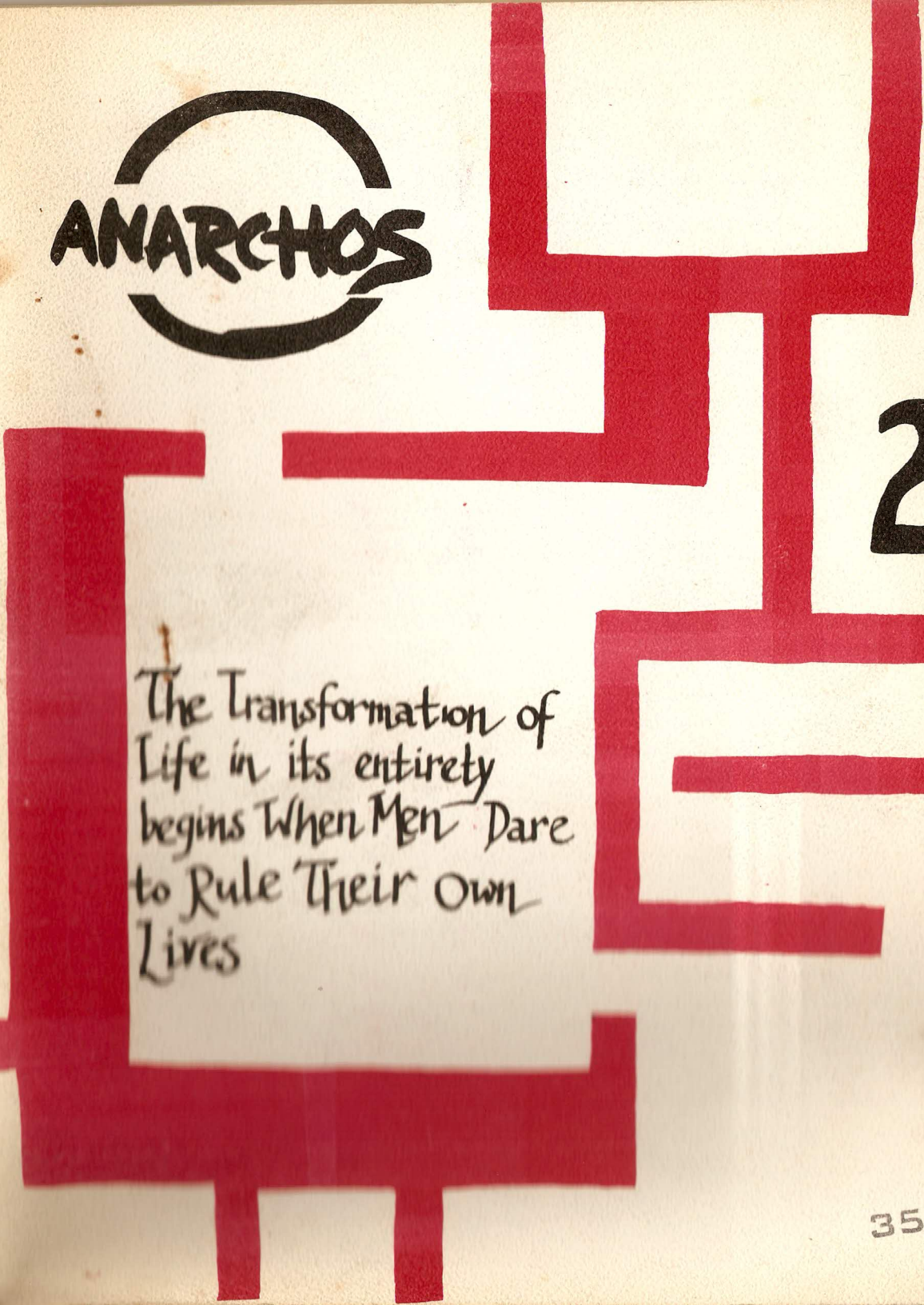




ANARCHOS



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The Transformation of
Life in its entirety
begins When Men Dare
to Rule Their Own
Lives

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ANARCHOS is published by a group of people in New York City who seek to advance nonauthoritarian approaches to revolutionary theory and practice.

Most of us regard ourselves as anarchists. Others feel that their views do not fit into any category in the traditional spectrum of political ideas. What we hold in common, however, is the firm conviction that revolutionary theory and practice must now look primarily to the future, rather than to the past, for inspiration and clarity; that a qualitatively new order of possibility faces our generation -- the possibility of a free, nonrepressive, stateless and decentralized society based on face-to-face democracy, community, spontaneity, and new, meaningful sense of human solidarity.

