

Five Theses on Workers' Councils

John Zerzan

1994

Dear DB'ers,

There are so many ways to run the world. This journal, in fact, fairly teems with schemes of governance. And yet don't we all know, on some level or other, that running the world is not the challenge that will heal us and the planet? A world that doesn't need running offers the only qualitative difference from today's hyper-alienated one.

In the spirit of the excellent critique of democracy from *Echanges*' (DB 62), I submit the following very brief objections to the direct democracy of workers' councils.

- a. The Adorno-type objection to ideological imposition on the future, which says that the shape of freedom is not concretely theorizable because that blue-printing closes off other (possibly more radical) departures.
- b. As a definition of anarchy, councilism is rejected: if emancipation consists of no rule, rule by councils is not emancipatory. (Anarchy is not democracy insofar as it disallows *any* form of government.)
- c. The critique of technological civilization and division of labor seeks to dissolve production; councilism is a means of directing industrial production. A world in which technology is absent has obviously no need of such coordination of specialization and economy.
- d. If the condition of worker is to be abolished, as it is already being refused in partial ways, workers' councils are backward because they perpetuate it in their fundamental work-erism.
- e. If representation is a negative value, councilism fails on a strictly 'organizational' level. To be represented is a humiliation. Further, delegates and recall have always been, in practice, direct routes to bureaucratization and the rule of experts (consult all trade union history).

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Retrieved on 8th June 2022 from radicalarchives.org
Letter to *Discussion Bulletin* #63 (Jan-Feb 1994), page 20.

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