

A Revolution Beyond Theater

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Introduction	3
An Overview of Revolutions	7
Bread and Puppet Theatre	13
Hegemony	18
The Paris Commune	26
Cities Belong To Workers	27
Social Class	30
Indigeneity	31
Violent Injustice Does Not Deserve Reason	33
The Paris Commune (Continued.)	39
Lenin	42
References	48

Introduction

Radicalization plays an integral role in any movement that seeks to change the structure of its society violently or non-violently. In the United States, for example, the Civil Rights movement, various feminist movements, the anti-war movement, the Black Cultural Nationalist movement, the Black Freedom movement, the United Farm Workers movement and so on all employed a mechanism of collectivization to obtain their rights as human beings. The participants of these movements largely disintegrated their divisions and alienation based on the common interest of dignity. Change in formation is necessary for change in systemic results. This change needs to come from the people, not plutocratic heads of state. Theatre is a most effective mode demonstrating what the people need and want. The executions of these representations are not the illusory veneers of ideal policy. They are the closest actions to the realization of human salvation.

In his essay, *The Revolutionary Theatre* published in *Selected Plays and Prose of Amiri Baraka*, the poet explains the necessity of the eponymous culture: ‘Imagination (Image) is all possibility, because from the image, the circumscribed energy, any use (idea) is possible. And so begins that image’s use in the world. Possibility is what moves us,’ (132). Theatre provides a great service for progress, but imagination lights the fuse to the bomb of righteousness. This type of theatre, revolutionary theatre, is humanistic. It is difficult to objectify revolutionary theatre because it is fundamentally the embodied synthesis of art and action. People are revolutionary theatre and the action they stage is literal political action because it is real life, seeking to maximize the fruits of the human experience and protect what we love. We have to ask ourselves: how do we start this work? What has already been researched on this topic that

we can use for the revolution? As in most endeavors, success and failure accompany these trials, but what the scientists have produced in their experiments is nothing less than useful and fascinating.

Let us begin with the socialization of our venue: the American city. In the United States of America, the city became a prominent area of study in the nineteenth century with Max Weber, a German sociologist, but was revived in the twentieth century with Lewis Mumford as its most highly acclaimed student. The Urban Prospect in *The Lewis Mumford Reader* summarizes: “In *The Story of Utopias* Mumford argued for a new humanism, an organic mode of thinking and acting that recognizes the ‘inner and the outer, the subjective and the objective, the world known to personal intuition and that described by science [as] a single experience.’ While some radicals expected such a value change to occur after the revolution, for Mumford this value change *was* the revolution,” (160.) Mumford’s view compares to the Living Theatre’s prescription for the ‘Beautiful, non-violent anarchist revolution’ rendered by *Paradise Now* in which the actor must change his or her principles, habits and attitudes if they are to realize the revolution. From a sociological perspective, Mumford’s perception is anti-Marxian and slightly more Weberian because Marx viewed the means of economic production as the absolute basis of society and thus systemic change, including cultural, would result from a political-economic revolution. Weber, on the other hand, believed that culture was the primary mechanism that governed society; therefore, culture would be the agent to effect change in the social organism. Again, in pertinence to social class, the people, both as groups and individuals, must realize not only their relationship to the means of production, but where their interests lie and how they must reconstruct their values and behavior in order to meet the objective of the revolution while in

motion. For the purposes of this study, we shall see that both are vital to radical change, however the opinions differ over which aspect takes priority.

The commentary on Mumford adds to this: “A systematic sociology, Geddes had taught him, must be linked to a vision of the good life; and in *The Story of Utopias*, Mumford declared it the responsibility of the artists to suggest this. They would be responsible for the first, the most important, step in any general reform- the reconstruction of our inner world- by suggesting images of a more balanced, spiritually satisfying life. These could be then woven into the plans of the regional surveyors, whose job it would be to recommend flexible civic programs for each of the various regions of the country. In this way, we could begin to build not utopia, the perfect world, but eutopia, the best place possible,” (160.) In the maximization of both the common good and personal freedom for every individual in the city, the population attains health and happiness. Cities and metropolitan regions as the globally ubiquitous centers of socialization, population density and industry are quite literally the capitals of human civilization. Theatre has tremendous potential for change of heart and change of character. Revolutionary theatre is both infinite and infinitesimal for what can be done. For the things that are dismissed as impossible, yes, they can be done. A form of revolutionary theatre, guerrilla theatre, staged in the streets and places generally considered inappropriate for theatre especially without permits, first appeared in the 1960s in a group called the San Francisco Mime Troupe based in the eponymous city. In New York, the Living Theatre, Bread and Puppet Theatre and the Black Arts Movement charged revolutionary theatre into an unprecedented movement with guerrilla theatre in the lead.

In the first section of *The Communist Manifesto, The Bourgeois and Proletarians*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels write: “In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property,” (*Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, McLellan, 224.) Marx and Engels, revolutionary socialists, watched the stages of capitalism unfold. The common property of the fruits of intellectual production, meaning ideas, lay the foundation of a society’s general understanding and acceptance. Organizers must have knowledge in order to manage the affairs of an entity. We will later explore the methods in which Marx and other thinkers believed the public should acquire governance as well as ownership of the means of production. Knowledge becomes complete with ideas and ideas become complete when they are exercised in action. Capitalism, in this case, provides the means of generating wealth and private property in the formation of an oligarchy. Workers are alienated from what their labor produces by a wage system and the profits from the sales of products flow into the bank accounts of individuals who own the majority of the company’s stock (business magnates, corporate executives, investors, etc.)

They also write: “The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural,” (225.) The first industrial revolution intensified the division of labor, exponentially increasing the profits of magnates of those respective industries. As seen in this history, the concentrated flight and development of the cities directly correlate to the concentration of profits. Marx did

not live to see the second industrial revolution, but he accurately predicted the consequences of the growth of cities.

An Overview of Revolutions

Revolution espouses many strides in human history in a variety of disciplines. At least in Western history, broadly, we have the Protestant Reformation which curtailed the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in much of Europe, the Scientific Revolution which again challenged the clerical dogma of the Church, the intellectual revolution of the Enlightenment which promoted the primacy of reason and critical thinking and the first Industrial Revolution from 1750 to 1850. The American Revolution beginning in 1775 and ending in 1783, for example, was the preliminary revolt in the New World. In turn, this revolution inspired the national French Revolution of 1789 to 1799 which moved France from a monarchy to a capitalist republic until the French empire was reinstated by Napoleon. Subsequently, the Haitian Revolution followed their mother country in 1791 until 1804, lasting the longest out of the three. The Haitian Revolution catalyzed many of the wars for independence in Latin America. Revolution also differs from rebellion. Rebellion means an attack on government or institution while revolution is the complete transformation of a societal structure. In *The Future of Ritual*, Richard Schechner writes: “Revolutions in their incipient period are carnivalesque. Written on a Sorbonne wall in 1968, ‘The more I make love, the more I want to make revolution- the more I make revolution, the more I want to make love.’ (Baxandall 1969:65.) This is because both revolution and carnival propose a free space to satisfy desires, especially sexual and drunken desires, a new time to enact social relations more freely,” (Schechner, 47). The Living Theatre, founded in New York by the anarchist married couple Judith Malina and Julian Beck, sought to

inspire a revolutionized society with their staunch pacifist avant-garde drama and communal rituals. The troupe was expelled from New York for tax evasion and civil disobedience, yet welcomed in Europe. In the same year of 1968, in France, they collaborated with mobilized students attending the University of Paris (the Sorbonne) who were moved by police brutality in the city streets and President Charles de Gaulle's disenfranchisement of unions. John Tytell, a friend and historian of the Living Theatre narrates the experience in *The Living Theatre: Art, Exile and Outrage*: "The extensive police violence moved the unions to side with the Sorbonne students, and they called a general strike for 13 May 1968. From the outset, this action was planned as a symbolic show of support. Judith and Julian, driving through France with the company, saw the General Strike as the beginning of the new revolutionary consciousness they were trying to dramatize in *Paradise Now*," (Tytell, 231). Alienated by New York, they finally found the energy essential for the bubbling rebellion, the antecedent to revolution, now springing from the ground. Actions like the Parisian General Strike were not only the successive stage of their drama, but archetypes of the theater moving into the street. Together they led an insurrectionary mass protest at the Odéon Théâtre de France where students, workers and actors spoke and flourished anarchist flags and Beck proclaimed that it was 'the greatest theatre I have ever seen,'" (Tytell, 233.)

