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# THE RESISTANCE STUDIES MAGAZINE

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# Editorial

by Christopher Kullenberg & Jakob Lehne

## What is Resistance Studies?

In a complex and globalised world the issue of power and resistance needs to be raised continually. Resistance, as a practice aimed at inequalities, whatever they may be, is not a marginal phenomenon, even though it may vary in size and shape dramatically. On the 15th of February 2003 millions of people around the world hit the streets in a manifestation against the war in Iraq. The protest was coordinated from 'below', by grass-root movements displaying their ability to form transnational networks. But how could the protest evolve like this in the first place? This cannot be understood as merely mass behaviour, but rather, the research agenda of Resistance studies would be looking into how social networks are shaped, how conflict and pragmatic consensus are negotiated, and what kinds of dispersive mechanisms operating to reduce the complexity along a multiplicity of actors, synchronizing them into one of the largest demonstrations in history.

However, we do not need to turn to the obvious examples in western cities,

nor do we need the proximity of the local. Recent developments in Burma have shed light on how the local and the global are interconnected. A crucial element for the monks to gain international support depended on the control of information technologies. The authoritarian regime, which regulates most of the Burmese Internet cafes and also owns the telecommunication companies, is actively trying to prevent information from entering or leaving the country. During the escalation of the protests in late September 2007 all Internet access was stopped by the regime, which physically blocked the only cable connecting to the global servers, in order to prevent Burmese journalists and activist from communicating with the rest of the world. This is one of the examples where small-scale and heterogenous breeding grounds of resistance are produced simultaneously as centralised networks of power are shaped and reshaped. By following the strategies of power and resistance in action, we may learn a lot about the importance of technology, information and the role of the international community.

A third level, which is elaborated by Jeffrey Shantz in this first volume of the Resistance studies magazine, is the very small scale organisation, which may appear spontaneously or strategical. Abandoned buildings may be squatted by people who wish to build alternative social relations, production may be practised in a gift-based economy in a small community, or during disasters where social relations may emerge only to disappear soon afterwards.

These short illustrations, being only samples of historical and geographical events, raise numerous theoretical problems: *How are local practices of resistance related to global processes? How are they communicated in the age of new digital media? Can resistance be liberating, or are all acts of resistance in turn leading to renewed power take-overs establishing different oppressive structures? Is resistance always strategic, or could it be unintentional?* Also normative questions should be reflected upon, such as: *To what extent should resistance embody democratic processes? Is armed resistance (ever) justified? If the outcome of resistance is uncertain, should we pursue it even if it means risking harmful consequences?*

Asking these questions about the nature of resistance is perhaps the only way of answering the overarching question: *"What is Resistance Studies about?"* Due to the multifaceted reality of social relations (understood in the widest of senses), there can be no a priori rules of method confined to disciplinary boundaries.

## The mission of the Resistance Studies Magazine

The current publication emerged from intensified discussions within the Resistance Studies Network during 2007, which were embodied in local seminars at Gothenburg University, where also an international work-shop was held on the 6th of June, which inaugurated the network officially. Mona Lilja and Stellan Vinthagen, the initial founders of the network, write in a mission statement:

*"As power-relations effectively are maintained, challenged and resisted, while the interaction amongst people globally increases, there is a renewed need for research that pinpoints issues of social change, resistance and power. Yet resistance strategies, mobilisations and methods are normally not what interest scholars of social science. Traditionally social science focus on understanding world order, nation state systems, capitalism or other established power structures, while research on the transformation of power is a lot less established /../ To our knowledge there do not exist any research centre – even less a department – dedicated to the study of resistance to power and its social change.<sup>1</sup>"*

The Resistance Studies Magazine aims at taking this task seriously and to fill the knowledge-gap outlined above. Thus, in order to summarise the initial goals of the magazine, we could advance by the following five guidelines:

1. *To focus on the under-researched practice of resistance.* There are already numerous models describing power, but quite few who deal with the contingent and difficult problematics of resistance.
2. *To promote theoretical and empirical research from all disciplines.* Even though most contributions will come from the humanities and the social sciences, we welcome articles from all fields.
3. *To intervene in a global public debate with a strong emphasis on openness and contemporary events.* The magazine will be an open access journal available for free download, and we will try to bring in analyses of current events, even though they may be

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<sup>1</sup> Lilja & Vinthagen "The Resistance Studies Mission Statement" <http://www.resistancestudies.org/files/Missionstatement.doc>

problematic due to the unstable outcome of ongoing resistance practices.

4. *To bridge the gap between academia and people working in the field, without reducing the one to the other.* The articles of this very first issue already show that activist groups can be very theoretical, and through history we know that academics have always been related to the field-work of political engagement. By building bridges we encourage thoughts and reflections about these plastic identities.

5. *To provide high quality magazine articles, which are blindly peer-reviewed.*

## **The first issue**

This first issue does at least partially fulfil the five guidelines above. The first three theoretical articles definitely challenge our understanding of the concept of resistance. They also give examples from how resistance is being practised, from the case of Adbusters to anarchists in the making. We are also reminded about the heterogeneity of social relations emerging in the intersections of power and resistance by a historical article describing how the Orissa tribals organised against the colonial rule in India.

The article by Karl Palmås discusses the possible rupture in the strategies of activist groups, where the abstract mechanism of the motor is replaced by another abstract mechanism - the computer model. Palmås draws from contemporary debates in philosophy and sociology, as well as from recent societal and economical developments. In his case study of the Adbusters movement, he notices a shift in how the practice of resistance is modelled. Instead of "jamming" or "blocking" capitalism, Adbusters have turned to a computer-like model where capitalism is "hacked" or "re-written" just like software. This, in turn, leads to a new agenda for resistance, an agenda which works by making new arrangements instead of blocking the old ones. Palmås' text introduces an interesting perspective on resistance and social change, which instructs us to look at the abstract mechanisms and models, both in order to understand resistance as such, but also to understand power.

Tim Gough's *Resistance: Under what Grace* is another theoretical article on how to understand the concept of resistance. He invokes the paradoxical nature

of resistance, and its relationship towards the existing prevailing order. When an order is opposed and changed, and resistance triumphs, it immediately turns into a new order, which in turn may be resisted. Since this paradoxical logic is always at work, we must displace the question of a beginning and an end in terms of our common-sense understanding of the concept of time. Instead of separating resistance and order, Gough suggests an "awareness which in the context this cunning and simultaneity becomes the act of a being which, in its difference, makes that difference an issue for it; this folded characteristic being the very possibility of resistance".

