The Promise of the ‘80s

John Zerzan

1980

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For many, the 1970s were—and the 1980s bid fair to continue—a kind of “midnight of the century,” an arrival at the point of complete demoralization and unrelieved sadness. What follows is one attempt to gauge the obviously unhappy landscape of capital’s American rule and see whether there indeed exists no prospect for the ending of our captivity.

To begin with the obvious, the public misery could hardly be less of a secret; the evidence is legion. The March 1979 *Ladies Home Journal* featured “Get a Good Night’s Sleep,” in which epidemic insomnia is discussed. *Psychology Today* for April ’79 is devoted to the spreading depression, asking rhetorically, “Is this the ‘Age of Depression?’” A month later, the UN’s International Labor Organization reported that “mental illness affects more human lives than any other disabling condition,” adding that the number of people suffering such disorders is “growing dramatically.”

In terms of the young, the may 17, 1979 *Wall Street Journal* described authority’s concern over the dimensions of teenage alcohol abuse and cited the raising of the legal drinking age in an increasing number of states. Matthew Wald’s “Alarm Over Teenage Drinking” echoed the point in the *New York Times* for August 16, 1979. *U.S. News and World Report* in the same week talked about drug use among the very young: “Increasingly, grade school pupils are being drawn into the ranks of narcotics users-often paying for their habits by taking part in crimes.” Robert Press, in the August 17, 1979 *Christian Science Monitor* bemoaned the general ineffectiveness of parents’ organizing efforts aimed at curtailing rising drug use. A two year study of Texas counties by Dr. Kenneth Nyberg published in September 1979, indicates a universality to this problem, namely that kids’ drinking and drug use among urban and rural areas is tending to occur at similarly high levels. Another noticeable aspect of the phenomenon was its reflection in the many dramas and “Afternoon Special”-type television programs on young alcoholics, during the winter of 1979–80.

Of course, these references by no means exhaust the ways by which youth show the pain of living through this world. Nor do the young all make it. Scott Spencer’s “Childhood’s End,” in May 1979 *Harper’s*, tells us that the rate of childhood suicide is increasing radically. The scope of Spencer’s concern is reflected in the subtitle: “A hopeless future inclines the young toward death.” Nor should we neglect to include a staggering social fact dealing with the other end of the age spectrum, before turning our survey toward the adult majority. Senility, according to several doctors interviewed in Newsweek for November 5, 1979, is affecting millions, at far earlier ages and in a recent upsurge that qualifies it as epidemic.

Pressure Against Humans More Intense

The mountain of tranquilizers consumed in the U.S. each day is not a new situation, but by the late '70s the pressures against humans became more intense and identifiable. In general, this may be characterized by the *Harvard Medical School Health Letter* of October 1979: "...the concept of stress-a term that has become the banner designation for our human condition..." 1978 saw an unprecedented appearance of full-page ads in national magazines for such products as "STRESSTABS, " a "High Potency Stress Formula Vitamin." In the first half of April 1979, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a four-part, front-page series on stress and its mounting, and seemingly inescapable toll on health and sanity. On May 1 ABC-TV's "World News Tonight" began a highly-advertised four-part series of their own, called "STRESS: Is it killing you?" The November 1979 *American Journal of Nursing's* cover story was Smith and Selye's "The Trauma of Stress and How to Combat It."

Quite naturally, stress and wage-labor emerges as a pressing topic just at this time. The first volume in a series of Studies in Occupational Stress appeared in 1978, Cooper and Payne's *Work and Stress*. Articles on the subject, too, seem to fairly burst forth in the literature of industrial relations from 1978 and continue without let-up, through *New Developments in Occupational Stress*, published by UCLA's Center for Quality of Working Life in early 1980. That work is becoming viscerally unbearable is an idea reflected in the popular press, as well as in academic writings. Marcia Kramer's "Assembly-line hysteria—a fact, not fiction" recorded the incidence of stress-releasing mass psychogenic illness often occurring in monotonous work scenes, in the May 31, 1979 Chicago Sun-Times. Nadine Brozan's "Stress at Work: The Effects on Health," surveyed changing values and reactions toward work in the *New York Times* of June 14, 1979. Another topical piece was seen in the July 13 *San Francisco Chronicle*, in which Joan Chatfield-Taylor's "Job Burnout" described its timely subject as "a profound and lasting dread of work...mental and physical depletion ranging from fatigue to full-fledged nervous breakdown."

In late February 1979 United Auto Workers Vice President Pat Greathouse told a Senate Subcommittee that occupational alcoholism alone may be draining the economy by $25 billion per year. He spoke of the widening use of drugs and alcohol, a growing menace to business and industry, which has motivated recovery programs being conducted jointly by union and management. "More Help for Emotionally Troubled Employees," (*Business Week*, March 12, 1979) and an August 13, 1979 *Wall Street Journal* article by Roger Ricklef which described the boom in all-inclusive counselling services being set up for firm's employees, are but two stories on the new measures needed to try to cope with the massive, physically-registered alienation.

It is clear that we not only feel a higher level of everyday unhappiness, but that what many social psychologists observe as a very high degree of supressed rage prevalent is surfacing in terms of conscious, disaffection with the social system. *U.S. News and World Report*, February 26, 1979, registered alarm in its "'The Doubting American': A Growing Breed." The article, like perhaps hundreds of others recently, noted the decline of "faith in leaders, institutions and the U.S. future," going on to state that "many Americans doubt the strength and even the validity of old values — and are skeptical about the quality of their lives..." A case in point was the public attitude concerning the spring 1979 disaster at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant; as the Manchester Guardian correctly assayed: "...in the countryside around Middletown, Pa., and in the country at large, people were overwhelmingly certain that the authorities were lying."

The May 1979 Gallup Opinion Index featured a poll measuring confidence in ten key institutions, and depicting a general decline from the already low degrees of trust these institutions attracted in 1973. Only one was the object of "A great deal of confidence" from more than 25% of the public, and the three most distrusted—organized labor, congress, and big business—could muster this rating from an average of only 12%. May 15 provided a specific example when the *Los Angeles Times* announced that the "Los Angeles Police Department has suffered a serious decline in public support..." according to their own *Times* poll. And May 21 unveiled a Gallup Poll which disclosed that "despite the best efforts of the Carter administration, energy experts and the oil companies," only 14% in the nation believed that a real gasoline shortage existed while 77% felt it to be artificial, contrived by the oil companies. The poll results had been finding their practical expression as well, as evidenced by the dismay voiced on March 11 by Energy Secretary Schlesinger: record levels of gas and oil consumption had been reached despite all the "energy crisis" appeals for restraint.

Coinciding with long lines at the gas pumps in 1979, *Time's* June 18 issue included "Hoarding Days" in which the incidence of hoarding other goods—and the likelihood of its increase in the '80s—is caused principally by public distrust of government and its statements. "A Summer of Discontent" by Walter Annenberg decried the American unwillingness to sacrifice; the essay appeared in the June 16, 1979 issue of *TV Guide* and was a full-page reprint in the *New York Times* of June 14. Donald Winks' "Speaking out-with a forked tongue" was an editorial in the July 2 Business Week, which reminded that "rising mistrust of big government" is matched by strong public mistrust of business. On July 3 President Carter's popularity was assessed by an ABC News-Harris Poll; his job performance rating was 73% negative, lower than Nixon received as he left office in disgrace, the lowest for a president since modern polling began. There followed the exhaustively reported mid-July '79 crisis of the Carter regime, including the Camp David "domestic summit" from which talk of the mounting tense of "malaise" abroad in the land issued. His nationally televised July 15 speech included the following on the "crisis of confidence": "It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation. The erosion of our confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and political fabric of America."

