

REVOLUTION IS THE ONLY SOLUTION

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by Rosalie Diabalo

[The following is taken from a somewhat longer series of two articles which appeared in the Liberated Guardian starting Jan. 27, 1971, and subtitled: "Story of a White Working Class Addict." The author begins with a short personal history of her brother Johnny, a white working class junkie and pusher in a suburb outside of NYC. In the spring of 1966 Johnny was busted and convicted. He was paroled to Daytop Village as an alternative to a six-year jail sentence.]

COMMUNAL LIFE AT DAYTOP

The program at Daytop is modeled after Synanon. There are no professionals on the staff, aside from part-time doctors, teachers, and a psychiatrist. All the rest are ex-addicts. They make it hard to get in because they believe an addict must make an "investment," show some real commitment to change. Understanding that nothing buttresses commitment like the alternative of six years in jail, they took Johnny right in.

He was brought handcuffed to the Staten Island Center. A big old Victorian house with wings and porches overlooking the bay. Very uninstitutional. Full of big winding staircases. And full of activity, music, people, laughter. Johnny had to squirm for three hours in the lobby with his back to all that action and his face to the wall waiting to be interviewed.

"Interview? Man, I thought they were crazy. Three guys come in. Start asking questions about why I was taking drugs. I didn't know what to say. Said maybe it was because I felt no one understood me. They laughed in my face. And started screaming at me. 'Maybe it's because you're a baby.' Fuck that, I was ready to walk out. Then they asked what would you call a guy who stuck dirty needles in his arms, kept going back to jail, was always half dead and close to finishing the job. I said maybe he was sick or something. Then they started the yelling again, 'maybe he's STUPID.' I swear I thought they were crazy. I wanted to slug this one guy, but they said anytime I threw a punch I was out. Then they asked me if I wanted to stay at Daytop. I'd rather have dug ditches, if you want to know the truth; but there was jail. 'Yeah,' I said. Then they told me to yell, 'I want help.' I got out a little squeak. Louder they said. And you know I was screaming my head off. It was hard, but you know it felt good."

Johnny came down smiling, the first glimmer of pride in himself I'd seen in a long time. And it grew. Daytop is continual therapy. People live, work, eat, play in a community where they get constant feedback on their behavior rather than past traumas. Addicts are treated not as psychiatric cases but as undeveloped persons who need to grow up. Behavior changes are encouraged by a system of rewards and punishments; at the extreme the threat of banishment from the community for the use of dope or violence. Inside the community, there are a whole series of privileges to strive for. A new member cleans latrines, is denied all contact with family and former friends, is restricted to the grounds. Later he earns the freedom to write letters, get phone

calls, more free time, the use of a car, a job outside the house, finally maybe his own apartment in the city.

Daytop completely rejects "addict behavior," and provides continual group support in finding "new models." There are regular "encounter sessions" at which ex-addicts get a chance to express their feelings, let out hostilities and learn about themselves. These sessions are supposedly intended to lead the individual to accept his need for others and his responsibility towards them, to be able to love. In the final scene of The Concept, Johnny plays the tough guy who turns to his roommate sobbing, "Will you love me?" But there is another aspect, a tremendous pressure to conformity as the price of that love. One writer describes Daytop as a "carefully formulated status system in which ascendancy is gained by displaying the middle class virtues of old-fashioned hard work, integrity, honesty and concern for the well-being of one's fellow man."

Yet, Johnny blossomed at Daytop. Was it the philosophy, the therapy or just the community itself? There is a richness to the life; an addict moves from the loneliness and boredom of the street, the corner where "nothing's happening" into a rich, heterogeneous world of activity. Two hundred ex-addicts, Harlem blacks, Puerto Ricans, Italians from Brooklyn and Jersey and some Jewish college kids getting away from Speed.

Life is structured. Instead of getting up in the morning to nothing, there are meetings of task forces to plan their work, lots of goofing around and friends to acknowledge your existence. Then jobs, of wide variety, in which addicts who seem to have no skills get to explore all kinds of potentials.

"Man, I used to hate work. Up at 6:30 and then the same thing all day long, loading trucks. At Daytop I could move around. I was on cars for awhile. I loved that, boy, and learned to be a crack mechanic. Then, just because I'm Italian, they figure I can probably cook. And I'm putting out Sunday dinners that are out of sight. I mean, I personally went to this supermarket and hustled the clams for this fantastic spaghetti sauce. I was good at hustling. We had to beg most of our equipment. You should have seen me talk the Board of Education out of that bus. For awhile, I admit I fucked up. They put me in charge and I couldn't handle the other people. Guess they figured it would bust my authority hang-up to be on top.

