COMMUNIST HEADACHE
NOTES FOR WORKING AND LIVING VOL. 4
SPRING 1996.

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It was once said...
Our notes for working and living represent our efforts to develop a radical methodology for examining this society, and our own observations and recommendations when we apply this methodology to various aspects of the capitalist system.

We are only a small group, and have put out these first three volumes in a hope to engage in some critical debate and to further the revolutionary cause. Communist Headache does not exist as some formal organisation. If we manage to stir some revolutionaries from their various slumbers then we will consider this initial stage as successful. Needless to say we offer no blueprints and our analyses are far from flawless.

However, some of this is blatantly untrue. Those who suffered the early volumes would have seen this (particularly volume 1) was my own talking aloud as I suffered through a kind of fever to understand what is passed around as revolutionary theory. And so this fever is passed on. This volume comes back full circle and I inadvertently look back on my own work and activity as part of the praxis I have developed. I'm sorry if it all appears as a big joke (the punchline is on the back cover). As I indicate elsewhere, I plan to continue with new things, and so the contact address will remain 'live'.

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In volume 1:
New struggles in an Old Framework
Some Questions for the Anarchist Movement
Workplace Struggle vs Community Struggle

volume 2:
Postmodernism vs Class Struggle
Our Contribution to the Animals Debate
Libraries and journalists on strike
Violence and Adrenalin

volume 3:
Middle Class Struggle
Punk Rock Demystified
Crime and Community
Information Society
INTERNAL BLEEDING
(A Tragedy)

Prologue: This is a Genuine Sincerity Alert

On the introductory pages to Communist Headache I outline an aim 'to develop a radical methodology for examining this society' and to give my own 'observations and recommendations when we apply this methodology to various aspects of the capitalist system.' What does this mean? Obligatory words put down as part of the deal when producing a radical publication? A contract to be honoured between myself, and you the reader?

There were a lot of things I put over in the first three volumes of CH. This represented at least 2 years worth of half-formed and festering frustrations - frustrations formed from my everyday 'interaction' with the capitalist system, and also forged from my inability to relieve myself within the structures that are antagonistic to capitalism. At its most cynical the contents of volumes 1-3 could just be seen as an airing of my frustrations, the whole reason for its being as nothing more than getting it off my chest. Of course I used some established paths and procedures ('class struggle') and also tried to develop them further, but how much of this was done out of a selfish frustration?

Subsequently this volume has been almost impossible to produce. From writing to this prospect of typing it up. Poor old me etc. Sticking to the intentions of examining the dynamics of this society I have tuned this examination upon those who, in some way, oppose this society, the ways they express their opposition and the ways they see of resolving this opposition. Having taken on this task it seemed sensible to turn the spotlight onto my own activity in producing this magazine. Moving away from the cynical angle it would seem relevant to assume that I have opted for a certain 'theory' and a certain 'style' of delivering this stuff. I have altered myself to various individuals and groups who both share an opposition to current society and see themselves as differing to myself in either idea, ways of presenting ideas, the practical use of ideas, or even the impracticality of ideas. This volume includes dialogue I have had with the oppositional milieu (in letters or spoken criticism) or within articles and also of my own activity in this milieu. By turning the examination of the dynamics of society onto the dynamics of the opposition to this society I am changing the game plan. By examining myself I mean to examine the forces at work (ie the shaping mechanisms of capitalism) and how they structure our lives (ie the attempt to remove the understanding of a class system). In fact this is my methodology, my ideology if you like.

Marx was partly wrong about not wanting to interpret the world but to change it, what is necessary now more than ever is to change people's interpretation of the world. Capitalism exists as a living system - we know its basic 'life functions' and so assume of us all we can predict what will happen in this society. Certain groups adopt this as an article of faith,... 'crisis theory' becomes like a version of quantum Marxism, an extremely scientific (but proven) process in space and time. Some of us feel that capitalism has grown new 'limbs' and that it spends its efforts into shaping our minds (the 'carving up of social existence' 'intensive rather than extensive development' etc). Again, blessed with our special knowledge, we can try to predict what will happen, how we must act things happen, and how to best interfere in the dynamics of flow to effect this towards our ideas. And so my examining of the dynamics of the oppositional currents is shaped by my ideology of the need to examine dynamics full stop.

Of course there are manoeuvres and manipulations at work - interest efforts to make sure that everyone is committed to class struggle etc. At the Northern Anarchist Network conference over summer it was agreed by everyone present that NAN should be about class struggle anarchism yet only a few hours earlier in a discussion it was obvious that most people in the room were uncertain of how to define the class system and relate it to real life. The pages of the ICC publications are littered with an intense desire to get to the heart of themselves the CWO and the CBG regarding 'political' paralysis and the 'gravitational pull of the anarchic swamp'. Etc.

The material I put into volume 1 was broadly theoretical in that it talked of marxism and systems that I have 'faith' in believing existing etc only I could get them to reveal their true nature. I had used the influence of the Anarchist project but came to realise that each volume of Anarchist was becoming a complete work in itself, in that the content and was then tightly to the correct reading of Marx. Their discussion on primitivism was so finalistic that I felt I needed to take this further. A questioning of progress makes the whole science of scientific marxism turn on itself. Natural laws are shattered as we realise that our society is becoming more and more bound up by forces that are all pervasive. As far as I was concerned this meant an extra effort in unravelling and counting these forces that make the dynamics of our society - to some extent this was attempted in volumes 2 and 3. Having developing should not be developed to exist as something increasingly complete and separate - it should be used to inform our attacks on the structure of our society. Many people seemed to like 'the' certain articles (I had a few comments that people liked the punk article). This can be symptomatic of some aspects of the milieu - it becomes like stargazing. So you can feel caught between trying either the ultimate all encompassing theory that stands the test of time (past, present and future) and trying not to provide 'revolutionary entertainment' and simulation to a hungry audience of consumers. Check the calendar, another volume of such and such a publication should be due around now, put the battle on and put your feet up...

As well as including a chronology of recent 'theoretical' activity and some critical reflections I have also included a short article on class. This was written partly as a commentary on another article on class that demands attention, and partly as a response to accusations that I had a certain (wrong?) theory of class. The volume concludes with a mish mash of reprinted articles from about 10 years ago presented in a different format. This is done for those who accused me of just stirring up old (and so redundant or failed?) ideas. I didn't know I was doing this so after several readings I am now going to do it with some panache. All of the articles are concerned with the oppositional milieu and its use and abuse of theory. They all express what I am trying to put across here, albeit in a much better style.

Act 1: Honey, I Shrunk the Anarchist Movement!

I got all the CH material produced just in time for the @ bookfair although some of the flyers that went towards volume 2 had been minimally circulated in the summer (thanks to Proletarian Gob and Armchair for responses). The only reason to mention the @ bookfair is for the showdown between Larry O'Hara and the rest of the world. That there was a whole room in suspended animation listening to a schoolteacher giving his contribution to the movement - ie standing around in an ill-fitting suit, sweating profusely, shuffling with swaps of documents in a huddle, and aspiring to be an investigative reporter - was enough to make you sick. The slander he had set down on a certain individual were ridiculous, but the fact that they were followed by kangoaro courts, pumished punishment beatings, and a puffed up chest debating between who was the most effective (read hardest) AFA crew made me feel that people were actually getting off on all of this. The article in CH 2 on the addictiveness of militancy was written part tongue in cheek - sadly this fiasco seemed to confirm what had been written.

Following the bookfair, at last minute notice, I presented the talk 'Some Questions For the Anarchist Movement' to a local anarchist group. This was a bit of an uneasy experience for a couple of reasons - firstly that I had to use the written version of the talk (as in CH 1) which is designed to be read (and not read out), and secondly that discussions in the group were more suited to a brief and coherent (though open ended) presentation than then began to pick up complexity as the issues were debated within the group. I felt that I had to adjust some of the talk and the event became too long and its major thrust was lost.

Initially there was a couple of disagreements from a comrade who had seen a draft of the work beforehand and seemed eager for me to do the talk (so it could be attacked). The title of the talk had caused him some concern as it seemed to be that I was somehow standing above the anarchist tradition and throwing down questions. I will not pretend that the anarchist milieu is beyond criticism, although I don't feel able to make a science out of it ('swamp' theory), but the title was meant to imply that these are questions for the anarchist movement in the nature that they seemed to be no longer asked by something that prides itself on a radical tradition. Thus the only possible question to the anarchist movement would be 'Why do you no longer ask questions?' That said, there seemed to be a disagreement in terms of approach between what I was perceived to be doing and what was seen as the traditional anarchist approach. (The other point was the continual insistence on using
Act 2: This Films Crap, Lets Slash the Seats

Ken Loach's film on the Spanish Civil War "Land and Freedom" sent the left into a right panic - never had such a debate about something related to the cinema been had. From 1963 to 1967, the film was screened in all the universities, seeking to overturn the assumptions of what anarchism could actually mean. From the response to my talk, and the lack of written response, it appears to have been a total failure. On what level it has failed I am not sure, maybe I am beyond the point of no return with my situationist bent, or myself an anachronism (language etc). On the other hand it would appear that anarcho-communism may have set itself fast, albeit a moralism disguised by an urge to perpetuate practical activity and to attack those not operating at such a level of activity etc.

Beyond these initial 2 criticisms, there were further criticisms of what I was trying to achieve and if I was elevating myself to a particular status above the anarchist movement. Though it is hard to pin down, a form of the anarcho-communism (when I address it) addresses those who consider themselves as anarcho-communists who have a degree of commitment to developing or understanding class struggle. It appeared that I was accused of trying to find a easy niche within groups formed from ideological umbrellas that had little other than producing magazines than banding a coherent theory and slagging each other off. The person criticising thought that a handful of followers existed for such groups of situationalists and that the production and consumption of revolutionary material in this circle had become a particular activity. Whilst I admitted earlier that this situation can seem partly true (I don't think that the fault lies at the feet of the various groups (Situationists etc) producing the material also the answer doesn't lie in the practice of just getting on with everyday struggles and keeping on 'chipping away' etc.

The criticism that the ICC etc level at the anarchists joining the Spanish Civil War beyond left communist politics and method (Situationists etc) producing the material to their revolutionary cause. Apparently the SWP block booked the cinema early in its run to drill the troops with the official line - now I am all for rowdy behaviour and festivities in areas where we are supposed to adopt a dropped jawed respect to our cultural mentors, but this is taking the piss.

Confusing to having little knowledge of the Spanish Civil War beyond left communist critiques of socialising the economy and the biggie about the anarchists joining the government to defeat fascism, defend democracy. I thought that the main line of assault would be the trolls trying to get one over on the anarchists by showing the concrete proof that the anarchists didn't put up by doing something the trolls would have loved to have done anyway if they had the opportunity. The fractions of the factions were getting pretty outside the cinema with parties accusing other parties of having no right to be here etc etc. Eventually a series of meetings was called by the big guns to regain territory. I missed the Militant meeting but the SWP meeting provided sublime entertainment.

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LAST FEW DAYS

DOWN WITH BOREDOM! DOWN WITH SURVIVAL!

THE CRACKS IN THE RESERVOIRS ARE THE CRACKS IN THE SYSTEM.

When money rules the system there's always going to be a struggle in progress. But when the struggle is between who says they can best run the system - the economy - and who thinks they have the best rules and regulations to somehow make the economic system provide for us all, then there is always going to be the same losers: Us - the working class.

The role of money means it has to go on creating profit - to give it a reason for existence. The capitalists have no qualms with this - they dont mind seeing people faked over again and again so they can reap the benefits of the system for themselves using the power they have. For them it is perfectly acceptable to ask staff at Burger King to clock off from work when there were no customers in the restaurant, only to 'hang around' until another customer came in.

Socialist bosses like to think they can run the system a bit better, promise us they wont take all the profit and make us work too hard. But when we do have to work hard at our designated and meaningless jobs we are told we are working hard to keep the economy strong. We are even told by some dreamers that we can run the economy for ourselves - somehow create a self managed monster. This is like tinkering with the steering on a car that has no brakes- the best place for it is the scrapyard.

The ones that are most fervent about changing the system are often the ones that want to convince us that they will make the best managers. People like the Socialist Workers Party. Well, if we are going to keep a money system then we might as well keep the old bosses who lose no sleep about making us work hard.

What use would a world be with miserable workers ruled by bosses and miserable bosses feeling poorly about making us work too hard?

Why don't these voiciferous revolutionaries champion the day when money is abolished and people treat each other as equals, and why do they feel the need to boss us about in what, they tell us, is our own best interests. Could it be that they think we are all stupid?

Well that would make sense. For a party that is made up of middle managers, school teachers, social workers, journalists and other types that have a large say in our miserable lives then they would have to think we were stupid. The truth of the matter is that it is these very people that keep us from finding out, that styyy out our disgust at the current system, that bound shoplifters and schooldodgers in their journalists columns, that keep the lid firmly on society. The veil of normality.