Most Feel Nation In Worse Shape

Allegedly, the source for much of Carter's remarks in this vein was an April 23 memo from his pollster Patrick Caddell, dealing with a growing cynicism and pessimism with society. As 1979 drew to a close the general outlook was not seen to have changed, though the Iran situation provided a temporary deflection. Edward A. Wynn, writing in the October 4 *Wall Street Journal* ("Why Do We Expect Too Much?"), carped that "utopian" expectations lead to cynicism and disengagement. Calling for disciplinary efforts, he warned that a social order does not regenerate itself if the young generation is not socialized. A New York Times/ CBS News Poll published November 12 found that two-thirds in the U.S. feel that the nation is in worse shape than it was five years ago, while holding on to the belief that their personal futures look reasonably good. Significantly, the young are most optimistic about their personal future. A survey by *U.S. News & World Report* for the week of November 12 reported extremely similar findings.

From late '78 through mid-'79, the conclusions of a major study by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan attracted much public attention. Primarily seen as a study of job satisfaction, "a marked and significant decline" in specific satisfactions was registered between responses of the 1977 workers and those queried in 1969 and 1973. The June 4, 1979 *Business Week* discussed the results of this third national SRC survey as "A warning that worker discontent is rising," a typical summation.

Coincidentally, however, the next day's June 5 *Wall Street Journal* noted a further interpretation of the poll data of even wider significance. It was reported that the survey's director, Graham Stines, had recently drawn attention to the "life satisfaction" responses, indicating that the dissatisfaction in this area (e.g. overall health, happiness) was even greater than in terms of job discontent, and that workers tended to see less separation between work and non-work desires for satisfaction. The appearance of Robert Ogger's *A Little White Lie: Institutional Division of Labor and Life* also suggests that life-and society-is a totality which should provide all-around fulfillment. That an authentic life is absent is more consciously obvious, as individuals demand more from all spheres of living.

Concerning work, a few examples should suffice to indicate the general range of disaffection. Wright and Hamilton's "Education and Job Attitudes Among Blue Collar Workers," in the February 1979 Sociology of Work and Occupations, demonstrated that "education and job satisfaction are not significantly related." In other words, contrary to stereotypes, it is not only the more highly educated who are discontented. Neither, apparently, do the "seniors"- fit the cliche image of docility, according to the 1979 publication by Action for Independent Maturity, entitled *How Do You Motivate the Older Worker?* Edward Harriion's "Discipline and the Professional Employee" from *The Personnel Administrator* for March '79 announced the increasing need of management to discipline professional workers, as opposed to the "rather rare" instances in the past. The March 26, 1979 U.S. News & World Report depicted labor's "Big Crusade of the '80s: More Rights for Workers," projecting the "mountain of complaints and litigation brought by workers against their bosses-court suits, grievances, arbitrations and charges brought to federal agencies." An April *Wall Street Journal* article on food-service jobs, "Burger Blues," reported extremely high turnover

and quoted a counter employee in Texas as to his loyalty to his bosses: "We have all learned how to successfully steal enough money…" Anxiety and resentment at AT&T, the nation's largest employer, was discussed in the May 28 and June 25 issues of *Business Week*. Similarly, *U.S. News & World Report* for July 30 and September 3, 1979 features articles which further elucidate the decline of the work ethic. In "Why 'Success' Isn't What It Used to Be" (July 30), it is counseled that "employers will have to re-examine the traditional techniques for managing and motivating workers because people have a different way of looking at life." The September 3 "New Breed of Workers" was a cover story in which the cardinal adjectives were "restless" and "demanding."

Booming Employee Theft

Moving from the general to more specific cases on the "anti-work" front, consider the role of the lie-detector in industrial relations. The Federationist (AFL-CIO) discussed the fact of hundreds of thousands of psychological screenings and polygraph examinations using an increasing variety of devices, in its January '79 "The Intimidation of Job Tests." The piece cited the claim of Dr. Alan Strand, industrial psychologist and president of Chicago's Personnel Security Corporation, that 100% of drug store employees steal with 80% stealing "significantly." Benson and Krois' "The Polygraph in Employment: Some Unresolved Issues," Personnel Journal, September '79, also examined this new development. Booming employee theft and falsified job applications has drastically increased lie detector usage, calling for some controls or standards, in their view. In the same month, the *Washington Post's* John A. Jenkins discussed the controversial voice stress analyzers, wireless lie detectors used more and more by businesses "concerned about the honesty of their employees."

In Lawrence Stressin's "Employees Don't Take Anti-Theft Moves Lightly" (*New York Times*, March 4, 1979), resistance based largely on right-to-privacy grounds is seen, with the larger point that greater surveillance of workers has done little to stem "inventory drain." The April 16 *Forbes* cover story "The Game Where Everybody Loses But Nobody Gains," by Richard Phalon, finds big business bewailing the staggering figures involved: theft has surpassed the $40 billion a year mark, increasing at a compound rate of 15% annually. More rational than its title, the article goes on to credit the Department of Commerce with the observation that "Businessmen mistakenly assume that most inventory losses are caused by shoplifters when actually employees account for the major portion of inventory shrinkages." Commenting on the "horrendous" statistics involved, the piece notes also that "the security industry…is now grossing $23 billion a year." This last datum is clearly reflected in the full-page and even two-page ads by such firms as GTE ("Industrial Security") and INA Corporation ("Coping with White Collar Crime") appearing in business periodicals from mid-1979 on.

While the technical ingenuity of "computer criminals" is often mildly surprising to us, what is a real jolt to business is the great diversity of people robbing them. Associated Press writer Charles Chamberlain's "'Spy TV' Turns Up Surprises in Watching Industrial Plants" (June 24, 1979) how widespread was the vandalism, theft, and non-work discovered by new laser beam television surveillance systems. A July 23, 1979 *U.S. News & World Report* interview with Prof. W.S. Albrecht, "expert on employee crime," was revealingly entitled "Surprising Profile of the White Collar Crook;" "the typical offender turns out to be someone just like the normal citizen…"

Decline in the Work Ethic

Another aspect of the anti-work trend is the most obvious one: the current and emerging ways by which the "labor force" breaks away from work as much as possible. Late January 1979 provided a most extreme case of rage in the person of Chicago snowplow driver Thomas Blair. After smashing some forty cars, killing one person, Blair was arrested screaming "I hate my job! I want to see my kids!" On a more widespread level are the findings of Caroline Bird's *The Two-Pay Check Marriage*, that men are losing their ambition and seek jobs which allow them more time with their families. Although inflation has forced a situation in which there are now more couples in which both parties work than those in which the woman stays home, Bird has observed "a definite decline in the work ethic, with men coming in late or telling the boss to go to hell if they don't like what is happening or even quitting." Another

book in 1979 takes this theme further; *Breaktime: Living Without Work in a Nine to Five World*, by Bernard Lefkowitz, saw "average people" dropping out in protest "against a work culture whose values they no longer trust." Breaktime described the phenomenon as constituting a "quiet revolution taking place in the mainstream of-American culture."

"Time Wasting at Work," in the March 5, 1979 *U.S. News & World Report* is representative of the recent outpouring of attention on "time theft." In mid-April, Robert Half of the placement service Philadelphia Inc. reported that the deliberate misuse and waste of on-the-job time was costing the economy $80 billion a year.