Jeffrey Shantz too challenges the grand theories of revolution, and instead discusses how anarchist futures are made right now. He draws his examples from the "anarchist transfer culture", which is attempting at building sustainable communities within the context of the old society. Instead of purely speculative social analysis, the desirable society must be made, and the only way of doing that is to learn the practices. The capitalist relations between consumers and producers, for example, can be overturned, at least on a small scale, by developing gift-economies. We have seen this trend on a large scale in computer software and copyleft media. However, this model is also applicable in building alternative forms of welfare based on mutual aid and autonomous networks, which could endure the trends of the market or the budget of the State. The concept of resistance, then, turns into something readily available in everyday life, not merely reacting against obvious structures of power, but primarily with a potential positive task of building new arrangements. This is why, Shantz argues, the anarchist futures need to be understood in a present tense, since they are already in the making right now.

Patit Paban Mishra rounds up this issue with the historical case of the Orissa tribals in India, which resisted the 1874 revenue settlement imposed by the colonial rule. The settlement led to poverty and misery for the tribal society. However, in heterogeneous constellations the struggle continued up until 1946, displaying the ever-changing dynamic of oppression and resistance.

Finally, the editors would like to thank the members of the editorial board for their valuable and excellent work, and everybody else who contributed to the making of this magazine. Thank you all!

# From jamming the motor to hacking the computer: The case of Adbusters

by Karl Palmås

Centre for Business in Society, Gothenburg University

*In the past few years, concepts such as “hacking”, “open source”, “protocols” and “peer-to-peer” have begun to circulate in settings that bear little relation to actual computers. Using Adbusters as an example, this article will explore how social activists are developing strategies of resistance on the basis of a nascent computer-inspired worldview.*

## Conceptual models and machinic eras

The conceptual models that underpin our worldviews are tightly intertwined with the everyday technologies that surround us. Michel Serres<sup>2</sup>, whose

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2 Serres, M. (1982)

thoughts have more recently been picked up by Manuel DeLanda<sup>3</sup>, theorised this very relation. As DeLanda explains:

*“Serres was the first to point out that the transition between the clockwork age and the motor age had more profound implications than the simple addition of a new brand of machines to the technological ‘races’ already in existence. He sees in the emergence of the steam motor a complete break with the conceptual models of the past. [...]”*

*When the abstract mechanism [of a motor, such as the so-called ‘Carnot cycle’ of the heat engine] had been dissociated from its physical contraption [the actual motor] it entered the lineages of other technologies, including the ‘conceptual technology’ of science<sup>4</sup>.”*

Thus, Serres argues that as new types of machines enter the social world, they may end up changing our ways of seeing the world. The logic of the motor did not only appear in the contraptions studied by engineers and natural scientists: it also shaped the theories of modern social scientists, philosophers and artists. In their introduction to the English edition of Serres’ book *Hermes*, Josué Harari and David Bell state that Serres charted how the motor emerged as “the universal model of knowledge in the nineteenth century, a construct that always functions in the same way in all cultural domains – from Marx to Freud, from Nietzsche to Bergson, or from Zola to Turner.”

In order for the motor “logic” to spread from the physical, actual motor to the minds of social scientists and authors, the operational diagram of the machine had to be formulated in generic, abstract terms. As DeLanda points out, this process was slow in the making:

*“In 1824, a century after it was born as a concrete assemblage, the steam motor was given a completely abstract description by Carnot and began to influence other technologies<sup>5</sup>.”*

However, we are now living in a world in which motors are no longer the dominant everyday technology. During the 20th century, computers have become more pervasive, leading the way to a new machinic era. Thus, the

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3 DeLanda, M. (1991)

4 DeLanda (1991), p. 140-141

5 DeLanda (1991), p. 142

“abstract mechanisms” of computers are now making their way into contemporary practices of social activists. So, in what ways can traditional modes of protest be seen as motor-inspired?

## Motor activism

Michel Serres describes motor-like conceptual models in the same way as Carnot described the heat engine. They draw on a “reservoir” of fuel, creating a “energy differential”, generating “circulation” and “motion”. In the case of modern social theory:

*“...the reservoir is capital, the quantity of energy, the constancy of force, the libidinal reservoir; [...] the pattern of general circulation [...] is language, speech, words, vocabulary, values, money, desire<sup>6</sup>.”*

Thus, Serres’ remarks apply specifically to Marx (capital as reservoir, money circulating) as well as Freud (libido as reservoir, desire circulating). Thus, the politics of these apparatuses concerns issues like “What blocks circulation? What stimulates it? Who or what governs or forms the reservoir?”.

This characterisation of Marx and Freud is noteworthy, as these authors have been hugely influential in founding modern social critique, and still feature prominently in activist circles. In *The Rebel Sell*, Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter argue that since 1968, a “Marx-plus-Freud” world view has dominated social critique and activism – in other words, “counterculture has almost completely replaced socialism as the basis of radical political thought”<sup>7</sup>. Hence, activists have tended to prefer the countercultural political strategies of the situationist, hippie and culture-jamming movements, rather than engaging in traditional social reform. Incidentally, the same phenomenon is also observed by Boltanski and Chiapello, who argue that “artistic critique” (of capitalist inauthenticity) has usurped “social critique” (of capitalist exploitation)<sup>8</sup>.

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6 Serres (1982)

7 Heath, J. & A. Potter (2005)

8 Boltanski, L. & E. Chiapello (2006)

Back in 1968, Theodore Roszak related “the making of a counter culture”<sup>9</sup> to Herbert Marcuse’s blend of Marx and Freud. Crucially, this worldview highlighted the ways in which culture – mass media, advertising and contemporary modes of thought – undermined productive critiques of capitalism. Hence, Marcuse’s industrial capitalism can thus be modelled as a closed system of adjoined motors. The motor-like capitalist society described by Marx is married to the motor-like civilisation described by Freud<sup>10</sup>, creating a stable, repressive engine. The Marxian motion towards revolution generated by the reservoir of capital is counteracted by the Freudian motion generated by libidinal reservoir.

Heath and Potter uses blockbuster movie “The Matrix” to illustrate this view of culture and society. To lead a true existence, free from exploitation, one has to opt for the red pill that ejects the lead character Neo from the simulated world that is “The Matrix”, enabling him to see the monstrosity of its underlying reality. Thus, countercultural activism and protest strategies can be seen as efforts to act as this red pill.

