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MAYDAY #01

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MAGAZINE FOR ANARCHIST/LIBERTARIAN IDEAS AND ACTION

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...having a law!

Launch issue [Introduction/Open letter - The Tribe of Wombles - Autonomous Anti Fascism - 1967-2007 A Socialist Review ...plus much more]

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Congratulations to you for spending the energy and money digesting this, thinking outside preset parameters, it should be to all our benefits. Firstly though, thanks to all the contributors and designers, those who helped with finance, and not least to you, the reader, because the success of this project depends upon your participation in spreading it, a donation here, a print out and an introduction there, and perhaps contributing, news, cuttings, drawing, articles, slogans or whatever. contact us at maydaymag@hotmail.co.uk

Intro.....Open letter

This article sets out the problems we think are important at this point in history, dealing with; Political practice, left political groups, economics, history, New Labour, and government process. The layout, format, and price of MM07 bridges and blurs the formats of a 'magazine', and a 'journal'. In order to present ideas in the depth necessary to suggest new approaches are necessary; to be happening, and to show what is possible with a little application.

This Mayday publication was intended for the 40th anniversary of the first New Left Manifesto, May 1967. Originally, many of those who left the Communist party were to form this New Left, including Christopher Hill, Raphael Samuel, EP Thompson, and many others. The "1967 New Left Mayday Manifesto" was edited by E.P. Thompson, S. Hall and R. Williams, and had many well known supporters. It was re-printed many times and translated into many more languages.

Their themes of regeneration of the working class movement and analysis of the political situation have instructive things to say about the present period. There is a dangerous gap between label and reality, between power and the people, between our human needs and the deadening practices of the political, economic and media systems. Any perspective today must have explanations of the current situation and the way forward for the whole working class movement, otherwise it is merely reductionist and utopian. The crisis on the left now is the decimation of Left wing parties, and the lack of new politics to tackle these huge issues, cannot be tackled with 'more of the same'.

This magazine is also aimed at the spirit of freedom to be found in those who have left the authoritarian left behind for whatever reason. Or those who marched with CND, danced with UB40 and the Clash, or took part in any of the Labour

movement struggles, as it is time for the practical renewal of progressive working class politics; to unite, and to spread our new agenda and perspectives.

Some leftists remain trapped in the mindset inherited from authoritarian socialism. In these new technological times however, it is the spirit of liberation and skill sharing which has the political dynamic, most visible on the anarchist movement. Especially in the years following J18 (June 18th 1999), Mayday 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003. Though we want to celebrate success and be critical too where it is warranted, as this will help reform our movements onto the next cycle of struggle.

'The Tribe of Wombles' describes the socio-economic context of Wombling free during Maydays, whilst we are aware that a new social movement has yet to grow. The editorial in Upping the Anti issue 3, from "Autonomy and Solidarity" in Canada, speaks of 'the mysterious death of the anti globalisation movement' and 'the problems of activists relating to the anti War movement'. It is by considering the growth of our struggles and movement and by participating in praxis (the joining up of theory and practice) that Mayday hopes to be of use for diverse and unaligned people and peoples. Attempts at progressive political renewal are occurring all around the world, whether it is Red Anarchist or the North Eastern Federation of Anarchist Communists, Zabalaza - South African anarchist communists, Refoundation Communist,

and the Federation dei Communist Anarchist in Italy, Platypus in Chicago and many, many, more.

Platypus in their 2006 document, "On Surviving the Extinction of the Left" say; 'We maintain that past and present history need not indicate the future. Past and present failures and losses on the Left should educate and warn, but not spellbind and enthrall us. Hence, to free ourselves, we declare that the Left is dead. - Or, more precisely, that we are all that is left of it. This is less a statement of fact than of intent - The intent that the Left should live, but the recognition that it can, only by overcoming itself. And we are that overcoming!'

This is a spirit which Mayday has much in common with although we include the anarchist movement in this assessment, and it is through engagement with groups who are beginning again that serious progress may occur. We hope to include more analysis of different groups' attempts to be innovative in these new times in theory and in practice, including different tactics, agitational methods of presentation, and alliances and campaigns. Further, some groups do not alter their practice even though evidence shows that they need to reconsider. Instead they merely reproduce old theory in new clothes which is totally inappropriate at best. Anarchists on the other hand can be as stale as the authoritarian left. Mayday feels we have incorporated the innovations in practice and theory made during the anti-globalisation cycle of struggles into our politics, and now this magazine aims to participate in the birth of the next cycle too.

The title Mayday was chosen to emphasize that this is a new project which has knowledge of the relevant past, and which is seeking to cut fresh ways forward. That is thinking of and practicing innovative working methods and alliances for our movement of movements. As such this participatory project will develop on the basis of feedback and involvement, so that even the title Mayday is open to change at some stage, reflecting the new priorities of those who seek something sensitive to political practice and reflection. Ordinary magazines present a finished 'this is it' approach which cannot possibly be true; however we seek to approach truth through grounded theory and practice.