In his time at Daytop Johnny was janitor, mechanic, dispatcher, cook, hustler, P.R. man, speaker at high schools, actor, group leader for encounter sessions for new people, drama coach for teenagers in N.Y.C. and finally on the administrative staff of the city center. He played these roles sequentially or a few at a time. When he was acting in the play he was working 15 hours a day, joyously. And he had never been able to keep a job.

The difference was the community. You knew it existed for your salvation, not just to use you like a regular job. There was little money economy. People got room and board and a little pin money. You could aspire to staying on as staff at a minimal salary (\$3,000-\$6,000). The satisfaction came from the fact that all the results of your and your friends' labor came back to the community. You put a bunch of metal together into a car, and you had more transportation, more freedom. Also there was not so much an external work discipline, as the support of doing things with others, in an easy going atmosphere where you could take a little time to walk by the Bay, frug in the kitchen, or embrace in the yard with no foreman yelling back to the job. Life and work, friendship and sex intermingled normally in the close contact of community life.

And the day was deliberately split into many experiences. Lunch-time, there were discussions of the news, a chance to develop opinions about society. Afternoon classes were available for people who wanted to finish high school. And artsy things were always going on. Festivals Daytop sponsored for fund-raising purposes, poetry appearing on the bulletin board, a jazz combo putting something together after dinner. And there were all kinds of games, discussions to help people get over their inarticulateness. "Sometimes we'd all have to get up and tell maybe out most embarrassing experience. It was scary but fun. But when they said they were going to send me out to make speeches I thought I was going to die."

Johnny grew in this atmosphere. Grew taller in self-esteem. He was a kind of comic around the house and got a lot of response. His ideas changed, too. Went in pretty reactionary, a racist. Had to struggle to make black friends, accept black people in authority over him. Learned about what blacks thought of American society, the war. Fell in love with a black girl.

He had come a long way from Nowhere, New Jersey. By Fall 1968, he felt he had not only kicked drugs but started a new life. He moved out of the isolated Staten Island Center to join the staff on 14th Street. Daytop has a three-stage program for leading addicts back into the "real world." The third stage involves working with other addicts and facing again the horror of drugs in others' lives. Johnny was thinking that maybe he'd stay on the staff when he was "clear," marry his girl friend, maybe start another Daytop house. Or maybe just get a job and be "normal." The parole officer who had haunted him through his youth was now offering him \$10,000 to take his job.

THE VRISIS AT DAYTOP

When Johnny first joined Daytop, there was a strong bias against a social interpretation of drug use. Seeking to deny the addict all excuses for his behavior, the Daytop philosophy refused to blame society for addiction. But Daytop provided a life style so drastically in contrast to American society: an egalitarian community, without money, without the rigid division of labor that reduces men to the function of machines, an unrepressive approach to sexuality, an extended family (wives and children were gradually incorporated) which went beyond the whole privatization of life that usually is part of marriage, inter-racial equality, work for use rather than market.

Daytop had elements of Utopian communism. It had its own hierarchy, but by and large the individual had more power over his immediate society and his own life. This necessarily led to a critical attitude towards American society. The first form that took was the vision of making Daytop a permanent community to which people would commit themselves for life. This at first was a surprising tendency since it was precisely on this point that David Deitch had broken with Synanon to found Daytop. Chuck Dederich, the founder of Synanon, envisioned it as a permanent social alternative. Now there is a kind of Synanon City, with its own schools and businesses to provide maximum social and economic self-sufficiency. Daytop was developed as a half-way house, an alternative to "getting hooked on Synanon." Yet the same Utopianism re-appeared.

Meanwhile other factors were setting Daytop in a more aggressively critical stance towards society than Synanon. Synanon was pretty middle class; the investment to get in wasn't just emotional but \$1000 cash. Daytop got its money partly from the government and took its members from the most wretched sectors of NYC. These men and women came from seeing slum landlords getting rich off squalor, seeing racist

police brutalize black people, courts that sent petty thieves to prison because they had no bail while Westchester drug users went free. They came from a city where the conditions that made them escape into drugs were making others become Black Panthers. It was inevitable that the two tendencies get together. And when they did Daytop was going to be subject to some of the repression dealt their more political cohorts.

New York Times, Nov. 17, 1968: "Narcotics Complex Split by Charges of Cultist Activity." Thus the New York Times ran Daytop's obituary on page one. After a few weeks of struggle against almost the entire staff, the Board of Directors of Daytop, composed of businessmen, government officials, and a particularly zealous Msgr. O'Brien, armed with their authority, over \$500,000 in state funds which went to Daytop, expelled founder David Deitch and 60 members of his staff.

The charges were remarkably clear. Dr. Daniel Castriel, the staff psychiatrist, said the trouble began when Deitch "began developing a theory that addiction was produced by a sick society and its cure was to involve the addict in changing society." "In recent months," Castriel charged, "he added a whole socio-political tinge of leftist identification that doesn't belong in Daytop. He also taught that Daytop was a perennial way of life." The accusations against the staff included a poster of Che Guevara who allegedly had been adopted as their hero, and visits from Black Panthers and "other militants."

