inescapable. A large share of the cost, in terms of less than desired consumption, in other words a reduction in consumption, will have to be borne in taxes by middle income people. This is simply because they comprise the bulk of the population and do most of the consumer spending. This, in my opinion is realism, it's facing up to the facts. There is no magic, in terms of taxation, of soaking the rich, of equalizing distribution of income within this kind of a social framework that will keep the society going. If you remove the incentive from capitalism, from the capitalists, you're going to create more and more serious problems.

Now I'm not discussing here the question as to what political position should be taken at any given moment to get medical insurance, or to get decent hospitals or to get better education. That's another matter. What I'm trying to get at is, not to kid yourself in that struggle, not to fool yourself that you're going to attain equality or a significant change in social relations, the sort of thing Michael Tanzer is talking about, by manipulating better taxes, better legislation of a reform nature. In the very fundamental sense, you have to have adequate resources for investment and it has

to be in an environment that is happy, successful for what Keynes called the animal spirits of capitalists, of entrepreneurs. He was right, the animal spirits are what is needed for a successful operating capitalist.

This is merely the first point. In terms, however, for those who might suggest changing the society in a more radical way--eliminate the profit motive, take your chances. If the capitalists don't produce, the government will step into the picture and will do the job for the capitalists. We're intelligent, we're smart, we're competent, we can do it. My argument is that here too we will fail. This goes to some extent much deeper because I am talking now about the structure of the society that was built up over centuries, a society that was created and which, in the process of its creation and its evolution, developed a great deal of inequality which cannot be eradicated merely by will or by handing out money. It not only created inequality in terms of income, it created inequality as among people--stratification of different kinds of people, by ethnic groups, by class groups, by religious groups. It created attitudes, a point of view, a way of doing things which, if it remains as the standard for the society it will, even with the best kind of government administration, reproduce itself and will reproduce the inequalities, the difficulties, the strains that occur in the purely capitalist society.

I'll try to explain this. There are two aspects to it. One aspect is that our thinking and our standards are those of the elite. When I say our, I mean people, I'm no longer talking about capitalists. We imitate the rich. The movement in our aspirations, whether it is to a better car, to eventually own a Cadillac or even to own a car manufactured to imitate the Cadillac as much as possible, is something that is built into the society.

I was talking to someone about outlining my talk this afternoon, to a man whom I respect very much in the black community. He said you're absolutely right, because when you examine the black community you find their aspirations are what the white community has. These are their standards, they don't create standards of their own. And within the white community the thought processes are fundamentally determined by the class structure of the society that has been structured, not in a few years, but over centuries. We get it with our mother's milk. This is to me an essential part of the analysis that is as important as the economist analysis. At college we are taught and every single text book that I know of is based upon the assumption, and explicitly states the assumption, that consumer needs are insatiable, that consumers wants will never end, can never end. This is a perfectly reasonable assumption. It's a perfectly reasonable statement about human beings who are created, conditioned and developed in a society where this is the standard. But it isn't necessarily a function of human nature nor is it an inevitable function as far as the kind of societies that can be built or must be built.

I would say first we must recognize the overwhelming significance of the elite consciousness, the consciousness of the rich, of the wealthy, of the superior that is the standard for

the way of thinking all the way down the line. At the lowest level without blaming anybody, not accusing, we're all the same kind of people, all have aspirations to reach to the top. And it's the top and the patterns of the top and the type of consumption, the type of luxury, that sets the standards. This is from the viewpoint of mentality, ideas.

Then there is the other kind of question, the very issue, the very practical issue. It is my argument, for instance, that we cannot continue for very long. I'm not talking necessarily about tomorrow or next year, but I would assume that even talking in Detroit, it should be evident that the automobile society has to change. You cannot continue to pile up the kinds of cars we have simply in terms of the space available and the air there is to breathe, even with respect to the changes that will be made on exhausts and processing of fuel within the car and so on, or the type of fuel that's used. It's impossible. It's impossible to clog all the roads of the country with cars and we are going precisely in that direction. There was once a cartoon in the New Yorker which had a picture of one end of the Holland Tunnel, the New Jersey end. At the New Jersey end was a sign, a stanchion and a placard, "Sorry, New York Filled Up." It seemed like a joke but shortly thereafter there were a few days when it literally was so, you couldn't move. It just happened to be a combination of certain circumstances.

In any sort of rational society, call it capitalist, socialist, anarchist, feudal, whatever you want to call it, the notion of having one or two people consuming, using up several tons of steel is impossible. When I say several tons, it's not only the steel or metal that is in the car itself but all of the metal that had to be scraped off in the process and not always recycled, that was used in order to be able to get from one block to ten blocks away or twenty blocks away or even twenty miles away. The amount of oil that's consumed, what's done to the air, what's done to human beings, to their nerves--it's just impossible, it's incredible, it's stupid, it's irrational and it cannot continue. Nor will other countries in the world be able to continue if they follow the American path, which they are bound to do without some drastic changes in their way of life and in their way of thinking. It is an impossible development in terms of utilization of resources.

