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City University of New York PH.D. 1982

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MODEST STRUGGLE

UNDERSTANDING EVERYDAY RESISTANCE THROUGH CITIZEN ACTIVISM IN THE 1970'S

by

Celene Krauss

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The City University of New York.

1982

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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When I think of modest struggle I think of my parents. They were liberated from a concentration camp in 1945 by resisting in this small way: they walked very, very slowly to the train that was to deport them to another concentration camp. They knew that every minute counted. On the way to the train they were liberated by the Russians. Everyone who made it to that train died.

I wish to express my appreciation to the members of my committee; to Bill Kornblum for his generous spirit and rigorous thought, to George Fischer for inspiration and vision, to Michael Brown for helping clarify and frame important questions and issues.

I am forever grateful to my husband, Walter Krauss, for his love and support. And for washing the dishes, doing the shopping, cleaning the house, and brightening my days with flowers and his warmth.

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Chapter One

GROUNDING A THEORETICAL CONCEPTION OF MODEST STRUGGLE

I. A Clash of Two Worlds: Activism and the Academy

Modest struggle is a theoretical conception I develop to understand the phenomenon of everyday resistance. I offer a new way to analyze social protests of ordinary people that grow out of their daily lives. These everyday forms of resistance are elusive and often invisible to outsiders.

For the most part, the deeper meanings and importance of these protests are ignored or considered unimportant. For modest struggle does not fit into any grand notion of social change held either by participants or by observers. More and more I feel we need a way to analyze such everyday resistance against prevailing social arrangements.

Here I develop an over-all conception of what I call "modest struggle". I do so by analyzing one case of everyday resistance in our own time and place. I refer to the emergence of citizen activism in the 1970's. Citizen Activism is a term popularly used to describe and give coherence to many different grassroot activities that emerged in the neighborhood and workplace over the past ten years.

In an article entitled, "Citizen Activism Gaining in the Nation", The New York Times recently described citizen activism as a progressive, grassroot phenomenon growing from the mainstream of society.[1] These groups raise issues about a wide variety of neighborhood, environmental, and consumer problems. The phenomenon of citizen activism referred to here can be distinguished from what Alan Crawford calls "Right-Wing Populism".[2] The struggles Crawford describes also take the form of local, citizen initiatives including, for example, fights against the Equal Rights Amendment and pornography. They differ from the citizen revolt since citizen activists do not generally define themselves in terms of traditional left or right politics. By contrast "Right-Wing Populism" emerges primarily within the right as a challenge to mainstream conservative politics.

The citizen protests I analyze in this study were not clearly visible during the past decade. There were few mass movements and fewer mass leaders. Yet, in its hidden ways, citizen activism helps me get at the heart of what modest struggle means in general. In these less visible spaces close to home, people who never before resisted became politicized in deeply personal ways. They made the link between the political nature of their personal troubles. In those moments, people at the grassroots moved from experiencing much that troubled them to

fighting back. Women miscarried and fought against pesticide poisoning. Workers got cancer and fought for health and safety on the job. Neighborhoods were threatened by the bulldozer and residents fought General Motors and City Hall.

I want to argue that to understand everyday protests such as these requires a different kind of analysis. For these protests grow in slow and elusive ways out of felt and, hence, subjective experience. Their deeper meanings are often taken for granted by participants and may not be articulated at all. The more implicit analysis that grows out of everyday resistance is not verifiable in the traditional sense of social science. They cannot be measured by interviews or surveys alone. To understand these protests requires a perspective which puts the process of slow and elusive protest first.

On their own, these everyday protests do not transform the whole of society. These struggles are in truth modest. But in some measure they are anything but modest. They make possible important changes in people's lives in the here and now. They also change the ways people see themselves and their world, and thereby plant seeds for broader possibilities.

We need to know much more about those moments when ordinary people break through the constraints facing them. These are the moments people transcend their fatalism and

fight Goliaths. Hence the question I am compelled to wrestle with is large: how is it possible for people to redefine and reshape their social world? How does it remain possible for people to assert their spirit and hope, to resist and to struggle, to renew themselves and their visions, to bring about social change?

Protests of daily life have marked much of our history. Everyday resistance is not a new phenomenon. There have been good historical and empirical studies which describe this resistance. Yet the theoretical significance of these everyday protests has been overlooked.

To date, I found no adequate attempts by sociologists to theorize about the phenomenon of everyday resistance in a comprehensive way. I discovered that the sociological literature on collective behavior and social movements proved inadequate to analyze protests such as these. The university does not have a theory or a language to conceptualize what I call modest struggle. Older ways of looking at everyday resistance did not satisfactorily make sense of these protests or missed them completely. Therefore there was no adequate way for me to interpret citizen activism. In this study I want to establish the necessity for coming up with new concepts to understand everyday resistance such as citizen activism.

We see the difficulty in analysis when we look at the existing literature on collective behavior. Everyday protests are treated here as irrational and even neurotic.[3] This interpretation is not surprising given mainstream sociology's theoretical emphasis on social stability and social order. Resistance, in general, is perceived as a threat to social stability itself.

Critical social theory and Marxism fare little better. Their failure to develop adequate categories of analysis is more of a paradox given an underlying commitment to a theory of social change. The left's emphasis on dramatic conflict and large-scale class struggle fails to address the smaller protests of everyday life. In the absence of what DiFazio calls "big-bang" revolution,[4] the left explains just why the revolution hasn't taken place. It therefore ends up emphasizing concepts like domination and social reproduction. When the left does address struggle it stresses class struggle in the workplace. This excludes ways of understanding resistance in the community. Community struggles are often viewed negatively and seen as functional to the reproduction of capitalism.

Within critical sociology, however, there are new strands of writing which develop ways to conceive of social change from below. These include feminists, radical social historians, and Marxist theorists of the

state. I intend to show how their ideas can be used to develop a conception of modest struggle.

The phenomenon of citizen activism that emerged in the 1970's has been poorly understood precisely because we have no ways to conceptualize everyday protests such as these. No theory exists which considers them important. Through a combined analysis of citizen activism and new critical social theory, I see a way of getting at the deeper, more implicit meanings of everyday resistance in general.

The conception of modest struggle offered in this work grows out of very personal experiences of mine. For me, years of intense involvement in citizen activism ended in a thought-provoking crisis and the need to reflect on the possibilities and difficulties of that experience. Then came an equally intense attempt the last half-dozen years to understand my own activism from within the university. The upshot of wrestling with these two different experiences in the 1970's, the activist and the academic, led me to a broader conception.

Here I share a feminist perspective on theorizing which emerged in the 1970's. Feminist theorizing draws on, and puts into practice, the analytic insights that emerged in the critical social science and left of the past decade. Feminism puts high theorizing about our own personal experiences. Thereby, we make the connection

between the private and public, or the personal and political, in everyday life.

Sheila Rowbotham describes this feminist theorizing. Rowbotham treats theory as a way to generalize and reflect upon our experiences and get our bearings. She analyzes her own politics and experience to show that ideas don't come out of thin air; they are rooted in everyday experience.[5] Like Rowbotham, I feel that too often formal theory becomes abstracted or alienated from everyday life. Concepts seem to take on a life of their own. Feminist theorizing takes us beyond this separation of theory from experience. Such integration, I posit, aids and abets the very rigor of theorizing stressed in the university.

For me, this process of reflecting on experience is all important. In the present study, reflection served as nothing less than a bridge and a bond between my practical experiences and theoretical conception.

In this way, I derive my conception of modest struggle from my ongoing dialogue with experiences in two worlds: the activist and the academic. For a long time that meant a tension in bringing together these two experiences subjectively and analytically. Reconciling that great tension allowed me in the end to reconceive my experience in citizen activism and move beyond that

experience to understand modest struggle in general. These experiences constitute the grounds for my conception of modest struggle.

The conception of modest struggle offered in this work grows, as noted, out of very personal experiences of mine: first, years of intense involvement in citizen activism, and then an equally intense attempt to understand my own activism from within the university. To look at personally important experiences in this way meant a great tension between two sides of me, a highly subjective side and a systematically objectifying one. In this section I link my conception of modest struggle to that tension.

For the past ten years, I tried hard to make sense of the strengths and frustrations I saw in citizen activism. From 1970-1975 I was involved in citizen protests as both a volunteer activist and a professional writer. During those years, I edited a community newspaper which covered citizen protests in Brooklyn and around New York City. In the mid '70's I returned to the university and continued my attempt to understand these protests of everyday life. That took the form of practical and theoretical analysis of citizen protests at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. My conception of modest struggle is shaped by a clash of these worlds.

I found myself confronted with a paradox. Social theory helped me account for and deepen my understanding of my experience within citizen activism. It helped me validate the deeper meanings of these protests. At the same time, social theorists for the most part seemed fundamentally indifferent, if not hostile, toward the phenomena of citizen activism and everyday resistance. That held true of left academics no less than those in the mainstream. Needless to say, this negative reaction added to my inner tension as I sought to integrate my practical experience with the theoretical critique I found in the university. In that sense, the university seemed like a house of mirrors. The language of everyday life was inverted. I felt like Sartre's stranger.

The paradox of both empowering and disempowering my own quest started with the prevailing view of the 1960's. The stormy '60's died, so the story started. In the university the left mourned the death of that decade. The media sadly proclaimed the '70's a "Me Decade", where people retreated from political activity. Others turned an indifferent eye to the citizen struggles of the past decade.

For the most part, these views pictured citizen activism as defensive, easily coopted, petitbourgeois, and conservative. The university did so no less than

the rest. In some instances all this is true, I felt. Yet there is far more to it than these criticisms imply. I wanted to know about the "far more". I wanted to know still more: how could I account for the very one-sideness of the critique I found, or the ways these struggles were trivialized? It seemed to me more and more that others, as well as myself, faced problems in understanding more elusive forms of everyday resistance.

The gaps in my dialogue with my two worlds led me to feel that as yet no way existed to conceptualize the problems and the possibilities of everyday resistance such as citizen activism. I wanted to understand citizen activism in all its complexity: its possibility and energy and creativity, its constraints and limits and contradictions. I wanted to bring out its deeper meanings while recognizing its difficulties.

What pulled me powerfully to these protests was the dread and rage that people expressed: the resentment at being thrown out of homes where people had invested all their life savings; the dangers that toxic chemicals pose to the health of men and women and children; the slow, incapacitating illness from years of being exposed to health and safety hazards on the job; the fear of nuclear holocaust.

Yet I was also deeply confused by my experience in citizen activism. I needed time to reflect on the

difficulties and contradictions of everyday protests as well. I had to ask: just what led so many like myself to burn-out?

What did fights for political and economic decentralization mean in a world dominated not only by multinational corporations, but by large, complex structures in general? What power did grassroot struggles have in the face of economic and political power that seemed so intractable? How could we deal with the very contradictions of our attempts at renewal? We improved our neighborhoods only to find ourselves displaced by real estate speculators who profited from our hard work.

I felt more and more that as yet we had no way to conceptualize about experiences such as my own in all their complexity. We needed to get beyond either/or ways of looking at the world. We needed ways which would help us understand our everyday protests with all their possibility and all their difficulties.

It would help, it seemed to me, to treat our problems as moments for growth and not, as we tend to do, moments of defeat and burn-out. To use that approach we need to stress complexity and contradictions. For if something is good/bad, a vision is possible/impossible, utopia is around the corner/never reachable, we set ourselves up for confusion or defeat or both.

We miss the shades, the process, the modest and yet most important successes. We miss the glimpses of transcendance, the times when we go beyond our own selves. My theoretical conception of modest struggle, I came to feel, brings out well these elusive and contradictory forms of social protest we tend to dismiss.

In this section I showed in broad terms how the conception of modest struggle grew out of my experience in two worlds: the activist and the academic. That is how I ground my theoretical perspective subjectively, in my own self. Without that subjective grounding, I could not get past my initial tension between activism and the university, and the paradox of the university both empowering and disempowering my quest.

II. Grounding Modest Struggle in the Experience of Citizen Activism

1. Understanding Citizen Activism

In a decade dismissed for its quiescence, citizen activism affirms an opposite view: ordinary people brought to bear unsuspected energy, intelligence, impact. We are accustomed to thinking about social change in broad macro terms. Yet citizen struggles in the neighborhood and the workplace suggest we also need to pay attention to the ways people experience and wrestle with crisis in bits and pieces, in the moments

of everyday life. My study suggests that we will continue to miss and dismiss the importance of these seemingly ordinary protests as long as we continue to look for the expected: formal organizations and formal creeds.

Struggle after struggle during the 1970's bear out this theme, as people's lives were politicized in deeply personal ways. During that decade ordinary people who had never before resisted broke through the fragmentation and isolation of daily life and made links between the personal and political in their own lives and fought back. In the here and now, they found cracks in the system. They fought for social change. In some measure they changed their own lives.

Social commentators such as Chrisopher Lasch and Tom Wolfe conveyed an image of the 1970's as a Me Decade characterized by passivity and a retreat from political activity.[6] Yet in the hidden, less visible spaces of daily life I saw something more happening.

During that decade I participated in an explosion of activity that grew from the grassroots. Working people awakened politically to defend their neighborhood from corporate and government bulldozers. Others fought bank redlining and displacement from gentrifying neighborhoods. Still others fought slow death from "planned shrinkage" whereby city governments deprived low income neighborhoods of much needed services.

During that decade workers brought out into the open and fought for health and safety on the job. Tenants organized for their rights. Ecologists fought against the destruction of the natural environment and human life.

These were years when we came to recognize the rights of older people, veterans, and the handicapped. We also deepened our understanding of feminism and gay power. The seventies was a decade of democratic visions and democratic dreams.

In some measure these protests were all that they appeared to be. They were sporadic and fragmented. They died as quickly as they sprouted. They were elusive and hidden. Yet in partial and fragmented ways, in bits and pieces, the citizen struggles I was part of, changed the ways we thought about ourselves and our world. Through these struggles people made connections between the personal and the political in their own lives and acted upon them.

In this respect, citizen activism arrives at an insight that is at the core of feminism. In more explicit ways, feminists have also stressed as all important the need to make connections between the personal and the political; political consciousness is seen as rooted in everyday experience.[7]

The moment where women made such links in their own life feminists popularly called the "click".[8] This word describes the shock of recognition, the moment of truth, when women became self-conscious of and reflected upon their personal oppression.

For me, the same "click" marks all of the citizen activism of the 1970's. Lois Gibbs gives voice to this process. Gibbs became a citizen heroine in the 1970's for organizing the fight at Love Canal. She describes well that moment of truth, that shock of recognition that suddenly politicized her life when she wrote

> All around me I saw things happening to my neighbors--multiple miscarriages, birth defects, cancer deaths, epilepsy, central nervous disorders and more...
>
> We were never warned. We had no idea we were living on top of a chemical graveyard. I never thought of myself as an activist or an organizer--I was a housewife, a mother--but all of a sudden it was my family, my children, and my neighbors.[9]

Citizen struggles such as the one at Love Canal show how insidious many of our day to day experiences are. The deeper political meanings of our personal troubles often elude us. We unwittingly drink water polluted by toxic wastes. Our neighborhoods deteriorate and we aren't sure why. Miscarriages get chalked up to unfortunate tragedies. So does serious illness.

Yet in certain moments our lives are unexpectedly jarred. Then we get so shaken up we are provoked to

make sense of troubles which previously eluded us or seemed difficult to resolve. In those moments we can no longer take our daily life for granted: what once seemed routine or elusive or beyond our control, suddenly becomes problematic and demands our attention. These are the moments of the "click" or shock of recognition that mark the citizen resistance I describe here. These are the moments when we move from experiencing much that troubles us to fighting back.

When we talk about everyday protests from below we of course are not talking about a unique form of resistance. Successful popular struggles have always given voice to the concerns and hopes of people in their everyday lives. What marks the '70's as different is this: people created a new language and new visions which asserted as all important the ways they were politicized by deeply felt experiences rooted in daily life.

Words like citizen activism, grassroot activism, ordinary people, local democracy became shorthand, taken for granted symbols. As a whole, this language expressed peoples indignation at a system that systematically excludes them from decisions that affect and often harm their lives. In this context the language of the grassroots affirmed people's desire to wrest a measure of control over their own lives.

In this way, in their own terms and through their own struggles, people from every walk of life affirmed the ways ordinary people make history day to day. People at the grassroots affirmed resistance which grows in slow and elusive ways in the less visible moments of daily life. In place of dramatic conflict and mass movement, citizen activists put struggles rooted in the lives of ordinary people.

2. Making Implicit Meanings Explicit

For all the intensity of grassroot activism, there were also substantive difficulties as well. The very rootedness of these struggles in daily life sustained an intense and creative and personal involvement for participants like myself. But such rootedness also isolated activists from one another. There were no social supports or spaces to reflect on the contradictions of our past experience. Nor was it clear where people could take the powerful personal connections they made after their own struggle was over. In this respect citizen activism differs from feminism. For the women's movement offers just such support. Feminism offers both a larger structure and a wider culture that citizen activism lacked.

I came to feel more and more that people like myself, who had been deeply involved and then burned out,

needed to be far more explicit about our experience at the grassroots. Our analysis, I felt, could shed light on some of the strengths and difficulties in understanding everyday resistance in general, and citizen activism in particular. We could affirm the creative underside of a decade dismissed for political passivity. But we could also account for what made everyday resistance so isolating and fragmented.

Yet as I began my own project to make explicit the new implicit language and meanings created by citizen activism, I found substantive difficulties. Not only are these struggles elusive for observers, they are also difficult to explain to observers. For the shared meanings of everyday resistance were seldom articulated at all. This is exaccerbated in citizen activism since there is a commitment to grassroot and hence piecemeal resistance. For the most part the language of citizen activism was taken for granted by participants. This language grew over years of struggle. It allowed people at the grassroots to engage in some measure in dialogue and debate. Yet it also made the analysis much much more implicit. This only added to the confusion and isolation surrounding these protests for participants and observers alike.

Ironically, the very elusiveness of citizen

activism may have had hidden benefits in the '70's. During more repressive moments in history, people camouflage their resistance. All this makes such resistance difficult for historians to pin down. It may well be that the very elusive and fragmented character of grassroots activism protected citizen activists from the repressive politics of the seventies. For the past decade was the age of Nixon, the Trilateral Commission, and the Business Roundtable. During that decade these groups launched an all out assault on unions, popular struggles, and democracy in general.[10]

The very sporadic character of grassroots activism makes them difficult to repress or control. Some protests may be coopted or constrained. Yet they would only sprout up in a different form elsewhere. Moreover, the very insipidness of the language of citizen activism hid its more radical possibilities not only from observers; it made it less threatening to those in power as well.

Whatever the benefits of such fragmentation, there were, as I have said, an equal number of difficulties. For such fragmentation only increased feelings of isolation and frustration for activists. I felt more and more that we needed to go beyond the fragments and be more explicit about the underlying coherence that rested side by side with this fragmentation.

The frustrations inherent in the very elusiveness of citizen activism were driven home for me in the university. There I realized how very difficult it was to convey to others the experience I had just been part of. For there was no shared language.

The social historian Georg Rude wrote that people appropriate and reshape popular language in their everyday struggles. In the process of resisting they transform this language, it undergoes a "sea change".[11] This was true of citizen activism. People both created a new language and reshaped an old one. These new meanings continue to exist side by side with older and more popular definitions. Needless to say, this only contributes to the confusion of observers and participants alike.

The very language I had taken for granted for so many years had substantively different meanings in the university. Words like neighborhood, community, democracy, ecology became powerful symbols in grassroot struggles of the '70's. Yet they could not be used casually in the university. These same words had very different meanings for people in the academy. The university, like the citizen activism I was a part of, had a shared language and presuppositions of its own.

I do not imply here that citizen struggles are neat or cohesive. On the contrary, they move in many

contradictory directions all at once: they may be progressive or conservative or radical, or some new combination of all three. Yet, despite these differences, there is also an implicit underlying coherence. People who have never met one another, consistently reproduce similar analysis and similar visions through very different experiences at the grassroots.

In The Backyard Revolution, Harry Boyte singles out this paradox in his own study of citizen activism. Boyte writes that the citizen revolt

> is a movement still in its early stages. Most forms of expression are disconnected from a broader democratic culture and awareness of structured activism elsewhere. Neighborhood groups come into existance for a brief period and then disappear...A group of workers fight against health hazards in the workplace, unaware of organizations formed to help such groups in such efforts.
>
> Yet the varied, dispersed nature of the revolt is a strength as well. Indeed, millions of Americans participate, if most often unselfconsciously, in stirrings of a democratic movement.[12]

Boyte's analysis points to the implicit tension I raise here. Citizen activism creates a possibility for moving "beyond the fragments", yet it never realizes this potential. In the '80's, others like myself were beginning to feel the need to move beyond this fragmentation. This affirmed for me more and more the need for my own project: to make explicit the

implicit new meanings and underlying coherence created in the '70's by citizen activism; to inquire into what everyday struggles such as these presuppose. From click to burn-out to elusive coherence, I analyze citizen activism to get at the creative, yet implicit meanings of everyday resistance in general.

III. Grounding A Conception Of Modest Struggle In Academic Experience

1. A New Critical Community

To develop my analysis, I ask this phenomenological question: what makes everyday resistance conceivable, intelligible, possible in the first place?

Here I encounter a difficulty in the university. I need a theoretical perspective which helps me account for resistance and social change. Yet those of us who try to develop such an analysis are on new ground theoretically. For the most part, classical social theory has not left us this heritage. The university emphasizes, helps, and urges us to understand what constrains and stabilizes society. Their theories enlighten us about continuity and domination, as against change and resistance.

To be sure, these theorists take us part of the way. Their theories sensitize us to the very difficulty of social change and the fragility of resistance. They

help us see the ways we are unfree and constrained, how we live in the iron cage Max Weber writes of.

Theorists like Weber help us understand the very depth of domination which resistance presupposes. Weber touches the despair that permeates our own day and age. His theory anticipates a modern world where human beings are reduced to cogs in a bureaucratic machine. This is a world of "specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart", where "not summer's bloom lies ahead of us, but rather a polar night of icy darkness".[13]

Left social theory has often followed Weber's despairing lead. Tomes are written about domination which penetrates every moment of our lives: science and technology, the state and the economy, our very consciousness and souls.[14] No doubt it was with good reason that left theory was drawn to describe modern domination. These writers themselves felt betrayed by the false promise of revolutionary optimism which marked the twentieth century. Their own project was to account for the Holocaust, Stalin, the possibility of nuclear annihilation. Moreover, they offered a balance to the post-war euphoria with economic growth and the affluent society by pointing to: continued poverty and unemployment, deteriorating cities and ecological disaster, the

oppression of workers, women, and minorities. These works accounted for the underside of the seeming stability of modern society by describing historically new forms of domination.