A further facet of work avoidance is the growth of part-time employment. Barney Olmsted's "Job Sharing: an emerging workstyle" (*International Labour Review*, May-June '79) explored the "innovative U.S. work pattern" of two people splitting one full-time job. In the same issue of the ILR, Olive Robinson found that the number and proportion of part-time workers in Europe has been rising for twenty years. "Big Market for Part-Time Help" by Lloyd Watson (*San Francisco Chronicle*, October 25, 1979) points up the same tendency in the U.S. What gives added significance to this trend can be grasped in studies like Miller and Terborg's "Job attitudes and Full-Time Employees" (Journal of *Applied Psychology*, Fall '79), which found that "Part-time employees were less satisfied with work, benefits, and the job in general."

The plight of the mass occupation of secretary is a reminder that antipathy to work has its more specific targets. "Help Wanted: a shortage of secretaries" (*Time*, September 3, 1979) took note of national aversion to the job, this severe under-supply despite a 6% unemployment rate and the most openings for secretarial positions of all the 300 Department of Labor classifications. The 20th Century Fox movie "Nine to Five," which appeared in early 1980, reinforced the image of such corporate work as degrading and empty.

The four-day week, touted in the mid-'70s, produced no improvement in worker attitude or performance, beyond a sometimes-seen initial welcome. Talk of the three-day week, logically or illogically, has emerged from this failure. It is the scheduling of work time that has, most recently, occupied perhaps greater attention in management's hopes to quell the anti-work syndrome. "Flextime," or the choosing by employees of which hours in the day they will devote to wage-labor, has not, however, achieved results much dissimilar to working fewer days in the week. Similarly, it leads to an extension of its basic idea-in this case, to that of "flex-life"! "Live Now, Work Later"—though it may sound like a parody-was the quite serious article appearing in the *Financial Times* of London, early October '79. The idea of flex-time, already introduced in many firms, is simply extended to offer "the same kind of flexibility" to the entire work-life's scheduling. Worker disaffection is likewise behind this concept's appearance, introduced by no less a figure than Francis Blanchard, director general of the International Labour Organization.

Low Election Turnouts

Work, to which we will return at length further on, is of course only part of the arena of public disenchantment and withdrawal. The steady decline of voting, as discussed in books like E.C. Ladd's *Where Have All the Voters Gone?* (1978) and Arthur Hadley's *The Empty Polling Booth* (1979), is bringing popular support of government to lower and lower levels. Nor, by the way, does this phenomenon seem confined to the U.S.; the June and-October 1979 elections in Italy and Japan, respectively, attracted the lowest turnouts since World War II.

And the participation of the young is the strongest portent for the future of the electoral diversion. Only 48% of the newly-enfranchised 18 to 20-year-olds voted in 1972, 38% in 1976, and 20% in 1978. Fall '79 saw the inauguration of new efforts by national groups to reverse this downward spiral, including that of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. A United Press International story of October 23 reported that registration is "down throughout the country for all voters, but most notably for those 18 to 20," and described attempts to register high school seniors in the schools plus provide a new "voting education curriculum." Time September 3 had also remarked on the steady decline of young voters and the consequent registration drives in high schools, as typified by the new state laws deputizing school principals and teachers as registrars. Nonetheless, November '79 elections produced, in many places, such as San Francisco, the lowest turnouts in their histories. As T.W. Madron put\it in the December '79 *Futurist*, the downward trend threatens "the entire American political system."

Without its re-creation by the citizenry, the modern political network indeed collapses. When Ralph Nader urges that voting be made mandatory, he is recognizing this essential need for participation. Bernard-Henri Levy, in his *Barbarism with a Human Face*, fleshes out this point a bit further: "There can be no successful dictatorship without the establishment of procedures through which people are invited or forced to speak."

The great socializer, education, is also beset by an advancing resistance, which exhibits both passive and active forms without precedent in their magnitude. Avoidance of school is seen, for instance, by a January '79 Oakland, California School District report, which discussed "the growing number of truants" and the various costs of such "unexcused absences." The May '79 Educational Press Association convention heard school officials term the 25% high school dropout rate "a national disgrace." The Lall's "School Phobia: It's Real and Growing," in which children experience panic and often severe physical symptoms in growing numbers (*Instructor*, September 1979), is another example of passive resistance to school on an important level.

School Test Scores Dropping

This withdrawal, no matter what form it takes, is obviously a major cause of the continually declining academic test scores. The pre-college Scholastic Aptitude Test, which measures high-schoolers' verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities, showed lowered scores for the tenth year in a row it was announced on September 8. The average scores for the million high school seniors taking the SAT in 1979 are thus part of the downward current that began in 1969. The National Assessment of Educational Progress, a non-profit organization which monitors students' achievements in math and science, reported '79 declines comparable to those of the SAT scores. The July 3 *U.S. News & World Report*, in its "Science Skills Skidding in U.S. Schools," and "Problems!: Math skills are down again," in the September 24 *Time* registered these diminishing levels.

Carl Tupperman's *The Literary Hoax*, dealing with "the decline of reading, writing, and learning," suggests an even more widespread tendency of aversion from society's "knowledge." With Hunter and Harman's "Adult Illiteracy in the United States: A Report to the Ford Foundation," this turning away becomes more obvious. Made public in September '79, the two-year study states that reading and writing problems are increasing, with as many as 64 Million adult illiterates; "distrust of the institutions of the mainstream culture" is advanced as a key factor in this "American dilemma."

And within the educational system there are the most active forms of rebellion paralleling the quieter "crisis in our schools." A brief chronological sample will have to take the place of an easily voluminous catalog of student mayhem and teacher retreat.

Early in '79 two 11-year-old schoolboys in Marianna, Florida, armed with a gun and a knife tried to take over their classroom but were forced out, police reported. On April 6 two Stafford, Connecticut High School students were arrested for bombing a chemistry lab, which caused $100,000 damage. On April 24 four Isleton, California Elementary School children laced a teacher's coffee with poison; aged 12 and 13, they were later convicted in juvenile court of attempted murder and conspiracy to commit murder. The May 21 *U.S. News & World Report* reported that "Now It's Suburbs Where School Violence Flares: From ice picks to explosives, a frightening array of weapons are contributing to disorder in the classroom-especially in areas once relatively untroubled." Also in May, the third arson incident within a month occured in California's San Juan Unified School District, which brought the school year's arson losses to over $1 million. The school districts centering around Sacramento and San Jose are among other California areas-largely suburban-also registering extremely high arson and vandalism damages.

In June '79 a San Diego Teachers Association "violence inventory" was completed, showing increasing student violence; nearly one-fourth of San Diego teachers had been physically attacked by students during the '78-'79 school year. R.M. Kidder's "Where Have All the Teachers Gone?," in the July 19 *Christian Science Monitor* discussed the growing flight from the field, owing largely to resistant students. Education periodicals feature articles like Lee Cauter's "Discipline: You Can Do It!" and "Lessons in Anti-vandalism," both in the *Instructor*, September '79.