### **Adbusters: Jamming the motor...**

For the countercultural youth, the only way out of this total motor was to throw gravel into the machinery, jamming its modes of operation, thus baring the monstrosity of the machine for all of the world to see. Public demonstrations, sit-ins, subversive art and various ways of “dropping out” mainstream culture were all different approaches to achieve this effect. Here, the obvious reference was the critical strategies – notably detournement – of Guy Debord and the Situationist International. More recently, culture jamming has served the same end:

*“The goal of culture jammers is quite literally to ‘jam’ the culture, by subverting the messages used to reproduce this faith and blocking the channels through which it is propagated<sup>11</sup>.”*

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9 Roszak, T. (1971)

10 Freud, S. (1989 {1930})

11 Heath & Potter (2005)

Through the paramount success of Naomi Klein's *No Logo*<sup>12</sup>, a new generation of activists have been introduced to the "culture jamming" strategies of Adbusters magazine. Incidentally, the magazine is also one of the key targets for Heath and Potter's criticism, as the magazine can be viewed as "the flagship publication of the culture-jamming movement"<sup>13</sup>.

Heath and Potter's criticism revolves around the fact that Adbusters hark back to countercultural rhetoric, while their actual practices now include the manufacturing and sale of fairtrade goods such as the "Blackspot Sneaker". Thus, "cultural rebellion, of the type epitomised by Adbusters magazine, is not a threat to the system – it is the system".

*Nevertheless, Adbusters has since then departed from the rhetoric of detournement and culture jamming. In the "Big ideas of 2006" issue and onwards, the magazine started celebrating a new activist hero – "the antipreneur".*

*"While giant corporations run roughshod over our lives, we whine and complain, protest and boycott. For too long we've ignored the market, written it off as enemy territory. Yet, what do mega-corps like Walmart and Coke fear most? Competition. We're talking about a new breed of bottom-up enterprise that runs differently: promoting ethics over profit, values over image, idealism over hype. A brand of grassroots capitalism that deals in products we actually need – and believe in. No sweatshops. No mindfucking ads. Just fair trade from sustainable, accountable companies. Run by us, the antipreneurs<sup>14</sup>."*

Thus, the hallmark of the countercultural worldview – the view of capitalism as a motor-like system, only to be transformed through jamming strategies – was no longer adhered to. The market – no longer a space for natural law-guided domination – emerged as a field of bottom-up, grassroots politico-entrepreneurial action. Capitalism – no longer a closed,

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<sup>12</sup> Klein, N. (1999)

<sup>13</sup> Heath & Potter (2005)

<sup>14</sup> Adbusters Magazine, "The Big Ideas of 2006" issue

motor-like machine that circulates capital and desire – was increasingly described as an open structure, potentially subject to rearrangement.

### **... or hacking the capitalist operating system?**

One of the key components of Adbusters' antipreneur strategies is the notion that, as activists share knowledge and ideas, their chances of building robust alternatives to large corporations increase considerably. These shared ideas and strategies "will transform the antipreneurial movement, along with open-source counter-brands like the Blackspot, into a real economic threat to top-down corporate capitalism – through the next year, the next ten, and well into a saner, more democratic future."<sup>15</sup>

*The focus on creating networks of knowledge-sharing, and the direct reference to "open-source", indicates that Adbusters – just like the innovation theorists mentioned above – have gained inspiration from the success of the FLOSS (Free/Libre Open Source Software) movement.*

Just like hackers sharing knowledge in order to collectively hack a system – "given enough eyeballs, all bugs are shallow", as programmer Eric Raymond phrases it<sup>16</sup> – the collective of antipreneurs share ideas in order to modify capitalism. Thus, concepts from the world of computer networks seem to have seeped into the ex-culture jammers' understanding of the world. Notions of "open source" and hacking no longer apply just to computer networks as such – increasingly, they are applied to other social apparatuses.

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<sup>15</sup> Adbusters Magazine, Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Raymond, E.S. (2001)

The move towards understanding the economy as a computer was finalised in the September/October issue of Adbusters. Here, the main feature article explicitly depicts capitalism as an operating system:

*“Capitalism is the almighty operating system of our lives [...] But who is in charge of this operating system? Who wrote it? Who maintains it? Who protects it from viruses? Who reboots it when it crashes? So here’s the big question: can we the people – civil society – take charge? Can we rewrite the capitalist code? [...] In other words, can we turn capitalism into an open source design project and make it more sustainable and responsible to our and future generation’s [sic] needs?”<sup>17</sup>*

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Adbusters’ recent move to promote antipreneurship is its commitment to the hacker ethic. In the quote above (on building “a real economic threat to top-down corporate capitalism”) the long-term strategy of the antipreneurship strategy is to build robust competitors to large corporations – alternative structures that can latch onto the current market settings. Unlike their previous countercultural imperative to de(con)struct the societal machine, Adbusters’ new imperative is to experiment with its possibilities, rewriting its underlying code. Here, Adbusters is joining a growing number of writers who argue that the hacker is the ideal artist/critic of the 21st century. For instance, the philosopher Manuel DeLanda has stated that activists:

*“need to adopt a hacker attitude towards all forms of knowledge: not only to learn UNIX or Windows NT to hack this or that computer system, but to learn economics, sociology, physics, biology to hack reality itself. It is precisely the ‘can do’ mentality of the hacker, naive as it may sometimes be, that we need to nurture everywhere”<sup>18</sup>.*

In other words, as an alternative to Heath and Potter’s interpretation of “The Matrix”: The point is not that we need to “swallow the red pill” in order to become enlightened critics. The point is that by getting access to, understanding, and rewriting the code that underpins this world (as Neo does towards the end of the film), we can “hack reality itself”.

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<sup>17</sup> Adbusters Magazine, September/October 2006 issue

<sup>18</sup> Excerpt from an interview conducted by DJ Spooky

The rise of the hacker ethic is not only apparent within social activism, but also within contemporary art. In *Postproduction. Culture as screenplay: how art reprograms the world*<sup>19</sup>, art critic Nicolas Bourriaud argues that the hacker and the “deejay” are today’s cultural and political heroes. Like DeLanda, Bourriaud invokes Deleuze in his account of how the hacker-/deejay-inspired ethic leads us towards a new form of critique, which is an attitude, an ethical stance more than a recipe:

*“The postproduction of work allows the artist to escape the posture of interpretation [as assumed by the post-1968 critic]. Instead of engaging in critical commentary, we have to experiment, as Deleuze asked of psychoanalysis: to stop interpreting symptoms and try more suitable arrangements”<sup>20</sup>.*”

Bourriaud argues that this experimental approach to the re-use of existing art differs from previous modes of Situationist-inspired art: “While the detournement of preexisting artworks is a currently employed tool, artists use it not to ‘devalorize’ the work of art but to utilize it”.