This brings us full circle. Modern social theorists attempted to provide us with a counterweight to false or overly optimistic predictions. In doing so they fell into the trap they sought to correct. They end up presenting us with a no less one-sided view of the world.

As important as these theories are, they cannot help us account for my initial question: what makes resistance and the social change it spurs conceivable in the first place? For these theories leave us with an implicit view of people as passive, determined, and dominated; when it occurs, resistance tends to be seduced and absorbed or crushed. Such passive images of humanity cannot account for resistance; passive people do not resist. These theories cannot help us understand the cracks in the system or the moments where people break through the domination that does constrain them.

Those of us who want to account for resistance and social change are still compelled to wrestle with the legacy left by Karl Marx. For Marx, more than any other classical theorist, left us with a vision of change

as contradictory and ever becoming. His was a theory of an ongoing drama produced by human struggle. This legacy has often been lost, not least of all in Marxism, by theorists who were more drawn to Weber's despair than Marx's sense of possibility.

By and by I found a new generation of theorists trying to revive Marx's lost legacy from within the university. There I found a modest struggle of a different kind quietly taking place in the 1970's. In one way or another a few people were returning to one part of the legacy Marx left us, to his passion and his poetry.

Marx was read and reread, picked apart and re-created. People loved him and hated him, rejected him and shaped him anew. New hybrids were born with the marriage between Marx and our own concerns: feminism and anarchism and phenomenology and critical philosophy. People called into question old taken for granted assumptions by and about Marx on science, the state, and technology as necessarily progressive. There was little conscensus between the people involved. Yet in bits and pieces it seemed to me that, like the citizen activism I had just been a part of, the '70's created something new in the realm of theory. In those years a few left academics like E. P. Thompson and James O'Connor and

Sheila Rowbotham created a new way of thinking to help them understand their own lives and experiences. In the process they created new theories. In much of this work I draw on those theories.[15]

My use of such theories, though, did not take the form of passively consuming an object (theory). Instead, those theories came to be part of my own life. They did so by way of community, by me taking part in close relationships with people equally concerned with alternative, innovative theory and practice.

For the past six years, specifically, I took part in a web of study groups and seminars at the City University Graduate Center. Most influential for me was a continuing Sociology seminar on Marx and the theory of community. This web of interactions constituted for me and others a community seeking innovative theory and practice together. That critical community challenged me and engaged me. It made the reconstructed Marxist theorizing part and parcel of my own experience. Hence I derive my theoretical conception of modest struggle as much from my experience and work in this community as from my former activist community. I am equally indebted to them for understanding a problem I had wrestled with.

On the theoretical plane, then, I also ground

the conception in my own personal experience. That experience consisted of participating in a community within the university that innovatively shared reflection or critical theorizing.

2. New Critical Theorizing

As noted, community made a part of my life, critical theorizing, directly relevant to my activist experience. In the rest of this section I spell out just what I made my own from Marx and from recent theorists.

The shared theoretical search of the 1970's recovered the dialectical method I see at the heart of Marx's analysis. With this theoretical perspective it becomes possible to emphasize the ways human beings are not merely determined by external circumstances. Rather, this rereading of Marx brought to light a dialectical interplay in which human beings actively shape their world as they are simultaneously shaped by that world. This is a world where men and women make history, but not exactly as they please. In part, though not in full, they are born into circumstances which are beyond their control.[16]

By and by I found two strands of writing that gained importance in the context of recovering Marx's

dramatic dialectic of social change. For me these writings brought out different aspects of Marx's lost legacy. I refer here to radical social historians such as E. P. Thompson and Georg Rude.[17] I include here as well dialectical Marxist theorists on the state such as James O'Connor and Alan Wolfe.[18] Central to both groups of writers is understanding an ongoing process of social change produced by people struggling and resisting.

Like our reconstructed Marx, all of these writers see our world in continuous motion: contradictory, crisis ridden, ever changing and ever transforming. Radical social historians bring out a view of social change from the bottom up. They offer us countless social histories of the ways oppressed people resisted in daily life. Dialectical Marxist theorists of the state bring out a view of social change as an ongoing product of "tangible", "modest" class struggle.

Most of all, I ground my conception of modest struggle theoretically by making explicit an analytical and methodological potential I infer from these two bodies of literature. The theory I found in their work is left implicit by them. These writers do not put forth what I conceptualize here as a way to understand modest struggle. I make explicit a theoretical grounding for modest struggle that their work strongly implies. My

theoretical grounding combines a view of resistance from the bottom up with a broader social drama. More than that, they help me make explicit what everyday resistance itself presupposes: active, critical subjects who are caught up in a moment of history they find troubling.

From radical social historiagraphy I derive a perspective which affirms the importance of everyday resistance. Writers like E. P. Thompson and Georg Rude unravel a drama of everyday life, a view from the bottom up, a view of the ways ordinary people make their imprint on their social world.

They include the men and women who have been excluded from our history books: their experiences, grievances, struggles, and dreams. These are often elusive or contradictory or difficult to pin down. But writers like Thompson and Rude treat them as all important. For they are concerned with recovering a sense of resistance as process. Too often this gets lost in history books which reduce social movements or revolution to dates on a calendar. Through new social histories we come to see that in certain moments what appear to be disparate and fragmented resistance may give birth to broader social movements and revolutionary ferment.

Their emphasis on the everyday struggles of ordinary people implies in large part a critique of both

mainstream and Marxist sociology alike. For both tend to overemphasize macro social structures over and above people's everyday experience and resistance. By neglecting the everyday ways people resist, they seem to imply, other writers forget just what it is that makes social change conceivable in the first place: human beings who experience, reflect, and resist.

The feminist social historian and theorist Sheila Rowbotham captures this critique when she writes that as important as understanding oppression and inequality are, in itself it

> reduces human potential to a total, determining fatalistic state of oppression. We forget that people are greater than the category of oppression. We have the means of seeing people as victims, but not the means of seeing the sources of power which subordinated groups have created.[19]

Thompson and Rude stress above all else the role of human agency and human choice. For they want to affirm a much neglected history: a view of people as active, critical shapers of their lives. They do so to show how people are always more than the passive victims of social structures. Thompson sums up his perspective in his classic study, The Making of the English Working Class:

> The making of the working class was not the spontaneous generation of the factory system. Nor should we think of an external

> force - the 'industrial revolution' - working upon some nondescript undifferentiated raw material of humanity, and turning it out at the other end as a 'fresh race of human beings'... The working class made itself as much as it was made.[20]

As I see it, radical social historians realize a phenomenological potential in Marx by asking this question: just how do social actors make history? Just how do people's everyday activity and experience make social change and resistance conceivable?

Yet ironically, by emphasizing and stressing a much needed view of social activity from the bottom up, they end up remaining silent on forms of domination and oppression which provoke and constrain resistance in the first place. Inadvertently, this very silence leaves us with static, one dimensional images of power. Their own critique ends up forgetting, or not sufficiently stressing, what my view of everyday resistance also presupposes: a macro analysis of social change which brings out the ways we are caught up in a contradictory, ever changing social drama; we shape that drama, but it also shapes us.

To bring out such a dialectical view of social change I turn to another strand of theory which gained importance in the 1970's. I refer here to dialectical Marxist theorists of the state. Writers such as James O'Connor and Alan Wolfe help me fill the gap social

historians create. They help me make everyday resistance explicit by bringing out the broader historical moment and ongoing struggle.

In other words, people's resistance does not emerge out of thin air. They resist because they find their social world troubling. Understanding the historical moment helps us grasp just what it is that provokes anger and rage, hope and promise in everyday life. It helps us understand just what it is that constrains people's lives and undermines resistance as well. In other words, we see how everyday resistance is historically specific as well as ever changing.

The analysis of the state does not, of course, account for all of everyday resistance. Nor do I try to do so here. Dialectical macro analysis does help me make explicit the implicit coherence of everyday resistance.

Their analysis of the state turns out to give a great deal of coherence to what appear to be unrelated grassroot protests. For in citizen struggle after struggle one dominant theme emerges in the 1970's: the state becomes a central arena of struggle. This begins to make sense when we see how since World War Two the state has intervened more and more on behalf of the private economy and intruded on people's lives. We see

this with increased state aid to nuclear power, highways, jetports, corporate development. These in turn create problems in people's everyday lives: ecological deterioration, neighborhood destruction, possible global annihilation.

Through such intervention, the state politicizes decisions once left to the private economy. Seemingly ordinary hearings for government licensing or site selection become highly political events. Consider the recent resistance against licensing the nuclear power plant in Diablo, California.

Equally important for us here, however, is the way writers like O'Connor and Wolfe help us get away from one dimensional, static views of power. By treating the state as an ongoing and ever changing product of class struggle, they help us see the ways people's lives are not merely dominated; their struggles are not merely crushed or coopted. Important gains are made in the here and now, even though the corporate state seeks to, and often does, constrain and undermine these gains.

These dialectical Marxist theorists of the state offer us a complex, dynamic macro analysis of social change and struggle. Yet inadvertently they too end up leaving us with a one dimensional analysis. For their own works remain silent on the subjective, everyday

experience of people who resist. They forget or underplay the human subjective experience that provokes resistance in the first place, that macro social change presupposes.

I see the micro analysis of radical social historiagraphy and the macro analysis of theorists of the state as equally important for my analysis of everyday resistance. Both together help us understand everyday resistance.

The problem I found in mainstream and Marxist sociology alike was a tendency to reproduce a split between the macro and micro levels of analysis. Macro analysis of social change forgets or underplays the human beings who create social change: human beings who experience, reflect, resist, and thereby change themselves and their world. On the other hand, micro analysis of everyday life forgets or underplays a moment in history that provokes and makes resistance possible in the first place.

By combining an analysis of the micro and macro, of everyday life and large social institutions, my conception of modest struggle sensitizes us to the ways we are caught up in the very system our struggles change all the time. I view modest struggle as a dance of two partners in a tension-riddled swirl,

shaped by and transforming one another. This image gets at the core of my perspective.

Modest struggle is not a straight road to utopia. It is filled with leaps and reversals and twists and turns. Therein lies the hope. In a time and place riddled with pessimism and despair, the surprises and uncertainty of everyday resistance become a source of hope. In a moment of history where domination appears to be all pervasive, I see hope in the people of the 1970's who found within themselves the capacity to resist in the face of despair.

By drawing on and combining my own practical and theoretical experience lived in community with activists and then in the university, I develop a conception of modest struggle which helps us pay attention to the interplay of the personal and political, close to home and the wide world. If we fail to pay heed to this process, we miss the times we go beyond our own selves. I owe my whole conception of modest struggle to integrating my own experience.

NOTES

1. John Herbers, "Citizens' Activism Gaining In Nation", New York Times, 16 May 1982

2. Alan Crawford, "Right-Wing Populism", Social Policy, May/June, 1980

3. See for example, Talcott Parsons, The Social System, (New York: The Free Press, 1951)

4. William DiFazio, "Working Class Community of Informal Resistance: A Theoretical Ethnography of Brooklyn Longshoremen on the Guaranteed Annual Income", (Ph.D. dissertation, The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 1981), p. 14

5. Sheila Rowbotham, Lynn Segal, and Hillary Wainwright, Beyond The Fragments: Feminism and the Making of Socialism (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1979), pp. 54-55

6. Christopher Lasch, Culture of Narcissism, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978); Tom Wolfe, Mauve Gloves and Madmen, Clutter and Vine, (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1976)

7. Rowbotham, Beyond The Fragments, pp. 54-55; See also, Sheila Rowbotham, Woman's Consciousness, Man's World (New York: Penquin Books, 1973)

8. Jane O'Reilly, "The Housewife's Moment of Truth", Ms. Magazine, Spring, 1972, p. 54. The quote read: "The women in the group looked at each other and clicked with the shock of recognition...one little click turns on a thousand others."

9. Lois Gibbs, President, Love Canal Homeowner's Association, letter on behalf of Stop Environmental Cancer Project, Santa Monica, California, February, 1982

10. For the ways resistance gets camouflaged see for example, E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (New York: Vintage Books, 1966). For readings related to the Business Roundtable and the Trilateral Commission see, Harry C. Boyte, The Backyard Revolution: Understanding the New Citizen Movement (Philadelphia:

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12. Boyte, The Backyard Revolution, p. 34

13. Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 181; and From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology, H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, trans. and eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 128

14. See for example, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, The Dialectic of Enlightenment, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972); Nicos Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, (London, New Left Books, 1973); Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974); Stanley Aronowitz, False Promises, (New York, McGraw Hill, 1973); and Georg Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness, (Cambridge, M.I.T. Press, 1971)

15. Thompson, Making of the English Working Class; Also see E. P. Thompson, Poverty of Theory, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978); James O'Connor, The Fiscal Crisis of the State, (New York: St. Martin Press, 1973); and Sheila Rowbotham et. al. Beyond The Fragments

16. Karl Marx, The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, (New York: International Publishers, 1963), p. 15

17. Thompson, Making of the English Working Class; and Georg Rude, The Crowd in the French Revolution, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), See also Georg Rude, The Crowd in History, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964)

18. O'Connor, Fiscal Crisis; and Alan Wolfe, The Limits of Legitimacy, (New York: The Free Press, 1977)

19. Rowbotham, Beyond The Fragments, p. 126.

20. Thompson, Making of the English Working Class, p. 194

Chapter Two

THE EXPERIENCE OF CITIZEN ACTIVISTS

This chapter moves from a theoretical conception of modest struggle to a more detailed analysis of citizen activism in the decade of the 1970's. The specific protests referred to here illustrate what is politically and socially meaningful about the forms of everyday resistance in the '70's.

Citizen activism helps me illustrate everyday resistance by ordinary people. These people resist without political training or special education. In the course of their struggle, they raise and answer questions about aspects of their own lives that they usually treat as given. They develop a practical analysis of power, which does not grow from formal ideology or abstract theory, but from people's experience with powers they consider unjust.

Citizen protests take place in less visible and fragmented spaces close to home: voluntary groups, neighborhood associations, workplace organizations. There are few mass movements and fewer mass leaders. Yet in its hidden ways citizen activism helps us get at the heart of what everyday resistance means in our time and place. More and more, people's experiences and resistance close to home are seen as central to their

very lives.

I share here a view held by social movement theorists Frances Piven and Richard Cloward. Like me, they are critical of a tendency among left theorists to discredit popular protests because they "fail to conform to doctrinal prescription regarding constituencies, strategies, and demands". Like me, they argue that "popular insurgency does not proceed by someone else's rules or hopes: It has its own logic or direction".[1] I analyze citizen activism to bring out the inner logic of people's own struggles close to home.

The analytical inferences in this chapter are based on extensive empirical research. For the purposes of explaining my analysis in prevailing sociological terms, it makes sense to list the empirical research which bore on these inferences. The analysis combines four major techniques: participant observation, content analysis, in-depth interviews, and qualitative analysis of secondary sources.

1. Participant Observation:

From 1970-1975 I was a professional writer and activist in Brooklyn, New York. During those years I was a writer and editor for a local community newspaper called The Township. In the capacity of writer, activist, and organizer, I participated in about three dozen citizen campaigns and organizations. Of these,

I subsequently analyzed the following: The Ad Hoc Committee to Save the Waterfront; The Fighting 69: Campaign to Save Corona; Committee to Save the Northside; Gray Panthers of Brooklyn; Brooklyn Heights Neighborhood Assembly; Citizens for Local Democracy; Heights and Hill Community Council; Alliance for Neighborhood Government; National Association of Neighborhoods.

2. Content Analysis:

As a first step to an inventory of activist language and experience, I carried out a qualitative textual analysis of articles in New York City newspapers from 1970-1980, including the New York Times, New York Post, and Village Voice.

Secondly, to inventory the actual language used by activists, I performed a qualitative analysis of journals and books written by citizen activists. The journals include: The Ecologist; Environment; Rain; Self-Reliance; Not Man Apart; Street. Books include the writings of Alinsky, Commoner, Hess, Kotler, Lovins, Morris, Schumacher.

3. In-depth Interviews:

1975-1976: I conducted twenty-five in-depth interviews with citizen activists for the Institute of Neighborhood Studies.

1977-1978: As research assistant to Professor William Kornblum at the City University of New York Graduate Center, I participated in a study of "Supersonic Transport

and Environmental Decision-Making", interviewing twenty people involved in this controversy.

4. Qualitative Analysis of Case Studies:

To illustrate citizen protests I rely on a qualitative analysis of secondary sources. These include: M. Brown, Laying Waste; L. Gibbs, Love Canal: My Story; D. Nelkin, Jetport; H. Molotch, "Oil Spill in Santa Barbara and Power in America"; and W. Kornblum and C. Krauss, "Some Environmental Impacts of Industrialization".

This research forms the basis for an analysis of citizen activism which illustrates citizen protests, identifies phases of resistance, and integrates the phenomenon of citizen activism into a broader social framework.

I. Illustrating Everyday Resistance Through Citizen Activism

In this section, I present three case studies to illustrate citizen protests. The first is of a heterogeneous working and middle class community built on a foundation of carcinogenic chemicals. The second deals with a blue-collar working class community bordering on an airport. The final case study describes an affluent shorefront community confronting the effects of oil drilling on its beaches.

Let's look at what is known about the course of

activism by citizens of these communities.

Love Canal

For two decades residents at Love Canal unwittingly lived with the effects of inhaling carcinogenic compounds such as tetra-dioxine and benzene. These chemicals penetrated their homes. They contaminated the waters where children swam. Residents lived with the personal tragedy of high rates of miscarriages, birth defects, illness, cancer. Yet until the late '70's, residents were kept in the dark. They did not know that their personal tragedies were in any way related to the toxic poisons near their homes.[2]

In 1953, the Hooker Chemical Company had filled in Love Canal and sold it to the Board of Education for one dollar, with the stipulation that the company would not be responsible for any harm that might result from the buried wastes. Soon after, homes were built near the canal. Families moved in unaware of the dangers nearby. In 1955, an elementary school opened near the edge of the canal.

For years, residents complained to the local government about problems related to the toxic wastes, such as black sludge coming through basement walls and smells of pesticides that permeated their homes. But calls to the local government were met with indifference. The Niagara County Health Department and the city called

the problems "nuisance conditions" and assured people that they posed no danger.

In 1977, the problem of toxic wastes became more visible. Due to several years of heavy rains, the contents of the canal started to overflow. Backyards were covered with pools of chemicals. At this point, conditions near the canal deteriorated rapidly and residents began to organize. Still, however, neither the local government, the school nor Hooker Chemical was willing to acknowledge that a health problem existed.

About this time one mother, Lois Gibbs, became suspicious after reading about toxic wastes in a local newspaper. She started to associate toxic wastes with her son's ill health. This woman realized that her son had become more and more ill after starting elementary school. Doctors recommended her son's transfer to a different school because chemicals were affecting his health. But school officials denied the request. To transfer this boy would mean publically admitting that there were dangers to other children's health as well. The denial of the school officials provoked Gibbs to start organizing. She ended up at the forefront of a massive campaign to relocate all the residents at Love Canal.

Gibbs and several other residents first surveyed the community to determine the scope of the problem.

They found: unusually high rates of miscarriages, families with serious illness, and children with numerous birth defects. Still, most residents had a difficult time accepting the implications of these findings. Local officials ignored the surveys and called the organizers hypochondriacs. Finally, in the absence of action by local health officials, the New York Department of Health conducted a health survey of its own. Their conclusion: conditions were so hazardous that pregnant women and children under two were advised to move immediately. This study legitimized the small grassroot struggle organized by Gibbs and others. It also spurred on resistance by igniting people's anger and rage.

Residents were up against the wall. If they stayed, they endangered their lives and their children. Yet they could not afford to move and give up homes which represented all their life savings. The government study had confirmed their worst fears. But the government offered no financial aid. Residents not only had paid the price of corporate and local government neglect with ill health. Now they were asked to bear heavy financial losses as well. The choice was to risk their health or abandon their homes and a lifetime of savings.

Faced with this bind, they fought back, organizing the Love Canal Homeowners Association. Their central goal was "to get all the residents who wanted to be

evacuated, evacuated and relocated, especially during the construction and repair of the canal".[3] They wanted the government to pay their relocation costs.

Residents had a difficult time getting anyone to recognize and take responsibility for the damage. Their first success was in having those families moved who lived immediately adjacent to the canal. But after that, they were met with continuing indifference. Government felt it had already shown a measure of responsibility in moving a few families. Hooker Chemical continued to show no concern. Health officials denied the full scope of the problem.

As those in power continued to turn a deaf ear, residents became more autonomous and militant. They brought in their own experts and conducted their own surveys as a means of providing alternate information. At the same time, resistance escalated. A large part of people's anger was now directed against the government's dangerous attempt to repair the canal before residents were relocated. Residents were unified on one point: they would not allow the government to dig up the canal before an adequate safety plan was developed. For them, the only possible safety plan was evacuation.

Despite residents protests, the government started digging up the canal. In response, resistance escalated. Residents vandalized the site, burned effigies of the

governor, were arrested at a baby blocade of the construction site. But they found that the government would still not meet their demands.

Confronted with official indifference, writes Gibbs, "I began thinking about how bureaucracy works. They're supposed to be working for us. But they are treating us as if we were an inconvenience or the enemy or small children...I never thought government worked like that".[4]

When they perceived that no options were open to them, the residents of Love Canal finally took drastic action. They captured and held hostage two officials of the Environmental Protection Agency and offered President Carter an ultimatum. The next day they won their fight. President Carter bowed to the publicity. Love Canal was declared a national disaster and fifteen million dollars was allocated for relocation.

East Boston and the Expansion of Logan Airport

East Boston is an Italo-American working class neighborhood, which borders on Boston's Logan Airport. Transporation problems have plagued East Boston and politicized its residents since the Great Depression. Largely abandoned by the city, East Boston did not face the bulldozer as did other Italian working class neighborhoods in Boston. Rather, the city expected that the community would die a natural death from the expansion

of airport interests. Yet in the late '60's and early '70's, residents of East Boston became increasingly radicalized. They tried to limit airport expansion and the enormous power of the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport).[5]

The development and maintenance of Logan Airport is largely the responsibility of Massport, a supramunicipal port authority similar to those in other areas. Massport illustrates characteristics of supramunicipal authorities in general. They are public agencies which operate midway between public and private corporations and are well insulated from electoral politics. They tend to share strong links with the business community. Many of the commissioners are themselves businessmen. Not surprisingly, investment and economic growth are seen as priorities. These agencies are accountable primarily to their bondholders and not to the public.

