

*On the Blaumachen presentation for the 'communismos' conference:*  
**a note on communism as real movement**

coghnorti / 2011

\*

In fact, the internal obstacles seem almost greater than external difficulties. For even though the question “whence?” presents no problems, the question “whither?” is a rich source of confusion. Not only has universal anarchy broken out among the reformers, but also every individual must admit to himself that he has no precise idea about what ought to happen. However, this very defect turns to the advantage of the new movement, for it means that we do not anticipate the world with our dogmas but instead attempt to discover the new world through the critique of the old.  
–Marx to Ruge, *September 1843*.

\*

It would be rather naïve to think that today we face the same situation. *Our* ‘whence’ includes not only two more centuries of capitalist rule, but also successive defeats of the practical (and therefore, also theoretical) aspect of that then new tendency, that wanted to discover the new world through the critique of the old. Therefore it isn’t just the ‘whither’ that breeds opposing opinions but also the interpretation and analysis of our ‘whence’. This development complicates matters even more, not only in regard to what ought to happen, but also in regard to the actual relation that we can have to what ought to happen. Therefore it shouldn’t come off as a surprise that there are comrades who, through a laborious examination of the struggles of previous periods, conclude that we should close our accounts with the past, and start in a way anew and say that today everything has changed, the defeats of the past are not our defeats: “[w]e would go so far as to say that with the exception of the recognition of the historical break that separates us from them, that we have nothing to learn from the failures of past revolutions”.<sup>1</sup>

With this note I will proceed, under the form of critical remarks on the Blaumachen presentation for the ‘communismos’ conference that was organized by the Fabrika Yfanet squat<sup>2</sup>, to undertake a succinct investigation of the relationship that can exist between what we call ‘communism’ and what exists today, that is, the social individuals in their real relations –in a way, us.

The theoretical work of Blaumachen is suited for this, since it is a serious and noteworthy project of critical examination and elucidation of our era. Reading these texts<sup>3</sup> one encounters ideas and arguments that provoke thinking, elsewhere one notes down a reference to an interesting text or book. In places, aspects of communism come forth in full force. I am not writing the above in a conventional manner, before the outbreak of the ‘military operations’. I am not aiming in polemics, but in a comradely debate, since this is

---

<sup>1</sup> Endnotes #1, *Bring out your Dead*.

<sup>2</sup> Information regarding the conference can be found at <http://www.communismos.com>. The 1<sup>st</sup> communismos conference/festival took place in the Fabrika Yfanet squat, in Salonica, Greece, in May 2011.

<sup>3</sup> For this text I am taking into account Blaumachen #1-#4.

the only way to elucidate matters, especially if one takes into account that elucidation exists and develops *between* individuals as a relation, and not inside our heads<sup>4</sup>. In a period that one keeps on encountering within the 'radical' milieu texts that end with the appeal for a society of democracy, freedom, equality (and Bentham?), and generally positions that revolve around the realization of the ideals of the bourgeois revolutions abound, every and any tendency that puts forward a negative critique of what exists is important. Another interesting aspect of Blaumachen is that it doesn't limit itself in describing in radical terms what takes place now or what took place in the past, but ventures on making expectations on the characteristics of what is on the way.

Now, since the text of the presentation, or more precisely, the two texts<sup>5</sup>, are to a great extent of conclusive character and codify, so to speak, a theoretical process that vastly surpasses them, it is impossible to refer to them without taking into account the wider context from which they were produced – specifically the Blaumachen oeuvre, and in general the tendency that is comprised by Blaumachen, *Théorie Communiste*, Endnotes, etc. I am not claiming systematic character to these remarks; that would amount to a project of quite different scale and character<sup>6</sup>, for which I am not sure whether I am currently in position to undertake. But I made efforts to concentrate on what these texts actually say, and to focus on the strong, central points of the standpoint in question. At first I will focus on a contradiction, an inconsistency, that I believe is at work in the argumentation of Blaumachen. I will then proceed to examine the way the mode of existence of the proletariat is analysed. The two issues in question are linked, and therefore aspects that have to do with the first one resurface in the analysis of the second one, and *vica versa*; essentially I will approach one and the same issue from two different starting points.