## A new research agenda

Adbusters is just one example of activists who are realigning their strategies. Indeed, in the past decade or so, several cultural spheres have adopted the abstract mechanisms of computers in their understanding of the world<sup>21</sup>. For scholars interested in protest and social activism, this opens an interesting research agenda: Where else are “abstracted” hacktivist practices being deployed? Are they solely a novel phenomenon, or did they exist before the advent of computers? Moreover, are these approaches effective, and if so, in what contexts?

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19 Bourriaud, N. (2002)

20 Bourriaud (2002), page 37

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## Resistance : Under what Grace

by Tim Gough  
Kinston College

*There is an apparently paradoxical nature to resistance. Resistance is resistance against something, towards which it appears inimical. This resisted thing, however, requires such resistance in order to define itself and keep itself safe. Should it fail to do so, that which succeeds it will require resistance in turn. This paradox – a prevailing order requires that which is opposed to it, and that which overcomes is resisted in turn – occurs within time thought as a successive order of past, present and future moments. Two temporal displacements (those of simultaneity and reversal) are evoked, not in order to resolve the paradox but to displace it and hint at an other strategy of resistance.*

...the very possibility of resistance: that which comes before. Within a common – that is to say philosophical – concept of time as a series of successive moments, resistance will be regulated (given its order and its orders) – even in its aspirations for the future (itself conceived as a series of moments beyond the present) – by its reaction against the pre-existing and its order. Resistance and counter-resistance, resistance and counter-move, resistance and incorporation are the means by which this pre-existing order will maintain itself and neutralise that which opposes it. It will maintain

itself, more or less successfully, and will neutralise resistance, more or less successfully, but will never, for strategic reasons, do so too well.

Either that prevailing order which is resisted needs the resistance, maintains the resistance in its position, desires and needs the risk of resistance to prevent complacency, stimulates risk or leaves itself vulnerable at a critical moment in order to provoke resistance, provokes risk up to a limit of imagination and sometimes beyond it, has to have a force against which it can act in order to justify its existence, retains and maintains such a force in order to itself be a force, an energy, the disposal of this order not that.

Or else the prevailing order fails and falls, resistance triumphs, prevails<sup>22</sup>, and in that moment – or perhaps the one after – becomes itself a prevailing order itself requiring the resistance of the other, the poignancy of this implacable logic outdone in turn by the cunning of a schema whereby only that which no longer requires to be resisted, which no longer poses a “true” threat, remains successfully resisted; thus consigning resistance to impotency, or rather to a potency regulated by the orders which were to be called into question.

These political strategies of and against resistance are deployed – we do not say necessarily intentionally – today to extreme extents. We may recall that a limit of imagination was reached at 9/11 when the invulnerability of the world’s most sublime (that is, absolutely large, *schlechthin gross*<sup>23</sup>) and provocative war machine was nonetheless left vulnerable. This vulnerability consisted in, amongst other things, the non-existence of effective air defences for the country’s very body; and resulted in an arguably sublime – absolutely large – event, directed at sublime constructions. Yet this act of counter-provocation, in the murderous effectiveness of its resistance, bolstered the political order it wished to destroy. More generally, we can say that the framing and staging of the resister – the enemy within or without – by an existing political order is an ancient strategy constantly and effectively reused in order to cement political power; and that this staging is effected both by the resister and the resisted power.

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22 We posit here no agency or criteria of failure (or success); we point rather to the necessary structure of resistance.

23 See section 25 of Kant’s *Kritik der Urteilskraft* – explication of the term “sublime” (Kant, I. (1963) “*Kritik der Urteilskraft*”, Stuttgart: Reclam)

*It is against the logic of this structural cunning that resistance would have to work. Resistance beyond resistance, resistance without work, since these terms receive their authority within such a structure. Yet we have no choice but to use such old words, and find ourselves needing to resist at each step their re-absorption.*

The operations within which a resistance beyond resistance might occur will happen without the prevailing order. The cunning structure itself will need to be solicited, and since it is a question of order, this solicitation will extend to the philosophical structure of time thought conventionally as the line of past, present and future<sup>24</sup>. This will not be work or resistance by means of philosophy; more a working on philosophy itself. To resist a political order calls for a resistance to philosophical-temporal order, which implies that the task is at least one of thought beyond philosophy, since philosophy posits time in this manner and calling this definition of time into question means, of necessity, going beyond or before philosophy and those those discourses dependent on it.

An order is necessary<sup>25</sup>. There is no necessity without order. Within an order, a proof can be made, an economy can move, authority is disposed, politics occurs. An economy allows authority to be disposed, politics to occur, a proof to be made, philosophical order to be analysed. The disposal of authority is the occurrence of politics, implying a philosophical order, the

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24 See, for instance, Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* section 6 "we represent the time-sequence by a line progressing to infinity" ("wir... stellen die Zeitfolge durch eine ins Unendliche fortgehende Linie vor"), (Kant, I. (1933) *Critique of Pure Reason*", London: Macmillan)

25 We take "order" here both as ordering in time and as political order. The dual meaning is bespeaks an intimate relation between them. In relation to the necessity for political order, see, for instance, Jo Freeman's classic pamphlet 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness', *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 1970. As Barbara Epstein has pointed out in respect of Freeman's argument, "antileadership ideology weakened the women's movement by permitting crippling attacks on the very activists who had helped the movement find its direction." (*Political Protest and Cultural Revolution*, University of California Press (1991) p. 169)

availability of proofs, and the workings of an economy. The founding and refounding of one implies, necessitates and generates the founding and refounding of all. Any attempt at analysis of their interplay, preparatory or not to a resistance against it, faces the force of this order and the cushioning counter-force of its sprung fabric, but also the order of time, the order of the succession of time, which is part of the overall ordering and that which gives it its possibility. It would be wrong to say that the concept of time as succession has been created by this philosophical-political-economic ordering, but if for the sake of simplicity (and acceding momentarily to the logic of the order it would be our desire to question) we were to take it as such, then a sort of logic of types would determine that time as result or a sub-set of the political-philosophical order cannot itself dominate it. Nor could any strategy of resistance which remained held to the ordering of time. Thus the ever-present appeal by that which we are to resist to the concept of nature, an appeal nowhere more powerfully and quietly disposed as in the characterisation of time - commonly thought – as “natural”, not-get-roundable, not questionable except in a thus-neutralised moment of madness, mysticism or myth. Not primarily to give time an unquestioned authority but rather, in positing it as natural, leading that which resists into believing that action within its scope could possibly be effective.

*Only a bastard logic could work against this. A logic outside philosophy proper; at least thought rather than metaphysics; the excess of a general economy of thought.*

Yet any such general economy will always apparently fall, destroyed by means of proofs brought against it by the restricted economy just described, since it is only within and as a tool of such restriction that a proof can be disposed. There can be no counter-proof for a general economy, since such a counter-move would be counter to the non-structure to which that general economy is appealing. Proofs are not available whilst appealing to or “working” within a general economy; for the a-logic of a general economy does not and is not capable of working with or founding proofs.