Reactionary views are hammered into peoples heads - they do not arise out of some misformed human nature. They need to be tackled at the stem and combined with our own lucid visions of how we could create and live in a world community without state or money.

Yorkshire Water provide a case in point. We have been presented with a shambling where a market mentality rules and the biggest turd floats to the top - a chairman with a salary of £156,000! Well we certainly don't believe in 'nationalising' this crucial service to save us all from dysentery. And we would like to use this as an example to those who ask the question: Who would flush away the turds / clear away the rubbish / etc in a society that had no bosses. Just because we refuse meaningless work and drudgery, because we refuse to take our roles in lubricating the wheels of capitalism, does not mean we will spend all our time rampaging through the streets singing crude songs and hurling petrol bombs (this activity would be confined to the weekend).

We are the architects and builders of a new world, we do not fear the ruins of the violent struggle that will occur when we finally destroy capitalism. The dams, pump houses, water processing plants we build will be a monument to the rain that falls from our skies. We will furnish these buildings with banqueting suites, dance halls and lush green football pitches. The doors to our libraries will always be open as people satisfy their hunger for a knowledge of how to provide for the world human community and begin to repay with respect all the horrors we have subjected this earth to.

Physical and intellectual work will always be there, it will be devoried. All of life, every minute of every day, will have a meaning. Your imaginations are the blueprints for what could be possible.

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blows did not deter the journalist chair from selecting more petty members to back up the original load of irrelevant bollocks with more backslapping and recalled anarchist ramblings. I decided to leave the room as I was in danger of exploding into someone's face and I had my little discussionать. The subject matter (I'm not into the hagiography of bloodying them young). On reaching the door I was tagged by the 'extremist' who was so made sure that everyone leaving had been converted to the faith and had bought both a paper and a handcrafted 'Manifesto for the Millenium'. Significantly though there could be some broad

...In terms of advancing the necessary theory then using myself as an individual is an absurd bankrupt. The things I wanted to talk about (and the things I had previously talked about in CI) were of immense importance - ideas of democracy, progress, class analysis, technology, human nature. Individual's ideas being put across in individual's magazines like CH were like the individual voices coming up from the floor to the discussion - a hint of progress was impossible to like.

So workshop one was called 'Where is the Struggle'. This was mainly concerned with the gruesome task of explaining a class nature from our own new struggles' such as against the road development, policing, animal rights, etc. As this was due to be continued to the second day I had produced the enclosed 20 things... flyer (actually written in an afternoon in work). I never actually read these points but indicated that they were available with my other literature.

The second day of discussion, which had only been set up as an invite only session based around ACF/Subversion to develop the first days discussions (particularly around Where is the Struggle) in a more conducive manner, managed to loosely fall apart as the ACF decided beforehand to use the opportunity to put the final touch to their manifestos.

Thankfully the meeting ran pretty smoothly there was no blood boiling arguments, though the discussions moved pretty swiftly with many people having much to say. It was obvious that the topics presented were giving rise to a variety of views and this made development of a consistent line very difficult. For instance, if a comrade made a contribution that you felt you wanted to challenge or expand then you waited until it was your turn to speak, which on most occasions meant that a couple of other comrades would speak before you adding something totally different or addressing something even earlier, and by the time it came round to your turn to speak it seemed quite irrelevant. This is why the proposed invite only session for the second day made some sense, especially when the subject matter is so explosive from this aspect. It was difficult to believe that 'a best possible line on this issue' is hard to come by. Of course the CWO were all sorted on what they thought of it all (ie these 'new struggles' and tended to use the chaotic nature of the discussion as a proof that these 'new struggles' (or indeed the anarchist movement) was a load of old tosh. This wasn't helped when the third discussion (following the ACF delivering a depressing 'balance sheet' of the current situation) started flying all over the place no thanks to a comrade from the CWT who had strange ideas and started preaching on things that were probably best kept to himself (ie I don't drink, I keep fit, etc). There were some sobering moments when people entered the fray directly from the official dockers support rally and started asking what the people (and groups) in the room could do in the here and now to support the dockers. Of course the dockers dispute was like a breath of fresh air for many people... I mean these workers are like the working class from a tin of the century 'pop-up book on Marxism'. Of course I am excited that they have decided to struggle and that they have instigated a degree of working class solidarity, but not because they see an obvious example of the working class proper.

Act 3 : Converging on/in Liverpool

This meeting was called by various groups with an aim to discuss and possibly bring together various smaller discussions that had been developing around the finessed nature of our current struggles. As it was the turnout from various groups was poor. Subversion and the ACF made up the numbers which were boosted by some comrades and a core of people from the Communist Workers Organisation (CWO). There were three brief talks given in such a manner that discussion was invited rather than a stated 'group position' created to be debated and acted on etc. Significantly there could be some little interest detected - the first talk by a comrade from Subversion covered the Nottingham of a debate that may well have been occurring within Subversion, whilst the other two tales presented by the ACF were broadly based on a plea to bring revolutionaries (as individuals and small discussion type groups) into some form of organisation, and a large chunk from the ACF's handcrafted 'Manifesto For The Millennium'.
20 THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT THE 'NEW STRUGGLES'

It would be advisable to read my articles in CH #1, particularly 'New Struggles in an Old Framework' and 'Some Questions for the Anarchist Movement'. I appreciate that my 3 volumes of C.H. have not had great circulation! They were produced concurrently for the bookfair and beyond that I have mailed a few copies out to comrades I correspond with.

I have also been told that these new struggles are just like redundant struggles from past-times by various revolutionaries (such as from the CWO) and I find it hard to challenge these arguments. The era I have been politicised in (ie 1980's) has been full of activity. I didn't get involved in revolutionary politics because of some university course or whatever. I have had to suffer low paid work, evil landlords, police hassle, dole hassle, poverty. I am not casting around for some motivation for change, there is no need for that. There is much about this society I hate. The economics of capitalism, the state system, the education system, the whole system that prevents us from realising the absolute poverty of our lives (not just in terms of quantity but quality as well), and the various pseudo-oppositions to this society. It is a complex web of affairs that demands we understand it in order to best direct our efforts in hastening its end and creating communism. I am sorry, but I don't like to be told to sit comfortably and wait patiently until the right struggle emerges (ie militant workers?). I am neither patient nor comfortable.

1. In my opinion they seem to be increasingly against the effects of capitalism. Thus capitalism exists as a system to keep the capitalist class maintaining what they want ie 'wealth' (in commas because we would hopefully have a different definition of this), and power. By its nature it needs to run quicker and quicker to keep profit ticking over, and so it attacks the environment (health etc issues), the good conscience (animals protests), the commonality, the open space (road protests).

2. These new struggles immediately express a need to question our domination by the capitalist system, and a need to understand the systems that dictate our living conditions. But they don't necessarily question it or indeed refuse it.

3. I argued in CH#1 that they should be seen in this way, as opposed to how they are traditionally seen by Greenpeace, PoE, CWF etc. Thus to see them as part of the class struggle. But this class struggle as we would like to see it is often very weak. It is then assumed that we are somehow maximising this by posing these new struggles as contradictions' and not resolveable 'unpleasantnesses' (terminology used in my article). This simplistic assumption I develop is not adequate. Hopefully this is why we are having these discussions.

4. By relating things to the heart of capitalism - ie how the class system functions and what is in it for them (Marx work, Aufheben's work, etc) we can decide on what we want to attack and what we see as a direct attack by our class. This basic compromise (ie the wage/labour relationship) is seen as the motor of class struggle. We try to spread the idea that this system is incredibly unfair by giving our analyses or reporting on struggles that express this relationship.

5. As anarchists I assume we don't believe in money or wage labour and so we also spread the idea that capitalism cannot be managed by anyone including 'socialists' or 'ourselves'. Connected to this, but not relevant here, are the ideas of how 'revolutionaries' develop a warped vision of a warped human nature - stupidity, incapability, greed, banal fascination, violent individuality - and how this forms their ideas of change as a process and a destination. I am working on this for further articles if anyone is interested in contributing...

6. We have the motor of class struggle, can we discuss a brake on class struggle? And what do we mean by the concept of 'social revolution' to release this brake?

7. This is where I see the new struggles directing themselves. People beginning to demand control over their own lives and to make choices on what they see as 'wealth'. This, to me, is where we can put forward our arguments on how we can control our lives (and not the economy) to live our Marx's words of from each to their own ability to each to their own needs, ie NOT a case of working our bollocks off to enable us to stockpile mountains of glittering commodities in our 'own cathedrals' (homes). I am not being sarcastic here.

8. Of course the struggles are only the tiniest seeds of such a social revolution, and they are instantly open to recuperation. This includes a recuperation to maintain capitalist profit (green shopping, environmentally friendly factories, etc) and to maintain capitalist ideological domination (to turn critical thinking into either uncritical thinking (ie individual consumerism, democracy) or critical unthinking (ie an interest in how we treat animals becomes a morality etc)).
9. If we wish to release the brake on class struggle how can we intensify this activity? What disciplines, efforts and organisation does this demand as anarchist / communists?

10. At a basic level we can try to understand the power systems and the state system. To understand how reactionary views flourish without associating this to a lumpen proletarian stupidity! To challenge education, the role of the media, the ideology of individualist consumerism, the role of culture, the family, etc.

11. Whilst I dont believe in fantasies of decadent capitalism (an illness contracted, it seems, from examining the mechanisms of capitalism inside an objective vacuum) I am aware that 'wealth' is defined and obviously created by capitalism (see 'Some Questions...' in CH#1).

12. There is a conflict between what some revolutionaries see as the motor of struggle and what I see as the brake on struggle. I do not see the benefits of demanding a 'wealth' that is alien to me and then demolishing it. I prefer to refuse 'wealth' as it stands and demand control over the definition and fulfillment of my desires as part of the communist society.

13. This is a difficult situation, and I am prepared to compromise in terms of what I see as practical to the destruction of capitalism and the creation of communism.

14. Autonomism talks of capital reacting to our demands against it. If it cannot turn demands 'against it' into demands 'on it' then it goes on new offensives. The new struggles portrayed as struggles against the effects of capitalism are thus easily recuperated (for the time being).

15. I see the motor struggle, ie the wage demand and the workplace site, as the better attack on capitalism because this is what will plunge it into crisis. But I passionately want to discuss and develop the possibilities and practicabilities of a future society, and I want to resist directly against the horrors of modern society as part of the improvement of my life and health as a (revolutionary) subject of capitalism. There is the old joke about one revolutionary scolding another revolutionary for campaigning to save the whale by stating that whales will be left free in the future classless society, only to be greeted with the reply that the scolded revolutionary wants to live in a classless society that has some whales left in it! (But then again 'Extinct is Forever' has been used to sell products and ease consciences by the Body Shop International).

16. What does this imply we should actually do? Is there a conflict of interests in revving up the motor and casing off the brakes?

17. In understanding capitalism we don't want to get the best ways to operate it, we need to develop something to replace it with that is feasible and relevent to our class. This is where we need to see the brake on class struggle... not just as something that stops us from understanding the mechanisms (and so the evils) of capitalism, but as something that also stops us developing ways of understanding power and social relations. I think it is impossible to be 'against Aufheben' in terms of these new struggles, but we need to be more than Aufheben. They develop the ultimate analysis of the mechanisms of capitalism and assume that in doing so they are releasing the brake on class struggle. But communism is more than just 'not-capitalism'!

18. I would also agree to the argument that intense industrial struggles (such as with the miners) bring about new visions and new ways of relating that prevail themselves in the struggle. Here we see the solidarity and mutual aid that lies at the heart of human nature. Capitalism will resist an economic attack as ferociously as possible, and so force this new conditions on us if we are to see a victory to our struggle, yet at the same time allows us to see the need to go beyond a simple economic (pay and condition) struggle.

19. But we are left with protests against the effects of capitalism and against the loss of self-control in our lives. However this struggle can contain its own divisions with many people refusing the poor quality of life, and many others too poor to appreciate that a good quality of life cannot be bought. This is the underlying nature of some of the analyses of the road struggles in the Home Counties as being irrelevant middle class affairs. The situation of Pollock has made people sit up and take interest in as much as these struggles can be part of the working class struggle.

20. But can we expect such struggles to manifest themselves into an attack on capitalist economies? Maybe only as part of a general refusal of work and a push to organise our own lives beyond pockets of hedonists 'politicised' by raving and road protesting. This then becomes part of the building of communism, and it throws a whole new light onto our 'roles' as revolutionaries and class struggle militants.
capitallism. But this doesn't make me sleep any easier at night when I see our college implementing ridiculous "O.N.Q.O" courses that probably lend itself to meaningless schemes, when I see the lazy and arrogant lecturers not giving a toss about it. So I cannot consider myself as see the lazy and arrogant lecturers not giving a toss about it. So I cannot consider myself as

Preparation for meaningful schemes, when easier at night when I see our college

Thinking resulting in generations of false and people separate from the middle class cannot be

having for decades exhorted to accept (and still -

prove all such revolutionaries to be heading towards this same dead-end - for instance you categorically state that not one group published any kind of critique of your pamphlets. I know of critiques existing in Organise (possibly the major serious anarchist magazine) and also in Echanges. I enclose photocopies for you of the articles (not to prove anything but to give you for your own interests). Contrary to what you may think debate does occur (but, yes, the AWG were a joke).

