

Social Movements: Participation and Protest

Alain Touraine, CNRS, Paris

Critiques and New Images of Modernity

Classical sociology identifies modernity with participation and rationalization. The evolution from tradition to modernity permits society to overcome the limitations and specificities of closed communities and to transform itself into a more and more active network of exchanges which supposes a standardized, impersonal, and quantifiable representation of the largest possible number of elements of social life. Bureaucratic rules, accounting, market regulations, and general laws are major examples of a general process of rationalization which is linked to a growing density of social exchange, to use Durkheim's expression.

The underlying idea which links together modernity, rationalization, and participation is that *interests* permit bartering, bargaining, and debate, while passions lock individuals and groups into identity and lead to warlike conflicts. A modern society, says Dahrendorf, is full of limited conflicts while a traditional society combines passivity and global mobilization. This generalization of limited conflicts which can easily be solved by direct negotiation, mediation, or legal intervention creates a direct link between modernization and democratization.

Democracy is modern, says Lipset, first because it supposes direct participation, while traditional, autocratic régimes are linked with the relative isolation of local communities; second, because individual interest calls for the creation of an open political market; third, because the rule of the law can replace personal power when politics deal with exchange, not with essences.

A modern society, then, is a highly differentiated one in which each institution fulfills a function, contributes to the survival and activity of a social system which is oriented toward rational and instrumental action. A modern society is defined by its achievements, not by ascribed statuses.

This optimistic view of modernity is still defended by prominent sociologists. Nevertheless, it has been criticized, since its very beginning, on two opposite grounds.

First, how is it possible to maintain some kind of social order in a type of society which is entirely defined by its capacity to change. Capitalism for example, as the economic expression of modernity, has been defined by its continuous capacity to destroy old forms of production to create new ones. Is not modern society dominated by uprootedness, anomie, and more generally, by absence of participation, if all kinds of communities are constantly replaced by unstable market relations? In a parallel way, modernization is accused of subordinating all aspects of individual and collective life to economic interest and to destroy what cannot be easily expressed in monetary terms: personal feelings as well as long-term preservation of the environment.

Second, the triumph of instrumental action does not lead necessarily to a balance of individual interests; on the contrary, it destroys the capacity of defense of the vast majority of people who are unable to build complex strategies. In a market economy, small shareholders and, even more directly, workers are dominated by tycoons, or raiders who act rationally but only to increase their own power or wealth.

A more elaborate expression of the same general idea is that in a highly mobilized or modern society, power and domination are everywhere and not only in the hands of a Prince. M. Foucault, in particular, has introduced the idea of the diffusion in modern society of systems of normalization and of social and cultural control. The triumph of rational interest means the exclusion of social categories or types of social behavior which are identified by a rationalizing élite with irrationality or traditionalism. Examples are under-developed countries which have to be opened to modernity by colonization, industrial workers who, according to F. W. Taylor, are lazy and must be forced by incentive systems to act according to their economic interests, children who are dominated by their passions, and women who are naturally hysterical and irrational. Progressively, most of the world was subordinated to impersonal laws of rationality which were used to foster the power of élites whose actions were oriented toward profit or war with other élites or other empires.

These two types of criticisms have inspired two opposite anti-modernist movements. The most visible one is the neo-communitarian movement which defends cultural identity against the invasion of western interests, arms and ideas which pretend to fight for rationality and modernity, but actually defend the interests of rich and powerful foreign élites and destroy traditional forms of social and cultural organization.

The other movement, on the contrary, criticizes modernity on behalf of what has been vaguely defined as post-modernity and which corresponds

to the triumph of the avant-garde, a continuous creation of languages and styles which destroys references to evolution as much as to tradition and leads to an extreme diversification of forms of expression and action. Individualism, at that level, stops being synonymous with rationality; like in Baudelaire's writing on modernism, it refers to a resistance to mass production and to a defense of personal esthetic or moral experience.

In short, modernity is identified with power, both by neo-communitarian and anti-modernist movements, and by the defenders of an individual experience which rejects all kinds of evolutionist interpretation.

In the social sciences themselves, the identification of modernity with the application of general principles to social organization has been criticized by a neo-rationalist school which rejects the idea of a scientific organization of production and substitutes for it the notion of 'limited rationality' introduced by H. Simon, and more generally look for a flexible rather than a rational type of production. An efficient organization is no longer defined by general and stable principles, but by its capacity to adjust itself to a complex, changing, uncontrolled environment.