## I

According to the theoretical framework in which Blaumachen functions, the historical character of the exploitation relation between proletariat and capital, causes the content of communism to change fundamentally, as a product of proletarian activity. So, in *Perspective of Communisation*, the Blaumachen presentation, a number of formulations appear, and function as defining elements of communism *strictly for the current period*: abolition of the proletariat, the state, value, exchange, money, society as an entity separated from the individuals; positively, the positing of individuals as directly social.

The contradiction, the inconsistency, that in my opinion is at work in this argumentation is the following: *if* the content of communism is defined strictly by each historical phase of the capital-proletariat relation, *then* an examination of the current period should result in producing a content of communism composed of a number of characteristics that are *novel* and *unprecedented*.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Introduction to 'A Reply to Aufheben'* by a former member of Aufheben, found in the riff-raff site.

<sup>5</sup> I will be referring to the text that's on the Blaumachen site as 'oral version'. The other one is the brochure that was handed out at the conference.

<sup>6</sup> For example, such a systematic critique would have to *base itself* on an extensive examination of the history of class antagonism.

*But this does not happen.* While the analysis begins (or finds en route) with the explicit position of the historical character of the content of communism, we end up with formulations, definitions and positions that quite simply ...exist in one form or another in the marxian oeuvre, that is to say, we end up with *positions that were accessible to the human mind and the critique of political economy since the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

Let's digress a bit, just to make something clear. The issue at hand is neither the fidelity to Marx, who wrote (and more importantly, has *done* in his political activity) the most different things, nor a peremptory declaration of the invariance of a transcendental communist 'program'. But we have to admit that it's true that parts of the radical movement time and again return to the marxian oeuvre, reinterpret it, advance it, criticize it, and retrieve tools, methods and contents for the critique of the contemporary world in ways, frequency and *results* that differ significantly from the way Blanqui, Bakunin or so many other personalities of the past are present today. Within the context of the left wing of social-democracy, Rosa Luxemburg tried to address this issue in an essay that, while raising interesting points, at times gets close to a certain idealism, and concludes that only when "the working class has been liberated from its present conditions of existence will the Marxist method of research be socialized in conjunction with the other means of production"<sup>7</sup>. Paul Mattick, to mention in passing a diverging view on the same issue, argues that the abolition of class society through the abolition of capitalist social relations will bring about "at once the verification of Marxian theory and the end of Marxism"<sup>8</sup>. Mattick's point is much more fertile, and can lead us to the idea that perhaps the necessity to critique this world through the straight-jacket –and it certainly is a straight-jacket– of the critique of political economy is valid only as long as the standpoint of this critique, the standpoint of socialized humanity, exists only in latent form in modern society. Perhaps this is the meaning of the initially enigmatic formulation of Gilles Dauvé, that "communism does not even know what value is."<sup>9</sup> Communism does not know what value is because communism does not *need* to 'know' what value is.

In any case, important aspects of the domination of capital, but also essential elements of the character of communist transition became in later periods objects of theoretical examination –a process that is of course by its very nature still underway. In Blaumachen's elaboration one finds a number of such aspects: gender, the critique of use-value, of labour-power, of the distinction between production and reproduction, public and private sphere, *the potential relations between these at first sight distant issues.*

Let me use an example to sketch out how I understand such a critique<sup>10</sup>: the sublation [*Aufhebung*] of the capitalist mode of production can be defined (of course not in an exhaustive manner) as the sublation of value-production. But the source of value is a certain use-value: *the use value of the labour-power commodity.* Therefore this sublation can be approached, in a peculiar and unexpected turnaround, as the destruction of a certain use-value. This way, the use-value category, although in the sphere of the so-

<sup>7</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, *Stagnation and Progress of Marxism*, 1903. Marxism as a means of production!

<sup>8</sup> Paul Mattick, *Marxism: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, 1978.