Secondly I will comment on my article and on the aims and limitations of Communist Headache. Primarily this magazine is not internationalist in its writing, but that does not mean I shan't internationalist magazines or debate (I would recommend the ICG publication 'Communist for the best material). The current issue of Communist talks of how Western Europe and USA act as a kind of showpiece for democracy and capitalism. Thus in other parts of the world proletarians suffer blatant oppression we have this mystique of a rich lifestyle with high levels and high qualities of consumption. Even here we have something to aim at etc etc. So I think it is important to analyse the dynamics of our society and to emphasise where and how class struggle will occur, and how it be interpreted. In some respects there is now a twofold reason - firstly because class struggle occurring is always a positive thing in itself and secondly because it smashces the illusion that tries to glue our whole world together.

I stand by the decision to examine the 'fuzzy area between the working class and the middle class' already published an article "Developing a radical methodology for examining this society." Perhaps this is where we again diverge in our ideas? It is likely that we both see the traditional attempt to see class identity and class struggle as insufficient in that it is impossible to pin down a model that is inclusive and also supremely distinctive in defining the whole of capitalism. While retaining and these ruling / bossing / or whatever. But it appears to me that you wish to search out a perfect model by considering all of the middle class as the class enemy, and of including the idea of the ruling class as merely a top level of this class. We are also interested in such a model of society but we don't see it as being so simply

Interlude (Refreshment Break) A Short Dialogue with SPLAT (or good guys finish last)

1. A letter from SPLAT: 5/11/95

Dear CH, We want to say a few words about the article How the Other Half Lives... in Vol 3 of Communist Headache which we received a couple of weeks ago.

In some parts it appears to agree with our position on class which opposes that of all the other so-called revolutionary left groupings who continue to tell us that our that our main enemy is the never defined Ruling Class. It was therefore encouraging to find that the article does not mention 'the ruling class'.

However, at the same time, it is not encouraging to see that the article appears to want to concentrate on the fuzzy area between the working class and the middle class, and suggests that this is of considerable importance. We do not agree, and assume that the writer makes this mistake partly as a result of a year's aim "to develop a radical methodology for examining this society."

To put it as briefly as possible, we maintain that the enemy of the working class, the enemy that dominates us in every aspect of our lives and does all it can to ensure we remain a dominated class, is not a non-existent, hence never-defined, Ruling Class (or Boss Class or Capitalist Class) separate from the middle class. Our real and clear enemy is the middle class.

The fact that the so-called revolutionary Left have for decades exhorted to accept (and still continue) to that our real enemy is a class of people separate from the middle class cannot be excused by saying that It is merely a flaw in their thinking resulting in generations of false and misleading propaganda directed at our class. It is far more serious than that, for it has mean confusion and apathy in our class which in turn has meant degradation and suffering, and the brutal truth that our class is today no nearer to emancipation than it ever was.

This will remain so until a substantial number of working class people clearly see that those who dominate them in every way are the middle class as a whole, and not just one undeclared section of it.

When they do see this - which is an absolute prerequisite - a beginning can at last be made to the massive task of building a well-organised and also supremely distinctive in defining the whole of capitalism. While retaining and these ruling / bossing / or whatever. But it appears to me that you wish to search out a perfect model by considering all of the middle class as the class enemy, and of including the idea of the ruling class as merely a top level of this class. We are also interested in such a model of society but we don't see it as being so simply

Best wishes Mark and Andy (SPLAT)

2. A letter to SPLAT: 12/12/95

Thank you for your letter and your copy of 'Why the Revolutionaries Have Failed'. I already have a copy and found it good reading (I will give my views on it below), however I am sad to hear that it is no longer in print. I would advise other people to contract distributors (such as A.K.) to see if they can get a copy. I have passed the copy that you sent on to another member of Sheffield Anarchist Group.

Firstly I will comment on an apparent similarity between our concerns. Communist Headache was partly instigated because of feelings (of indignation) that were inspired when I read the literature from the libertarian - communist - anarchist - socialist revolutionaries. It seems that your writings may share a similar motivation. However, it sometimes seems that you want to prove all such revolutionaries to be heading towards this same dead-end - for instance you categorically state that not one group published any kind of critique of your pamphlets. I know of critiques existing in Organise (possibly the major serious anarchist magazine) and also in Echanges. I enclose photocopies for you of the articles (not to prove anything but to give you for your own interests). Contrary to what you may think debate does occur (but, yes, the AWG were a joke).

Secondly I will comment on my article and on the aims and limitations of Communist Headache. Primarily this magazine is not internationalist in its writing, but that does not mean I shan't internationalist magazines or debate (I would recommend the ICG publication 'Communist for the best material). The current issue of Communist talks of how Western Europe and USA act as a kind of showpiece for democracy and capitalism. Thus in other parts of the world proletarians suffer blatant oppression we have this mystique of a rich lifestyle with high levels and high qualities of consumption. Even here we have something to aim at etc etc. So I think it is important to analyse the dynamics of our society and to emphasise where and how class struggle will occur, and how it be interpreted. In some respects there is now a twofold reason - firstly because class struggle occurring is always a positive thing in itself and secondly because it smashces the illusion that tries to glue our whole world together.

I stand by the decision to examine the 'fuzzy area between the working class and the middle class' already published an article "Developing a radical methodology for examining this society." Perhaps this is where we again diverge in our ideas? It is likely that we both see the traditional attempt to see class identity and class struggle as insufficient in that it is impossible to pin down a model that is inclusive and also supremely distinctive in defining the whole of capitalism. While retaining and these ruling / bossing / or whatever. But it appears to me that you wish to search out a perfect model by considering all of the middle class as the class enemy, and of including the idea of the ruling class as merely a top level of this class. We are also interested in such a model of society but we don't see it as being so simply
LAST FEW DAYS

WHAT WE SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T FORGET

Remembrance Sunday passed with a sense of melancholy as we remember our glorious dead. But now the mood we must embrace is one of hope and togetherness. The workers of the world are united in our struggle for justice and peace. We must not forget the sacrifices made by those who went before us.

WHAT WE OUGHT TO REMEMBER

- The importance of solidarity among workers.
- The need to stand together against oppression.
- The legacy of those who fought for freedom.

WHAT WE OUGHT TO FORGET

- The division between classes.
- The greed of the ruling elite.
- The forgetfulness of past struggles.

We must remember the sacrifices of the past and use them as a beacon to guide us in the present and future. Together, we can make a better world for all.
stated in that we have a clear enemy who will always act in our enemy (because of their human nature) so we should not be physically destroyed on a one by one basis.

Our society is extremely complicated and the class system is as much about power relations as anything else. It is the working class that hold the key to struggle while it is the middle class who remain the class enemy. But this is not to say that the middle class do not see the oppressive nature of their behaviour, and that this is something that the system tries to hide (ie the generation of middle (oppressive) class consciousness and its rejection). This can partly build down to the idea that proletarians are all thickheads and need the right people to guide them along (thus the SWP is a party of schoolteachers and social workers). So oppressive behaviour is seen by some oppressors as positive and necessary because there is this myth we are all stupid, even though this myth is perpetuated by the oppressors!

I do not see immobilisation as being totally quantitative (in that it is represented solely on a scale of wealth and so is a single function of economic crisis theory), it is also qualitative. This means that the bullshit we are fed as to what makes an ideal life - from in-cd CD players for when the traffic density gets out of control to microwave cuisine for the person who has no time between working and needing to forget about work - slowly becomes less and less credible. Currently there is a massive push to counteract this middle class epidemic - such as new agers, but it could be used to highlight the true nature of the oppressive middle class (in terms of the system they support and reject) and so it could be turned into class struggle. We are seeing this with the road struggles that is little effects of capitalism (beyond things like poverty and mistery of wage labour which are said not to exist!) are now starting to creep into the open.

The arguments around teachers are a good example. You say never support them, we would suggest here to obtain a copy of Whatever (from Folder 18, 28 Silver Street, Reading, RG1 2ST) it contains an article called "Class Analysis for Anti-Capitalist Struggle" which provides a better statement of this kind of approach.

As for the Echanges review (issue 707) then there are a few more points to consider. Echanges immediately pin you down on your strict definition of the role of revolutionaries - something that they are strongly against. They see your arguments that the middle class are merely a way of preventing to revolutionaries the new (and correct) targets - ie the middle class. I do not wish to be drawn here on Echanges ideas of organisation, function, politicisation etc but I am sympathetic to the view that we cannot just define a middle class and then start telling people to bump them off. I am sympathetic to the view that nobody in the middle class do see the oppressive nature of their behaviour, and this is something that the system tries to hide.

Regarding the review in Organise! 62 I would suggest that it is favourable and some points were promised to be taken on board by the ACF. The disagreements regarding the middle class are quite vague - on the one hand the ACF seem to agree that the middle class is an enemy, but on the other hand they seem keen to impress the existence of the ruling class as some kind of justification for capitalisation. As I said earlier, I am not interested in turning up clean lines of assault to enable us to go out and destroy our 'proper' class enemy. I am interested in capitalisation as a system of social relations that helps to maintain and disguise the economic rip it off it performs. I would suggest here to obtain a copy of Whatever (from Folder 18, 28 Silver Street, Reading, RG1 2ST) it contains an article called "Class Analysis for Anti-Capitalist Struggle" which provides a better statement of this kind of approach.

At this stage in your letter, we were beginning to wonder how - and why - you've managed not to understand the main points of our pamphlet.

Latter in your letter, you return to the Aunt Sally about destroying the middle class "on a one by one basis" with the statement that "we just can't start telling people to bump them off." What the hell was the point of implying that we said anything like this?

You say "It appears that you wish to search out a perfect model by considering all of the middle class as the class enemy, and of including the idea of a ruling class as merely a top level of this class. I am also interested in such a model of society, but I don't see it as being so simple that we have a clear enemy who will always act as our enemy and we will need to be physically destroyed on a one by one basis."

You go on to justify this by saying that the middle class do see the oppressive nature of their behaviour, and this is something that the system tries to hide.

We are not searching out models, perfect or otherwise. We make it quite clear that the middle class as a whole is our enemy. We are fairly aware that they have a hierarchical structure - every society in history that had a dominant minority had a hierarchical structure throughout. (We accept that your article in CH3 - which provoked our initial response - shows you are more or less aware of this. Incidentally, this article was just on 6000 words and remained quite a lot of waffle... the worthwhile points could have been made in little more than a quarter of that number) We are just not interested in seeking out a particular 'level' of this hierarchy as you apparently still are. It should be crystal clear to genuine class-struggle revolutionaries that there is not a section/level which constitutes a third class - the so-called ruling/capitalist/bourgeois class - and no-one, certainly not any of the failed 'revolutionaries', has been able to reasonably argue, let alone prove, that there is.

The middle class as a whole will never act as anything but our enemy. There are a tiny few among them who realise that their class dominates the working class and that at that class, and may honestly fight to the end to change it. There are also a few liberals amongst them who feel some sort of guilt and may see the oppressive nature of their class's behaviour, but these latter are not worth having as allies because not only are they too few, but they will cease to be allies when the crunch comes. (There are already examples of these - students, to name but one.)
believe that we are, as you suggest, implying a tight enough grip on the mind, of the working class people already see this. As revolutionaries we have a task to understand society — primarily the capitalist aspects of society (anarchist method) and to some extent the politics of the working class. These 'educationalists' would accuse us of crimes they themselves have always been guilty of. Like some of the working class children they are doing so on a large scale teachers would then be out on their eres before you could say Gillian Shepherd. The 'educationalists' still don't feel they have a tight enough grip on the minds of the working class children, eg the current debate between teachers, the church, business and government about how to indoctrinate children even more effectively with their crap ideas on right and wrong.

The second and most obvious thing to be said about your position on teachers is that 'revolutionary education' depends on the revolutionary having begun. To advocate supporting teachers and trying to persuade them to accept the importance of revolution by the working class themselves, alone, is destructive, hence counter-revolutionary, at a time when all our energy and activity must be concentrated on persuading working class people that it is the essential and only way of freeing ourselves from the domination of the middle class. This is the core. Our main priority has always been and will continue to be to stress that working class people can only stand a chance of freeing themselves when a substantial number of them clearly see that it is the middle class — not individual members of the middle class — but the middle class as a whole who are oppressing them. It is only then that we can begin the gigantic task of showing our working class sisters and brothers a possible way forward. All political 'revolutionary' theories to date which claim to be concerned with the 'emancipation of the working class' have totally failed. We must throw them out together with all the middle class 'revolutionaries' who still put them forward because for them there is no alternative.

We must find new ways — new ways based on recognition of the fact that the middle class is the dominating class and therefore our enemy. Best wishes.