*Under what grace are your victims innocent and ours  
dust, your blood blood and our blood water?*<sup>26</sup>

In this question we hear - from the position of those privileged by the current world order and its disposal of energies - the cry of a resistance whose reticence in answering might appear motivated by a strategy of respect for the question as question, the question as opening. In leaving the question hanging, this text destroys the fundament as fundament; any definitive answer would co-posit the authority under which the question has been or should be decided, and the lack of such answer leaves open the possibility that no such authority is acknowledged. The question of the authenticity of this non-fundamentalism is answered not at the level of the text, but at that of the author, bin Laden; there, we intuit an answer, and the question becomes the apparatus of a resistance propagating that archi-authority which in turn is to be resisted.

The logic of question and answer shares the reciprocal structure of resistance and counter-resistance, act and revenge, all again operating within but at the same time positing as a condition of their possibility the order of time, the time of order. By contrast, it is a strategy which posits and gives to itself as its possibility an other time, an other order of time, a time not of order or a time not of time, which could escape this trap of resistance as counter-thrust caught within the prevailing orthodoxy. This would require a thought of the “new” which, in its act, would re-cast time and rethink it otherwise than as the succession of past-present-future.

This recasting might operate with respect to the “at the same time”. The possibility of the wholly new can only be thought at the moment where the successive order of the concept of time is arrested, whence two things which are inextricable and which co-posit themselves – such as something “new” and the “at the same time” – occur, precisely, at the same time; not one and then the other, but both hyper-simultaneously so as to be outside the order of successive time as that event occurs. It is the new, that which is created in an event entirely separated from what went before and thus wedded to a simultaneity of actuality and potentiality – giving it its potential at the

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26 Osama bin Laden, April 2004, tape released to Arabic speaking television networks. For a full transcript see [www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1118204/posts](http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1118204/posts). Refer to Paul's Letter to the Romans 6:14 “you are not under law, but under grace”

moment that it gives itself its actuality – it is in this event of creation that a resistance beyond resistance could act, unwarned, against a prevailing order.

This recasting might operate by means of a kind of reversal of the order of time. If representational politics collapses into a strategy of the prevailing order, a strategy intended at heart (thus quietly, cunningly) to disrespect and control those who could resist, then this operates within a structure where that which does the representing comes after that which it represents. It not only operates within it; the privilege and the power of this democratic structure (guaranteed by its supposed natural quality as the end point of political evolution) also co-posit and mutually legitimises the order of successive time which gives it its possibility. The effect of this, constructed and deployed within our tradition, is to fix that which is prior – those who are represented – in position as political subjects, subject to the taming of a representational structure. It would be by means of a warping or distortion of this order – an order where the subject as political participant comes first, followed by her democratic representation - that a voice which escapes the counter-resistance of the existing order might have a chance to be heard. Democracy gives us first the people, clear in their supposed identity, then the representation of them. By contrast, we ask for no pre-positing people, multitude or subject to be represented. Instead, such representation would be understood as that which enables and requires the defined political subject to exist – an effect both benign and malicious, a gift and a poison - an understanding which, at the same time and as condition and result of this understanding, sees that that which is represented is not to be fixed in its nature by a disrespectful order.

*These two strategies, of hyper-simultaneity and apparent reversal, cannot operate without the event they give possibility to.*

Unless the thought of the simultaneous or reverse-action effect occurs at the same time as that to which it gives its possibility – namely, the irruption of the new, the unwarned impact against the existing order, the destruction of the pre-determined subject of representation – it will not be what it is since it will immediately itself be respecting order, sequence, the “this then that”. This event does not act once within the “at the same time”. The possibility

of the “at the same time” allows the new to irrupt<sup>27</sup> and it does this – in a peculiar folding-back-upon-its-own-idea – at the same time or it will not be what it is; and it is only by means of this potentiality for the “at the same time” that this whole irruption can event itself. This event occurs in multiple fashion – hence its given name of “hyper-simultaneity” – or it happens not at all. Likewise the reverse-action effect on a representational order is given its possibility by a distortion of time’s order, but the thought of time’s reversal by and of itself would remain ineffective unless that to which it gives possibility occurs at that moment of apparent reversal.

These abysmal logics give the possibility of a strategy outside that of resistance and counter-resistance, outside the representational structures they use. It is by the deployment of something like an en abyme rule that this could occur. Nonetheless, we have seen that the pre-existing order has been constituted or has constituted itself with similar cunning, and if an effective resistance-beyond-resistance and the pre-existing order both deploy, necessarily, the cunning strategy of a *mise en abyme*<sup>28</sup>, of the simultaneity of the potential and its corresponding occurrences, by what grace could we separate them?

This question cannot be answered directly, and there is no time now for even an oblique approach to it. It has become not so much a question of what a text could say on the issue, but rather of the effect it would have. This effect will not be that of a faith this way or that, a hope (or non-hope) for the future, a pledge one way or the other for the sake of good conscience or bad, a wager one way or the other. Rather, it will hinge on the awareness of what is occurring, an awareness which in the context of this cunning and its simultaneity becomes the act of a being which, in its difference, makes that difference an issue for it; this folded characteristic being the very possibility of resistance....

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27 Conventional time, as past-present-future, is not merely a container within which causality can be thought, but implies causality (be that divine or, latterly intramundanelly thought, mechanically) from the outset. Causality - the connection of this with that across past-present-future – precludes the utterly new. Hence any thought of the new must call “time” into question. We desire, indeed, “a new refutation of time” (in the words of Borges).

28 “Placing into infinity”, “placing into the abyss”

# Anarchist Futures in the Present

by Jeffrey Shantz  
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*“The bourgeoisie may blast and ruin their own world before they leave the stage of history. But we carry a new world in our hearts.” (Buenaventura Durruti)<sup>29</sup>*

*“We must act as if the future is today.” (Howard J. Ehrlich)<sup>30</sup>*

The idea that the form of post-revolutionary society must be foreshadowed in the form of the “revolutionary” organization has been a primary feature of anarchist theory, at least since Michael Bakunin's famous disagreements with Marx over the role of the state in the transition to socialism. Bakunin's central conflict with Marx was related precisely to the former's conviction that an authoritarian revolutionary movement, as Marx espoused, would inevitably initiate an authoritarian society after the revolution. For Bakunin, if the new society is to be non-authoritarian then it can only be founded upon the experience of non-authoritarian social relations. The statement

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<sup>29</sup> The document produced by Bakunin was the Sonvillier Circular

<sup>30</sup> This statement comes from the Situationist International whose most prominent writers were Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem.

produced by Bakunin's supporters in the IWMA during his battle with Marx in 1871 asked: "How can you expect an egalitarian and free society to emerge from an authoritarian organization?"<sup>31</sup>. This conviction was repeated a century later by participants in the Paris insurrection of 1968: "The revolutionary organization has to learn that it cannot combat alienation through alienated forms"<sup>32</sup>.