<sup>9</sup> Gilles Dauvé, *Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement*, Capitalism and Communism.

<sup>10</sup> I summarize in this paragraph some notes regarding a possible way that leads from a critique of a dynamic and structured ensemble of use-values to the critique of use-value as such, and to its dismissal from its current status of transhistoricality.

called 'simple circulation' appeared as an indifferent 'material' substratum, now becomes implicated in the critique of capitalist society. Thusly, a new possibility arises for the development of a more radical critique of the labour-power commodity, a critique which can include both its exchange and its use value. From there, and in a retroactive way, given the fact that the subsumed into capital human activity (re)produces in commodity form (that is, as *unities* of the categories of value and use-value) the conditions of existence of the social individuals as they exist today – the labour-power commodity encompasses in potentia the world of commodity –, we can move from the important but ultimately sociological critique of capitalist technique that can be found in *Socialisme ou Barbarie* and elsewhere, to a critique of the use-value category as such (a project which would include the critique of capitalist technique and the critique of the relationships that the social individuals develop with the 'outside' world, in the *concrete* dimension of these relationships), and to a critique of the *dual* character of labour in the capitalist mode of production and of the corresponding dominant form of the metabolic process of the human and the non-human: *when the life-process isn't fragmented, when the conditions of existence of the social individuals are not (re)produced through a separated activity, then it's impossible to talk of a moment of that process (labour-power) that is exhausted by/absorbed in the activity; therefore the need of the separated reproduction of that moment also ceases to exist.* This sublation functions corrosively/destabilizingly toward the social gender and the fixed roles, the distinction between private and public sphere, etc.

My view is that positions like the above –the abolitions and the sublations that according to Blaumachen define the content of communism in the current period– are *threshold moments* of the (still underway) theoretical project that could be defined as an immanent critical presentation (*Darstellung*) of the capitalist system – and more broadly, of the society that is dominated by the capitalist mode of productions. (Such a project would be the theoretical aspect of a total/unitary critique of this world). Exactly because we live under the rule of abstraction, exactly because the mode of being of capital is the ideality, the *real* (and not just mental) abstraction, the possibility arises for this study-'object' to be exposed (to some degree) in a dialectical manner, that "includes in its positive understanding of what exists a simultaneous recognition of its negation, its inevitable destruction"<sup>11</sup>. Thus, in an early draft of his project that is included in the *Grundrisse*<sup>12</sup>, Marx posits in the end of his entire theoretical construction the dissolution of the mode of production and of the social form that are based on exchange value, and the presentation of the real positing of individual labour as social and *vica versa*, that is, the presentation of immediate social activity (that is reflected upon individuals that enter into immediately social relations or, in other words, immediately social individuals).

Of course, the problematic that is developed in Blaumachen is based upon an examination of the class relation (that is, class struggle) in its historicity –and from there, and through the marxian categories as they are interpreted and used, we end up with the current content of communism. Here, on the contrary, I approach the question from another angle, in its relationship with revolutionary theory: already on this level, in my

<sup>11</sup> Capital Vol. 1, p. 103

<sup>12</sup> Grundrisse, *The chapter on Capital*, p. 263-64.

opinion, a contradiction appears. I don't begin with the question of the historicity that is produced (or not) from class struggle – I don't counterpoise here an alternative interpretation of the history of class antagonism; generally, what Dauvé-Nesic do on 'Proletariat and Labour...' (TPTG #11) seems adequate. I say something else: the existence of revolutionary theory presupposes the existence of a revolutionary class. The theoretical existence of the dialectic of the self-abolition of the proletariat in 1843-46, with all its problems, its deficiencies and defects, presupposes the existence of tensions with corresponding characteristics in the class antagonism of the same era. To remain in the same period, the existence of the logic of the *Manifesto*, utopian socialism, the revolutionary reformism of the era, Dejacque, Fourier, Tristan etc, lead us *to trace a contradictory relation of the proletariat toward its own existence and activity*<sup>13</sup>, through the codification of this 'contradictoriness' in theory: like capital, the proletariat exists as a moving contradiction.