We believe that technology has now advanced to a point where the burden of toil and material necessity could be removed from the shoulders of humanity, opening an era of unprecedented freedom in every aspect of life, a nonrepressive civilization and human condition in which man could fulfill all his potentialities as a rounded, universal being. We submit, furthermore, that there can be no abstract liberation of society without the concrete liberation of life in all its intimate, everyday facets. Revolution cannot end with the traditional goal of the "seizure of power"; it must culminate in the here and now with the dissolution of power as such -- the power of the state over society, of centralized political entities over community, of the older generation over the younger, of bureaucracy over the individual, of parental authoritarianism over youthful spontaneity, of bourgeois routine over daily creativity, of sexual, racial, cultural, and national privilege over the unfettered development of human personality.

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Note

The short article below -- "Vietnam and the White Refrigerator" -- was written immediately after the Tet offensive, weeks before Johnson's speech of March 31st, the assassination of Martin Luther King, and the sweeping black insurrections that followed. The article is a slap at the hypocrisy of white middle-class America. In this respect, absolutely nothing has happened to question its relevance. The Johnson speech was a shrewd maneuver, clearly intended to arrest the headlong plunge of the United States into an acute social crisis. Whether it leads to negotiations or to a resumption of the war on a still higher scale of military operations alters nothing in the article. White middle-class America for the most part exhibited a shameless indifference to the suffering inflicted on the Vietnamese people by American arms and a disgusting preoccupation with its own media-manufactured appetites, tastes, and concerns. Only the prospect of extended conscription, higher taxes, a call-up of the reserves, and the obvious futility of trying to achieve the subjugation of Vietnam by military means began to shatter this mindless indifference and evoke serious opposition from the great backwash of suburbia.

The assassination of Martin Luther King revealed this hypocrisy to its very core. No sooner was King murdered when the whole liberal Establishment moved in on the man's death, co-opting in Hollywood style the eulogies, mourning, and funeral solemnities. It is an act of supreme hypocrisy that while Johnson and Humphrey were mouthing eulogies to King as a man of nonviolence, bombs were still dropping on Vietnam. It is an act of supreme hypocrisy that while King's body was being flown to Atlanta, the strike of the predominantly black garbage collectors that brought him to Memphis in the first place was still dragging on, all but forgotten by his liberal "mourners." It is an act of supreme hypocrisy that while Rockefeller, McCarthy, Kennedy, and Lindsay were following King's body to a segregated cemetery, the body of Bobby Hutton, age 17, a Black Panther militant, was lying on an Oakland slab, the victim of racist cops who shot him down when he emerged with raised hands from a beleaguered building. It is an act of supreme hypocrisy that while the liberal Establishment croaked the refrains of "We Shall Overcome" around King's grave, H. Rapp Brown starved by a protest fast, was still in prison, the victim of outrageously high bail.

The article below is only too relevant. With a few modifications, a few changes in words, the reader has only to substitute "Afro-American" for "Vietnamese" in the lines that follow in order to retain a clear focus on recent events in Vietnam and the United States.



Vietnam-and the White Refrigerator

Tell me, white, fat-cat, middle-class America: how do you live with your - self? How can you endure yourself? How can you stomach yourself?

Right now, in Vietnam, what is at issue is no longer a social or political question, but a biological question -- a question of whether the Vietnamese people will physically survive the attempt of America to "liberate" them. In this horrifying apocalypse, where all the horsemen are white, a beautiful, gentle Asian people are being systematically butchered and their land reduced to a desolate cemetery. While white middle-class America wakes up to its favorite crispy breakfast cereal and its inane morning paper, while it sends its plump, well-groomed kids off to gleaming suburban schools, countless Vietnamese families awoken to a diet of rifle and mortar fire, to high-explosive aerial bombs, to napalm. In the villages of Vietnam, thousands of children are too mutilated, too maimed to walk -- much less to attend class for "improving their minds."

While white middle-class America lathers itself with perfumed shaving cream, gargles with its choice mouthwash, smugly pats its plump face with brand-name lotions and deodorizes itself, millions of Vietnamese -- their destroyed cities and villages lacking food, potable water, and the most minimal sanitary facilities -- are faced with massive epidemics of typhoid fever, cholera, and bubonic plague.