Mark and Andy (SPLAT) (Reply sent but not reprinted here)

Internal Bleeding - Part Two

After Liverpool...

The method of analysis that has been called 'extension' is potentially most useful here. The diversity of opinions on issues such as the road struggles indicates that such a method is not a simple step by step procedure to follow — though it is certainly better than throwing the whole thing out. These ideas need to be glued together in a better fashion than I achieve here.

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LAST FEW DAYS
DOWN WITH BOREDOM! DOWN WITH SURVIVAL!

HARD DRUGS FOR A SICK SOCIETY?

When Leah Betts opted for a chemical high and popped an ecstasy tablet her body was unprepared for the substances entering her living systems. This was because ecstasy - a designer drug - can be cut with numerous other substances - anything from aquarium cleaner to dog worming tablets. It was these poisons that began to kick in to the fluids of her body, and induce her coma state. Make no mistake, we are talking in terms of market forces, of capitalism, here. This is what killed Leah Betts.

Consider, a designer drug is designed for a defined market, in this case the burgeoning rave scene. This is the same as a market researcher pushing a product on a recognised market - a scam which occurs particularly when young children are the market - anything from Sonic the Hedgehog pasta shapes to Lion King fizzy pop. Because a designer drug can be manufactured in a laboratory and treated as any other product (to buy and sell) then it can exist to make money for people. This is the story of our lives - we work for a living and the bosses make their living by ripping us off whenever and wherever they can. This always includes making us work harder for less money and diluting our lives with diluted products. If the ecstasy can be cut with some common or garden chemical then it means more money for those controlling the drugs flow. When heroin was cut with baking powder a highly addictive product was inadvertently created. When designers at Nintendo create a game like Tetris that keeps kids glued to a monitor screen all night they are hailed as heroes. When designers at Birds Eye perfect the ultimate microwaveable concoction of addictive additives, flavour enhancers and colourings they are labelled as entrepreneurs. The drug culture is no different. We should also make the point that Leah Betts’ father, being an ex-cop, should know all about the ruthlessness of drugs dealings - I mean, it was his gang that controlled the Stoke Newington drugs. We can’t mourn the death of Leah Betts as a special case. She was a victim of the brutal system of capitalism. Of course there are things we could do about it... Drugs, drugs, drugs... what can we say? The world we envisage is a world based on free association and cooperation. Money will exist only as a curious artefact in our free museums. Of course we cannot deny that people will wish to experiment with their bodies and minds - and they should be free to do this. The strong sense of community that would exist would imply that support was always available for those pushing their limits; and anti-social behaviour resulting from drug use would not be tolerated.

Drugs, drugs, drugs... We would like to suggest a few more addictive and dangerous drugs: television, celebrities, voting, Meadowhall, nationalism, painkillers, tranquilisers. The list could go on. The furore about Leah Betts’ death is also a direct attack on the rave scene. Concerned parents - is your son or daughter showing signs of raving? If the answer is YES then they could soon be lying in a coma. What bugs the authorities about the rave scene is that it is bringing people together again to enjoy themselves and define and create their own entertainment. That this then spreads to things like rampant pirate radio and home produced music bugs them even further. Of course the rave scene is full of unscrupulous characters - from the club owners who turn off the water taps and pump up the radiators, the DJs who present themselves as the new celebrities, to the ethics of designer drugs that strive to create a trip where you can ‘come down’ the next morning and be prepared to face another day of druggery at work with no serious side effects.

We only have to look at how the authorities smashed the football community when they used the pretense of Hillsborough to end terracing. Standing on a terrace singing and shouting is a good, rowdy activity... people come together and ideas are discussed, seeds of revolt are nurtured. Now that has passed. We are asked to sit in a bucket seat and enjoy the entertainment. What happens is that people then demand their ‘money’s worth’ from what they see on the pitch, and this is impossible to fulfil. Pressure is exerted on chairmen, managers, players to come up with the goods or face the prospect of empty stadia. In the meantime we are presented with new activities to fill the void... buy a satellite dish, join a fantasy football league, play on your Nintendo. So long as you do it all on your own...

CONTACT US: C.H. PO BOX 446, SHEFFIELD, S1 1NY
Act 4 : Tearing Up the Plans

The concept of analysing the potential for extension of a struggle can provide a key back into a critical analysis of the various revolutionary movements. Taken as a stock term potential for extension' can seem quite logical, but it demands that a set of practices and procedures be followed to enable 'potential for extension' to be measured. I would suggest that those who hold revolutionary ideas have attempted to fuse together these basic categories:

(i) An analysis and understanding of 'society' (ii) A vision of a future society (iii) A strategy and an understanding to enable (i)-(ii) dynamic to occur.

Of course it would be clever to suggest that the analysis of potential for extension is in fact part of the strategy (iii), but this sort of obvious logic is like someone tying a knot in their spices in order to remind themselves to tie up their shoelaces. However, it could be noted that certain groups do hold on that category (iii) - is what constitutes activity - can be nothing more than understanding, communicating and commenting on certain struggles based on their potential for extension. But this does not deny this loose model because it is necessary to be selective about which struggles are to be examined, and this is not based on their 'physical' criteria such as mass of people involved, moreover it is based on a grounded political analysis of society (and often a rejection of other interpretations).

Though for many revolutionary groups, the contents of (iii) are an examination of the potential for extension and also certain practices beyond this examination. I could not begin to suggest that this is the most clear-cut thing (that is most clearest), and I think a critical examination of the potential for extension to such an extent that they actively support anything that moves.

So potential for extension involves looking at (i) and (iii) - how is this attempted across the milieu? Firstly we can note that it is not strictly a 'molecular' model that exists as (i), (ii) and (iii).

Each section overlaps and as it changes so does it change its other sections. This normally occurs from (i) (analysis) outwards - a shift in reality, or understanding the dynamics of society, creates a rethink in either (ii) (vision), (iii) (strategy) or both.

Of course, certain groups refuse to change from their political model - which is normally expressed by this activity - and so refuse to take account of changes in reality, behaviour, dynamics, etc. or worse than that they bend round an interpretation of certain real changes to fit their ideology.

But in general, the analysis, vision and process of change are all highly interlinked. Concepts such as trade union consciousness or a nightmare fetich of human nature (based upon a partial analysis of our current alienated existence, without understanding the nature of alienation) create visions that demand a society regulated by order, money, wage labour or state ownership, and so this demands a process of centralisation and discipline, or even the super-convenience of anarcho-syndicalism.

In this section I will look at how some sections of the revolutionary milieu examine society and what takes up their plans of action. This involves a closer study of concepts (i), (ii) and (iii). The analysis of society (i) draws itself from the interpretation of the history of theory and practice (such as marxism) and the individuals' own experience and ideas of the proletarianisation process. Revolutionary individuals are drawn into the milieu and find a modality that best suits their imaginations. Certain types of groups are responsive to individuals' input and allow their 'group' understanding of society (and so perhaps their physical activity) to be reconsidered and reformed. Other groups harden their interpretations of society and become critical of those who pander to the individual.

This hardening of the understanding of society is traditionally achieved along the lines of Marx's economic analysis of capitalism whereby he concentrates on the 'rationed' process capitalism and its benefits to the capitalist class (e.g. class theory emerges). All the while the individual is in the cross-fire of all the other groups reaching out with their own analyses and understandings of society - in that certain groups gain the virus of expansionism and develop a strategy of simply appealing to other individuals (who usually occurs in a fascination with merchandising, posters, slogans etc. - normality is a movement that grows most of its time to discussing new merchandising, posters, stickers and slogans...). This cross-fire can turn into a great deal of negativity whereby groups define themselves as not so and so, or not the same as so and so.

The traditional analysis of society has been along the lines of the workplace, as this seems to fall in line with Marx's body of thought and present itself with a deal of ease to the revolutionary groups in terms of concentrating on the struggle (as examining the potential for extension and finding it always positive) and putting forward a process (trade unionism, syndicalism) and a vision (work for less hours in the same job/factory). The shift away from this line always struggle to surface (certain history is covered by the telling of the current model, but the wealth of people's past struggle is often ignored by many mainstream revolutionaries (or it is treated as a curable outbreak of workers rash) but the screwed up state of our minds does now concern many revolutionary groups. This then ties in with the 'new struggles' etc as these represent capitals trying to get away with as much as possible by playing out its 'crisis' in the theatre of our alienated minds.

Of course some groups refuse all of this and refuse to devote any thought to issues such as environmentalism arguing that they are not central. For instance the road struggles are ignored because they do not attack the reality of capitalism's existence, and quite often demand reforms that guarantee the smoothing over of capitalism's running. An attack on the workplace is supported because somehow the labour/capital relationship is still attacked, even through most workplace struggles concerning wages and conditions are inherently reformist etc. What is important is to consider the subjective forces and conditions of capitalism, and how people are re-estimating their situation in any struggle, and how each particular struggle can control the individuals' re-assessment of their situation in respect to the particular struggle.

An analysis of society has been crucial to my thinking and to many extents this is why this magazine existed. There is evidence that similar analyses are emerging from other magazines that seemed keen to steer away from such areas - and claims for class consciousness, etc. can often seem devoid of a vision and a strategy of change which is transitional and allows people to adjust and re-assess their situation. Of course it would be

Two together three basic categories of other interpretations).

Examining the struggle for potential for extension in terms of a vision is fairly straightforward. This involves assessing whether various tendencies to a certain vision are consciously expressed, or whether these can be illuminated within the struggle by the influence of the revolutionary group. Many struggles and actions can express a more communistic manner of living though on their own these are not necessarily revolutionary. In most cases it depends on the factors at work that forced those who are manifesting this new way of living into their actions. This can involve a degree of guilt or unexamined individual greed etc. Though positive strands are often to be found - for instance there is a new idea of wealth based on experience and appreciation of nature within the road protesting milieu - whether we call this anti-consumption, primitivism, or whatever is beside the point. The problem with extending a vision in terms of positive potential for extension is its openness to reform. This can lead to situations where workplace struggle is stated as the only visible struggle even though it is often presented totally devoid of a vision (perhaps a little less sweat and grime is promised), and many new actions are soon not seen as revolutionary and instead are classified as secondary, etc. The rich visions that are fostered within the ecology and environmental movements are what draws in proletarians - it is translating such visions to the relevance of scaring wage labour and capitalist production that provides the difficult task.

How potential for extension ties in with strategy is normally based on a negative factor which suggests that potential for extinction doesn't exist because the struggle is open to reformism. Thus reformism here implies a strategy of capitalism usually the caring left wing of capitalism) will be presented and more than likely accepted by proletarians encountering and entering the struggle. This can range from political pressure / campaign groups to trade unions. The possibility of non-workplace struggles evolving into a political form etc is pretty far fetched, but what could be described is the process whereby involved proletarians begin to re-examine society and gain an understanding of, and capability to, change this society. To tap into this potential implies a balancing of forces between both how critical / uncritical you are of a movement, and how you try to expand it to its movement (to view the fact that you will be
Act 5: The Emergence of Meta Politics

Differences in strategy and vision emerge through differences in interpreting society. There is always a tension between using a body of theory (marxism) to use as a guide when interpreting society and between applying anything goes approach. Of course the degree of rigour with which theories such as marxism can be used can greatly vary (as described in the previous section). Certain bodies of theory have played an emphasis on further analysis of society, and grounded themselves new practices - we can think of situationism and its enquiring into the spectacle and its activity of exposing society for the sham it is, creating unmediated situations or exposing mediated situations. Situationalist practices remain popular mainly because they are tolerated at a certain academic / avant garde level and they are often (though not recorded or documented) seen by the participants to be a specific fix (boredom with the revolutionary movement, impending poverty,...). Situationism (this term is used because of the self-pronouncing the situationists gave themselves for their actions specifically in the analysis of their time) is still a fairly loose ideology, and it is vaguely attached to the anarchist movement, which is now examined further.

At the start of this long travel I noted how my work received a hostile reception with some individuals in the anarchist scene. This then gave rise to some ideas on moralism and an aversion to practical activity that develops a degree of hostility to others not so practically minded etc. Critiques of the anarchist movement have recently re-appeared with the publication of Green Apocalypse, the labelling of the Sucking Pit, and the stock slogan "If anarchists can tolerate each other they can tolerate anybody". All of this is rooted to a lack of a coherent body of thought and a lowest common denominator of just analyzing society as it appears and taking practices which theories such as marxism can be used can greatly vary (as described in the previous section). Certain bodies of theory have played an emphasis on further analysis of society, and grounded themselves new practices - we can think of situationism and its enquiring into the spectacle and its activity of exposing society for the sham it is, creating unmediated situations or exposing mediated situations. Situationalist practices remain popular mainly because they are tolerated at a certain academic / avant garde level and they are often (though not recorded or documented) seen by the participants to be a specific fix (boredom with the revolutionary movement, impending poverty,...). Situationism (this term is used because of the self-pronouncing the situationists gave themselves for their actions specifically in the analysis of their time) is still a fairly loose ideology, and it is vaguely attached to the anarchist movement, which is now examined further.