But in the theorization of Blaumachen the different and diverging manifestations of proletarian activity of the past (for example, autonomy and social-democratic integration in the postwar conjuncture) are integrated in the same framework and are overdetermined, united in the capital-labour contradiction in its historicity, and ultimately, *are reduced to the same*. This mode of thinking, like money, leads to the reconciliation of impossibilities, and imposes the unification of that which is in contradiction to itself: it leads to the homogenization of the most oppositional and diverging expressions of the proletariat for the sake of the orderliness of the periodization.

## II

The second point, in which I approach the same issue from another angle, is somewhat more entangled, and to be honest, parts of argumentation have an exploratory, or even, 'experimental' character. Not that I am uncertain toward the end-results or the points of criticism, but toward parts of the method and path. What follows includes indirectly a critique to the notions of 'swerve' (écart) and 'programmatisation'.

“Capital, as relation, is class struggle, and the proletariat as class is also capital. The proletariat is simultaneously and identically class of capital with sole horizon the perpetuation of the capital relation, and class of revolution with sole horizon the destruction of this relation”

–*The Perspective of Communisation*, p.2

---

<sup>13</sup> During the apex of the period of affirmation of the proletariat and labour, a grouplet appears in the Netherlands that attacks labour and the proletarian condition, and puts forward a communist content and a negative praxis (Mokergroep, *Work is a Crime*, 1924). Of course, this proves nothing. But the past of class struggle is full of moments like that. Blaumachen appears to reject such a contradictory self-relation. See BM #4, p.14, footnote: “[...] this current, in order to explain the evolution of class struggle and to posit itself in relation to the content of contemporary struggles, transforms the contradiction between capital and labour in a simple opposition, and transports the contradiction inside the proletariat”. Moreover, regarding the *reduction to the same*, see in the same issue the footnote of page 35, where a 'scandalous' assertion by TC is quoted without any critical remark: “The Stalinist leader was perhaps the “workers’ equivalent of the boss by divine right”, but he was also the institutional counterpart of autonomy.” (*Théorie Communiste, Self-organisation is the first act of the revolution...*).

I am under the impression that in the quote above I didn't stumble upon a secondary position, but instead, upon the formulation of the fundamental problem<sup>14</sup> that is posited in the framework of Blaumachen, not in the form of a question, but in the form of a position.

My objection, which in the way it will be developed is meaningful only if the phrase "the proletariat is also capital" is not a hasty or careless formulation is the following: this identification of proletariat-capital (identification that if I understand correctly is a feature of the class relation of the current period) is not legitimate, obscures the character of the proletarian condition, and moreover, and here's the gist, it creates an *convenience* for theory: the possibility (which inside the theoretical framework appears as a necessity) to put aside and get rid of the question of proletarian experience, of the moment of collective reflexion within class antagonism and its sublation. I do not argue that Blaumachen considers these issues minor and immaterial, but that the framework that Blaumachen uses obstructs their sufficient elucidation.

Because the proletariat is *not* capital/commodity but 'agent' of the labour-power commodity (it has a negative monopoly: it cannot sell anything except labour-power); because it possesses a certain *use-value* that is involved in a unique way in value-production; because in the capitalist labour process, exactly because it is *non-capital par excellence, non-value par excellence*, it functions not only as a moment-of-capital, but as the moment-of-the-production-of-capital, of value creation, for all these reasons, it can actually have a critical relation to its existence and activity. This approach focuses on one aspect of the mode of being of the proletariat – I don't dwell with issues such as the absence of control on the life-process, the dispossession, the radical separation from the conditions of existence.<sup>15</sup>