This general crisis of modernity can lead us in two opposite directions. The first one has already been partly described: the rupture with the very notion of modernity. For some people, an evolutionist view of social life corresponded to the short period of take-off which led us in one century or less from scarcity to abundance. Now, we are on a new plateau, and the central idea of modernization must be replaced by a variety of orientations. That is the reason why we are more interested in differences among cultures and societies than in stages of development and why we feel it more important to respect minorities than to discover laws of history.

More precisely, a good number of observers reject the notion of development which received so much attention during the post-war period. A group of scholars headed by A. Abdel Malek, the majority of them coming from Third-World countries, members of one of the major programs of the United Nations University, oppose the unifying and dominating concept of development, and defend the specificity and diversity of various civilizations and cultural areas.

But such a rejection of the notion of modernity introduces an anti-rationalist bias and rapidly leads to cultural pluralism which gives the same importance for example to 'modern' and to 'traditional' medicine. This position is more ideological than practical. Some political leaders, their immediate followers, and some intellectuals can develop an extreme anti-Western attitude, but few people avoid speaking in quantitative terms, or consider Bangladesh and Switzerland just to be different from each other and not more or less 'developed'.

In our own type of society, the crisis of modernity can be interpreted

much more as the decline of a certain image of modernity than as a triumph of a post-modern, anti-modern orientation. After a few years during which social thought seems to have vanished and narcissism to have replaced social commitment, we are living again in a period of frantic race toward modernization and the control of new technologies, and there is a serious danger of going back to a 19th century optimistic scientism. But we cannot begin all over again a new period of modernization, relying once more on science, technology, and instrumental reason to solve all social and personal problems.

We have learned two things from the critics of modernity. First, that there is no direct link, no parallelism between modernity and participation. There is an intermediary variable, power, so that the effects of modernization on participation depend on the results of the social movements, conflicts, and negotiations through which a certain type of social and political control of modernization is created, in the same way as industrialization had only indirect consequences on participation, depending on the relations between management, workers, and the State.

The second is that modernization cannot be identified with rationalism and naturalization. These trends correspond to the process of secularization, that is, the destruction of an 'enchanted' image of the world. But this negative process cannot be identified directly with the general meaning of modernization. The decline of ascription and essences can lead to a purely empiricist view of human action but can as well announce a more direct reference to human creativity, a growing capacity of human beings not to be part of natural systems, but to be agents of a transformation of nature. What is specific of human beings appears more and more to be their consciousness, that is their capacity to select and transform actions' ends and to recognize as a central value-orientation the right for each individual to be a subject, that is to be entitled and able to build his own individuality. Creativity was long attributed to natural principles, then to a Logos and to Reason; human beings, along with the progress of rationalization and of applied sciences in technology, discover themselves as creators of themselves as individuals.

Classical sociology has much too easily accepted a materialist view of social evolution in which science would eliminate creeds and all images of the Subjects progressively fade away. It should have considered more carefully another cultural and intellectual tradition.

Western thought did not proceed toward rationalism; it came from rationalism which dominated Thomist theology as well as 17th and 18th century philosophy, but it replaced during the 19th century the cold and limited image of a rational ego – 'cogito ergo sum' – by the heroic and suffering image of the worker and, in a parallel way, by the austere figure

of the entrepreneur who curbs his wants by submitting himself to a deferred gratification pattern.

Don't we observe in our century the creation of a new figure of the Subject, rational but at the same time not only laboring but desiring; not only work but sex, imagination, and emotion? Can't we define modernization as a process of construction of a Subject who is more and more directly able to consciously build and control all aspects of his own personality?

This link between modernization and the development of the Subject is not contradicted but on the contrary strengthened by the progressive decomposition of ego as a social actor. First defined by its ascription, then by its statuses and roles which are acquired by participation in various types of social organization, ego was destroyed by the development of social sciences and of psycho-analysis. Art, from cubism and expressionism on, made manifest the destruction of ego as a social actor.

This destruction does not impose upon us either a utilitarian view or a voluntaristic image of personality. It can as well call for a study of the processes through which ego ideal or super ego can create some ego from id. Ego is no more a central principle for understanding individual psychology than scientific management for understanding social relations of production. In both cases, the idea of a person – individual or organizational – taking rational decisions and controlling all aspects and levels of his activity has been definitely destroyed and a large part of our contemporary culture expresses this destruction of ego. More generally, we no longer define social actors by their contribution to the integration of a social system.