Recent anarchist initiatives have gone well beyond Bakunin's preoccupation with prefiguring the future society in contemporary revolutionary forms to creating the future immediately. As James Joll noted with respect to the activities of participants of the May 1968 uprising in Paris:

*"For these young people, the revolutionary movement is not only the pattern of future society which Bakunin believed that it should be: it is future society. Their Utopia is realized here and now in the process of revolution itself"*<sup>33</sup>.

Perhaps the most significant form of contemporary anarchist futures-present is the "autonomous zone" or more simply @-zone. These sites, often but not always in squatted buildings, are home to diverse types of activity. Autonomous zones are used primarily as community centres organized around anarchist principles of mutual aid, providing meals, clothing and shelter for those in need. @-zones also serve as gathering places where community members can learn about anarchist theory and practice, both historic and contemporary. Because of their concern over the dangers of insularity, organizers try to build and nurture connections with residents of the neighbourhoods in which the @-zones are situated. Their intention is to create broadened free zones which may be extended, from block to city to region to nation, as resources and conditions favour.

These are the building blocks of what Howard Ehrlich refers to as the anarchist transfer culture, an approximation of the new society within the context of the old. Within it anarchists try to meet the basic demands of building sustainable communities.

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31 (Joll, 1964: 216)

32 Marshall 1993: 658)

33 (Joll 1964: 217)

A transfer culture is that agglomeration of ideas and practices that guides people in making the trip from the society here to the society there in the future. As part of the accepted wisdom of that transfer culture we understand that we may never achieve anything that goes beyond the culture itself. It may be, in fact, that it is the very nature of anarchy that we shall always be building the new society within whatever society we find ourselves<sup>34</sup>.

*In this sense, anarchist autonomous zones are liminal sites, spaces of transformation and passage. As such they are important sites of re-skilling, in which anarchists prepare themselves for the new forms of relationship necessary to break authoritarian and hierarchical structures.*

Participants also learn the diverse tasks and varied interpersonal skills necessary for collective work and living. This skill sharing serves to discourage the emergence of knowledge elites and to allow for the sharing of all tasks, even the least desirable, necessary for social maintenance.

### **Gift economies and anarchist transfer cultures: Anarcho-communism, from DIY to self-valorization**

In his compelling and provocative essay, *The High-Tech Gift Economy*, Richard Barbrook argues that the gift economy provides a starting point for thinking about social relations beyond either the state or market. More than that, the gift economy provides the basis for an incipient anarcho-communism, visions of which, have inspired a variety of recent community media and “do-it-yourself” (DIY) cultural activism. Despite the contributions Barbrook's article makes to a rethinking of both emergent social movements and alternatives to statist capitalism, his emphasis on gift exchange leaves his analysis at the level of consumption and exchange, rather than addressing crucial issues of production. Yet it is predominantly questions of production, and especially the transformation of production relations, that have motivated anarcho-communists historically. In this short

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34 (Ehrlich, 1996: 329)

discussion I attempt to look more closely at the contestatory and transformative aspects hinted at by DIY production within the anarchist gift economies. Such production, more than issues of how exchange occurs, suggests possibilities for eluding or challenging relations of capitalist value production. Crucial for understanding the liberatory potential of the “new economy”, beyond the practices of consumption or exchange, is the notion of self-valorization, or production which emphasizes community (use) values rather than capitalist value.

As Barbrook suggests, for participants in a diversity of contemporary affinity groups, DIY activities offer a context for coming together, a shared opportunity for mutual expression and unalienated labor. Contemporary usage of the term DIY in underground movements comes from punk rock and its visceral attack on the professionalization of rock and the related distance between fans and rock stars. This anti-hierarchical perspective and the practices that flow from it are inspired by a deep longing for self-determined activity that eschews reliance on the products of corporate culture.

As an alternative to the market valorization and production for profit embodied in corporate enterprises, anarchist DIYers turn to self-valorizing production rooted in the needs, experiences and desires of specific communities. In place of a consumerist ethos that encourages consumption of ready-made items, anarchists adopt a productivist ethos that attempts a re-integration of production and consumption.

It is perhaps highly telling that in an age of multinational media conglomerates and gargantuan publishing monopolies a number of younger people have turned towards artisanal forms of craft production in order to produce and distribute what are often very personal works. Even more than this, however, are the means of production, involving collective decision-making as well as collective labor in which participants are involved, to the degree that they wish to be, in all aspects of the process from conception through to distribution.

While cultural theorist Walter Benjamin spoke of disenchantment in the “age of mechanical reproduction”, DIY projects offer expressions of re-enchantment or authenticity. This authenticity is grounded at least in the sense that such works help to overcome the division between head and hand

that reflects the division of labor in a society of mass-produced representation. As attempts to overcome alienation and address concerns with overly mediated activities, DIY activities suggest a striving for what an earlier era might have called control over the means of production and what has now come to include control over the means of representation. Perhaps ironically this has been aided by the availability of inexpensive desk top publishing and other means of "mechanical reproduction" since the 1980s (though not all anarchists choose to use it).

*Along with DIY production often comes the collective production of alternative subjectivities. For many the content as well as the process of DIY production expresses a confrontation with the cultural codes of everyday life.*

While such activities express a variety of styles and viewpoints, they tend to present a vision of a desired society which is participatory and democratic. In production, content and, often through distribution in gift economies, they advocate active production of culture rather than passive consumption of cultural (or even entertainment) commodities. Self-production provides an opportunity for producers to act against the proprietorship of information. Most DIY communications, whether literature, music, videos or broadcasts, for example, are produced as anti-copyrights or as "copylefts" and sharing of material is encouraged. Indeed as a key part of gift economies, DIY takes on an important place in experimenting with communities that are not organized around market principles of exchange value. They help to create a culture of self-valorization rather than giving creativity over to the logics of surplus value.