Very often we have discussions on ecology with people who come around the office or in the classroom and when we get to very refined points I immediately pounce on the automobile because this is the essence of the problem; not that there aren't other problems. Assume that we want to change it. If we use the accepted standards of bookkeeping of our society or even of socialist societies, then the cars in the United States are the most efficient and best way of handling the problem. We have the automobile factories all built, we know how to do it, we have a great deal of efficiency in producing the automobiles, our cities are designed in such a way that the only effective means of transportation is the automobile. Our land values have developed along that line, our road systems have developed along that line. In other words, since the

beginning of the twentieth century the economy has developed in such a way, with the price system, the wage system, the entire structure of a way of life in addition to housing, city structure has been such that you have to have the automobile. If you remain within the context of the bookkeeping of the market economy, the pricing system, the wage system that has been established over the years, then the only way to continue would be to continue building an automobile economy. In order to change it you have to overhaul everything about our economy. When I say everything, you realize that it's an exaggeration, you'll have to redesign your cities. But you cannot redesign your cities without taking into account land values. Land values have no logical meaning other than business speculative purposes. You have to be able to reorder your housing, you have to be able to reconstruct your cities, you have to develop an industry, a new kind of industry that will supply mass transportation, that will solve many of the problems of transportation; you have to restructure your society from a purely technical standpoint, certainly not an easy thing to do and certainly not something that we could sit down and do overnight.

If you are going to overcome the sickness of operating and developing along the lines that we have been developing, then just eliminating the profit motive doesn't change it because it's not merely the profit motive, it's the accounting, it's the bookkeeping, it's the pricing system and the entire structure of housing and manufacturing that has developed. I'm using automobiles because it's the classic illustration, the best, everything is contained in it, but you can go down the line to all sorts of other industries and find the same type of problem. The same thing happens with respect to your regional development. Some areas within the United States are very backward, some areas very advanced. In some areas within a developed region you will have backward pockets. These things themselves have generated a continuity of reactions which again continue the differential between the more advanced. All logical as long as you maintain these standards of accounting, of pricing, this way of thinking has become accepted and recognized as part of our way of life.

If you are going to entertain any problem of changing this society, of eliminating the issue of sickness, neither the welfare program or adjustments by increasing welfare reform nor even a radical change such as removing the profit motive will do the job. The problem is not only one of your pricing system and your bookkeeping system with respect to the structure and the inequalities that have developed within the society. The very nature of the institutions which have developed also sustain the illnesses and support the illnesses that have been corrected. The problems (I cannot go into detail tonight) on the questions of the medical profession, of education, of recreation--three major areas that employ a very substantial part of the society, that utilize and are also involved in any kind of change that would adapt the society to a new level, into a new direction.

Whatever one of these or related issues you approach, you'll find the development of a structure of institutions with a highly motivated top establishment and a hierarchic set of relations which include a high degree of oppression,

of separation of people from the ability to obtain the kind of health care, education and recreation that would be best suited for their own development. Again, this is not the problem of any particular evil group of educational administrators or hospital administrators. They are, in their own way, trying to do their best but, in doing their best, living within the institutions of the philanthropic organizations, the problems of the medical schools, working within the areas of inequalities, the institution itself becomes ossified and has a logic of it's own. The institution imposes again these areas of oppression at various levels. We might argue a great deal as to whether we accept this as the evil of the institution; the point is that people are not involved in making that decision. The decision is made in terms of almost automatic factors, each one calling upon the next, each development creating a logical and necessary followup development within a process not of evil, not of conscious oppression but a process even among the best who are trying to service and to produce a better situation.

What I am coming to is that if the issue is one of changing the society, of curing the sickness we have to examine the issues at their very root. At the root, in my opinion, is the standards of social responsibility, the standards of social desirability if you wish, the ways of thinking of people and the achievements that are needed for a society. While my emphasis is very strongly the need for a socialist society where production will be geared to the needs of the people, we have to start thinking in terms also of what kind of socialist society. Not that we have to design a careful plan of exactly what kind of a society it will be, this would be a contradiction, we're not going to build a dream world. But we do have to have certain principles and certain guides. It is in terms of these principles and guides that we also have to design our action, our work, our program and this I would like to devote a bit of time to doing.

