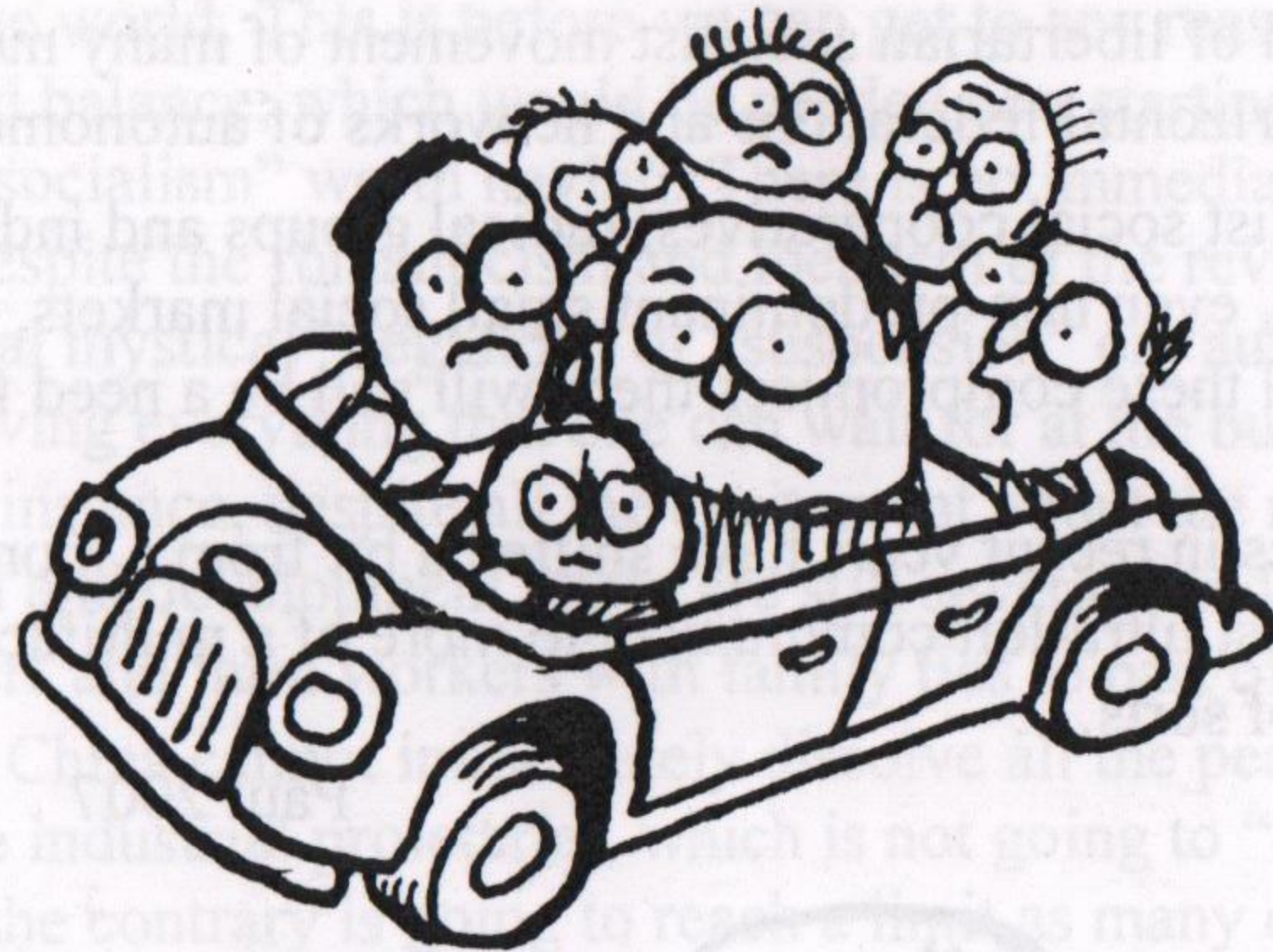


### CURRENT WORLD SITUATION:

1. *Middle classes anxiety ridden and drifting into crisis*
2. **Working classes mostly too Knackered and worn out to care that much.**
3. Ecosystem on the brink of collapse, so we're all sinking in the shit anyway.



*What do we want?*

- \*Open diverse libertarian socialism
- \*Post-scarcity abundance, with free access to needs and more
- \*Mutual aid and voluntary cooperation; maximum complementary liberty for communities and individuals
- \*Worldwide solidarity of workers, peasants, and craftspeople, in a transitional social-evolutionary struggle of many struggles....

**WHINGER PRESS**  
**ppetard@hotmail.com**

# THE WHINGER

Irregular journal of hysterical madmaterialism No.6 Oct 2007



**Not Much Content**

**VERY BORING**

*confused*





## The Whinger

The Whinger is an irregular rant-zine written and produced by Paul while grumbling indoors in London. Contributions, letters, comments, criticisms to: ppetard@hotmail.com

### INTRO

It has been a long while since our last "Whinger" came out, not since 2005 in fact when we put out an issue under the title "Political Slacker". After all that time in the pipeline this "new" issue is not exactly bulging with content either.

It's not that there isn't plenty to write about in the world today. it is far more a question of just what the hell are you supposed to say about it all without just repeating all the ready made slogans, dogmas, formulas, and methodologies. Just how do you deal with the immense changes and upheavals that have pulled the comfortable rug of certainties and established reference points from under our feet within the last three decades?

The system never just stays the same, it is constantly developing and there isn't necessarily just one path of development. I am skeptical of fundamentalist invariantist kind of positions. Even when the system or systems appear to be staying the same, the process of constructing the appearance of things staying the same is itself a temporary part of the process of development and change.

"Capitalism" is never just "capitalism". *Capital and state* consist in practice of historically specific dominant developing capitals, and historically specific developing states. Likewise struggles against the developing capitals and states, and against other forms of oppression and exploitation that continue to exist in the world, and for social libertarian alternatives, develop and *change* all the time. The old struggles can never really be repeated. For instance, it will never be the seventies again, nor do we really want them back.

There is no immediate unity, or pure and evenly formed generality in the system(s). The fragmentations, separations, divergences, and unevenness of development have all become real. Nor is there immediate unification or fully formed generality in social movements and struggles. If this existed on both sides then everything would already be determined, and inevitably on the path to being sorted out and resolved in one movement.

But our daily life experiences, which are often very chaotic, and are not necessarily "dialectical" at all (Engels talks rubbish), inform us this is not the case. Only in the monastic meditation room can the illusion of an immediate unified totality be partially invented, and it is soon interrupted come the need to acquire lunch...



Today I find myself stuck as a tired and weary rent-paying, usually unemployed, bureaucratic dependent living in the aggressive capital city of a social democratic imperialist heartland. There is a whole world we need to talk about, but sometimes I will write quite a lot specifically about the UK. Why is this? As part of the process of attempting to relate to more worldly struggles, we need to try and talk honestly and critically about who we are, and about our own conditions, and about where we are coming from to start off with.

We can only start from where we are. While "recuperation" is never total, at the same time no-one in the developed world, or even in the developing world, is totally beyond recuperation all the time. Regardless of any adopted political cult-consciousness or ideology, nobody can honestly call themselves a "revolutionary" in a non-revolutionary situation. And political "revolution", with its potential neobolshevik and Stalinist dangers, is not always such a good idea anyway.

Rather than delude myself and hide behind a smoke-screen of romantic insurrectionary hot air, or adopting pompous pure ultra-left "proletarian internationalist" postures with little real meaning or content, it might be far more useful for us to face up to and critically deal with our own specific subsuming and minor incorporation into historically specific capital and state.

In my case that means critically dealing with my incorporation into the developed consumer economy, and more specifically my incorporation as a UK citizen into the social democracy and *British imperial labour corporatism*.