At the same time, corporations such as Massport are public authorities that are mandated to act in the "public interest". Citizens find themselves trying to hold accountable a public corporation which by its very design is set up outside the political arena.[6]

In East Boston, residents lived daily with high levels of jet noise, truck traffic, pollution and the threat of airport expansion. These became highly charged political issues. For the most part, however, Massport

ignored residents' concerns. Its planners viewed the airport as vital to a healthy regional economy and airline industry. Airport development was justified as essential for economic growth, and airport expansion was viewed as "inevitable", "efficient" and "necessary" for progress. Excessive noise was merely one of the costs of progress to which residents should "accommodate".

Thus, the central difficulty for East Bostonians was to persuade those in power to recognize that a problem existed. Residents raised questions about the "justice" of airport expansion. They saw neighborhood survival as a matter of "rights", and asked: "Don't working class neighborhoods have a right to exist?"[7]

Extended protest began when Massport announced plans to "take" a neighborhood park and evict eight families to provide additional airport space. By the time Massport implemented this plan, it had been challenged by lawsuits and demonstrations involving hundreds of people. Yet Massport essentially ignored the neighborhood's existence. Public hearings were used as a "way to inform the public of decisions". These "formal vehicles of participation", however, only tended to "aggravate mistrust and polarize conflict".[8] Residents found themselves up against powerful foes. They took on not only a supramunicipal port authority, but a national industry, federal agencies, and the priorities

of a regional economy.

During the early years of protests, residents had unsuccessfully tried to influence policy through letters, lawsuits and appeals to state and federal legislatures. Protest escalated when Massport "took" the neighborhood park, evicted families and razed their homes. Precisely because a port authority is so insulated from local politics, people were forced to resort to more militant tactics.

East Boston's first militant action was the Maverick Street "baby-carriage blockade". Protesting the airport-related traffic of heavy trucks through their neighborhood, women and children physically blocked Massport trucks for one week. They found that this type of action provoked official response which had been unattainable through their earlier, peaceful protests. Although Massport had been requested by the city to build a truck road on airport property, it had previously refused to comply. After the baby blockade, this demand was met.

Activists learned that "legally we couldn't get anywhere".[9] The success of the baby-carriage blockade led more people to become involved in anti-airport protest. The women and children of Maverick Street set the style for activist protest in that neighborhood

for years to come.

Along with more militant tactics came an increasingly militant political perspective. East Bostonians came to see Massport as a "monster with dangerous tentacles" out to "strangle" the community. They use the language of "total war", "devastation", "battles". Massport donations to sports clubs were referred to as "pacification by a dictator". Residents ultimately hoped to "reclaim land" and "to survive totalitarian control". Residents contrasted their own interest with Massport as "people or progress". Massport was perceived as only interested in the "almighty dollar...and people be damned".[10]

Oil Spill in Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara, California, is an upper income residential area, desirable for its "ideal climate" and "beautiful environment". Many of its residents are rich, well educated, and have contacts with national and international elites. A massive eruption of crude oil covered the coastline of Santa Barbara and disrupted this community. The sustained seepage of oil continued to pollute the sea, air, and beaches for months, causing considerable damage to the ecological chain and wildlife and seriously threatening tourism, the economic base of the region.

In response, local residents attempted to stop oil drilling at nearby beaches. They were initially disposed to blame the oil company, - "oil and profit are running their community" - and approach government for redress. They believed that once government was "provided with the 'facts' of the case justice would be done".[11]

Residents petitioned the President and Congress to pass legislation. They held rallies, gathered petitions, went to court, and lobbied with legislatures. They were met, however, with silence from their elected officials, a pattern repeated at every level of government. Wherever they turned, residents found those in power denied or minimized the ecological and economic damage of the oil spill.

The Department of Interior failed to support legislation to halt drilling. In fact, it openly supported oil company plans for continued drilling. Regulatory agencies at both the national and state level were equally indifferent. They treated the oil spill as a "minor seepage...with no major long-term effect on the marine ecology".[12] Residents came to identify "each agency as a captive of the industry that it is to regulate". Increasingly disillusioned with government, they saw legislatures in the "pockets of the all-powerful oil lobby".[13]

When local officials had first tried to stop oil drilling, they were assured by the Department of Interior that "such an accident could not occur given the highly developed state of the art".[14] Now residents found that not only had an accident occured, but that no adequate technologies existed to clean up the mess. The appointment of a Presidential Committee of distinguished scientists and engineers raised residents' hopes of an equitable solution to their oil-related problems. The Committee, however, after two days of testimony limited to representatives of the Oil Company and the Department of the Interior, offered no serious recommendations and even endorsed continued drilling.

The unresponsiveness of scientists prompted residents to investigate ties between science and the oil companies. As their research progressed, they learned more and more about the role of oil company funds in the financing of scientific research. As they discovered that "science was not neutral", residents were forced to conduct their own research, relying on experts unaffiliated with universities or government. On their own, residents had to demonstrate that "continued drilling was not safe, that experts who said it was safe were the hirelings of Oil Interest, and that the report of the Panel recommending massive drilling was a fraudulent document".[15]

As Santa Barbarans found themselves up against corporate and government officials who tended to deny or cover over the problems, they became engaged in more militant tactics. "Letter writing gives way to demonstrations, demonstrations to civil disobedience. Confrontation politics increase".[16]

People who believed in the established political system became increasingly disillusioned. Like East Bostonians, they saw how government helps industry and not people.

> We the people can protest and protest.
> It means nothing. They tell us, the
> People, what is good for the Oil Company
> is good for the People. To that I say,
> Like Hell!...Profit is their language[17]

Residents in Santa Barbara again illustrate the ways people learn about power in the process of protest. Through protests close to home, they develop a practical theory of power in America. In each case, they come up against a system that tries to depoliticize issues by denying the problem. All this radicalizes residents still more.

II. Analyzing Everyday Resistance Through Citizen Activism

From disparate socio-economic classes and parts of the country we find similar phases of protests and changing consciousness. In each case we see how people

develop a practical analysis of power as they make the link between the personal and political in their own lives. Through protest, they break through the obfuscating analysis of the status quo. As George Orwell pointed out, politics is the art of "defending the indefensible" by using a language that obscures the problem. Political language has to consist of "sheer cloudy vagueness", to name things without calling up images of the brutality they invoke.[18]

As people move through different stages of protest, they more and more break through the political language of those in power and develop a practical oppositional analysis of their own. This in turn facilitates new avenues of protest.

In this section I analyze the phases of protest to show the inner logic of everyday resistance as people move from passive to active. These stages may be characterized as follows: (1) nonpolitical, (2) linkage of personal and political, (3) escalating protest, and (4) consequences. They do not progress in any automatic or predetermined fashion and, indeed, resistance may stop at any point. However, they identify steps in the escalation of protest as evidenced by the preceding case histories as well as other research.

(1) Nonpolitical

On a day to day basis, people are excluded from

decisions that affect their daily lives. Decisions with far-reaching social and political consequences are made without most people's input. Consequently, people are constantly faced with a number of problems of seemingly indeterminate origin. Neighborhoods deteriorate and people aren't sure why. People unwittingly drink water polluted by toxic wastes. Workers become ill.

In all these cases, people fail to make the link between what C. Wright Mills called personal troubles and public issues.[19] The failure to make the link between the personal and political, often means people blamed themselves for a problem, or accommodate to it, without assigning political blame. In the latter case, the problem seems inevitable and, therefore, not subject to change.

For example, residents at Love Canal unwittingly lived with the effects of carcinogenic compounds. These caused high rates of miscarriages, birth defects, illness. Yet until the late '70's all this was treated as a personal tragedy dealt with by individual families. Similarly, workers were exposed for years to dangerous substances on the job. Their health problems were treated, at least by corporations, as personal troubles. Workers, like Love Canal residents, had to personally bear the costs of industrial policy. In both cases, industry knew about the danger these hazardous substances posed

to human health, and in both cases industry covered up the problem.[20]

In other instances, people may be aware of a problem, but not necessarily define it as political. They may accommodate to stress because they feel they have little choice in the matter. Residents near Logan Airport, for example, live daily with jetport noise and dangerous truck traffic. This provokes anger. Yet they do not generally resist, except in moments when they feel pushed too far. Residents at Love Canal lived for years with toxic sludge penetrating their basements. Complaints to the local government were met with a denial of any danger. In the face of government refusal to admit a problem, residents dealt with it as a "nuisance" problem; they kept fixing up their basements. In other words, they were forced to carry the burden of the problem themselves.

In nonpolitical periods such as these, we can speculate that residents may be unaware of the political nature of their personal troubles or that their inactivity stems from feelings of powerlessness.

(2) Linking the Personal and Political

As a first step to resisting, people identify personal difficulties as political issues. They stop blaming themselves or accommodating to a problem.

Instead they see their everyday troubles as a consequence of particular economic and political policies. In each case, a problem once elusive or tolerated is experienced as intolerable. In those moments, people fight back.

Making that link and acting upon it implies a critique of dominant ideology. Those in power tend to obfuscate a problem by denying or minimizing it in the first place. Thus, identifying the political nature of personal problems implies a change in consciousness. In turn, changing consciousness allows people to interpret their worlds in new ways and thereby take action.

In each case study, we saw how linking the personal and political was critical for resistance. The first step to protest at Love Canal was linking individual illness with the effects of toxic wastes. East Bostonians first had to define airport expansion and truck traffic as political issues that took priority over economic growth. Similarly, Santa Barbarans could not accept industry's or government's analysis of the oil spill as "minimal". Nor could they chalk up damage to the natural environment, wildlife, and the local economy as a price to pay for growth and profit. In all these cases, citizens developed an analysis of their own which differed sharply from that of those in power.

Linking the personal and the political and developing an oppositional analysis marked numerous citizen protests of the '70's. This was the case with the campaign against redlining. This was the foundation of struggles for occupational health and safety.

Redlining was uncovered, for example, when working class homeowners in Chicago decided not to accept as inevitable their neighborhood's decline. Their research brought out an insidious process called bank redlining, whereby savings banks refused to grant loans based on the bank's arbitrary assessment of a neighborhood's well-being. Incredibly, these savings banks were investing the money of urban working people in the more profitable suburbs and sunbelt.[21] Making that link was the first step to reversing this insidious process and lobbying to get legislation for neighborhood reinvestment.

Industrial or institutional expansion in general was not initially seen as a widespread political issue. Working class neighborhoods were often perceived as politically apathetic and, therefore, easy marks for city administrations. But in the 1970's, neighborhood became a highly political issue. Working class people now defined attempts at destruction as political and asserted the "right for working class communities to exist". The fight to preserve a neighborhood in itself was not new. What was new was the increased anger and

consciousness of this as a national political problem.

These protests, we should note, took place in a broader social climate, which influenced the types of political connections people made. The protests described here were influenced by social movements of the '60's and '70's. These drew popular attention to dangers to the environment and to citizen rights to participation.

The environmental movement, for example, sensitized people to the dangers of pollutants and their effects on human life and the ecology. As a result, people were sensitized to dangers from toxic wastes in their community, environmental hazards on the job, and oil spills. In this context, we can see why toxic sludge might be tolerated as a nuisance in the late '50's, but be seen as life threatening in the late '70's. Similarly changing popular awareness of environmental issues influenced the ways airport expansion into marshland was perceived. In the 1940's airports were built on large tracts of marshland. At that time, marshland was viewed as wasteland to be filled in. But by the 1970's this same marshland was seen as an invaluable part of the ecosystem. Attempts at similar landfill met with extreme resistance.

Everyday protests such as these suggest that changing consciousness is a critical first step to resistance. As people link the personal and political in their own lives and act on it, they create an oppositional

consciousness of their own. This helps them break through the obfuscating analysis of those in power.

(3) Escalating Protest and Deepened Consciousness

As a second step to resistance, people begin to pressure the government for assistance. In each case study, we saw people turn to government with some expectation that their problem could be ameliorated. At Love Canal, residents identified Hooker Chemical as the problem. They believed that the government would help them. We saw the same in Santa Barbara. At the minimum, people expect that with sufficient pressure and organizing they will be heard. "If you had a complaint, you went to the right person in government, if there were a way to solve the problem they would be glad to do it".[24] Faith in government is demonstrated in part by the traditional protest methods people use, such as letter writing and picketing.

What residents got back in each case was a tendency to deny, minimize, or ignore the problem. Residents at Love Canal were called hypochondriacs. Citizens at Logan Airport were considered overemotional and too ignorant to understand the complicated economics of airports. "The worst part of the struggle", wrote Lois Gibbs, "was that no one would take us seriously. Everywhere we turned we were met with deaf ears".[22]

Indifference or arrogance on the part of government tends to exacerbate people's anger even more. It violates in some concrete way what they had expected. When the Port Authority considered landing the Concorde at Kennedy Airport in the late '70's, residents invited them to a neighborhood hearing. They found officials so arrogant that they were provoked to organize on the spot. As one resident put it:

> I hadn't been very active in fighting jet noise. In 1975 I went to a community meeting with a few friends to hear the FAA and PA talk about Concorde. I couldn't believe the arrogance, the unbelievable arrogance directed toward the people in the room who were begging and pleading for mercy from the possible interjection of the SST into their lives - compounding the jet noise that they had been living with these many years...I made a promise that evening that I would dedicate my life to raising an army to fight the SST...[23]

Similarly when school officials denied the transfer of Lois Gibb's son, they pushed her over the edge. The insensitivity of school officials pushed her to begin organizing the community. "I wasn't going to send my child to a place that was poisoned. I thought that I, as a person, had rights, that I ought to have a choice".[24]

As people resist, they move away from an initial faith in government. As they become aware of the strong ties between government and private industry, they

generate their own practical critique; reflection on their experiences leads them to break through a prevailing ideology. They become critical of government claims to be a "neutral arbiter of competing interests" which acts in the "public interest". Instead, citizens develop their own analysis which sees words such as "the public interest" or "neutral arbiter" as part of the language that obscures power in the United States.

East Bostonians came to see themselves at war with Massport, which was only interested in the "all mighty dollar and people be damned". Santa Barbaran's saw government more as an ally of oil companies than of the people. Government could not be counted on because "it was in the pocket of oil" or because regulatory agencies are "captives of industry". Government which was once seen as a potential ally was now seen as the enemy, since "profit is their language". At Love Canal citizens saw they could not rely on government because they had "no money and no clout".

As people saw the ties between government and industry, they felt pushed to escalate their resistance. This occurred not because people were "irrational" or "unruly" mobs. This protest was a rational perception that government would not meet their needs unless they forced government to do what its supposed to do. Their own activity was justified by the very ideology of a

government that claimed to act in the public interest. Illegal tactics were legitimized as an act in defense of democracy itself. People's very expectations of government became a spur to resist. Citizens were merely forcing government to fulfill its false promises. As one neighborhood resident put it, "Our fight is a fight to save democracy against corporate greed in America".[25]

These protests, we should bear in mind, grew from the mainstream of daily life. This resistance took place with people who felt they had no choice. For the most part they believed in the established system, as evidenced by the symbols they used. In a local struggle in Northside, Brooklyn residents tried to stop bulldozers from demolishing their homes by running into the street holding onto the American flag. In Poletown, Detroit, working class people tried to save their neighborhood by illegally occupying a church.[26] In East Boston, mothers blocked traffic with a baby carriage brigade.

In each case, people participated in civil disobedience only after other methods were tried and failed. They took part in illegal protest as a last resort. As one Santa Barbaran put it, "We are so God-damned frustrated. Nobody responds to us, and we end

up doing things progressively less reasonable".[27]

As people engaged in these protests, they found at the very least that they began to get attention. One week after the baby carriage blockade in East Boston, residents won a new road for truck traffic that Massport has opposed for years.

> Legally we couldn't get anywhere. The only way we could get anywhere was to demonstrate. If you write a letter, they put it on a desk and there it sits.[28]

Like East Bostonians, residents near Kennedy Airport learned the same lesson in fighting the Concorde

> We picketed Governor Carey. We delivered hundreds and thousands of petitions and letters and telegrams and pleas for mercy to spare us from the SST. He didn't respond.
>
> He called for a ban on the SST in less than 72 hours after our first drive-in. We knew when we engineered those drive-ins that hitting those people in the pocketbook is the only language that is understandable in this country today.[29]

At each step of protest we see how people develop a practical analysis of power in America as they link the personal and political in their own lives and act upon it.

(4) Consequences

Tangible:

The results of citizen protests are often mixed.

On the one hand, citizen activists throw up obstacles to economic growth and capital accumulation. Substantive gains may be won as neighborhoods are saved, highways are stopped, rent control preserved, redlining prevented. On the other hand, citizen activists exert enormous energy, as they take on powerful foes with few resources. Their protests may be short-lived with no clear cut gains. Some are coopted. Others peter out. The tangible, visible consequences of these protests are often mixed.

Consider for example the enormous victory won by residents of Love Canal. Love Canal was declared a national disaster and its residents allocated fifteen million dollars for relocation. They achieved their stated objective. Yet the emotional, physical, and financial toll of toxic wastes will continue for the rest of their lives.

After residents moved, a number of less visible problems emerged. Lois Gibbs son nearly died a year ago from a blood disease. Twenty people committed suicide. Marriages broke up. Children developed phobias and became obsessed that they were carrying toxic poisons in their body. Many women had hysterectomies.

At Logan Airport the case is somewhat different.

Residents won a specific victory to get Massport to build a new road. This success in turn spurred hope among more residents and increased participation. Nonetheless, residents will continue to live with jetport noise and threatened airport expansion. Here periods of political quiescence tend to be dotted with intermittent struggle as new incidents provoke residents into action.

In still other struggles, the protest or leadership is coopted. Those in power integrate dissent by creating advisory boards which offer token participation. This institutionalizes resistance and creates the illusion of participation.

In some cases, the grassroot struggle has effects that go way beyond its immediate goal. Love Canal, for example, sensitized the nation to the dangers of toxic wastes in general. It was influential in creating a federal superfund to clean up similar unsafe dump sites across the country. Lois Gibbs, herself, became a national figure, organizing a nation-wide movement to fight toxic wastes.

Similarly, the grassroot struggle against bank redlining, which started in a working class neighborhood in Chicago, quickly mushroomed into a grassroot based, national movement known as National People First. This

group successfully pressured Congress to pass legislation forcing banks to disclose where they were investing and reinvest in redlined neighborhoods. Gail Cincotta, who led the original struggle, became a working class heroine in the '70's.

Here we see that the consequences of citizen protests cannot be easily determined. Starting with problems close to home, people may have some impact on their own lives and others. The gains are mixed, the successes rarely clear cut. All this suggests that everyday resistance such as citizen activism is an ongoing process of fits and starts, which is fragile and intermittent. Its gains and losses need to be observed over time.

Intangible:

The primary emphasis in this section is on the less visible, intangible consequences of everyday resistance. I refer to the growth of critical consciousness as people move from passive to active.

Through protests close to home, ordinary people glimpse a world of power that is normally elusive and taken for granted. Large institutions which were once distant become part and parcel of people's immediate lives as they protest around tangible issues.

People are politicized as they attempt to

participate in the system in the most minimal way. The very act of resistance implies a changed critical consciousness. For it means that people refuse to accept the ideology of the status quo, developing in its place an analysis of their own. Ordinary people uncovered the dangers of toxic wastes and bank redlining. They brought out the everyday dangers of new technologies to the ecology, community, and human life.

In struggle after struggle, grand or small, people at the grassroots learned a similar lesson: they were systematically excluded from decisions which affected their lives. This lesson was no less true for life and death fights against the dumping of toxic wastes at Love Canal than for fights against oil drilling by wealthy citizens of Santa Barbara.

In each case people asserted new values which came into conflict with profit and economic progess. They began to question the benefits and costs of progress. Their protests sent back this implicit message: they refused to pay the price so that business could profit.

As I noted earlier, protests such as these have tended to be relegated to the realm of collective behavior and dismissed as "irrational" or "magical", or simply misguided. Yet these everyday protests are

characterized by an internal logic and rationality. In each case, we saw how people acted rationally to meet their own interests.

Because government is expected to respond to popular needs and to protect the individual from abuses of the private economy, government becomes the focus of an underlying tension. People target government, and not industry, in their protests because they believe that they can hold government accountable, make "it do what it is supposed to do". However, they begin to see government as tied to the demands of the private economy, with profit taking priority over community, ecology, health and life itself.

In the face of this, people move from an initial faith in government to increased disillusionment. As their analysis changes, their protests tend to become more militant. Escalated resistance, such as civil disobedience, becomes a rational response to people's practical analysis of ties between government and industry.

Everyday struggles such as these politicize people who have never before resisted. They raise and answer questions about their own lives that they usually treat as given. This changing consciousness is empowering. For it helps people reinterpret their social worlds in ways that facilitate moving from

acquiescence to defiance.

In each case, we saw how changing consciousness in the process of resistance made possible both the resistance and increased militancy. We might speculate then that the changed consciousness that grows from everyday resistance may have long-term consequences for still more activity which is not immediately visible.

III. The Phenomena of Citizen Activism

Something akin to a popular ideology emerged in the mid '70's which affirmed the importance of grass-root struggles close to home. Words like "citizen activism", "grassroot politics", and "ordinary people" named a form of politics rooted in daily life. The protests I have described are illustrative of this phenomenon.

In this section, I look at the phenomenon of citizen activism by reviewing the literature from activists themselves, political writers, and observers, who attempted in different ways to articulate some aspect of this still-fragmented notion. Here I offer an overview of the phenomenon, a language of resistance, limits and possibilities.

Overview of Citizen Activism

Citizen activism has alternately been called the

"neighborhood movement", "grassroot politics", "the citizen revolt", "democracy in action".[30] The New York Times described it as a growing grassroots phenomena whose size is hard to determine because of its local character. They write that "it is so scattered and diverse no one has been able to measure its precise nature or extent".[31] These groups, notes syndicated columnist Neil Pierce, not only flourish in the United States, but can be found throughout the developed world. They represent a "groundswell of environmental, consumer, and neighborhood groups".[32]

As I said earlier, citizen activism differs from citizen initiatives that emerge within the right. "Right-Wing Populism" defines itself politically as a challenge to mainstream conservative politics. These struggles include, for example, fights against gay rights, the equal rights amendment, and abortion. In fact they are often opposed to the anti-corporate and anti-government thrust of ecology, consumer, and neighborhood groups. Moreover the latter do not define themselves in terms of tradional liberal or conservative politics. Clearly, however, the distinction between progressive and conservative dimensions of citizen activism is ambiguous around certain issues. Frank Reissman offers a new and helpful way to look at issues such as Proposition 13. Reissman suggests that, "In

opposing the narrow politics of Proposition 13, for example, we should not overlook the underlying theme which appeals to a wide range of working class and middle class people, large numbers of whom may not accept its other reactionary aspects".[33] In other words Reissman suggests we differentiate between the conservative groups who mobilize sentiment around Proposition 13 and the large mainstream of its supporters who would also be concerned with genuine tax justice programs.