I would say that the issue of socialism vs. capitalism is not a theoretical one, it is not even a question of choice. We may kid ourselves and think that there is a choice, that it's a matter of sitting down and debating whether you should have capitalism, whether you should have socialism. Capitalism is rapidly coming to an end in any event. It's not coming to an end because the system is going to collapse. I think this is an area where people, seeing the critical problems of finance and international affairs, seeing the contradictions of inflation or seeing the problems that have arisen with respect to the Vietnamese war, the social discontent, the economic discontent in this country, deciding this system has got to end. In those terms, it's foolish it seems to me to think of an automatic collapse of the system. It isn't going to end that way, at least in the visible future. It has to end, talking now about the next generation, the youngsters here, is that within the next 30 to 40 years you'll have a situation in the world that cannot be solved in the normal standard ways, taking just the normal increase in population.

All this talk about population control is for the birds as far as underdeveloped countries are concerned, it's full

of contradictions, full of nonsense. At best, even if they achieve a great deal, there is still the problem of merely the pressure of population on food supply. Such that, for the majority of the world the issue of planning production and controlling production for purposes of meeting the needs of the population even at a minimum level has got to come up. It's either that or starvation or killing each other by war and disease. This is part of the reality of the world. My point is that socialism has got to be on the agenda, some form of it, it may be a rotten socialism, it may be dictatorial, it may be an oppressive one but a socialism of central control of the means of production in order to achieve certain ends has got to come forward as a central issue throughout the world. Assuming that the United States is able to maintain itself under these circumstances, then the problem becomes one of continuous contraction of the society and, without a transformation of the society, a major step towards a repressive society, call it fascistic, dictatorial or what. You cannot have even the trimmings of democracy that we live with, under such periods of contraction, such periods of decline.

The problem is not whether you want to dream up a better society, whether you want to dream up a pleasanter one or a nicer one, the problem is one of confronting yourself with the situation, the real situation that is bound to face both the world and this, our own country, in one way or another within the next 30 to 40 years, within the year 2000. That doesn't mean that there aren't more serious problems that may come up or changes may take place before then but I'm focusing on the 30 to 40 year period. This is the period of greatest tension in terms of the basic problem of the world, the one of starvation, hunger facing, not millions, but billions of people; that we're going to be facing this type of an issue.

The problem then becomes: what do you do in your own society since we cannot think in terms of merely restructuring and imitating the existing society? If we are thinking in terms of restructuring the society and creating a new society, it has to be done in terms of a different framework of thinking, a different set of standards and guides than the standards and guides that have existed for centuries if you wish, in terms of previous history and the way we ourselves have been trained, the way we have learned. The problem of consumption has to take on a different form, the problem of the relations between people has to take on a different form. It's in this sense that the youth culture has created and challenged us with a whole new set of ideas, not that we have to accept all of them; but the fact that they are creating these, suggesting these ideas means that it's coming up from somewhere, the need for it.

I'm not talking about messianic activity nor am I talking about merely reaching out for purely good and evil. What I'm talking about is that you cannot, in the kind of industrialized society we have, in terms of the utilization of our resources, the question of the utilization of the air that surrounds the earth, you cannot continue to build along the present path. The illnesses discussed in the Tanzer book are merely preliminary symptoms of the kinds of problems. If we talk about building a

Socialism, or creating a new society that has the same standards of consumption, the same elite concepts of relations between people, then we are going to continue these problems and create others for ourselves. What is needed is a completely different way of thinking and a way of thinking that is based upon collectivism, cooperation, of people working together, of people undertaking projects together, as part of a process of development. Lenin was very intrigued with the idea in STATE AND REVOLUTION that with the new revolution, with the Communist revolution, the Socialist revolution, that every cook could become a member of the Soviet, of the ruling group. It was a great idea, but it never worked. Now I'm not going to analyze why it didn't work, but I think the idea is still there. The point is that if we are going to have social change, without the participation of people at the lowest levels, it isn't going to be meaningful social change. Unless in the process of working for social change we learn how to take responsibility at the lowest level, we become more self-reliant on a community basis, we're not going to get social change.

The issue of socialism is not merely the destruction of the profit system nor is it, in my opinion, the substitution of planned production for anarchic production. It is also a question of where power lies, a question in the attitudes and standards that people have --whether people are ready to act as socialists, to behave as socialist human beings, or whether they are ready to remain individualistic, selfish, aspiring for their own needs. People are not going to transform themselves overnight or be transformed, and certainly they're not going to be transformed in a voluntary fashion by religious leadership of some kind. Within this concept, we have to start redirecting our thinking because the process of creating socialism is also the process of creating a socialist man. You cannot wait until you have socialism to create the socialist man. The socialism that you have will not necessarily create the socialist man. If it's a socialism that is again geared to the consumerism of a capitalist society, that is again geared to production and only for higher and higher production, then you're not going to get a socialist man out of it no matter how much you educate him with the ideas of socialism or with the ideas of Marxism.