Act 6: All That is Solid...

Again I am concerning myself with something that is common to the anarchist movement, a trait that I have been guilty of manifesting myself in previous writing (by my own admission). The condition which arises when individuals gain an understanding of society as it is and partition blame on certain sections for what they do or don't do. This is the heart of the discussion on teachers / social workers as being class enemies or whatever. For such a strong analysis on what appears to be the dynamics of this society there exists an incredible lack of understanding of the dynamics of the struggle to a new society.

Recently a comrade has been arguing about the evil roles of teachers, social workers, etc in a discussion on class struggle. He appeared to take such arguments to their logical conclusions when he talked about how proud he was to have never done a day's work. This suggests that all people are stupid who can't see through the system and resist it. The argument about teachers and social workers concerns the former's role in consciously preparing kids for capitalism and the latter's role in patching up the cracks in society (indeed a similar critique should then be applied to all charity work such as with the homeless and indeed even to local anarchist groups which, contrary to what some anarchists may think, consist of poor and angry working class people who come together partly to get involved in initiating things that will improve their lives in the here and now - of course our comrade who has never worked a day in his life does not need such things).

The class role of those shaping and restraining the working class has a history of argument, and most analysis (including mine) neglects to consider the dynamics of a possible struggle in terms of the potential juxtaposition, and the net outcome. Earlier I gave my gut reactions to the SWP and their teacher-like behaviour, this is something I stand by... it concerns power relationships and responsibility. Marx and Engels wrote down something about the ideas of the ruling class being the ruling ideas, and that the control over materials production (and material producers such as factory labourers) exists concurrently with the control over mental production (and mental producers such as teachers). This is enough for astute marxists (many of whom are teachers or academics) to justify themselves as working class. The "historical materialism" used by other revolutionaries to counteract this notion is often the experience they have gone through at school. However it is usually expressed that teachers should have knowledge of what they are actually doing (fucking up our questioning of society) because they are considered as somehow more intelligent. If this was not the case then it could be argued that everyone who perceives reformist or counter revolutionary visions has no place in "our class" or is a "class enemy" etc. And this would include most workers who read the daily rags and drag their guts out for survival, how the (materially productive) factories (of course this attitude is common for the revolutionary who has never worked a day in their lives), we can then get to the situation where we are condemning those who are not revolutionary and should be. Thus we could argue that teachers (as labourers of material production) should rebel against the nature of production and we should not support them when they rebel against the terms of their exploitation. But we are willing to support labourers of material production rebelling against the terms of their exploitation and try to, somehow, attempt to aim for the revolutionary position of workers rebelling against production out of their own (revolutionary) desires... again there seems to be a divide based on "intelligence". Of course, syndicalists and hard core crisis theorists have no quibbles about people rebelling against the terms of their exploitation without questioning its nature.

The debate on teachers can be read about here in the letters section, or in the document discussed in the article on class (following this) or in the dissolution statement of the Wildcat groups a few years ago. There is much to be said, but I will try to concentrate on examining potential for struggle (from a low struggle standpoint) and comparing my own experience in the education system.

(i) Potential for Struggle

It has been favourable to look towards workers in struggle for the revolutionary spark. Various analyses exist that range from trade union consciousness theory to the increase in the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, and various "endpoints" have been attempted to be transgressed through notions of 'but it is only a small factor for a failure in the system (see documents later). What is important is that when workers decide to struggle they begin to shed alot of the baggage that forces us into a particular perception of our world - they question many things, are more open in communication, and through these two processes begin to consume a revolutionary vision and practice (thus notions of trade union consciousness and ideas of trade unionism in our increasingly fractured and saturated world can counter revolutionary).

Some comrades wrote of the ruptures describing the levels of communication on the street...
industry, the terrain of community, and the further increase in individualized lifestyle is capitals attempt to end the big struggles of the past. Various revolutionaries agree to various points of this idea, for instance the documents 'Technology and Class' and 'The City, Social Control, and the Local State' in Subversion #1 give indications of what we could be considering within these capitalist concepts. However, sporadic workplace struggle will still occur and, it is argued, this struggle puts the working class on the spot as both the producers of wealth in our society and as the exploited classes. Of course, such struggles such as against road developments put capitalism in the spotlight in terms of its effects but those who argue that these struggles go nowhere do so on the basis of their susceptibility to reformism. It is hard to make distinctions on the basis of this 'susceptibility to reformism' as all struggles are bombarded with reformist ideas - capitalism won't just roll over and die! There is the argument that workplace struggles (beyond the pull of trade unions) are less open to reformism and always liable to spread - through this excitement can sometimes be generated on the premise that somehow us working class will unconsciously make a revolution by pushing capitalism into crisis.

This potential for struggle, and then potential for expansion, is how we should approach all our analyses. The literature I mentioned earlier suggests that these potentials are under assault and it is useful to consider the education industry here. Teachers (eg) in Sheffield are often on strike or threatening strike - this is mainly over insufficient pay increases. In some ways, the amount of pay a worker gets is irrelevant - what matters to them is how their pay increases with the overall increase in the cost of reproducing their perceived standards of living. (Obviously I am not talking about the low paid 'unskilled' or unemployed workers who are always struggling to maintain any standard of living). For instance, lecturers where I work enjoy a good standard of living and a good salary, to such an extent that cuts in education costs are needed. However, these lectures (as do other workers) build up their lives to match their financial situation (expensive and long summer holidays, skiing at Easter or Xmas, decent car, home computer on the internet etc) and so feel 'the pinch' as much as anyone else failing to maintain a standard of living through an insufficient pay increase. When a pay rise is granted other areas are cut back on such as increasing the class size and diminishing the resources budgets. Traditionally education workers strikes have remained isolated - this is perhaps because they are not part of the jigsaw of dependency - and are generally settled after a week or so of negotiating or interest. Of course it could be put forward that the slow social standing that teachers have in the working class (historical materialism again) prevents their potential for extension (as was not the case with health workers).

The purist argument about the total counter-revolutionary nature of teachers is based upon the premise that teachers do not and cannot challenge their role as 'soft cops' (ie controllers and conditioners of our class). I would think that this would be the case in the first instance as though teachers may struggle for a wage that matches their expectations they are also aware that one false move may result in their sacking and in the current situation, this can create a delicate dilemma for the teacher who wants to rebel against his/her role as soft cop because they feel they are best placed to 'intercede' but also are scared shitless of losing their job through poor class discipline or results. Thus, as a section of the working class I do not think that teachers' workplace struggle has much potential for extension. However, if a different struggle blows up and spreads across the world to other wildcat strikes, riots, etc then what is necessary is to look at how other sections of our class will contribute. Here teachers have an important role... whilst the emphasis would be on discipline and control the possibility would be with communicating what is really happening (as many kids 'see' the world and its limitations through their educators). I will leave the argument at this point as it becomes too much speculation... both the documents discussing teachers mentioned earlier and the article in Whatever comment on actualities and speculations.

(II) Powers Repression and Compensation

Not too much can be said here, only enough to emphasise the need to realise the power relations that permeate our society. That they will no doubt polarise in the event of an extensive struggle suggests that these analytical pursuits are nothing but a flight of fancy. To consider class as social power is a useful argument, however the existence of such a system of social power is not as simple as first considered. There could be a case of distinguishing between those holding real power and those who either pretend to hold real power or hold this power on behalf of someone else. Also those who remain powerless do not necessarily struggle to destroy this power system, and remain open to the illusions of attaining some power etc, whilst those who have to exercise some power may feel 'uncomfortable with it. This was the nature of the text in the argument 'How the other half lives', thought that seems to have been misunderstood.

CAST:

Thanks for support and communication - Paul Armchair, (the late) Proletarian Gob, Mark / Andy / SPLAT, Mike + Steve Here and Now, Fabian and Stewart, N At Aufheben, Mark S., comrades in Sheffield Anarchist Group.

A joint collaboration between the International Communist Conspiracy and the Communist Wormhole Organism.

God bless you all, motherfuckers.
CLASS THEORY FOR BEGINNERS: Whose right, whose wrong and whose checking for spelling mistakes?

The Reality of Conflict...

This article is written for 2 basic reasons. Firstly to deal with accusations that I have a certain theory (ie the wrong theory) on class, and secondly to examine whether a most correct theory can exist or should be chased like a holy grail. It begins with a review of a good article on class that I find useful in both its honesty and limitations.

What I have said on class appears in certain articles in Communist Headache 41-3 and may look, through in other articles or byers I have produced, particularly as I have committed myself within the class struggle tradition during my politically active years (even if I didn't know what this meant!). Class struggle was touched upon in volume 1, and while I was writing this I had been putting together a critique of various revolutionary groups I had encountered and had developed into a discussion on class (...) this document may yet surface in some form, though it informs this article in an enigmatic capacity. In the meantime I churned out the article above the other half lives... in volume 3 which was driven by an urge (not reaction?) to investigate how those in society whose job is to regulate, control and reinforce anti-communist conditions are likely to feel grieved and act out this grievance. I will return to a discussion of how the other half lives... in a future piece I am writing but I would like it to be considered as an attack on the anti-communist conditions that exist to prevent class consciousness developing (in the specific case it was a discussion on LETs but it could be trade unionism etc). As it was, I was accused of developing some kind of well defined 3 class theory akin to Class War in their book Unfinished business) and at the same time accused of demolishing this model.

A recap. This system we call capitalism has at its heart the desire to create more profit - there are those who thoroughly believe in the system and simultaneously surf the wave of profit making. In the classic analysis this meant the owners of the means of production, but now it includes many others such as the hunger on from the top echelons of the finance industry. The internal contradiction of capitalism demands a structuring of society to make it run more smoothly - this is the class system - this is where we, as proletarian revolutionaries, have been unable to hold in our utter disgust at what passes for a worthwhile life. Capitalism extracts our commodities as capital - as communists we realise that exchange and wage labour need be abolished

for ever (not by "outliving" them but by developing consciousness). We believe the struggle is not merely an organisational and planning will not be crucial - in fact we relish the challenge of taking part in such a process. But we live in a capitalist system that has imposed a class system firstly as a necessity and now also as an accessory to its survirvity. This class system is kept in place by many forces, like the thousands of intersecting ropes that kept Gulliver tied down when he awoke washed up on the beach in Lilliput. Furthermore, these forces are not all obvious, so they cannot be slashed like ropes holding us down. We, as communists believe that the ropes are part of ourselves, and cutting them away would be like disemburring a limb or slashing our skin. If we are made to submit to capitalism then that is a great victory for capitalists. If normality is hammered into our heads as something NEVER EVER to stray away from then this is another victory. If we can substitute our desires, creativity and neds into craving after an endless stream of sterilised images then this is yet another victory. And if we, as revolutionaries, can satisfy ourselves with a new, richer and correct analysis of class then this is perhaps the saddest victory of all.

I will consider in detail the article Class Analysis, for Anti-Capitalist Struggle. The article is a straight forward, well written 10 page polemic produced by anyone attempting to read this article (copies from ETV, F(9), 28 Silver street, Reading, RG1 2ST).

I am in immediate agreement with the first few lines, especially "the background of all present radical struggles is an attack on the social relation of capital, whether or not this is realised by the participants" and that the author insists on extending this "understanding of class relationships into practical activity. We are then taken back to the origins of the idea of truth, as it is suggested that "minor disagreements on class analysis can turn out... to rely on disagreements on the nature of truth". It is argued that truth is then replaced by science which can bend to the will of capitalism by replacing them with people who promise to see the bosses totally ripping us off, those with 'better' intentions perhaps see as incapable of organising the economy for ourselves and take it on board themselves to get us to "benefit". Such a view is reflected in the make up of parties for example the SWP. They cram full of teachers, social workers, journalists, etc - people who hold a great deal of social power and have a day in the running of society (or at least in the corporation's, their calculators for the continued running of society). People who have obviously accepted that the working class are incapable of doing anything for themselves beyond exercising a robotic desire to perform meaningless, alienated work. While we are seen as nothing more than drones then 'class struggle' and 'revolution' cannot be seen as anything more than getting rid of people who hold all the profits of our cloud like existence (labouring) and replacing them with people who promise to be not so greedy.

The article then discusses the communist analysis. The author seems keen to play down the economic side of my analysis (improvisement) and instead play up the concept of alienation from labour. This again is something I would agree with (see also the long article in CH41 which refashions the Situationist method with the critique from Barrot). It is the actual use of such theory that is important (subtly hinted at in this title), and this is immediately developed in the next section "Class Theory and Its Use". The importance of class analysis is in identifying the material interests of the different social groups, both in the day to day running of capital, and in the ongoing struggle against it. I feel that this sentence is extremely important, but also that it is written down almost as if by accident... its impetus is not expanded. The next line goes straight on to say that the proletariat is seen as the revolutionary class because it has no material interest in the maintenance of capitalism, and this is followed by a brief explanation of the functions of the ruling class and the middle class. So we have a theory from descent which can be applied to the reality of our situation (i.e. why and how do the working class see this utility of material interests in the way that they do?) to
applying it to how we want it to be (ie the proletariat must be revolutionary because it has - according to our analysis - no material interest in the maintaining of capitalism and so must appreciate that fact).

