

August Gérard

**Human Beings Are Also
Capable of Intelligence**

1995

What will put an end to capitalism is our capacity for conscious thought.

To be human is to be aware that we are all mortal. We love and are loved. We wish to be understood and we are not . . . That should be the least of our troubles! On top of everything else, there are all the powers that dominate, exploit and oppress us.

The primary need of life is living. That is why it is necessary to succeed in creating a society in which individuals will be able to choose the activities and means they use and create for satisfying their needs and desires. This movement of emancipation will grow not out of the structures and groupings in which people are brought together, but those in which they freely unite. Domestication and regimentation no longer being part of the usual ways of doing things, individuals will make use of their reason and sensitivity in order to understand each other and to cooperate.

Because it is a very efficient means for the manipulation, reduction and degradation of life, capitalism must be abolished. There is no reason to believe that capitalism will be transcended while we contribute to its functioning. It is a system that turns us into instruments and objects whose survival is only assured as long as they are considered useful to it, that is, profitable! Capitalism will continue to see “good times” as long as we cannot see the real positive alternatives to the chains it puts on our lives.

It will endure as long as we consider it “normal” and “natural” to obey and to submit to this vile system which defines living as something we must earn. In fact, we already have our lives!

What will put an end to capitalism is our capacity for conscious thought. Sometimes the habits of thought limiting us can be loosened. Our consciousness can allow us to take a certain distance, to observe, to criticize the way we have been led to live, and then place in doubt the things which stand in the way of our self-realization.

This can enable us to believe that to be alive doesn’t naturally or necessarily involve allowing ourselves to be used for our own self-destruction, or to trample each other. It can enable us to understand that it would be better to experience social relations that don’t force us, a priori, to see ourselves as adversaries and enemies of everyone else. From this, it follows that it is preferable for people to understand, help and protect each other, instead of living like social machines only capable of producing aberration, alienation, grief and destruction.

In rebelling against everything that turns their lives into a succession of sacrifices and mutilations, human beings will have to do away with wage labor, and the many consequences of wage labor which permit capitalism to make life dependent on it while the system extracts profits, interest and benefits from it. This rebellion will also sweep away what remains of the roles, rituals, humiliations

and other tortures which societies prior to capitalism used to secure their grip on individuals.

This movement will make plain and public the rejection of hierarchical and competitive separations and the predatory behaviors they engender. Since these separations are based on the domination of certain human groups over others, there are numerous ways the dominated can organize themselves and achieve their own ends. Separations confine individuals to categories, status niches and classes. Separations result in a long chain of mechanisms which seize, shape and pulverize lives. Their daily operation turns human relations into a vortex of horror and monotony.

The radically different nature of the movement of opposition, as it relates to the way people have come to understand society, will affect the very form of their activities and actions, as well as their forms of organization. A world will be born, in which activities, capacities, the needs of individuals, as well as their eventual outcomes, will no longer be determined, valued and sanctioned through hierarchical and competitive rules and institutions.

Other than the requirements for reproducing a social order based on oppression and exploitation, nothing justifies the continuation of social classes, categories and status niches which lock human beings into specific positions with respect to life. Obviously, the necessities imposed during the formation of a human association, where the free development of each will take place in the context of the free development of all, will be quite different.

Those who put into practice the new relations will be people who consider it worth the effort to live in a world where no one is excluded, and where everyone will be able to choose what she does and with whom. The associations created to carry out this or that activity or meet this or that need will no longer be enterprises employing wage workers and selling their products. What will need to be calculated and recorded, in terms of whether or how much to produce of a given thing, will be the needs, tastes and preferences expressed by human beings.

Life will no longer be limited and measured by phenomena like purchase, sale, price, value and profit. Humanity will no longer submit to the caprices and fantasies of dominators, each more irrational than the next. The need for affirmation, affection and attachment will no longer be lost in relations of domination and submission. The end of manipulation will surely lead humans to different conceptions of nature, and substantially change their relations with all aspects of it. When the quest for wealth and power no longer destroys or perverts their feelings and reasoning capacities, from then on, individuals will be better able to understand the consequences of their actions for nature, as well as nature's influence on their own lives.

We experience the burden of specific behaviors and reflexes, a whole incredible litany of the exactions by which people make each other suffer. These destructive games are in fact a serious problem. So it would be better not to reinforce them by building up the oppressive machinery, the institutions and authorities that can only use every possibility and opportunity to continue their dirty work.

Human beings are also capable of intelligence, goodwill, tenderness and sensitivity. We must count on the potential held by these capacities, not on that which contributes to endlessly reproducing mere existence.

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