Citizen groups often develop a progressive analysis which shows that "government rarely serves real community needs since government programs are consistently subordinated to marketplace considerations".[34] In this respect, they can speak to a broad constituency that is concerned about the problems of government. They also help challenge conservatives who tend to mobilize anti-government sentiments by "blaming the victim".

Social commentators have tended to compare the '70's to the seemingly more conservative '50's. The '70's is seen as a time of retreat from the more active '60's. Yet as writers like Gar Alperovitz note, the '70's was also a decade which saw "the strengthening of democratic values of participation and community"[35] through many grassroot struggles.

The development of critical consciousness in the United States contrasts with a prevailing media image

of the '70's as a decade where most people in the United States turned toward the right. According to a nationwide Hart Public Opinion Survey conducted in the middle '70's, people at that time had started to blame business for the country's problems: millions of Americans had lost confidence in capitalism (33%), believed both parties represent big business (57%), and blamed big business for the country's problems (49%).[36]

Harris surveys also showed that the '60's vision of participatory democracy influenced people in the '70's as more and more "people showed a widespread desire to play a more active role in areas that they were previously prepared to leave to others, from the neighborhood to the factory floor".[37]

This suggests that we cannot neatly separate decades. The '60's didn't simply die in 1970 as social commentators suggest. The phenomenon of citizen activism was influenced itself by social movements of the '60's which challenged the prevailing ideology on issues of race, welfare, sexism, and corporate exploitation of the environment.

At the same time, citizen activism of the '70's was strikingly different, in strategy at least, from '60's style politics. It represented a shift from

large scale mobilization designed to pressure the national government. In the '70's people moved to the local community as an arena of struggle. That decade, writes Janice Perlman, "spawned a plethora of grassroot associations where local people mobilized on their own behalf around concrete issues of importance to their community". Growing disillusionment with existing institutions and the lack of government and corporate responsiveness led to a "surge of vitality expressed in grassroot associations which counter centralized power or unresponsive institutions".[38] As a whole, these groups tended to be "more down to earth, more practical, and above all more rooted in the social fabric".[39]

Like Perlman, Harry Boyte also sees the citizen revolt as a reflection of the depth of popular resentment to both corporate and political power. Boyte interviewed hundreds of people in citizen organizations across the country to show the breadth of grassroot activity in the past decade. Neighborhoods fought for their survival and, in the process, challenged banks, oil giants, governments, and corporations. Consumers and ecologists took on powerful corporations, attacking "the new styles of violence practiced by corporations which show up years after the initial exposure in th-statistics of lung cancer, emphysema, and genetic damage".[40]

These protests emerge as people feel threatened by "increasingly direct control over social and community life by corporations and the state".[41] They emerge when confronting problems created by market pressures such as land speculation, shoddy merchandise, and skyrocketing energy costs.[42] People protest in an attempt to protect the human environment. As anti-redlining activist Gail Cincotta put it, they are fighting, "the insidious throwaway mentality afflicting America which classified older people, older homes, and old neighborhoods as expendable-like pop bottles and kleenex".[43]

This changing consciousness grew at the grassroots. It grew in a decade which marked a shift away from post-war years of increasing economic growth, faith in progress and the "American Dream", and moderately liberal politics. In contrast, the '70's were years of increased inflation, recession and growing disenchantment with the United States. This climate

> cut loose the political moorings of middle America. The new ferment of citizen activism involved constituencies scarcely touched by the revolts of the '60's - for example, blue-collar workers, old people, housewives, middle aged homeowners, farmers, small business people.[44]

The constituency described here was analyzed in quite a different way by Herbert Gans in the 1960's. In a now classic book, The Urban Villagers, Gans described Italian working class people in Boston's West

End. As redevelopment programs broke up their neighborhood, Gans found neighborhood residents tended to be fatalistic about their capacity to influence the outside world. They remained politically apathetic.[45]

By the mid '70's, however, the word "neighborhood" had taken on new political meanings for working class people. Neighborhood came to symbolize residents' struggles against economic and political powers which intruded in their lives and were perceived as unjust.

Writing in the mid '70's, the political scientist Andrew Hacker found very different perceptions of neighborhood. For the most part wrote Hacker, neighborhood had been understood by social scientists in primarily cultural terms. Within this framework,

> the city was viewed as a series of enclaves whose residents shared common values, attitudes, and perhaps heritage. What these visions of community shared is that they are essentially nonpolitical. Not least of its attraction lies in this premise, that given a comfortable culture, citizens feel no compulsion to argue issues of governance.[46]

But, as Hacker notes, this passivity can no longer be assumed. By the 1970's, neighborhoods had ceased to be "placid villages". Neighborhoods which once guaranteed passivity and restrained citizenry now appeared as "contentious cockpits". People demanded the decentralization of decision-making and, in the process, created a new style of politics. In this context,

words like "neighborhood" and "community" came to mean a "participating citizenry".

Language of Citizen Activism

In their own terms and in their own struggles, people at the grassroots created a practical analysis. This bore a striking resemblance to more scholarly works of the university left. Like radical social historians, feminists, and phenomenologists, people at the grassroots stressed the importance of everyday life. A central theme that emerged in struggle after struggle in the 1970's was this: people wanted more and more control over their daily lives.

Words like "citizen activism", "grassroots activism", and "ordinary people" became shorthand, taken for granted symbols which named a new form of organizing emerging in spaces close to home. The language of citizen activism, largely taken for granted, must be viewed as an integral part of a developing ideology. Its use, which has not previously been analyzed, is investigated here by studying those writers who have attempted to articulate this still-emerging perspective. They include activists themselves, political organizers, and social analysts. Many of them are widely read by people at the grassroots, for whom their analyses serve to legitimize their own struggles.

Citizen or grassroot activism is a broad label which identifies a form of everyday resistance. That is, it affirms the very personal ways people are politicized in spaces close to home: in their neighborhoods, on the job, with the very water they drink. The word "grassroots" implies a rootedness, an emphasis on resistance growing from people's direct exerience rather than abstract concepts.

When we talk about protests of everyday life we are by no means talking about a new form of resistance. What marks the '70's as different is the emergence of a language that affirms such protests as all important. This implies a new consciousness.

Activist-writers like Milton Kotler gave voice to this new perspective. His works are widely read among activists of the past decade. Kotler sought to redefine what we mean by revolution itself with images of local insurrection growing out of people's everyday experiences. Kotler wrote,

> We had been taught that revolution springs from causes larger than men - from historic forces - when it springs, in fact, from matters which cause anger and fear and contempt in the basic situations of people's lives, such as their schools, jobs, welfare, health, and so on.[47]

Like Kotler, activists Karl Hess and David Morris gave voice to a politics rooted in people's day-to-day experiences. They questioned an alienated, abstract

politics which was separated from the spaces where people live and work. For "people simply do not live in institutions or in areas of abstract political theory. The physical facts are that people live in particular places and work in particular places... Our point is that politics should live where people do".[48]

Writings such as these stressed as all important politics from the bottom up, a politics rooted in everyday life. This affirmed a democratic faith in the capacity of ordinary citizens to make decisions about their own lives.

Grassroots activism created a politics from below in the '70's as ordinary people fought back who had never before resisted. Women like Lois Gibbs became national figures who spoke about the ways their lives had been transformed by their resistance. Gibbs describes herself as a shy, apolitical housewife whose life was turned around by Love Canal, "It took Love Canal to open my eyes", she said, "I bought the American Dream when I moved to Love Canal only to learn that it wasn't there because government and industry abused my rights". Gibbs enjoined others like herself to fight back against "experts, political bureaucracy, and corporations who abuse people's lives".[49]

The language of ordinary people implies a dividing

line of sorts between "us" and "them". "Us" refers to the direct experiences of ordinary citizens who are powerless, vulnerable, victimized. "Them" refers to an empowered elite who make decisions about people's lives but are far removed from its consequences. This includes both multinational corporations and city hall, city planners and nuclear physicists, real estate speculators and banks. The abstractness of the decisions they make contrasts with the practicality of people's experiences. Cost benefit analysis, statistics, flow charts tend to measure and justify policy in terms of "acceptable risks", But, as Gibbs notes,

> Governors and legislators, industry executives and experts do not usually live on top of toxic waste dumps... They don't have to live with the thought that the leukemia which took a child ten years ago was not an unfathomable act of God but the result of human carelessness, of greed or stupidity, or, worst of all, that the disease might have been avoided.[50]

In this respect, the language of ordinary people implies, broadly speaking, a kind of "class intuition... a belief that common people are mistreated by the powerful".[51]

Arising together with the critique of top-down politics is a growing faith in the capacity of ordinary people to make decisions about their own lives. In this context, the language of citizen activism resurrects

classically democratic meanings about faith in an active citizenry. Participation is seen as "an inalienable right to participate in all our affairs",[52] or even as a moral imperative necessary to "save democracy itself, indeed, necessary for our very survival".[53]

Its emphasis on participation, notes Boyte, makes citizen activism a democratic thread of insurgency in our time and place. But it has tended to confound the political wisdom of liberals and conservatives alike. For it contrasts with "traditional liberal-conservative choices between government bureaucracy on the one hand and profit-making corporations on the other". Instead citizen activists "couple a mistrust of large institutions - public and private - with a rekindled faith in the citizenry itself, a belief that given adequate resources and information people could make decisions about their own lives".[54]

The language of citizen activism, grassroot activism, and ordinary people affirms a new view of politics. It suggests that in some measure people who are most affected have put their finger on problems and solutions that often escape the view of analysts of the larger society. During the 1970's, people at the grassroots challenged our topdown view of politics. They created a language of resistance from below, a

"modest" politics that not only begins with everyday life but stays close to it.

Possibilities and Limits of Citizen Activism

Citizen activism has been called the "Democratic Awakening", "The Democratic Promise", The Democratic Movement in the United States". In one way or another, political analysts are trying to bring out an implicit theme that underlies the many disparate protests of the '70's. They see this as democracy.

To call citizen activism a democratic phenomena is by no means to imply a coherent ideology or social movement. As Frank Reissman points out, it would be more accurate to say there are several emerging ideologies. These include participation, empowerment, decentralization.[55]

The attempt to find in citizen activism an implicit potential or emerging ideology helps us make inferences about everyday resistance. Over time, recurring patterns begin to emerge in the analysis and organizing forms of different groups. These allow us to interpret the broader potential everyday struggles suggest.

Harry Boyte, for example, views citizen activism as an "embryonic movement", whose "animating impulse" is the "democratization of the social structure itself".

While Boyte realizes that the achievement of this goal is far from certain, he attempts to identify a common thread or possibility inferred from many different protests. These as a whole represent for him "an alternative popular democratic thread of insurgency".[56]

Like Boyte, James O'Connor tries to identify the implicit themes of these struggles. For O'Connor, these struggles represent a fight over who will define and control social life itself. On the one side is the corporate state with its need for economic growth and capital accumulation. On the other side are popular groups struggling to redefine human and social needs in democratic ways. "The movement's actual self-conscious practice consists of struggles around economic and social issues. Yet while the struggles appear particularistic and hence unrelated, in fact, they have the same implicit objective, namely, the democratization of the state".[57]

Whether or not citizen activism will coalesce into a more visible social movement is still an open question. To date, most struggles tend to be sporadic and isolated. But as Peter Marcuse has written, everyday protests such as these are important in and of themselves. "They slow down some aspect the system wants..." Moreover, win or lose, the consequences of struggle transcend the immediate goal.

People change the ways they see themselves and their world as they "learn, gain skills and experience and self-confidence. In the end, some may be co-opted and others return to inactivity; but the potential for renewed future action is greater than before". Rather than dismiss these protests as reformist, there is no reason to reject immediate gains or changed consciousness simply because their "linkage to the final collapse of capitalism is not established within acceptable limits of statistical certainty".[58]

An approach which seeks to identify common underlying themes of citizen activism must, at the same time, recognize its limits and differences. Treating the citizen revolt or the neighborhood movement as a potentially unified phenomena fails to address differences that divide citizen activism, such as race, class and sex. Delmos Jones levels this critique at the "neighborhood movement" for, "neighborhoods are not merely places where people live. They are places where people possessing differential wealth and power live...Not all communities are redlined, only specific kinds - communities are not equal..."[59]

Here we see how the word "neighborhood" can be used to obscure class differences. Attempts to stabilize neighborhoods can also inadvertently stabilize class inequality. Residents who seek to renovate old brown-

stones may improve their neighborhoods. At the same time they may create the very gentrification that displaces poor residents. Both groups might be considered part of a neighborhood movement. Yet they become embroiled in contradictions of a market economy which divide them.

By failing to address such contradictions directly, people may feel more defeated by the difficulties they inevitably encounter in protest. For example, working-class people fight hard against redlining. Yet in the very act of improving their neighborhood they make themselves more vulnerable to gentrification. Their very success inflates housing prices and makes them ripe for real estate speculators. Housing then becomes less affordable for the very working class people whom the initial struggle was designed to help. Here again we see that failure to address the problems of a class society and market economy creates a potential for undermining resistance.

On another level, an emphasis on the potential of citizen acitivism tends to underplay the ways those in power try to constrain or coopt protest. Sixties activists also raised issues such as citizen participation and community control. Yet they found these struggles frequently undermined by government attempts to defuse or integrate protest. This happened, wrote urbanist John

Mollenkopf, as "sixties activism embraced the model cities programs, project area committees, mental health advisory boards, and other devices designed to bring them into the pork barrel fold".[60]

By the 1970's, militant struggles by black communities for community control of education had been coopted. Marilyn Gittell, a vocal advocate of this struggle in the '60's, studied its defeat in the '70's.[61] Gittell found that government-mandated education boards and government-subsidized service organizations all but eliminated the '60's emphasis on citizen participation. Dissent and advocacy politics declined as people were integrated into apolitical advisory boards. The most seriously affected were poor people, since they could least afford the cost of maintaining independent citizen organizations. Gittell concludes that prospects for effective citizen participation in educational decision-making aren't very promising, especially for low income people. Her study serves as a warning to current activists about their vulnerability to a politics of cooptation.

This chapter focuses on the possibilities of everyday resistance and, in so doing, brackets many of the difficulties. It should be emphasized that the limits and constraints inherent in these protests are themselves of importance and must be further explored.

At the same time, we must recall that the present emphasis on the potential of citizen activism emerges in a context in which these protests have been dismissed or minimized. The attempt to bring out their inner logic and potential is necessary to our own time and place. My analysis suggests that not all struggles are integrated or manipulated by those in power. People do develop a critical analysis of power in the course of their daily struggles. In this chapter I have stressed the ways in which ordinary people move from passive to active as they reflect on problems of their everyday lives.

The phenomenon of everyday resistance is not new. In the next chapter, we explore everyday resistance more fully by turning to the works of social historians.

NOTES

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3. Gibbs, Love Canal, p. 39

4. Gibbs, Love Canal, p. 56

5. Information for this case study is drawn from Dorothy Nelkin, Jetport, (New Jersey: Transaction Books); William Kornblum and Celene Krauss, "Some Environmental Impacts of Industrialization: The Case of Kennedy Airport" (forthcoming)

6. Kornblum and Krauss, "Environmental Impacts of Industrialization"

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Chapter Three

THE INNER LOGIC OF EVERYDAY RESISTANCE: A THEORY FROM HISTORIANS

This chapter further elaborates my theoretical conception of modest struggle by turning to the works of radical social historians. In particular, I refer here to a new generation of writers who gained importance in the 1970's, emphasizing subterranean undercurrents of historical resistance which had previously been ignored. I have in mind such writers as E. P. Thompson and George Rude, Herbert Gutman and E. J. Hobsbawn. To this group I would also add the British cultural historian Raymond Williams.

The writings of these social historians take us to the preindustrial crowd and its resistance to early capitalism: from English taverns to revolutionary crowds in France and social bandits in Italy. The subjects of their analyses differ; hence, these writings are not to be conflated. Yet despite their differences, they share a deeper story. This includes new ways of looking at ordinary working people who actively shape their social world through more elusive forms of everyday resistance.

I interpret the work of these writers to bring out what I view to be a theoretical and methodological potential for analyzing everyday resistance in general.

Most immediately, they validate the practical insights brought forth by citizen activism of the past decade.

For the most part, the theoretical grounding I infer is implicit in these writings. They rarely set forth an integrated analysis of resistance in the terms conceptualized here. I make explicit a theoretical grounding for modest struggle that their work strongly implies. This grounding, I argue, underlies their more specific descriptions and provides the framework for their historical orientation.

In the following sections, this theoretical perspective is described and documented by specific references to the works of these social historians.

I. A New Theoretical Perspective

Social historians reread history to emphasize the ways men and women shaped their social worlds as much as they were shaped by them. To this end, their social histories include the men and women who have for the most part been excluded from history books. We read not of kings and wars or political and social elites. Instead, they bring out the everyday ways ordinary people make history: their activities, feelings, grievances, visions. Here they stress the more elusive forms of resistance which contrast with a possible result or byproduct of it: the more dramatic

and visible social upheavals we perceive as important.

Two dominant themes recur throughout the theoretical works of social historians, as well as in their historical studies of the preindustrial crowd: (1) the inner logic of everyday resistance and (2) an emphasis on human agency. In this section, I examine these aspects of their work.

Inner Logic

Social historians stress the more elusive forms of everyday resistance that historians have been prone to neglect. They impute to these struggles an inner logic or rationality that social scientists generally have not. Social scientists have tended to ignore these protests, in part because of the very elusive character of everyday resistance. Its meanings are not well articulated; records of its thoughts and struggles are lost. As we will see, the analytic methods of social historians reveal implicit patterns which emerge over time. They demonstrate the rationality of protest in terms of working people's experiences and their reflections upon them.

This emphasis on the inner logic of everyday resistance contrasts sharply with predominant attitudes toward collective behavior. Within the social psychological tradition, which dominated views of collective

behavior during most of the twentieth century, forms of everyday resistance were assumed to be irrational.[1] These protests were equated with mental disorder and neurosis. Participants were considered neurotic, "weak-minded and gullible people who fall prey to manipulative or psychotic leaders".[2]

This interpretation of collective behavior was articulated by the French psychologist Gustave Le Bon, whose study of the preindustrial crowd has influenced images of collective behavior throughout this century. To Le Bon, these crowds were "irrational, fickle, destructive". He describes participants of the French revolutionary crowd as drawn "from criminal elements, degenerates, and persons with destructive instincts, who blindly responded to the sirens of 'leaders' or 'demogogues'".[3]

The literature of collective behavior adopts this perspective, reflecting a general fear of the masses and an assumption that "masses have no worthwhile aspirations of their own and were easily manipulated".[4] While this view stems in part from a focus on certain forms of collective behavior, for example, lynchings, it is similarly applied to all forms of everyday resistance, conflating historical differences, experiences and motives. There is a tendency to identify resistance more generally as antisocial and the product

of social misfits: "decent, law-abiding citizens could not be converted into the lawless".[5] These writers fail to consider those rational moments when people engage in resistance because of economic and political experiences with powers they consider unjust.

Sociologists such as Neil Smelser advanced beyond this social psychological approach. Smelser identifies collective behavior as purposive and guided by generalized beliefs. Yet he views these generalized beliefs as magical or irrational.[6]

As a whole, the more elusive, less articulate forms of everyday resistance are "consigned to the shadowy realms of social problems and deviant behavior. Having decided by definitional fiat that nothing political has occurred, nothing has to be explained, at least not in terms of political protest".[7]

The phenomenon of everyday resistance has fared little better in those studies of collective behavior emanating from theorists of the left. Less articulate forms of resistance in the local community are dismissed as "false consciousness" and "backward looking". The struggles of the preindustrial crowd are seen as the "blind futile actions of desperate men and women".

In contrast to these perspectives, social historians emphasize the political significance of more elusive, everyday protests. At times, they seem

overly optimistic about the progressive dimension of these struggles. Their emphasis makes sense, however, when viewed within the broader context of their work: a critique of traditional ways of analyzing collective behavior and social change.

Social historians argue that everyday protests must be understood on people's own terms and through their own experiences. Central to the social historical perspective is the study of the practical ways people reflect upon and interpret social life, creating the possibility for oppositional consciousness and resistance. This practical way of knowing that informs people's lives stands in contrast to the formal theorizing of intellectuals and political theorists.

We see this emphasis when Thompson writes that "ordinary mortals are not as stupid as intellectual's think",

> outside the university precinct another kind of knowledge production is going on all the time. Knowledges have been and still are formed outside academic procedures. They have assisted men and women to till the fields, to support elaborate social organizations, and even, on occasion, to challenge effectively the conclusions of academic thought.
>
> Experience does not wait discreetly outside their offices, waiting for the moment at which the discourse of the proof will summon it into attendance. Experience walks in without knocking at the door, and announces deaths,

> crisis in subsistence, trench warfare, unemployment, inflation, genocide...People starve: their survivors think in new ways about the market. People are imprisoned: in prison they meditate in new ways about the law. In the face of such general experiences old conceptual systems may crumble and new problematics insist upon their presence.[8]

Thompson elaborates a perspective which underlies the historical works of social historians: how less articulate majorities interpret their lives in practical ways. Throughout history, these practical ways of knowing have informed everyday resistance. While leaving few traces of their thoughts, less articulate majorities nevertheless lay the groundwork for a more articulate minority and developing social movements.[9]

As Gutman notes, the social historians' concern with practical resistance, central to their historical analysis of the preindustrial crowd, has largely been lacking in the work of labor historians. Most labor historians have overemphasized formal organization and trade unions, or more articulate forms of protests. Since most nineteenth century workers did not belong to unions, their resistance is not documented by these writers.[10]

In contrast, writers like Gutman and Thompson, shed light on precisely these mundane forms of protest. Thompson wants to "rescue the poor stockinger, the

Luddite cropper, the 'utopian' artisan from the condescension of posterity".[11] In these blind alleys and lost causes of the industrial revolution may be "insights into social evils which we have yet to cure...that working people felt these grievances at all - and felt them passionately - is sufficient to merit our attention. Their aspirations are valid in terms of their own experience".[12] For this reason social historians argue that everyday resistance must be analyzed on its own terms.