So the problem is one of educating our own people in the process of working for socialism, if we are going to work for socialism. Here the problem of education is two-fold. We have to think about the question of humans and human relationships. But also within the tactics of struggle, we have to think about what we select in the process of creating and working for this end. The process of education has to be experience at the lowest community level, at every step in organization which recognizes this problem as well, which opens up the issue of human relations and responsibility and decision making at the lowest level. The people have to be involved -- the poorest, the most ignorant, the ones at the lowest rung -- if you want to develop their own consciousness of the possibility of also being rulers and of making decisions. Whether it's a struggle around welfare or whether it's a struggle around an issue of housing, or whatever issue that

comes up, the process, the responsibility of socialists is to select or suggest or open up the mind to such means of action at the community level, in the shop, in the factory, that pose the fundamental issues of: Who has the power? What are the restrictions of making the changes for the necessary reforms that you're fighting for and working for? What ways can we do it that are better and how can we undertake the responsibility at our level to do it better?

Now of necessity, this type of presentation has to be vague. But I would say that the role that we have to play if we are sincere in our analysis of the sick society, is the role of being educators -- educating, educating, educating. When I talk about education I am not talking about merely reading books, an essential and first part of it. I'm not talking about lectures. I'm not merely talking about preaching to people. The process of education for socialism must go on every day in every relationship, with neighbors, with social activity, with work activity. It has to go on explaining to people in terms of their own experience. It has to go on in the organizational campaigns, in the work for reforms which have to be carried on also, where people can learn in the process of fighting for these reforms that socialism is necessary. A change in the system is possible, is necessary. And it has to be a system based upon a way of thinking that is diametrically opposed at every level with that of capitalism.

Thank you.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I don't know whether it's going to be possible to answer all the questions, it depends upon how much patience you have and how much time we have and how long you can stand the stuffiness in the room. There hasn't been enough time to organize the questions, so I'll start them off in the order they were submitted.

Q: CAN THE CHINESE CULTURAL REVOLUTION BE A PATTERN OF HOW TO MAKE PEOPLE THINK AS SOCIALIST MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RACE?

A: I don't think that the Chinese pattern, as a general proposition, can be applied to the United States. The Chinese pattern is a pattern that came from China, out of the Chinese people, their particular tradition, their philosophy, their religion, their experience, before imperialism, after imperialism; and the United States has its own experience and its own traditions. What the Chinese Cultural Revolution did though, was put on the agenda some of the things that I tried to say today, which need I'm sure quite a bit of elaboration in terms of some of the questions I've seen. I should have spelled out some of the points more fully.

The traditional Marxist notion, and I don't think this is basically in Marx, is that the general approach to history was at first the religious spirit expressing itself. I'm talking about in the earlier days. There was no approach to history as such, but the dominant thinking was that history is the result of ideas, of new thoughts, of new concepts of how society should be organized. Marx's contribution, of course, was to accept first the materialist explanation which doesn't mean, by the way, that Marx thought men are dominated purely by economic motivation, as is the common misconception about Marxist thinking that appears in textbooks over and over again. I say this very strongly because it's just false. There is absolutely nothing in Marx along this line. There is no reason ever to think so if one reads Marx. It's not a question of interpreting it one way or interpreting it another way. It just ain't Marx. He never talked in terms of economic motivations as being the dominant. What he did talk about was not necessarily where the motivations were but what people thought they were doing.

Now, in the days of Freud, this is not a new phenomenon, though he was not doing the Freudian subconscious. What he was saying was that people make history, not out of the entire cloth. They make their own history, but they make it in terms of the conditions and the problems that exist and can only solve the problems that exist which are themselves limited by the technology, by the power structure. I'm not going to give a lecture on Marxism, but the point is to emphasize the role of technology and the objective conditions determining the limits as to what people can do, in terms of making history. He presented a position which was in conflict with the prevailing ideas of his time.

He wasn't the only one who was a materialist. He has other ideas as well in trying to explain why societies move from one stage to another, but one of the most important parts of his idea, of the struggle that went on by Marx himself and by Marxists over the years, was that the conditions make man. Marx himself said that the conditions make man and man makes the conditions, that the subjective factor is terribly important. If you're interested, I can sight you chapter and verse. But in the struggle between the materialists and the idealists, the main emphasis was how human nature is changed by conditions. From this came the conclusion or the inference which was quite common, dominant in socialist movements and socialist thinking, that if you have a socialist society, if you remove the capitalists and if you took away their economic power and their political power and you put the productive system in the hands of the people, then the people would become socialists. What else would they become? The conditions would make the man and by that token, since there were many other problems in the development of socialism, and production was not that easy to conquer (there were both internal problems, in terms of the first socialist country, as well as external problems, in terms of the dangers of external aggression of the rest of the capitalist world that wanted to destroy them) you got an emphasis on that which was, if you want, most capitalist in human nature.