Paul 2007



### CHECK IT OUT!

When I get round to it some of these rants may eventually turn up on: [www.geocities.com/doodlepaul](http://www.geocities.com/doodlepaul)

Unfortunately I don't have space this issue for listings and reviews of other mags and publications I like to read. If you are looking for a decent guide to current small press & alternative publishing from an anti-authoritarian & libertarian-left perspective then check out **HOBNAIL REVIEW** free or donation from: Hobnail Press, 235 Earls Court Road, London, SW5 9FE, UK.





## *"British imperial labour corporatism"*



There we were in the pouring rain with our broken umbrella sinking in the squelchy mud in the middle of July in Finsbury Park in London. We were held prisoner caged into Mayor Ken "uncle Joe" Livingstone's "Rise" Festival (It used to be the "Respect" anti-racism festival until rebel MP Galloway together with an assorted bunch stole the name). Here we were incorporated into the state's own official political rally "against racism". But keep your voices down about the British Labour government's aggressive active hand in current imperial war, ethnic cleansing, and plunder in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On the stage Lee overpaid-bureaucrat Jasper lectures us about how we should be ever so frightened of the BNP fringe right party and its new fake union "solidarity" with its claimed 1000 members (in reality probably much less). Meanwhile the "real" official trade unions, he tells us, like "Unison" are really protecting the workers, and we should be thankful for them.

A big heavy-weight official Trade Union like Unison with its 2 million, or whatever the figure is, state sector employees, is a bureaucratic monolithic corporation. It is itself supportively and financially tied to the Labour Party machine and thus to the Labour Government and the warfare state, the very state who are the bureaucratic and state capitalist employers of the union's members. Many of the government's own MPs and ministers are sponsored by Unison and similar rival big daddy Trade Unions. The modern big Trade Union, increasingly functioning not much differently to a bank or insurance company, now itself becomes precisely an employers' organization.

State sector employees become tied and incorporated into the state not just by the duties and demands of their particular kind of employment, but also by the institutionalized representation of their struggle with their employment. Both within their work, and in their immediate defensive struggles around the conditions of their work, they become tied into, and encouraged to identify their interests with, their entrenched bureaucratic monopoly sector against everyone and everything else.

The voices against "privatization" and "casualisation" can often be heard loudly through a megaphone. If spoken moderately these voices can sometimes even be given encouragement and official approval by self interested parts of the state. But social radical voices on the left against state-capital and bureaucracy are less common, more muffled, and need more courage to come out into the open.

What is referred to as "neoliberalism" isn't that much like classical liberalism, there isn't that much genuine industrial free enterprise. What is called "privatization" will nowadays tend to take the form of state monopoly corporatism gladly handing a service over in exchange for some extra private cash to private



monopoly corporation while keeping things heavily bureaucratically controlled by stand-off regulatory bodies and agencies.

In a situation where there isn't full employment, sectoral trade unions will tend to "protect" their members by playing the corporatist game and help build up dams of protectionism and exclusivism around their sector, like demanding regulations restricting employment in their sector only to those with certain professional qualifications, or demanding elite privileges for their own key workers and so on, or playing the industrial patriotism card and supporting economic nationalist policies, tariffs and trade wars etc..

As we have argued before, a lot of the sloganising about "join a union" and "unionize all the workers" falls a bit flat when you realize in reality the official trade unions have always tended to exclude the majority of workers, that in practice is how they need to operate and how they work.

They periodically will do some targeted selective unionizing and recruiting, and run publicity campaigns for cleaners and catering workers and against sweatshops, when they need to and when their own positions are threatened and to bring in some more subs. But with the current balance of social forces in the economy, if the unions were to suddenly have to take on board millions more lower skilled and lower paid workers then the unions would have to make more of their money available for strike funds and share out some of what they have got more equally. Potentially threatening elitist wage differentials for example.

### UK Trade Union membership:

1979; 13 million

1985; 11 million

1990; 10 million

1995; 8 million

2005; 7.5 million...

So "where has all the struggle gone in the UK?" we keep hearing comrades ask in despair. In confused terms the answer roughly might be:

1. *Downwards*- Semi-invisible informal struggle in the service sector, in the sweatshop economy and in the informal economy, particularly amongst new migrant workers, as well as the older labour forces.

2. *Upwards*- Incorporation upwards into the state, and absorption into its health and welfare bureaucracy with dependency as a weapon of control. Parts of the state substitute themselves for part of the struggle and represent us on our behalf. Struggle is disguised under layers of protection.

3. *Sideways*- Large-scale relocation of industrial production and the industrial struggle that goes with it abroad.

4. *Indoors*- For some time the deliberately engineered credit bubble has provided a temporary atomized safety valve to diffuse social wage pressures that might otherwise flare up as organized wage demands in peoples' jobs and





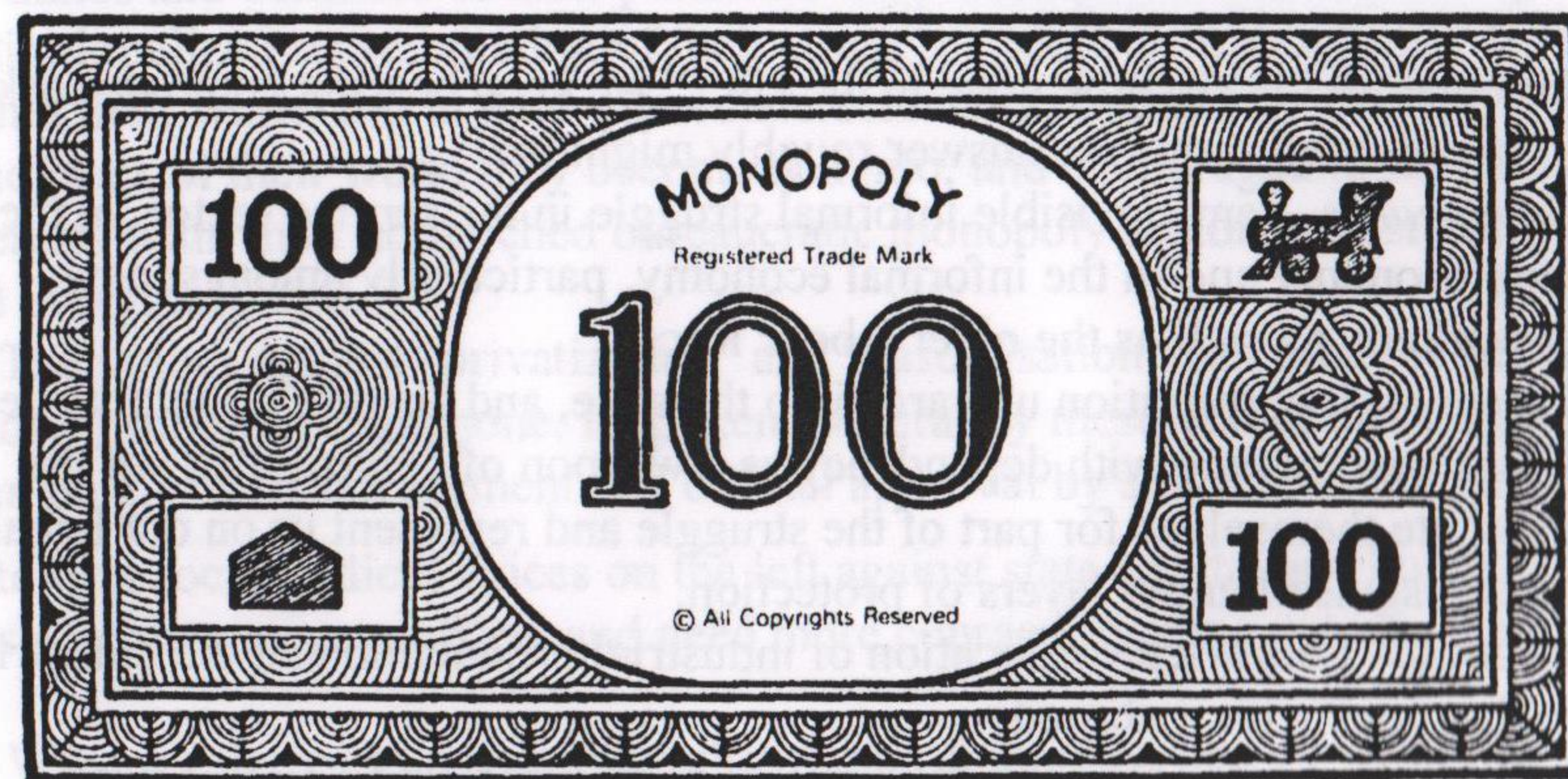
workplaces, although in practice workplace wages for many have still gone up above inflation. But now with the arrival of the “credit crunch” this is all in the process of changing....