Meanwhile, even the most mass-circulation "entertainment" magazines are forced to devote space to the crisis. *People*, September 10, 1979 interviewed Willard McGuire, president of the National Education Association, in a piece entitled "Classroom Violence and Public Apathy: Why Teachers Are Quitting in Droves." McGuire talked about the

"growing malady of 'teacher burnout,'" a problem he believes "threatens to reach hurricane force if it isn't checked soon." McGuire's NEA had met earlier in the summer of '79 and had included one teacher, Emmit Williams, who understands rather well the meaning of "teacher burnout;" his home was burned by one of his students. Phyllis Burch, a teacher with 16 years experience in four states, essayed in the October 10 *San Francisco Examiner* that the foremost change in the schools since the mid-'60s has been "the mushrooming problems of violence, vandalism, and drugs in the classroom." Put more mildly, "A survey by the American Federation of Teachers indicates disruptive students are the main cause of stress experienced by teachers" reported the November 20, 1979 *Wall Street Journal*. It is not a big surprise, then, to find Neil Postman, author of *Teaching As A Subversive Activity* in 1969, to have written *Teaching as a Conserving Activity* in 1979—or to find his "Order in the Classroom!" in the September '79 *Atlantic*.

Work, political participation, education all seem to be failing grandly as pillars of our society, especially perhaps in their roles as domestication of the young. It is not surprising that newer, less subtle devices must be projected to come to the rescue of a rotting social order.

Such a program was unveiled in Mid-February '79, with the Committee for the Study of National Service's report titled, "Youth and the Needs of the Nation." It declared that universal service for American youth is needed to curb "a cynicism and selfishness that can destroy society." "Too many…are drifting without purpose, and their apathy or self-centeredness is seldom cured by schooling," it added.

Actually, of course, this is a return to the draft, with the option of civilian duty in slums, parks and the like. Aside from its hoped-for results in terms of a national socializing force, it is also abundantly clear that the volunteer army, instituted in 1973, has been "a disaster verging on a scandal," according to Congressman Robin Beard in November '79.

The Economist, March 10, 1979, spoke of "severe problems of discipline" with the voluntary service, the immediate backdrop for talk of reviving conscription. AWOL (absent without leave), training, and attrition are major problem areas, with turnover very high in combat units and a third of all soldiers never finishing their first term of enlistment. Pentagon sources have increasingly been calling the overall status of the volunteer Army "hopeless;" allegedly, only a few elite units have any semblance of morale or dedication to national defense.

Beginning in May '79 a recruiting scandal spread, involving the enlisting of thousands of unqualified recruits; hundreds of Army recruiters have been relieved of duty for their illegal efforts at shoring up a growing shortage of volunteers. In mid-September the Army announced it would take enlistees with less than a tenth-grade education due to manpower deficiencies. Educational bonuses of up to $6,000 were announced November 29, 1979 in a bid to attract qualified bodies in the face of the shortage.

A further perspective on G.I. attitudes was offered in the July '79 *American Journal of Sociology*, also a reminder of the point noted above on the blurring of work and non-work areas of life. Segal, Lynch, and Blair's contribution to the AJS, "The Changing American Soldier: Work-related Attitudes of U.S. Army Personnel in World War II and the 1970s," observed a comparable level of dissatisfaction between WW AWOLs and typical soldiers in the all volunteer force. Within the '70s job satisfaction was seen to fall even more between February 1974 and the end-point of their data, August 1977. Aside from a suggested decline in military values between the 1940s and the '70s, it must also be recognized that there has been a "secular decline in job satisfaction in American society generally." Seth Cropsey's article in December '79 *Harper's* laments the severe shortage of volunteer troops, and makes a similar connection between the condition of the services and a larger trend in society: namely, that there exists a strong anti-military, anti-draft sentiment which show no signs of changing.

Anti-Military Hostility Increasing

A more vivid illustration of anti-military hostility could be seen from within the Navy. Blaine Harden, writing for the *Washington Post* in late June '79 chronicled the many fires aboard the carrier John F. Kennedy, believed to have been set by disgruntled sailors. In July, Naval officials announced that the period April-July '79 contained twice as many suspicious fires aboard Atlantic Fleet ships as there had been during all of 1977 and 1978 on both Atlantic and Pacific vessels. At the beginning of November the Los Angeles Times' Robert Toth noted the almost $5 million fire damage to ships during 1979, postulating "deeper morale problems" involved.

Leaving the subject of national service and the desperately-ailing military, the above cases of arson bring to mind that it is the nation's fastest growing crime, up "900% over a 16-year period," according to San Francisco Fire Chief Andrew Casper in September '79. August 31 had seen a $20 million apartment complex in Houston, the worst fire in the city's recent history. And less than a week later, an 18-year-old was arrested for starting a 5,000 acre fire in California's Los Padres National Forest.

Sabotage, too, seems to be providing spectacular and unprecedented examples of anti-society urges, and not only in the U.S. The St. Catharine's *Standard* of December 9, 1978 carried, complete with photo, "Man Drives Truck Through Stores in Shopping Plaza." The story recounted the systematic destruction wreaked by a man who drove an armored truck through 35 stores in the Montreal area's Carrefour St. George, costing nearly $2 million. Crestview, Florida was the scene of a derailment on April 19, 1979 of two dozen cars on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad; sabotage was strongly suspected due to track damage caused by rifle bullets. On June 2, 1979 Los Angeles County Museum of Art officials said that eight paintings, including two by Picasso, had been slashed by someone using a metal object. A bulldozer smashed five cars in the parking lot of a Houston plastics firm June 13; the driver, finally halted by a collision with a railroad boxcar, had been recently fired from his job. Southern Pacific Railroad investigators announced on October 8, 1979 that saboteurs had derailed a 101-car freight train the day before near Santa Barbara; a barricade of lumber and concrete caused the crash, which closed the main rail line between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Mountains of Trash in NYC

If 1978 was a time when much national attention was given the fiscal survival chances of New York City as a public corporation, 1979 could perhaps be commemorated as the year in which its hope to survive as a coherent social entity became an open question. As the highest point of American urbanism, it deserves at least the following few, random readings from the front pages of the *New York Times*. March saw NYT stories covering the alarming jump in subway crime and the consequent decision to station police on every nighttime train. March 15 disclosed that "New York's Illegal Garbage Dumping Gets Worse," as some roads in the Bronx and Brooklyn are "completely blocked" by mountains of unauthorized trash. "Graveyard Vandalism Continues," was another featured March topic. In May the *Times* front page for the 7th featured, "Vandals Ruin $80,000 Sculpture Outside a Madison Ave. Gallery." On the 10th Mayor Koch, in a "public safety" move eliciting mostly laughter from New Yorkers, was announced to have banned the drinking of alcohol in public places, such as street corners. T he next day found a woman reportedly attacked by rats near NY's City Hall; officials closed off the area to battle the rodents. May 21, 1979 disclosed the high monetary and psychological cost of vandalism; it had already reached a dollar price-tag of 8 million by the end of 1978, to the Education and Parks Departments alone.

"Tens of Thousands of Derelicts Jam New York's Criminal Courts" appeared on the June 7 front page, within days of news stories on the description of drug abuse in City schools as "critical" by a congressional investigating committee. Narcotics Abuse Committee Chairman Lester Wolff said the New York problem "reflects the state of affairs in all major metropolitan and suburban areas throughout the nation."

Turning to the subject of contemporary forms of violence in society at large, we encounter the "sniper." Lately it almost seems that every newscast includes a story on someone who has "flipped out" into a posture of lethal behavior, such as a man firing away from inside his barricaded apartment. A well-known case was that of Brenda Spencer, 16, who surrendered to police after shooting at an elementary school across the street from her San Diego home, killing its principal and custodian and wounding nine students; "I hate Mondays," she offered following the January 29, 1979 attack. In late April, a 64-year-old man opened fire on a group of seven police, wounding six of them and then killing two women and injuring more than 30 others who were present watching a San Antonio parade. A 30-year-old social worker shot and killed two FBI agents in their El Centro, California office on August 9, 1979 and then killed himself.