At that same moment in New York, Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet Theatre occupied the streets and Richard Schechner and activists from Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) had begun organizing guerrilla theatre in protest. Judith Malina and Julian Beck first instigated their revolutionary protest in the Living Theatre when organizing the General Strike in New York City

in 1963: “The combination of rehearsing *The Brig* and *General Strike* affected even the apolitical members of the troupe. Joseph Chaikin recalled that he started getting involved in political demonstrations getting arrested and jailed: “I began to feel that the political aspect of the Living Theatre, which had looked so ridiculous, was very necessary. And the fact that it *was* ridiculous didn’t make it any less necessary,” (Tytell, 183.) This profound shift in the culture of the Living Theatre evidently galvanized participants to a newfound political inspiration as Chaikin, for example, would go on to start the socialist Open Theater in New York. This is where James Rado and Gerome Ragni, the authors of *Hair* would first meet, working on a production of Megan Terry’s musical, *Viet Rock. Paradise Now*, the magnum opus of the Living Theatre, as evidenced by the tactics in the finale, attempted to rouse the public by breaking what one might call the “fifth wall.” At the end of the final rung, “The Rung of God and Man” the cast would shout: ‘The Theatre is in the street. The street belongs to the people. Free the theatre. Free the street. Begin.’ (1971, 139). The intended effects on the audiences of *Paradise Now* fall in accord with Henri Lefebvre and Karl Marx’s analyses of the Paris Commune of 1871 which we will discuss. The impossible became possible and joy permeated the lives of the communards. Let us present an anecdote of subjectivity on these concepts. An individual in conversation once replied to the question about the difference between joy and happiness is that joy is more spontaneous. Logically, given the broad intellectual leftist interpretations of the activities of both The Living Theatre and the Paris Commune, this understanding would make perfect sense. In the home of the Commune, the hot bed of *Paradise Now*, the slogan in the year of 1968 was: “Be Realistic. Demand the Impossible,” informing that radicals are in fact, realists. 1968 was perhaps the most eruptive and chaotic year of the decade. In addition to the turmoil in Paris, there were schisms, uprisings and wars all around the world: the massacre of student

protesters in Mexico City, the Soviet annexation of Czechoslovakia, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr and Robert Kennedy, the massive escalation of the War in Vietnam, police brutality and the DNC convention in Chicago, civil wars in Guatemala and Nicaragua, the first full year of Brazil's military dictatorship, the War of Attrition between Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Palestine, the Nigerian Civil War, and many other conflicts. The majority of these conflicts were rebellions not revolutions, hence the guerrilla fighters in these wars were often called rebels. It was the first time in our country's history that intelligence was so widely available around the globe and the world had been so deeply shaken by imperialism and the Cold War. People shared the anomie of overwhelming uncertainty as they stood on a barely sustained floor. The oppressed of the world stood in true solidarity for the first time.

One of the opening exclamations of "The Rite of Guerilla Theatre," the introductory scene of *Paradise Now* cries: "I don't know how to stop the wars!" (Tytell, 227.) This despair in reaction to the war in Vietnam left protesters like Malina and Beck's troupe in an anomic state, troubled by things they had not dealt with before. Against the machinery of the military industrial complex, they were powerless to halt or reverse the imperialist damage incurring on third-world grounds. However, Malina proposed a substantive solution that would do more than simply cause ceasefire. She says: "I have complete faith in the ability of the theatre to destroy the values that caused the war, and eventually destroy the culture that created those values," (Tytell, 240.) Violent dramatic uprisings in the late 1960s in Paris, for example, contrary to the pacifist orthodoxy of the Living Theatre led spectators to challenge the troupe's allegiances, leaving them between a rock and a hard place. Malina's insight again explains that their work could not expunge the actions of others, but rather the militarism that inspired them. This belief

is what made the doctrinal art of the Living Theatre truly radical because it not only supplied a moral critique of intervention and warfare, but a critique of the cultural superstructure of societies as well.

Another political element naturally indispensable to the Living Theatre is anarchism. In an essay entitled “Anarchism and the Pro-hierarchical Left” published in the anthology *Reinventing Anarchy* Malina writes: “Such groups, instead of becoming vulnerable though dissident appendages of the dominant political body, work as opposition forces, especially where it is possible to carry out action programs that present more functional and more human alternatives, and carry them out in opposition to the lousy oppressive so-called solutions of the official bodies. Thereby, the revolutionary possibility is made clear,” (Ehrlich, Ehrlich, De Leon, Morris, 1979.) Concurrent with the conception of guerrilla theatre and other forms of revolutionary theatre existed the countercultural movement of the Beat Generation to which people called beatniks subscribed. The founder of this movement, Jack Kerouac, fascinated Julian Beck and Judith Malina. Beck viewed Kerouac as an anarchist or at least as embodying traits of one: “*Beat* stood for *beatific*, he asserted, and what he wanted most was to see God’s face. When Wingate wanted to know about Kerouac’s politics, he answered that he believed in nonviolence, noninterference and that he never voted. It was the most persuasive demonstration of anarchism Julian had ever seen,” (Tytell, 138.) Beck’s intuition of Kerouac’s political leanings present a partially logical yet conflicting image of the Beat author because even though Kerouac produced and participated in a distinct counterculture and abstained from voting, he was politically conservative. He verbally supported President Dwight Eisenhower, to recall the famous slogan “I like Ike” and proudly told William F. Buckley, Jr in 1968 that his family always voted for Republican

candidates. Nevertheless, the literary movement that Jack Kerouac helped to create which historically includes the famous poetry readings in San Francisco and New York in the 1950s inspired the ambience of the artistic communalism that Beck and Malina wished to foster in their cooperative. Although they still had a long way to go in addressing essential issues such as racism, the Living Theatre perhaps can be viewed as a perfect product of the libertarian left-wing dramatization of Beat New York. They became the prototype of the artful anarchy arising in the 1960s. In continued commitment to the concept of revolutionary theatre, Beck hoped: "I dream of a theatre company, of a company of actors that would stop imitating, but that would by creating a full view of the audience, move that audience in such a way and imbue that audience with ideas and feeling that transformation and genuine transcendence can be achieved," (Tytell, 161). Bertolt Brecht, as a communist dramatist, envisioned a similar organization of actors who would transform the political system. The stage was not simply a place for entertainment where the audience could relax and forget about their anxious lives. The actors were obliged to serve as teachers in raising the audience to consciousness in the deepest sense, in turn mobilizing the people cognizant of their own interests and the inextricable ties those self-interests had to political life. They could not afford to be apolitical. That is the central goal of Marxism; to make the general interest the particular interest and to make the particular interest the general interest and that is also the purpose of theatre. As the patriarch of Western political theatre, Brecht merits a reference in any study of general revolutionary drama in the United States of America. A German-born Marxist-Leninist, Brecht defended Joseph Stalin to the bitter end in part because the Red Army of the USSR had defeated Germany's fascist Nazi forces which made enormous advances both for the Allies and the Communist movement. He died in 1956, the year that Nikita Khrushchev publicly announced the crimes of Stalin. One of the literary devices of

his drama was allegory used in plays like *Galileo* in which forces tell the title character that physical satisfaction is the most important thing in life (Jameson, 124) and *In the Jungle of Cities* represents the brutality of American capitalism by which workers live in a completely insecure state in relation to power. Allegory served as a major component of Bread and Puppet Theatre.

Bread and Puppet Theatre

In his Bread and Puppet Theatre, Peter Schumann used masks and puppetry allegorically to represent the dichotomous forces of good and evil as well as to invoke deconstruction of presuppositions. Stefan Brecht, Bertolt's son, wrote of the process of Schumann's sculpting: "In contrast to distortion, the figures here are embryonic, formless, anonymous. And, in formation, they represent anarchy," (Brecht, 53). Schumann also drew inspiration from the Living Theatre in the organization of actors and the choice of plays. Bread and Puppet performed the *Dance of Death* in New York at Judson Church. *Totentanz*, the dance's formal name, one of Schumann's finest pieces, breaks down into twelve acts. Important descriptions include:

Act I: The Overture

Act II: The Celebration

Death bursts onstage, performs an arbitrary dance, the dancers follow and imitate Death until they pile onto him until Death erupts below and dances in circles around the bodies.