During a week long dispute, 60 staff members occupied the Daytop facilities on 14th Street. Signs appeared in the windows: "We demand a say in our own destiny." "Integrity not compromise" and "We're a family not a factory." During the struggle the family was torn apart. The trustees approached some of the long-term Daytop residents, nearing staff status, and offered them positions in a new management. Johnny was offered \$10,000 to head the city center. He was told that he was "cured," but that Deitch was just keeping him there to make him a tool of his political ideas. The community split, with most blacks and Puerto Ricans fighting the state and (with exceptions) the mostly unpoliticized white working class members siding with the trustees. One night two casts almost fought a physical battle for the stage of The Concept. The director ordered the play closed down. "I created the play within a concept of love which is no longer what Daytop represents. The soul of the community has departed. The revival of The Concept would be a lie."

Johnny found himself alternately locked out of and in charge of the 14th Street center. But for him, Daytop was dead. He had been cut off from close friends. The original staff mostly left. Some stayed on to administer an abbreviated program under the close surveillance of the state which for the past years has been putting addicts through the rigor of encounter sessions. Many are getting temporarily off drugs, but the larger question raised by Daytop about the price and form of re-entry to society goes unanswered. Once the Daytop staff had turned with all its wisdom to confront the society which has made junkies in the first place, it was crushed by the ruthless power of that society. David Deitch had always been asking the question about the relationship of a therapeutic community to society at large. At the time that he broke with Synanon and created Daytop as a program that would send people back into society, he was aware of the difficulties. "It's tempting to adopt a defensive attitude towards society. After all, our people have been roughed up pretty badly out there. And when we think of returning them, we have to face the fact that it is in fact a big spinning madhouse that breaks down individual ethical value."

The solution towards which Daytop was moving was remarkably similar to that evolving in the American left. The accusations of left wing activity were true. Black members had demanded all black encounter sessions which quickly developed from the traditional therapy into the kind of "personal-political" groups around which the left wing woman's movement is organized. Eventually everyone was in "social groups," with personal problems taking an integral, but subordinate, part. The question stopped being "what am I going to do about myself" and became "what am I going to do with my life to make the world more like Daytop?" The vision seems to have been moving towards that of forming permanent collectives which would live as extended families and engage in action which would not only save individuals but challenge the social institutions which were destroying them.

Not everyone in Daytop was ready for that. It was easier for blacks to see the social cause of their addiction in racism than for whites to see the connection between their addiction and society. They tended to see their plight individually rather than socially. Hadn't they just been "babies" and "stupid"? They hadn't grown up hungry.

It was 1967 and it was questionable whether the political people at Daytop could have had any more awareness of the political plight of working class youth than the rest of the movement at that time. It was a time when to be radical meant only to relate to the black liberation movement; and the first form that politics took at Daytop was black nationalism.

The subsequent racial tension was especially scarring to Johnny. Johnny had entered Daytop a racist and had gone through many grueling sessions before he became able to relate to black people. When his girlfriend got a natural he not only feared losing her, but he actually had hurt feelings that she was saying something was wrong with his hair. As political consciousness first developed at Daytop it had something of black nationalism to it. Johnny experienced what could easily become a paradigm for the white working class in this country. Frightened, bewildered, left out of the black political struggle, and with no movement of his own, he became a tool of right wing business interests that used and discarded him.

BACK ON JUNK

Another Christmas. And it was all so familiar, the stiff walk, the scabby face, the incoherent conversation. After two years, Johnny was back on heroin. In a few months he was kicked out of Daytop for shooting in the house. He returned to New Jersey, to the TV set. No, first he tried to get a job. I think he really believed that he had changed enough to make it on his own. But he was working 50 hours a week in a factory warehouse at \$1.85, getting up at 5:30 AM, coming home too tired to do anything but sleep. He stuck at it four months.

"Then I figured, why bother? This isn't life. I'm alone, working for somebody else and getting nothing for myself, except money, and not much of that. My friends are racists so I can't bring my girl home and her friends are telling her to get rid of whitey. There's no world for us outside Daytop. Am I going to spend my whole life working, like my father? Sixty hours a week for little more than I earn now, just to keep this house and stay alive? Alive for what?"

Johnny had become articulate, but he couldn't talk his way out of the condition of his life and the only way out he knew was the old way. He took an overdose accidentally in a drive-in theater. He was brought back to life, then charged with possession. In desperation that he might kill himself on a rapidly escalating habit, he called an old

friend who had remained neutral at Daytop and was now running another program. "Tony, it's me Johnny. I'm in trouble. I'm back on the street." "Johnny"--on the extension I heard the older man crying. His friend took him into his New York State facility. But it was too late. Johnny did not believe in "programs" anymore. He was bounced again for use in the house. Running fast now to avoid jail. Into another program in Jersey City. Another imitation Daytop, without the self-determination. Because he knew the techniques, they put him on staff.