The central problem of 16th–17th century social thought was: How is it possible to create order and to maintain it against chaos, to establish a civilized life, with rules and codes? The central problem of the industrial period was: How can we maintain some order and integration in societies which are defined by their own progress and permanent change? In both cases, the key notion was society which was often identified with the Subject, especially by legal thought which likes to speak on behalf of society and of its basic values, and by Rousseauist political philosophy.

We are drifting rapidly away from this society-centered social thought. Our main preoccupation is centered on the production and defense of the subject, individual or collective. We do not defend minorities' rights because they fulfill a specific function or try to increase the level of social integration; we defend directly the right of a given group to assert its own identity, while fifty years ago we would have been more universalistic, more integrationist, fighting against obstacles to the assimilation of minorities, particularly of the Jews. The core of women's lib movement is not only to refuse for women to be considered only as instruments of biological or

social reproduction, or as instruments of men's sexual satisfaction, and to advocate equal rights for them, because such a goal means that sex identity must disappear. This liberal, universalistic view is rejected by the most creative feminist groups which, on the contrary, want to assert the specificity of women's sexual, affective and intellectual life, to be able to build equalitarian heterosexual relations between a male Subject and a feminine Subject, creating, through their relations, their own identity.

The defense of the right of a given individual or group to be a Subject does not call for universalistic against particularistic values or vice versa. It combines universalism and particularism. More concretely, a Subject cannot be recognized by law, but by another Subject who asserts himself as Subject through this recognition of the other as Subject. The Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas has called this inter-subject relationship *love*. If the central principle of 16th–18th century reform movement was freedom, of 19th–20th centuries, justice, in contemporary society, it's love. So the most particularistic relation becomes a central principle of social life. Without love, without recognition of the other as Subject, the contemporary call for difference, identity, and specificity turns into segregation, intolerance and religious war, Jihad.

One of the main intellectual and practical tasks at the end of this century is to overcome the open conflict between rationalism – Western type or Soviet type – which is supported both by science and by arms, and eastern or southern nationalism and culturalism which can be dangerously anti-democratic. We, in the Western world, must contribute to the solution of this problem which can lead to a major world crisis by rejecting a repressive and authoritarian view of modernity which identifies it with the conquest and domination of nature, including of what is 'natural' in our own biological and cultural existence.

This deeply transformed view of modernity corresponds to a new system of production. After merchant societies in which exchange was the central category and industrial society in which productive, instrumental activity had a central importance, we are entering a type of social life in which communication is the most important activity.

But this expression can be as ambiguous as rationalism. It names, to be sure, a new stage of rationalism, an increasing level of social density. While industrial workers, or at least part of them, still owned a craft or skill which was autonomous from the production process in which it was used, a communication worker is entirely defined by the processes of encoding and decoding, that is in organizational terms. But such a complete integration is not just a technological fact. Communication tends to be constantly transformed into accumulation of information within an organization and reduces external locutors or receptors to be instruments of this accumu-

lation, which increases organizational power. In the same way, in industrial society machines and organization were transformed into rationalization and scientific management, that is, into a system of social domination of managers over workers. Managers created an impersonal, scientific view of industrial production, while workers opposed to it the central role of productive workers, of their energy, skill, and suffering. I called our society a programmed society because communication processes tend to be subordinated to programs which are created by élite groups. The programmed society is challenged by people, more often outside than inside communication industries, who give priority to communication of information, to bi-directional and equal exchange instead of mass diffusion of centrally produced messages.

More than in industrial society, Subject is defined, in communication society, by its capacity to share with a partner the control of an interpersonal communication because self-production of individuality is directly threatened by the industrial production of cultural models, pieces of information, languages, and attitudes.

In conclusion, our view of social life and social actors, which was first political and then economic, becomes moral or ethical. We feel more deeply committed to the defense of human rights than to a social justice, which has been too often manipulated and transformed into totalitarian régimes, and a purely institutional freedom which is certainly indispensable but which is too often combined with the domination of dependent or colonized countries, and which has been too long indifferent to workers' exploitation.

Social Movements and Participation

A direct consequence of the new approach to modernity, which has just been outlined, is that the action of social movements is less and less oriented toward participation. Such a statement comes as a surprise because we live in societies which have in general a very high capacity for giving institutional answers to social demands, and which value participation as an anti-authoritarian value. Especially in the Scandinavian countries, the political system is so open that social protest is often transformed into reforms before it has been possible to organize it as a social movement. Nevertheless, let's not confuse the institutional treatment of social demands with the nature and orientation of the demands themselves.