The article then discusses proletarian struggle, arguing that such struggle is anti-capitalist when (and increasingly so) it occurs. It is then admitted that the proletariat exists primarily as a class defined by capitalism. Again, it would suggest that it is difficult to present a utility of class analysis as the material interests in maintaining capitalism (a negative value for the proletariat) to a class that is defined by capitalism. I am not trying to pick holes here, I am only interested in developing what is stressed in the title of the essay - ie class analysis for anti-capitalist struggle.

The remainder of the article attempts to do this. It plans down that which destroys us as 'not the rich or their functionaries, it is the social relations of capitalism'. And that therefore, 'relationships that act against our own liberation and the liberation of humanity as a whole' can be defended by capitalist class, middle class or even the working class. Working from this standpoint the author discusses their own experiences of the class struggle and the use and abuse of power is considered in the education system, the trade union system and the policing system.

The article concludes "the function of, and need for a class theory is to understand how to destroy capitalist society by and through the creation of anti-capitalist modes of living". Again, this somewhat final statement is something I can agree with, but is this different from the earlier statement regarding the utility of class theory? And what is there to be made from the staunch statement regarding the utility of class theory? That the proletariat exists primarily as a class and class theory. At the back of all of this analysis as the material interests in maintaining capitalist society as it is constructed and passed down. This is something we need to be conscious of, otherwise we would be putting it mildly. All that we can do with this current reality is to explode the forces that keep the consensus in place - by both attacking the forces and presenting, practically where possible, better ways of doing things. There is always a tension that exists and it shows itself in many ways. Currently we are seeing the limitations on the expansion of capitalist domination by the burgeoning presence of its effects. Thus the road development, the criminal justice act, the treatment of farm animals, etc are all the backdrop of all of this. The last thing and the question of the drive to get the 'correct' analysis of class and satisfy ourselves with our watertight answers. To say we need to forget together class theory and its practical use to further our ideas would be putting it mildly. All the time we see the separations of class consciousness from the conscious development of theory/activity to enable class consciousness to be developed. This is something we need to be aware of.

...The Conflict of Reality

Without wanting to sound like a science fiction writer I think that there are three separate realities we need to consider if we are to use class theory. Within this 'reality' there are the groups of people who are defined by their actions and ideas. I will define these realities:

(1) There is the 'bourgeois' reality which is the mixture of views that are hammered into people's heads, and the network of forces that exist to keep them in place.

(2) There is the class system as it exists within (and obviously for capitalism - ie the reality which is defined).

(3) There is the communist society which exists only as a movement borne through our practices in the current society and our aims and visions.

Beginning with (1). This is the reality of capitalist society as it is constructed and passed around as the dominant discourse. It is an extremely sociological society, and is becoming increasingly so all the time (see the article on the cult of information). Perhaps it's ok to talk about 'abstract images' being the driving force in a 'spectacular' society, but what this means is that certain categories and styles are created that have certain attributes and signify other more 'abstract' things. Thus people are made to choose these categories and attain their abstract qualities (which includes a motion of 'class') by physically attaching their attributes. This is a double victory for capitalism. Whatever people are choosing certain categories they are least likely to be questioning the true meanings of their lives and the structure of the society around them, and they are also doing their bit for the economy because choosing a category involves a certain degree of consumption of the right commodities.

And so while the author of the article on class describes of capitalist's programming of categories (social class C1, B3 etc etc) I think that it is important to understand how this sociologisation of society is powered, and how best to combat it (or to look for where it is being challenged or stretched etc). Class, as such, doesn't exist in this reality. Some comrades use the term 'class in itself' to describe those in this society who feel they should be committed towards communist society. Inevitably this includes the 'workers' as there is some kind of base connection made that a plunger in capitalist society will be unable to envisage a communist society without seeing themselves as a plunger. Variations on this theme lead to Trotskyists justifying their existence (to themselves and the 'workers') through a need to organise all those workers who wish to carry their tools through the revolution and then recommend them as usual (one is reminded of the films Carry On Drifters 'Carry on Cabby' as some kind of Trotskyist conspiracy!).

All that we can do with this current reality is to explode the forces that keep the consensus in check - by both attacking the forces and presenting, practically where possible, better ways of doing things. There is always a tension that exists and it shows itself in many ways. Currently we are seeing the limitations on the expansion of capitalist domination by the burgeoning presence of its effects. Thus the road development, the criminal justice act, the treatment of farm animals, etc are all the backdrop of all of this. The last thing and the question of the drive to get the 'correct' analysis of class and satisfy ourselves with our watertight answers. To say we need to forget together class theory and its practical use to further our ideas would be putting it mildly. All the time we see the separations of class consciousness from the conscious development of theory/activity to enable class consciousness to be developed. This is something we need to be aware of.

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After Cease To Exist  
(Political X-Files)

1. That was now but this is then.

Agent Fox Mulder checked the corridor, closed the door to his office, sat down, and reached for the monitor. The screen message flickered: The Truth is Out There. Mulder scrubbed the message from the screen with a quick flick of the mouse... the words made his throat tighten - he felt like puking his guts up. It had become an advertising gimmick that had the public grasping at it like they devoured the stories of alien abduction. It was all a set up... mere fear fantasies of the loss of control, the brutality of human nature in the unaged other, the threat of the outsider, etc. Since the collapse of the cold war the abduction hysteria had filled the vacuum. Mulder's X-Files were blazing a trail and it made him rich.

Mulder had been applying his efforts to producing a covert, radical magazine. He wanted to use his insights and commitment to communism to fuel a magazine to bring his desires closer. Recently it had become a difficult task. Mulder realised that his commitment to communism had been the force for his writing in that he wanted to express his feelings and frustrations as part of the communist he held in his heart as a hope for the future. The concept of producing a magazine to further a theory or a possibility for communism had slowly been losing its apparent sheen. Some things were always the same: the violence, the money, the society based on cooperation and mutual aid. The fight against wage labour through class struggle. But things were now becoming untenable - the 20th century had seen failed revolutions giving rise to questions on discipline and organisation before, during and after the revolution. The web of forces form the totality of what is seen as society was becoming increasingly complex and difficult to break.

Mulder began typing on the keyboard: 'It is not a case of extending beyond theoretical and emotional contexts, the problems we face involve unravelling a political hyperspace. We acknowledge that the tradition that we stand in defines both our ideas and total limitations.' He drew back his arm, clenched his fist, and powered a punch clean through the glass of the monitor screen. The electronics crackled and a trickle of blood rolled from the agent's hand as he plucked a shard of glass from his knuckle. He held his head in his hands and started a barely audible weeping. Mulder had been criticised for writing without a 'collective effort.' A statement that this didn't bother him. He had been criticised for just re-hashing old ideas from the past. This had nagged him, not because he felt hurt through being criticised, but because he had been slowly realising the futility in pushing for a theory that was increasingly losing its meaning. He had considered the alternatives... to invent his ideas and energies in something that is a deal more comfortable and 'sussed' - whether this be the 'let's go to work' attitude of anarchosyndicalism or the 'wait for the crisis' attitude of left theory. Everywhere he had been accused of 'Cardenism' because he doubted in the understanding of the intricacies of modern society. The weight behind such an insult was that he had denied the working class as the protagonist to capitalism by suggesting that new conflicts (such as based across the terrain of bureaucracy etc) were now the way forward. Mulder knew that the class struggle would be the method that disposes of capitalism, but he also knew that capitalism had tried to mask the emergence of the realisation of class struggle as much as possible. And so everything said beyond outlining what is communism in open to specification and eventually to cretinisation. Mulder wondered if creating written enquiries and developing theory is worthwhile doing...

He had talked of capitalism as breaking the rules of fair play as laid down by Marx in his theoretical extrapolation to empirical data. This was in fact his contribution to speculation (and cretinisation). He wanted to understand how these rules had been transgressed and how the working class is structured within its own milieu in this transgression. The tradition of speculation that Mulder had tried to pursue had attempted to blow away these actual structurings that led to imaginary structurings of class (including its non-existence). He saw Carden as seeing the task as simply resolving the tensions that emerged from the newly imagined (non) class system. Mulder wanted on the other hand what Marxist had attempted to understand this transgression by both attacking what it saw as a vital part of it - the cultural industry - and by developing a new language to immediately address the struggle and these imagined terrains. Mulder felt this critique to be still valid, indeed the process had moved further on. Whilst those following in the tradition of the Situationists (Situationists involving Situationists) had been gradually creating their tribe in the crisis of official opposition (as a lunatic fringe) Mulder felt that there was a need of capacity that needed to be nurtured... a reading of 'Capital' can now be placed alongside a reading of Burroughs' 'Alleged Need.'

Mulder's mind ofinaire thought was interrupted by the blopping of a fax machine. He shuffled his chair across to the sleek piece of technology putting out a sheet of A4 paper. The message was headed 'New troops to investigate - a city in a nearby state had recently witnessed the phenomenon of people's time being directly stolen from them, and of reality being tampered with by a replacement of an endless stream of sterile images to pursue in a pointless spiral. Mulder knew his contact was playing tricks on him, joking with the agents communist tendencies. But now was not the time to play such tricks. The agent poured a hot cup of coffee, stirred in 15 spoonfuls of sugar, and deposited the inscription into the machine.

Mulder picked up his pen in a last ditch attempt to get his feelings onto paper... but nothing would come. Between the close of despair and the cloak of the superhero there existed nothing but a criticism of what currently existed. Mulder knew that he had to use this to move beyond its limits into something other than 'theory.' He began writing out of desperation: "There is an underlying fear to confront a human nature as it exists in our current society. The Trotskists devise this situation like a hungry dog encountering a plate of entrails. Never afraid to admit that the working class can achieve nothing more than a trade union consciousness (an outdated pseudo concept that considers a definable productive working class as a pre-condition) they now assume that people are basically too stupid to achieve anything; that they cannot organise, that they are organised by individuals who have a history of organising and naturalising power relations (you know who you are). Crisis ideology dodges this question and falls upon an article of faith - that is the working class (and mainly the working poor) is open to specification and eventually to cretinisation. Mulder wondered if creating written enquiries and developing theory is worthwhile doing..."

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fighting against the hostility that permeates our society. It was not passed on through the monitored and imposed system of technology and progress, even if it is used to develop the class struggle, as seen heretical by many revolutionaries. I'm having trouble programming my VCR. You can now program it using a light pen and barcode in the Radio Times. Does this make common sense? I'm not sure.

Mulder knew what came next, he couldn't imagine what he was doing. He examined what he had written and realized that the screws were put into it. He knew that tonight this human nature was now beyond the point of no return, and so the 'control' mechanism. Yes, this may be the only solution. The Endgame was drawing closer. Rational logic was never an option. He realized that there exist certain contradictions of capitalism, these were the contradictions of capitalism. The way you can learn and share your ideas and experiences. It makes you feel at ease with yourself. A vision came to his mind., a piece of music, a track from the future. He was forced to acknowledge that there exist such a project with this issue. What I am reduced to is just a senseless repetition of minute details of insignificance. Should I really keep saying the lack of understanding of why someone should adhere to the crisis theory. Any theory that predicts a violent change from the way things currently exist on something you should be dealing with. Of course there exist certain restrictions on how to use such a theory. The more you hold it dear to yourself the less it becomes necessary to analyze why it has not yet arrived and how (and if) you can accelerate its possible arrival. And so the more restrictions exist between those holders of the theory and those who devote their lives to hammering away in the here and now. This tension has lightened in a two process way of resisting/stretching - stretching/insisting. It was all well and good to be sure of what should be done and happen. The things really are (class struggle?) but how does this relate to what actually happens (anarchism?) and why certain things do not happen in a certain way (primitivism?).

This magazine was originally begun to report on such occurrences and non-occurrences as a single person project it was immediately limited on what it report on practically (for obvious reasons) and theoretically (for reasons such as 'individualism' etc). So what can become of it? It is an individuality that firsts this project, an urge to learn and share my ideas and experiences. It expresses both a positivity in change and a positivity in wanting to discuss change. When the positivity of wanting to express change dries up then the magazine will cease. Whether such a positivity for change actually dries up is something we do not like to face. Revolutionary periods appear and disappear. If I no longer gain a 'pleasure' from writing I will invest my energies elsewhere. In disregard towards this issue I have come quite close to that situation. Some kind of change is imminent. In the mean time there remains just contradictions.
We do not believe that strikes, or any other mass class struggles, automatically lead to a growth of revolutionary consciousness – an awareness of the need for social revolution as the only real solution to oppression and exploitation, the alienation and loss of community that characterises this society.