"It just wasn't like Daytop. We were 90% state-funded, so the state was always breathing down our necks. Always ready to fire somebody. Social workers all over the place undoing any good we did with people. Hell, we had to even keep people from falling in love. Or the politicians would say we were running a free love farm and cut our funds. It was shit."

By Spring 1970 Johnny was messing with heroin once more. The state said they were going to bust him for the drive-in incident so what the hell. Sentenced to an indefinite term at a state prison. Not so young anymore, 25 years old, back on the path he entered when he started popping pills at age 16.

He told the Judge, "I know what I'm doing, your honor. I'm killing myself. But I haven't stolen or done any pushing. Who am I hurting but myself? Why do you have to send me away?"

But he told me, in the visitors room, "What's the difference? After awhile therapeutic programs are just prisons too. Daytop was beautiful, but you can't stay forever, and anyway a place like that couldn't last. I wanted more freedom, so I went with the trustees. Maybe I was wrong. Anyway, getting out was like getting into a worse prison. There isn't even any place my girl and I can be together. So I might as well be in here. Where is there to go?"

Before Johnny entered the prison there was a riot where demands included access to political literature and socially relevant films. The turmoil in the prisons seems to indicate he might be able to get the political awareness there he was not able to get in Daytop. However, these were the demands of black prisoners and the only literature admitted is black literature for the authorities fear a racial uprising. So Johnny reads the Autobiography of Malcolm X, but how is he going to understand the autobiography of Johnny Diabalo and make the connection between social oppression in his own experience? Where is the movement for such working class kids to make that connection without which Johnny is certain to go from prison right back to his old connection and, at the least, a life whose terrible meaninglessness will be alleviated only by the fact that it will be very short?

PART II: DRUGS, A STRUCTURAL PART OF AMERICAN LIFE

"I'm just a born loser," Johnny told me from jail. This belief that addiction is an individual aberration is the foundation of most programs for the rehabilitation of addicts. This ideology was strong at Daytop in its early apolitical phase. The house was plastered with slogans which could have come out of Emerson's "Self-Reliance" and other classics of American individualism. The contradiction, was that it was, in fact, life in a new kind of community which actually saved the addicts and this led to a critique of the society which had, in contrast, led them to addiction.

The attack on Daytop was led by the one non-addict on the staff, psychiatrist Dr. Casriel who expressed his belief that the goal of rehabilitation was to adjust the individual to that society. He said he believed "it was confusing to concern the addict with political problems until he was ready to rejoin the outside community and assume his duties as a citizen." But this too implies a politics. It implies that "assuming one's duties as a citizen" in the present order as defined by that order is valid. It implies "assuming one's duties as a citizen" to fight in an army that murders Vietnamese and support a government that oppresses minorities and enforces the legal exploitation of all American working people by the owning class which owns the state. Thus, it is significant that the dispute over Daytop began when, at a festival to celebrate the founding of Daytop, a group of Daytop residents performed an "unpatriotic" skit which "abused" the American flag which has become the symbol of American imperialism across the world. They were rejecting their "duties as citizens."

In this article I will turn from autobiographical description to analysis and argue that addiction is all about our political order, a structural and necessary part of it, just like racism and male chauvinism, and therefore, the only solution to the present horror of what heroin is doing to our people is a social revolution. There have been many studies of the causes of drug addiction, all apolitical. The most unsatisfactory, I believe, are those which treat it literally as a mere physical disease. This is the reasoning behind the now highly touted methadone program developed by Dr. Marie Nyswander. A drug which is legal is used to "cure" addiction to another drug which is illegal. But heroin addiction is not a matter of running into the wrong friends, innocently taking a shot, accidentally getting hooked, and then remaining a junkie for fear of the effects of physical withdrawal. First of all, most addicts do withdraw from drugs, many times, cold turkey in jail cells, with medical assistance in "detoxification" programs; they know they can handle the physical withdrawal and this makes it easy to return again and again to the drug. The limitations of programs which would just "legalize" heroin must also be faced. This might cut some of the criminal motivation for getting more and more people profitably hooked, but it would not solve the problems of why people like Johnny turned to drugs in the first place. It would simply accept the fact, as we have accepted mental institutions, prisons and ghettos, that hundreds of thousands of our young people are going to spend their whole lives in a chemical trap.