Most social movements in traditional rural communities were defensive actions against external aggression, military or economic; social movements were often tightly linked with national or communitarian movements. As a consequence, the self-organized defense of interests was often linked with the heteronomous, subordinated participation to political action; but

mobilization was first of all an identification with a community and the defense of its values, activities, and interests.

In merchant societies, especially in 17th- and 18th-century Europe, the main goal of social movements was political representation. Democracy was identified with the right to vote taxes, especially in Britain. It was the main problem in France, too, every time the *Etats Généraux* were called into session. Social movements appeared as the expression of absence or loss of political participation. Jean-Jaques Rousseau gave the most extreme expression of this protest movement when he based the legitimacy of political institutions on its correspondence with a basic social contract through which human beings constitute themselves as citizens.

The Labor Movement was less completely oriented toward participation. One of its main goals, to be sure, was self-management and it advocated, especially in social democratic régimes, workers' participation in industrial management at the shop and factory levels as well as at the branch and national levels. But at the same time it was based on the defense of workers' autonomy, on their resistance to scientific management, on their hope to free themselves from factory life, and to conquer their independence as craftsmen or small entrepreneurs. The more concentrated and rationalized industrial production is, the more ambiguous becomes the idea of workers' participation. Often it means the access to power of unions' representatives and the creation of a wider and wider gap between plain, ordinary workers and these new members of the political class. Today, the idea of workers' participation is more actively defended by Japanese managers than by European labor leaders. The more active a society is, the higher its capacity to transform itself, the more easily open conflicts spread in all sectors of social life, while in a traditional society, each group tries to maintain or improve its level of participation. An extreme – and in my view excessive – expression of this evolution is Marcuse's idea that in a modern mass production society, the ruling élite controls social life so completely that the only possible expression of dissent must be marginal, coming from drop-outs. In a more moderate way, we can say that in a very active society, it is more and more necessary for protest movement to oppose the apparent functionality and technicality of social organization because they conceal the defense of specific interests. Thus, social movements are more and more protest movement and less and less participation-oriented.

The relative decline of social participation as a goal for social movements must at the same time be interpreted as a progressive separation of two kinds of conflict: structural conflicts, which are defined by a struggle around the social control of main societal resources, and 'historical conflicts', which are centered around the political control of development, of the passage from one societal type to another. In merchant societies, the differentiation

between these two types of conflict was a limited one and the enemy of peasants' or craftsmen's movements was as much the State as big business or large landowners. In industrial societies, the differentiation became more visible, but was still limited. Union activities as such were directed against management and challenged industrial organization; here was the specific field of class struggle which was strongly rooted at the job, shop, and factory levels, but at the same time the Labor Movement was generally linked with one form or another of socialism, in fact with the defense of a non-capitalistic process of development. Class struggle created a social movement, but socialism was much more of a historical movement. The first one responded to the nature of industrial society; socialism challenged a process of industrialization.

The two faces of the Labor Movement are almost never completely separated from each other, but they can certainly not be considered as just two aspects or levels of action of a unified social movement. For example, we can easily observe industrial workers' class conscious action in so-called socialist countries, that is, in countries where the process of industrialization is no longer in the hands of a bourgeoisie but is controlled by the State. In that case, a class conscious action can even be associated with an anti-socialist attitude. Socialist ideas, and in a complementary way, pro-capitalist ideologies, insist on participation, while class-oriented action – on both sides – emphasizes conflict and tension, innovation or revolt.

S. M. Lipset has demonstrated that radicalism was the political expression of a low level of political social participation. But radicalism or reformism have very little to do with the formation of a class conscious workers' action as a response to the control by management of industrializational organization. The American reformist A. F. of L. and the French revolutionary C.G.T. at the beginning of the 19th century were very distant from each other politically, but shared the same view about the basic class conflict which opposes workers to management in industrial production.