In explaining what we mean by this, it will be useful to talk at two versions of the fallacy. One holds that workers are in possession of a merely ‘trade union’, or reformist, consciousness – that is to say, they behave like the dogs in Pavlov’s experiments. On their own, workers may be able to work out which levers to press to obtain extra food pellets or avoid electric shocks, but by themselves they cannot divine the existence of the cage, or a world outside, since they have been born and reared under laboratory conditions (capitalism). They must therefore be either injected with a consciousness-raising drug (‘revolutions theory’ or else forcibly set free by a benevolent animal liberationist (‘Revolutionary Organisation’). An obvious feature of this model of consciousness is that in order to be a revolutionary, or to fully appreciate the benefits of having a revolution bestowed upon us, it is helpful for us to be put through repeated doses of pain and failure, the more the better. For workers in struggle, repression and defeat are held to contain valuable ‘lessons’ which can be ‘applied’ later. How well we respond to the revolutionary imperative will indicate how well or badly we have absorbed these ‘lessons’. In relation to the miners’ strike, the interpretations of the left are dealt with in Playtime 8. For now, we would point out two things. If this is a true model, it would imply that it would be possible for the working class to create communism without realising what they were doing. It would also suggest, in the light of the ‘lessons’ of 1926 and the last five years, that the miners would have to be worse than pig ignorant to even think of going on strike in the first place. Our objection is simply that we are not animals, neither can we rely on capitalism and its ally, the left, in herding us towards revolution; moreover, the possession of such an idea is worse than useless if we do not constantly test it against our own and others’ experiences of struggle – for then it becomes mere ideology, a barrier to understanding and effective action.

We can remain in the laboratory, however, to illustrate a second theory of ‘revolutionary consciousness’, the pathological (quasi-man) version. Certain dogs go mad or become infected with rabies (‘class anger’) due to the cramped conditions in the cage (alienation), or the introduction of foreign microbes (anarchism, situationism, autonomism), and go mad biting all the other dogs, who in turn become so violent (‘enraged’) that the cage bursts open at the hinges. In one moment the scientist (bourgeois) is torn to shreds and the dogs discover absolute freedom (‘take their desires for reality’, ‘every dog will live in his own Battersia Dogs Home’, etc). Apart from the fact that, in practice, rabies causes blindness, thus making it difficult to distinguish between the scientist, the cage and the other dogs, and manually ends in early and painful death, our objection would be that being mad and ideologues who infest picket lines, for the most part, carry on the矿ini's revolutionaries, as some have tried to do. For most of us, it has been a matter of ‘finding the words to express a feeling about our own lives and the world; words which we did not invent ourselves, even though we may have had to modify, edit and add to them again and again in the process of understanding what revolution means. We do not often get a chance to test this understanding by participating ourselves in mass struggle.

Little wonder that the miners, faced with a barrage of propaganda telling them that the best way for them to win the strike would be to follow a course of action which (by the way) leads logically to revolution, and that they should ‘link up’ with other workers because it is in their interests ‘as workers’, have remained impervious to such ‘revolutionary theory: as workers, our only interest is revolution, precisely to put an end to that status. Moreover, the ascendant leftists and ideologues who lusted picket lines, for the most part, carry proletarian credentials which even according to their own criteria of correct consciousness would have to be forged, made up or borrowed from a friend. The most that many of them have done in the way of ‘class struggle’ is worrying about whether they’ll be found nut, or lying awake at night fantasising about a mass movement in whose ideological embrace they could hide their (self-inflicted) shame. They have forgotten that what they brought them in revolutionary theory in the first place was a revolutionary idea, the proposal of a revolution which would put an end to the ‘thousand dull blows and daily humiliations’ which fill their lives under capitalism. So instead of using revolutionary theory as a weapon of clarity, making sense of their own experience and activity, they turn it into ideology, a shield which they can use to blank out their own past, and a mystifying...
veil with which they will disguise to themselves and others the possibility of a different future. This is the origin of the Party mentality. 'Revolutionary' groups are full of people who claim to have come from nowhere in particular, and, in practice, seem to be going straight back there. But today's 'revolutionaries' cannot be compared with the generation of proletarians who will overthrow world capitalism; at least we hope not.

There are moments during struggles, those moments when autonomy is experienced, when revolution may seem an immediate possibility. When the strike or riot is over, the experience fades to a memory, frequently one that people don't have the words to express; and the idea that revolution is possible comes to seem quite utopian. In the attempt to retain hold of this experience, people look for the language to describe it in the existing political traditions. It is at this point that every variety of leftist Creeping Jesus slithers out to meet them. For every one of these reptiles, the strike is just an opportunity to sell more papers. For those of us who believe that the only solution to the horrors of capitalism is revolution, not leftist palliatives, the need to make our ideas available is just as great. Not because holding them gives us any advantage or privilege, nor because we believe they are the last word or the definite answer, but because in spite of their failings they have helped us make sense of our own experiences, thereby convincing us that the revolutionary solution they point to is correct. There is nothing 'special' about revolutionary ideas; they are not the property or domain of 'intellectuals', but the product of the experience of generations of revolutionary militants.

It would be tempting to fetishise the moment of clarity when anything seemed possible; or else fall into the other trap, of trying to account for the apparent 'impossibility' of revolution - the fact that it seems so far away - by filling in the gap with comforting notions about the 'inevitable march of history', which will cause the old world to collapse and reveal communism as the only alternative to annihilation. But revolution will not be the end of history, and communism is not inevitable. There are times when capitalism appears to create conditions favourable to those who wish to destroy it; but it will not destroy itself.

Class analysis is essential to understanding capitalist society, but it does not give us the key to the revolutionary process which will put an end to all classes. Capitalism will not lay the social, economic or political foundations of communism. The increasing integration and co-ordination of production and the market (the 'socialisation of production') which takes place under capitalism cannot create a unified proletariat; in fact, this 'socialisation' has gone hand-in-hand with increasing social atomisation. The proletariat will only discover itself in the process of revolution. Until then, it can only be defined negatively, as all those dispossessed by capitalism. The proletariat emerges as a community of opposition to capitalism and for communism; it starts in actively rejecting the divisions imposed by capitalism, as well as the roles capitalism assigns us - 'workers', 'unemployed', 'dependents', etc. Society is polarised into the most fundamental class division of all: for and against the revolution.

This 'community of opposition' is not the same thing as the sort of 'community of struggle' which has emerged during the miners' strike - an alliance between different groups (local retailers, miners' dependents, etc) acting in support of the strike and in defence of their own sectional interests; closely tied to the sectional interest of the miners. The experience of the strike is certainly extremely important, because in practice it reveals interdependence, demonstrates that social relations are not 'natural' fixed or 'eternal'. But this kind of semi-autonomous organisation is also developing in the mining communities where most of the miners are working, where the 'resolve' of the scabs has 'hardened' during the course of the struggle. Scabs are now actively campaigning for a return to work, supported no doubt by other sections of their local community (miners' families, shopkeepers, police, local employers etc), also intent on defending 'their' interests. The difference is that this last sort of revitalised community is renewed precisely around the defence of normal capitalist social relations - narrow self-interest, class conciliation, and so on. While the scabs have been justifying their miserable, craven posture in the way scabs have always justified their actions - HP instalments to pay, TV licences to buy - the possibility of a change of attitude in capitalist reality exists among the strikers (many of whom have found that since the strike began, they hardly watch TV any more.) Significantly, some have begun to talk about the future in such a way as to suggest that in some sense they prefer being on strike to being at work, in spite of the hardship.

The kinds of organisation and activity generated by mass struggles like the miners' strike cannot be said to portend revolution, or prefigure human activity and social organisation in a communist society. Nevertheless, isolated and partial struggles can disrupt the routine of daily life under capitalism to such an extent, that they give rise to moments when a proposal of revolution can suddenly seem the most blindly obvious proposal of all. In these moments, the exhilaration of struggle, a sense of power and freedom, the intense feelings of solidarity, can make the return to normality an unbearable prospect. Such moments vanish, just when they began to seem more real than reality itself. But they leave behind them a sharper awareness of the misery of daily life, and the possibility of something different.
Today we can see the limit of all struggles for simple demands in the actual development of class struggle – its unofficial origin bypassing the unions, its progressive demoralisation, finally sinking back into bitterness. What is needed at the moment is a social mobilisation which increasingly against wage labour itself, and which goes beyond the framework of the single company or trade. But this is going to be much more difficult than the major strikes of the '70s, for it means that the working class will have to stop acting as an economic category of capitalist society; in other words, as waged workers trying to get a better return for our labour in the futile hope that this will improve our lot. Everything that is mutilated and repressed by capitalism as it reduces us to packages of commodity must finally emerge in the struggle of the working class.

The struggles which broke out in Europe in the '70s, for example in Spain and Italy, demonstrate through their weakness and the difficulty of going further, that the working class movement is finding it difficult to confront the problem of changing the basis of its struggle. The weight of ideology and its institutions obstruct this change, not only reflecting the weakness of the class struggle, but also playing a very active part in it. The domination of capital rests on two things: firstly, the invisible conditioning of individuals, which leads them to produce and reproduce competitiveness, atomisation and subordination in every aspect of their lives, and secondly, the visible location of individuals within organisations (unions, parties, etc.) whose role is to discipline them. It's the extent of the class struggle, its advances and retreats, which allows us to consider the questions attached to the abolition of wage labour: what, in practice, are the responses to this inertia? What form and content will assist them?

The experience of those working class struggles which have at least partially gone beyond putting forward lists of demands shows that their form of organisation is that of assemblies with the ultimate power decision on the actions undertaken. This is the only organisational form allowing everybody to genuinely participate, which generates unity, and where decisions and their implementation are directly connected. Any important struggle throws into question the forms of struggle which capitalism adopts to ensure that its domination is accepted. So it's no surprise that our struggles develop forms of organisation that already express the communist revolution, and which represent a step towards it.

In saying this we don't wish to introduce any separation between the form and content of struggle. While the "council" form will undoubtedly be necessary for a future revolution, it's no guarantee against its eventual degeneration. Only the autonomous activity of the working class – in large numbers – can permanently overthrow the social relations of capitalism, without compromise, and without coming to a half within its forms it's employed in the past. Beyond such terms as 'council', 'committee', or 'assembly', which could just as easily disguise the persistence of relations of exploitation, the working class must organise itself in communities of action emerging directly from the struggle.

When we say that the abolition of commodity society will be a social process which overturns all the relations between people, we aren't appealing to recipes drawn from history. This struggle of disintegration of all social dislocation, of workers to seek points of leverage in their material circumstances which will make any going back more difficult. The human community won't be achieved in a fortnight, and it cannot come about on the basis of any significant and lasting breach in the relations between people. Life cannot continue without social organisation. If the working class does not set up autonomous mass organisation which can express and implement social transformation, the immediate joy of insurrection will be swiftly replaced by savage repression from those forces which want to restore the old order, with the active consent of one part of the population.

Just as everything depends on the ability and power of the working class to take charge of their own destiny, so the concrete reality of this autonomy depends on the formation of communities of action which allow workers to transform their daily lives through the immediate results of their decisions. In their recent struggles, Polish workers spontaneously created sovereign general assemblies and strike committees only to see this break with the hierarchy of exploitation turn into the emergence of Solidarity, a permanent structure of negotiation, a union like any other. The superficial view of this process quickly glosses over the importance of working class self-organisation, and sees only an absence of any will to place capital itself in question. But this ignores the fact that in any struggle of importance, the refusal to obey the dictation by the working class always spontaneously takes the form of collective bodies in which the division between the representatives and the represented is rejected, and a community of struggle aims to maintain the power of decision-making. From the moment that the Polish workers wanted to negotiate their wage conditions at national level, it was logical that a union would emerge from their movement, complete with experts in negotiation and manipulation of the workers. And it was logical that as this structure emerged, the self-organisation present at the beginning of the struggle should be undermined. While the principal reason here was the inertia and inability of the working class to avoid the revolutionary process, we must not gloss over the problem of self-organisation, because all the pangs of wage-exploitation, from the Bolsheviks to the Socialists – including Walesa on the way – struggle pitilessly against this autonomy.

THE BURDEN OF UNIONISM

However militant workers are, they will always run up against not just the union machinery, but also a deeply interiorised trade union logic. This logic is expressed through unions and parties as a tendency to claim power for themselves. But it is also expressed within the working class as a tendency to become involved, passively or actively, in organisations which lie outside of them. The burden of these organisations is only one expression of the survival of capitalism in the working class – as ideology, as a type of social structure, and as a relation between people. The pretence that possession of a 'theory' means the possession of truth would have no real standing if the workers didn't have the conviction – reinforced every day by the conditions of life under capitalism – that general questions are the province of specialists and that their own experiences aren't important.