Act III: The Janus Dance

A huge double headed mask runs onstage screaming until Death runs around it in a circle and pushes it out.

Act IV: The Fanfare

Act V: First Repetition of the Janus Dance

Act VI: The Dance of Birth

A dark masked figure comes and squeezes out a number of bodies. This symbolizes the act of giving birth.

Act VII: Second Repetition of the Janus Dance

Act VIII: Third Repetition of the Janus Dance

Act IX: The Chairs

The dancers bring chairs onstage, stand on them, sit on them, throw them in the air and bring an enthroned Death on stage.

Act X: The Ceremony

The dancers carry an enthroned Death on stage set him in the center.

Act XI: Death's Dance

A solo dance in the audience and tracing the perimeter of the house.

Act XII: The End (Brecht, 88-90).

Schumann viewed everything in the human experience as a balance between life and death, good and evil. The Living Theatre similarly incorporated this dichotomy into their work as the first act of *Paradise Now* is called the "Rung of Good and Evil" and state that evil in itself is good, the lowest rung of perfect goodness. On earth, therefore, evil is the lowest rung before delving into the underworld and the degree opposite in diameter to the rung closest to paradise and the realization of the permanent revolution.

Schumann didn't 'give a shit' about how his art turned out. The content of the art did not matter, according to Bob Ernsthall, his long-time colleague. The objective of Schumann was to achieve the Good life with a capital G, which naturally agrees with Mumford's proposal of the values of discipline. Given Schumann's protestant Christian background, it makes sense that he demonstrated a passionate work ethic for something worth putting in the time. Sociologist Max Weber authored *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* in which he discussed the tendency of people's success sourced in the duration of their work and the accumulation of wealth. Ideology was irrelevant and the prime point of Schumann's endeavors was to keep going no matter how fine or poor the most recent production seemed. Sometimes, he harshly criticized popular, successful productions, other times he lauded below average performances. The soul of Bread and Puppet Theatre transcended revolutionary politics. Its goals lay on a broader spectrum than a mere capitalist-socialist dichotomy. The utter sustenance of the work is persistence. One must act whenever one can. Even if one fails to achieve the end one wants, one must try again, like a defiant pest. In both his conception and practice, Schumann created an anthology of work in a mere decade.

Amiri Baraka, on the other hand, advocated violence, seeing it as a necessary trait of an authentic revolution which would smash the dominance of white supremacy and bourgeois values. He incites: "We want actual explosions and actual brutality: AN [EPOCH] IS CRUMBLING and we must give it the space and hugeness of its actual demise," (132). Baraka calls for a complete rupture of present institutions that form the anatomy of society, displacing

the privileged and apolitical, leaving them dizzy and bereft of comfort. This summoning to the streets, banks and city halls connotes the beginning of the pulverization of the hegemonic apparatus that the white ruling class uses to hold the masses down, especially black people. As Baraka calls the Revolutionary Theater a “theatre of assault,” the cause is not so much to instill fear in white people as it is to first demolish the facades that prolong the strain of the oppressed and delude the protected. Once these facades crumble, the institutions they housed will stand naked in plain sight and the eyes of the lower social classes will open. When Baraka refers to the magnitude of this crumbling, the reader should understand that it is not merely the colossus of geopolitical corruption that will fall, but the depth of systemic evils that survived for centuries will be so great in measure shocking the earth as reality changes. Notably, Baraka perhaps shows the most diverse professional biography of all of the aforementioned artists, from beat poet in the early 1960s, to Black Nationalist in the middle 1960s until the early 1970s to Marxist-Leninist in the Maoist school of thought.

In his essay, “Black Liberation/Socialist Revolution,” Baraka states that the only way the Afro-American nation based in the Southern belt can achieve liberation is through the armed violent revolution of a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party. He criticizes the Communist Party USA for disenfranchising the Black proletariat by collaborating with the big bourgeoisie and the black bourgeoisie for their uncommitted, ineffective leadership. Baraka notes that Malcolm X was the greatest leader of the 1960s, but was incapable of turning the tide on oppression due to the absence of a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party. The integrity of a vanguard Marxist-Leninist party in the Mao Zedong school of thought that will disown any socio-economic relations with the bourgeoisie and put the multi-national working class first, making no exception to black

people, is the only viable solution. Only when the people have collectively understood that their interests are realized in the destination of a socialist world, will they crush bourgeoisie and the proletarian-trusted Communists succeed on behalf of the people.

Describing *Paradise Now* as a call to the “Beautiful non-violent anarchist revolution,” Judith Malina and her husband distanced themselves from the ideology of a ruling class rife with aggression and profit-motivation and created a culture that would work to supersede the hegemony that incites violence. Karl Marx writes in *The German Ideology*: “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time an intellectual force,” (McLellan, 176). Hegemony is a trilateral paradigm of culture, morality and intellect. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist philosopher, understood that dismantling the repressive hegemony of a society was equally necessary to the proletarian seizure of the bourgeois political economy because it is another mode of production that quite literally shapes society. “Force is available to enable the state to gain its ends. The state controls the police and the military, and if the working class gets politically out of hand they can be arrested or the troops can be called to ensure compliance. This conception, Gramsci thought, was not adequate for a proper understanding of the *bourgeois* class under capitalism. This class was dominant not only in the sense that it held economic and political power, but in the sense that it provided moral and intellectual leadership of the society,” (*Perspectives in Sociology: Structuralism III*, 117). Hegemony yields the pure mental fabric of a society, prevalent in our minds and informs the perceptions we have of historical events, patterns and the systems we live in. Because Gramsci supported the Bolsheviks and doctrinally adhered to Leninism, he understood that the only way to purge force from a society is by force. The

working class must deploy force if it is to control the state and once in control continue to channel force in the relations of production down the road to socialism.

Hegemony

Interestingly, Antonio Gramsci prescribes that a revolutionary coalition must lead with alternative values akin to the ones Mumford spoke of in their subculture prior to the supersession of capitalism. Class consciousness does not suffice. Additionally, the working class must largely agree on and inculcate a counter ideology in the proletarian masses as that ideology reflects their interest, counter to the bourgeoisie. This universal proletarian consciousness will dissolve the present hegemony in the revolutionary process and replace it with communist hegemony imbued in them by their autonomy, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Again, that indoctrination cannot occur without the working class conquering the bourgeoisie. Notably, Gramsci was a somewhat heterodox Marxist. One of the co-founders of the Italian Communist Party, he was not a left communist like his comrade Amadeo Bordiga (one of the leftists Vladimir Lenin criticized in his pamphlet *Left-wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*) nor publicly anti-Stalinist like another named Angelo Tasca, but at the same time not a pure communist in support of Joseph Stalin as was Palmiro Togliatti. Gramsci's complexity earns him a special place in the socialist canon and we will use his methods to understand the cultural criticisms of these performance groups.

Gramsci writes in *The Prison Notebooks*: "Among the subaltern groups, one will exercise or tend to exercise a certain hegemony through the mediation of a party; this must be established by studying the development of all the other parties too, in so far as they include elements of the

hegemonic group or of the other subaltern groups which undergo such hegemony,” (53).

“Socialism does not work. Capitalism is the most free and viable economic system.” “There are only two genders.” These popular statements are common examples of American intellectual and cultural hegemony. These examples are not biased so much as they factually show the ideas that shape our dominant culture. An example of moral hegemony in the United States would be the view that the indefinite incarceration of a citizen without a trial is wrong. Socialism, especially democratic socialism, is often interpreted benevolently by the millennial generation, particularly when viewing the “Nordic model” practiced in the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Sweden and Norway. This favorable view of “socialism” is only substantially held by one sector of society. But it isn’t socialism, in reality. Democratic socialism is socialism. Therefore, assuming the preceding two sentences are true, what exists in Scandinavia? Social democracy. Socialism is defined as public ownership of the means of production. This definition warrants various interpretations ranging from total state control over the means of production out of private hands to universal collective worker control over the means of production. Left-wing libertarians, certainly anarchists argue for worker control and assuming so, the state could and would be abolished in relation to production. The worker control framework does not exist nationally in any Scandinavian country. Capitalism remains as the economic basis of those countries.