Therefore, this magazine is aimed at those who have lost confidence in the socialist project, those Marxist Humanists who follow in the New Left tradition, other open Marxists, and thinking anarchists. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, the anarchist movement shares similar problems to Leftism. One of which is conservatism and that means the hierarchies and some groups are more concerned with the continuation of themselves rather than the growth of an independent and free working class movement.

Another is an anti-intellectualism, which has meant that the anarchist movement is full of lions led by donkeys. This argument is also suggestive of hidden hierarchies inside outwardly democratic appearances. The counterpart to anti intellectualism is over intellectualism, such as www.libcom.org. Rather than ground themselves in the political practice of our times, these libertarian

youth over emphasize the possibilities of pure web based workerist anarchism which is barely distinguishable from failed and failing Left Communism, a feature typically of orthodox 'anarchist communists'. A famous figure of the New Left, E.P. Thompson, correctly criticised those who do not base their politics in real historical subjects, which means actual men and women in social struggles who have made their own history and will make it again.

Alternatively, others use a primitive workerism that fetishises some working class culture, or seeks to constrain the spirit of liberation within one-dimensional respectable working class forms. This infers a problem already mentioned - the hidden structures even in the most apparently democratic organisations. Mayday will warmly receive any articles suggesting new organisational practices, as well as those considering how to improve our tactics of spreading class struggles.

Mayday was produced because experience within political movements led to dissatisfaction with what already passes for politics and political organisation. Rather than enabling progressive politics, existing practice was rather sectarian in approach; they practice self-isolating politics rather than an inclusive and growing approach, and this even from anarchists. Loyalty to groups/projects is touching, and so is attachment to a grand idea, but ultimately it is a fruitless endeavour. At best, this is dreaming rather than autonomous struggle based politics, and at worse a mere copying of Leninist tactics which are designed to continue the organisation not the class struggle (Franks, 2006).

We must go beyond artificial boundaries we set for ourselves, or that which becomes traditional practice. Most of the movement acts as if it is in a ghetto, magazines may as well be for internal use only, and they are self-defining and separate themselves from wider society. Others have retired from political engagement, but now is time to re-engage perhaps in the space this new magazine brings. For others who are isolated for whatever reason, the exchange of ideas, practice and solidarity through the circulation of knowledge Mayday encourages contributes to the spreading of struggles.

Mayday wants to use the political space generated by the crisis in orthodox politics, the decimation of the Left, and the inspiration created by the Anti Globalisation movement to develop ideas for the next cycle of struggles. Subscribe, draw, photograph, design, write, and just do it. After all, if we want realistic dynamic and popular independent politics, this must be based upon dynamic and popular practice in the issues of our time.

We will outline why the political situation is ripe for joined up thinking in the technological age, as this is the way we can attempt to tackle the many different problems that face us all today. Why such an approach is not only timely but also politically necessary, and why such political experimentation can develop in practice political attitudes based in and relevant to issues that face us. Most Leftist and anarchist concepts and strategies are still based upon conditions existing decades in the past, rather than in the new spaces and conditions of the 21st century.

Where we were?

Though we have passed the time of the cold war and the threat of imminent nuclear war, new and dramatic threats are encouraged as a means to rule and contain us. Whether it is the risk of environmental catastrophe, a threat of terror, or the threat of crime – posed by the unruly – the young, those who wear hooded tops, those who drink too much or take drugs. A common factor running through these issues is fear. Fear is more directly experienced in risks within society, such as to your; health, housing, lifestyle, work, and education. They are constantly reinventing fear and insecurity, although there are some still who feel the government 'can look after us' despite evidence to the contrary.

The widening net of detention, border policing, and Government policy focussing on identity in all areas, combines with traditional fears such as drugs and the poor, to build the 21st century authoritarian Market Security state. England and Wales have become the gulag of Western Europe with the highest levels of incarceration, whilst the U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration of any modern developed state. With deindustrialisation, new service-orientated jobs have employed some, but large amounts of people have disappeared into the black economy of drugs and crime. Industry has shipped to India and China mainly in search of cheaper labour. It has coincided with the Criminal Justice system virtually trebling in size since the early 1970s, and growth shows no signs of slowing down. However, this was not a coincidence but part of the restructuring necessary to usher in Neo-Liberal capitalism, the 'non-coincidental coincidence'. More police, more prisons, and more law that at any other time in history have not improved society. In the first 7 years of the third millennium the vast majority of those punished in the overcrowded criminal justice system are, either poor or socially vulnerable.