These interlinked tendencies derive from the same reality and lead to the same dead end. Politicians and trade unionists who seek to impose their point of view by any means possible, always have the means to do so, faced with workers powerless to respond to their flood of words or to thwart their cunning. They only 'betray' because they are trusted in the first place. No-one can betray people for long if they don't want...
appeals to our abilities as living labour capable of modifying and transforming... and thus also capable of refusing exploitation and the denial of our humanity through the commodity. Working class struggle, in its most important aspect, is a struggle against itself, a struggle to rid itself of all traces within it of the society it fights.

This struggle isn’t continuous but contradictory, composed of periods of partial or total retreat. It’s not only in terms of ‘Militancy’ that the retreats or advances of the working class are measured, but also by the attitude it adopts to the problems it encounters. Opposing the unions often appears to some workers to isolate themselves from the whole labour movement, to ‘hinder solidarity’, etc. It’s therefore necessary to show how unions oppose struggles and their extension.

Union officials are generally the only ‘link’ that extends between different workplaces. Breaking it leads to fear of isolation. It’s a problem often troubling workers who have broken with their unions.

But experience shows us that the unions use their ‘power of co-ordination’ to systematically isolate and divide struggles. All possible links between workers in different workplaces must be encouraged, both during and outside struggles, but above all, so that when a struggle breaks out direct contacts can be made. Such links are equally useful for spreading new forms of struggle (when they actually exist!), so that the experience of autonomous actions and organisation in defiance of unions and politicians is as widely known as possible.

Certain practices assist the development of working class autonomy:

- The absolute control by workers of their struggles (in terms of goals, strategy, and methods), but without excluding criticism of these choices.

- The rejection of all delegation or substitution of power. Everything is discussed, decided and carried out by the workers themselves, whose decision is final.

Because of the openness of their activity, the sovereign general assemblies can more clearly unmask the policy of the unions, and to some extent disarm it. This organisational form isn’t a remedy for all ills, but it allows strikers the chance to take decisions and responsibilities for themselves, and to at least partially escape from the limitations of unionism and the passivity associated with it.

Groups of workers in a workplace - whether completely informal, or structured around a platform - can make a direct and visible contribution to the development of class consciousness and to the attack on the roots of capitalism. When such groups have appeared in countries where autonomous class struggles are in motion, they have often turned out to be too fragile to survive the decline of the movements which gave birth to them, or to survive the resulting isolation and demoralisation. Thus in France, such groups as the ‘Action Committees’ of 1968 progressively disappeared. The difficulties they encounter are not much different from those which affect the whole working class movement in moving beyond a basis of wage rises and reforms. The situation of self-styled revolutionary groups is scarcely any better, even if their method of organisation promises a longer survival.

Moreover, the content of such focal points for discussion and/or action, in putting forward the idea of workers self-organisation during and after struggles, depends in the nature of their break with the forces of capitalism. For some it will be unionism, for others new human relations appear in the course of struggle, in discussions with other workers... We don’t have to wait for the appearance of workers groups according to some pre-planned process and with a pre-established content reproducing the experiences of the past. They are only aspects (in a limited framework) of the contradictory and complex relationship between the working class, the labour movement and the attempts to go beyond it.
It is true that the dynamic definition of communism, as long as capital continues to be unchallenged by even the beginnings of insurrections on a global scale, remains an elusive force...: the elimination of all forms of capitalist domination, which themselves can be analyzed as for as present possibilities allow us to gather information, think about them and discuss them, etc. Positive descriptions remain imprecise or abstract, such as the realization of (in the dialectical sense of becoming real and gaining consciousness of) all our potentialities and limitations, or the superstructure of human philosophy (which has never been a definition, but only one way of describing communism). Particularities are hard to pin down, since I leave aside the rubbish of pseudo-revolutionaries who would have us believe that a "new society" means "cheap farces" or "small is beautiful" or "a Bolshevik party in power implementing its "historical" progress". But if there is no revolution in the next month, and even more so if there is, we are still in favour of talking about precisely what we mean by communism, what each of us thinks certain aspects of it will be like. All communist revolutionaries have some ideas about it -- to deny this would be a perfect example of overly pretentious objectivism, or self "follower" in the mould "hitting in the only important thing we can do." Some of us may have hang-ups about the left of capital, including a fear of changing into programmatic or bureaucratic, or...: but does our very activity, our intervention NOW, have any relation to our views on how the movement will progress, on what will be "generalization" and what will be "specificity", on what will be "radicalization", etc.? Doesn't any kind of analysis of present manifestations of the movement rest on an understanding of what it will become, on possible futures for it, on the characteristics which are still qualities which are still possible gateways to escalation? More globally, couldn't we be confronting our ideas on possible futures for the movement on a planetary level which would be part of what some comrades have called "an analysis of the period"? As revolutionaries, that is as people who work on the generalization of all the proletarian ensemble on capital in every way and area, and as people who fundamentally feel the necessity for something which has a new (communist), why should we shy away from thinking about what some aspects of this progression of the movement towards it will be like? The conditions where this becomes more and more possible will be and are being created by the movement itself and are the same as the conditions for victory. Note that I am certainly not saying that the majority of the proletariat is presently revolutionary (subjectively) has only to think everything in its head and all will be portentous of imminent victory. But the movement, the Old Left, has already created a specifically and consciously communist milieu -- which has never been totally empty in the last 150 odd years -- and it has created possibilities for us to have a certain practical weight. (Those who want to misinterpret this remark will do so.) It is surprising how little is spoken of what each of us thinks about how the movement will progress, namely about what is a gateway and what is a dead-end. It is not enough to say for example "negotiation is a dead-end" and "anti-union workers gatherings are a gateway" -- TRUE, certainly, and also NECESSARY, but not enough.

Let's imagine a situation of a wildcat general strike which has been set in motion by means of proletarians in progressively more lucid opposition to their enemies and their enemies' lackeys (unions,...) and which is developing towards insurrection and civil war by means of:

+++ occupations which unemployed proletarians as well as wage-slaves are beginning to rely on;
+++ attacks on the strategies-ideologues-military centres of enemy power such as police-stations, barracks, party-balls, etc.;
+++ requisition and subversive use of (1) present products, such as arms to fight troops, big meeting-rooms for discussion, communications networks for a global call-in-arms and rapid link-up, etc; and (2) the productive forces themselves, in order to produce such products (notably food and arms) as are required by the power of the present Workers' Councils. (That is, imagine that a movement goes just beyond what were the highest highest point of class struggle in the last decade-and-half.)

If this came to pass, proletarians at this time would have to make some pretty crucial organisational decisions, including how to link up, how those who have not been delegated to conferences of delegations from their own base assemblies could be in possession of all information regarding those conferences preferably while they were in progress program, how the armed side of class war can be won when all the proletarian side's strategies in the military sense would probably be easily known to the enemy, ....
The immediate stop to the functioning of the official commodity economy — wage-labour, buying, from shopkeepers, etc. — would be a fairly automatic result of the failure of an area. But the problems would still exist of how to prevent an "unofficial" commodity economy — black market, with boys — from thriving and of how to develop the first stage of a property-less, money-less, commodity-less society given that its enemies would still exist, would be strong, and would be trying to drown it in blood. Similarly, participants of self-managed wage-slavery would still be trying to counter the movement into committing suicide by means of introducing another official commodity economy through sanely bureaucratic, (if not much in those problems from this angle, and the "res" of other questions to do with production and distribution in a socialist society) are legion, in particular — but not only — concerning the beginnings of communitarian, which will occur when the military problems faced in class war will make themselves faced at every level.)

As I see it, it is useful to have a look at these problems, because they can be partially seen now. (Us and RE, who both to this partially, this included, is not talk of the concrete nature of what will be "the slightest civil war humanity has ever seen" (Rosa Luxemburg), despite RE's notion of weakness and robbers.)

Whether we know it or not, our views on the content of intervention and on theoretical analysis of class struggles are INEXTRICABLY BOUND UP with how we think they might progress, on what we think are their weak points which might lead to defeats, and what we think are their strong points which might lead to intensification of struggle (radicalization, arming itself, spreading...).

The moment of self-organization of struggle, especially in the form of standing general assemblies which have appeared intermittently in many forms in dozens of areas (Spain, Poland...) are the highest moments of class struggle in recent years.

Revolutionaries should declare themselves in support of these, even if their surmountable shortcomings must be criticized, and should openly declare that the generalization of this form, the Workers' Council, in all areas, is part of the pathway to victory in civil war and revolution.

Social relations under capitalism, from wage-labour to the social life, hinges on the fact that everything is alien to the vast part of the world's population, the proletariat. Most proletarians are kept from forced labour where they are allowed to work and reproduce the productive forces (including their own existence and in a wider sense present social relations, as well as machines, etc.) according to the needs of capital, so that it is which accumulates the surplus value on their exploitation of their labour-power in motion, i.e. bringing into existence future realization or reinvestment of possible. Other proletarians are forced into the same thing but merely in the terms of reproduction of the physical existence of their major productive forces — the proletariat itself. Domestic wage-labourers come into this category, as do nurses, shopkeepers, etc. Still others are not even allowed near the productive forces, but are maintained at whatever subsistence level the "period" of capitalism provides, given the balance of whichever stage it is, or whether there is any more possibility that they will be forced into wage-labour as a later date (less and less likely), political-economic considerations, etc.

This poses the question — the accidental historical question — of what is the opposite to alienation? What can we know about it now, even in descriptive terms? Isn't it true that we will feel qualitatively different emotions in communism? Isn't communism more than just a quantitative variation on capitalism?

Insofar as we can know anything about it now, the following will be true:

(1) "People will have a better, more fluid, more conscious idea of what they need, what they desire — one of the reasons being the profoundly historical fact that there will be no unnatural necessity to be constantly going to..."

(2) "The new social relations will be able to be described, as they already have been, in ways such as:

*** a society where the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.
*** the free construction of situations in all aspects of life.
*** a society where "the eye has become a human eye, just as the object has become a social, human object, made by man for man and where "the senses have therefore become organs of that senseless power" (Lenin-Manuscript).

(3) "People will have the ability to organize natural production and distribution according to their needs (which is not simple but will need a lot of thought) and according to their own autonomic regulation of markets and private property, which will obviously be unorganized to proletarians where they belong."
By way of summing up, I would like to restate what I have already said in a slightly different way. The dilemma which Marx found himself in was very much the same as that which still confronts communists today. Marx yearned for communism at a time when only capitalist struggles offered any chance of success in the reasonably near future. Like most present-day communists he was frustrated by inactivity too. The third source of tension was that he wanted to close the three sides of this triangle but, in the conditions of his day, it was impossible to do this. Try as one might, only one side of the triangle could be closed.

Marx wanted to close the three sides of this triangle but, in the conditions of his day, it was impossible to do this. Try as one might, only one side of the triangle could be closed. One could try to be an active communist, i.e.:-

but this left one open to the charge of being utopian, since one's 'activity' was like throwing sand in the wind. One could be a scientific communist, i.e.:-

but, since science demanded that one recognize that communism offered no prospects of anything but the very long-term success, one was bound to be accused of inactivity, or at least of standing aside from the struggles that were in process. Finally, one could be active and 'materialist' (or 'scientifie' in the sense of engaging in what Engels called "the already-existing" movement), i.e.:-

but as we have seen, this could only put one's commitment to communism at risk.

The answer to this riddle is, of course, that only the working class as a whole, rather than individual revolutionaries, can bridge the three sides of this triangle. Until the working class as a whole, rather than individual revolutionaries, closes the triangle, all we more or less isolated revolutionaries are stuck with this dilemma. What makes it particularly painful is precisely that there is no solution at the level of the isolated individual revolutionary (or revolutionary group). However distasteful it might be, in the absence of communist consciousness among the mass of the working class, the individual revolutionary has to give up something. The only choice we have is to decide which one of the three factors we have represented in our diagram ('communism', 'activity' or 'science'/materialism'/anti-utopianism) we choose to abandon. Without becoming sentimental, this is the tragedy of anyone who desires to be a revolutionary socialist under present conditions - and Marx demonstrates that tragedy particularly well.
Dear Ian,

Thank you for your declared interest in the 'Study Group'. We have decided for the moment, though, that this should be, in effect, for people close to the CWO, members, supporters and sympathisers. This will allow the achievement of a number of things. This state of affairs will continue for the time being. Unfortunately, we do not believe that a huge diversity of people from different political tendencies is right for the declared aims of the 'Study Group' just at present. This need not be the case for ever.

In our readings of your texts we have found a number, obviously, of radical divergences from our political standpoints, analyses and principles. We believe that these should be addressed in a quite different manner. The suggestion has been that a particular comrade engage in informal discussions of these differences so that in the future there is a well-explored clarity with regard to them. We hope that we shall have some contact in the near future.

3-Dialectics
Handy Hint - Place this volume close to your eyes. Try not to focus directly on the ideas but on a theoretical point behind the ideas. Move the volume away from your eyes slowly approaching an arms length distance - do not refocus your eyes, keep them trained on the same theoretical point. This is the difficult part. A 3-d idea will slowly emerge. Do not try to see it in its entirety or 'snatch' at a part of it... it will disappear. Be patient.