Human Agency

At the core of their analysis, social historians raise this phenomenological question: just how do social actors make history? How do people's everyday experience make social change and resistance conceivable? By raising these questions, they lay the groundwork for what makes resistance intelligible in the first place. For they bring out what resistance presupposes: human beings who are active and creative shapers of their social lives. They posit and make real the ever active role of people. In this respect, they revive a legacy central to classical Marxism, an emphasis on human agency, on the ways people make history.

The emphasis on human agency critiques the prevailing orientation of mainstream and Marxist

sociology that social structures determine most or all of what people do. This emphasis cannot account for social change since there is "no adequate category to explain social change or class struggle".[13] We cannot expect resistance from people who are overdetermined and hence accommodating and passive.

By opposing the dominant perspective, social historians provide us with the theoretical grounding for everyday resistance which is missing elsewhere. "History", writes Thompson, "is not a process without a subject, it is unmastered human practice".[14]

To say that social historians emphasize resistance and human agency is not to say that they do not acknowledge social constraints. On the contrary, their historical works are written against the backdrop of early industrializing capitalism. They write vividly about the experiences of working people who are oppressed and exploited. Nowhere do they imply that people live in a world where all choices are freely available.

What they are questioning is a perspective in social science that emphasizes the study of the dominant social order. This view underplays or ignores the ways in which people's lives are not neatly determined, the ways people experience and interpret and shape their social worlds day by day.

The emphasis on a dominant social order or culture offers only a partial analyses of people's lives. This is so, as Raymond Williams notes, because,

> no dominant social order and, therefore, no dominant culture, ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention...
>
> Practical consciousness is what is actually lived, and not only what is thought to be lived. (It) may represent human experience, aspiration, and achievement which the dominant culture neglects, undervalues, opposes, represses or even cannot recognize.[15]

In contrast, social historians shift the emphasis from social structure to daily life, grounding the possibility for critical consciousness and everyday resistance. They add an underplayed dimension to social science: the meanings and values of people's lives as they are actively lived and felt.[16] Emphasis on human agency underlies all of their historical works. Working people are not simply the passive victims of history; they are also active subjects.

This theme is at the core of E. P. Thompson's now classic historical work, The Making of the English Working Class. Thompson tells us that he is taking on prevailing orthodoxies. These include the Fabians who treat "the great majority of working people as the passive victims of laissez faire". It also includes "economic historians who reduce working people to data

for statistical series". What troubles Thompson is the way these views obscure what is central to his own analysis, "the agency of working people, the degree to which they contributed by conscious efforts to the making of history". What gets left out are the ways people "owe as much to their making as to their conditioning".[17]

We see this emphasis again in the social histories of Herbert Gutman. Gutman criticizes labor historians for writing too much about how capitalism shaped the working class. In contrast, He stresses how working people made their "imprint" on industrializing America. Similarly George Rude criticizes Marxists for a narrow emphasis on ideology as hegemony or control, which fails to consider the ways people also create an oppositional ideology from below.

In sum, the key organizing concept for the social historians is the role of conscious human choice, value, action in history. Through their social histories, they show that people are not merely determined by the dominant culture or by the relations of production.

II. Implicit Meanings of Everyday Resistance

In their historical analyses of the preindustrial crowd of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, social historians interpret less articulate forms of resistance.

In so doing, they develop analytic categories which demonstrate how people create meanings that facilitate resistance.

In the following sections, I look at the specific groundings through which social historians interpret the inner logic of everyday protests. These include: historical experience, cultural expectations, and culture as process.

Historical Experience

As a first step to analyzing resistance of the preindustrial crowd social historians stress the changing historical context that frames experience.

The preindustrial crowd emerged against the backdrop of the new free market economy, which threatened people's livelihood and culture. Social historians offer considerable evidence that their protests were an important and rational form of resistance against a new industrial order. This resistance lasted for nearly two centuries and reflected the total immiseration of people's daily lives.

> As commercialism and the quest of 'improvement' entered the village, common lands were divided and fenced off, turnpikes were erected, and grain was stored in barns and withheld from immediate circulation, while prices were allowed to follow the whims of supply and demand and find their 'natural' level. Similarly, as industry developed, labor-saving

> machinery was introduced into mines, and wages, like prices, found a 'natural' level by direct bargaining between the masters and their laborers. Thus, gradually, the old protective legislation against enclosure, engrossing, and forestall, and the export of grain, and the old laws empowering magistrates to fix prices and wages, were rescinded; and the old notions of the 'just' price and 'just' wage, imposed by authority or sanctioned by custom, gave way to the prevailing notions of 'natural' wages and prices in a freely competitive market.[18]

Emerging capitalism led to a total transformation of social life which eroded expected ways of living. Prices once regulated by custom were now subject to market forces and thus allowed to fluctuate. Unregulated prices threatened people with poverty and starvation. Workers faced unemployment as new forms of labor saving machinery were created. Peasant farmers were thrown off their lands.

The industrial revolution is generally identifed with the rise of the factory system and alienated labor. But the factory system was, in fact, a late development; it did not become a central force in social life until the mid-nineteenth century. What people felt most immediately was the "loss of common rites, village democracy, craftsman status, livelihood, work and play, loss of security, leisure and deterioration of the urban environment, physical and spiritual deterioration,

lost community".[19]

During those years, there was a breakdown of all the protective devices which maintained people's culture and prevented starvation and unemployment. This is not to idealize preindustrial times. It is to suggest, however, that popular conceptions of that historical period are misleading. The industrial revolution happened to a free peasantry, not to serfs in bondage. These people had come to expect certain rights and customs and traditions. All this was eroded by an industrial order which threatened people's very lives through starvation.

The riots of the preindustrial crowd did not spring from the margins of society. They grew from ordinary working people resisting dangers to their daily lives. For the most part the preindustrial crowd is seen in the literature of collective behavior as composed of "criminal elements, or riffraff, or social misfits". In contrast, social historians show us people who were rooted in established ways of life. These included

> the 'lower orders' of menu people of the town and countryside. Menu people were in French cities, predominantly small workshop masters, shopkeepers, apprentices, independent craftsmen, journey-men, laborers and city poor; and in the countryside, wine-growers, small peasant proprietors, landless laborers, and rural craftsmen.

> In England they were small shopkeepers, peddlers, artisans, journeymen, servants and laborers in one case, and weavers, miners, village craftsmen in the other.[20]

The composition of the preindustrial crowd suggests both its rootedness in daily life and the breadth of its resistance. In contrast to a popular image of resistance in the factories alone, we see how the composition of the crowd went far beyond factory workers.

Working people were not passive in the face of radical social change brought forth by industrializing capitalism. Nor, given the context of their resistance, can we say that they were irrational. When located in the historical context of early capitalism, we see an inner logic to their struggles.

> Crowds riot because it is hungry or fears to be so, because it has some deep social grievance, because it seeks an immediate reform, Cornish tin miners or West country weavers burn down their employer's house or mill or destroy his machinery in the course of an industrial dispute because they want higher wages and peaceful means have failed.
>
> Food rioters threaten bakers, invade markets, rip open sacks of flour or grain, not to intimidate or destroy but to bring down the price of food.
>
> Food riots, strikes, wrecking of machinery take place among common people of town and countryside impelled to urge to maintain or improve living standards, to prevent reductions in

> wages, to resist encroachments on their holdings in land or their rights of common pasture, to protect their means of livelihood against the threat of new mechanical devices, and, above all to ensure a constant supply of cheap and plentiful foods.[21]

Here again we see the logic of working people's resistance. They resisted in the face of threats to daily life by the new market economy. This resistance was a way to control prices, wages, and unemployment. For example, food riots were a form of "price control" by riot. Machine burning was an early form of "collective bargaining". In both these forms, social historians see forerunners to modern consumer and labor disputes. They were measures people took to protect their lives and livelihoods.

While these crowds often appeared unruly and spontaneous, closer examination reveals that their outbursts were neither indiscriminate nor uncontrolled. What is striking about the preindustrial crowd is

> The remarkable single-mindedness and discriminating purposefulness of crowds, even those whose actions appear to be most spontaneous. For example, they took meticulous care to avoid destroying or damaging the properties of their neighbors...
>
> It rioted for precise objects and rarely engaged in indiscriminate attacks on either properties or persons. Riots might spread but they rarely spread to areas untouched by the grievances that gave them birth.[22]

We see here how the preindustrial crowd picked its targets carefully, demonstrating again a degree of rationality with which it is rarely credited.

Let us consider one widespread form of resistance characteristic of the preindustrial crowd in Europe, the machine breaking riots described in the studies of Thompson, Rude, and Hobsbawn. Machine breaking illustrates well popular images of the irrational crowd vs. its internal logic based on direct experience.

Machine breaking riots were recorded from as early as 1663 to as late as 1831. On the surface, they appeared to be a backward lashing out against technology. A concensus emerged among disparate observers, from conservatives to liberals and socialists, that saw the crowd as

> not knowing what it was doing, but merely reacted, blindly and gropingly, to the pressure of misery, as animals in the laboratory react to electric currents...The conscious views of most students may be summed up as follows: the triumph of mechanization was inevitable. The tendency was to see them sympathetically but we must accept its pointlessness and inevitable defeat.[23]

Luddism, a social movement which grew out of machine breaking, was seen as "an uncouth, spontaneous affair of illiterate handworkers, blindly resisting machinery".[24]

As Thompson writes, these protests were by no means the "blind and futile gesture by ignorant and

desperate men; still less, a last-ditch attempt to arrest the course of progress".[25] Rather, they reflected workers' perception of threats to their livelihood. Machine breaking riots took the form of

> the destruction of materials, looms, threshing-machines, the flooding of pits or damage to pit-head gear, or the robbing or firing of houses or property of unpopular employers - these, and other forms of violent direction action...are sometimes aimed at machinery held to be obnoxious as such. More often, they were means of enforcing customary conditions, or were ancillary means to strike or other 'trade union' action[26]

These riots did not represent an antagonism to technological progress per se. Machine breaking riots reveal a practical analysis of workers' problems. They broke out when forms of peaceful negotiation broke down.

Machine breakers rioted for two reasons. In the first instance, riots were a way to protect workers' livelihoods against wage cuts and rising prices. Machine breaking here illustrates one form of "collective bargaining by riot". It was used to pressure employers to increase wages. In this respect, wrecking was a "technique of trade unionism in the early phases of the industrial revolution".[27]

In the second instance, riots were more directly related to problems associated with machines.

This involved the practical analysis by working people that new, labor-saving technology threatened workers with unemployment and reduced their standard of living.

> The spitalfields weavers rioted against machines by which 'one man can do as much...as near twenty without them'[28]

Workers perceived a threat to their standard of living not only in economic terms; the new technology additionally constituted an assault upon their freedom and dignity. These machines were seen as "a means of oppression on the part of the rich and corresponding degradation and misery of the poor".[29]

Machine breaking illustrates how seemingly irrational and violent riots have an inner logic of their own. We make these implicit meanings explicit by analyzing protests over time and rooting them in historical experience. This emphasis on historical experience helps ground or account for more elusive forms of everyday resistance. It brings out the inner logic of protests which may never be articulated at all.

Cultural Expectations

As a second step to analyzing everyday resistance, social historians stress cultural expectations. These provide the framework within which oppressive experiences are interpreted. By looking at people's inherited culture,

social historians again validate the internal logic of everyday protest. Culture is a critical dimension in their analysis, as Thompson notes, because people,

> experience their own experiences as feeling and handle their feelings within their culture, as norms, familial and kinship obligations, values...[30]

Culture, as used here, is not a static concept. It refers to the ways people shape meaning in their lives, how they interpret their experience.

This emphasis again contrasts with mainstream and Marxist analysis, which social historians view as denying the holding power of popular traditions and inherited culture. Theoretical dichotomies such as gemeinschaft and gesselschaft, notes Gutman, have led historians to underplay the ways culture and tradition live alongside radical social change. Historians tend to

> miss the subtle historical processes that explain particular patterns of working class behavior. An analytic model that distinguishes between culture and society reveals that even in periods of radical economic and social change, powerful cultural continuities and adaptations continue to shape the historical behavior of diverse working class populations.[31]

Gutman is critical of images of industrial change which support deterministic, mechanistic views of the making of class. What gets missed is that class is not merely determined by external forces; class was

not made by the factory system in an economically determined fashion. The industrial revolution did not happen to raw material. As Thompson points out,

> the making of the working class was not the spontaneous generation of the factory-system. Nor should we think of an external force - the 'industrial revolution' working upon some nondescript undifferentiated raw material of humanity, and turning it out at the other end as a 'fresh race of beings'. The working conditions of the Industrial Revolution were imposed upon the free-born Englishman as Paine had left him...The factory hand or stockinger was also the inheritor of Bunyan, of remembered village rights, of notions of equality before the law, of craft traditions...The working class made itself as much as it was made[32]

The industrial revolution happened to people with an inherited cultural tradition. And that culture was a resource used to interpret their experience of misery and exploitation in early capitalism.

> The Magna Carta, the Popish Plot, the Bill of Rights, and the 'glorious constitution' of 1689 were all reminders that these 'liberties; had constantly to be fought for against tyranny from within. What we see is a rich variety of beliefs, through which economic issues and appeals to customary rights exist side by side with new conception of people's place in society. Memory and oral tradition, as well as the material conditions and social relations of the present, served to perpetuate the forms of popular disturbance.[33]

A wide variety of beliefs and customary rights

legitimized popular direct action for nearly two centuries. People resisted as rights they came to expect were violated. Riots were popularly regarded as acts of justice. For example, people expected that the price of food would be regulated by custom. They, therefore, saw as immoral a free market that made hunger possible by forcing up prices and profiting from people's daily needs.

Cultural expectations are treated as central in the analyses of the radical social historians. We see this in Thompson's use of the term "subpolitical", which distinguishes between the point of confrontation and the underlying cultural base from which people relate to one another. This underlying cultural base provides the framework for interpreting historical experience and resistance.[34]

Like Thompson, Rude also treats as important the ideas and beliefs which underlie social and political action. He calls this "inherent ideology". These are the less articulate "attitudes, mentalities, or outlooks that grow from a sort of mother's milk ideology based on direct experience and custom".[35]

In the view of these writers, culture is an internal resource and not simply imposed on people's lives from above. In opposition to the traditional mainstream and Marxist orientations, culture is not

seen as reproducing the dominant social order. Nor is it merely an agency for stability and domination. On the contrary, culture is often a spur to resistance. Ordinary people interpret their lives in ways which are creative and partly autonomous from the dominant social culture. As they interpret and create meanings from below, they shape their culture as well.

As Rude notes, traditional leftist theory fails to account for such oppositional consciousness from below. For example, Marxists treat ideology as a form of domination by the ruling class. Rude points out that for Luckacs ideology is only hegemony or "the way the ruling class imposes concensus through its control of the media of indoctrination in that part of the state he terms civil society, through press, church, and education. Thus people become willing partners in their own subjection".[36]

While recognizing the significance of these notions, Rude wants to move beyond this analysis. Rude wants to consider, in addition, how working people develop a critical consciousness from below. Without such a perspective, Marxists have tended to create passive images of men and women, "the proletariat is left to stand on the sidelines as silent spectators while capitalism digs its grave".[37]

In contrast, radical social historians stress

the more active, creative, dimensions of people's resistance. For this reason they treat culture as a resource which people appropriate and reshape in the course of resistance.

An illustration of the relationships between cultural expectations and resistance is provided by consideration of the food riots of the preindustrial crowd. In urban and rural communities, consumer consciousness preceded other forms of political or industrial conflict. It was the cost of bread, not wages, that was the most sensitive indicator of popular discontent. This was so because of people's expectations that prices would be regulated by custom. The preindustrial crowd looted shops because they saw rising prices as unjust and immoral. Food riots in this context were a form of price control. They were found in every town and country until the 1840's and were

> sometimes uproarious like the 'Great Cheese Riot" at Nottingham's Goose Fair in 1764, when whole cheeses were rolled down the streets; or the riot in the same city in 1788, caused by the high price of meat, when the doors and shutters of the shambles were torn down and burned in the marketplace.
>
> The climatic year for such 'riots' was 1795, a year of European famine or extreme scarcity...When prices soared, direct action spread throughout the country. In Nottingham women went from one baker's shop to another, set

> their own price on the stock therein and putting down the money, took it away.[38]

Herbert Gutman also describes food riots by poor immigrants in industrializing America. For example, in New York City in 1902

> Orthodox New York City Jews, mostly women led by a woman butcher, protested the rising price of kosher meat and the betrayal of a promised boycott of the Meat Trust by retail butchers. The complaint started on the Lower East Side and then spontaneously spread among Jews further uptown and even among Jews in Brooklyn, Newark, and Boston. The Lower East Side Jews demanded lower prices. Some called for a rabbi to fix for the entire New York Jewish community the price of meat, as in the Eastern European shtetl. The nation's financial metropolis saw immigrant women engage in seemingly archaic traditional protest. Outsiders could not understand its internal logic and order. These women did not loot. They punished. Custom and tradition that reached far back in historical time gave a coherence to their rage. The disorders started on a Wednesday, stopped on Friday at sundown, and resumed the following evening.[39]

Observers of that time could not understand the internal logic of these struggles. The New York Times and New York police, "came down quite hard on these Jewish women", calling them "a dangerous class, very ignorant, they do not understand the duties or the rights of Americans".[40]

These riots make sense, however, upon consideration

of people's cultural expectations and new oppressive experiences. In this case, the free market economy posed a historically new threat. Unregulated prices threatened people with hunger and violated expectations that prices would be regulated by custom. In these examples, we see how traditional beliefs were used to set limits to unjust capitalist practices.

People's experience of oppression are not articulated in formal analytic terms. The preindustrial crowd did not put forth an explicit critique of emerging industrial capitalism. They expressed resistance in a language that was familiar to them by drawing on old customs, traditions, beliefs, and expectations of rights. Social historians look at these to bring out the inner logic of everyday protest.

On the surface, outbursts such as food riots may appear to be uncontrollable acts of violence or vandalism. Moreover, resistance framed in the language of religious beliefs and traditions may appear to be conservative. We go beyond the level of appearance when we analyze these protests in a historical and cultural context. Then we see how people's resistance makes sense on their own terms. Identifying underlying cultural expectations is an important second step to analyzing everyday resistance. It helps make explicit people's struggles on their own terms, in their own language.

Culture as Process

Social historians treat everyday resistance as a historical phenomenon. This means that it is not a static concept; it is transforming and changing over time. As Thompson notes, no historical phenomenon can ever be analyzed by "freezing it in time and taking a geological section, for each moment is a moment of becoming".[41] If we freeze class in time we would not get class but merely "a multitude of individuals with a multitude of experiences". But "if we watch these men over an adequate period of social change, we observe patterns in their relationships, their ideas, and their institutions".[42]

An emphasis on process stresses cultural continuities and historical change. Traditional protests draw on old beliefs which in turn give birth to new political ideas and social movements. These in turn are integrated into the popular culture and transform future protests and cultural expectations.

This emphasis on culture as process helps us move beyond the individual gains or losses of social protest. We see how people's changing consciousness and practical analysis is all important. These may lead to resistance and gains in the here and now. Inevitably, consciousness deepens and changes over time. Thompson and Rude illustrate this change in the trans-

formation of sub-political or inherent ideologies.

Thompson, for example, examines changing political attitudes among the English from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century. He shows how the Englishman's inherent belief in their birthright as "freeborn Englishmen" provided fertile ground for new political ideas. This belief spurred people into protest by setting limits "beyond which Englishmen were not prepared to be 'pushed around'".[43]

Thompson grounds the influence of Thomas Paine on the English of the 1970's in this already existing political climate. Paine's The Rights of Man became the "foundation text of the English working class movement".[44] Paine, however, did not precipitate democratic ideas. People were receptive to Paine's radical egalitarianism because he touched their sub-political attitudes, such as working people's rights as "freeborn Englishmen". Their prior cultural context made working people receptive to Paine's ideas. Paine helped articulate and deepen beliefs that were already firmly rooted in a people who had come to expect village democracy, the Bill of Rights and the Magna Carta. Here, as always, Thompson shows the role of human agency, how working people are active even in the act of receiving new ideas.

Radical egalitarianism helped spur resistance

in the 1790's. This resistance and the ideology of radical egalitarianism altered the sub-political attitudes of working people and initiated still new traditions. Concerned with the revolutionary potential of this radical struggle, the ruling class imposed repressive measures. Agitation receded. Yet to say that no visible resistance took place is not to say that no activity took place:

> If the year 1791 provided the democratic impulse, it was the repressive years of 1799-1800 when working class consciousness matured. The democratic impulse can be felt at work beneath the surface: new ideas and new forms of organization continued to ferment. There is a radical alteration in the sub-political attitudes of people. During a less repressive period in 1811 there was a simultaneous emergence of a new popular radicalism and militant trade unions[45]

Here we see an ongoing process of "revolutionary waves, repression pushing struggles underground, and quiet new waves".[46] This process is not fragmented by protests or decades, but rather shows both the continuity and changing character of everyday beliefs.

George Rude emphasizes the process of changing consciousness which underlies protest in his most recent work, Ideology and Popular Protest. Suggesting a more radical potential in everyday resistance, Rude argues that inherent beliefs may be transformed into popular revolutionary ideologies in certain historical

moments. Such popular ideologies arise from a merger of inherent or traditional beliefs, such as the belief in a "just price" or a "just wage", with more formal political or philosophical ideologies. This merger is necessary, argues Rude, for everyday resistance to become revolutionary. Inherent ideologies may establish a climate of awareness for radical change, but in themselves they do not foster revolution. For a popular revolutionary ideology to develop, political, philosophical, or religious ideas must become absorbed into the popular culture. "Derived ideas become grafted onto inherent notions and beliefs and the new popular ideology takes shape as an amalgam of the two".[47]

This merger between inherent and formal ideologies is not a passive process brought to people by political educators. Here again we see the emphasis on human agency, on how people are instrumental in shaping meaning as they integrate political ideas. Working people respond to ideas that speak to their experiences and expectations. In turn they appropriate and reshape these ideas so that they undergo a "sea change" or transformation. So, for example, the meaning of radical democracy might mean very different things to the bourgeoisie and the sans-culottes in revolutionary France. "The nature of this transformation", notes Rude, "depends

on the aims of classes ready to absorb them".[48] The language of democracy itself means different things to different groups of people.

Rude shows the transformation in democratic ideology that took place with the preindustrial crowd in the French Revolution.