It is not that people have become more criminogenic in Britain, one of the richest countries of the world; it is that the capitalists have chosen to vilify a section of the class to blame for capitalism failings, and as a means to reproduce its power. The state, ran by conservative bureaucrats, has seen fit to imprison growing numbers of women, the young, ethnic minorities, and those with 'untreatable personality disorders' in alarming numbers.

There has been a movement away from the welfare state; a cut in funds and ideological support, for social projects that support people. With a corresponding increase in funding, for the direct control mechanism of the state; the criminal justice system. This is entirely expedient and deliberate on behalf of the capitalist state, though presented as normal. In fact, what they are engaged in is normalised repression. This is experienced by participants and their audience as the depoliticisation of these deliberate activities and the creation of 'crime', in order to maintain the appearance of neutrality. Research published by the Crime and Society Foundation in November 2006 by David Downes and Hansen has shown links between welfare cuts and incarceration in Europe and North America that are too prolific to be coincidence.

For the victims of this process the distinction between the 'criminal outsider' and the working class on many estates has broken down in 2 directions which often overlap. One forced upon people because of economic insecurity – they can make money selling drugs, tobacco, alcohol, counterfeits, and stolen and shoplifted property with more autonomy and respect than they get in official labour markets, and the other a self-destructive alienating path. It is these income mixes, with part time insecure work too, that are particularly important.

Only the ignorant (The Sun journalists) are not questioning the terms of political engagement in the face of alien and thwarting official Labour and Tory politics (Daily Mail editorial, 3.4.06). Everybody knows the Government and media manipulate, often openly aggressively and cynically. They take well-meaning support for good policy that could look after the population, and change meanings, take causes and use them for their own ends. Whilst their formal agenda is improvement e.g. housing, health, education, their informal agenda is the spread of neo-liberal policy and practices. The only options presented are neo-liberal ones, as they encourage practices and spread resources unevenly which further divide and rule an already precarious society.

Government seems to be our own creation but now stands against us, as the open agent of money and power. They try to create a bogus conviviality between social groups, and succeed only in the boardrooms. Governments are elected by promising to listen, but they never do. The real business of government distributes resources among competing elites, in private, by 'quangos' and numerous local and national offices of government.

Contrary to mythology, business has never regarded democracy as a means whereby power is shared and distributed. Instead, 'democracy' and its organisation itself becomes a structure to negotiate, manipulate, influence, and pay off. Every administrative act is an aesthetic performance, an exercise of political public relations, note the way that bureaucracy's such as the police, universities, NHS, councils, etc. release and control policy and money to the media, itself ran by corporations. The use and waste of the public's money repeatedly by government is one of the pathetic tales of our time. Endless reports are produced focussed on the minutiae of existing policy programmes and these feed into the Welfare Reform Green paper, the Freud report, etc. There is nothing new in these papers and instead these reports say what the minister who set them up wants to hear. There is nothing open, new nor independent about them. Yet they present the agenda along nice and easy lines, all the ministers have to do is get their make up done ready for TV.

The remaining nationalised industries within the state are the remaining power bases of the organised working class, and it is instructive that so far New Labour has avoided taking every sector on at once over the pensions issue, but remains as bullish against one sector e.g. fire-fighters, as the Thatcher government was against the miners and others.

Applied Autonomism in British conditions

Though many no longer see themselves as 'British', Mayday will concern itself with difficult issues of praxis in English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish areas and respect the differences. We will aim to be as international as we can, although language difficulties suggest we maybe confined to the English speaking world (a de facto global language). Though, increasingly radicals will have to engage with more languages as the nationwide presence of 500k Polish speakers testifies. Also, we will consider the positive and negative within social life in a non-judgemental manner, and the biblical saying that 'he who is without sin should throw the first stone' is something that will be applied to those who criticise without attaching the terms of their own criticism to themselves. This combination of internal and external politics is able to build popular confidence in autonomous politics, again.

Originally, trade unionism was a radical demand, and workers who promoted them were killed, transported, and persecuted, but now what has happened to trade unions is symptomatic of the general crises within the working class movement. Employment is high, but trade union numbers relatively low, and this is because of temporary contracts and informalisation, reintroduced to raise the rate of profit. Any new political approach must seek to have a working practice which is able to develop progressive politics in these conditions, and must involve the new working classes, mainly migrants. The 1970s black slogan – Here to stay Here to fight – must be brought alive, again. There are already signs that the absence of a welfare system for migrants refused benefits for the first year of working in Britain, and that is if they are registered, is producing a crisis situation for many Polish people. It is also allowing divide and rule as other homeless people are identifying these Poles as the problem rather than the government and capital who have created the situation (Sunday Times magazine cover story, "Don't Go West", 25.2.07). Rather than any easy and safe campaigning (read 'ineffective'), radicals have a responsibility to practice solutions and politics in these human crisis situations of our time.