As unreasoned as these suicidal acts may be, they are clearly a part of the syndrome of (often ill-defined) anger at authority, discussed throughout this essay. Marilyn Elias, in her June 1979 essay "Freelance Terrorists," lends

a judgement that applies: "People seem willing to resort to drastic acts in an era marked by ebbing faith in such institutions as the family, the church, our economic system and the government."

Despite an everyday reality that enforces the surface calm of isolation and entropy, acts of collective as well as individual violence mount. Outbursts shatter the facade and contain mixed elements in their released rage; the '80s will, for a time, most likely bear this varied imprint as seen in a scan of some of 1979's group violence.

A Wichita rock concert "just broke into warfare," said a radio station director, when police shut off the power at the April 15 event. Hundreds of police firing shotguns and teargas required three hours to quell the riot, which saw squad cars destroyed by tire irons and four officers injured. San Francisco's "Dan White Riot" of May 21 caused over $1 million in damage to Civic Center buildings and looted stores and banks. A largely gay crowd of 5,000 also injured 60 police and burned 13 squad cars in an all-night explosion which laid siege to City Hall; begun as a protest against the extremely lenient legal treatment of a reactionary County Supervisor who had murdered a gay Supervisor and the mayor, the riot included many other elements and quickly transcended concern with legality or politicians. On the same night, a crowd of 1500 attacked firemen and police with rocks and bottles at the scene of a million-dollar factory fire in Redwood City, 25 miles south of the San Francisco outbreak. Also at the same time, end-of-semester vandalism at the University of Connecticut left smashed furniture and burning debris across the campus, in a rampage apparently caused by nothing so much as boredom.

Two days of rioting occurred in the famous Philadelphia suburb of Levittown-a name once synonymous with suburban conformity and tranquillity-in late June, involving 3,000 people and 200 arrests. Truckers blockaded the area and joined teenagers and motorists in burning gas pumps and vehicles, throwing objects, including molotov cocktails at police, and demanding more and cheaper fuel.

'79—A Summer of Violence

Four further examples from summer '79 demonstrate continuing non-individual violence in an array of forms. The Chicago White Sox annual teen half-price night, July 11, was billed as "Disco Demolition Night," but the anti-disco theme proved the excuse for 7,000 rioters to overrun and destroy the playing field. Red Lake Indian Reservation experienced two nights of arson and gunfire, including a three-hour firefight between Indians and federal police; on July 21 and 22. One man was shot to death during a July 27 rock concert in Cleveland which was marked by vandalism and rock and bottle throwing at police. An August UPI newswire from Slatington, Pennsylvania points out that even hamlets are not immune; it read: "The mayor of this tiny Lehigh County community Saturday declared a state of emergency and imposed a midnight-6 a.m. curfew in an attempt to break up street corner crowds Mayor David Altrichter said the groups were at times, 'urinating and defecating on Main Street!'" Curfew was also imposed on the central Connecticut city of Meriden on September 6, 1979 following a teen-age gang's rock-throwing attack on a police station. Mayor Walter Evilia said the assault came from "Hispanics, blacks and whites" living in and around a downtown housing project; "It's going to get like New York City soon," he told a reporter.

Dozens of melees could be cited involving people vs. police, but it is also true that a brutalized population is quite capable of brutalizing itself, as with gang violence or the tragic storming of a Cincinatti rock concert entrance on December 3, 1979 which resulted in 11 youths trampled to death. With both its liberatory and its backward aspects, however, we do appear to be embarking on the '80s in an increasing current of discomfort with passive spectatorship. Steve Jenkins, in his mid-April '79 *Newsday* piece "The Growing Spectre of Fan Violence in Sports," points to the mounting fragility of all types of sports spectacles, for example. Almost any large gathering seems vulnerable, as if physical closeness reminds us, bitterly, how far away real community is in this buy-and-sell existence.

Turning to specifics of the less graphic, everyday plane of the job, an unchecked tendency to stay away from it as much as possible is seen. *U.S. News & World Report* for July 3, 1978, in its "World Business" column, observed that in the United Kingdom, bonuses are offered for coming to work in an effort to check rising absenteeism; "Missing workers are an old problem, but it's getting worse." Allen and Higgins' "The Absenteeism Culture," in the January-February '79 Personnel, typify a flood of interest in the subject by specialists. Similar was the March 14, 1979 *Wall Street Journal* article by James Robins, "Firms Try Newer Way to Slash Absenteeism As Carrot and Stick Fail: All Cures Seem Temporary." And the 1979-'82 United Auto Workers contract increased the number of "paid per-

sonal holidays" to 26 from 12 provided under the previous covenant, bowing to auto workers' refusal to maintain attendance. Concerning the phenomenon in Canada, the November 13, 1979 Wall Street Journal noted Manpower, Incorporated's report of absenteeism's $8 billion per year price-tag there, plus the "growing tendency for workers to take a day off just because they don't feel like working"; their perspicacious psychologists opined that "frequent absentees may be trying to withdraw from life's tensions.

The frequency of people quitting their jobs is a related, and growing, matter. Characteristically, this is seen in the literature: Farrell Bloch's "Labor Turnover in U.S. Manufacturing Industries" (*Journal of Human Resources*, Spring '79), H. Kent Baker's "The Turnover Trap" (*Supervisory Management*, June '79), and Robert Kushell's "How to Reduce Turnover" (*Personnel Journal*, August '79) for example. At the end of April '79 the Labor Department disclosed that job tenure of American workers decreased to an average of 3.6 years per job in 1978 from 3.9 years in 1973, with the tenure apparently shrinking at an accelerating rate. The October 10, 1979 *Wall Street Journal* announced an Administrative Management Society survey which observed that turnover among office employees averaged 20% in 1978, up from 14% in 1976.

In an early November '79 Princeton Features piece, "Revolution in the Workplace," Carper and Naisbett declared that "a growing demand for more satisfaction from life" has brought dissatisfaction with work to the point where "workers refuse to produce and even deliberately sabotage the products they make." This point may be highlighted by a few of the more sensational acts of employee sabotage, such as the November '78 damage to three of the world's largest electrical generators at Grand Coulee Dam in Washington state. In what investigators called "an inside job," 19 of the generator's coils had been broken with a crowbar resulting in "millions of dollars" of damage. On February 15 1979 a strike by mutuel clerks at New York's Aqueduct Race Track got out of control and all 550 mutuel betting machines were put out of action by sabotage. On May 7, 1979 it was discovered that lye had been poured into 62 uranium fuel elements at the Surrey nuclear plant in Richmond, Virginia; two employees were later arrested and convicted for the act. During September 21 and 22 of the same year, 4,000 Chrysler workers, anticipating a two-week shutdown of their factory, ripped the vinyl tops of the new cars, broke windows, tore out dashboard wiring and started small fires throughout the plant.

Unlike the general charade/catharsis nature of strikes-though it may be noted that strikes appear to be more often taking illegal and violent forms—workers obviously are opposing work in a thousand ways, from purely visceral reactions against it, to the most calculated attacks. This opposition registers itself most fundamentally in terms of productivity, or output-per-hour-worked.