When we hear the word “Communism,” we might imagine the Stalinist USSR or another Marxist-Leninist totalitarian state. On the other hand, many of us cannot define what capitalism is, despite living in a capitalist society. Because the means of production affects everything in our society and thereby all that we know, it impacts our understanding of communism by what

the owners of production communicate. The means of production is additionally controlled by a handful of capitalists: monopolized oligarchy. Sample names include Amazon, Google, Disney, Microsoft, Facebook, Apple, General Electric, etc. In further regards to American capitalism's relationship to our hegemony, consider how we might perceive our system by what the media tells us. In describing the process of alienation of workers from the fruits of their labor, there previously was a brief litany of terms describing the owners of capital. Generally, capitalists do not call themselves capitalists in pro-market dialogue. Terms such as CEOs (Chief Executive Officers), entrepreneurs and investors are used because these belong to the lexicon of hegemonic capitalism. When discussing alternatives to capitalism such as socialism and the former's theoretical superiority to the latter, capitalists will then use the word capitalism and call themselves capitalists advocating free markets instead of a command economy as in Venezuela, where a recent example of the failure of socialism has occurred. While Gramsci did believe in the leadership of a vanguard party after ousting the bourgeoisie, he believed in worker control as evidenced by his organizing of factory councils in the Northern Italian city of Turin. When the producer contingent convene to socialize the means of production and make decisions on their own accord in the interests of everyone their livelihoods will supremely improve because their own best interests are everyone's best interests and everyone's own best interests are their best interests. That is not to say that problems will not arise, but theoretically once the workers harness autonomy, leveraging their demands against the authority figure and humbling that incumbent as their equal, the problems will be insignificant in comparison.

Americans and immigrants without citizenship live in a neoliberal hyper-capitalist system in which healthcare, housing and education are barely affordable and the government could easily

withdraw their plans in the public system. Based on the design of capitalist production, the United States' economic placement on the politico-ideological spectrum convinces us that Scandinavia practices 'democratic socialism' which, in reality, is a comparatively reduced capitalism. The fact that the United States government and private sector oppose the implementation of elementary social democratic programs like universal healthcare demonstrates that we are largely to the right of center on the ideological spectrum. Whether or not it is the correct definition of socialism, social democracy is what "democratic socialism" has come to mean conceptually in the United States. Because the concept of democracy is nominally so highly valued in this country along with freedom, we put our faith, even if on the surface, in the premise that we are a democracy. That is another example of our hegemony. Theatre has its roots in ritual, but it serves democracy.

The ancient Greeks, the pioneers of theatre, primarily staged drama to honor their deity Dionysus who was the god of wine and festivity. Additionally, they not only viewed theater as complementary to democracy, but as a means of protest against sexual repression as well. Tytell writes: "In *The Birth of Tragedy*, the German philosopher [Nietzsche] had conjectured that the origin of drama could be found in the orgies of the pre-Doric Greeks when, three to four thousand years ago, they were still nomadic shepherders. This part of the play suggests the volatile energies that had given birth to theatre in the first place," (Tytell, 228). Nietzsche's point maintains Baraka's thesis that theatre is, in fact, inherently revolutionary. Every war in the modern history of America has subsequently been accompanied by a sexual revolution. This was especially the case during the post-World II years in the age of the baby boom and then the

cultural changes of the 1950s including Rhythm and Blues, Rock and Roll; the decade's economic boom while the Cold War raged on. Taboo practices such as premarital sexual intercourse and homosexuality also surfaced at this time as openly gay writers like Allen Ginsberg and William S. Burroughs came into prominence. As members of the original Beat circle in New York with Kerouac, a closeted bisexual, they were naturally related by the avant-garde tradition to Beck and Malina. Beck and Malina had agreed to an open, polyamorous marriage, thus enabling them to embrace free love. In this case, love is defined as the eroticism stimulated by sensual, communal and intellectual bonding, eradicating the divisions in the different social strata of a society. Beck described sexual repression as "The basis of most violence," (Tytell, 228). Sexual repression and heterosexism are forms of cultural hegemony. A sexual revolution that included homosexual intercourse and gender deviance was the only antidote to this plague and they made this happen in *Paradise Now*. The partners articulated their views in response to said repression in the context of the act called "The Rung of the Way" containing "the Rite of Universal Intercourse": "The work of liberation from sexual repression must be a parallel of all revolutionary work and must take place during all revolutionary stages (1971, 80). This may have a double meaning as it verbally parallels the universal intercourse that Marx and Engels speak of in *The Communist Manifesto*. "The Beautiful Non-Violent Anarchist Revolution will only take place after The Sexual Revolution because before that the energy is violent," (1972, 80.) To summarize the message of shattering taboos as a path to non-violence, they use a vulgar profanity in the line: "Fuck means peace," reenacting the conflicts and staging the ideal harmony between Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem. In authoritarian and reactionary movements, some leaders strongly discourage from partaking in pleasurable activities. The Nazis trained men to resist the inclination to masturbate. They also applied the same practice to

homosexuals in the concentration camps. Scholars say that if you can psychologically inhibit humans from masturbating, you can make them do anything. As per common knowledge. Sigmund Freud theorized that the most primal sense in our psyche pertains to sexuality. It is worth noting in respect to the Nazis, that both Malina and Beck were Jewish and Malina was born in Germany amidst the heightening anti-Semitism in the Weimar Republic. In terms of sexual orientation, Judith Malina was straight and Beck was a gay-leaning bisexual. As a repressed homosexual, Beck experienced two forces of sexual repression due to his attraction to men and the prohibition of engaging in sex in public places with multiple partners. Predating the couple by nearly two centuries, William Blake protested similar civil laws that encroached the life he wanted to live and that he believed should be available to everyone. He practiced sexual liberalism in respect to advocacy and participation in polyamorous culture, encouraging individuals to even have extra-marital partners if they so desired. Blake was a Christian, and of course a heterodox Christian. Some historians regard Blake as a prototype of Christian anarchists. Both of these assumed characteristics compare to Beck and Malina's identities and if we were to incorporate revolutionary urbanism into the example of Blake, he details his pertinent ambition in the lyrical preamble to his epic poem, *Milton*:

I Will Not Cease From Mental Fight
Nor Shall My Sword Sleep In My Hand
Till We Have Built Jerusalem
In England's Green And Pleasant Land

This stanza responds to the legend that the Christ child appeared in Glastonbury, England with the disciple Joseph of Arimathea and built the Holy City. This was purportedly a vision of the New Jerusalem. The Book of Revelation describes the eternal, perfect Jerusalem. *Paradise Now* employs spiritual rites of the Hasidim which guide them up the rungs of the metaphorical ladder to complete Paradise where the actors and spectators will realize the permanent revolution. Judith Malina was raised in an observant Jewish household; her father was a well-respected rabbi, while Julian Beck's parents were secular Jews. In respect to their culture, Jerusalem would be the archetype of a supranatural metropolitan center of superfluous transcendental joy, akin to the impossible joy to which they refer in *Paradise Now*. The Vision of Apokatastasis follows "The Rite of Universal Intercourse" in which the demonic forces transform into celestial counterparts. The Living Theatre's use of the term Apokatastasis derives from an exclamation of Allen Ginsberg during his arrest at an anti-war protest in December of 1967: '

Pentagon, Pentagon
Reverse Consciousness
Apokatastasis.' (78).

The Exorcism of Violence And The Sexual Revolution follows Action IV which succeeds the Vision of Apokatastasis. Without the sexual revolution, we cannot achieve democracy.