In June 2006 an American Marxist Humanist group could write; "There is no greater sign of the renewal of freedom movements in the U.S. than the marches for immigrant rights. The rapid emergence of this movement is a response to the globalization of capital, which has forced millions off the land in Latin America through free trade agreements. The separation of the laborers from the objective conditions of production has led growing numbers of people to migrate directly to the U.S. instead of first taking jobs in the cities and sweatshops of their native lands, since employment is drying up in them due to neo-liberal economic restructuring. The globalization of capital creates a reserve army of the unemployed in the form of immigrant labour, even as sections of the ruling class move to restrict immigration and/or discipline immigrant workers through "guest worker" programs that make use of their labour power while denying them all rights of residency.

While the reserve army of labour is an important tool in capital's effort to keep down wages, the unemployed and super-

exploited workers are also a subjective, potentially revolutionary force that can bring the system down—provided, that is, that the masses do not leave matters at the level of the massive but restrained rallies that are now going on. At a moment when workers around the country are being subjected to an intense effort by capital to further lower wages and gut benefits—as seen in the drive to deprive millions of workers in auto, airlines, and other industries of their health benefits and pensions—the new struggles of immigrants has the potential to reawaken the U.S. labour movement as a whole. No one six months ago predicted such an outpouring over immigration."

With Mayday 2007 in the USA focussed around migrants too, there is every sign of this potentially becoming a new cycle of struggle in the US, whether it can extend elsewhere is a question that can only be answered in praxis.

Just as historically trade unionism was a radical strategy in an age of persecution, so in the surveillance era the working class avant-garde must also seek several ways forward in the age of diversity. This movement historically built itself in hard times, and such hard work is going to be necessary again to rebuild centres of working class power. It is partly a process of trial and error, as only those who do nothing make no mistakes. The 'correct' theory does not get created in advance of class struggles, rather the working class on the move creates it.

Those who cling to shibboleths of faith, such as some Platformist Anarchists and Left Communists, fail to recognise that the class forms itself in practice and does not adopt wholesale any finished programme in advance. This is one of the lessons of the 20th century, class struggle is class formation, and those seeking the way ahead should focus on enabling class strategy and tactics of resistance. As such resistance is primary and subsequent reaction by capitalism, and its state(s), secondary. Issues of strategy will also be addressed by Mayday, as currently the Left and anarchists appear to be flailing wildly in the dark. There are those, N.E.F.A.C. (a USA group) and the Workers Solidarity Movement (Ireland), who are willing to debate the platform and improve practice – long may this tendency continue.

Around the world the best anarchists are those not clinging to the Platform, but are instead superseding it, such as the Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici (F.d.C.A) from Italy. At a congress in the Autumn of 2006 they have adopted many positions of practice and class struggle which go beyond the Platform in many ways. They also have a more developed economic position than many anarchists in the UK. The ideas they stand for now are those which Mayday will pursue too.

The FdCA "favours the horizontal creation of networks, coalitions and forums inspired by the practice of self-organisation, self-management and direct action, which represent the collective capacity for acting against the contradictions and violence of neo-liberalism... the development of networks, coalitions, alliances multiple and pluralist poles and political campaigns which can help spread libertarian ideas and the self managed anarchist communist social project."

New Labour – the bastard children of the Tory Party

This Mayday Manifesto is timely for another reason, and that is to give a judgement upon Blairite policies on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of New Labour coming to power (May 1997 – May 2007). A defining feature of this Blairite rule is 'Modernisation', otherwise known as 'the Third Way', the new theology of capitalism. It opens up a perspective of change and at the same time mystifies the process and the ends whilst setting limits to change. This way they ignore discussions about what type of society is wanted and needed, and instead focus only upon how 'modernisation' is to be achieved. Attitudes, habits, techniques, practices can be changed within structures, but the overall system of economic and social power remains the same, endless work.

Modernisation is the ideology of the never ending present, a technical way of creating the appearance of change with the past without creating a future. No confrontations of power, values or interests, no choice between competing priorities, are envisaged or encouraged. It is a technocratic model of society achieved in part through manipulation, it is 'conflict free', and politically neutral, dissolving genuine social conflicts and issues into the abstractions of 'choice', 'free will' within preset limits, common sense, 'market forces' and bourgeois rationality.