I describe shortly the way I understand the notion of subsumption in capital, not as a historical phase but as an unstable, conflictual, violent process – the capital violence *par excellence* – that takes place without pause, and is challenged, contested by proletarian negativity: capital transubstantiates the proletariat and makes it quasi its own, quasi its own flesh: "capital itself is essentially this *displacement, this transposition*, and [~~that~~] wage labour as such presupposes capital, so that, from its standpoint as well, capital is this *transubstantiation*; the necessary process of positing its own powers as *alien* to the worker"<sup>16</sup>. Both poles of the capital relation can claim that all moments of the capitalist labour process are instances of their own self: capital can ascertain that there's nothing but variable and invariable capital – and not even that: circulating and fixed–, and labour can argue that there's nothing but living and objectified labour. But one of these claims surpasses the other. The discourse of capital is the truth of a really, actually inverted world – in this aspect, only capital is productive. New value is the successful transubstantiation of a use-value, the 'reward' of capital for successfully subsuming that use-value (and thus, the proletariat) under its forms. Subsumption does not function only as an abstract moment, but runs through the entire matrix of the valorization and

<sup>14</sup> "The fundamental problem to which all theoretical production must return, that must be confronted and to which it must find a resolution, is the following: how can the proletariat - acting strictly as a class of the capitalist mode of production, in its contradiction with capital within this mode of production - abolish capital, therefore all classes and therefore itself; that is to say, produce communism?" *Théorie Communiste*.

<sup>15</sup> Namely, with this approach no special primacy is given to the so-called 'productive worker'.

<sup>16</sup> *Grundrisse*.

realization process: capital needs and uses an entire army of middle strata, supervisors, foremen, psychologists, advertisers etc to ensure the success of subsumption. Theory must take this aspect of the question into account, and what this aspect has as a precondition: the never-ending refusal and resistance to subsumption that characterizes the proletarian condition.<sup>17</sup>

The variance, the non-identity, the distance that opens up between the proletariat and its activity, that as value-creating is alien to it, is condition for the *possibility* of a critical experience toward that activity and therefore toward the world of capital, and *together*, moment of that which integrates the proletariat in capitalist society in a way that is radically different from the subordinate classes of the past modes of production: in this aspect also, the proletarians are *in* this world but not *of* this world. This variance, this non-identification (which is an aspect of the process that could also be called ‘alienation’) is not exclusively result of the negativity of the proletariat nor of the positiveness of capital, but simultaneously precondition and result of the asymmetric, conflictual relation that connects the two classes of the capitalist mode of production.

This variance is condition for the possibility of the proletariat to relate to itself, or, in order to put it in more concrete terms, this variance is condition for the ability of the proletarians to relate to one another as something different than capital – as individuals that share the same fate, as exploited. This self-relation is inherent in every negation, every opposition that moves against the logic of capital, from the smaller ones (when workers cover each other in slacking, when they try to withhold the work speed, when they express solidarity by handing out a bus ticket) to the greater ones: these are the gestures that shake the certainties of the world of capital.

This variance is also condition for the possibility of the proletariat to argue and discuss the way it does, in a practical manner within the dialectic of class struggle. But this ‘practicality’ encompasses both in the micro-scale and the wider historical scale the exchange of opinions, choices, weighing up the various tactics, the possibilities that open up or perish, collective reflection, forms of organization.

This variance is finally condition for the possibility of the regroupment of the proletariat as the *party of the critique of work*, that is, as the party of the practical critique of the reproduction of the conditions of existence through a separated activity, but also of the specific way the means of productions are unified with it, and in total, of the dominant form of social metabolism in capitalist society. I understand that speaking of *possibilities* opens up the floodgates. Let’s not dodge the issue and try a first approach. The category of possibility enters the *immanent* critique of capitalist society with the presentation of the notion of the labour-power commodity, of the potential for labour, the potential to provide labour. The labour-power – labour pair is based upon the ontological aristotelian pair *dunamis-energeia* and is a radical route for its critique. The capitalist buys this potential, which in his mind is equal to a certitude, but that’s capital’s fantasy (that most of the time is coming true, at least to the degree that is needed for the production of

---

<sup>17</sup> For the notion of subsumption I borrow elements from *The Problem of Use-Value for a Dialectic of Capital* by Christopher Arthur that is included in *New Dialectics and Political Economy*. I don’t deal with the close relationship that exists between capitalist productivity and this negative potential. Naturally, there are reciprocal relations between the precondition and the mode of being and characteristics of the paragraphs that follow.

surplus-value) of a world without resistance and hindrances. The successful usage of this commodity, that cannot exist separately from its 'agent', is an uncertain endeavor (as every new boss learns the hard way, if she leaves her employees to work without some kind of supervision), that makes the use of violence, imposition inevitable. In my opinion, the existence of this conflictual dynamic can be used as a starting point for the reconstruction of the category of *potentiality* in the field of social antagonism, first in regard to the present, and then in regard to the legitimacy of its usage for the examination of the past.