The notion of self-valorization, as used by contemporary anarcho-communists and libertarian socialists builds upon Marx's discussion of use value versus exchange value. While under communist social relations there will be no exchange value, what is produced will still retain use value. People produce things because they have some kind of use for them; they meet some need or desire. This is where the qualitative aspect of production comes in. Generally people prefer products that are well-made, function as planned, are not poisonous and so on. Under capitalism, exchange value, in which a coat can get two pairs of shoes, predominates use value. This is the

quantitative aspect of value that does not care whether the product is durable, shoddy or toxic as long as it secures its (potential) value in sale or other exchange with something else.

And capitalism's driving focus on the quantitative at the expense of the qualitative also comes to dominate human labour. The quality (skill, pleasure, creativity) of the particular work that people do is not primarily relevant for the capitalist (except that skilled labour costs more to produce and carries more exchange value). That is partly because exchange is based on the quantity of 'average-socially-necessary-labour-time' embodied in the product human labour produces. That simply means that if some firm takes a longer time to produce something on outdated machinery they can not claim the extra labour time they take, due to inefficiencies, compared to a firm that produces more quickly using updated technology, and that is one reason why outmoded producers go under).

Capitalist production is geared towards exchange as the only way that surplus value is actually realized rather than being potential; the capitalist can not bank surplus as value until the product has been exchanged. Use value plays a part only to the extent that something has to have some use for people or else they would not buy it; well, if the thing seems totally useless the bosses still have advertising to convince people otherwise. Under other non-capitalist "modes of production", such as feudalism, most production is geared towards use value production rather than exchange value.

Surely if, under communism, people are producing to meet their needs, they will continue to produce use values (and even a surplus of them in case of emergency) without regard for exchange value (which would, certainly, be absent in a truly communist society anyway). Unless one is talking about a communism of uselessness perhaps. Certainly people would value their work (qualitatively) in ways that cannot be imagined now since they would be meeting their community's needs and would try to do so with some joy and pleasure in work, providing decent products without fouling up the environment.

The new subjectivities emerging from the transition to neo-liberalism have sought to contest and overcome the impositions of productive flexibility within regimes of capitalist globalization. Rather than accepting the emerging socio-political terrain or, alternatively and more commonly,

attempting to restrain it within the familiar territories of the welfare state, recent movements have “appropriated the social terrain as a space of struggle and self-valorization”<sup>35</sup>.

For many contemporary activists and theorists the concept of self-valorization offers an important starting point for thinking about “the circuits that constitute an alternative sociality, autonomous from the control of the State or capital”<sup>36</sup>. Originating in autonomist Marxist reflections on the social movements that emerged most notably in Italy during the intense struggles of the 1970s, the idea of self-valorization has influenced a range of libertarian communist and anarchist writers. As Hardt suggests:

*“Self-valorization was a principal concept that circulated in the movements, referring to social forms and structures of value that were relatively autonomous from and posed an effective alternative to capitalist circuits of valorization. Self-valorization was thought of as the building block for constructing a new form of sociality, a new society”*<sup>37</sup>.

Twentieth century notions of self-valorization echo the arguments made by classical anarchist communists such as Kropotkin and Reclus, regarding the construction of grassroots forms of welfare developed through mutual aid societies. Self-valorization is one way by which a variety of recent theorists have sought to identify social forms of welfare that might constitute alternative networks outside of state control<sup>38</sup>. As Del Re<sup>39</sup> suggests, part of the new parameters for change includes “the proposal to go beyond welfare by taking as our goal the improvement of the quality of life, starting from the reorganization of the time of our lives.”

For radical political theorists in Italy, the experiences of the social movements “show the possibilities of alternative forms of welfare in which systems of aid and socialization are separated from State control and

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35 (Vercellone, 1996: 84)

36 (Hardt, 1996: 6)

37 Ibid (1996: 3)

38 (Hardt, 1996; see Vercellone, 1996 and Del Re, 1996)

39 (1996: 110)

situated instead in autonomous social networks. These alternative experiments may show how systems of social welfare will survive the crisis of the Welfare State”<sup>40</sup>. These systems of social welfare, however, are based on social solidarity outside of state control through practices of autonomous self-management. Beyond providing necessary services these practices are geared towards freeing people from the necessity of waged labour, of valorization for capital. In this, self-valorizing activities challenge the limits even of the gift economy and shift emphasis again towards that great concern of anarcho-communists historically - the abolition of the wage system.

### **Re-visioning anarchy**

While some commentators question the pedigree of contemporary anarchism, I would suggest that there are clear precedents in the works of classical anarchist writers. Bakunin, for example, viewed trade unions not merely as economic institutions but as the “embryo of the administration of the future” and argued that workers should pursue co-operatives rather than strikes<sup>41</sup>. Recognizing the impossibility of competing with capitalist enterprises he called for the pooling of all private property as the collective property of freely federated workers' associations. These ideas would serve as the intellectual impetus for anarcho-syndicalism and its vision of the industrial syndicate as the seed of the future society.

Perhaps most influential in the current revisioning of anarchy has been the work of Gustav Landauer. Influenced by the writings of the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, Landauer identified himself as an “anarchist socialist” to distinguish himself from popular currents of Stirnerist egoism. Drawing upon Tönnies distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (organic community) and *Gesellschaft* (atomized society), Landauer desired the rebirth of community from within the shell of statist and capitalist society. The forms within which the new society would gestate were to be the *bunde*, local, face-to-face associations.

The anarchist-socialist community, for Landauer, is not something which awaits a future revolution. Rather it is the growing discovery of something

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40 (Vercellone, 1996: 81)

41 (Marshall, 1993: 627)

already present: “This likeness, this equality in inequality, this peculiar quality that binds people together, this common spirit is an actual fact”<sup>42</sup>. In as much as anarchism would involve revolution, this “revolution”, for Landauer, would consist of elements of refusal in which individuals withdraw co-operation with existing state institutions and create their own positive alternatives.

*“The state is a condition, a certain relationship among human beings, a mode of behaviour between them; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another... We are the state, and we shall continue to be the state until we have created the institutions that form a real community and society of men.”*<sup>43</sup>

Landauer thus advocated the development of self-directed communities which would permit a break from institutions of authority. Revolution, reconceptualized by Landauer as a gradual rejection of coercive social relations through the development of alternatives, was not a borderline between social conditions (marking temporalities of “pre-” and “post-”) but a continuous principle spanning vast expanses of time<sup>44</sup>.

This view of revolution as a process of constructing alternative forms of sociation as models of a new society is largely shared by contemporary anarchists. Revolution is a process, and even the eradication of coercive institutions will not automatically create a liberatory society. We create that society by building new institutions, by changing the character of our social relationships, by changing ourselves - and throughout that process by changing the distribution of power in society. If we cannot begin this revolutionary project here and now, then we cannot make a revolution<sup>45</sup>.