Nor, from personal experience, can I accept the view which sees addiction as stemming from the psychological or character defects of the addict, though this is what the addict himself, full of self-hatred, often believes as Johnny does when he says he's a "born loser" who "always fucks up." Johnny and his friends at Daytop went through fantastic personal transformations. He went from an inarticulate mumbler, to someone who could express his ideas and feelings, from a blind rebel against authority, who simply bought the authorities down on himself, to a respected leader, from a drop-out, fuck-off to a person with multiple talents and self-respect. Yet, when Daytop was split and he could no longer rely upon or believe in the community, he could no longer believe in himself. He found nothing in the society outside to affirm those new personal dimensions, just a \$1.85 an hour job loading trucks. Synanon accepts this reality and doesn't even try to send its people back. The most "successful" programs in getting people off dope have been those like Daytop and Synanon which offer a completely alternative society.

I want to argue that drug addiction is a life style buttressed by

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the oppressive demands of this society. My conclusion is supported, I think by the case studies of drug addicts presented by Seymour Fiddle in Portraits From a Shooting Gallery. Though a professional sociologist, he is one of the few who studied addiction by working and living with addicts in their real habitat, the streets of East Harlem. (Fiddle worked first with drug programs--at East Harlem Protestant Parish and then with Exodus House, a half-way house not entirely unlike Daytop.) I want to draw on some of Fiddle's insights into the addict's life style, then make my own political analysis. Heroin, he rightly understands, offers not just a momentary kick, but an entire way of life, a "pseudo-life" which revolves entirely around the goal of maintaining the habit and replaces work, family, sex, everything. Heroin is a culture.

"Stretched over the United States, but particularly over the large metropolitan centers, it tends to be self-perpetuating, offering its own rewards. In fact, having its own codes, hierarchy, language, mythology, life styles, and modes of interaction, it offers to its inhabitants an alternative to the dominant American society."

Drug addicts relate primarily to other addicts in a sub-society. They work feverishly at the various illegal hustles which insure their drug pay-off. Drugs structure one's life, becoming an all sufficient reason for living. "The morning shot, the afternoon shot, and evening shot are mecca points in the course of the day. For the man who is not working, is afraid to work or cannot work, these consumption points are, in part, the equivalent of the workingman's daily schedule."

Fiddle quotes addicts who speak of the void in their existence, "I don't feel anything." Johnny's typical attitude was "Who cares?" just as his friend Jimmy spoke about their home-town in New Jersey as a series of monotonous street corners on which nothing happened. All this is replaced by the urgency of the drug need, the complex social connections involved in filling it, the adventures of hustling, and the specious victories of outwitting the cops one more time. (Anyone who has been with addicts or ex-addicts finds himself a frustrated outsider faced with the addicts' sense of superiority in their experience of being part of a community that has been "into something"). Fiddle reports how often addicts will talk about how without the drug they feel "something is missing." He calls this "the curse of the necessary added dimension."

"I cannot stress too much my feeling that the year 1898 in which heroin was discovered was a great watershed in human history, for this was the year of the discovery of a process by which man can actually transform the terms of his existence by a chemical reaction...heroin became an added dimension that took over the rest of life...The addict may well crave drugs, but that craving submerges and smothers other needs, other things which he is missing...When a man says he is missing something, he does not say overtly what is really the case--that he is missing everything."

What this points to is some horrendous human deprivation that the drug monomania is attempting to fill. It is no wonder that we find heroin addiction most extensive among the most deprived, the people in our black and brown ghettos. For the habit not only fills the terrible boredom which ghetto youths face in unemployment or, degrading employment, the transitory oblivion of the "nod" wipes out briefly the abysmal ghetto environment. [See also Michael Tabor's article on this point (in this packet).]

No understanding of heroin addiction can overlook the fact that it has been bred in the ghetto. According to The Black Panther, from

January to July 1970 there were 700 deaths of black people related to heroin in NYC alone. My brother Johnny and his friends crossed the racial barriers of our society to make their connections in Harlem. Johnny's "connection," to whom he was devotedly loyal in silence in the face of all kinds of sadistic pig pressure, was a black woman with several children living in a Harlem tenement. For the first time in his life, white and prejudiced, he saw a little of what it was like to be black and poor.

And what is the connection, I thought, that united her tenement existence and our mortgaged but sheltering home. The failure to understand that connection enabled Johnny to turn against those, often black or brown, who were making Daytop political, who were endangering financial support of the community by bringing Panthers there to speak. Yet, it is the same system that drives black and white working class youths to drugs, the higher incidence in the ghetto reflecting the greater oppression of racism. But Johnny's return to drugs had a social cause. When he left Daytop there was nothing for him, a high school drop-out, to do but return to New Jersey and load trucks fifty hours a week. That kind of self-mortification which had been possible for our father who lived through the depression seems an absurdity to our generation and leads us into open rebellion. We see a society which is incredibly wealthy reducing the human experience of someone like Johnny to the impoverishment of a lever-puller or truck-loader, as it reduces others to pencil pushers or, in the social services, which manipulate men rather than serve them, to people-pushers.