Part of pushing the boundaries in the Living Theatre was spontaneity. Spontaneity is characteristic of both experimental artistry and anarchism, but not exclusively. Some non-anarchist leftists also view spontaneity as key in staging revolutions organically. Unlike Lenin and the Bolshevik Vanguard Party in Russia, for example, Rosa Luxemburg and the German Communist Party espoused what is regarded as left communism and sought to strike the

political-economic system spontaneously in the socialist revolution. Just as the Spartacist League in Germany began to rebel, their leader Luxemburg and her comrade Karl Liebknecht were executed. Gramsci took the spontaneity a step further. The Italian communist diverged from the economic determinism of classical Marxism in response to the results of the Bolshevik revolution amid a confluence of destructive events in Russia. Gramsci rejected Marx's prescription in *Das Kapital* which dictated that a nation's proletariat must endure roughly another century of bourgeois rule before rebelling and proclaiming their dictatorship. In an essay published in 1917 entitled *The Revolution Against 'Capital*, Gramsci writes: "But in Russia, the war galvanized the people's will. As a result of the sufferings accumulated over three years, their will became one almost overnight. Famine was imminent, and hunger, death from hunger could claim anyone, could crush tens of millions of men at one stroke. Mechanically at first, then actively and consciously after the first revolution, the people's will became as one," (*The Young Socialist*, 36.) Gramsci viewed Marx's work as bourgeois material and that in order for true progress to be made, the proletariats themselves would have to rebel on their own accord instead of patiently waiting for the next bourgeois revolution at the height of capitalistic existence to strike at the appropriate moment. Gramsci's prognosis also details a course of the formation of a new society that follows the sociologist Emile Durkheim's analysis of civil history. Durkheim found that traditional societies and the like (e.g. the Amish today) functioned mechanically by a strict social system. As the populations formed nations, the state became centralized, but in the introduction of the private sector in empires once again decentralized. Organic solidarity came in modern societies. Gramsci predicted that the functions of the Russian proletarian revolution would unfold organically in worker council administration. People would organize as second nature. The epochs of the industrial revolution reached the logical conclusion

of globalization. Regardless of the unprecedented flaws of capitalism, many post-feudal societies have by and large granted their citizens civil liberties, even if only nominally. Critically, Russia did not possess this constitutional post-feudal capacity at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. In the United States, the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees its citizens Freedom of Religion, Speech, Assembly, Press and Petition. Every authoritarian society in modern history has infringed upon these natural rights as we have come to understand them by hegemony: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Third Reich, the Democratic Republic of North Korea, etc. The only coalition who have successfully organized as a compact populace through organic social solidarity are the communards of Paris in 1871.

The Paris Commune

Many left-leaning urbanists and socialist revolutionaries regard the Paris Commune as the historical archetype of the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat that Marx and Engels discussed in the theoretical stages of the revolution in the transition to communism. Henri Lefebvre, a French Marxist and urbanist, describes the “Style of the Commune” as: “A spring festival in the Cité a festival of the disinherited and the Proletarians, a revolutionary festival and festival of the Revolution, a total festival, the greatest of modern times, which unfolded at first in magnificence and joy,” (*Key Writings*, 2017, 211.) Parallel to Schechner, the festival brought the best out of the city. The revolutionary actions of the communards maximized the utilization of Paris’s infrastructure, but then things ultimately took a turn for the worse. Lefebvre analyzes the degeneration and collapse of the commune: “And how it acclaimed the world of work, that is to say, work as world and creator of worlds. And how, during this immense festival something rents asunder the opaque veils of customary social life, rises from the deep, cuts through the

accumulated layers of the inert and the obscure, comes to light and opens up. What was it? A basic will to change the world and life as it is, and things as they are, a spontaneity conveying the highest thought, a total revolutionary project. A general and delirious ‘all or nothing’. A vital and absolute wager on the possible and impossible.” (*Key Writings*, 212.) All of these revolutionaries sought to change the world, not necessarily to a perfect state, but to maximize what could be in work that would never end. This interpretation of the continuity of the Commune is paramount to its progress because, as Mumford agrees, utopia is anti-rational and stasis negates the natural continuity of cities. They were unprepared and poorly protected. The inadequate adaptability of the Commune led to its demise.

Cities Belong To Workers

Spontaneity is important, but in order for the masses to sustain their communal momentum, they must be prepared to reckon with activity outside of the locality. The army invaded and overran the Commune in the case of Paris. Any solution to a problem is in the interest of everyone even if distant and non-immediate. The population needs spontaneity on both sides of the equation if they are to make the correct calculation and find the solution of communism. In regards to the history of his native Italy, Gramsci writes of the process:

“The Bourgeoisie needs an abundant supply of labour which can only be provided by the rural masses-but the nobles want the peasants tied to the soil: flight of the peasants into the cities where the nobles cannot capture them. In any case, even though the situation is different, there is apparent in the development of Communal civilization the function of the city as a directive element of the city which deepens the internal conflicts of the countryside and uses them as a

politico-military instrument to strike down feudalism,” (64). Marx theorized that inequality begins with the division of labor. It makes the accumulation of wealth possible. When he spoke of the dissolution of the division of labor and people rotating occupations once in control of the means of production, he did not mean that somebody who worked as a miller could suddenly become a neurosurgeon as some anti-Marxists argue his premise is. That would be quite dangerous. He refers to the divisions in production which creates efficiency in the workplace. These divisions fall into three categories: agricultural, commercial and industrial production.

This alliance of the peasantry and industrial workers affirms the prescription that Baraka issues to the proletarian masses of third-world countries in their relationships to the imperialism of the United States and the USSR. Gramsci’s description more or less parallels the Great Migration of African-Americans in the 1930s in which they fled the rural South from states like Mississippi, North and South Carolina and traveled to urban destinations in the North like Chicago and New York. Bertolt Brecht also wrote a play entitled *In the Jungle of Cities*, a dreadful story set in Chicago in 1912 about a family who migrated from the plains to the megalopolis, living in unbearable conditions. The climax of the plot is a duel between two men spurred on by uncontrolled hatred. The Living Theatre performed this play in Paris and New York in the 1960s.

Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong envisioned a society in which the workers of the agrarian sector of the economy would be integrated with the factory workers and Baraka subscribed to Mao’s idea of unification. As Baraka compelled: “Black liberation will only come through socialist revolution, and it is part and parcel of proletarian revolution, and socialist

revolution can only come led by a party which combines the entire multinational working class guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. ” (219.) Baraka’s diagnosis accepts that U.S. capitalism cannot be divorced from racism and conversely, racism cannot die without the abolition of capital. He highlights capitalism’s rise in the New World predicated on the arrival of forcibly transported enslaved people from Africa. These people’s labors in the New World provided the basis of the American economy, as the colonies won independence from Great Britain after the Revolutionary War, exponentially increasing wealth in the hands of white land-owning capitalists who were entitled to the profits generated by their share of the forces of production.

The Afro-American Nation of the Black Belt South referred to by Amiri Baraka inhabit the very region that became one of the richest places in the world due to the realized value of cotton. The Constitution protected the property rights of these capitalists which enforced who controlled the means of production thus establishing a ruling class and a superstructure. After slavery was partially outlawed, the South found ways to apprehend and force African-Americans to work on chain gains, in mines, etc., forming a criminal class. The competition for jobs between people of color and whites increased as the second industrial revolution dawned and tycoons like John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie and Cornelius Vanderbilt skyrocketed in the benefits of laissez-faire capitalism. This economic period is perhaps one of the starkest examples of a prevalent false consciousness. The cities became hell holes for immigrants and working people. They were not homes.

Social Class

Karl Marx analyzed society by social stratification which classifies people based on their relationship to the means of production. Naturally then, this would mean that slaves resided in the very lowest social stratum of the hierarchy and bourgeois whites ruled as the overlords. Marx interpreted social class by objective and subjective criteria. Objective criteria is the group that an individual belongs to, in Baraka's case: a worker, paid or unpaid, and a dominant bourgeois master. Subjective criteria is the degree of awareness that a member of such a social class bears to the fact that she or he is a member of that social class. In other words, it is self-awareness of one's objective criteria. The fulfillment of subjective criteria yields an individual's class consciousness.

