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Dear Amadeo,

Enclosed is "The Power to Create, the Power to Destroy," a rewritten version of the same "manifesto" I wrote in 1969 for Ecology Action East in New York City. The present "manifesto," or "Statement of Principles" of the newly constituted Northern Vermont Greens is an updated version with certain modifications (libertarian municipalism) of the old one. Certain passages have been deleted, others modified, and still others (especially the conclusion) added to it. I submit it to you and the comrades as one example of how we, in the New England setting of town meetings, where municipalism has real meaning and direct democracy is still being practiced (even if only in vestigial form), of a libertarian practice, one that has a certain measure of success. ~~People~~ should understand that in New England, at least, and particularly Vermont, we can have a real anarchist practice on the communal scale. Our group, up to now, has grown considerably and we have some very exciting people, especially in recent weeks, who are involved in considerable study and plan to function directly with the general population as more than a sect. It is very unfortunate that Rosella did not have an opportunity to see this when she was here. Much of it came out of the Institute for Social Ecology summer program; still others from events that have been percolating in our area -- particularly the bankruptcy of the Jackson "Rainbow Coalition" and the Democratic Party. I shall tell you more about this when we see each other. It is worth studying and reporting on.

I have received the articles you so kindly translated into English and will give them close study. This is August in Vermont, when we are deluged with visitors and it is almost impossible to concentrate on reading and writing. Forgive me for any delays in responses. I will get to things -- the articles and hopefully a question-and-answer elaboration of "What If We Were Wrong?" article which I sent you separately. This much should be made very clear: the article I sent you and the enclosed statement are not attempts to develop an parliamentary strategy for anarchists. We are completely opposed to parliamentarism. This should be clear and I can not state it too emphatically. What concerns me is the whole analysis of capitalism that we have inherited from the Marxists -- on this score, many anarchists, whether they admit it or even want to acknowledge it or not -- do accept Marx's interpretation ("dialectical") of the capitalist development. I, for one, no longer regard it acceptable. To me, capitalism is not a system that has "dialectical inner limits"; it is the cancer of society -- not even a social cancer. It has no "inner limits": it simply metastasizes and grows, penetrating every sphere of social life, commodifying everything (to use Wallerstein's phrase in quite another connection) and, unless completely effaced, will end with the destruction of society as such, even with the planet as we know it at this

point of evolution. Hence Social-Democratic "politics" (read: statecraft) is totally excluded with its parliamentary crap and forms of "mobilization." I do not believe that capitalism was ever "historically progressive" or even a "historically necessary evil," much less the State. Indeed, I think that many people have gravely misread the "historical nature" of the French Revolution and the American Revolution -- the whole myth that they were "bourgeois revolutions." Here, again, "historical materialism" has penetrated the radical consciousness of our time. Happily, the best and most recent research on these questions -- unknown to me when I wrote "What If We Were Wrong?" -- supports all my doubts on the question. I refer to the work of Alfred Cobban, François Furet, and many others, quite aside from the direct research which has occupied me on the American Revolution.

These questions all converge to very crucial points: the definition of capitalism, the direction of capitalism, the nature of capitalism and the nature of the so-called "bourgeois revolutions" that still exist among many comrades. If "What If We Were Wrong?" seems provocative, it meant deliberately to be so -- even overstated, at times, to open sharp and clear discussion.

I've met too many comrades, even in Italy, dear Amadeo, who despair of effectively fighting this system and are turning "inward" toward an anarchist "lifestyle." I can understand this very well -- all the more so as I reach 65 years of age, when rest, reflection, even nostalgia are my "right" as it were. But there is a Mediterranean and Slavic spirit in me, I suppose, that demands action, at least a public practice of a libertarian kind. So I probe, dear friends, explore, reconsider and try to develop, however feebly, new ways that my anarchist ideals can be translated into public movements. Perhaps we in America have a very peculiar situation -- especially in New England -- that makes the ideas I present in "What If We Were Wrong?" and in the enclosed statement seem viable. In any case, it will be interesting to see what we can do with these ideas here, in the "belly of the beast," as so many Europeans characterize America. Yet we have a hidden democracy, here, that has libertarian qualities from our revolution and its development. Can something be done with that waning but very real tradition -- strangely all the more living because it is so largely "mythic" -- or shall we leave it to the Right to co-opt that tradition, turn its libertarian dimension into a proprietarian one, its individualistic one into an egoistic one, its genuinely collectivistic one into a corporative one, its anti-statist one into a party-oriented one. This is our challenge, dear Amadeo, and we must deal with it at a time when the "Left" in America (heaven help us!) preoccupies itself with Sandinismo, Marxist "scholarship," South Africa -- in fact, everything but America.

I shall be in Paris on November 1, if not earlier. Thank you for all your kind offers and I will phone you, in any case, when I come to Europe, where, in Germany, I will be deeply involved, I suspect, in the fight to keep Danny Cohn-Bendit and the other "Sponties" of yesterday from turning the Greens into a sleazy adjunct of the German SPD.

P. S. Feel free to show this letter to other comrades.

In friendship,

Murray