The history of modern civilization is, in an important sense, a story of the steady growth of productivity. Unbroken for centuries, the foundation of industrial capitalism, rising productivity has now gone the way of the work ethic. And for the same reason: the falseness of trading away one's life in order to purchase things is a transparently barren death-trip.

1974 saw this reversal surfacing really for the first time, as that recession year's overall output-per-hour showed a gain of virtually zero. Since then, those who have attempted to manage the fate of the capital relationship have witnessed brief periods of small productivity gains being outnumbered by those of often substantial decreases. The Bureau of Labor Statistics announced a .3% productivity rise for private business in 1978, a tiny advance clearly reversed in 1979.

U.S. Worker Productivity Dropping

"Sharp Drop in Worker Productivity" read the May 30, 1979 Associated Press release, in which Labor Department analysis of first quarter figures showed "the steepest decline since 1974." A July 31 *Washington Post* story announced that "productivity of U.S. businesses fell more rapidly in the second quarter (of 1979) than it has since the government began keeping records in 1947." AP for November 29 proclaimed "Productivity in U.S. Still Declining," explaining that the third quarter drop was the first time since 1974 that three consecutive quarters had shown declines.

The overall trend has engendered countless articles, as society's defenders look desperately for solutions and the future of worker "efficiency" seems ever dimmer.- February 5, 1979's *Time* featured "Perils of the Productivity Sag,"

while the March issue of *The Office* began to look at Northrup's plant design, "The continuing decline in productivity is considered a major problem in this country…" Campbell McConnell's "Why is U.S. Productivity Slowing Down?" discussed the "unsatisfactory gap between output and hours worked," in the April-May *Harvard Business Review*; the May-June *HBR* carried "Productivity-the Problem Behind the Headlines" by Burton Malhiel. Industry Week of May 14 spoke of "a new emphasis on office productivity" in its "Removing the Cages from the Corporate Zoo."

Meanwhile, unions and the left publicly exhibited their delusions, if not callousness, on the subject. Befitting their roles as champions of "honest toil" and the "good worker," the entire crisis is denied by them! The May '79 AFL-CIO Federationist and the June '79 *Monthly Review*, in "Bringing Productivity into Focus" and "Productivity Slowdown: A False Alarm," respectively, dispute the facts of diminishing work output and ignore the individual's primacy in productivity.

Returning to reality, Lawrence Baytos offered "Nine Strategies for Productivity" in the July '79 *Personnel Journal*, John Niler wrote of "Diagnosing and Treating the Symptoms of Low Productivity" in August's *Supervisory Management*, and the August 7 *Wall Street Journal* front-paged "White Collar Workers Start to Get Attention in Productivity Studies: Employees Resistant."

On June 4 and September 10, 1979 *Time* editorialized on the plight of America, in "The Weakness that Starts at Home" and "The Fascination of Decadence." Considering the mass circulation involved, we glimpse here the growing awareness of how critical the changing work posture is. The June essay deals with "a damaging slackness…in U.S. society at large" and locates a key part of the problem in "the state of American productivity, which after several years of declining growth has in recent months actually dipped below zero progress." September's opinion piece declared that "the work ethic is nearly as dead as the Weimar Republic," citing "the last business quarter's alarming 3.8% decline in productivity" as a symptom of decadence. It is a certainty that the '80s will see even more on capital's productivity dilemma, inasmuch as it cannot be "solved" without the destruction of that wage-labor/commodity relationship which is capitalism. *Business Week* of October 1, 1979, fretted over "Why It Won't Be Easy to Boost Productivity," and in mid-October Theodore Barry & Associates management consultants-reported their findings that the average worker is productive during only 55% of working hours. James Fields, of the Barry firm, said this compares with 80 to 85% spent productively working around the turn of the century; "the implications of that are staggering," declared Fields. The "team concept" of work improvement received a most negative judgement by Latane, Williams, and Harkins' "Social Loafing." The November '79 *Psychology Today* article concluded that output-per-hour actually declines in groups. And so, on into the new decade.

The proliferation of organizations like the American Productivity Center and Human Productivity Institute shows the demand by business for help. Similarly, Sylvia Porter's column, "'Hot' Careers of the 1980s" lists the top two fields as "management information systems" and "human resources" in which improving productivity is the "fundamental challenge" of each.

Even Managers Restive

Corporate management has recently been forced toward a restructuring, as restive workers create more difficulties for their bosses. *Personnel Journal*, February '79 indicates this in Lawrence Wangler's "The Intensification of the Personnel Role: The personnel executive of the 1980s, with increased responsibilities and new challenges, will be viewed as a key decision maker (and part-time magician)." This major expansion is also seen in "Personnel Widens its Franchise," which appeared in the February 26, 1979 *Business Week*. *Personnel Journal* for March reported a "new era" in federal industrial relations, due to revised laws and organization which put personnel administration on a par with financial management; publicized in Julius Draznin's "Labor Relations" column, this development was another spur to the private sector in this area. Donald Klingner's "Changing Role of Personnel Management in the 1980s" (*The Personnel Administrator*, September '79) pointed out that a fundamental change in the nature of the profession must follow the major shift of values underway at large. In mid-October Information Science, Inc. disclosed that a survey of 2,000 executives showed almost twice as many of them devoting from five to 20 hours a week to personnel matters as was the case five years ago; the respondents also indicated that pay for personnel execs has risen significantly.

Of personnel chiefs surveyed at a November '79 meeting of the American Society for Personnel Administration, 85% felt unions will have increased difficulty controlling their members during the '80s according to the November 20 *Wall Street Journal*. It is this sense of union infirmity which is bringing on the great bolstering of personnel departments, and, more importantly, pushing increased union-management collaboration.

Whether or not unionism is seen as weakening, its vital, disciplinary role is unquestioned by America's corporate leadership. The appreciation of this role is exemplified by a May 21, 1979 *Fortune* article by Lee Smith, entitled "The UAW Has Its Own Management Problem." It focuses mainly on the auto companies' worries about the top Auto Workers' officials who will be replaced by the end of 1983: "What the companies dread is a power vacuum created by a weak, inexperienced, and indecisive leadership." Noting "sullenness," a shift of values, and general distrust of institutions among the workers, a strong union is prescribed as the best defense against "chaos." Manufacturers "want to know whether or not the UAW leadership can deliver a manageable-labor force," inasmuch as "a fundamental problem not just for the UAW but for most unions in this epoch has been the increasing disaffection of the rank and file and, with that, an erosion of discipline."

In the September/October '79 *Harvard Business Review's* "Are Unions An Anachronism?" UAW and Communication Workers of America co-management: programs with General Motors and AT&T, respectively, were adduced as joint efforts to effectively control the workplace that succeeded where neither party alone could have. The piece speaks of "the new discontents" creating the "post-industrial workplace problems" which have been growing "for over a decade," and concludes that authority must be shared in order to motivate "this kind of employee to produce."

Shared responsibility is the urgently needed cure for a "growing sense of social entitlement" which threatens to destroy wage-labor and society with it, according to James o'Toole's "Dystopia: The Irresponsible Society" in October '79's *Management Review*. Similar was R.M. Kanter's fear of an "authority vacuum" and his prescription, "to expand power, share it," in the *Harvard Business Review* for July/August '79 ("Power Failure in Management Circuits").