> The French bourgeoisie, finding themselves in the late 1780's with the need to make revolution, picked on Rousseau's theory of 'popular sovereignty' and his 'social contract' to provide an ideological justification for their rebellion against nobility and royal despotism. The French 'lower orders' - in particular, the sans-culottes in Paris - learned their lesson and having acquired the new idiom of revolution from the liberal aristocracy and bourgeoisie, adapted it in turn to their own use and, on occasion, turned it to good account against their former teachers.[49]

This contrasts with a prevailing view that the working people were merely manipulated by the bourgeoisie. "However 'bourgeois' these revolutions may have been, they were also the seed-bed for a challenge 'from below', opening other perspectives and presenting a kind of 'revolution within a revolution'".[50] Working people with democratic traditions of their own were receptive to the more formal political ideas popularized by the bourgeoisie in their struggle. As these became integrated into the popular culture, groups like the sans-culottes appropriated these ideas and used

them for their own ends.

Consider, for example, that preindustrial food riots were a continuing undercurrent throughout the French Revolution. In fact the issue of rising price was an underlying theme that ran through nearly all the political protests of that decade. What changed, however, was the merging of these traditional protests with radical democratic ideologies. In the context of a changing political and economic climate, common people developed a new political awareness of what caused increased prices. The issue of food price did not die. But the analysis of the problem changed.

As prices continued to rise, working housewives began to direct their complaints from the bakers to the government and princes, and even the King himself. Radical democratic ideas spoke to people, in this case, because of their direct experience with the possibility of hunger and unjust prices.

These illustrations show how people's cultural expectations and political ideologies change over time. Again they reveal the ever active role of people who appropriate and reshape political ideas. This suggests that everyday resistance is an ongoing process with potential for deepening over time. We saw this with the transformation of inherent democractic beliefs into

more radical democratic ideologies. The transformation of indigenous culture made possible more radical resistance.

Preindustrial riots clearly did not stop the emergence of capitalism. Yet these practical, more elusive forms of resistance helped people survive in the early years; in some measure they slowed down the rapid destruction of daily life brought on by the free market. In England, for example, they prevented the hegemony of the gentry from becoming all-pervasive, they maintained traditional cultures, and even partially arrested the work-discipline of early industrialism. They took preindustrial crowds into "strikes, food riots, peasant rebellions and even into a state of awareness for radical change".[51] In addition, they provided the climate out of which more formal ideologies and movements grew. Under certain conditions, they became revolutionary.

By looking at these protests over time, social historians bring out well their internal logic, implicit meanings, successes, and process of becoming.

In sum, radical social historians bring out an ongoing undercurrent of resistance which is often neglected by historians. They elaborate on the blind alleys that have been prematurely dismissed. Once we treat resistance as an ongoing historical process, we

see lost causes as important. "For one possibility which actually is realized, innumerable others have drowned, the losing movements are forces which have at every moment affected the final outcome".[52]

Social historians bring out the inner logic of resistance by looking at patterns and transformation of the preindustrial riot. In contrast to other analysts, they do not dismiss these more elusive protests as irrational or conservative or manifestations of false consciousness. These protests make sense, they imply, in terms of people's own experience, culture, history. In the end, they have to be understood in the terms of those who lived through those experiences. These everyday "modest" struggles reveal the ongoing ways people resist and shape their social worlds.

From social historians, in sum, I derive a theoretical perspective for everyday resistance. Like myself, they emphasize the ever active role of people in shaping their social worlds. Like myself, they take seriously the lives, practical analysis, and resistance of ordinary people. In this chapter, we have seen this in how historians deal with the inner logic of everyday resistance and human agency. Making explicit their theoretical perspective helps me develop my theoretical conception of modest struggle.

Yet the works of social historians are limited for my purposes here. This is so because their analysis is confined to the preindustrial crowd. An analysis of contemporary resistance can use their analytic categories, but we cannot immediately generalize from their historical findings to citizen activists.

The everyday resisters they write of are not full citizens in the sense that we speak of citizens of the modern state. Therefore, their behavior and expectations are different. They had no rights or recourse to social institutions beyond the feudal and local capitalist commercial power centers. As a consequence, we must go beyond social historians to understand the situation of the ordinary citizen in the modern nation state.

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Chapter Four

THE STATE AS LOCUS OF STRUGGLE: A THEORY FROM SOCIAL SCIENTISTS

This chapter analyzes the inner logic of citizen struggles around the state. In different ways, around different issues, grassroot struggles end up developing similar analyses of power in America. Here I elaborate my conception of modest struggle by showing how an analysis of the larger social context, in this case the state in capitalist society, grounds and thereby makes explicit the implicit meanings of everyday resistance. I use the analysis derived from social historians to interpret the practical critique of everyday resistance in our time and place. Like social historians, I argue that protests of daily life reveal an underlying coherence and clarity when analyzed in terms of historically specific experiences and cultural expectations.

The analysis of the state does not account for all of people's everyday protests. Nor do I try to do so here. Nonetheless, the experience of citizen protests around the state is critical; the state is one of the great experiences in people's lives in this day and age. To analyze that experience I ask: what makes resistance around the state conceivable, possible, intelligible in the first place?

This analysis uses the works of recent Marxist theorists on the state such as James O'Connor, Alan Wolfe, and Jurgen Habermas. They develop an analytic model which helps me account for the state as a historically specific arena of resistance. My analysis is not intended as a full explication of their theories. Rather I appropriate their work as a way to make explicit the implicit logic of people's experience, that is, what people practically conceive as they move from step to step in the course of struggle.

I. The State as Focus of Resistance

In chapter two on citizen activism, we found that in this time of history many citizen struggles take place around the state. In the early stage of protest, people perceived corporations to be the source of their problems and turned for recourse to the state. We saw this with residents of Santa Barbara who were angry at oil companies. We saw this again with residents of Love Canal who targeted Hooker Chemical as the problem.

Why didn't they confront corporations directly? Why did they turn to the state to intervene on their behalf? After turning to the state, why did they become even more angry and militant?

I argue that the steps of resistance reveal an

inner logic which is historically specific. That is, resistance around the state grows out of experiences and expectations inherent in the state itself. In the course of struggle people develop a practical analysis of the state as they experience its power in their immediate lives.

On a day to day level, that experience may be vague and hazy. The state appears to be a distant relation, something that is external to people's lives and beyond their control. Yet as people see the political nature of personal troubles and engage in struggle, some part of the state suddenly becomes part of their immediate lives. In those moments, people deepen their awareness of political power; they catch a glimpse of what created their problem in the first place.

Marxist theory has often preoccupied itself with struggles at the point of production, to the exclusion of other spheres of social life.[1] Struggles around the state have been seen as misguided and unimportant. Marxist analysis has centered on the economy and work-place, which are seen as the centers of power.

Yet in our time and place struggles around the state make sense in a new way. The state has under-taken a historically new role. It intervenes more and more directly in social life on behalf of the

private economy. As a result of its expanded and more visible role, it inadvertently ends up providing the focal point for popular struggle. As Miliband notes, "more than ever before men live in the shadow of the state, it is for the state's attention or for its control that they compete".[2]

A new generation of Marxist theorists have shifted their attention to just how men and women live in the shadow of the state. They question prevailing paradigms in mainstream and Marxist theory alike. On the one hand, these theorists challenge the dominant pluralist paradigm, which portrays the state as neutral. As Miliband notes, pluralists assume that

> power is competitive, fragmented, and differentiated: everybody has some power and nobody can have too much of it; therefore, the state can't be too biased. Its role is to reconcile conflict.[3]

In contrast, Miliband argues that the pluralist perspective obfuscates the state's own power and its undemocratic role in aiding the private economy. This critique is central to Marxist theories of the state in general and validates a practical critique citizen groups develop in their own struggles. As people protest, they also find that the state is not neutral. Their own needs generally take second place to the needs of the private economy.

At the same time, these writers are no less critical of traditional Marxist theorists. Here they criticize a tendency to analyze the state in terms of domination alone. It is one thing, they argue, to criticize pluralists for seeing the state as neutral. But it is quite another to reduce it to an instrument of the ruling class alone. Alan Wolfe illustrates this general criticism when he writes that theorists of domination see "every popular reform merely as a cooptive mechanism to preserve the power of the ruling class".[4] Victories for oppressed groups are seen as benefiting those in power. This perspective cannot account for instability and struggle that also marks democracy. For Wolfe, liberal democracy is marked by ongoing struggles. It is not merely a way to obscure class rule. If it was only a source of domination, how could we account for resistance at all? Its very democratic traditions have constantly stirred up protest. As Wolfe notes,

> liberal democracy did not, as with omniscient Zeus, spring full-born out of the forehead of the ruling class. It was created as a response to mass pressure from below. In other words it lives, it has substance. And because of that it is not static, it continually changes because it is under continuous pressure to change.[5]

Wolfe attempts to account for a democratic state that cannot fully integrate crisis or maintain stability. The state is a product of struggle, and it constantly provokes struggle. This perspective validates what we see with citizen activists: people are not merely dominated; their passivity is not assured. They perceive the democratic possibilities of the state. And for this reason they pressure from below.

To account for the tension immanent in the state, theorists of the state posit a model that analyzes the contradictions between accumulation and legitimation, contradictory claims on the state. This model accounts for struggle by showing a state embodying both dominating and liberating possibilities.

Accumulation refers to the state's involvement in a capitalist economy based on the pursuit of private profit. Legitimation refers to the need for the state to justify its activity as compatible with its democratic claims. In some measure, the state must take account of democratic desires. In order to aid the private economy, the state must also provide some kind of popular participation and equality of results. Yet these two roles are fundamentally opposed to one another. Accumulation fosters inequality and powerlessness. Legitimation fosters equality and participation; it

stands opposed to hierarchical and oppressive structures.[6]

These contradictory claims create the tension which makes of the state an ongoing site of struggle, "torn by conflict, replete with contradictions, under continuous pressure to change".[7] It is pulled by the private economy on one side, and the need to justify its activities on the other.

This analytic model is grounded in the historically specific example of the welfare state. For my purposes here, it is a helpful analysis. The welfare state and its problems continue to form the backdrop for citizen struggles in our own time. Only a decade ago, the welfare state appeared to be the solution for liberals and conservatives alike. Now it is commonplace to read about a state in crisis.

The state, as we know it, was born in the 1930's, a time of catastrophic economic crisis and radical labor struggle. It was the product of class struggle.

On the one hand, the state sought to rescue capitalism from its economic and political crisis. The market having proved inherently unstable, the newborn state was created in part to prevent endemic slumps.

> ...the struggle brought all kinds of aid to strengthen banks...and especially direct subsidies to the business sector for producing more.[8]

On the other hand, the welfare state emerged as an accomodation to working class demands from below. The New Deal, and the fiscal state it gave birth to, implied possibilities for working people as well as for capital. It created popular expectations that people would be protected from the abuses of the private economy.

> Class conflict led to such developments as unemployment insurance, the Social Security Act of '35, the Wagner Act, which gave workers the right to organize.[9]

From its inception, the welfare state took an unprecedented role on behalf of working people, emerging in fact as

> a series of responses to defects and injustices in the development of capitalism. Inspired by democratic sentiments it defined itself against the troubling effects of capitalist development: inflation and unemployment, destruction of natural supports of human life.[10]

In other words, the state compensated for its increased participation in the private economy with aid to working people. The state could justify its participation in the private sector only if it "guaranteed to underwrite the economic and social costs of accumulation".[11] Here we see the roots of popular expectations among citizen activists that the government will intervene on their behalf and moderate the problems of growth

and accumulation.

Thus, as a product of class conflict, the state created expectations both for business and for working people. Maynard Keynes recognized the moderating role of the state when he wrote that it would "moderate class conflict or Marxism and old style capitalism would fight it out".[12]

This new role for government in our time led to an increasingly bloated bureaucracy:

> When the dust settled, it became clear that the New Deal had been the catalyst for the permanent enlargement of a national administrative infrastructure...exercising more national economic functions... The New Deal established for the Federal government a fiscal role where previously none had existed. In the process, a new highly visible national bureaucracy was born.[13]

With the growth of this national bureaucracy, class conflict tended to shift to the political arena.

State aid to the private economy was in itself not new. Government has helped to create and maintain the conditions of accumulation since the beginning of capitalism. Contrary to the myth of the free market economy, the state has always been involved in facilitating conditions that were favorable to growth. It is more accurate to say that laissez-faire capitalism never existed. As Miliband notes

> State intervention in every aspect of economic life is nothing new in the history of capitalism. On the contrary, state intervention presided at its birth or at least guided and helped its early stages, it has never ceased to be of crucial importance in the workings of capitalism.[14]

What was new, however, was the scale and pervasiveness of state intervention in the private economy. The fiscal state became essential to "facilitate, stabilize, regulate, and stimulate the capitalist economic engine on a more systematic basis".[15] The need for this intervention marked the failure of liberal capitalism to manage its own problems.

The state's main role was to underwrite the costs of growth, to nurture growth of private capital and thereby promote profit, to promote favorable conditions for accumulation. In sum, the state became directly involved in socializing the costs of production. At the same time, however, the profits continued to be privately appropriated. This, of course, placed the state in a precarious position, for a democratic state is not supposed to be biased in favor of the private economy. The state legitimized this role with a promise: in the long run, growth made possible an affluent society which would benefit everyone.

The promise of growth obscured a fundamental

point: the state has increasingly subsidized a private economy which benefits the few over the many. Citizen struggles around ecology, neighborhood, consumer, and health and safety show the underside of that growth. As citizens confront the state, expecting it to mediate these problems, they find a state which is seriously constrained. The state cannot make good on its promise; it tends to violate people's expectations of democratic right. It is limited by its dependency on the very economy it seeks to regulate.

> The welfare state cannot accumulate the revenue it needs to redress the adverse affects of private enterprise unless the private system provides it with a large tax dividend; and the tax dividend depends on the success of economic expansion in the private sector. The welfare state is thus deeply dependent on the system it seeks to regulate; it must subsidize and nourish the private economy even while it strives to tame and regulate it.[16]

The welfare state's deep dependency on the private economy creates conflict for a democratic state. It further constrains the government from meeting popular demands. Hence the enormous pressure popular groups must apply to get the state to live up to its promises.

The conflict between accumulation and legitmation in the welfare state frames citizen struggles.

The state is inexorably tied to the economic growth that creates problems in daily life. Citizen activists protest these very problems. At the same time, the state makes claims to being democratic. Hence activists turn to the state in the expectation that it will mediate popular troubles. This tension, Marxist theorists help me make clear, is rooted in the welfare state.

II. The Inner Logic of Struggles Around the State

This section elaborates upon people's practical conception of the state as a source of domination and possibility. This practical analysis is made explicit by grounding citizen protest in a historical and cultural context. This takes the form of analyzing new problems created by an accumulative state, and new expectations for democracy. The tension between the two underlies the phases of resistance, why people move from nonpolitical to political in the course of struggle. In this section we see how the state is instrumental in this very process.

On the one hand, the state actively tries to prevent people from recognizing the political nature of their personal troubles. It depoliticizes issues and, thereby, attempts to obscure its highly political

role in the private economy. For the state to acknowledge the political character of its activities would reveal its false neutrality and create problems for its legitimacy. Popular participation would also seriously restrict its capacity to aid the private economy. So the state tries to define its own activity as *nonpolitical*.

Yet the state is not always successful in depoliticizing issues. Its very involvement in the growth-driven private economy creates problems in everyday life which in turn end up provoking resistance. As people protest, they come to see some part of the state up close. In the course of their struggle, they see the false neutrality of the welfare state itself. This exacerbates conflict. People see how the state's role on behalf of the private economy violates democratic rights they came to expect.

In the following sections I analyze the steps of resistance in terms of the depoliticizing and politicizing tendencies of the welfare state.

Depoliticizing Tendencies

The cultural expectation that a state be democratic plays a significant role in the depoliticizing and politicizing tendencies of the state. Like the

preindustrial crowd, ordinary people today resist when rights they had come to expect are violated. In our time and place, the welfare state embodies new democratic expectations born of the thirties in addition to two centuries of previously-won democratic traditions. The state's involvement in the private economy on an unprecedented basis creates not only new problems, but also new expectations. This spells trouble for the private economy which formerly made decisions independent of the citizenry. The very involvement of the state now means that, through the state, people can potentially exert a measure of control over the economy. People, of course, perceive this. Hence decisions that were once left to the marketplace now become highly political events.

A democratic state depends on public support or legitimacy for its own existence. The need for legitimacy, notes Habermas, is the capacity of the state to persuade the mass of the population to accept the current political order. This is necessary for political stability. Without legitimation, social conflict ensues.[17] To justify its own existence, the state finds it

> necessary to keep the surface of mass loyalty from sinking below the level at which the withdrawal of legitimation would issue in conflict[18]

Legitimation then is necessary to maintain social stability and "prevent alienation from turning into a serious revolt against the social order".[19] A challenge to the state's legitimacy, by contrast, reduces its effectiveness in aiding the private economy and maintaining social stability.

The state legitimizes or justifies its activities by claiming to be democratic. Therefore, people expect, at least in principle, that democratic values will be fulfilled. But, as we saw, the state is constrained from meeting these expectations. For the state's involvement in the private economy implies that it is not neutral at all.

The central dilemma the state faces is this: it must try to aid the private economy while at the same time trying to obfuscate that role and present itself as democratic. This tension is expressed as a state that simultaneously tries

> to maintain or create the conditions in which profitable capital accumulation is possible. However, the state must also try to maintain or create the conditions for social harmony or stability. A capitalist state that openly uses its coercive force to help one class accumulate at the expense of others, loses its legitimacy and hence undermines the basis of its loyalty and support. But a state that ignores the necessity of assisting the process of capital accumulation risks drying up the source of its own power, the economy's surplus production capacity

and the taxes drawn from this surplus.[20]

Given this dilemma, what does the state do? How can the state justify its intervention on behalf of an economy which benefits the few over the many without provoking resistance? The state's response is to depoliticize its role, trying to maintain a nonpolitical climate. To do this, it must find ways to keep citizens from participating. True participation would reveal and attempt to constrain the state's undemocratic activities. A participating citizenry would only uncover precisely what the state tries to obscure: its highly political role in capital accumulation and the socialization of costs of private production at the expense of working people.[21]

The solution to this problem is found in formally democratic institutions. These institutions reduce participation to a minimum (i.e. voting) and thereby maintain the separation between citizenry and state. In this way,

> administrative decisions may be made relatively independent of the aim and motives of citizens. Concrete participation by citizens in the process of forming political aims - in other words real democracy - would bring into open contradiction state socialized production. To eliminate this contradiction as a theme of discussion the administrative system must be sufficiently autonomous in relation to the system of legitimation.

> This is brought about by a process of legitimation which secures the loyalty of masses but avoids participation. In the midst of a society which is political itself citizens enjoy the status of passive participants, with the right to withhold their approval.[22]

To summarize Habermas' argument, the state must maintain the conditions for capital accumulation, the basis of its own economic power, without losing its public support. Since its involvement in the private economy constrains the state's ability to meet popular democratic expectations, the state must avoid substantive participation or real democracy. Through formally democratic institutions, legitimation is secured by reducing citizens to passive participants, whose participation is confined to voting every few years. This system of legitimation is threatened by citizen demands for true participation, which would reveal and attempt to limit the state's undemocratic activities. Hence, the state seeks to undermine or coopt these demands.

Marxists have tended to regard struggles around the state for increased participation as unimportant. Their analysis stresses problems with the private economy and in the workplace. Yet analyzing the state in this historical moment suggests the inner logic of citizen groups' practical critique and demands for participation. Through their everyday

struggles, people learn about the relation between the state and economy. The democratic participation which they demand would give citizens a measure of control over problems created by the corporate state in their day-to-day lives.

The language of citizen activism stands opposed to the need for a passive citizen. The government tries to maintain the status of a passive citizenry by treating issues around planning, energy, technology as administrative matters to be solved by experts. Ordinary citizens, by contrast, treat these as highly political issues and seek to take matters into their own hands.

The perceived dangers of participation to those in power were well publicized in a study called The Crisis in Democracy. This study, published by the Trilateral Commission, was financed by a number of United Stated and European bankers. One of its authors, Samuel Huntington, is a political scientist from the United States. His analysis inadvertently affirms the critique raised by Marxist theorists of the state: participation is a danger for the corporate state.

Huntington is critical of what he calls the "democratic distemper" of the 1960's. Citizen activism of the '70's was influenced by democratic themes revived in that decade. The '60's, as Huntington notes, raised

democratic themes

> ...of the Jacksonian Democracy and the muckracking Progressives; they embodied ideas and beliefs which were deep in the American tradition but which usually do not command the passionate intensity of commitment that they did in the 1960's. That decade bore testimony to the vitality of the democratic ideas.[23]

To Huntington, this democratic surge was not a healthy resurgence of democracy, but, on the contrary, posed problems for democracy. As people became politicized, their disappointment was inevitable, for according to Huntington, democratic societies can only work when the citizenry is passive. Huntington continues,

> some of the problems of governance in the United States today stem from an excess of democracy...Needed, instead, is a greater degree of moderation in democracy[24]

Huntington's solution to this problem reflects a prevailing fear of participation. What the state requires in sum is a more passive citizenry,

> the effective operation of a democratic system requires some measure of apathy and noninvolvement on the part of some individuals and groups.[25]

In an ironic twist to Marx's dialectic that capitalism digs its own grave, Huntington argues that the danger to democracy is democracy itself. The solution to this problem is to reduce the "excess of democracy" by restricting democracy. A measure of

political apathy should be reintroduced and popular expectations lowered. Huntington's analysis, of course, is not especially new. He affirms a century of political theory with its deep distrust and fear of direct, participatory democracy. The dominant assumption from the works of Mosca to Schumpeter is that too much political participation is either impossible or dangerous for democracy itself.[26]

Participatory demands of the 1970's, we can see, posed a substantial threat to the state. The fear of true participation makes sense when we analyze it, as I have suggested, in the context of the state's need for legitimation.

Depoliticizing tendencies which undermine participation are not unique to late capitalism. They mark, as Alan Wolfe notes, a historical tendency that emerged at the turn of the century. Political participation by working people was seen as

> incompatible with an emerging corporate order based on initiative from the top down, not from the bottom up or the middle out.[27]

Movements for political reform during those years attempted to depoliticize politics by fighting against working class parties, which posed a threat to the corporate order. Political parties were seen as dangerous given that

> their accompanying democratic surges would harm a stabilized, well-ordered political world...The factors leading to the transformation of active nineteenth century politics were devices by which a large and possibly dangerous mass electorate could be brought to heel and subjected to management and control within the political system[28]

The depoliticizing of politics of that time took place alongside attempts to control working people on the job. Management techniques in politics resembled scientific management in the workplace. Both were an attempt to increase efficiency by diffusing class conflict and controlling "unruly" working people.