Certainly, as the presentation by Blaumachen argues, "there is no such thing as an accumulation of class consciousness"<sup>18</sup>; everything depends on what is meant by accumulation: only capital accumulates – accumulation belongs conceptually to capital-as-process. The proletariat in contrary finds *in the first instance* its history already in front of it, *as capital*, as material and value objectivity that has to be torn to pieces, *that needs to be demystified*; I am not aiming at a mental process but a practical one, that of course includes the mental, the conscious as moment: "the real intellectual wealth of the individual depends entirely on the wealth of his real connections"<sup>19</sup>. The process of demystification, that takes place but also gets interrupted in a million ways, shows that the proletariat stands vis-à-vis its own activity that has taken a twisted, perverted [verrückte] form, in all the tenses, from past perfect to 'future anterior'. But what is the mode of being of class experience, of class consciousness? First of all it is consciousness of the present, of the present situation. Of course. "As soon as it has risen up, a class in which the revolutionary interests of society are concentrated finds the content and the material for its revolutionary activity directly in its own situation: foes to be laid low, measures dictated by the needs of the struggle to be taken; the consequences of its own deeds drive it on. It makes no theoretical inquiries into its own task."<sup>20</sup> This logic, that is used in various parts of the Blaumachen text, for example that "the attack on banks in which proletarians have their money is what will necessarily open up the issue of how life without money can continue, and it will not be a *decision* to abolish money", is a logic that recurs time and again in revolutionary theory, and is not without justification: "[t]he will and good wishes of men are not potent enough to retain this system after revolution (as in Russia) without eventually surrendering to the dynamics engendered by it. It is not enough to seize the means of production and abolish private property. It is necessary to abolish the basic condition of modern exploitation, wage slavery, and that act brings on the succeeding measures of reorganization that would never be invoked without the first step"<sup>21</sup>. First people throw stones or wish they had thrown, and only after do they become receptive (or not!) toward the logic of counter-violence.

But this 'present' of class antagonism is not a snapshot, a mere and unconnected (absolute) moment. It encompasses as tension, as tense relationship, that which does not exist yet<sup>22</sup>. Capital produces its own temporality. To mention just one aspect, beyond the

---

<sup>18</sup> *Perspective of Communisation*, Blaumachen.

<sup>19</sup> German Ideology

<sup>20</sup> *Class Struggles in France*, Karl Marx

<sup>21</sup> *Masses and Vanguard*, Paul Mattick.

<sup>22</sup> I will not discuss here the issue of critical appropriation of the past of class struggle, the elaboration of lessons out of this historical experience, and of the way that the above are implicated into the present of class

