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> "A specter is haunting [the world] — the specter of [the Occupy movement]. All the powers of [the world] have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter.
>
> — The Communist Manifesto — 1848, Karl Marx & Fredrick Engels [altered to reflect current reality]

One hundred and sixty-three years after the original words were written, the specter the rulers of Europe so feared (communism, the word altered in the above quote) appeared to have been successfully vanquished. But suddenly the Occupy movement went from 0 to a 100 mph in a few weeks placing the question of the rule of money on the political agenda across the world, and, in the U.S. for the first time in a hundred years. Inspired by the Arab Spring, the Greek, Spanish, and English opposition to shifting the cost of repairing capitalism from bankers to the people, almost overnight, Occupy sites sprouted up in over a thousand U.S. cities.

The dramatic events of September 17, when Occupy Wall Street launched, through December, have brought the words that define the class system and its hierarchal rule to the point where its main phrases, "99%," "1%," and "Occupy," have entered the lexicon faster than any high school slang

Criticism of Occupy, some of it from the left, that the movement is only a spasm of bottled up anger without programmatic demands, and at worse, reformist, fails to realize that occupying the sites constituted a critique of capitalism and the culture it spawns. All of the contradictions and problems of the encampments not withstanding, the taking of public space where capital's precepts are negated, a commitment to consensus decision making, the refusal of hierarchy, communal living, and confrontation with power, is anarchy in action.

Not anarchism, but, anarchy, the manner in which humans naturally associate to effectively and convivially live harmoniously. The politics of the people involved both as Occupiers and supporters were all over the left spectrum, but these anarchist processes were almost universally adhered to by all.

Even though Occupy immediately altered the political narrative, with even major media, talking about corporate greed, the increasing

poor, and the impact of austerity on most Americans, the idea of permanent centers of protest and even revolution, was more than the rulers could tolerate. Even supposedly liberal city administrations.

The coordinated militarized police assaults to remove encampments in cities across the country was reminiscent of the murderous attacks on workers in earlier periods of labor militancy. Although there was general outrage at the repressive manner in which police cleared Occupy sites using clubs and pepper spray, the most frightening police armament carried into these situations, automatic assault rifles, seems to have gone unnoticed.

The cops were ready to kill.

With the clearing of the outdoor sites, the hope among the powerful is that this specter has gone the way of communism now that the streets have been returned to commerce.

We'll see.

Much is still going on with the Occupy movement now quartered inside in many cities, and they continue to launch actions around a range of issues caused by the collapse of capitalism for large sections of the population. Still, the movement faces the daunting task of discerning what revolution means in the modern era.

The earliest concept of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, which was posed by those who capitalism exploited and oppressed from its origins, was a straight forward proposition: The means of production (the economy) would be seized by the proletariat who would eliminate the rule of the capitalist class and then administer society for the collective benefit of all. This is certainly a sensible and equitable solution to a horrid set of social circumstances that capitalism has always enforced upon society.

The main impediment to revolution is' the political state which functions as the defense mechanism against attempts to eliminate capitalist property relationships. This socially constructed institution, which arose thousands of years ago, hasn't altered its purpose of defending accumulated wealth and power since its inception.

As Fedele Spadafora's wonderful painting on Page 24, which redoes the old IWW social pyramid, illustrates, the state apparatus contains more elements than just its repressive mechanism. The "We Fool You" sector, i.e., nationalist myths, militarism, religion, and the

In Detroit and elsewhere, community gardens, shared housing, and local start-up businesses, many energized and connected to social justice groups, are often held up as the model for re-inventing daily life divorced from capital's mainstream. There's a great deal of enthusiasm for this as a new revolutionary paradigm by writers such as Grace Lee Boggs (see her The Next American Revolution) and publications like Yes! magazine. But, hey, guys, businesses are businesses, and capitalist.

Much of the activity and vision they chronicle, particularly with Boggs, is admirable and many anarchists are swept up in it. They see possibilities in what has historically been designated as a situation of dual power where revolutionary formations take the place of official ones.

The down side of this perspective seems to be an unintended cooperation with what capitalism already has in store for us — shedding off millions of people from its mainstream and having them fare for themselves. It probably isn't bad to be confused about which direction will bring about the changes in our lives. We hopefully are only at the beginning of a movement that' confronts power.

Could it be that this time around, the system's capacity for co-optation has run out of space, leaving the future to be creatively re-invented?

Increasingly, it seems as though many people are ready for „the challenge.

The current trajectory of capital, the maximization of profit-taking, has as a model countries like Guatemala. This would mean for the U.S. that only about a third of the country would be well waged, and it is within that upper stratum where commodity consumption, financial transactions, and affluent lifestyles will continue in what we associate with middle-class living. Below that will be the vast majority, characterized by precarious labor, non-existent social services, deteriorating infrastructure, and general social insecurity.

A good illustration is the transformation of Detroit's Albert Kahn-designed Russell Industrial Center. During most of its existence since its opening in 1915, it operated in terms of its name, manufacturing automobile components for the city's many car companies. Now, its two million square-foot buildings, with industrial production long gone, is occupied by more than 150 creative tenants such as architects, painters, clothing designers, photographers, musicians, filmmakers, bands, and art galleries.

Certainly, most of us would rather visit Russell as a vibrant center of creative talent than an industrial shop of grey men forced to work to the rhythm of relentless machines, but its transformation is indicative of how a waged workforce with defined benefits is replaced in the same location by its opposite. The former, the so-called American Dream; the latter, the new face of capitalism which is often marked by scuffling at the bottom, hoping for work or sales, as talented as many at Russell are.