Oh yes, change it will, the house of cards is starting to topple. The UK really is one of the weak links in the imperialist chain. Individual UK householders are much more indebted than most Europeans. The UK’s credit card debt of sixty billion pounds accounts for two thirds of the total credit card debt in the whole of the European Union! In early 2006 UK individuals and households owed 1,175 billion pounds, almost equivalent to the total UK Gross Domestic Product. Every adult owed on average 25,000 pounds which is more than the median annual earnings.

Upper working class, and lower middle class households and people have the appearance of being prosperous and live comfortably because they have been allowed a small bit of “conditional capital”. Under Brown speculation and the deliberately engineered property bubble have driven up the prices of homeowners’ houses and flats, and in the UK there is a much higher rate of home “ownership” amongst the population than in other parts of Europe.

But conditions are turning against them. Mortgage payers face heavier mortgage repayments as interest rates have risen. Like in the sub-prime bubble burst in America, they face the prospect of a housing market slump, threatening to push them into “negative equity”, and possibly having their homes repossessed. “Average” workers and their households are already being driven out of London and the south-east. Meanwhile the low paid and the impoverished are forced to live in crowded inner city areas with still rising rents.

gloom and doom....



Fight regressive taxes; down with council tax



## POSTIES

There have been big strikes in the UK postal service in the last few weeks (October 2007). This has involved not only union lead one and two day stoppages, but has also involved the postal workers taking the initiative themselves in a series of wildcat walkouts going on for several days, particularly in London and Liverpool.

There are all sorts of “issues” and “demands” involved such as pay, pensions, shift patterns and hours, threatened job-cuts etc., but overall the whole future of the post office and its workforce is the issue at stake. To what extent, or not, could the government and much of the economy successfully operate without having to rely on a large institutional post office? Both from the point of view of someone in the community getting worried because I saw no mail through my letterbox for nearly two weeks with two housing benefit checks I urgently needed seriously delayed (only yesterday did anything finally appear, the sudden loss of a daily postal delivery you sort of take for granted as part of your day is a bit spooky and disorientating), and from the point of view of being a temp myself who should be





working in one of the postal sorting offices for several weeks over winter, I have been trying to follow news of what's going on.

The postal workers are in a potentially vulnerable situation as the employers want to eventually get rid of up to 40,000 staff out of a workforce of 130,000. The post office has lost its official monopoly and now the threat of "privatization" is being continually used as a stick to wave at the workers.

The post office is a state capitalist and bureaucratic institution but it nonetheless contains a big useful social service element in some of what it does, and something like daily doorstep mail deliveries are like a form of social subsidy and are not run on economically rational lines. There is a worse threat than privatization of a *whole* service, and that is that large parts of a service will be deliberately run down, neglected, and allowed to rot, and then shut down completely, because the bosses couldn't be bothered with them.

The postal workers have been smart enough to avoid the danger of getting stuck in a lock-out and have staged selective and staggered walkouts on specific days, causing maximum stress to the employers, while minimizing the number of days without pay to themselves. The danger is, particularly when mass redundancies are planned are planned on the long run, if you walk out too much and too often they will happily shut the door behind you and say "goodbye", leaving you impoverished while letting parts of the service collapse. The threat can be part bluff and part real.

We shouldn't be cavalier and nihilistic, and romanticize the stopping and disrupting of a service by workers' action either. The basic services DO matter to communities including the striking workers' own communities. Employers can sometimes be happy to deliberately provoke walk out strikes as a way of getting rid of people and not paying them wages or redundancy money. Action will break out because often in reality it becomes impossible in a workplace for workers to just carry on as "normal", their situation becomes unacceptable to them.

But they will also be going through a dilemma as to whether it is better to walk out, or stay inside the workplace and try and take action on the job (slow-downs, overtime bans, working to rule, inefficiency, etc....). The "strike" as a particular tactic and event is not always guaranteed to be the most powerful moment of struggle. The struggle to start exerting and winning social control over parts of production while still in the workplace can be more subtle and ongoing, but it is often just as important and powerful as "strikes".

Nevertheless the current wildcats have demonstrated a re-awakening of revolt and show a consciousness of struggle and solidarity is still alive and out there. This is already refreshing. It may be, because of vulnerability, that they may have to accept some kind of fudging compromise deal for now. But they have prevented the managers getting an unopposed walkover. And they have put out a loud call for dignity and respect that other workers, particularly manual workers, will certainly have heard.

## THE GREAT HOUSING WHINGE

Council for many, local figures reveal.

As house prices and rents spiral, town halls are being flooded with applications for social housing. The number of applicants on waiting lists, including many middle-income professionals who can't afford to buy, hit nearly 340,000 this year.

In Redbridge, Barnet and Barking & Dagenham applications have shot up by about 500 per cent since 1996.

Councils with rises of more than 100 per cent include Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston, Sutton, Westminster, Ealing, Croydon, Harrow, Haringey, Havering, Hillingdon, Newham and Tower Hamlets.

Ministers admit that Britain's property boom has left more and more people seeking social housing through local authorities or housing associations. Shared ownership schemes are also growing in popularity.

Shadow housing minister Grant Shapps said: "People on low and middle incomes are now finding they can't afford their own homes. After punitive rises in stamp duty and escalating council tax, home ownership is now falling for the first time since records began."