Here, a straightforward marxist analysis makes clear the connection between working class drug addiction and the social system. The addict is fleeing the alienation of capitalist society, the psychological anguish of alienated labor. Marx's central critique of capitalism is that, not only does it not deliver the goods to the workers who produced them, it forces the worker to trade his life, his activity as the price of survival.

"...he does not fulfill himself in his work, but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well-being, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies, but is physically exhausted and mentally debased. The worker, therefore, feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless. His work is not voluntary but imposed, forced labor. It is not the satisfaction of a need but only a means of satisfying other needs...."

In this situation the worker has no control over his product, the work process, or the social relations in work to other people.

These abstractions come vividly to life in the contrast between Johnny's life in Daytop and outside. On the one hand he was working together with a community in jobs whose variety approximates Marx's dream of being able "to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner just as I have a mind." For Johnny at Daytop it was more like fixing cars in the morning, discussing the news at lunch, studying in the afternoon, cooking dinner, and acting in the evening. The products were all shared by the community as well as the human relationships in work. This is a sharp contrast to his life in New Jersey where he dragged himself out of bed alone at 5:30 to be harassed by foremen if he spent any time relating to people on the job and came home too wasted to do anything but flop in front of a TV set. And he probably didn't even know what he was loading on the trucks and could care less.

Johnny turned back to heroin as an escape from this alienation.

The paradox of the heroin culture is that while addicting and imprisoning a person it gives him an illusion of freedom. The objective fact behind the euphoric escape is that the addict must usually also be a pusher in order to maintain his habit, and in this role he is working for an elite as exploitative as the legitimate capitalists whom he never sees. This elite, once identified solely with the Mafia underworld, is now often synonymous with the legitimate business world and power structure. A few years ago a large cache of heroin was found accidentally in the refrigerator of an army Colonel returning from Southeast Asia. Recently the Times reported the arrest of an Argentinian businessman for massive dope smuggling. Heroin is a "big business" with profits estimated at \$337 million a year (Alvin Moscow, Merchants of Heroin). The addict finds himself on the bottom of a whole hierarchy of drug profiteers, including the members of the Narcotics Squad, and as every junkie knows, the local police. [Also see Tabor on this.]

Fiddle captures the irony of this system. "At the bottom of this socio-economic pyramid are the addicted men...the addicted man is in the most technical sense of the term a proletarian. His "property" basically consists of his own labor power and the strength and intelligence and daring he can bring to the use of his life. He has no one employer (except himself) and is in effect actually working for the profit of the invisible hierarchy above him. From a nominal point of view he seems to be self-employed...but this is merely a facade. That is to say, when he goes out in the street in the morning and looks around for a sting, or illegal enterprise...he seems to be an independent entrepreneur...However, once they get their money they spend it all on drugs, the money going to the pusher, then in varying ways up the ladder to the Invisible Illegal Personages...I am suggesting an image that we have a hierarchy that employs a vast proletarian mass...and that this hiring out process is disguised by apparent freedom. The entrepreneurial role serves only to give the proletarian the feeling that he is his own boss. I am suggesting that this illusion...is the kind of myth that narcoticizes the addict as much as does his own heroin." Crime has always been the ladder of the unpropertied to power, an attempt to escape one's class status. I remember hearing the change in Johnny's voice in his early days as a pusher as he got on the phone to make a deal. The phone ringing all the time, for those moments he became a big man, a person of power. "This is the best stuff in the County, man. I want a real good price." This illusion was always quickly dispelled by the desperation of his own life. As a prostitute or a hustler the junkie must constantly trade his freedom for bare survival, must literally sell himself for a fix. He becomes the grand consumer who consumes himself.

Although drug addiction may seem to the user to provide a total alternative to alienated life, boring work, the powerlessness of the ordinary man in monopoly capital society, the loss of community and resulting personal fragmentation. Actually all it provides is a fix, a total illusion and the quest for a total escape.

In their escapism drugs now play the role religion once played for the proletariat and till recently still played for the most oppressed people of the black, brown and poor white communities. [See Tabor.] Religion, however, provided only a mental illusion. Under the more drastic conditions of contemporary oppression, only a real material illusion can provide a potent enough escape. Opium is the opiate of the people.

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THE SOCIAL VALUE OF DRUG ADDICTION IN MAINTAINING THE EMPIRE

Drug addiction provides a quick source of easy capital for all kinds of business enterprises, but its primary function under capitalism is to direct the rebellion of young proletarians destructively against themselves, rather than against their oppressors. Heroin pours freely into the ghettos, and in NYC alone estimates are at least 100,000 addicts. [See Tabor.]