naturalization that is (re)produced fetishistically by the relationship, the concept 'capital' includes a 'claim' on future as future of the expanded capital. I argue that the counter-dialectic of class struggle produces its own antagonistic temporality, not in parallel or across, as if capitalists and proles constitute two independent and self-sustained subjectivities that only by accident are implicated in an asymmetrical relationship, but *transverse* to the temporality of capital. "[I]f we did not find *concealed* in society *as it is* the material conditions of production and the corresponding relations of exchange prerequisite for a classless society, then all attempts to explode it would be quixotic"<sup>23</sup>. Communism is not only the horizon of all our negations; it can be constituted in embryonic form, as 'yeast', gesture, wealth of relationships, community, need, tool of social struggle in any class negation that strives to communicate an opposition to what exists. The point is not to deny or smooth out the fact that in the communist transition rupture and discontinuity take place, but to trace the ways in which the conditions for this rupture, this discontinuity (in other words, for social revolution) are interweaved, so to speak, in today's social antagonism. Exactly because the 'present' neither needs to nor can be reduced to one single dimension, exactly because it is not consubstantial and homogenous –that's the discourse of capital: 'I am Alpha and Omega, ubiquitous and all pervading'–, radical consciousness can exist as condensation and expression of class antagonism, and communism (a life in which the relations between individuals cannot and do not have to be reduced to any preexisting or posterior common measure) as desire, volition and project. The perspective of communism opens up through the interweaving of the critique of imposed poverty (material, spiritual, human poverty) with the critique of promised wealth (wealth of goods, comforts, relations). This second aspect cannot exist without communism as desire. We don't have to add this aspect artificially to the whole 'equation'. This desire for another life –to change life itself (*changer la vie*, Rimbaud), not our life– and the hatred for capital that feeds this desire and is fed by it in return, arise and develop as a creative reconstitution in the human affect of the "inevitable destruction" (see note #11) of what exists, of the necessity of the destruction of this world, a necessity that obviously does not exist nowhere but within individuals, keeping in mind that, *on the one hand*, productive forces and social relations are nothing but aspects of the social individuals that for a number of conditions and reasons exist apart from them, and, *on the other hand*, that communism as a process transforms the present conditions into conditions of the communisation of life, of the sublation of the fragmentary character of the life-process – or, in cases that this proves to be impossible, communism destroys them, or leaves them aside like broken toys. I am not putting forth a determinism (a *Gesetzmäßigkeit*) of sorts. I want to elucidate what in the beginning of the paragraph was termed as tension, tense relationship between the *now* and the *not yet*. The necessity of the destruction of the world is nothing but the other side of communism as the destruction of any necessity that exists outside and independently of the individuals

---

struggle, affecting our activity. It's enough to mention that all the above cannot be accumulation – a concept that belongs to the domination of the past over the present. If we had to borrow a term from the concepts of the capitalist universe, that wouldn't be the quite problematic negrit term 'proletarian self-valorisation', but quite simply, devaluation. I don't see the need to do this. It's enough to understand the above as moments and aspects of the struggle for the domination of the present over the past.

<sup>23</sup> *Grundrisse*, Karl Marx. My emphasis.

(to the degree that it is product of their activity), that is, the destruction of all social relations that bear inherently their autonomisation from the social individuals, that is, the abolition of society as a (relational) entity that exists outside and apart of the individuals.

To return and to start concluding, according to '*Self-Organisation...*' of TC, in the present period "exploitation doesn't produce a homogeneous social entity of the working class any more, a prevailing entity, with a key role, *able to be conscious of itself as a social subject*, in the sense habitually given to this, that is to say able to have a consciousness of itself as a relation to itself, facing capital." Exactly because, by appealing to the characteristics of the current class composition, theory is led to posit that the impossibility of a proletarian consciousness (self-relation) is structural, a irreversible social product, it "was *necessary* [for *theory*, my note) to produce the *identity* of the proletariat as a class of the capitalist mode of production and as a revolutionary class"<sup>24</sup>. Theory is led, by necessity, in order to salvage the communist perspective, to posit an identity between proletariat as a class of the capitalist mode of production and as a class of revolution, and to posit a question that we can only answer in a negative fashion. Or better, the question itself is problematic, result of an one-dimensional theorization of the social-historical, and its validity should be put into question. Within this framework, in which the deepening of the reproduction crisis of the proletariat leads it in its struggles to come into rupture with itself by coming up against class-belonging as a limit, we can speak of communist content only as a beyond, as a supersession of a limit, hence the repetition of a stereotypical formula: the proletariat *will* take communist measures. The solidaristic, emancipatory, communist gestures that in the social struggles of the present prefigure the world of the future (Blaumachen #1, p.28) fall into oblivion, and the "subversive potential of fraternal, open, communistic relationships that keep re-emerging in every deep insurrection"<sup>25</sup> is misunderstood once more. The hatred of capital, the desire of another life, are interpreted as "*ideological* expression of the fact that the proletariat is pole of the contradiction of exploitation"<sup>26</sup>.