The relative decline of social participation as a goal for protest movement came in great part from the growing separation between structural problems and historical problems. This growing differentiation comes from the decline of the representation of development as an endogenous process. The European idea of modernization in the 19th century was identified with the idea of modernity. Modern societies were defined by their capacity to create modernity, to transform themselves constantly, to invent new technologies and new ideas thanks to the progress of science, education, and communications. Who shares, today, such an optimistic and ethnocentric view, when we observe that the most dynamic industrial country, Japan, reached a high capacity for modernization by maintaining non-modern, traditional patterns of social relations, while highly modern Euro-

pean countries have a low capacity of modernization and tend to sacrifice future for present, and long-term investments to immediate consumption. We are re-discovering that development is not entirely created within a given society, that it can be defined as a capacity to mobilize resources to respond to challenges – technological, economic or military. The theory of endogenous development insisted on rationalization; the new theory of adaptive responses to challenges insists on flexibility.

In a post-industrial society, the separation between management of new systems of production and processes of historical transformation is so wide open that the goal of social participation, which corresponded to the interdependence between these two sets of problems, loses most of its appeal. On the one hand, the catchword is not participation, but, on the contrary, capacity to change and to move from one activity to another; on the other hand, individuals and groups try to maintain their identity and capacity of communication against systems of information which integrate, in an even more oppressive way than industrial management, social actors into systems not only of production but of power.

New Social Movements

Collective forms of behavior which have been called new social movements are less and less political because they no longer associate in their action structural problems of a post-industrial society with conflicts linked with the process of historical transformation. But many observers conclude that collective actions which are not directly oriented to the conquest of political power lose their capacity to unify more specific protests. Central social movements, like anti-autocratic movements or the Labor Movement, belong to the past and our society heads towards the triumph of interest group politics. Union campaigns, regionalist movements, feminist initiatives, defense of ethnic minorities, anti-nuclear struggles, seem to have little in common and their basic interest is to concentrate their forces on specific targets, not on vague political themes. Other observers describe an opposite weakness of these new social movements; they oppose modern society more from the outside than from the inside; they advocate a complete cultural and social change instead of criticizing it from within and tend to divide themselves as soon as they enter into concrete political action; halfway between utopias and interest groups, the social and political scene seems to be dominated by mass leaders more interested in their public image than in a 'project of society' which would be too rigid to help them to obtain the support of unrelated pressure groups.

These complementary critiques seem to be enhanced by the fragility and short life of most new social movements. Feminists are much less active

than ten years ago; students, after the mass movement of the sixties, were described, at the end of the seventies, as passive, as more preoccupied with their own careers than with general ideas. In some countries like France, the ecological and anti-nuclear movement almost disappeared after 1978.

It is certainly valuable not only to analyse the weaknesses of new protest movements, but, even more, to avoid identifying any conflict in all its aspects with a social movement. However, it is necessary to go beyond these useful but limited observations. First of all, it is not possible to accept a purely descriptive definition of social movements as if any kind of 'trouble' or protest had the same nature. We must use here the notion of social movements in a more specific sense, even if such a choice seems arbitrary. We must at least choose between three possible uses of the same word. For some social scientists, a social movement is first of all the collective defense of economic interests. But how is it possible to accept such a narrow definition of social movement when the most striking fact about new social movements is that they largely defend non-economic interests? Moreover, a long line of social thinkers, from Roberto Michels to Mancur Olson, have rightly demonstrated that economic interest is mainly individual and cannot explain the formation of a collective action which is in fact, they say, an instrument for the defense of leaders' personal interests.

A much more interesting school of thought, initiated by N. Smelser, considers social movements as responses to the crisis or destruction of an important element of a social system. For example, many strikes or labor conflicts try to avoid the consequences of an industrial crisis. These movements of reconstruction, which could be called conservative, are certainly important, but they are quite different from collective actions which fight for orienting and controlling a process of change, so different indeed that I proposed to call these anti-social movements. Their main goal is participation and the defense of society or community against disruptive forces, external or internal. This notion has received widespread attention in American sociology, which has traditionally given a central role to the idea of social system. Social movements appear then as responding to dysfunctions and crises of social order. The number of studies devoted to social movements increased sharply in the seventies in the United States, precisely because black movements, students' protest or anti-war movements appeared as challenging an institutional order which identified itself with rationality and modernity. These movements were interpreted sometimes as integrative forces, opening more completely a society which was still dominated by privileges and prejudices; sometimes, on the contrary, as radical threats to a democratic society because they were defending particularistic interests against a supposedly universalistic society. These two complementary interpretations have in common the analysis of social movements in terms of participation or exclusion.