In other words, you had to get production out, so you said to people you'd pay them more, you'd give them greater incentive because you didn't have time to teach socialism. Just as during the war, the Atheist Society in the Soviet Union began to sort of forget a bit the quest of defending the Socialist Fatherland, and began emphasizing Mother Russia, because in terms of the immediate situation, in terms of the dangers of war, of losing to Hitler, whether right or wrong, the most common appeal was used and that was Mother Russia. Even God as a common folk phrase, became used frequently in the conversation of the speakers. In the same way, in terms of focusing the direction of the people on getting production out as quickly as possible, the emphasis was on individual achievement and getting paid for it.

Now this was merely a confirmation of what one might call the capitalist spirit in man, the competitive spirit, the self-protective one, the one that is most natural, that which comes most easily. The Chinese came on the scene and said we want to learn from the Russians' experience. We don't want to repeat what they did. And their approach is that what you have to do is to develop socialist man in the process of building socialism. You have to think and work on the question of human relations. You have to continuously be confronting the issue of elitism, and you have to continuously be confronting the issue of selfishness, of the concern for the private over the social. The Cultural Revolution, which I'm not going to discuss today, raised this issue to even a higher level.

This is not the whole story between the Russians and the Chinese, but the ideological controversy over whether, as I would put it philosophically, it's conditions that make

the man, which is the idea that the socialist man will come automatically more or less, or whether you have to work towards the creation of a socialist man by conscious elimination of, if not elimination, reducing the importance of privilege and of status, of leadership or factory managers, party members, party leaders, secretaries and so on, with respect to the cars they may have that others may not have, the kinds of apartments they have that others may not have and by emphasizing in the work place and in the schools and in the hospitals, the process of working together for a common goal. Now this takes on very practical forms like eliminating the status position of the top physicians as being outstanding. In terms of the army, of the army not wearing epaulets to show who is an officer or who isn't an officer and so on.

Well the whole big deal about the Cultural Revolution, is that it raised the issue for socialists, for all thinking people, (in that sense, the Cultural Revolution put it on the agenda). I alluded today to this in a discussion my wife and I had this afternoon with some people in Detroit. The question came up in the discussion about the Chinese Cultural Revolution and some very glorious things were said about it. I tried to put a sense of realism in it by saying that the selfishness in man does not get eliminated in five, then, maybe a hundred, maybe not five hundred years. The struggle is a long and arduous one, and we shouldn't dream about it, we shouldn't imagine, we shouldn't romanticize. We should appreciate what it is, without making it to be what it isn't. I pointed out that I expected that they would be going backwards, too; that they'd made one advance, but that I would expect a backwards step. There were going to be problems, conflicts, tensions that will develop and will push it off in another direction and that it would have to again revitalize itself towards the goal of creating a socialist man.

People in the room were a little bit surprised at my position, a little bit worried about it. I went a step further in the discussion. I said even if the Chinese Cultural Revolution turns out to be a failure this time, it is, in my opinion, one of the greatest advances in human history, in mankind. For that reason, I would urge you to study it and to think about it because for the first time, a society has raised consciously the question of creating the underlying conditions of decent human relations, designed for social need, to eliminate the competitive spirit and the need for privacy in mankind. Not privacy in terms of personal living, but privacy in terms of, "I come before the rest of society as a necessary part of protecting my own family, protecting myself." Now, you don't change people, but the fact that you can even raise this issue and raise it over an area which contains some 800,000,000 people and fight over this issue and have debates over it and try to compete in the sense of showing which group is doing better from a social standpoint rather than from an individual greed standpoint, this is, to my mind, one of the great historical achievements in history.

Even if it fails, if you look at things historically and take the long view, this is how history is made. Ideas come up, experiments occur from which people can then learn.

In terms of experiments and experience, this is, in my viewpoint, a set of ideas that we all must learn from and which must influence history. We cannot do it by simply taking it and applying it to American conditions. We have to think in terms of America; American traditions, the ethnic composition, the history of the various peoples in this country, and try to think it through in our terms rather than copying it from the Chinese.

Q: WON'T THE EVENTUAL CRISIS FORMED BY THE END OF IMPERIALIST EXPANSION CAUSE THE COLLECTIVE SPIRIT IN FOLKS TO COME OUT, AS IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION?