The people of Vietnam do not have to diet on low-calorie biscuits and yogurt to stay thin; they live daily on the edge of starvation. They are not preoccupied with the length and styling of their garments; for them it is a question of finding bandages to cover the gangrenous ooze of wounds inflicted by American napalm and shell fragments. They are not shopping for face creams to pamper flabby, middle-aged skins; they desperately need antibiotic ointments to coat their festering, blackened, incinerated flesh. They are not concerned with occupying a corner of a psychoanalytic couch and coaxing some life out of bored, vacuous egos; they are looking for hospital beds in which to rest their shattered bodies.

What is your "dream" white middle-class America? A new dishwashing machine, a sleek Jaguar, a color television set, a hotshot hi-fi ensemble, a motorized lawnmower? In Vietnam it is simply: survival. Survival -- and the silence of peace. Do you dare, white middle-class America, to babble about city planning, clean air, more park space while the cities and villages of Vietnam lie in shambles and the air is filled with the stench of decaying bodies? What has replaced your conscience and soul, white middle-class America? A supermarket, with its soothing, piped in music? A discotheque with weary go-go dancers wreathed in synthetic smiles? A topless cafe, where the naked tits of bought girls hang over your martinis? In Vietnam the supermarkets are the garbage dumps of American army camps and the grim children of Saigon have been turned into pimps for their sisters and mothers. It used to

be said of the colonized countries that whisky preceded the bible, that dynamite paved the way for the cross. Those were idyllic days compared with the "blessings" you have conferred on southeast Asia today. You have the nerve to talk about "liberating" Vietnam, of "freeing" Saigon from Viet Cong infiltrators. You demoralized and crushed the soul of this Asian city long before your guns and bombs shattered its buildings and huts. In its shanty cheapness and florid vulgarity, in its blackmarket and brothels, in its corrupted, venial officials and sadistic police, in its garish neon lights and squalid, filthy streets, Saigon has become the authentic image of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, shorn of their myths, their false tints, their hypocritical claim to culture and civilization. You have not merely Americanized this city, white middle-class America; you have shown what America means, what America is. The only pure and clean thing in Saigon is the armed guerilla lurking behind a window. And that is who you want to drive out of the city — the guerilla whose very presence is a defiant protest against all your "blessings" and "contributions."

It's your hypocrisy that rankles the soul, white middle-class America, your stinking pretensions. One can deal with a "radical" rightist, an outspoken fascist openly and cleanly — in a state of mutual hate that evokes respect. But to listen to your demeaning claims to be "liberators," your pap about "negotiations," your queasy moralisms, or more horrifying than all, to suffocate in the atmosphere of your narrow egoism and indifference — this is what aches, what nauseates. "Law-and-order" America, divinely mediocre America, beauty parlor America, tv-soaked America — vapid like the face of a Nixon, phoney like the demeanor of a Johnson, philistine like the soul of a Norman Vincent Peale. And "liberal" America — prudent like the speech of a Eugene McCarthy, treacherous like the opportunism of a Kennedy, vulgar, dense, and self-righteous like the column of a Max Lerner.

Take care, white middle-class America — the war is coming home. Your youth -- the sweet concern of your baby doctors, your PTA meetings, your recreation directors -- may not permit themselves to be hypocritically sacrificed by the thousands to your computerized god of war. Your black house-cleaners and handy-men may set your mortgaged little boxes afire. Your stinking cities may burn in the flames of insurrection.

What will you do then, white middle-class America? Try to place your youth in concentration camps? Try to place your conscience behind barbed wire and prison turrets? Try to bomb your own cities? And in the name of "freedom" try to turn America itself into the graveyard of freedom, its sepulcher: a towering, white-enameled refrigerator topped by a grinning skull? Then learn this much from your escapades in Vietnam: what will lie in that cemetery will be the ruins of your own foul and oppressive "civilization".

Eighteen Rounds of Total Revolution

PROCESS

1.

The "poverty" against which man has been constantly struggling, is not merely the poverty of material goods; in fact, in industrially advanced countries "the disappearance of material poverty has merely revealed the poverty of existence itself" (I S). In cybernetic society it is the mediocrity of existence; the deprivation of a real intellectual, emotional, sexual or social life; the impoverishment of every dimension & every moment of man's existence that finally defines the contemporary meaning of the "poverty" of our lives.

The struggle against this condition must be total, because the poverty against which we are struggling is total: it is the repressive organization of life in its entirety depriving us of the opportunity to be fully human. The proof is on everyone's face, masking the minutia of everyday suffering: this intolerable situation, which is so much a habitual part of our lives that its very "intolerableness" has become one of the pre-conditions of our everyday routine. W/out it we would be left naked & empty to face our real selves. But he who can not change himself, can not change his environment, except to impose the particular form of his malady on the content of a sick whole (a Stalin, Hitler or Johnson). & when it is life in its entirety (literally the planet & species) that is degraded by an encompassing culture predicated on Death, then the only struggles which we can afford to call "revolutionary" are those which seek revolution in Totality: the creation of a new life in a new environment which we ourselves must construct.