On the contrary, the third school of thought defines social movements as organized action involved in a conflict for the social control of central cultural resources – investments, knowledge, or patterns of ethical behavior. This means that a social movement exists only if it combines a conflict between specific groups which are in an unequal relation of power and a field of conflict which is positively recognized by both groups. For example, the Labor Movement was a struggle of organized workers against management for the control of industrial investment and industrial organization. What opposes this definition to the previous one is that it does not refer directly to values around which a system of social organization is built but to power relations which are an intermediary variable between culture and social organization. This opposition between two approaches exemplifies a more general conflict between a functionalist and a non-functionalist view of social life.

If we accept, at least temporarily, the separation of interest groups, reconstructive action, and social movements, two questions must be immediately raised. The first is: what is the specific field and who are the actors of new social movements? The second is: are these movements diversified or relatively isolated from each other, or does there exist a central social movement, as in industrial society where the Labor Movement appeared to be the central social movement, at least among non-élite groups?

What has been said in the first two parts of this paper leads us to recognize that new social movements are not just new forms of the Labor Movement or of protest against technological change. They deal specifically with the social control of production and diffusion of symbolic goods; they oppose the creation of images, languages, and representations which impose upon us basic components of our individual experience and personality. They are not just the defense of consumers of new services; they challenge the way technostructures, by controlling cultural industries, acquire a power which creates relations, not of exploitation, but of alienation, because the image of our very self is determined by these cultural industries, by hospitals and the medical industry on the one hand, and by the mass media on the other. Our representation of the world and of societies seems to be constructed and imposed upon us by the mass media as much as our representation of health and illness, of birth, reproduction, and death is shaped by hospitals and doctors.

Such a strict definition of new social movements helps answer the second question about the possible creation of one central social movement, because there is a visible parallelism between various conflicts and collective protest movements which challenge a domination of cultural industries. The central role of feminist movements in this network of new social

movements makes clear that these movements are not anti-modern, because the contraceptive pill certainly contributed to free women from purely traditional roles. In the same way that the Labour Movement was both progressive, that is, pro-modern and anti-capitalist, new social movements struggle to make possible non-technocratic or non-commercial use of new cultural industries, but they are not neo-traditionalist.

It remains true that the similarity of goals of various protest movements does not lead to their organizational unity. But the apparent strength the Labour Movement received from the central political role of socialist or communist parties was paid at a very high price, by the subordination of a social movement to political action. The dream of a self-managed labor movement was present from the beginning to the end of the history of the Labor Movement. In Italian Operaismo, in the Lip Strike, or in Serge Mallet's writings, in the sixties and seventies, as much as in the revolutionary syndicalism of the early 19th century, this autonomy and central role of unionism was claimed, but this claim was never transformed into reality. On the contrary, new social movements are largely autonomous from political parties, even when they contribute to the creation of new parties, like the German Greens. Political parties as such no longer attract passions. European parties have long identified political action with social classes, but their representative functions disappear and they transform themselves into coalitions which try to attract centrist or unstable votes. The hottest area in public life is no longer at the frontier between economic interests and political action; it is where cultural innovations and social conflicts overlap.

Once the centrality of a new social movement has been recognized, it is necessary to observe more closely the slow and difficult process through which this social movement takes shape and the different types of collective behavior which mingle with it. If politics are further and further away from new social movements, marginality, revolt, and exclusion are nearer and nearer to it. Social movements were limited and repressed by strong mechanisms of social and cultural control and it was difficult for people who were submitted to authoritarian rules and isolated by lack of education and information to go beyond specific material claims and to challenge general patterns of social organizations. Some intellectual and political leaders spoke on behalf of peasants or workers, but were very far from their life experiences. In our time, the dangers are the opposite. Protest spreads more easily thanks to radio, TV, and newspapers and the general level of education is much higher than one century ago. Social and cultural controls have been loosened; the result is that protests, which were too limited, are now easily too general; they question very directly and globally cultural orientations, like ecologists do, more than specific forms of social

and political power. Many new social movements do not pretend to represent a precise social category, but mankind as a whole, or vague categories, like youth.

This transformation cannot be confused with the development of movements which challenge a cultural power instead of an economic or managerial one. Protests against cultural power are often covered by a global cultural critique, rejecting productivity, progress, evolution, and giving priority to equilibrium, integration, and equality over production and economic development.

The main weakness of new social movements is that they have difficulties defining their enemy. No clear image has replaced the old ones: capitalism or management. When no social opponent is defined, the actor tends to identify himself with positive values and to fight against enemies which threaten a community more than their own interests and power. This is a process through which social movements are transformed into what I call anti-social movements.