Hilary Armstrong Minister for Social Exclusion provides good examples, promoting managerial responses to real political issues. Though as an MP from the Labour heartlands, she dresses up her real proposals with spurious socialistic values that are never delivered – also a metaphor for Labours (lack of) overall commitment to and for socialism. Hilary's role as Blair crony has seen different peoplesacrificed at different stages of Blair's project, including herself, and the infighting and faction building as Labour politicians choose sides in the resulting power struggle is one of reasons why people do not trust politicians. Such point scoring and bitter intrigues are so very far removed from what socialism actually is. The original New Left was critical and constructive about the potentialities for change with the Labour party, and it is harder now to see any scope for work with the Labour Party. However, it must be recognised that we still live in a social democracy, even if it is a disillusioning and increasingly authoritarian one. While our ancestors would be interested in exercising their vote, they also had another part to their strategy, and that was in struggling and campaigning for their class interests as much as they could in the conditions around them. Mayday does not see any possibility of New Labour being a part of the political way forward for the working class, though other avenues of social democracy are where it is possible to increase working class presence at the grass roots level e.g. the trade unions, charities, campaign groups etc. Critical reflection on the possibilities within these groups and institutions will be encouraged. In his article Dave Douglass looks at renewal in the working class movement for chances of political success.

There have been signs that Unions are finally awakening to the new times apart from the disaffiliations from the Labour party, the T & G, and UCAAT are both reorganising and recruiting migrant labour. Periodically unions have always reinvented them-

selves, and this appears to be happening out right now. Everybody is aware that the Olympic Games in 2012 and the facilities in East London will see just as many nationalities building it as are taking part.

Left Failure

There is striking historical irony in the attempted new Neo-liberal capitalist consensus being constructed using the Labour party. One has only to look at confusion on the left e.g. Socialist Workers Party, now that their traditional approaches to politics have been broken up by new political orientation and practice from capital. This is not helped by their theoretical adherence to basic Bolshevism; 'soft on New Labour and soft on the causes of New Labour'. Many people will have cut their political teeth either in the SWP, or in opposition to them though. Paul Blackledge in a recent attempt to reclaim the best of the New Left in a teleological manner for the S.W.P. (*International Socialism*, 112), needs refuting. As we do here – as those who control the past, control the future. His teleology did not discuss the actual politics of the New Left as described in the New Left Manifestos or elsewhere, and instead focussed on personnel. Mike Marqusee has written very well about other flaws of SWP practice already, as have other relatively small offshoots such as Red Action or the Revolutionary Democratic Group.

Economic Restructuring

The hard part of economic restructuring was achieved with the Conservative party 1979–1997, now the political and welfare changes New Labour are attempting, is meant to set the political balance, social contract, and scope of debate for future decades. Welfare policy (New Deal, Sure Start, Disability benefit reform) and Education policy is evidence of this, instead of improving society in a beneficial way – new controls and attitudes are imposed upon it. The war on terror and the war on welfare, of which the war on asylum seekers is one episode, is the central dynamic of our time. The one defining and creating the other, and the article on the way forward for anti fascists and anti racists describes the new racism in these conditions. Sivanandan, as early as 1990, was describing the new conditions which the anarchists and left only started theorising themselves circa 1999 or later, and this suggests that the conservative nature of many radicals must be killed.

This is at a time when the creation of 'heaven on earth' has looked possible for the first time in history, though it has always been necessary. Technology is enabling the spread of knowledge and the possibility of authentic democratic participation on a worldwide level, reaching across time zones and cultures. This is a double edged sword though, with the same technology being used to build a global Adam Smith wet dream – an integrated global workforce management and governance system which can efficiently and reliably deliver profits.

However, this is based upon the curtailment of political, civil and human rights. Instead of celebration, freedom from want,

and solidarity, government and corporations are intent on spreading poverty, hatred, harm and division in order to have control and profit. Among the masses there is diversity in experience though; in education, at official and informal work, in culture, and this is creating new forms of national popular consciousness, and it is increasingly subject to international financial and cultural experience. It is towards these new directions that we will be concerned. The article on the racist Jade Goody describes the new political environment, and the article on the new wreckers shows why this is very much rooted in our past.

Where this magazine will end up is very much to be determined by the national and international reception it gets, and whosoever decides to get involved with this project. Whether it ends up as a popular autonomous magazine, more lively, more serious, a journal, a conscious political tendency, or propaganda group is very much unwritten. What we are sure of is the need for revolutionary pluralism as the announcement of the Autonomy and Solidarity (A & S) tendency in Canada described (2003).

A & S is an exploratory grouping that identified the political weaknesses of left and anarchist theory correctly – as that of a lack of relation to oppressed groups, such as; the indigenous population, queer, black, and women. Unfortunately there is a reductionist tendency on the left, still, and amongst anarchists, which assumes their pure and small factions are already 'doing it' and alliance building often gets pejoratively written off as 'rainbow coalition' politics as the purists do not take part in coalitions or alliances. Unfortunately the dour Left has not realised that their world needs livening up somewhat. A & S goals include producing theory and analysis collectively, with tactics which can realise and promote currents and movements of 'socialism from below'. This is a cosmopolitan British tradition too, which made so many positive theoretical contributions.