Management and unions have been advancing toward greater institutionalized collaboration, whereby. joint management programs-labeled "worker participation," "job enrichment," "quality of work life" project-aim at increased worker motivation. Business periodicals see the need for strong union partnerships in these developing set-ups, just as they have, for example, bemoaned the "anarchy" in the coalfields produced by a weak United Mine Workers Union, or applauded the United Steelworkers' partnerships with steel companies in pursuit of higher productivity.

Workers seem generally distrustful or cynical about such programs, like the major UAW-GM one at Tarrytown, New York, or the UAW-Harman International program in Bolivar, Tennessee which dates from 1973 and is discussed in an early 1980 University of Michigan study by Macy, Ledford, and Lawler. But unionists show a greater enthusiasm, as evidenced by Ponak and Fraser's finding of strong support for union-management cooperation in a study of middle-level union officials, entitled "Union Activists' Support for Joint Programs" (*Industrial Relations*, Spring '79).

The highest levels of power also see clearly the stakes involved, the need for new forms to contain the individual. In 1979 the Trilateral Commission published Roberts, Okamoto, and Lodge's *Collective Bargaining and Employee Participation in Western Europe, North America, and Japan, a Task Force Report to the Commission*. Its summary called for labor-management cooperation, lest "the marvels of modern technology and raised expectations lead to disaster." The reason for capital's embrace of the joint approach movement and workers' distrust (as shown by unchanged "performance" figures) is the same, of course. The September 4, 1979 Wall Street Journal quoted University of Michigan researchers that "the most common response that this country's labor unions make to the introduction of new technology is willing acceptance." This quote, from the "Labor Letter" of the WSJ certainly provides some of the reason for the opposition of interests felt by rulers and ruled in the unions.

The union-management committees and the other forms of "quality of work life" co-determination seem "on the brink of important growth in the U.S.," according to *Business Week*, September 17, 1979, which noted that representatives of 32 unions attended a Spring '79 American Productivity Center meeting aimed at such programs. The biggest top-level change, billed "a major breakthrough in U.S. labor history," was the UAW trade-off of $500 million in contract concessions for a seat on Chrysler's board of directors. Agreed to in October '79 and consecrated by the federal government in December, UAW president Douglas Fraser will obtain the directorship in May 1980, prompt-

ing such editorials as "Are Unions Knocking at Boardroom Doors?" (*Industry Week*, November 12, 1979). The move also sparked discussion of a possible shift toward the "social contract," in which unions and government agree upon and attempt to enforce various social programs at the national level; Fraser, for one, has declared himself quite interested in this direction for American unionism, following European examples.

Union/Management Cooperation Growing

Certainly there already exist labor-management bodies with broader social objectives than has generally been the case before. California's Council on Environmental and Economic Balance, or CEEB, was founded in 1973 and is composed of bankers, oil company executives, nuclear power industry representatives, land developers and the like, plus the heads of the state Building and Construction Trades Union Council, the Teamsters and the United Auto Workers. A great power in the state capitol, CEEB characteristically has done much toward lowering environmental laws and nuclear safeguard standards. Investigative reporting by David Kaplan in the Summer of '79 further uncovered that this "form of fascism" intends a national organization with CEEB's set up across the country. Collaboration of this sort recalls the Golden, Colorado pro-nuclear rally on August 26, 1979 organized by Local 8031 of the United Steel Workers and paid for by Rockwell International, which operates the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant near Golden.

Institutionalized cooperation at the local level is incisively discussed by Urban Lehner, in his August 8, 1979 *Wall Street Journal* piece, "Committees of Labor and Management Enjoying Resurgence in Communities." The Evansville (Indiana) Area Labor-Management Committee, formed in 1975 and comprised of the local Alcoa, Whirlpool and Inland Container managements plus the local union chieftans, is portrayed as one of a growing number of joint bodies which try to solve communities' in-plant and at-large social problems. Plant vandalism was one of Evansville's biggest sore points; joint efforts at boosting productivity and general morale, and union-management planning for industrial expansion are other examples of such groups' functions. "In just the past year or so, new area-wide committees have sprouted in Scranton, Pa., Portsmouth, Ohio, and St. Louis, and a longstanding committee in Pittsburgh has begun expanding its operations…They're really flourishing,' says John Stepp, a official of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, which has helped set up a number of the committees."

Government help for unionism, in fact, has recently been increasing, especially in the form of helpful court decisions defending the power of unions over their members and extending their roles; this tendency is an invaluable aspect of the class collaboration directions indicated above.

Congress failed to pass the "Labor Reform" bill, or "common-situs picketing" measure, in the Late '70s prompting many to interpret this as a major shift away from appreciation of unions' benefits to the state and business. The bill, designed to greatly strengthen the leverage by which unions could corral new members and gain new jurisdictions, retains its importance in light of continued and growing worker restiveness against management and unions. D. Quinn Mills' "Flawed Victory in Labor Law Reform" (*Harvard Business Review*, May-June '79), suggested that the victory was a pyrrhic one, that business really requires this "reform" to avoid soured "labor relations" in the '80s, as Labor must have help to unionize.

Denied for a time, this help becomes a must as will be discussed below. Meanwhile, there has been a steady increase in government assistance to unions on a more day-to-day level.

In early January '79 the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the dismissal of an action brought by members of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1547 in Alaska against the international union for its refusal to submit terms of a national contract to a membership ratification vote in 1977. The court decided that IBEW president Pillard was justified in interpreting the union's constitution in such a way as to negotiate and implement the agreement without ratification.

Early March '79 found a federal Appeals Court deciding, against a membership suit in St. Louis, that the UAW could give union funds to whatever causes or organizations the "officers' descretion" dictated. At the same time a New York Court of Appeals sided with the Communication Workers of America executive board who fired shop steward Dave Newman merely for criticizing union policy; the judgement concluded that a steward's duty is to represent the policies of the "management of the union" and not the views of the members who elect them. The

Supreme Court, in Summer '79, IBEW vs. Foust case, ruled that a union member could not recover damages over the failure of the union to fairly process his grievance. Although the right of fair grievance representation is guaranteed by law, and the individual was denied an opportunity to grieve his firing because the union would not represent his grievance within a time deadline, the Court decided that interference would antagonize the union, would "disrupt peaceful labor relations."

The state has also slowly but steadily expanded the purview of union authority. In March '79 the National Labor Relations Board reversed a 1971 decision and placed employees of condominiums and cooperatives within collective bargaining jurisdiction. This policy change was supported not only by unions but by New York's Realty Advisory Board, an employer bargaining association representing over 1,700 apartment buildings. On May 14, 1979 the Supreme Court declared the availability of food to employees during working hours and its price to be subject to union bargaining. Next day the Wall Street Journal's "Labor Letter" said "Unions win expanded rights to picket and organize at shopping centers," noting that recent NLRB decisions have virtually overturned a 1976 Supreme Court denial of First Amendment protection to private shopping center access. And a continuing development is the setting up of collective bargaining systems for public employees; 1979 saw California, for instance, add local government workers to pay dues to a union, along with state employees, University of California workers, and others already served up to unions by state legislation.