This analysis does not require a conscious conspiracy of the largest corporations to funnel drugs into the ghetto. It is proven by the complete indifference of law enforcement agencies to the heroin problem until it begins to touch the children of the rich. While every cop in the country is out harassing harmless marijuana users, who are seen as radicals, the Narcotics Bureau, which must police the international drug trade, is the smallest of all federal law enforcement agencies, constituting only 2% of federal police personnel. If those in power had any desire to stop the heroin trade they could do so easily. Most of it is grown in Turkey, and the U.S. virtually controls Turkey. The only interest police have shown in drug laws is in using them to frame and bust non-conformists and radicals. The powers that be have no more desire to stop the flow of heroin than to provide real rehabilitation programs. Thus The Black Panther, Feb. 28, 1970, states:

"Their so-called plan of attack deals mainly with treatment which is for addicts who volunteer for treatment...which consists of telling potential users of drugs how harmful they are. This, of course, is typical of a capitalist solution to a social evil, always dealing ineffectively with the results and never dealing with or talking about the cause, but how can they when they are the cause...."

When a program like Daytop begins to talk about the cause, it, like the Panthers, faces immediate repression.

Drug addiction, as an escape from reality, not only channels off rebellion, however, it also channels the rebel into the criminal world where he will be under constant police surveillance, and eventually, like Johnny, face the direct repression of imprisonment. I shudder for the ruling class if kids like Johnny, instead of deadening themselves with dope from their early teens had become revolutionaries and graduated from ripping up the schools to mutinying in the army, to wildcatting in the factories, and busting the do-nothing unions which keep the assembly lines running with such deadening efficiency. Instead these "rebels without a cause" are identified by about age 16 and spied upon by parole officers once a week for the rest of their lives. If they are unlucky enough to fall into the methadone program they are spied upon every day of their lives. They are early identified as social rebels. Then they are hustled in and out of prison, as Johnny was for years, on minor raps for possession or petty theft before they can ever understand the political source of their law breaking. They engage in a criminal forage against the properties and the police, rather than an organized political attack against the capitalists, hitting the nearest but not the real targets, the petty shop-keeper, rather than the head of the corporation for which they have at one time or another worked their ass off. They engage in a daily guerrilla warfare against a society which would alienate them, but it is an individual war in which they are bound to lose and to wind up defining themselves as "losers." Once they are on this criminal path, any political activity is dangerous. I talked to Johnny in jail where he was being threatened with having his parole cancelled simply for having received radical literature. They could keep him in jail indefinitely just for passing out in a drive-in on heroin if they sense he's politically dangerous. I tried to talk him into a political perspective: "Unless you fight back,

Johnny, you are playing into their hands, becoming the good boy they want you to be or going off on a suicide trip." "Fight back," he answered realistically, "When I get out of here I won't even be able to spit in the street. If they ever saw me near radicals they'd call it a parole violation for 'associating with undesirables' or something. They've got me." This system of identifying and policing potential rebels through drug laws is only intensified in the ghetto where they are used to ~~police~~ police everybody. The crime rate in the ghetto is high and most of the crimes are committed by addicts. Drug addiction, therefore, provides an excuse for moving a tremendous police apparatus into the ghetto. Anyone who has lived in Harlem or the Lower East Side of NY knows that it is a joke to call the police about a robbery, the main form of junkie crime. But the police remain there to protect property of the rich and the slum lords and to repress a potentially rebellious community.

DRUGS ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE

To understand the rapid spread in the last decade of heroin addiction from the black to the white working class one would have to do a thorough analysis of the economy and the recession which is forcing capitalists to intensify the exploitation of workers in order to maintain profits. We can only observe the symptoms, that alienation is so widespread among young workers that now even ruling class publications like Fortune are perplexed about it. In "Blue Collar Blues on the Assembly Line" (July, 1970) we learn that the auto magnates are upset by the growing numbers of men who hate their jobs and are rebelling through tardiness, absenteeism, bickering constantly with foremen, walk-outs, and even direct sabotage which insures that some shiny new Cadillac will have a persistent rattle. Young workers are quoted, "I don't like nothin best about that job." "You're in a jail cell--except that you have more free time in prison."

"Both young black and young white workers have higher expectations of the jobs they fill and the wages they receive and for the lives they will lead...The deep dislike for the job and the desire to escape become terribly clear twice each day when the shifts end and the men stampede out the plant gates to the parking lots where they sometimes actually endanger lives in their desperate haste to be gone."

alter Reuther spoke similarly before he died: "Young workers get three or four days pay and figure, well, I can live on that. I'm not interested in the material things anyhow. I'm interested in a sense of fulfillment as a human being. The prospect of tightening up bolts every two minutes for eight hours a day for thirty years doesn't lift the human spirit. The young worker feels he's not master of his own destiny."