This pattern of depoliticization grew in the twentieth century, with concentration of power "in the executive, and the development of new forms of bureaucratic control over social and economic planning and other examples of the domination of administration over politics".[29] This is the dominant pattern we see fullgrown in the welfare state and its greatly expanded bureaucratic apparatus. In our time, attempts to depoliticize the welfare state's role in accumulation led to an expanded political bureaucracy. By reducing political questions to administrative issues, more and more social questions were taken out of the realm of public debate.

The effects of this process are seen today as ordinary citizens are excluded from debate on issues of

nuclear power or new technologies. These, it is argues, should be left to the "experts".

Justifying highly political intervention on technical grounds of expertise, of course, has been a central depoliticizing technique, serving to legitimize state intervention by treating policy decisions as administrative and nonpolitical. Scientists participate in the process of depoliticization

> through their command over arcane forms of knowledge and information. The alleged complexity of the institutional world, combined with scientistic interpretations of that complexity, tended to legitimate further inaccessability of public issues from the public[30]

The adminstrative realm justifies its activities by claiming to be the technically most efficient manager of social life: objective, neutral, well suited for managing competing special interests. To involve itself in accumulation, the state obscures its policies in this way, it "must either mystify its policies by calling them something that they are not, or it must try to conceal them".[31]

Consider this example. The current administration tried to justify or make acceptable cutting back the Occupational Health and Safety Administration on the basis of a cost/benefit analysis. This economic measure purported to show how the economic costs of

OSHA outweigh its benefits in a time of economic crisis. This measure, however, obscured another message: that problems measured in terms of dollars and cents take priority over human and community needs. It is only on the surface that the state can present its analysis as value-free and objective.

As people try to participate, as they engage the state in struggle, they of course threaten to uncover this obfuscating analysis. Participation works against an administrative system that makes decisions independent of the aims of most citizens. Participation in the course of struggle reveals the false neutrality of the state and thereby poses a challenge to its legitimacy. The state, of course, continuously tries to depoliticize its political role. But it is not always successful. If it were, there would be no conflict, no resistance, and no demands for true participation. The very fact that the state has become a focal point of struggle in recent decades suggests that its capacity to obscure its role is only partially realized.

Politicizing Tendencies

While those in power try to control the state by defining issues as nonpolitical, they are not always successful. The greatly expanded intervention

of the state into everyday life creates problems for its depoliticized status. Its increased domination over social and community life spells trouble. Unlike the private economy, people feel that in some measure the state is accountable to them. As crises are provoked in daily life and people feel increasingly threatened, protests emerge.

The cultural expectation that the state be democratic provokes just the resistance the state seeks to avoid. From the moment people define their personal troubles as political, the problem begins. As people turn to the state, they inevitably encounter its depoliticized character and its relation to the private economy. In other words, they break through its ideology and see the violation of rights they had expected. In turn, this provokes anger and still more resistance as people force the state to do what its supposed to do, to make real its democratic promise.

The state inevitably plays a role in creating the very disruption it seeks to avoid. On the one hand, it must obscure its interventionist role on behalf of the private economy. On the other, its very role in the accumulation process creates problems in daily life and therefore demands for participation. This reduces the state's capacity to operate effectively,

> The key crisis potential of administration lies...in the need to depoliticize its interventionist and planning role to avoid criticisms of its presupposed goals. In other words, the state must obscure its steering function to defuse its responsibility for economic growth and stability...The expanding of administrative use of power threatens legitimacy, and triggers demands for participation. This is so since legitimation is based on an assumption that the state as the bearer of public morality, may institutionalize only generalized, universal interests[32]

In other words, the very involvement by the state, which is so essential for the capitalist economy, creates problems for that economy as well. The unintended effect of increased administrative planning is to create disturbances that "promote the politicization of areas of life which could previously be assigned to the private sphere. But this spells danger for the private status of citizen. We see this in the quest for participation".[33]

When state policies aid economic growth by destroying neighborhoods and throwing people out of their homes, when people's lives are threatened by state financed nuclear power, anger and rage is provoked. These issues become politicized. As people protest, they try to stop state-supported growth. They may also demand that the state pay for social costs of the private economy. In either case, this

creates an added burden on the state and limits its capacity to aid economic growth and accumulation.

This is the irony of state intervention into social life. It cannot help but politicize what it tries to avoid, "with every penetration by the state into socio-cultural life, the political system risks thematizing new issues formerly withheld from the public".[34] Because of this dual role, it provokes crisis and demands for increased participation.

> An interventionist state makes constantly increasing demands on the loyalty of its citizens, because its tentacles reach into more and more areas of life, and at the same time, it raises their expectations. Hence it politicizes spheres of life previously assigned to the private sphere. This runs counter to capitalism's need to exclude the masses from political decisions.[35]

Here we see the ongoing problem. The increased intervention of the state raises popular expectations that it will be democratic. At the same time it puts those expectations to a test as it undemocratically aids the private economy and provokes crisis in daily life. As people experience troubles close to home and define them as political, they turn to the state for help. The state ends up providing a focal point for the very popular struggles it tries to avoid. Seemingly neutral state hearings, for example, become

highly political events when we are talking about hearings to license nuclear power plants or build highways and airports.

Historical Experience

Citizen activists protest problems created by economic growth. These include ecological deterioration, neighborhood destruction, health and safety. The problems raised are in themselves not unique to late capitalism. What is new is the grand scale of these problems and widespread popular anger. Everyday crises and the protests they spawn are an historically specific phenomenon.

In the last chapter we saw how struggles by machine breakers and Luddites were once seen as irrational. However, when these same struggles were reinterpreted in a context of an emerging market economy, people's experience and protests made sense in a new way. Similarly, everyday resistance in our own time makes sense in light of the historically specific relationship between state and economy.

There is a tendency to dismiss citizen resistance to airports, highways, and environmental struggles in general. Left theorists have seen these as trivial or unimportant. Business treats these as protests which stand in the way of progress. Yet these struggles,

like those of the preindustrial crowd, make sense given the current historical moment. Let us consider, therefore, specific ties between the state and private economy. For these are the intractable bonds citizen groups experience in the course of their own struggles.

Since 1945 the state has played a dominant role in stimulating economic growth. It has given

> economic infrastructure investments and general business subsidies. The most expensive economic needs are the costs of research, development of new production processes...the socialization of advanced technologies.[36]

These subsidies help create an economy based on planned obsolescence to ensure consumer demand; it gives enormous financial subsidies to infrastructural growth, such as highways and jetports, which reshapes urban life; it plays a significant role in the development of new technologies such as nuclear power. In all these ways, the state increasingly socializes the costs of private accumulation.

> Government subsidies to corporations socialize business risk and create huge government liabilities that can be guaranteed only by further private capital accumulation and growth and hence more loans, subsidies and guarantees.[37]

The costs of these subsidies and business risks are, of course, carried by the ordinary taxpayer. It is not surprising that working people feel pressured by the tax burden they carry.

Beyond the pressure of taxes, this growth creates other social costs in everyday life. These include, for example, unsafe and wasteful consumer products; destruction of working class neighborhoods; technologies which endanger human life and the ecology. These problems have been at the core of citizen activism in the 1970's.

As people struggle around these tangible problems, they inevitably confront the power of the state itself. People turn to the state in faith, expecting that their interests will be met. They find, as they cannot help but find, that the state's close ties to the private economy take priority over their needs. They find that interest groups have

> appropriated numerous small pieces of state power through a 'multiplicity of intimate contacts with gov'...They dominate most of the so-called regulatory agencies, at the federal, state, and local level and many bureaus within the Department of Agriculture and Interior, the Bureau of Highways, and a number of Congressional committees. Their specific interests are reflected in the partial or full range of policies of hundreds of national and state government agencies.[38]

These interest groups tend to dominate the very government and regulatory agencies citizen groups confront in their own struggles. Not surprisingly, activists conclude that the regulated have become the regulators. Key industries that dominate these agencies

are the very ones that citizen groups come up against in their struggle. They include oil companies, airlines, public utilities, and banking. The most powerful of these is the highway lobby. "Most important state investments serving the interests of specific industries are highway expenditures".[39]

> Beginning in 1944 when Congress passed the Federal Aid to Highways Act in 1961, the federal government expended its entire transportation budget on roads and highways.[40]

The highway industry takes up the largest share of state investment:

> Investment is led by automobile production and suburban residential construction, which requires an enormous network of complementary highways, roads, ancillary facilities. The state has 'socialized intercity highway systems paid for by the taxpayer-not without great encouragement from the rubber, petroleum, and auto industries.[41]

Not surprisingly, anti-highway protests comprise a large part of citizen resistance. Activists who resist these highways find themselves in an ironic position. They are asked to carry the burden of highway development in terms of disruption to daily life. At the same time, they must support this development as taxpayers. Ironically, they find themselves having to fight the very projects their own tax money subsidizes.

Citizen groups are provoked to resist highways not because they are against progress, as industry officials assert. They resist because these highways create problems in people's daily lives. They destroy urban neighborhoods and create urban sprawl. They create numerous environmental problems:

> Motor transportation is an important source of social costs in the consumption of oxygen, the production of crop and animal - destroying smog, the pollution of rivers and oceans by lead additives to gasoline...These costs do not enter into the accounts of the automobile. The industry is compelled to minimize its own costs and maximize production and sales.[42]

The social costs to community and environment are enormous. Faced with these problems, ordinary citizens resist. They turn to the state because they expect the state to moderate these problems, especially since highways are directly controlled by the state and subsidized by their taxes. In their resistance, however, they come up against the complex relationship between the government and highway lobby. They come to see the false neutrality of the state. Hence their resistance escalates.

The problem of state aid to economic growth in general creates problems in everyday life which spur resistance. These problems are exacerbated by the unwillingness of corporations to bear the costs of growth.

This is so since the first priority of corporations is to maximize profits. So, for example,

> Corporate capital is largely unwilling to treat toxic chemical wastes or develop substitute sources of energy for fossil fuels that pollute the air. And corporate farming generates still more social costs by minimizing crop losses (and thus costs) through the unlimited use of chemicals that are harmful to crops, animals, water purity, and human life itself[43]

Precisely because corporate capital is unwilling to bear the costs it creates - from pollution to toxic wastes to urban deterioration - crises are provoked in everyday life. They become visible to us in the struggles of ordinary citizens around the Love Canals and Westways. Ordinary people find themselves unwittingly forced to bear the costs that a corporate state creates but is unwilling to ameliorate.

These costs are often treated as personal troubles left to individuals to deal with themselves. But as people make the link between the personal and political, they begin to assign responsibility. Their anger first turns toward industry. Later it turns to the state itself.

Cultural Expectations

In the last chapter we saw that expectation of right was no less important than the market economy

in framing experience. In fact, historically new experiences of exploitation and oppression were interpreted in a cultural framework. This holds true no less in our own time and place than it did with the preindustrial crowd. In the case of citizen activism, we see the enormous holding power of traditions.

As I have shown, when people define personal troubles as political issues, they turn to the state for help. They do so because of popular expectations of a democratic state. In other words the very expectation of democracy becomes a spur to resistance when and if people make the links between the personal and political in their own lives. Democratic expectations justified citizen resistance in recent years.

A generation of Marxist writers have treated democratically oriented cultural expectations as ideologies of the ruling class. To the extent people believe in democracy they are merely misguided, they possess false consciousness. Poulantzas, for one, describes democracy as "ideology, a wet blanket smothering all challenge".[44]

In our illustrations of citizen struggles, we saw that democracy was anything but a wet blanket. On the contrary, democracy spurred protest around the state. When the state was unresponsive, the belief

in democracy justified militancy and escalated resistance. Precisely because of their belief, they turned to the state as a first step of protest. And precisely because of their belief, they became disillusioned when they came up against a state that was impervious to their needs.

Democratic claims embodied in the state have been a battleground for two centuries. For those in power, democracy and its participatory meanings have increasingly been eviscerated over the past century. They accept a more limited model of "political process as a 'market' of political 'consumers'...resting on a class-divided society".[45]

Despite the mixed history of democracy, it continues to appeal to ordinary people in their daily lives. This occurs because democracy is also a language - a tradition - with

> latent participatory, cooperative, and egalitarian meanings...(these) have made the appeal to democracy a rallying cry in every great struggle of the oppressed and powerless...A sense of unrealized potentiality has brought millions of men and women into the effort to 'make democracy real" again and again[46]

Democracy is a tradition that lives on in people's everyday lives. It is not merely externally controlled and defined by those in power. In the course of popular struggle people often appropriate and reshape these very

traditions to justify their own resistance.

This held true with citizen activists. Their very belief in democratic rights led them to feel violated by a government with deep ties to the private economy. The ideology of the state became untenable in the face of people's direct experience with problems of daily life. Abstract claims for efficiency and public interest did not hold up as people experienced life threatening toxic wastes. As people identified the political nature of personal troubles they came to see words like objectivity, efficiency, neutrality as a language that obscures power and profit. In the course of struggle people saw the false neutrality of the state itself. They were provoked to resist still more. People felt betrayed. They expected more: they expected what was promised.

There is an irony here. Ordinary people do not resist easily. They consider themselves law abiding; they need to feel that their defiance is justified. Precisely because the state makes democratic promises it cannot keep, people find that justification. The very legitimizing slogans of the state are now used by citizens to legitimate their own defiance.

In chapter two we saw how the violation of rights ends up provoking the escalation of resistance

itself, as well as new demands for true participation. O'Connor describes the implicit consciousness that develops in the course of these struggles. People seem to be saying

> You say we have a democratic society... But the state is undemocratic. We are finding this out in our struggles around dozens of economic and social issues. We are going to make you live up to your ideals to make the state democratic.[47]

The struggle to make democracy real does not arise out of thin air. It draws on democratic expectations which are themselves rooted in the emergence of the welfare state. These expectations become integrated into the popular culture and serve as guiding principles for protest. In this respect, citizen activism reflects a practical analysis of democracy. The potential of real democracy and true participation could, in fact, limit the expansion of both the state and the economy. It could threaten the autonomous workings of a national bureaucracy and capital accumulation. Hence both try to undermine citizen participation in the first place.

Militant struggles by citizen activists have at times led to substantive gains from the state. They have been instrumental in constraining capital accumulation. They slow down or stop highways, jetports, and nuclear power. They win legislation to regulate corporate behavior: environmental, consumer, occupational health

and safety.

We need not exaggerate the power of the regulations and agencies the struggles spawn to realize that they create problems for corporate power. This is so if for no other reason than that their key existance legitimizes issues, and hence popular struggles from below. We need only look to the current policies of the Reagan Administration to see the difficulties these agencies create. For the administration has tried to eliminate or minimize these constraints on corporate behavior. Witness the attempt to reduce to a shell the Occupational Health and Safety Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. However minimal the power of these agencies, it now appears that even too little is too much.

It is commonplace to read today about the crisis of the welfare state. As the crisis moves toward a new resolution, we see conflict moving away from compromise solutions born of the '30's. As O'Connor notes,

> The state is involved today in redefining social life in terms of capitalism's systemic needs. The democratic movement redefines social life in terms of direct social and material needs. State planning of social life creates a fundamental division between conceptions of system needs of capital accumulation on the one side and popular conception of social and community needs on the other.[48]

O'Connor here brings out the breakdown of the

labor/capital compromise. As capital and state move to redefine social life in terms of accumulation, it is less willing and able to compromise with popular groups. In turn, these groups begin to redefine their own social needs as taking priority over growth and profit. Behind much of the anti-statist rhetoric in this historical moment is a deeper story. Corporations do not want an end to the state at all. They want to restructure the state on behalf of their own interests. Neither do citizen groups want an end to the state. They want to decentralize it and realize its democratic possibilities.

All this brings me back to my initial point. Everyday protests of the 1970's may appear elusive and fragmented. When we ground them in a broader social context, however, we see their logic and coherence. Given this framework, we are now in a position to bring out new dimensions to citizen activism. Activists repoliticize daily life and make demands for real participation. This runs counter to the needs of a corporate state for a passive and apathetic citizenry. Ordinary people, I argue, practically conceive this in their everyday resistance. Protests such as these represent a form of resistance since they run counter to a way of life that tries to depolicize daily life and create a passive citizenry.

We can also reconceive popular criticism against political bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is the part of the state people experience in the course of their struggle. Hence it is bureaucracy that they call into question. To criticize bureaucracy means far more. It also reveals, as I have tried to show, a practical awareness of the ties between political bureaucracy and the private economy, the undemocratic activities of bureaucracy itself. Demands for increased participation, in this case, imply a practical awareness of ways to control everyday life in our time and place.

Finally people draw on the language of democracy not because they have false consciousness, but because it is part of their inherited culture and daily life. The expectation of a democratic state creates the cultural framework in which people experience oppression in the local community. Hence the violation of these rights becomes a spur to resistance. People demand participation and increased democracy because they feel entitled to these. In other words people fight with the means available to them. The demand for increased democracy is a practical analysis of immediate possibilities. In order to maintain its legitimacy, the state must, in some measure, live up to its democratic claims; so people see the practical possibilities of fighting to realize its false promises.

This chapter showed how in the course of struggle ordinary people become conscious of a social world once elusive and distant. Struggle made them conscious of the need to change the world. By developing this perspective, social scientists enrich my own conception. The experience of everyday resistance, they help me make clear, brings the world-at-large close to home.

The analysis of social scientists, however, can only take us so far. We may appropriate their analytic model, yet their analysis itself remains partial and one-sided. They do not address people's daily lives and struggles; they offer an analysis of social change which neglects the very human beings who experience and create change in the first place. People's experience, of course, is critical to an analysis of modest struggle. For this reason, I look not only to the theories of social scientists, but to the practical political analyses of citizen activists as well.

NOTES

1. See the journal Kapitalistate, a forum for Marxists who do theorize about the state

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4. Alan Wolfe, "New Directions in the Marxist Theory of Politics", Politics and Society, Winter, 1974, p. 140

5. Ibid., p. 139

6. Alan Wolfe, The Limits of Legitimacy, (New York: The Free Press, 1977), p. 9

7. Ibid., p. 7

8. Raymond S. Franklin, American Capitalism: Two Visions, (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 287

9. Ibid.

10. William E. Connolly, "The Politics of Reindustrialization", Democracy, July, 1981, p. 11

11. James O'Connor, "The Fiscal Crisis of the State Revisited: A Look at Economic Crisis and Reagan's Budget Policy", Kapitalistate, 9, 1981, p. 45

12. Cited in Fred Hirsch, The Social Limits to Growth, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 123-136

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14. Miliband, State in Capitalist Society, p. 9

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19. Franklin, American Capitalism, p. 289

20. James O'Connor, The Fiscal Crisis of the State, (New York: St. Martin Press, 1973), p. 6

21. Ibid.

22. Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. 368

23. Samuel P. Huntington, et. al. The Crisis in Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission, (New York: New York University Press, 1975), p. 60

24. Ibid., p. 113

25. Ibid., p. 114

26. For a critique of the fear of participation in democratic theory see Peter Bachrach, The Theory of Democratic Elitism: A Critique, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967)

27. Wolfe, Limits to Legitimacy, p. 293

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. M. Brian Murphy and Alan Wolfe, "Democracy in Disarray", Kapitalistate, 8, 1982, pp. 9-27

31. Ibid., p. 13

32. Jean Cohen, "Why More Political Theory", Telos, Fall, 1978, p. 88

33. Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. 378

34. Peter Wilby, "Habermas and the Language of the Modern State", p. 668

35. Ibid., and Habermas, Legitimation Crisis

36. O'Connor, The Fiscal Crisis, pp. 125-127

37. Ibid., p. 114

38. Ibid., p. 109

39. Ibid., p. 121

40. Ibid., pp. 122-123

41. Ibid., p. 121

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., p. 131

44. Cited in Amy Beth Bridges, "Nicos Poulantzas and the Marxist Theory of the State", Politics and Society, Winter, 1974, p. 188; Also see Nicos Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, (London: New Left Books, 1973)

45. Harry Boyte, "Socialist Organizing in the 1980's", Socialist Review, 45, March, 1979, p. 133

46. Ibid., p. 134

47. James O'Connor, "The Democratic Movement in the United States", Kapitalistate, 7, 1978, p. 20

48. Ibid., p. 23

Chapter Five

BEYOND THE THEORETICAL FRAGMENTS: A CONCEPTION OF MODEST STRUGGLE

Sociology shows a void in its understanding of everyday resistance, of how ordinary people in our form of life oppose from day to day the powers that be. To fill this void, I develop a theoretical conception in this work, *Modest Struggle*.

For sociologists who want to understand everyday resistance as a social phenomenon, my main point is this: you understand the phenomenon only if you start and end with experience, the totality of what the people involved go through. Otherwise, the theorist or social scientist remains external to the whole of the experience.

People's experience and changing consciousness in the course of struggle lie at the core of my analysis. Such an approach means integrating the way we theorize. That approach may use formal theory. As the reader saw, I integrate two kinds of formal theory together with the analysis of experience. But integrated theorizing puts people's experience first. People's experience lets theory come to life when and if theory lets experience come to life. I attempt that in the present work.

I. Feminist Theory

To focus my conception of modest struggle, I find I need to go back to the social theorists whose conception comes closest to my own. This body of theory is feminism. Although feminists, as a whole, do not deal with everyday resistance, I find in their work a language and analysis which help me clarify my theoretical approach. For this reason, they serve as an essential building block for my own conception of modest struggle. For the purposes of this analysis, I feel feminist theory, in this historical moment, offers a significant input into an analysis of everyday resistance. I treat their theory as a historically specific source for me.

My own conception of modest struggle shifts the emphasis of social change from external social structures to everyday life itself. This emphasis is at the core of feminist theory. Like me, feminists stress how people's experiences close to home are central to a conception of politics.

The starting point of analysis, feminists posit, is the personal, subjective, primary dimension of experience; political consciousness is rooted in everyday experience. In itself, this is not a new argument. Radical democratic theories typically embrace this

perspective. In our own time, however, feminists take this insight further than other groups. As Hilary Wainright notes,

> No organization had any real understanding of the subjectivity of oppression, of the connection between personal relationships and public political organization, or of the emotional components of consciousness, until the women's movement brought these issues to the surface and made them part of political thought and action.[1]

By stressing the "subjectivity of oppression", feminists introduce new concerns such as consciousness and self-image into a conception of political change. Change for women means questioning their very lives and the ways they act in the world.