Amiri Baraka wrote a one-act play on this very subject entitled: *What was the Relationship of the Lone Ranger to the Means of Production?* The three characters who appear at the beginning of the play initially go about their work day regularly, working on an assembly line. On break, when a man wearing a suit and hat that fit the description of Uncle Sam enters the factory, Donna, Reg and Clarke notice him and curiously begin asking him questions to which he replies vaguely. Eventually, he identifies himself as the "Money Master" who owns the plant. He confers to them that he will have to cut their wages, but he will raise their spirits. The workers react to his words incredulously and their manager, a union bureaucrat named Tuffy, reports over standing by his boss to quell their indignation. In addition to the salary reduction, the workers are informed that from now on, whatever the bosses say goes. Donna in particular, as well as Reg reach a boiling point and begin degrading their livelihood by naming the injustices they suffer every day: the evils of capitalism, racism, misogyny, in effect becoming an active social

class, fulfilling the subjective criteria, from a latent social class. Their outrage culminates when Tuffy brings a corpse to the workers which happens to be the body of their dying coworker Felipe. M.M. (Money Master) recognizes Felipe as his departed partner, Tonto. The Money Master, now recognized as the Lone Ranger, attempts to reminisce with Tonto (Felipe) about the adventures they had, but Felipe does not renege and pays with his life for his integrity. Felipe, an Indigenous person, dies at the hands of a violent, exploitative white plutocrat. This is fundamental to the character of America. Tuffy and the Money Master round on the remaining three workers as they protest. They suddenly hear rabble outside. At the doors, there is a huge crowd striking and picketing who burst in. This theme of the perpetuating capital injustice against Native Americans exists in *Paradise Now* as the first vision of “The Rung of Good and Evil”: “The Vision of the Death and Resurrection of the American Indian.” Representatives of Native Americans reappeared in large numbers in the 1960s.

Indigeneity

When looking at the “hippie movement”, perhaps the most conspicuous and recognizable countercultural current of the 1960s, we interpret them as the progeny yielded by the countercultural movements of the previous decades. Critics of the term ‘hippie’ argue that it is a generalization of non-conforming protesters with long hair. These types ranged from the peace-loving young protesters who lived on communes, the “yippie movement” coined in junction with the name of their formal organization, Youth International Party constituted by militant anarchists and socialists, to psychedelic “acid freaks” who abandoned political society in spiritual practice. In *Hair*, there are frequent references and character impersonations of

indigenous people in the Americas (i.e. “This Indian land, white woman. Buzz off.) The encore piece of the musical following the finale, contains a lyric: “How I Love My Happy Hopi Hippie Life.” To an extent, the hippie types largely modeled themselves after Native Americans.

Malina and Beck explain in *The Vision of the Death and Resurrection of the American Indian*: “It is the hippies who have risen up from the pavement, reincarnations of the American Indian, aspiring to be the Natural Man as represented by the great Indian culture, the great suppressed cultures. The culture is assaulted from below. It is the first step in revolutionary action to change culture,” (1971, 27.) *Hair* can be described as the mediator of conventional Broadway material and radical revolutionary drama staged off the Great White Way. The American Tribal Love Rock Musical premiered on Broadway in 1968 and in content appeared related to *Paradise Now*, but there were key differences: “*Hair* had frontal nudity and performers in the balcony, yet because of its banality, it could both appeal to the values of peace and love and satisfy tourists. The original intention of *Paradise Now* had been to envelop the audience in such joy that the impossible began to seem possible,” (Tytell, 260). In a contextual examination of who these people were and where they came from, they were the cultural progeny of the Beat Generation. Jack Kerouac, who happened to have a bit of Iroquois ancestry, answered: “We’re just the older ones. You see, I’m forty-six years old. These kids are eighteen. But it’s the same movement, which is apparently some kind of Dionysian movement in late civilization.” The hippies were the blossoms of the flower seeds planted by people like Kerouac. William S. Burroughs added to this analysis of the Beat Generation: “Although the Beats were originally non-political, others who were political were really following the Beat movement to its logical conclusion.” That movement was a movement built on ideas. The Living Theatre and their colleagues used a similar platform; there is an objective to achieve in the end, but the most important piece to lead

the revolution now comes by castigating the divisions between themselves and other people and that naturally the rudimentary step in that direction is a cultural rebellion. The only way to conceive of a cultural rebellion is by the investigation of ideas, then ultimately to realize the revolution by experimenting with them. This revolution is not strictly ideological because it is an evolutionary process, distinguishing itself from the dogma of Marxism-Leninism. Ginsberg was the most senior of the Beat poets closely affiliated with the hippies and as an anti-war socialist, he set the stage for his children. Although, like Schumann inexplicit in their political ideology, the hippies typically lived together in communal groups in cities like San Francisco and New York or on farms, distancing themselves from the jaded scene of individualistic American corporatism. Freedom of expression was quintessential in their professions and the surrealism found in their art and everyday life from hallucinations reflected anarchy to an extent. They were the spring of fresh water that had formed underground in both the Beats and anarchists. They came from different social classes, but unified in the reclamation of America.

Violent Injustice Does Not Deserve Reason

After coming to consciousness of the prevalent violence of racism, an enraged Baraka entered the Black Cultural Nationalist movement with other writers who drifted to comparable movements: Pan-Africanism, anti-colonialism. He writes in the 1971 essay *Newark Before Black Men Conquered*: “There is a clearer feeling in Newark, than any other city I have ever been in, of colonialism. Newark is a *colony*. A bankrupt ugly colony in the classic term, where white people make their money to take away with them. The city is kept up only as far as its

money-making capacity, say for Prudential Life Insurance, etc. etc. etc, (182). Export of capital inherently accompanies colonialization. Fifty years after this essay's publication, gentrification has pumped wealth back into Newark, but not to the ends that Baraka favored. We shall see that no reform under capitalism, certainly not racial capitalism, would satisfy Baraka and gentrification pledges allegiance to the status quo. The status quo is white supremacy. Newark was, and still is, a predominantly black city and overall 75% people of color. In the 1960s, the local big businesses were white-owned and the local government was white-run. Central Ward, where the rebellion largely took place, was ninety percent black and ten percent Puerto Rican. The public school system was in shambles and the great majority of students happened to be black. He was not the only member of the Black Arts Movement who criticized colonial displacement of gentrification. Sonia Sanchez, a womanist poet, wrote a play entitled *The Bronx Is Next* which focuses on the eviction of black tenants in Harlem. A black character reenacts an encounter of his with militaristic white men. The key theme of these writers was to write about black life in the U.S. though not always in a city. *Dutchman*, one of Baraka's earlier plays was set on the subway while its companion, *Slave*, is set in the rural south. The important urbanist component of their work is not whether or not these plays were staged in the streets or in the inner city, but whether or not they were set in cities. There was solidarity between black people, especially those who were descended from the people who came through the Middle Passage, and the goal of receiving help from the brotherhood and sisterhood was fragmented by lack of organization. The congestion and density of places that were hardly better than the plantation cohesively solidified that solidarity. Dr. King and others made progress with the Civil Rights movement, but as long as the hegemony of imperialism within their country even as citizens

remains, black people will never enjoy freedom. White supremacy is more than a mere manifestation of capitalism, but it would be critically injured without it.

Perhaps the most crucial piece of Amiri Baraka's analysis is his review of the impact of the Black Arts Movement, where they were right and where they went wrong. In the essay, *The Revolutionary Tradition in Afro-American Literature*, Baraka reflects upon the history of the movement that began with the masses of black people led by Malcolm X: "Its political line at its most positive was that literature must be a weapon of revolutionary struggle, that it must serve the black revolution. And its writers, Askia Muhammad Toure, Larry Neal, Clarence Reed, Don Lee, Sonia Sanchez, Carolyn Rodgers, Welton Smith, Marvin X, &c its publications, its community black theaters, its manifestos and activism were meant as real manifestations of the black culture/black art as weapons[s] of liberation. On the negative side, the black arts movement without the guidance of a scientific revolutionary organization, a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party, was, like the BLM itself, left with spontaneity," (251.) As he implies in his previous essays on black national liberation, the only way the masses of black people could penetrate the fabric of white supremacy and extreme capitalism in American society is by organization. Malcolm X was a black nationalist, putting black people first in an anti-black system, but did not make capitalism a nemesis in addition to racism. Capitalism is nothing more than mercantilism as evidenced by Marx's work when declaring that capitalism came into existence in the sixteenth century. The discovery of the new world enabled a novel nexus of profit-driven trade. Thus, capitalism developed a surrogate to colonialism. This thesis reaffirms that the United States was built on racism as well as capitalism. Given the internal colonialism

present in the United States in Baraka's lifetime, he states that a unity of black people and the multi-national working class under a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist armed revolution will be necessary to expel the imperialists from every corner of the oppressed third world (including the United States). When discussing imperialism, Baraka also refers to hegemony as a capitalist control force that divides the struggles of the black proletariat and the black petty bourgeoisie and leaving them ineffective in forming a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party. Marxist-Leninists are the only militants who will both challenge capitalism to its roots and apply force in the socialist revolution anywhere and everywhere. This is arguably a very narrow and restricted ideology, but Baraka operated in a country exceptionally restrictive for black people with a narrow path to real emancipation.