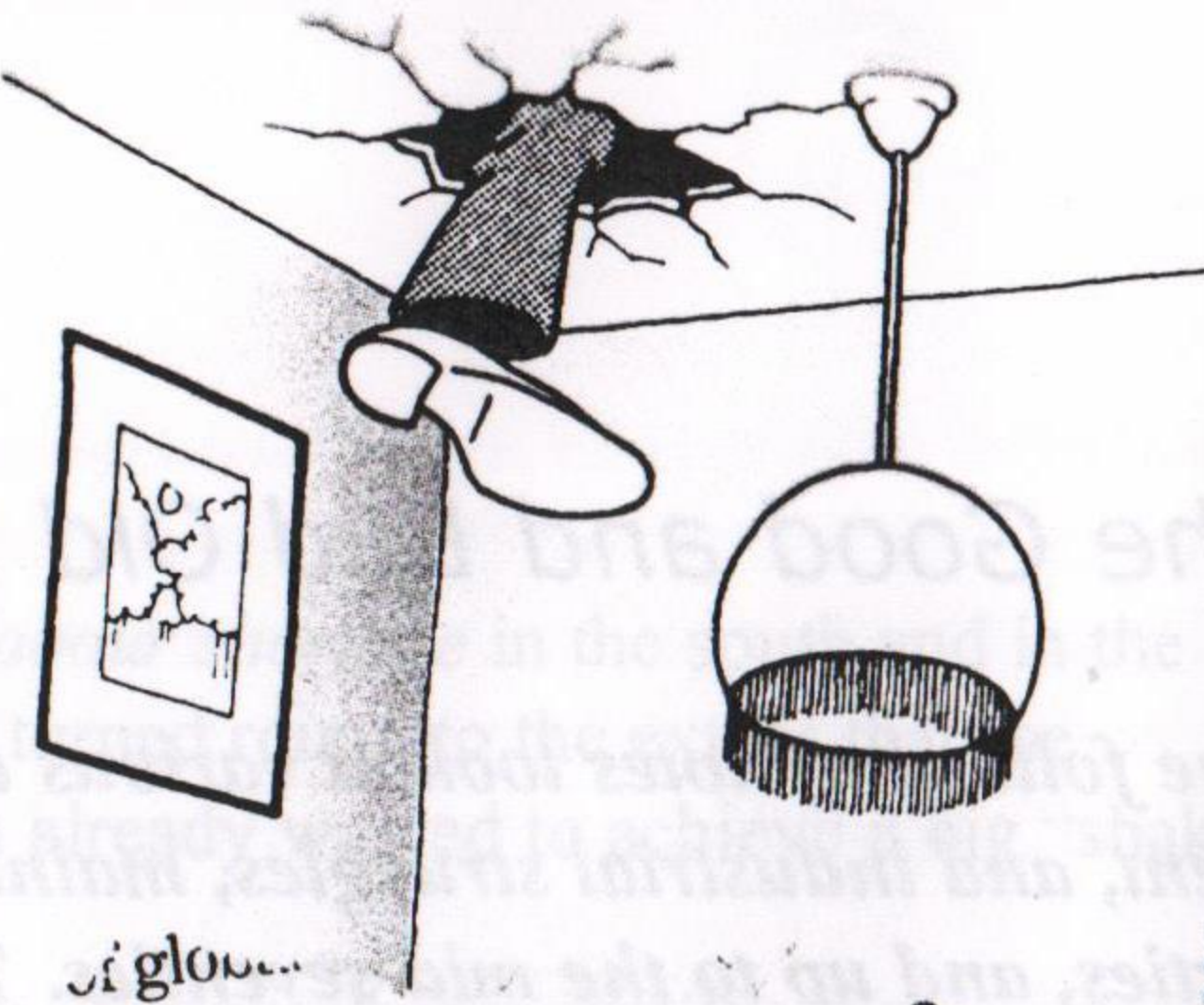
Professor Stephen Nickell, chairman of the Government's new housing agency, the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit, has said many young middle-class people face having to rely on the state for their housing in future. He warned of a "big increase" in social housing applications as the cost of buying an average-priced home is set to hit 10 times the salary of many workers by 2026. Rents would also soar.

Housing Minister Yvette Cooper will this week publish a housing green paper that aims to launch the biggest home

has passed its peak, so tenants are nowhere to be found and the buildings stand empty.

That is what happened last time there were this many cranes around during the boom of the Eighties. That turned into John Major's recession of 1992/93, when the City was awash with empty space. It could have been empty for years but the IRA solved the problem with the Bishopsgate bomb. That explosion, and another which demolished the Baltic Exchange, destroyed a dozen of the City's major skyscrapers and forced hundreds of businesses to find new premises overnight.

What had been an economic disaster for developers turned into good fortune for the City because it had the empty space. Almost as one, displaced businesses moved into the empty offices.



**And the outlook for London?**  
London and the surrounding region have a specific problem: a chronic shortage of housing. Despite being aware of this problem for many years, the Government has failed to do anything about it. The result is that the housing market in the Southeast is still very much a sellers' market. Another problem is that ultra-rich Londoners tend to be less sensitive to interest rate rises. Ultimately, price is a function of supply and demand. As long as housing supply remains low and demand for homes remains high, prices will continue to rise.

**Does any of this really matter?**  
It certainly matters to Britain's 18 million homeowners, most of whom have become used to the value of their houses rising every year. It also matters to the hundreds of thousands of first-time buyers who are being priced out of the market. Home owning has traditionally been one of the motors of social mobility in Britain. The gap between those who own homes and those who do not is becoming a political issue.

The bursting of a house price bubble could also have economic consequences.

**DOWN  
WITH RENTS  
homes for all**



## The Good and Bad Old Days

*The following notes look at various developments in employment, unemployment, and industrial struggles, mainly in the UK, through the period of the sixties, and up to the mid-seventies. These notes are not revolutionary, they don't even claim to be radical,... I just nicked them and adapted them from an old seventies cyclopedia I found in a charity shop!. But they do tell a story, and they illustrate a big process of change at a critical turning point.*

In 1932 there were 3 million unemployed in the UK.

In no year between 1919 and 1939 were there fewer than a million unemployed in the UK.

In most post war years up to the end of the sixties less than 2% of the working were unemployed -contrasting with 11% for 1937 and 22% for 1932.

By the mid-seventies, after 30 years of general rapid growth and unprecedented prosperity for the western economies the prospects for growth became much less favourable.

-growing open militancy in workers struggles

-big jump in oil price

The low unemployment of the post war years was not maintained in the late 60s, and by January 1972 unemployment touched 1 million; 4% of the labour force. According to bog-standard capitalist economics, "full employment" is defined as about 1 - 1.5% unemployed. Of the 603,000 people on average unemployed in 1970, 514,000 were men, 89,000 were women.

britain:	Annual average unemployment in thousands	% of total workforce
1932	2829	22.1
1958	457	2.1
1960	360	1.6
1962	463	2.0
1964	381	1.6
1966	360	1.5
1968	564	2.4
1970	603	2.6
1972	922	4.1
1973	609	2.6



In England in 1965 there was a serious *critical labour shortage* in the south and in the midlands! But by 1970 the situation had already turned round to the extent that the incoming conservative government of Ted Heath already wanted to achieve a big "shake out" of "underemployed labour".

It also needs to be remembered that large pockets of unemployment still continued to persist during much of this period in parts of Scotland and the North East of England. Throughout the whole period there was heavy unemployment in the North of Ireland, particularly for those workers from a catholic background.

Between 1955 and 1970 basic wage rates rose by 102% and total earnings for workers by 150% (this is if you add on overtime, piece rates, bonuses, etc....). The advance in wage rates was only a little bit higher than the rise in retail prices in the period- which was 70%. But earnings rose considerably more than prices, so the main source of the extra real income of workers is to be found in the widening gap between earnings and rates.

1969- 10 million trade union members and over 500 different unions.

1970- there were 3,900 strikes in the UK, 1.8 million workers were directly involved, 11 million working days lost to the employers.... a big year for strikes. But; growing unemployment, growing inflation. Worse industrial relations after 1967, increased incidence of work stoppages in Britain.

1970- Britain: 740 days lost through strikes per 1000 persons employed!

1970- U.S.: 2200 days lost through strikes per 1000 persons employed!!

In the Industrial Relations Act of 1971 the conservative government laid down new laws for the regulation of industrial relations and for the curbing of strikes. However the act was repealed by the incoming labour government of March 1974 under Harold Wilson. (Meanwhile; October 1973 onwards- world oil crisis).

1960- boom

1961-1962- minor recession

1962-1966- upswing and boom

1967- emerging stagnation

1968- slight reflation shortlived

1969-1971- recession and growing unemployment

1972-1973- sharp upswing but high inflation

1974- oil crisis, stagnation, re-emergence of continual mass unemployment

(continued....)





*Near full employment was maintained between early 1964 and early 1966.*  
(wage rises had to be restrained to some extent by government incomes policies)

By comparison, 1974 saw a simultaneous failure to meet all four main government economic objectives: adequate economic growth, full employment, stable balance of payments, stable prices.

Production in the first quarter of 1974 fell by 5.5%, affected the three day working week, temporarily imposed by the government in response to the overtime ban and then strike in the coal mining industry. The miners' strike was settled and full-time working was restored by an incoming labour government in 1974. By 1975, the labour chancellor Dennis Healey was announcing big cuts in state spending and rises in taxes. Unemployment continues to grow....