Dorothy Smith contributes to a feminist theory of consciousness. Smith argues that women internalize their secondary status in their very consciousness, in the mundane routines of daily life. Change in women's lives is made possible when they begin to call personal problems into question. Reflecting on immediate experiences leads women to question the

> ideological nature of 'values', 'norms', and 'beliefs' concerning women's role and relations between sexes which we had taken for granted. We became aware of the feminine mystique as a mystique which served to keep us in our places by invading our consciousness as our beliefs, our values, our sense of morality, fittness, and obligations.[2]

Smith shows that oppression takes place not only in the workplace. It is internalized in the very ways women see themselves and their worlds. Social change means calling these ways of seeing into question by challenging the values and norms which women internalize and reproduce.

By placing changing consciousness and personal life at the core of their analysis, feminists come closest to my own conception of modest struggle. Like me, their analysis argues against a top-down perspective on the left; they argue for a way of knowing the world from the bottom up. Everyday life becomes a means to understand both self and the larger social world. This analysis begins with the reflection on personal experience.

In this respect, feminists build on a theme that was central to the writings of C. Wright Mills. In his own day and age, Mills argued that politics happens when people break through the obfuscating ideology of those in power. In those moments, people stop blaming themselves and define their personal troubles as public issues.

Linking the personal and political in this manner is key for a feminist conception of consciousness. Women begin with their own lives. This does not mean they treat experience as an end in itself. They begin with everyday life and its problems as a way to develop a

broader analysis. The process of reflection is a way to treat daily life as problematic, a way to call it into question. As Smith notes, this is a way for women to step outside the "hegemony of discourse over the actualities of everyday experience of the world".[3] Reflecting on experience helps women call into question preconceptions about their own lives:

> The everyday world is the world we experience directly. Our experiences arise in it as conditions, occasions, objects, possibilities, and so on. It is necessarily local - because that is how we must be. Locating the social problem in the everyday world does not mean confining inquiry to the everyday world. Indeed...it is essential to this that the everyday world be seen as organized by social relations not observable within it.[4]

In other words, reflection on daily life makes visible larger social relations which influence women's lives but appear distant and elusive.

The process of developing critical consciousness is built into the very practice of feminism through consciousness-raising groups. Nancy Hartsock sees in these groups a new feminist mode of analysis.

> Through such groups women reflect on their personal experiences and connect these with the structures that define women's lives. The groups reveal the ways women build their analysis from the ground up, beginning with their own experience.[5]

Experience becomes a means to theorize about women's own lives. In the course of consciousness-raising,

> Women drew connections between their personal experiences and political generalizations about the oppression of women; indeed they used their personal experience to develop those generalities.[6]

Reflection on experience makes possible broader generalizations because, as feminists note, oppression is lived. By stressing the link between their own lives and larger structures of domination, feminists introduce a new mode of social analysis. As Smith notes, feminists go beyond a tendency to "divorce the everyday world of experience from the larger social and economic relations which organize its distinctive character". Whereas both mainstream and Marxist social science tend to treat everyday life and the larger social world as separate spheres of study, for feminists the two are intertwined. By reflecting on daily life, women can theorize about the larger social world.

> the effect of locating the knower in the everyday world of experience pulls what we know as the 'micro-sociological' level of the every-day world and the 'macrosociololgical' level, which we make observable as power elites and the state, into a determinate relation.[7]

The point I stress here is the bridge feminists

create between the everyday and the wide world. The process of linking the "micro" and the "macro", reveals new ways of looking at the world, or critical consciousness.

> The institutions of capitalism and patriarchy...cease to be abstractions, they become lived, real aspects of daily life. By making these links women see the need to restructure social relations. To transform the self is to transform society and vice versa.[8]

This emphasis on everyday life does not grow as a political abstraction. Women recognize the material conditions of their own lives. They may wrestle with problems in the workplace. But their problems also extend to the family, community, children, relationships with men and so on. The dominant male left ignores these dimensions of daily life. By contrast, feminists placed emphasis on these very aspects. As Wainright notes, because,

> much of the oppression of women takes place 'in private', in the areas of life considered personal. The causes of that oppression are social and economic, but these causes could only be revealed and confronted when women challenged the assumptions about their personal life.[9]

A left, which emphasizes struggles in the workplace over and above the community, necessarily minimizes these experiences. This holds true whether we are talking

about feminist issues or citizen struggles. The left analysis is inadequate because it cannot account for the experience of oppression by those who do not fit into the cash nexus. This gap in analysis leaves out not only women, but children and old people, and even men in their activities outside the workplace. As Rowbotham notes, "by focusing on class struggle at work, other aspects of power relations become of secondary importance".[10]

Precisely because so many of women's problems are located outside the workplace, feminists reject a limited conception of class struggle. Growing out of their own needs and struggles, feminists affirm the centrality of daily life as a sphere of oppression and resistance. By asserting its importance, they challenge the dominant male perspective. In turn, their work helps to validate more generally new forms of everyday resistance which take place within the community.

In another way, as well, feminist theory offers a building block for my conception of modest struggle. Like myself, feminists stress the importance of grass-root organizations and the participation they encourage. Participation is seen as important since it stimulates activity and thereby helps women break through their

own passivity. This fosters changing self-image. In this case, changing consciousness means more than changing values and beliefs, but changing women's very sense of themselves.

My own conception suggests that changing the ways people see themselves is critical for modest struggle. Our society constantly seeks to undermine participation and create passive people. Passive people do not resist or try to bring about social change. Feminists help me make clear that participation through small groups allows oppressed people to break through the passive self-images which they have internalized.

Social changes involves "challenging the self-subordination which underpins most forms of oppression and exploitation". To do so, feminists create new forms of organization which enable women to "adopt a less passive stance toward the world".[11] As Rowbotham notes, the forms in which people organize are not neutral; they imply certain consequences.

> If you accept a high degree of centralization...you necessarily diminish the development of the self-activity and self-confidence of most people involved. The enormous weight of the inner passivity which was the result of the particular nature of the subordination of women... meant that the effort to struggle, both against the personal forms of mens'

> control and our oppression within capitalist society, became inseparable from the ways in which these had been internalized.[12]

Not surprisingly, feminists develop a critique of formal, bureaucratic organizations. They perceive these to be far removed from the daily lives and problems of women. Such organizations tend to reduce participation and thereby reinforce the very passivity women try to overcome in the first place. Feminists embrace new political forms which "consciously help people overcome the continuous mining of our capacity to resist".[13] Feminists find these in grassroot organizations such as self-help and consciousness-raising groups.

The importance of these groups is emphasized by Hillary Wainwright. Wainwright notes that, for women, unrevolutionary actions like speaking at a meeting, writing a pamphlet, and joining a union open up wider issues of authority. "It wasn't just that women felt frightened to protest politically, but that most of us found it difficult to speak publically at all".[14] Citizen activists like Lois Gibbs describe similar problems. Gibbs writes that she had enormous difficulty overcoming her shyness.

Overcoming passivity is perceived as a form of

resistance itself. Hence, a key dimension of a feminist theory of social change is whether organizing styles facilitate empowerment or passivity. As Wainwright notes,

> The subjective experience of political organizing, whether it is 'off-putting' or involving, whether it builds up your sense of your power to change or makes you feel powerless, is so vital to whether or not women become active. Distant national structures over which you feel little control... none of these could have moved women to cast off their passivity and self-subordination.[15]

The internalization of passivity is of course not unique to women. This is one form self-subordination takes among oppressed groups in general. I argued this point earlier when I showed how the contemporary state tries to reproduce passive citizens. By directly addressing this problem, feminists illuminate another subjective dimension of social change that the male-dominated left tends to ignore. They help me make clear that small, grassroots organizations help people to move from passive to active, to break through one dimension of internalized oppression.

In their emphasis on changing consciousness and self-empowerment, feminists direct their attention to subjective changes in the very ways people see themselves and the social world. In so doing, they confront new

dimensions of social change the traditional left has been prone to ignore.

II. Glimpsing The Fragments

Let's return to a problem posed in the first chapter. I argued that there are no adequate ways to conceptualize everyday protests such as citizen activism. My whole study suggests that our presuppositions about resistance affect what we see and therefore what we treat as important. As long as we look for the expected, we will miss the more elusive forms of resistance that take place day to day.

The problem of overly narrow preconceptions about resistance marks left social theory. The left looks for grand social change and particular constituencies. These include elements of the old left such as the labor movement and the international working class, as well as some constituencies of the new left, such as blacks and Chicanos. The implication of left analysis is that if these groups are not moving we may as well stay home. Nothing is happening politically. Protests of everyday life are a bump in the log if the working class or other elements of the modern left policy are not organized. My whole study argues against this point.

I saw the need to find new ways to reconceive of resistance in terms of people's own experience with

problems and powers they consider unjust. That, for me, meant interpreting protests in terms of the links people make between their own lives and the larger social world. Left theorists explicate those larger social conditions which create problems in people's lives. They tend to ignore, however, people's day-to-day experience and struggle with these problems.

By contrast, my conception of modest struggle shifts the emphasis away from large social conditions alone. My point is not that this analysis is unimportant. On the contrary, there is at each step a reciprocal relation between people's experience and the larger social world. But an analysis of social conditions alone, I find, cannot account for what resistance presupposes: the ways people experience, interpret, and struggle with the powers that be and in the process develop a practical analysis of their own. That analysis cannot be interpreted by overly rigid and predetermined concepts externally imposed. For people's experience is always changing, as is the larger social world.

In each chapter, I built toward an analysis of modest struggle. That analysis helped me reconceive citizen activism and bring out everyday resistance in a decade dismissed for its quiescence and passivity. What have we learned about the phenomenon of everyday

resistance in this study that contrasts with the dominant left perspective?

Let's begin with feminist theory. Feminists help me establish the importance of experience, of the personal, subjective dimension of resistance. By stressing critical consciousness and self-empowerment, feminists build a new conception of social change which means far more than changing external social structures. Oppression penetrates deeply into the very ways people see themselves and their social world. Social change implies the need for people to challenge the ways they internalize domination and self-subordination.

The very process of everyday resistance, I argue, alters the subjective ways people internalize domination. This process fosters critical consciousness and a new self image. Citizen struggles illustrated this for us. The very process of resistance took people beyond the initial tangible issue which provoked struggle. In the course of struggle, ordinary citizens experienced a system they saw as unjust. This changed consciousness empowered them to act in new ways as they broke through the obfuscating ideology of the status quo.

For modest struggle, feminists help me make clear, the interior, subjective dimension of resistance

is all important. People may win or loose their individual struggles. But beyond the tangible issue is an ongoing process of changing consciousness of self and world. This, I argue, plants seeds for resistance and therefore creates new possibilities for an ongoing process of social change.

Now let's consider radical social historians. These theorists help me bring out that the more elusive protests of daily life follow an inner logic of their own. They reveal the ways people experience and analyze new forms of domination. If capitalism exploits, if the state dominates, theoretical analysis alone cannot interpret people's response. For ordinary people experience this in direct and immediate ways in their own lives as they fight against hunger, unemployment, loss of community, and so on. How people interpret these experiences will affect whether or not they resist, as well as the course of their resistance. Again, the emphasis for social change is placed not just on external conditions alone, but on the very ways people interpret and experience these.

We saw this with citizen activists. Activists try to stop economic growth such as highways, jetports, and nuclear power. In the course of their struggle, they fight government agencies which act on behalf of

industry. Social scientists may argue that these protests are instrumental in affecting a process of capital accumulation. However, as a rule, protestors do not articulate their activity in these terms. Citizen activists express their resistance in the language of democracy, a language which symbolizes and justifies their indignation.

Everyday protests are not articulated in formal theoretical terms. Their deeper meanings are therefore elusive to social scientists. Social historians argue that these protests can be understood on people's own terms, through their experiences, culture, and history.

Lastly, let's consider Marxist theorists of the state. Their analysis helps me bring out the ways in which modest struggle is historically specific. Left theorists tend to treat community struggles around the state as secondary, or even, as I said, functional to the very reproduction of capitalism. Marxist theorists of the state, by contrast, illuminate the inner logic to resistance around the state in our day and age. The state is one of the great experiences in people's lives; it mediates and intervenes in every aspect of social life.

Their analysis helps me account for an underlying coherence among citizen struggles. It affirms how citizen activists practically conceive new forms of

domination (state intervention into social life) as well as new possibilities (attempts to realize democratic promises).

Grounding struggles historically helps us grasp just what provokes anger and hope in the course of resistance, displaying the deeper meanings of people's practical critique.

Each chapter in this study constituted an occasion for theorizing about everyday resistance. Glimpsing each of the theoretical fragments made it possible for me to go on to analyze and integrate them. Together, they ground my conception of modest struggle. To integrate these fragments I find it necessary to introduce two analytic constructs. In this work each describes a key dimension of the experience of everyday resistance. The process of everyday resistance brings out what I conceptualize as the dialectical interplay between the subjective and objective, or everyday life and larger social world. Social science treats these two dimensions of experience as they appear to be: everyday life is perceived and studied as separate from large, macro institutions. In contrast, I assume here that to analyze everyday resistance the two interrelate and transform one another and hence need to be integrated.

To start with, I analyze the subjective dimension of experience. I begin with the subjective because it is essential to an account of what makes everyday resistance conceivable. Resistance implies this seemingly obvious point: human beings are active, critical shapers of their social world. In certain moments, men and women interpret their world in ways which provoke them to fight back. Such consciousness grows from people's subjective interpretation of their everyday troubles. External social conditions do not create resistance in any predetermined fashion. Without changing consciousness, there is no resistance.

Analyzing the subjective dimension of experience, I find, shows how human beings create social change from below and in the course of their day-to-day lives. It shows how people shape and construct a social reality in the very process of resisting. This includes the ways people reinterpret their social worlds as they move from passive to active and thereby construct a changing world view. It also refers to how ordinary people feel about themselves once they become active, how their own self imate also fosters activity, defiance, empowerment over passivity, despair and fatalism.

The subjective dimension of experience, however,

only takes me part of the way. I also find it necessary to analyze the objective dimension of experience, or the larger social world. Analyzing the latter brings out just what people find so troubling, just what creates crisis and problems experienced in daily life. This also helps me account for what makes everyday resistance conceivable.

On a day to day level, people experience the larger social world as it appears to be: vague, hazy, separate from their daily life. For the most part, the activities of large social institutions are not visible. People perceive the larger social world as it treats them: as objects or things external to their lives.

Yet in moments of everyday crisis people are provoked to become self conscious of just what creates the crisis in the first place. In that moment, the larger social world which was once vague and distant becomes in some measure part and parcel of people's immediate experience.

The relation I posit between these two dimensions of experience is not static. I treat these as part of an ongoing process. Social historians are an important building block for my conception precisely because they help me bring out this notion of process. For Thompson, for example, class is a historical phenomenon: lived,

experienced, changing over time. If you freeze class in time, you get fragmented individuals but no class at all. The same point on process stands out for me in the writings of social scientists such as O'Connor and Wolfe. Through them I inferred how struggle and only struggle is at the core of changing the world. By the same token, an ever changing world makes for changing struggles.

This emphasis on historical process is no less important to the present analysis of everyday protest. To make sense of both the immediate and historical process, we must pay special attention to the ever changing relationship between what I abstract as the objective and subjective dimensions of lived experience, the interplay between the everyday and larger social world. Analytically, we can see them always transforming one another.

III. Integrating The Fragments

In broad terms, modest struggle is a historically specific conception. It refers to everyday opposition to powers that be under capitalism. This section shows my substantive discoveries about everyday resistance. In this way I sum up my whole work.

By modest struggle I mean the social protests

of ordinary people that grow out of the hidden spaces of everyday life.

I use the word "modest" at the same time as both descriptive and ironic. In truth these struggles are modest. They do not transform the whole of society. They are small, fragmented and contradictory efforts by ordinary people to change their own lives.

Yet I call these protests modest to express a paradox as well. By this I mean that the struggles that appear to be modest are at times not modest at all. For in these less visible everyday struggles, people who never before resisted break through the fragmentation of their own lives. They make the link between the personal and political and fight back.

These struggles spring from matters which cause anger and fear and hope in people's daily lives. In those moments, people move from passive spectators to self-empowered activists. In some measure, they change their own lives and plant seeds for future possibilities.

In his own time, and in his own terms, Karl Marx addresses struggles such as these. He dwells on their importance. This stands next to the more apocalyptic vision of revolution he also stands for. We see this less known side in his analysis of the day by day fight

of English workers through the struggle to reduce the exploitative and brutal work hours of early capitalism. Wrote Marx,

> In place of the pompous catalogue of the 'inalienable right of man' there steps the modest Magna Carta of the legally limited working day. (emphasis mine)[16]

Like me, Marx uses the word modest here both descriptively and ironically. In the process of struggles such as these, Marx implies, consciousness changes and fundamental gains are won in the lives of people. My own work also suggests the need to stress much more how struggles for improvement close to home grow out of deeply felt experiences. Like Marx, I stress the ways these struggles change people's lives and consciousness. In closing I display the constituent features of what makes for "modest" resistance.

(1) Direct Experience

As a first step to conceptualizing modest struggle, I posit that in certain moments of people's lives they are so provoked they can no longer take their daily lives for granted. What once seemed routine, or elusive, or beyond their control suddenly demands their attention. These everyday crises or tangible issues provoke people to reflect on their

lives and problems in new ways. They stop blaming themselves as they become aware of the political dimension of personal troubles.

My conception, in line with feminism, singles out the relationships between immediate, primary experience and the ways people through struggle link these with the larger social world. Through the very act of resistance ordinary people become self conscious of themselves and their worlds in a new way.

Everyday resistance, as I define it here, stresses the immediate, primary, subjective ways people are provoked by crisis in daily life. These forms of resistance do not grow out of abstract causes. Rather they reveal the ways people are deeply touched. Their resistance may emerge from such everyday practical concerns such as workers fear for safety on the job or parents' concern for a child's welfare.

Ordinary people do not resist easily. Resisting means coming up against enormous constraints - personal and external. They face, for example, the fear of losing a job or fear of political repression. To resist also means overcoming the ways they internalize self-subordination in a way of life that encourages political passivity.

Yet in moments of immediate and dire crisis, ordinary people feel pushed against the wall. They feel

they have little choice but to fight back. In those moments they break through the constraints both within themselves and their world. As I see it, resistance sets off a process whereby people come to see themselves and their world in a new way as they seek to transform both.

(2) Reflecting About Their Own Lives

As a second step in conceptualizing modest struggle, I posit that ordinary people in the process of resistance become self reflective about their own lived experience. They do not theorize in the explicit formal terms of phenomenologists or other academic theorists. Nonetheless, like phenomenologists, they do raise and answer questions about their own lives that they usually treat as given. In moments of crisis, people are so provoked they cannot take their everyday lives for granted.

I conceptualize here that reflecting on their own lives in times of crisis and struggle makes possible practical theory. These theories may be elusive and implicit. Yet I find they are all important for resistance itself. In the process of resistance, ordinary people create a social reality which helps them analyze their own oppression. In turn, this analysis helps people sustain and plan struggle.

In their own language and in their own terms, I argue, ordinary people make clear for themselves what those in power systematically distort as they engage in everyday struggle. By reflecting on resistance, people reinterpret their social world and thereby create a new social reality.

(3) Experiencing Struggle as Limitation and Possibility

As a third step to conceptualizing modest struggle, I posit that people experience the ever changing interplay between the limits and possibilities of their own struggle. This is an ongoing process where people in some measure seek to shape their world. In the process, they too are transformed.

The experience of everyday resistance, I argue, is contradictory. For people experience a way of life that is crisis ridden and ever changing. On the one hand, this way of life seeks to exclude people from the very decisions which directly affect their lives. At the same time, it constantly provokes crisis and struggle.

In the process of resistance itself, people come more and more to glimpse a world that is for the most part invisible in their daily lives. What was once a distant relation is now part of their every-

day lives. People's very resistance is testimony to the ways they struggle against the separation of these two worlds to lessen their own fragmentation.

As ordinary people struggle to control their own lives in some measure, they find that the world at large continues to ignore them. In turn, their defiance escalates. Where they often begin with traditional methods of protest, in the process of struggle they are pushed to ever more militant means: from mass rallies to strikes and civil disobediance.

In the process of struggle, people get pulled in by the need and possibility of changing their world, by the yearning, the glimpse, the modest victories. And they are held back as well by a way of life that constrains, coopts, and represses resistance. Everything people win, they win against tremendous obstacles. People in their everyday struggles glimpse the need and even the possibility for change. They seek to shape their worlds. They also come up against enormous constraints which seek to coopt and crush and limit their struggle.

Central to my conception of modest struggle is treating everyday resistance as ongoing, and ever changing. It grows and changes over time. Some people win modest victories. Others are defeated after long

and difficult protests when their path is blocked. Some become inactive, but may well be drawn back into struggles in the future. This process creates new possibilities and new problems. It is filled with leaps and reversals.

In sum, as I conceptualize it here, modest struggle is the everchanging experience of ordinary people as they feel, reflect and struggle in their everyday lives. In the process of struggle, they create a practical analysis which links the personal and political in their own lives.

NOTES

1. Hilary Wainwright, "Moving Beyond the Fragments", in Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and the Making of Socialism, eds. Sheila Rowbotham, Lynn Segal, and Hillary Wainwright, (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1979), p. 7

2. Dorothy Smith, "A Sociology for Women", in The Prism of Sex: Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge, eds. Julia A. Sherman, and Evelyn Torton Beck, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), p. 137

3. Ibid., p. 159

4. Ibid., p. 173

5. Nancy Hartsock, "Feminist Theory and the Development of Revolutionary Strategy", (ed) Zillah R. Eisenstein, Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism, (New York: Monthy Review Press, 1979), p. 59

6. Ibid.

7. Smith, "A Sociology of Women", p. 183

8. Hartsock, "Feminist Theory", p. 59

9. Wainwright, "Moving Beyond the Fragments", p. 13

10. Sheila Rowbotham, "The Women's Movement and Organizing for Socialism", in Beyond The Fragments, p. 96

11. Wainwright, "Moving Beyond the Fragments", p. 250

12. Rowbotham, "The Women's Movement", p. 75

13. Ibid., p. 139

14. Lynn Segal, "A Local Experience", in Beyond The Fragments, p. 158

15. Wainwright, "Moving Beyond the Fragments", p. 252

16. Karl Marx, Capital Volume I, (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 416

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