A & S also practice inclusive politics and are against the personalisation of debates, different opinions are encouraged and they work in a proactive and respectful manner. Towards a mass anti capitalist strategy which can help facilitate and develop people's struggles and political initiatives, and develop a better understanding of theory and practice (praxis) when using direct action. Let's hope we can do this in the UK too.

Where we are

This magazine is about autonomy and equality; we do not believe that the 'answer' can be created in advance by anyone. Therefore, 'Mayday: for autonomous class war', does not lead but 'participates' – in debate and practice from experience. It is practical, not ideological, evidence based rather than dreaming, a 'can do' approach rather than can't, innovative rather than traditional, ambitious and not easily satisfied, inclusive not exclusive, enabling rather than disabling, spontaneous rather than bureaucratic, and European rather than parochial.

This is the way 'out of the ghetto', and towards autonomous political success, with egalitarian and solidarity practice and attitude. Developing new autonomous approaches, and reporting on existing ones that deal with current issues, never afraid to operate outside of official structures and pushing for 'best outcomes'.

Therefore, we ask readers to write and participate in this project, send everything and anything that those with ambition would need; articles, artwork, experience, knowledge and passion.

Autonomous Anti-Fascism

The left and anarchist movements in Britain are in disarray; sectarian, small and ineffective. The Neo-Liberal project has successfully divided opposition, and requires practical and theoretical contributions for rediscovering the way forward politically through the resulting confusing and debilitating political ambience.

While the right are on the march generally, the fascist movement in Britain has been growing because of the problems of globalisation from above. Racism is created by events at home and abroad, and the changing nature of state policy and practices affect the terrain of these class struggles and their development. This article is an attempt to discover self-built class struggle anti fascism in these conditions. It is essential to consider Britain as a fading imperialist power, which is now economically and politically closely aligned with the world's dominant superpower, America.

The history of the fading of one power and the emergence of the other is crucial. Old racism has been replaced with a newer variety whose characteristics are constantly on the move, though it is not less pernicious (Sivanandan, 2004). Part of the failure of the left is the political isolation, confusion and myopia of those who are not only concerned about the fascists in Britain, but are trying to do something to oppose them, without serious success. Just when the situation calls for unity the left is still fighting the battles of yesteryear, amongst themselves. Often there is no joined up thinking which would be the result of taking solidarity and political growth seriously, do they really believe the movement will build itself without regular and

open meetings and conferences which can leave previous moribund ideas and practices behind? This means not practicing in traditional formulations, but across barriers which have been erected for, and by us. Must the Left be forever afraid of the insights of anarchism, autonomism, and post structuralism, and forever chase the approval of managerial politicians of the New Labour left, centre and right who look upon them as excreta?

While the debate over the definition of fascism extends beyond Marxism and anarchism, and includes Weberian and totalitarian approaches (Passmore, 2002), the subject of fascism is complex and is a worldwide phenomena which makes definition difficult. Passmore (2002) attempts a 28 line, approximately 250 word definition, which is meant to synthesise the best elements of previous theories. Although, I am going to assume readers know what is meant by fascism for the purposes of this article, so it is possible to approach issues of strategy straight away.

While the reasons behind BNP success are being debated and identified (Sivanandan, 2001, 2006, Metcalfe, 2003a, O Hara, 2003-4, 2006, et al) this article is not intending to come to a definitive position upon this. However, briefly they are; Labour becom-

ing the party of business, economic deprivation, segregation as a result of council policies, improved BNP organisation, their occupation of empty political space, election frequency helping momentum, the War on Terror, Left complacency and inadequacy, and other inadequate opposition. A complete position upon this is not possible, in part because the empirical survey work amongst BNP voters has not been accomplished with the rigour necessary and in numbers that allow such a definitive and absolute position to be constructed. However, O Hara's list of the reasons for BNP growth (NFB, 2006, 3) would be a starting point for such analysis. Instead, this article seeks to describe the conditions, the options available and a possible way forward for anti fascists.

The end of the beginning

The Anti Fascist issue is attracting more attention because of the European common market integration, the activities of transnational corporations and neo-liberal economic policy around the world. Therefore, in order to clarify autonomous ideas it is important to work towards the theory and practice (i.e. Praxis) of an authentically independent, egalitarian and autonomous class struggle politics for the 21st century. We do not say, here is the truth, kneel before it, rather the process of struggle has a vital influence upon the character of an autonomous anti fascist movement, and therefore the beginning of this journey needs organising. What form it takes and what politics an autonomous anti fascism practices depends upon the cycle or stage of struggle that the movement is engaged in. The history of anti fascism and the state is also instructive, New Labour compromises and their following of a racist agenda has been done before by the Labour Party hierarchy (Sivanandan, 2004), and the interface between racism and nationalism has led to a confused and confusing debate. Nationalism as we understand it is a historically new construction (Miles, 1987), and racism is a similarly artificial construction; Hobsbawm would call them invented traditions (1983).