"Inflation" after 1967 had also began to grow, and by 1970 came the "wage explosion". This could not just be attributed to pressure of demand for labour as by 1970 unemployment had already risen to quite a high level compared to the "full employment" of the mid sixties.

The wage explosion appeared to reflect a general increase in militancy by the rank and file of the trade unions angered by the near stagnation of real earnings and real disposable incomes between 1967 and 1970, and was also influenced by militancy in other countries. Once begun, the wage explosion was further maintained by the growth of expectations that prices would continue to rise rapidly.

1972- "Wage-price spiral" in full swing, both wage and price increases accelerated. In November the government tries to intervene with a pay and price freeze, followed in 1973 by a "price and pay code"

Ted Heath etc.: In 1970 the conservative government had disbanded the National Board for Prices and Incomes. To curb "inflation" it started by maintaining the economy in recession, and squeezed company liquidity to encourage lower wage rises and more lay-offs. It also attempted to resist wage demands in the state sector at the cost of provoking long strikes, e.g. in electricity supply, the post office, and in coal mining. The miners' strike of 1972 was particularly strong, and successfully won big gains. The post office strike ended in more of a compromise.

The government measures were by no means a sure remedy for the "inflation spiral". Even its strategy of deterring high wage demands by maintaining high unemployment was dropped in the reflationary budget of 1972. The government switched to placing its faith in the infamous Act for the Reform of Industrial Relations, to try and solve the problem of wage inflation.

1972- Marked increase in the number and seriousness of strikes. The national miners strike accounted for 10 million of the 24 million working days "lost" in 1972. Main cause of strikes: pay claims. In the six months between the first and third quarters of 1972 average weekly earnings rose by no less than 7%. Even the expectation of an impending government freeze only encouraged further wage and price increases!  
Jan 1974: The National Union of Mineworkers, feeling strongly that their *relative* pay had fallen, but also recognising their new bargaining power resulting from the oil crisis, refused to settle under the government's price and pay code. A national overtime ban had begun in Nov 73 which in Jan 74 became a new national strike. In Nov 73 the government declared a state of emergency, and in January 74 introduced a three day working-week (!!!) for industry, and periodic power cuts, in order to conserve coal and coal-dependent electricity.

The government was effectively forced to call a general election. The pay board reported just after the election, they recommended that an additional increase be paid to the miners on the grounds that the long-run contraction of the industry would in future be reversed and that higher relative pay would be necessary to recruit and to retain more miners (!). The pay increase and recommendations were accepted by the incoming labour government.

The Labour Party came to power pledged to deal firmly with prices, but to abandon statutory wage controls. It took early action on rents and food prices by means of controls and subsidies. By July 1974 the pay board was abolished and the policies of compulsory wage restraint ended.

During the February 1974 general election, an agreement between the TUC and the Labour Party had been announced known as the SOCIAL CONTRACT. The hope was that, in return for the repeal of the 1972 Industrial Relations Act, the TUC would be able to persuade its members to cooperate in a programme of *voluntary* wage restraint. In this way it was hoped to avoid the strains caused by formal incomes policies which appeared to trade unions to leave them without any particular role to play. Under a voluntary system they could still do their job of bargaining about wage rates.

By early 1975 it was feared the Social Contract was failing. If the government continued to reject a statutory incomes policy, it was argued, the only alternative would be highly restrictive budgetary policies-  
monetarism etc.....







**Before** anyone starts blaming “Thatcher” and “Thatcherism” for so much of the hung over current misery, let us remind ourselves that it was actually Dennis Healey and Jim Callaghan who first went cap in hand groveling to the International Monetary Fund and introduced full on monetarist policies into the UK. The Tories subsequently built on what the other lot had started.

By the end of the seventies the constant set piece industrial showdowns, culminating in the “winter of discontent”, between employers and organized sectors of labour in both private and state sectors, who still had entrenched collective bargaining power, were becoming increasingly stuck and deadlocked. For the majority who were not directly involved in these collective struggles in industry, the experience was increasingly one of stagnation, service interruption in the community, and the perception of a growing “chaos”.

The Grunwick’s dispute, which began as a small local dispute around a photo processing laboratory in north west London was then seized on by wider organized bosses’ forces and the state and turned into a laboratory exercise for designing and testing the archetypal lock out entrapment model for breaking other strikes.

Come the end of the seventies, millions of working class people were sufficiently bored and pissed off with the stagnation and atmosphere of chaos to join large numbers of the middle classes in voting for Thatcher. She promised a radical way out of the deadlock, and appealed to workers’ aspirations for individual rather than collective advancement.

Part of our mistake at that time was that we still did not fully understand what the real agenda of the ruling elite had become. Many of us still thought that they just wanted us to be more patriotic, more loyal to industry, more hardworking, and to work for lower pay without teabreak in order to boost Britain’s industrial efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness, so they could sell more manufactured goods to the world.

What we didn’t fully realize was that many of the big bosses and capitalists in the UK were already completely fed up with the whole game of continually having to argue at home over productivity with industrial workers. Whether the workers were being a little less productive or a little more productive, the whole ritual of arguing about it had become a time wasting drag for them, and they wanted to free up their capital globally. Behind the scenes their real agenda had now become to *smash* the majority of the industries, shut them down, reduce their immediate dependence on them, and push them abroad. Domestically they wanted to shift mainly to a service economy, and a financial bubble economy centred on the city.

Thatcher began by pushing unemployment up to over 3 million, putting down a wave of inner city revolts, staging a small patriotic flag waving war over the Falklands, and testing and improving Grunwick style strike breaking techniques in the Warrington printworks dispute.

Then came the war on the miners, an attack that had been ten years in preparation. Thatcher didn’t just shut a few mines. Some mine closures had slowly been going on since the sixties and before, and the majority of mines aren’t particularly healthy places anyway. What she did, out of bitterness and class hatred, was to ruin and destroy whole miners’ communities, destroy their social fabric, destroy their strong rebellious spirit, and their material ability to sustain themselves. At the time this was going on I joined in local picketing at Didcot power station, participated in support demos in London, and went to the usual benefit concerts and events. But as most of the “action” was hundreds of miles away I remember having to spend most of the time at home watching the events unfold on the telly.

Two years later, with King Coal slain, my political education progressed with support for the regular picket line battles outside Murdoch’s newspaper printworks at Wapping. This was a pre-arranged set up that descended from tragedy into farce.

Rather than “winning the cold war and bringing it to swift end”, Maggie’s love-in with Reagan deliberately prolonged the cold war with the Soviet Union by another ten years, threatening Europe with cruise missiles. It was at this point that the seeds of *Al Qaeda* were originally sown with the west’s covert but large-scale support for Islamist mercenaries bringing terrorist sabotage to undermine the secular bureaucratic state in Afghanistan, and in doing so drawing the Soviet Union into a snare.

To celebrate her demise, some people are calling for a party in Trafalgar Square London the evening that Thatcher dies (she might hang on for another ten years or more). I’m not enthusiastic about this idea myself. If Thatcher dies a natural death it means she will have effectively gone unpunished, so we will be celebrating her victory. In any case, the war crimes of Blair and Brown, with their own love-in with the sinister post-shachtmanite-trotskyist-unipolarist neocon neoimperialists, and the Bush-Cheney grab-it-while-it’s-there peak oil gang, are measurably worse than anything Thatcher did. Anti-toryism and token anti-toffism in the British context too easily becomes a default cover up for the Labour state, and for the *British imperial labour corporatism* that helps keep it going.