A: This question makes certain assumptions. First of all, I don't know when the end of imperialist expansion will take place. I think it's a long way from the end. I think the struggle for hegemony in Asia and Latin America, in Africa, continues and the struggle also continues not only with respect to the aspirations of the people of those countries, but what seems also to be becoming more and more a struggle between rival empires. The Japanese empire is growing. The position of Germany in Europe and its challenge in terms of attempting to take leadership is also developing. While I'm not talking about another world war among the imperialist powers, there are new tensions, new struggles taking place. We are very, very far from the end of imperialist expansion. The end of imperialist expansion will take place if you have major wars of national liberation in still other areas, the beginning of the end, you might say.

I don't think that you're going to have, and here of course I'm guessing, any automatic development of the collective spirit. In many ways, I imagine the question was asked by someone who lived through the depression as I did. There were things in the depression in terms of the spirit of the people, despite all of the misery and suffering, that in many ways were much greater than might be imagined. Just reading history, and certainly far superior than the spirit that exists today within wealth and prosperity. But it really wasn't a collective spirit. There were a great many people, like poor people all over the world, helping each other in times of stress, relying on each other. In that sense, of course, there has been a change in our society because the impression I get is that the poor people are tearing at each other. Of course this most likely is related to the drug business, to the increase in the use of drugs, and to other changes within the society. But you're not going to get any automatic collective spirit, and I don't think there is any sense in hoping for it. I think you get it, to the extent that we can get it (and I'm not promising it, I have no idea whether we can get it), is by working for it. That we're set for ruin and destruction if we don't get it at some stage and without being a prophet and without prophesying, we have to decide, each and every one of us, what is our goal in life, what do we want to achieve. I say an essential part of it and what I advocate is to work, and to practice it in our work.

Q: WILL SOCIALISM IN THIS SOCIETY MEAN A GROWTH OF A NEW ELITE? AREN'T MOST LEADERS ARTICULATING SOCIALIST THOUGHT FROM A PETTY-BOURGEOIS BACKGROUND AND NOT FROM BOTTOM STRATA?

A: I don't know. That it's a danger, there is no question. That was in a sense a lot of what I was talking about. I don't think there's any guarantee. By the way, I don't think that the bottom strata are any better in this respect than the petty bourgeoisie, when it comes to a question of taking over power and then becoming a new bureaucracy. The problem is we don't know, we just don't know yet how to run a transition to a socialist society, in building a socialist society at the same time building a new kind of democracy. The world has not yet experienced democracy and this is something that we have to learn in the process of doing. I think that we are becoming much more conscious of the dangers of bureaucracy. We may be coming, in some respects, overly conscious of it so that nothing gets done. But the techniques that are developed are what we have to work for and, in a sense, this is what I was trying to say. That the very process of working for socialism, working for reforms or working directly for socialism, but working for reforms in a socialist manner, is to develop the, I'll put it in the crudest terms, power to the people. The people themselves involved have to be more and more the creators; they have to be encouraged to be the creators. The opportunity provided for it, our method of work, our style of work, has to be such. Our goals have to be clearly formulated in this way and in the process of fighting, we learn the collective spirit. I'm not expecting 100 per cent, but we have to work in that direction. We must learn to identify bureaucracy, to identify institutions that will perpetuate bureaucracy, and try to propose ways of going about it in a different way.

This is our challenge. There is no question that the danger is one of bureaucracy, that the danger of a new elite forming is there. In China, where there was a conscious policy of fighting against an elite, they found within ten years a cultural revolution was needed in order to re-establish the issue of doing away with the privileges that had grown up. This is where they were conscious of the issue. Even that Cultural Revolution took place, not as an outpouring from the people but, I guess my interpretation would be, from a signal that Mao issued, which is not good enough, if you're going to have anything to rely on, because we don't always have Maos and we don't always have them alive. He raised the signal and people understood what it was. This in itself is already an achievement. But his signal was required. I think China will need more Cultural Revolutions if it's ever going to attain its goal. It's not going to come easy. It's a continuous struggle but it's a struggle that the more of us that become of it, the more we practice it in our work, the greater assurance there will be for a better kind of socialism.

Q: THE HEALTH INDUSTRY IS THE SECOND MOST PROFITABLE BUSINESS IN AMERICA. THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN PROFITS AND HUMAN LIVES IS OBVIOUS AT ALL LEVELS IN THE HEALTH CARE

SYSTEM. HOW CAN THOSE WHO POSSESS THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO HEAL, AND YET WHO TRANSFORM THIS VITAL SERVICE INTO A HIGH PRICED COMMODITY, AVAILABLE ONLY TO THOSE WHO CAN PAY, TURNING AWAY THOSE WHO CANNOT PAY, AND CONDEMNING THEM TO DEBILITY AND DEATH, ESCAPE YOUR INDICTMENT OF BEING EVIL, OR BETTER, CRIMINAL SOCIAL MISFITS?