A global cultural critique is more easily expressed by relatively marginal or self-marginalized groups. This idea has first been expressed by H. Marcuse who did not believe in the possibility for new social movements to take steps in a manipulative and integrative society. In a parallel way, M. Foucault considered prisoners as the best subject-object of a possible social movement. In both cases, the forecasts have not been supported by experience, but these ideas rightly drew attention to the difficulty of freeing a social movement from a global cultural critique which leads to revolt, short-lived mass movements, or manipulation by politicians.

In spite of the difficulties which their formation meets, let's try to define the basic components of these new social movements: the social category they defend, their enemy, and the field of their conflict, or, better, what is at stake in them. The easiest element to define is what these movements stand for: the control by individuals and groups of their identity, of their capacity to build and control their life experience. These movements do not defend a socio-economic category and it would be short-sighted to define them as consumers' movements. To oppose the personality of the patient to the system of medical care, or 'real people's' problems to TV or radio programmes, or women's rights to pornography, means the defense of the individual's right to 'produce himself' instead of being manufactured by technologies and organizations. Their enemy is generally defined in quasi-industrial terms, as an élite which maximizes its power by submitting everybody to technocratic or bureaucratic procedures and gives priority to productivity.

It is more difficult to define the cultural values or orientations which are accepted by both camps but interpreted in contradictory terms. In industrial society, these values were called progress and rationalization. Today, they

are defined in terms of communication and systems. But the new élite conceives of communication as an instrument of integration of the productive system, which must be able to adjust itself to constant internal and external changes, while protest movements defend communication between autonomous subjects and criticize the growing dichotomy between élite and mass, producers and consumers, speakers and listeners and try to introduce a higher degree of interaction between them.

Social movements always have direct or indirect effects on political life. New social movements often have more influence as instruments of transformation of political life than as themselves. The Labor Movement was important by itself, for its great capacity of mobilization, but it created a new form of democracy too: union delegates or shop-stewards were more directly controlled by their electors than by members of Parliament. In the same way, new social movements introduce a more direct democracy and defend, beyond the rule of majority, the respect of minorities. The German Greens are experiencing the unavoidable tension between political efficiency and cultural fundamentalism, but, until now, no new social movement has been accused of being submitted to the iron law of oligarchy that dominated, according to R. Michels, social democratic mass parties and unions. Their anti-authoritarian orientation comes to a large extent from the central role women play in them. In many ways, these movements can be interpreted as a re-entry into public life of categories which had been expelled from it by the rationalizing élite made of Western adult middle-class males. Protest was dramatic, it becomes fun; it was instrumental, it becomes expressive; it was strongly national in spite of an ideological internationalism, it links in a completely new way problems of industrialized societies with those of Third World poor countries.

Here we come back to our starting-point. The central meaning of these new social movements is that they reconstruct a more complete and complex image of the Subject. They reintroduce emotion into rational action, solidarity into efficiency; they replace the aggressive ideal of men's domination of nature by the defense of creativity of individuals who try to safeguard their own complexity, their roots as much as their projects.

Sometimes the defense of individuality leads to counter-culture; more often it is a defense against new powers which have a growing capacity for controlling not only means of production, but cultural ends, and the formation of personality. The growing separation between social movements and political action makes it more difficult for various protest movements to unify into a general and central social movement, but at the same time, even if the integration of various conflicts is partial and loose, new social movements question more directly than previous social movements all aspects of domination and power. They oppose not only legal

and institutional rules, not only management methods, but images, languages, and values.

During the sixties, the new social movements rose, but they expressed themselves through analytical and political categories which were directly borrowed from old radical parties. Such a contradiction rapidly led to their disintegration and to the political and ideological void which characterized the late seventies. More recently, we have observed the development of new élite ideologies which hail the triumph of new communication industries. New élite groups always take shape before opposition forces. These have been weakened by early utopian visions and, in an opposite way, by the consequences of economic crises and unemployment. It would be misleading to pretend that they will soon dominate the political scene. They generally stay politically marginal, but are rapidly transforming public opinion. This leads us to our conclusion on the effects of social movements on participation. Social movements generally aimed at a higher degree of participation in decision-making systems and with respect to working conditions. But participation becomes less important now than autonomy. In the same way, negotiation is no longer as important as expression. Social movements are becoming less political because they are more prophetic in a world which knows it has an almost unlimited capacity to create, transform, and destroy itself.