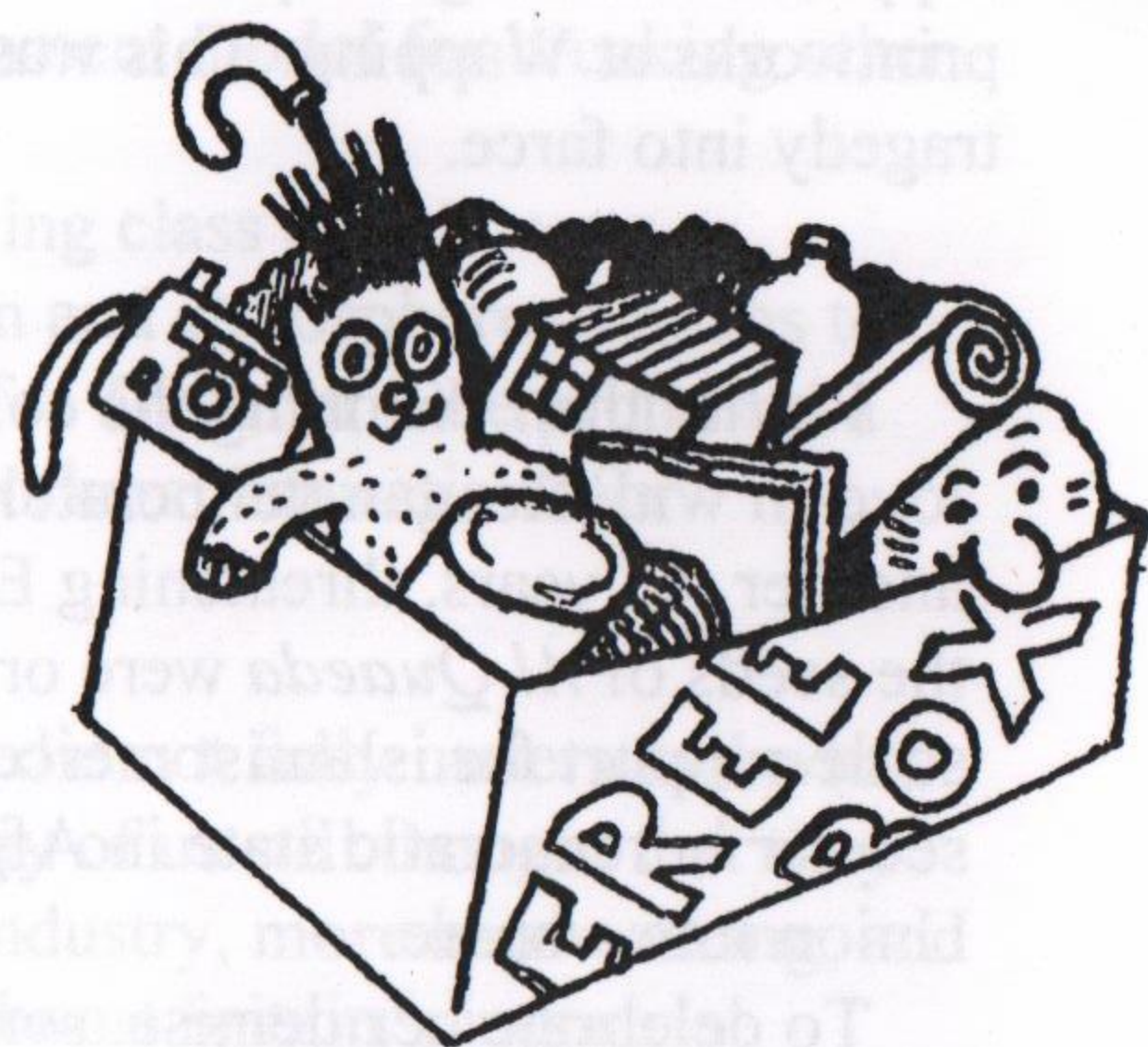
## (NOT FOR VEGGIES!)

One of the most revolutionary social programme of Gora was the Beef and Pork functions. These functions were intended to make both Hindus and Muslims to become aware of the customs imposed on them by their respective religions with regard to their food habits. He wanted everyone to act as human in choosing one's own find and not to hate what others ate. Through these programmes Gora attempted to change people from religious sectarianism to social harmony. Though the Beef and Pork programmes looked outrageous from orthodox Hindu and Muslim points of view, from the point of view of National Integration and Social harmony, they are of great significance.

ATHEIST. November 2006

Atheist Centre, Benz Circle,  
Vijayawada 520 010, INDIA.

The rise of freedom does not stop with fighting faith in the existence of god. It fights every curb on the expression of freedom and truthfulness. In the modern age, it fights political dictatorship, economic capitalism, social traditionalism, philosophical determinism, and forms of centralization, which belittle the individual. The modern shackles do not postulate a god or after-life. Nevertheless they smother individual freedom as severely as religious belief does. They constitute "godless theism". Marxian materialism, which subordinates the individual to circumstances, is a typical example of godless theism. By the assertion of the freedom of the individual and truthfulness of knowledge, atheism opposes both godly and godless theisms



Over 5 million people of working age are currently on benefits of some sort and not in work in the UK.

## BRIEF WHINGES



Yes we are still here,..., waiting the big wait, counting the days and a half, moving and progressing only slowly, waiting for some big pop or bang or crunch or whatever it is that is supposed to happen...

In the short run the neo-despotists can't be fully overcome. For the most part, apart from little grumbles, we can only try and hide from their immediate grasp and hope that some of us survive. While we are weak these global juggernauts will mostly have to run their course. We have to wait for them while they get on with the business of making their next big set of decisions for our world.

Processes always involve TIME. Social revolution and social evolution won't happen in an instant, and they are not successfully going to be rushed. They will take their own time. We need a long period of many struggles to make sure we get things right.

**True story:** I wanted to protest against council green con recycling, but somebody stole my green recycling bin from outside my flat.

**Is genetic modification** of plants always such a bad thing?

It is a harmful waste of time trying to use G.M. to produce herbicide resistant crops so you can splosh more herbicide around trying to kill the poor weeds, which will only end up getting stronger.

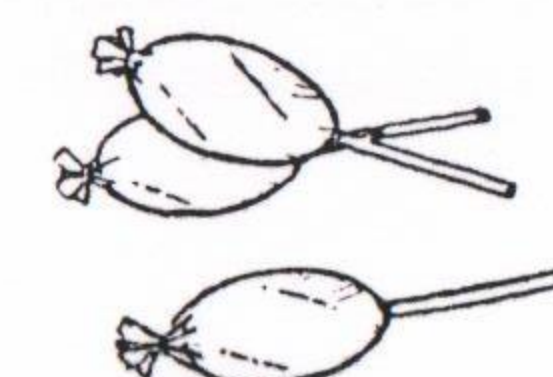
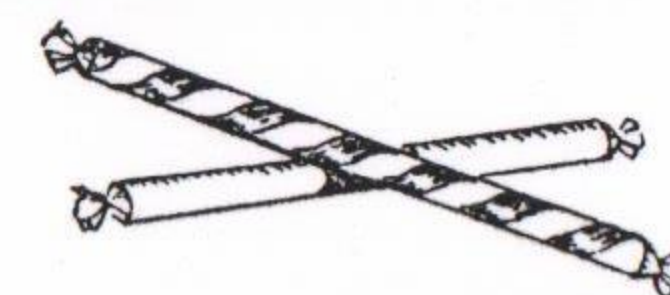
Instead why not use a little bit of G.M. to deliberately produce superweeds that are also edible? A new commons; wild artichokes growing through cracks in the pavement, wild lettuces spontaneously popping up all over lawns and golf courses,...

**Whether feudal dependency**, bureaucratic dependency, wage labour dependency, or drug dependency, dependency is always some form of serfdom. Won't the currently trendy notion of "mutual-interdependency" just promote mutually imposed serfdom?

Better independence with liberty and voluntary cooperation, and free solidarity built there-upon.

**We are pampered** by the rich and powerful state that we are supposedly trying to overthrow. We demand the protection of its laws while we plot insurrection.