What neither Fortune nor Reuther will tell you is that the intensification of alienation is being aided by intensified exploitation on the line, the back breaking speed-up which insures the company increased productivity to cover wage increases at a healthy profit.

DRUG organizers will also tell you something else, that one of the ways the guys have of dealing with the speed-up is speed, popping amphetamines to keep themselves going. And so long as speed keeps up the production quotas, I don't think we'll hear anyone moaning about drug abuse on the assembly line.

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THE PROBLEM POSED BY DRUG ADDICTION:
TOTALITARISM OR REVOLUTION

Von Hoffman uses the rhetoric of fascism and it's no overstatement. Drug addiction is itself a totalitarian solution to an individual's experience of alienation. Heroin replaces all human needs with one need, and the drug culture replaces the ordinary life of work and relationships with a total alternative.

Therefore it is not surprising that the most effective substitute for drug addiction has been provided by total communities such as Synanon. in a Ramparts article (Oct., 1967) on Synanon, Peter Collier remarks that "total" is the word most recurrent in the Synanon vocabulary. Thus the director will say, "within Synanon there is a total outlet. The games are for emotional tension." Synanon provides a total escape for those who find American society intolerable, but its very withdrawal gives it an air of unreality, so people talk of becoming "addicted to Synanon."

The paradox is that such withdrawal, just like addiction itself, often results in reproducing the same alienating values of the society at large. Synanon is extremely authoritarian, a necessity, perhaps, in a community dealing with extremely disoriented people and trying to sustain itself as an institution within society. Synanon, however, has also become incorporated into market society to the point where it no longer challenges those values. With millions of dollars in property, including gas stations and small industry, it has come to resemble a sprawling business more than an extended family. "We're not much different than other corporations, General Motors, for instance. Like them, we have jobs at the top and constant expansion. But they lack a philosophy that leads to satisfaction for their workers." With an elite of privileged executives, Synanon is a class society. Moreover, it is beginning to look more and more like white middle class society since initiates must bring some financial assets into the community. Repudiating government support and dependency on the bureaucrat, Synanon has become integrated into capitalism. The goal of maintaining the institution comes into conflict with that of liberating the individual. But the clearest sign of Synanon's totalitarianism is the attitude it takes towards those who leave. "Splitees" are like the ex-communicated, denounced and prohibited persons.

What happened to Synanon and later to Daytop will happen to any community that tries to co-exist within a reactionary society. The only alternative to the bourgeois conflict between personal liberation and institutional necessity is to fight against a society which demands oppressive institutions. It is interesting that Synanon celebrates the event in which it was decided to become a permanent community as "The Cop-Out." Collier suggests that its history bodes ill for many of the efforts at creating self-sustaining counter-cultures being attempted these days. "In each of them there is an element of nobility. But they can build the greatest illusions of all. And often these movements evaporate, leaving magnificent catacombs for social archaeologists, but having managed to effect the here and now hardly at all."

David Deitch, a Synanon splitee, created Daytop in repudiation of the totalitarian model. He opened up the doors between Daytop and the world. Daytop then evolved beyond the escapism of total community to engage itself in the political struggle for total social revolution. The drug addict could not go back into the world that had driven him to drugs except in conscious opposition to its alienating institutions. There are no Utopias within the Empire. You can't have black and white people loving each other in Staten Island if they are being set at each

others throats across the Bay, unless the community plans to cross the Bay and alter what is happening on the other side. One can simply substitute drugs for what Marx said about religion. "The abolition of (religion) as the illusory happiness of men, is the demand for their real happiness. The call to abandon their illusions about their conditions is the call to abandon a condition which demands illusions." Daytop showed that the addict could only give up the illusory happiness of drugs in a community that met real human needs; and the staff resisted having the community, a temporary respite from a vicious world, from becoming another illusion. Those who came to understand the social basis for their addiction have grown to be revolutionaries, and they are scattered across the country doing the work the state would not allow at Daytop. Those like my brother Johnny, who did not understand the political sources of their alienation, were left stranded on the rock of individualism and the society beat them back into addiction. But the path has been cleared. There are thousands of working class kids like Johnny around, totally alienated from this society, reduced to impotency by the schools, the army, the factories, with nothing to look to but the fix. There is an alternative, and the movement must provide it. In collectives where they can get "high on people" as Johnny did at Daytop, they can also begin to fight the sources of alienation. There are hundreds of thousands of kids like Johnny. They are so desperate they are turning to chemical suicide, yet the movement has tended to see them as reactionaries, rather than potential revolutionaries. In the prisons, in the streets, there are hundreds of thousands of kids like my brother, a knife edge between life and death. For the working class drug addict, as for black youth, the only leverage between life and death will be revolutionary consciousness. Can we not begin to embrace them all as other brothers and sisters in the struggle to build a communist society, a community from which no one will wish to escape.