So, what is to be fought for by the Occupy movement and an ideal of anarchy? Perhaps a vision is best encapsulated by our back page slogan — "Everything for everyone!" The question, however, becomes, what is "everything?" Do we demand that everyone on the planet have all the consumer junk the global productive machine can churn out? Surely, the world cannot sustain that.

What will it mean for the majority of us to be pushed out of a consumer-centered economy with much lower wages and no social safety net? At best, it can mean constructing a revolutionary society within the shell of the larger society based on the elements which sprung up spontaneously at the Occupy sites. At worst, most of the world could become a dystopian urban nightmare with a generalized Kingston, Rio, or Ciudad Juarez becoming the norm.

Spectacle, are the state and capital's first line of defense. Only after these cease to be effective, as is often the case, are the cops and army deployed.

There never was a Golden Age of the state or capitalism. Both were always a set of horrors from their beginnings, and although certain sectors of the world, and certain sectors within nations at different times achieve a degree of economic prosperity beyond just rewarding the owners, there is always a much greater number whose misery and penury is a key to the plenitude of the few.

The favorite form of governance of all ruling classes is absolutism; their favorite class system is feudalism, but now with capitalist forms of ownership. This has overwhelmingly been the way human affairs have been administered in nation states since their emergence 4000 years ago. Challenges to these arrangements have been few, relatively speaking, and met with suppressive force when they have occurred.

Political arrangements in the West have had some success with demands for rights and inclusion in decision making harkening back to England's 13th century Magna Carta, and culminating in the bourgeois revolutions of the modern era beginning in the 17th. What was gained in these revolutions, which installed the emerging capitalist classes in power, was usually a formal democratic system in which people had the status of citizens rather than subjects. What was lost was the ostensible reciprocity of feudal society where the peasants produced for the lords and in return were protected by them.

In the new capitalist societies, that social arrangement of mutual obligation evaporated, and the new class of workers were solely elements of production whose labor was purchased at the lowest price that could be leveraged by the emerging lords of manufacturing. Early revolts, such as those of the 19th century English Luddites were suppressed by massive military force, demonstrating that without the iron hand of the state, capitalist production would not have lasted long. [See p. 4]

Within capitalist countries of the West, movements arose around the inscription on the banner of the French Revolution, "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality." Taken to their full definitions, these words would

proscribe capitalism and demand an anarchist socialism, so they mostly remain as pretty phrases trotted out on patriotic holidays.

For those who took them seriously, years of struggle ensued with numerous successes in terms of the conditions and rights of the common people. In this country, we know and celebrate the history of the abolitionists, suffragettes, the union and civil rights movements, and that of the women, gay, and disabilities rights struggles that have created a slow progress for inclusion within American society. None of these hard won victories should be diminished, but within the economic and political sphere the same forces of greed and power continue to reign supreme all the while demonstrating a willingness (sometimes extremely begrudgingly) to allow some social equality; however, never economic.

To a large extent this is a conscious strategy on the part of the rulers to mollify challenges with the correct perception on their part that reforms extend and affirm the system. Once the personal prejudices of a white, male elite are brought to heel, the extension of some amount of inclusion works well for them. Color, gender, religion, sexual preferences, etc., doesn't matter if you are consuming, or if you are a company CEO.

The apex of this reform strategy, following some in the Progressive Era, was during the unionization movement of the 1930s, which demanded a more equitable split of social wealth and other reforms to improve work and living conditions. This wasn't granted willingly by the rulers and came only after general strikes and class struggle so sharp that it resulted in the death of 300 unionists during the decade at the hands of the cops, national guard, and company goons.

The New Deal legislation that resulted and the extension of the union movement's success opened the way to the creation of a large, consumerist middle-class who saw themselves as having a stake in the system that had seemed near collapse just a few years previously. This is known as the Great Settlement which lasted approximately 35 years until the early 1970s.

The trade-off was, no class strife initiated by the workers in return for a reduction in the rate of exploitation and a minimal share of social wealth. The latter provided for creation of a consumer class

that the economy required as it went beyond producing basic industrial products. This vertical integration of classes under the aegis of the state, combined with mobilizing workers for the second inter-imperial war, could easily meet the classic definition of fascism.

The expectation that each successive generation would advance through the economic system was dubbed the "American Dream," something that has significantly frayed in the last 40 years.

One of the slogans often heard in the Occupy movement is the plaintive call to "Restore the American Dream," uttered seemingly without recognition that the trajectory of capital world-wide has embarked on a massive reduction of economic and social gains made by the working class over the last 150 years.

If the capitalists have their way, and their forces and resources are many, there soon won't be a middle-class American Dream to which to return. The classic class formulation that all 19th century radicals tendered — capitalist and proletariat — will again become the norm.

The Dream, promulgated equally on the left and right, has always been a nightmare for other people here and abroad, and ignores that someone is always getting screwed somewhere, and badly, so we can shop at Whole Foods and buy iPhones.

The 35-year period which instilled the Dream myth in which anyone can "make it," and each generation does better economically than the prior one is now in terminal collapse in the popular imagination. And, myth is the operative word since upward mobility has always been fairly narrow within the American class system, it being, in reality, almost a caste system. Although some rise and a few falter, most people end up in the class to which they were born.

The great indignation among so many people contained in slogans such as "The banks got bailed out; we got sold out," is both righteous and understandable. But the system isn't broken, as is often suggested, but rather this is the way it works and always has. The attacks on what was once taken for granted as a middle-class standard of living are relentless with a recent survey showing that almost half of Americans are either poor or near poor. And, this in the richest country in the world.