Baraka, despite being a far leftist, vertically stood in contrast to the Living Theatre as he was not an anarchist, nor was he a pacifist and incited violence and he disavowed spontaneity. What are the explanations for this political make-up? With this dichotomy in view, Baraka presents from the absolutist side of the spectrum, Schumann presents from the center and Malina and Beck present from the voluntary side. Julian Beck would have disagreed with Baraka's prescription for an armed revolution, surmising that violence is a recipe for counter-revolution. In response, some people criticized the methods of the Living Theatre's propaganda arguing that people who promote peaceful protest have not experienced the violence which oppressed minorities, such as people of color, suffer in perpetual struggle. Amiri Baraka witnessed the early triumph of the Cuban revolution, mourned the assassination of Malcolm X, writing a play *The Death of Malcolm X*, changed his name and participated in the Newark Rebellion of 1967 where he was nearly assaulted to death by the police.

Schumann did not have the same experiences as Baraka, but he did witness similarities in his respective urban life. His troupe mainly lived and operated on the Lower East Side, in neighborhoods that were predominantly black and Puerto Rican, milling with rats and police. The 1960s were a dark and painful time and he contributed to the brightening hope of cultural change. In his *Manifesto*, Schumann explains why the roles of artists are necessary:

“[T]hat rarest among human characters, the human being that lives in his age, that reacts spontaneously to what his age teaches him, who makes his life out of what his age does to him, who in no way has recourse to what has already been developed- a naked, whipped, daring human being, one who is ordinary because no queerness, no particular inclination or passion, no genius ear, no genius eye, no genius love, no however beautiful eccentricity, seduces him away into the past, into peculiarity, and into selfhood, a human being at the same time sufficiently chaste and sufficiently daredevil to achieve what is necessary, that which in his age is possible.” (Brecht, 99.)

The axes of possibility and spontaneity intersect everywhere on the grid of imagination. It is the job of the artist to master his or her ability in the plotting of lines, shattering the illusion of bureaucratic cells and artificial segments, invalidating hegemony by practicing fantasy. They must do this and then keep going and going as second nature. Ironically, this may have been the final stage of Schumann’s vision, but he himself did not fully practice these ideals. Peter Schumann himself was not democratic. In fact, there is no concrete evidence that Schumann politically was anything but a pacifist which he believed not only in practice precluded violence,

but other forms of aggression as well. The problem here is that in practice, he was authoritarian. He dictated the prognosis, style and interpretations of the all performances to his casts. He wrote everything, crafted every piece of his sets, and designed all the masks. He did not control the exact dance because obviously he cannot control the outcome, but otherwise he was an exemplary autocratic bureaucrat. Clearly Schumann did not intend his participants to control production in the least. He retained ownership of the property that he had directly created. This is both Marxian and Weberian because he was not alienated from his labor and he conserved the intellectual wealth he had generated. People who worked with him testified that the principal reasons they chose to work with him are that they admired his art and that Bread & Puppet was the only available employment.

Simply put, Marx saw capitalism as the problem. Weber saw bureaucracy as the problem operating within the same system. Anarchists see both as “the problem.” This duality encompasses multiple variables in the equation. We know what Weber says on capitalism and bureaucracy, but what does Marx say on bureaucracy? In *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, Marx writes: Since it is of the essence of bureaucracy to be the ‘state as formalism’, so its aim implies this also. The real aim of the state thus appears to bureaucracy as an aim against the state. The spirit of bureaucracy is therefore the ‘formal spirit of the state.’ Thus it makes ‘formal spirit of the state’ or the real lack of spirit by the state into a categorical imperative. Bureaucracy counts in its own eyes as the final aim of the state,” (McLellan, 31). Neither Marx or Friedrich Engels bore strong affinities for the state, but they perceived that the state was an integral apparatus to the liberation of the international proletariat because the dictatorship of the proletariat would be a seizure of governmental power once in control of the means of production

and then as the class system dissolved, the state would begin to wither away. In *Paradise Now*, the actors chant to be free of the state, free of the system. Without the state and violence, bureaucracy greatly reduces. Bureaucracy exists in anarchy only in what individuals know they have to do in duty to the collective. They want to perform these duties because they have to in order for everyone to enjoy their rights, find inner peace and live the best life possible.

The Paris Commune (Continued.)

Stewart Edwards writes his book, *The Paris Commune*, 1871: “In the working-class districts more particularly the victory of the socialist candidates came from ‘the fact that, unlike most radicals and neo-Jacobins, they had chosen to burn their bridges behind them and stake everything on the revolutionary power of the people in arms,’” (185.) The scholar on the Commune continues: “But the political and social ideals alone would not have been sufficient to drive the Paris working class into freeing itself from its allegiance to the old forms of political rule. The impetus to do this could only have come from a more general feeling, which in this case was the frustrated popular republican patriotism arising from the siege,” (185.) In this case, the Parisian proletariat was largely more concerned with their safety and a protective order of peace rather than ownership of the means of production. They resented the old oppressive order more than their attraction to democracy. Paradoxically, that is the secondary purpose of socialism, but the first step in the proletarian revolution. Although socialism is defined as collective ownership of the means of production, no one can realize this until every individual in the state breaks from the chains of the oppressive, exploitative order. Until they defiantly stand up straight and avoid the whip or baton, there is no possible path to a better existence. Marxism-Leninism submits to this preference as well because it is an ideology that defends the USSR in

the name of anti-capitalism. All members of an official Communist Party, like CPUSA, are Marxists-Leninists. There was an expression in the Cold War era: “If you want your son to be a communist, send him to Paris. If you want your son to be a capitalist, send him to Moscow.”

The contrast of post-Lenin Russia to capitalist, republican Paris is stark at least. Though there was no total worker control over production in Paris in the duration of two months (March 18th-May 28th, 1871), the Commune was a magnificent feat in popular history even if extraordinarily brief. Even in Russia, there was a degree of worker control in cities like Petrograd under the Bolsheviks. This too was temporary as the Russian Civil War ravaged the Bolshevik army, exhausted the leaders of the Vanguard Party and effectively increased the bureaucracy of the state. Famine gripped the country immediately after the war ended in 1921, leaving six million people on the brink of starvation. The odds were against the Bolsheviks and Schechner’s theory of the fleeting mesmerizing indulgence proved correct in both cases. Marx did not believe that the revolution would take place in Russia, that it was more likely to take place in France or Germany. Lenin, Trotsky and others waited in Russia for that revolution to occur and it almost did, but as stated, the German army assassinated Luxemburg and crushed the Spartacist rebellion of 1919. The civil war and the incomplete socialist revolution left Russia in a completely anomic state. The centralization of the Soviet state enabled Lenin to break up the bureaucratic machinery, consequently exacerbating the livelihood of the laboring Russia populace. In this horrifying case, Gramsci overestimated the power of the workers’ state and underestimated the oppression that its supposed rulers would undergo. The Cheka, Lenin’s secret police, also enforced the laws ratified by the leaders of the party, leaving the general population with very few civil liberties. Lenin suffered an assassination attempt in 1918, died in 1924 and in three years, Joseph Stalin became the Soviet Premier (dictator of Russia) in 1927. The subsequent

understanding of these events concludes that free cooperation at its maximum cannot materialize within a centralized state, certainly not an authoritarian state.

Edwards continues: “The theme of the Commune was likewise marked by the action of the crowd: the parade of the federated National Guards to the Place de la Bastille on 24 February,” (296.) The National Assembly expelled the army and replaced them with the National Guard which protected the Commune from the French Empire. “But during the period of the Commune there were also staged public occasions, ceremonies, in which the crowd acted more as a chorus, both observing and participating in a collective representation affirming the unity of Paris in its revolutionary struggle against Versailles,” (297.) These actions may not be ascribed to theatre proper, but they staged dramatic actions in the street that affirmed the sovereignty of Paris, not only as a people who operate the city, but as a family who stand together in the separation from corporate conventions in the enrichment of their own island.