Unions Attempting to Increase Their Control

The unions themselves are moving toward structures and policies aimed at more effective bureaucratic control of their members. Thus in early March '79 the merger of the 25,000-member United Shoeworkers of America with the 510,000 Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union was effectuated, and in June the Retail Clerks and Amalgamated Meat Cutters unions merged to form the 1.2 million-member United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, the largest in the AFL-CIO. Business Week of March 5, 1979 wrote of the impending Clerks and Meat Cutters consolidation, noting that the Retail Clerks president stated that his highly centralized union would bring, most importantly, "structure" to the operations of the new body. Arnold Weber's May 14, 1979 Wall Street Journal article, "Mergers: Union Style" disclosed that 57 mergers involving 95 unions and employee associations took place between 1956 and 1978; of this 57, 21 took place since 1971, evidence of the quickening incidence of trade union amalgamation. "Labor stability" is thus promoted-which is logical on the part of Weber due to the diminished voice of the individual brought about by making union bosses more powerful and more distant. In the July 30, 1979 Business Week's "An AFL-CIO Without Meany" the Kirkland-era Federation is said to be committed to a policy of spurring more mergers: "One official predicts that the federation's 105 current unions will shrink to 70 by 1990." In late '79 AFL-CIO president Kirkland publicly invited the Teamsters and the UAW to re-affiliate with his umbrella body.

These few words on directions in unionism's structure bring to mind the European situation and its possible relevance to American developments. In England a strong parallel suggests itself from these comments by James Prior, Prime Minister Thatcher's minister responsible for union relations, interviewed in *Business Week*, April 16, 1979: "We have too many unions. And a lot of them are much too weak in administration, in ability to get a message across. The unions have lost a lot of control to the shop floor." The steady movement toward global unions, discussed for example in John Windmuller's 1980 work, The Shape of Trans-national Unionism, has already been felt here. Paul Shaw had discussed it in his March '79 *Personnel Administrator* offering, "International Labor Relations' Impact on Domestic Labor Relations," in which he saw its number-one influence as pressure toward "much more industry-wide bargaining on a national basis."

Working people, policed by the unions and aware of their ever greater collusion with employers and the government, exhibit a rising anti-unionism. The flood of workers' charges against unions is being deflected by public rulings that are outrageous for their contempt of members' rights and their naked defense of unions' anti-worker activities. Some of the cases were cited above; another tactic is to simply not process worker complaints. NLRB members Pennello and Truesdale, for example, both spoke out in '79 against "peering over the shoulder" of the unions in the rising number of charges brought against them by their members.

"Trucking Turmoil," a front-page *Wall Street Journal* article of March 9, 1979, stressed the "undercurrent of discontent" among Teamsters. The NLRB's 43rd annual report, released in mid-March, revealed that Board-conducted elections gave unions victories 46% of the time, for the second year in a row. The percentage of union victories has been declining: from 57% for 1968, to below 50% since 1975. Drupman and Basin's "Decertification: Removing the Shroud," in the April '79 Labor Law Journal, found that "In the past ten years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of employees seeking to decertify their collective bargaining representatives and become union-free." Further, these efforts are succeeding: "The rate at which unions are being decertified has increased continually over the last decade." Noting that a decertification petition may not be filed by an employer, it was delicately suggested that "today's employees do not consider unions to be a panacea for their concerns or desires."

Support of Unions Declining Among Workers

Underlining this point further was "Approval of Labor Unions Sinks to Lowest Point on Record," featured in the June '79 Gallup Opinion Index. The Gallup measurement showed a decline of about 15% among both union and non-union families since June 1965. The downturn has been a steady one since '65, having reached in '79 the lowest point of public approval in Gallup's 43 years of polling. The August 27, 1979 Fortune A.H. Raskin's "Big Labor Strives to Break Out of Its Rut," with a subtitle which observed that Labor's ways "don't appeal to younger workers." An interesting specific of the article dealt with General Motors' 1979 decision to grant union workers preferential hiring rights for jobs at any of 12 non-union plants, all but one of which were in the South. UAW President Fraser conceded that only this GM policy gave the union its edge in representation elections at the plants.

Though union fortunes have fallen, as seen above in their falling percentage of successful elections, it is noteworthy that recently—even without, presumably-management help—in every case, unions have been winning relatively more elections in the South and the Southwest. That is, they are winning more than in the past in areas rather inexperienced in union behavior. This finding was made by Chicago's A.T. Kearny, Inc. (*Wall Street Journal*, October 6, 1979) which, conversely, discovered waning union victory percentages in the nation's more unionized manufacturing regions.

Besides the charges filed (e.g. three times more NLRB grievance complaints than 10 years ago), and negative vote results, unions are being hit by work actions as never before. Richard Sennett, in "The Boss's New Clothes," *NY Review of Books*, Feb. 22, 1979, stated rather mildly that "During the last decade, the number of wildcat strikes has risen-strikes as much against the union bureaucracy, for example that of the United Mine Workers, as against the managerial bureaucracy." The Supreme Court decided in December '79 that unions are not liable for losses caused by their members' wildcats, a finding very consonant with Sennett's observation, recognizing that such acts are not an extension of union activity but antagonistic to it.

As with its denial of the productivity crisis, the left sees in this internal weakening of unionism another evidence of the hopeless nature of our era. Fortunately close to extinction, ground away as a separate force like so many other illusions, the left now more than ever shows its congruence with the world we must shatter. Like the basic rule of authority, it seeks to demoralize, confuse and divide that which proceeds past ideology, the painful-enough progress of the autonomous social movement. Insignificant in itself, we may use its typical viewpoints to chart, then, the difference between lived truth and those in general who fear it.

The image of ever-more security-conscious consumers, happily supporting the rules of the economy, is one maintenance of that economy-though this lie is so rapidly eroded by reality. In fact, as being uninsured vies with the filing of personal bankruptcy as the greater commonplace, and "wrathful jurors' demands" push damage suit settlements against wealth "sky-high," respect for the commodity is obviously ebbing. Almost weekly, the assessments of the "subterranean economy" of "illegal" and/or unreported income seem to include more millions of people and billions of dollars; former Treasury Secretary William Dimon said in November '79 that the refusal to pay taxes had reached the level of notorious Italy, and reflected Americans "thumbing their noses at the system." Meanwhile, '79 saw epidemics of bank robberies with records set in the major cities, looting to the point of requiring the National Guard after every hurricane or sizable tornado, and unprecedented, soaring shoplifting.

And the "rightest trend" seen in the "Ku Klux Klan rise" scenario is also at strong variance with the fact that people increasingly feel "in it together," all sorely mauled by increasingly visible sources. Taylor, Sheetsley, and Greeley's "Attitudes Toward Racial Integration," in *Scientific American* for June '78; the February '79 National Conference of Christians and Jews' massive survey; and the August '78 and '79 Gallup Polls, among other data, showed "dramatic" drops in race bias, a "markedly" growing toleration for persons of other races and creeds.

A Way of Death is Dying

The myth of impending economic doom, finally, is a favorite diversion among those who wish to keep the struggle to live contained on the already-won plane of survival. The March '79 Supreme Court decisions upholding unemployment benefits for strikers and extending them to students typify the guarantees in effect, and, in light of the collapsing capital relationship, lend more plausibility to the thesis that post-survivalist struggles occur with the stakes of total revolution much more accessible. In 1970 Herman Kahn predicted a frenzy of social travel developing in the new decade. Ten years later, Stephen Papson's *Futurist* article, "Tourism: Biggest Industry in the Twenty-First Century?" sees its arrival "with the growth of affluence," as emblematic of the need "to get away from all routine, not just one's work."

But "getting away" isn't that easy and the frustration corrodes. A way of death is dying but it may survive us. Arming ourselves with an accurate sense of our inter-subjectivity in its complex fight with this alien place is necessary to help us strike hard and well.

John Zerzan
The Promise of the ‘80s
1980

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