2.

What was true yesterday is false today/ what was then a dream now has become the substance out of which we will construct our new life: for us utopia becomes the achievable demand of practicality: But ideological solutions to the problems of total revolution destroy the possibility for thorough-going change: they define

reality in only one set of terms, develop a "one-dimensional" point of view (to turn Marcuse's phrase), & by describing reality from a set point of view, in order to represent it as a consistent (non-contradictory) picture, they always sacrifice fidelity to the original. Reality is too complex, too mysterious for their verbal & mathematic equations and they are afraid to admit their ignorance. Ideology, whether it is economic (as marxism) or psychological (as freudianism), to mention just two, only reveals fragments of the totality in which man's complex life moves. Never the less ideology seeks to impose its notion of reality on life-itself: that is what it calls "revolution," that is the content of its program, its only tactic. But finally we have been forced to see that wherever the revolution of ideology appears to "succeed" it reveals that it is not revolutionary at all: it does not change the context or content of life. & every historical change, at best, has been radical reform: Jacobinism, Bolshevism, Maoism or Castro-ismo: all have re-organized men's lives in one or a few of their aspects, but they fear the transformation of life in its entirety — the an-archos (Gk.) where men dare to rule their own lives.

3.

For us this conflict between revolution & liberty has been ameliorated, not by anything we have done, but by the development of society itself. We live in an age not clearly envisioned by past thinkers: & for us it is necessary to learn to see anew, lest we remain equally blind to new dangers as well as new possibilities. We are the first generation that has the cybernetic solution to the problem of survival (abundance of food, clothing, shelter & luxuries) as the starting point of our social theories; & we must begin to find the forms of organization for existence & struggle which will allow us to realize this new order.

All of past revolutionary thought has been confined to the problems of dividing the surplus of labor & distributing the scarcity of goods & services. For them the best form of society seemed to be the kind of socialism which came up w/ the most rational answers to these questions. & because of this the ultimate goal of their practice (of tactics & strategy) was to seize power; grasping control of the decision making process (politics) in order to re-organize society according to ideology.

But the very basis of revolution has changed, & only the general consciousness lags behind: we have not dared to dream high enough, seeking only to grasp that which is immediately beyond our reach, & thus succumbing, even in our most sublime moments, to the limitations which have been imposed upon us from outside by those who manipulate our lives; those who once dared to call themselves our "Masters."

In our time the problem of social change can not be solved by seizing power & establishing socialism: for we have been forced to see that what is revolutionary about change is that in the struggle to throw off the power that suppresses them, people begin to take control of their own lives. & in our time all hierarchies of power (bureaucratic, elitist or statified) are negated, destroyed, superceded by the same machines that make manual labor obsolete: for given the end of industrialism & the beginning of cybernation, we can find an "automatic" solution to the problems of production & distribution; we can provide abundance for everyone — thereby ending management as well as government & making material privilege (& therefore class) into meaningless concepts. From this we can also conclude that socialism need no longer exist: it is the answer to a problem whose solution has been found on another level (in the new means of material production). & for the present the ultimate tactical question must be, not the seizure of power, but its dissolution! We must destroy all structures based on the authority of hierarchical power. Not to impose a new ideology on reality, to create another monolithic (USA USSR China) style culture, but to allow all men to follow the logic of their personal development, to implement the technology which will free men from labor, to liberate the unconscious from its repression, to re-introduce man & society into an ecological harmony w/nature & to re-establish community as the arena in which the lost content of real human social relations can once again flourish. Only in this way will we liberate ourselves from the 6,000 year poverty of our subjugated existence. & that is why we say:
REVOLUTION BEGINS WHEN PEOPLE TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR OWN LIVES.

FRAGMENTS

4.

All the movements for change which exist now are merely fragments of the total process of change: movements which only incompletely satisfy the needs that demanded their existence in the first place: forms that rarely aspire to fulfill life because (as Reich has pointed out) the possibility of actually being free has been so deeply repressed in them.

In every historical period the movements for change that arise must meet the conditions of their environment; must express the felt needs of those who aspire to organize their life anew. If they do not fulfill real needs they finally fail, as by definition. & if they begin to succeed it will only be because they take what is given in history & make of that a way to destroy the forms of the old & to create the new forms of which they have dreamed. & for this task they have at their disposal all the resources of nature, technology, culture & consciousness.