Meanwhile we used to be productive labourers in one of the workshops of the world, now we just sit and watch films and videos, and stuff our gobs sitting in veggie buffets.







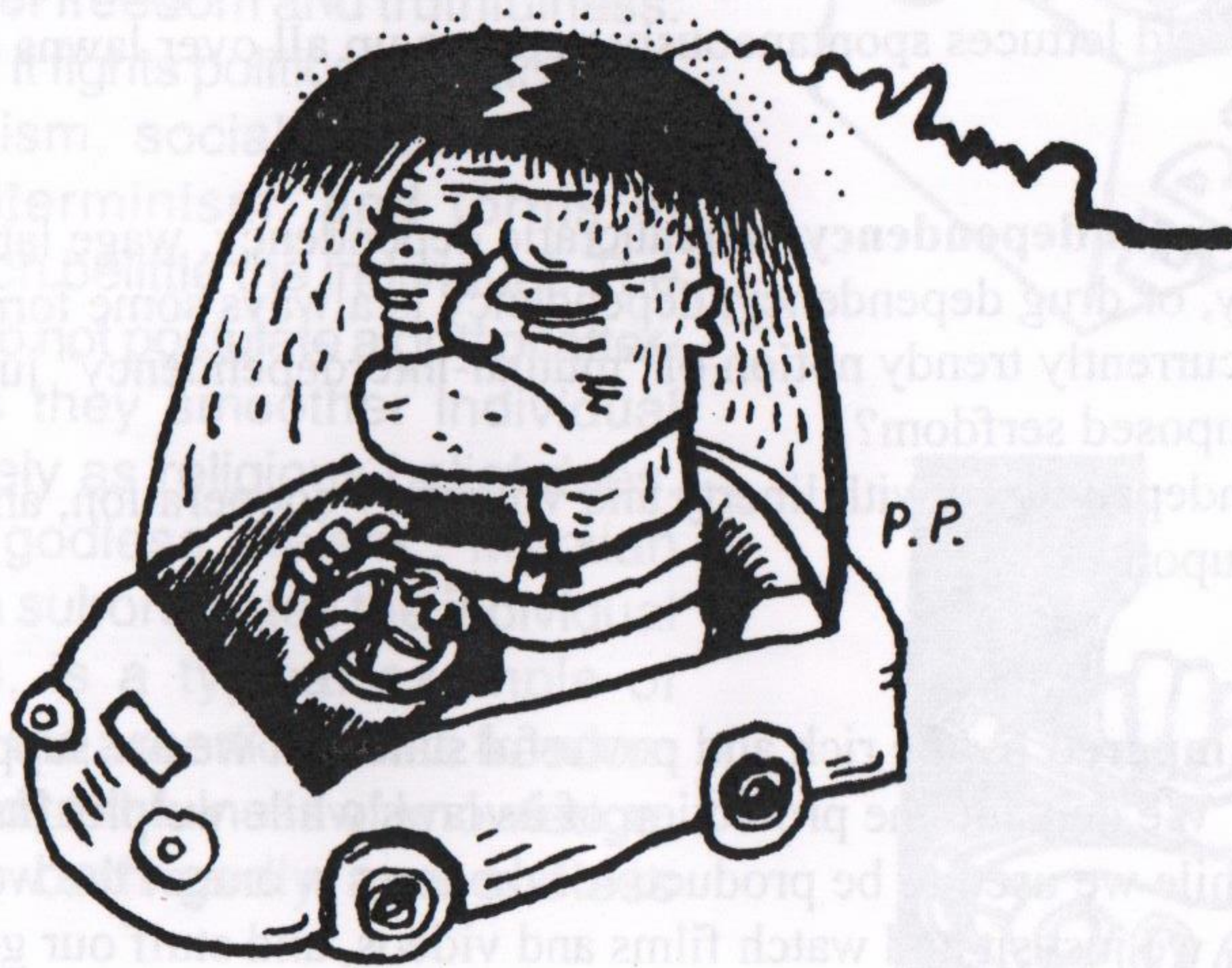
If total social historical "epochs" really have any meaningful existence, then how exactly does one "epoch" change into another? Do they change all of a sudden in one instant revolutionary crash bang wallop? Do we wake up one morning to the sound of the tannoy announcing "Hi-di-hi campers, the epoch has now changed, you no longer need to pay money in the canteen"?

Or is it more of a messy contested process going on for many decades, possibly centuries, with many parallel processes and developments in play at once? Systemic polyfurcation isn't just a pick-you-up tonic or some kind of hair restorer you know.

If you take a monolithic absolutist approach to struggle then you are likely to promote a monolithic absolutist outcome. If you take a pluralistic approach to struggles then you are likely to promote pluralistic outcomes. It depends what your preferences are in life really.

**What we might say** to those ultra-lefties, post situs, and autonomist marxoids, and so on who spend all their time waffling and droning on about "value" is this: *free circulating value is only half the story....* the other half of the story, which is growing and becoming increasingly "autonomous", is; managerialism/ state bureaucracy/ modern neo-despotism... It isn't even clear any more that there is only one story, in practice there are a number of different divergent stories all queuing up to clobber us.

**These murky and ominous things** going on in the world at the moment: It might not just be the decline of capital Mr Tictin, it could turn out to be the decline of *everybody and everything!*



*The following paragraphs are quoted from "The Continuing Appeal of Religion" written by Troploin in 2006. The full text, which looks at why there is a religious revival and why religion has not declined in the modern world, should be at <http://troploin0.free.fr> or you can write to them at: AREDHIS, BP 20306, 60203 Compiègne Cedex, France.*

"Capital today cannot afford to treat nature as an infinitely exploitable inert mass. Business has to care about renewable energy, biodiversity, climate change and the saving of resources. Nature is no longer regarded as an inexhaustible reserve, but as a common good to handle with care. What could stay out of the balance sheet in 1900 (the depletion of resources, the exhaustion of the workers, fresh water shortages, the destruction caused by sprawling cities, pollution-induced diseases, the drying up of rivers and seas, the transformation of fertile land into dust bowls...) must now be included in the costs, measured, managed and reduced, otherwise capital will kill the goose with the golden eggs and block its valorization. Nobody now worships progress as they did in the 19th century.

Relentless technological pursuits, as in genetics, nanotechnology, universal digitalization, etc., go together with a call to limits: Let's be reasonable, let's have garbage selection, let's cycle to work, let's eat organic cereals instead of beef steaks, because the culprit, the ultimate responsible for waste, is none other than you and me. The End Is Near: Repent!

To be truthful, in such an analysis, some are more equal than others, and two categories have trouble fitting in to this *you and me*. At the top, the very rich, the selfish minority that drives Rolls Royces and cares neither about the misery of many, nor about the future of us all. And at the bottom, sadly enough, a large proportion of the Western working class which remains addicted to TV, heavy smoking, red meat, cars and other symbols of consumer society, just as it too often sticks to sexist, homophobic and racist prejudices. The best thing would be to have society run by the enlightened educated middle class, teachers, social workers, artists, etc., aptly described by Philip Roth as "the limit loving class". Unfortunately, and in spite of a million statements that such a middle class would now be the sociological majority in Europe, Japan and North America, that middle remains desperately middleish, too small in number and social leverage."

We like these paragraphs. On a quick side note though, I am not sure about that last sentence. Although they might still be numerically a minority in the west, it might be argued that the "limit loving class" already have *far too much* social leverage. In the form of layers of petit bureaucracy and petit social managerialism, in alliance with stuffy busy-body do-gooders, ban the thing campaigners, and professional community activists, they are increasingly domineering in daily life....



Rather than criticizing or "replying" to any particular point from the Troploin extract, we are just going to use the quotes from Troploin as a starting point to wander off sideways and explore our own thoughts on some of these matters...