A: One thing, I did not indict them of being evil or criminal social misfits. I said quite the opposite. I gave them the benefit that they were pawns, they were doctors, perhaps this is written by a doctor. There are many such doctors. There are many of the younger doctors who went into medicine for social purposes, clearly, consciously working toward such aims and not for the sake of making money, but I can't perscribe for this. The fact that this question, I mean this is precisely the point, it isn't the kind of thing that should be done from the platform, certainly I can't do it in a few minutes, but let me just tell you a little story which may not apply to this question.

In New York there is a hospital in the ghetto area where the doctors have asked for certain minimum changes that were merely matters of decent medical service. It involved having a partition, a place for people who are more sick when they come in, for emergencies, it involved a number of things. I don't want to go into too many of the details. The normal bureaucracy was at work -- delays, delays, delays. It never got done and one Saturday morning the doctors came in with plaster board, with hammers, with nails, with paint. Nurses, doctors, orderlies got together, and they built a partition and they set up an intercom system, the kind they thought was needed and they did a number of other things in order to get that particular service. This, in itself, was a dramatic illustration. Of course, it didn't solve all the problems, but it was a step in that direction, of taking power by doing something positive, creating and doing it yourself. To me this was a model of an action. Of course, the question raised here is much more basic. The struggle is a very big one, but it isn't one that I can outline as a program. I think it's the kind of thing that groups of this sort should consider. There are books on health practice, on the problems of the health institutions, some excellent things. There is a group in New York called Health PAC which works on a national level which has been examining these problems. If it's of interest to you, that's the way to do it; not by my giving a snap answer to as complicated a problem as that.

Q: WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST LIKELY EVENT OR THING THAT IS LIABLE TO PERCIPITATE SOCIAL CHANGE IN OUR LIFETIME?

A: My answer is, I don't know. It's in the nature of the problem, that's another thing. It's in the nature of the problem, and this we have to know; it's not the question of wisdom, the nature of history is such that even if there are such things as historical laws, they are not laws that are imposed from above. They are laws that work themselves out through accident, through chance, and there are many chance

elements. In a sense, and this may be considered an advertisement, this is the kind of thing we try to do in Monthly Review -- to analyze these developments as they come out, try to see their implications and try to understand in which direction they are going, from the standpoint of social change. But it isn't something that I could possibly do reasonably or intelligently, in my opinion, to select any one event or any group of events. We have to think in terms of not what event will change our lives, but how we will change our lives, and what we do in a social group in terms of changing our lives.

Q: IS IT POSSIBLE TO CONVINCING PEOPLE THAT THEIR WANTS AND NEEDS ARE NOT INSATIABLE, THUS CREATING THE FIRST STEP IN A MORE EGALITARIAN DISTRIBUTION OF WORLD RESOURCES? ALSO SPEAK TO THE LIMITS OF GROWTH THEORY.

A: I don't know whether it is possible to convince people that their needs are not insatiable. I don't think this can be done in the abstract because it is not a question, as will come up later, of whether you have another radio or whether you have a color television or not. It's a whole approach to life. It's a question of what's important in life, of what we want out of life. I think we can raise these questions with people especially within the context of socialist thought.

What do we want out of life? What kind of life do we want? What are our aims? What social goals should we have? Discussions of this sort take place in factories. The advanced social thinkers don't think about these things, or the ones who are so much involved in politics, including myself, but among serious minded plain people who give time to thought. This is the kind of question that is asked. Now, I think that it's within that context that consumerism pro and con comes up. And there again, I don't expect people to be heroes and martyrs. I don't think that this world is going to change because there are more and more communes that young people set up or older people set up. (I'm not objecting to them. I hope they succeed and I hope they grow.) But the ideas are being introduced and the most important thing is to try to introduce or examine the question of what we do want out of life, what kind of society we want, and to recognize that we do not want a consumerism society which is one that's imposed on us. We have to think in terms of another, and I think the rationality of human beings will reach some sort of common conclusion if they are confronted with this kind of thinking.

The question of limits of growth theory that's been raised, if I understand the question correctly, is that there are two aspects to it. One is that you cannot grow at the present rate. The point that there just isn't enough energy, there aren't enough energy sources for the United States and other industrialized nations to continue to grow at the rate they have been growing. The question is whether the next step will be some form of international organization or perhaps even fascistic control to get the utilization of these

for those countries that are the richest and the most advanced. Now, again, we're going into an area of guess work. My own feeling is that the scarcity of resources argument is grossly exaggerated. I say this even though I spent time in discussing it, and I think it's fundamental to understanding what the problems are. In other words, I want to distinguish two issues. One is that there is a very real issue, there is no question, you don't need statistics, you don't need computers, you don't need fancy mathematics, just looking at the simple facts shows that you cannot continue to grow the way we're growing in terms of utilization of natural resources. Whether the end is year 2000, whether the end is year 3000, we don't know, because again there are too many uncertainties in the picture, too many new technological developments that may come up and so on. But that, I don't think, is the issue. I don't think we should fall for the scare theories that are developing now.