For Paul Goodman, an American anarchist whose writings influenced the 1960s New Left and counterculture, anarchist futures-present serve as necessary acts of “drawing the line” against the authoritarian and oppressive forces in society. Anarchism, in Goodman's view, was never

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42 (Landauer quoted in Marshall, 1993: 411)

43 (Landauer quoted in Marshall, 1993: 411).

44 (Marshall, 1993: 412)

45 (Ehrlich, Ehrlich, DeLeon and Morris, 1996: 5)

oriented only towards some glorious future; it involved also the preservation of past freedoms and previous libertarian traditions of social interaction. "A free society cannot be the substitution of a 'new order' for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of the social life"<sup>46</sup>. Utopian thinking will always be important, Goodman argued, in order to open the imagination to new social possibilities, but the contemporary anarchist would also need to be a conservator of society's benevolent tendencies.

As many recent anarchist writings suggest, the potential for resistance might be found anywhere in everyday life<sup>47</sup>. If power is exercised everywhere, it might give rise to resistance everywhere. Present-day anarchists like to suggest that a glance across the landscape of contemporary society reveals many groupings which are anarchist in practice if not in ideology. Examples include the leaderless small groups developed by radical feminists, coops, clinics, learning networks, media collectives, direct action organizations; the spontaneous groupings that occur in response to disasters, strikes, revolutions and emergencies; community-controlled day-care centers; neighborhood groups; tenant and workplace organizing; and so on<sup>48</sup>.

While these are obviously not strictly anarchist groups, they often operate to provide examples of mutual aid and non-hierarchical and non-authoritarian modes of living which carry the memory of anarchy within them.

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# The Hillsmen of Gangpur: A Discourse on Resistance Movements.

by Patit Paban Mishra

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*The present paper makes an endeavor to study the social structure and discontent among tribals leading to resistance movement in the ex-princely state of Gangpur, India. The tribals ranged from Zamindars and village chiefs to the agricultural laborers. There was considerable social differentiation in the social structure. The policy of colonial Government in replacing the tribal chiefs with outsiders resulted in depeasantisation. The movement collapsed after the arrest of the leaders. But the failure of did not lessen its historical importance. A dynamism was generated in the tribal society because of its reaction to changing situation, both internally and externally.*

The changing socio-economic situation and resistance struggles of the tribals have drawn the attention of social anthropologists and historians. The tribals constituted about 65 per cent of the population of the princely state of Gangpur, Orissa in eastern India. The rulers of feudatory states were effectively acting as agents of British imperialism. They tended to

demand excessive revenue from their subjects and the king of Gangpur was not an exception. The result was “depeasantization” and landlessness among tribals, leading to their discontent. Similar developments were also found in the other feudatory states of Orissa<sup>49</sup>.

Raja Raghunath Sekhar Deo introduced a new revenue settlement in 1874 and transferred some villages by auction to the highest bidders who came from the neighboring states. With the influx of Brahmins, Agharias and Telis, there was a change in social structure. Many tribal chiefs lost their earlier privileges. The land revenue policy of the colonial government was another cause of tribal discontent. Starting from the new settlement of the king in 1874, the misery of tenants, poor peasants and agricultural laborers increased. From an amount of Rs.5,200 in 1865, the revenue was increased by Rs.15, 000 along with increased supply of paddy and cereals<sup>50</sup>. The rent paid by fief-holders and gauntias (village chiefs) was not sufficient for the ruler, who was engaged in constructing a magnificent palace. The leases to chiefs was discontinued, then auctioned, and the highest bidders, usually from outside the state, received the lease agreement.

This led to revolt. A tribal gauntia named Madro Kalo rallied some chiefs behind him and rose in rebellion. With assistance of the British government, the revolt was suppressed. Edward Gait, Chief Secretary to government of Bengal reported in 1897 that the Deputy Commissioner of Singhbhum had intervened with an armed police force and that the leaders were arrested<sup>51</sup>. A new settlement was imposed on the cultivators in 1900 after an agreement between the king and gauntias. There was augmentation of rent on all types of land<sup>52</sup>. The increase in land revenue demand further continued in 1911 and 1936. The discontent among tribals, which had been growing since the last decade of the nineteenth century, flared up at this latest increase in land revenue demand. A converted Christian; Nirmal Munda led the aggrieved tribals and demanded a revision of the land settlement. It may have been more than a coincidence that the movement was led by a Christian. In 1870,

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49 Eschmann, A., H. Kulke and G.C. Tripathi (1978)

50 Senapati, N. (1975)

51 Ibid

52 Mukherji, I.B. (1978)

a Lutheran mission had started its activities in Raiboga and set up a station there, while a German Evangelical mission had opened in Kumukela. The missionary activities played an important role in spreading education among Munda tribals. Thus political consciousness developed. Christianity became an instrument to fight the oppressors and it became the rallying point of the anti-feudal struggle. But we should not overemphasize the importance of religion in the movement as Hindu tribals also joined later.

There was a campaign for refusing to pay any rent to the state under the leadership of Nirmal Munda. Dahijira village became the nerve-centre of the agitation and non-Christian tribal leaders like Bahadur Bhagat and Yakub Gudia joined hands with Nirmal Munda. The administration sought the help of the Church Council of Ranchi to appease the tribals, but the efforts of the delegation proved futile<sup>53</sup>. A petition was submitted to the queen Regent Janaki Rathnaya Amarjee at a meeting held at Sargipali on February 9, 1939. About 5,000 people from 30 villages articulated their anti-establishment feeling by demanding free transfer of land, establishment of a co-operative credit society, freedom to sell lac, silk, wax etc., and abolition of forcible contribution in cash or kind and an end to the bethi (forced labor) system. The nonchalant attitude of the queen gave a fillip to the no-rent campaign, and the Mundas refused to pay revenue dues. Following a carrot and stick policy, the administration issued arrest warrants. The situation was viewed seriously by the colonial government. On April 25, 1939, about 80 tribals had gathered around the village Simko facing the house of Nirmal Munda. The attempt to arrest him led to a police firing, in which 28 tribals were killed, according to the official report<sup>54</sup>.

After the arrest of the leaders, the movement collapsed. But the Prajamandal movement was organized in Gangpur in 1946, and the state merged with Orissa two years afterwards. The tribal society had experienced internal social differentiation, but it had also experienced external pressure due to diminution of forest land, increase in land revenue demand, influx of outsiders and the oppressive policy of the king. The failure of the tribal revolt did not lessen its historical importance, for it generated dynamism in the tribal society because of its reaction to the changing situation.

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53 Pati, S. (1987)

54 Amrita Bazar Patrika, May 2, 1939

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