Marx wrote on the Commune in *The Civil War in France*: “Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class property which makes the labor of the many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators. It wanted to make individual property a truth by transforming the means of production, land and capital, now chiefly the means of enslaving and exploiting labor, into mere instruments of free and associated labor. But this is Communism, ‘impossible’ Communism!” (McLellan, 545.) Even in a communal transformation of a metropolis like Paris, workers and socialist intellectuals caught a glimpse of the possibility of communism by a communistic cell. The facilities of the Commune may not have been perfect,

but they effectively demonstrated that the impossible was possible, thus shifting the spectrum of political and civil hegemony slightly leftwards. Conceptually, it was the functional birth of a socialized economy. But this was far from complete in Marx's own metrics of communism.

In *Private Property and Communism*, a section of *The German Ideology*, he writes:

“Empirically, communism is only possible as the act of the dominant peoples ‘all at once’ and simultaneously, which presupposes the universal development of productive forces and the world intercourse bound up with communism,” (McLellan, 171). Economically, according to Marx's theory, communism appears to be the ultimate form of solidarity. These ideas perfectly correlate to the events of the 1960s and the respective theatre troupes' reactions because even though the circumstances are different a century later, the solution does not waiver. Baraka calls it liberation. Malina and Beck call it paradise. Schumann calls it the Good life. In essence, the final product: communization is the same because it is only in the eradication of our divisions, are our problems reduced to a minimum.

Lenin

In opposition to anarchists and left Marxists are Leninists, molded in the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia led by their namesake Vladimir Lenin. Lenin's actions in Russia permanently changed the understanding and exercise of Marxism. The importance of Lenin's contributions to the “philosophy of praxis” (a term used by Gramsci and Benedetto Croce) cannot be overstated. Every Marxist revolution since 1917 has been Leninist: Cuba (1959), Zimbabwe (1980), China (1949), Vietnam (1945), etc. Most of these were also nationalist

revolutions as the leaders demanded sovereignty from imperial powers. The United States dominated Cuba, the United Kingdom occupied Zimbabwe, Vietnam was a French colony, etc. The regimes that the insurrections established claimed millions of human lives and oppressed their peoples on a scale broader than what every race of the world had collectively ever witnessed. Given his eminence in the respected domain of practiced communism, it is therefore incumbent on the parts of historical study to examine what Lenin said regarding the Commune. Published in the year of the October Revolution, Lenin writes in *State and Revolution*: “There is no trace of Utopianism in Marx, in the sense of inventing or imagining a ‘new’ society. To destroy officialdom immediately, everywhere, this cannot be thought of. That is a Utopia. But to *break up* at once the old bureaucratic machine and to start immediately the construction of a new one which will enable us gradually to reduce all officialdom to naught- this is *no* Utopia, it is the experience of the Commune, it is the direct and urgent task of the revolutionary proletariat,” (1974, 42.) Lenin did not hold the same view of bureaucracy as the anarchists did. In fact, he was anti-anarchist. He agreed that the old social order needed abolition, but not in a method that would also abolish the state. According to Lenin, there is no such thing as the abolition of the state. The state is either oppressive as in the historical dichotomy of the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariats or is worker-controlled. As long as we have civilization, we will have society and as long as we have society, we will have a state.

Marxism and anarchism seek the same ends: a stateless classless moneyless world, not society, world. While some Marxists primarily see capitalism as the force that wreaks havoc and pain in junction with the institutions of white supremacy, patriarchy, xenophobia and others breeding actions like war, genocide, slavery, systemic sexual violence and objectification, homelessness,

starvation, poverty, mass incarceration, and so on. Capitalism plays a role in every systematic injustice in existence and Karl Marx has been its strongest and most influential critic. He is one of the preeminent philosophers in modern history. A revolutionary, Marx sets himself apart from the anarchists not only in the context of Vladimir Lenin's actions, but because he was also a well-known social theorist with major contributions to the social sciences rivaling those of Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. In the realm of social theory, no anarchist thinker parallels Marx, not Emma Goldman or Mikhail Bakunin or Peter Kropotkin. As such, most of the people cited in this study are Marxists: Lenin, Gramsci, Baraka, Lefebvre, and Brecht. More broadly, the only referenced scholars who are not anti-capitalist are Weber and Durkheim. While it is improper and somewhat difficult to appropriate Marx's critiques to any dynamic of inequality, the sociological perspective rests as the base of this particular class conflict analysis. As this is a sociological study and most of the applicable concepts used in the context of revolutionary theatre bear a Marxian association, the sociology of revolutionary theatre must include his theoretical work.

There are many perceptions and even misconceptions of what an idea or practice is or what it ought to be. That applies to every product of humanity. Reality exists objectively, but how we understand that reality and approach it lies beyond objectivity. We have differing opinions of concepts, organisms, people, emotions, climate, places and events. Any sociological research a priori acknowledges its bias because all research in the *social* sciences is inherently biased. Students of societies convert data into statistics reproduced in analysis that either prove or disprove their points. From observing the patterns, the purpose of these theater collectives was

by and large to artfully demand and ensure a more promising future for other people as well as themselves and manifest that art in such a way that it would reflect the changes in a social system. Presumably, happiness or 'the Good life' is something everyone wants. The examples of those who have seen what has happened and have chosen to respond where the population was most highly concentrated and thereby where they would be most effective. In North America, the city best represents this qualitative heterogeneity of human beings where every infrastructural and superstructural aspect of a society convenes. In present day Midtown, New York, we have visual advertisements abound, newspapers and music on every corner. In the greater city, there are one hundred thirty institutions of higher education, grounds of neoliberalism in which the rich become richer and richer, rents increase, and poor people, especially low-income people and families of color, become poorer and poorer, gradually forced into displacement. Developers invest capital in poorer neighborhoods only in the rehabilitation and revitalization of the material structures, not to improve the well-being and security of people already living there. Public schools predominantly attended by students of color are insufficiently funded. This comprehensive process is not unique to New York. It has happened continuously at a range of levels in San Francisco, New Orleans, Washington D.C., Austin, San Diego, St. Louis, Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Newark, Jersey City and so on. In light of the lion's share of climate change disasters expected to inflict the global South, inhabitants of rural areas (i.e. farmers, peasants) are expected to flee to cities. Metropolitan areas will anticipate this adjustment and proceed accordingly or corporatists will turn a blind eye and refuse to open the doors to the contingents of environmental refugees and migrants. The chorus in the Action sequence of the Vision of the Death and Resurrection of the American Indian

profess: “New York City. Eight million people are living in a state of emergency and don’t know it,” (1971, 23). That remains the case today.

Figuratively, the people whom gentrification and revitalization directly affect sit in the back rows of the affordable local theater imminently to be escorted out by the usher. The revolutionary theatre must not merely warmly beckon them to the front rows, but encourage them wholeheartedly to jump on stage and participate because this is the beginning of their revolution. The actors spit on the viewers in front, not so much in bitter hatred, but in the passion of the lightening of the burden of exhaustion. Whether a particular revolution in practice is violent or non-violent, the spirit of that revolution must employ both the pain and joy in the conquest of repression, as the police drop their weapons and raise their hands above their heads, innocent and unjustly punished prisoners are freed, the homeless are housed, workers and their families receive their entitled benefits and the state ultimately demilitarizes as democracy is restored. As cliché and idealistic as those objectives may sound, they are necessary because the theatrical revolutionaries of this investigation pulled society to the inverse where such programs would exist. This progress can be described as post-revolutionary, the revolution itself or the beginning of the revolution. Regardless, these are criteria of humanitarian and humanistic justice.

Baraka, Malina, Beck and Schumann all fulfilled their duties as humanists and left permanent hand prints on the back wall of the internationalist stage. The radical dramatist should never forget their work and its formation of revolutionary theatre’s central imperative. Performers

must invoke political and popular change in their tireless advocacy, protest and repeated staging of cellular Eutopia with others to draw closer and closer to its full realization. Begin.

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