Both Nationalism and racism define who is included and who is excluded, and the intertwined historical development of these themes during the rise and fall of the British Empire have blurred the 2 in process (Miles, 1987), and has created the excluded. The historical creation of an imagined community (Miles 1987) of the classless white British I call romantic nationalism ♦ this is capitalism with struggle and poverty either written out of history or sold back to us in an idealised representation, often as compliant and deferent servants, or as subjects waiting for charitable relief. This is where the philanthropic bourgeoisie, and middle class bureaucrats, meet, and are helped with those schooled on the mythology one Nationism and singing down the tube station during the blitz together. E.g. the retired, southern professional classes and those workers who do not like to think about the labour theory of value. These accounts forget the thousands of rich people, aristocracy, and some Royalty, who went to Canada as soon as the war began, and those who remained who flouted the laws of rationing ♦ e.g. the Queen and Prince Philip for their wedding in 1947.

Reading Anti Fascism Politically

The heated debate that occurs over the nature of the correct response to fascism has not escaped old and dead leftist reductionism, sectarianism, and party building. The old left, whilst mutating in form, has not included new working class sectors in their active politics, and instead have re-labelled their politics, or, abandoned them to recruit Muslims using a simple and patronising anti war logic ♦ the victims can be brought into our project. Left communists sidestep the issue of relating to and debate with the working classes by creating a self-fulfilling prophecy as their theory. They say that anti fascism is not revolutionary, and thereby avoid the issue of a class strategy and associated tactics and propaganda. This, of course, is merely abdicating the scene of class struggle, and provides an opportunity for the very forces of reaction they say they want to suppress. They appear to be under the illusion that some external example and theory of a nice pure communism is more attractive and convincing than class struggle against the immediate enemies of the working class, who practice self and class liberation in the process of opposition to these class enemies. Though, this is far from the only problem with Left Communist politics.

Further Left communists assume an automatic homogeneity of the working class is produced by capital, rather than a strategy that encourages class formation amongst diverse groups through struggle. In other words, the practice of direct action and struggle, and the participation in these struggles, is a training ground for the generation of the consciousness of the working class, its values are created on the move. The working class through self-management of the day-to-day struggle rises in capability towards self-management of the revolutionary conflict ♦ it is neither an automatic nor an inevitable process. They thereby acquire an awareness of the particular limitations of their local struggle and its aims, and of the skills needed to create and sustain wider solidarities and larger struggles as they are all intimately connected. Little local successes may not be repeated, and limited victories may be taken away, and so it is important to understand these in the overall struggle and an ever-wider context of expanding aspirations.

This maybe possible through attempts to create a formal and informal popular consciousness of struggle, alternatively entitled popular fronts. These should impose no membership requirements; instead they are open and fluid ♦ constructed through participation. The task of an AAF is dialogue and debate within the actually existing working classes and class struggles, and constantly seeking to spread the struggles and class consciousness. Specialist sub groups e.g. political networks of pro-migrant decision making and struggle prioritising, or direct action hit squads, within the popular fronts, can then evolve more normally, rather than be imposed from without in a voluntarist manner onto the struggle. Though traditional popular fronts have been a top down vertical approach of party leaderships setting the agenda, and have been criticised by O Hara (NFB, 2006, page 4). However, AAF is potentially a horizontal popular front from below that works within and beyond institutions, organisations and groups. It is a

qualitatively different form of popular front than has ever existed before, although it could take inspiration from different practicing anti-fascists.

Some of the best ideas have come from Larry O Hara, and Mark Metcalfe, in Notes From the Borderland (various issues), and The Resistible Rise of the BNP in Hobgoblin magazine No. 5 (Metcalfe, 2003a). There are many different left factions, and O Hara writes that even those who profess to be a political alternative to the BNP have multiple problems with their strategy; With the best will in the world, the IWCA [Independent Working Class Association] successor to Anti-Fascist Action, isn't directly challenging the BNP either (O Hara, 2006, 4). The 1970s Anti Nazi League was relaunched by the Socialist Workers Party, but was a pale imitation of its former glory (Renton, 2006, Lux, 2006) and so was quietly dropped. Instead, the SWP has chosen to focus on Respect, and also instrumentally uses UAF (Unite Against Fascism). AAF seeks to work with those actually practicing an autonomous anti fascism even if they do not know it, and in particular to work with migrants who have a vested interest in such a politics. This is anti fascism as a politics of self and class liberation rather than an attempt to build the party, or something else. However, the difficulties encountered so far are perhaps because of a failure of old leftist practice, combined with opportunist and inadequate theorising of social conditions.