At the same time, we have to give recognition to the fact that this is a real problem that is going to confront us. This was the whole point to the analysis of the automobile industry. We will choke at one point and we have to plan for it. The kind of international distribution of scarce resources can be either socialist or it can be fascistic, there is no way of predicting that. It depends upon who wins the race. There is no reason why rational societies can't get together and discuss limits. I think there's enough in scientific development to recognize this, to direct where research should be going, to know what resources have to be controlled, or what energy should be put, say, in work on solar energy, and how what is available should be distributed; or it will be done by a group of leading capitalist powers, dividing it among themselves.

In a sense, this is what is being done today. Most of the resources are owned by monopoly corporations, by a handful of international corporations, largely the United States but also Japanese and German and British and to some extent French and Dutch. They own the oil, most of the oil of the world. They own most of the iron resources in the so-called "free world." They own most of the scarce metals that have to do with modern technology. This already exists. They are making that decision without fascism and they can continue to do it in a monopolistic fashion just as well. The question is the opposite one. To what extent will humanity accept the restrictions on their lives and the quality of their lives by this continuous exhaustion of the energy sources?

Q: THE ARGUMENT AGAINST THE AUTOMOBILE AND FOR MASS TRANSIT, AS YOU PRESENT, IS ONE OF EFFICIENCY. YOU DO NOT ARGUE FOR MASS TRANSIT BY SAYING WE HAVE TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES. YET, UNDERLYING YOUR THEME IS THE FACT, AS YOU SAY, WE MUST EDUCATE, EDUCATE, EDUCATE. EDUCATE FOR WHAT? TO CHANGE THE CONSUMER ORIENTATION OF PEOPLE, YOU SAY, BUT YOU YOURSELF DO NOT ARGUE FOR A REDUCTION IN TRANSPORTATION CONSUMPTION. YOU ARGUE FOR MORE TRANSPORTATION CONSUMPTION VIA THE EFFICIENCY ARGUMENT. IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO CONVINCE PEOPLE TO CONSUME LESS? IS IT POSSIBLE TO SAY TO ONE WHO DOES NOT OWN A RADIO THAT HE SHOULD NOT ASPIRE TO OWN ONE? OR HOW ABOUT ONE WHO OWNS A BLACK AND WHITE TV, THAT HE SHOULD NOT OWN A COLOR TV?

I don't think, and if I did say it I didn't speak clearly enough, that I was talking about either increasing or maintaining transportation services. I don't think that's the issue. I wouldn't know the answer. This is an answer that people have to decide, I was giving this as an illustration of the contradictions, the problems that exist in terms of coping with an automobile society. The problem of developing a more rational system entails considerations that are not the kind of considerations now made-in terms of the kind of cost budgeting, in terms of the kind of accounting systems, in terms of the questions of real estate values, the question of housing and so on-not whether we use more or less transportation. The issue is not efficiency; quite the opposite. Let me put it another way, if I did use the term efficiency I was setting up different standards of efficiency, efficiency of social value rather than efficiency of the pocketbook or of the bookkeeping one might say, of standard business. As for the latter part of the question on how do you convince people, I really answered it in one of the earlier questions.

Q: HOW WILL THE GROWING NUMBERS OF WORKING CLASS PEOPLE GAIN CONTROL OVER THE 20 PER CENT OF THE POWER STRUCTURE?

A: We're not going to know that answer unless we become conscious of the need for it and the consciousness in the working class for the need of it has to go a long, long way. Again, there's a romantic notion that because you're a worker in the factory, you are an innate, a born socialist; it ain't so. The consciousness of the American worker, to the extent that I know it, does not think in terms of socialism, does not think in terms of taking power. He doesn't want to take power, he just wants a better break. That doesn't mean that he doesn't have many problems and worries and concerns and dissatisfactions and unhappiness. This is what awakening consciousness means, to translate the causes of unhappiness, to talk about the solutions of unhappiness and introduce the question of taking power. But the question of taking power, of gaining power, he first has to want power, to recognize that it's possible to have power, that a change is possible, that a change is desirable. They have to be awakened to that and I think they will but a great deal depends upon people like us in doing it.

Q: IS THERE A WORKING CLASS SUB-CULTURE WHICH IS STRUCTURALLY DIFFERENT THAN THE RICH AND PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR SOCIALISM?

A: I don't think so. I don't know but I don't think so.