We can now see that the argumentation that in the first part of this text was identified as a '*reduction to the same*' of the different and conflicting aspects of the proletarian praxis of the past, can, in light of the second part of this text, be interpreted as a projection to the past of an one-dimensional and limited conception of the present of class and social antagonism, that corresponds in turn to a forced collapse of the moments and relations that constitute the concept of the 'proletariat'. But in my opinion proletariat has to be understood as a complex concept, and the relation of the moments that constitute it has to be understood as conflictual, contradictory; an analysis of the logical level (a logical level that has *ontological* value) of these moments that coexists and relate to one another contradictory can contribute to the elucidation of the mode of being of proletarian praxis on the *historical* level. The extremely complex relationship between the two levels of analysis obviously cannot be that of a platonic essence and its development in the social-historical space-time, nor could be given by the traditional logico-historical

<sup>24</sup> *Who Are We?*, Théorie Communiste. My emphasis on both quotes.

<sup>25</sup> *Eclipse and Re-emergence...*, Gilles Dauvé. The tense of the verb is changed.

<sup>26</sup> Oral version of the *Perspective of Communisation*. My emphasis. A valid question would be whether a possibility for a non-ideological expression exists in this theoretical framework.

method, according to which the presentation of the categories corresponds to the order of their appearance in the historical reality. We are not dealing with communism as a kantian polar star toward which humanity tries in vain to orientate, nor with a celestial ideal that could be contrasted to its crooked earthly manifestations, but with communism as the thread that runs through “the history of the party that is everywhere springing up naturally out of the soil of modern society”<sup>27</sup>.

\*

One has to admit the the theoretical oeuvre of Blaumachen is one of the serious and interesting attempts to critically understand our era, from a radical, communist standpoint. Although the crisis devaluates a number of broadly accepted practices, ideas and stances faster than the 10 year state bonds, it provides at the same time fertile ground for the (re)appearance of tendencies that take root in the real and understandable need for an easy, immediate and ofcourse ‘practical’ solution of any type to the current predicament: self-managementism, cooperations, fair trade, time banks, escapism in alternative lifestyles, democratism – to mention only some. In short, a new type of grassroots social-democracy, that just like the old one, not only cannot abolish the two extremes, proletariat and capital, but tries to find ways and means to soften, to mitigate the capitalist relation, and to ideally transform it into a harmonious relation. But capitalist society already is on the move to other directions. It is not the first time that the tendency that is inherent to the capitalist mode of production, to create surplus population along with surplus capital appears in such scale in the global centres of value accumulations. It is not the first time that value-form, from a social form of human-nature metabolism, and therefore a form of reproduction of the conditions of existence of the social individuals, turns into a form, a machine of human destruction. Or was that its other side from the beginning? Stillborn or not, such moderate tendencies like those mentioned above will act as barriers to pose the issue at hand. The work of Blaumachen can act as a solid and powerful critique of such views. Moreover, it produces results with practical usefulness for the movement – for example the critique of the logic (ie, madness) of armed struggle. But it can also obscure our understanding, for example in regard to the role and importance of organization, or in the way the radical currents of the past are interpreted in the periodisation.

With this text, that aims to constitute a small contribution to the discussion of the ‘communist question’ that little by little opens beyond the microscale, I tackled only with some aspects of the work of Blaumachen. To mention a couple of things, I didn’t discuss the interesting issue of measurability, or the relation between the ‘inter-individual relations’ and the critique of equality. I also did not discuss the role of political activity per se, and ofcourse, the crisis. I tried, from two different starting points, to develop my understanding of an aspect that is of central importance in regard to the elucidation of communism, but also a major point of disagreement with Blaumachen: the relationship between what we call ‘communism’ and the present social individuals in their real relations with one another. Anyhow, the discussion goes on.

---

<sup>27</sup> Marx, Letter to Freiligrath, 29/2/1860.