A big issue here is that of natural resource limitations. Both governments and corporations in recent years have jumped on the back of the notion of "resource limits" to make ideological propaganda for their own purposes; "sustainability", for instance, comes to mean *sustainability of their system*. But despite this the problems of resource limitations, together with the problems of eco-system damage and collapse, remain very real problems that are creeping up on us.

I don't think it is good enough if we, out of bad lazy theoretical habit, just want to carry on reducing it all to total sociological constructionism, perhaps by arguing that resource limit problems are all "socially constructed" (yawn!) and are therefore merely a question of social relations and their overthrow etc. Part of the reason the social discourse is forced to speak louder and louder about notions of resource limits is in order to give expression to the limits of any and all social relations as such, limits which are now knocking loudly on the door demanding attention. Human "social relations" are not totally subsuming and all encompassing, they too have limits. As well as social relations there are also *things*, and part of the time things go beyond social relations.

The usual mantra that gets trotted out is "humans are social beings", but this is tautology. But people are not just human, they are also part animal, part not-human, and animals are also part *thing*. The problem of resource limits is no longer just a crisis for capital and state, and a crisis for populations while they are in the process of being exploited and oppressed under capital and state, but it has now also become a crisis for modern notions of "communism" as well. The resource crisis and the ecosystem crisis have now reached such an extent and involve such long term damage that they now threaten to transcend any particular human "mode of production".



The problem can't be straightforwardly dealt with just by changing the humans "social relations", because part of the problem has gone beyond the particular social relations, part of the problem concerns our very existence as *things*. The problem is now bigger than what can be immediately subsumed within any old or new social relations. This throws up awkward questions concerning the limits of "communism".

Some radicals in the sixties, like the situationists, thought that transition and waiting for the right conditions to create communist revolution were no longer necessary, and the whole world could immediately jump to total communism.

Because the means of production by the sixties had developed to such a high level, and there was such capacity for rampant overproduction, then everybody's needs and desires could be immediately abundantly fulfilled.

However, even in its own time, there were always a number of problems with this argument. There is certainly massive overproduction in the world but much of it is a pile of harmful junk that is not what we actually need, or hasn't much use, or isn't anything we really wanted. The distribution system worldwide has been developed and structured to precisely misdistribute goods and services.

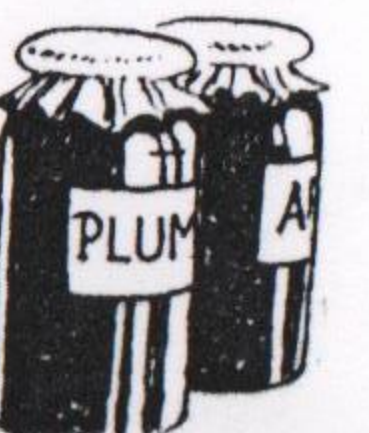
In practise, materially switching from a capitalist driven production to alternative useful production can be a difficult complicated process that involves time, new products may have to be designed, new production processes set up etc.. And even if worker and community forces were able to autonomously seize means of production on a large scale across several countries and start producing things for use, then there is still the problem of *distribution*. Specific questions of material *resource allocation* between different individuals and communities have to be critically dealt with, it is no good hiding behind vague generalities of "producing for the common good" or "producing for the whole of society".

The rebuilding of the whole infrastructure to facilitate the distribution of useful goods and services to whom and to where they are really needed could prove a major effort consuming extra reserves, resources, and labour, beyond the immediate social production and immediate reserves, and could take many years.

There is also an added danger of wars and elite sabotage. Capitalist economic decay leads to periodic destruction and waste of parts of its own production and resources. More specifically, ruling political elites in their crisis may deliberately seek to destroy material goods, machines, buildings, and destroy health, food, and water supplies to prevent them falling into the hands of workers and communities. All these possible problems could already be argued about in the 1960s.

But today we are now much more consciously aware of resource limits, eco-damage, eco-chaos, and the further damage and harm that the eco-chaos then goes on to create. In the meanwhile, the global human population has jumped from roughly 3 billion in 1960 to fast approaching 7 billion any year now. More than half the world population are now crowded in urban areas and are dispossessed from the land. This occurs alongside a growing agriculture and water crisis in many parts of the world.

There is dangerous over-dependence on industrial agriculture. Industrial agriculture is a disaster for a whole range of reasons, but in particular it depends on more and more *high inputs* to sustain it, including manufactured fertilizers, energy, machines, transport, a modern labour force, all of which have a big dependency on oil. Today, virtually everyone on the planet who is capable of reading a newspaper knows in the back of their mind that oil is finite and, probably within their lifetime, is going to start running out.





Even serious grumpy characters like Marx and Bordiga, despite their romanticizing and fetishising of industrialization and proletarianisation, could see the long-term need to redress the imbalance between town and countryside with its inherent social distortions, deformations, and heavy divisions of labour. Redressing the imbalance between town and country doesn't mean getting rid of towns like the neo-primitivists think. But what it will have to mean is ending the domination of the country and the population by towns, decentralizing towns, making them more self-sufficient, and much less demanding on the rest of the land. Specific material agendas for transition are necessary and can't be dodged.

It will take at least a generation of transitional struggle, still dealing with much social difference and conflict to re-adjust the massive social and material imbalances in the world. This is before we can get to any reasonably evenly sorted out harmony and balance, which would be needed as a starting point to create any ideal of "world socialism" worth having. There is no immediate total resolution of all problems. Despite the romanticism and idealism of the revolutionary, there is no imminent total mystical "negation" or "suspension" or "aufheben" or total revolution resolving everything that one can wait for at the bus stop.

In China for instance, despite all the excitement about the rapid and aggressive industrialization and development, there are still several hundred million peasants and small farmers and farm workers with family ties to part of the land. Capitalist development in China cannot immediately dissolve all the peasants or absorb them all into the industrial proletariat, which is not going to "universalize" anyway, but to the contrary is going to reach a limit as many of the industries become more technologically and capital intensive. A clumsy ultra-leftist workerism that tries to center everything totally on an industrial proletariat is a mistake.

In reality, alongside large-scale industrial agriculture, and despite encroachment and enclosure, the system still needs to continue reproducing and developing a significant sector of millions of small farmers and carry them into the modern world in order to support the rest of the system(s).

If all China's peasants were to successfully stage a social insurrection and totally communize their immediate conditions and villages and production, it would threaten starvation to the urban population who depend on them to produce and hand over a large surplus. Even if, out of love and solidarity, they voluntarily continue within their communes to produce and hand over a large surplus to the cities, a situation which would imply not strictly communism but some compromise form of transitional socialism, there is still a danger of them objectively self-harming as they would still be overworking themselves and overworking their land. Such objective self-harm could damage their future ability to sustain their own reproduction, threatening themselves and everyone else in the process.

Negotiating the rebalancing of imbalanced relations between modern small farming communities and urbanized workers will still be a tricky business and is not a problem that is immediately fully resolvable. At the same time the struggles of radical elements amongst small farmers could sometimes be a useful tactical complement to the struggles of urban workers, and point to a possible way out of being stuck in the eco-crisis.

If there is a need for some sort of "transition" to help get things right, then what sort of transitional forms would we prefer? Do we want state socialism and forced centralized collectivism, whether bureaucratic or even if it technically calls itself "democratic"? - NO! Rebalancing the world doesn't mean centrally imposed five year plans- themselves a recipe for more misproduction and misdistribution. We've been through that misery before and we don't want it back.

Maybe some kind of libertarian socialist movement of many movements, involving diverse horizontal federations and networks of autonomous communities, mutualist social cooperatives, radical groups and individuals, voluntary collectives, even non-predominant small social markets, could play a part.... But within all these compromises there will still be a need for ongoing struggles.

So yes, my politics in recent years have shifted a bit from a monohistorical monocoastist absolutist ultra-left communism to more of a multifaceted libertarian socialist mutualism of sorts....

Paul 2007