Labour, Tory, Same old Story

Racism of the early 21st century is still a tool of discrimination and a means of exploitation, conditioned by economic imperatives, but negotiated through culture: religion, literature, art, science and the media (Sivanandan, 2001). The globalisation project is based upon a pursuit of profit and a new international division of labour which has created conflicts, and traditional demonisation and exclusion are mobilised seemingly in a natural continuation through time, which disguises changed relationships, but focuses concerns upon new targets. Thus displaced asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are kept out; even if they are white, on the grounds that they are scroungers and aliens come to prey on the west's wealth and confound its national identities & it is xenophobia, it is ♦ in the way it denigrates people before segregating or expelling them ♦ a xenophobia that bears all the marks of old racism, except that it is not colour-coded. It is xeno-racism: a feature of the Manichaean world of global capitalism, where there are only rich and poor ♦ and poverty is the new black (Sivanandan, 2001).

This has been created in part by the new state, just like the old state where Labour is just as complicit as the Tories, but the welfare state of developed capitalism has been replaced by the market state of globalised capitalism. Everything which isn't directly profit making or contributing to the security of the state which enables capitalism is priced and expedient decisions are made regarding their funding. Expanding capitalism scours the world in a manner not unlike the Vikings of old, in search of new markets, cheap labour, raw material, natural resources. Oil

(Sivanandan, 2006). It is now necessary to consider an anti fascism of liberation in such conditions.

Here to Stay, Here to fight

An autonomous anti fascism (AAF) does not unthinkingly engage in voluntarist struggle; if it did this could involve always doing no platform direct action, or social democratic campaigning, without strategic and tactical thought. Thus, attacking any fascist groupings wherever and whenever found, outside of a strategy that seeks to prevent the largest current fascist problem nationally, is not revolutionary politics. This is partly because the movement is split historically by ego's and disputes, and comrades on the left are often in their own circle of friends and no more. AAF should aim to provide open and honest dialogue, by working outside our individual and groups comfort zone, amongst people who will have different priorities, without regard to idea origins, in order to get to the key issues of mobilisation and politicisation for anti-fascist struggles. This ideally has to involve all those working class people and groups who are trying to make their lives better through opposition to racism and fascism. It is the relationships between anti racism, anti fascism and the class struggle that are important.

From reading the socio-economic situation politically now, and by looking historically at the political and social functions fascism has had for capital we may begin to work towards our goals. Further, the 20th century history of black settlers (Sivanandan, 2004) has often been ignored by white comrades, the narratives of oppression and often violent struggles ensured the rise of a hierarchical politics of ethnicity for a nouveaux black middle class to implement; one cannot understand racism in the age of globalisation without understanding the racism of industrial and colonial capitalism. We cannot contest the one without understanding how we contested the other (Sivanandan, 2004).

Often inter ethnic solidarity was built on the factory floors of the Midlands, London, Lancashire and Yorkshire, however the decimation of the clothing industry which was part of a wider desertion of factory capitalist business in search of cheaper labour helped to foster the communities of segregation. Of course, these communities of segregation are not absolute, and there are avenues of contact and networks which overlap, although the images of these communities are such that local discourse often uses such language to stress separation. Thus the locus of resistance shifted into the community, and the black community was enthusiastic supporters of different class struggles in terms of welfare and financial assistance, at workplaces in Southall, Preston, Tipton, West Bromwich, et al. Asian and Afro Caribbean struggles recognised an undifferentiated racism that debased and dehumanised West Indian and Asian and African alike & [supporting] each other in the fight against racism (Sivanandan, 2004). However, this unity was to be dispersed by the different class struggles 1st generation blacks were to face in the 1970s; Asians fought back against NF attacks under the slogan Self Defence is No Offence, while African Caribbean s were fighting sus laws and

other police oppression. Thatcherism intensified these struggles, and dispersed and managed them too (Sivanandan, 1990), leading towards anti fascism being relegated in priority by the left for approximately 2 decades. Therefore it is important to remind ourselves of the historical roles of fascism for the left.

Fascism means counter revolution

The prime historical role of fascism is defeating communism within the working class by destroying the unions and the political left. This is why rhetoric of national-socialism aims to draw the working class away from class unity, and why big business has backed fascism at high points of class conflict and crisis.

Boot Boys and Girls of Capitalist and Nationalist hegemony

Fascists historically have agitated overwhelmingly within working class communities. They have done so using racist and nationalist ideas at a localised level with far less restraint than politicians or the media. They are not constrained by mainstream views on migration, religion, or racism ♦ that it is something that you cannot admit.

Attacking Ethnic Minorities

Those who have swallowed fascist propaganda want to demonise the other ♦ today this is often Pakis, though there is a great ignorance of the ethnic differences that originate in East and South Asia. This can manifest itself in verbal and physical attacks upon those targeted; some of the perpetrators with violent urges can be uncontrolled and are especially noticeable. There are various levels of this; going up to, and including, fascists at the peak of their hierarchy. In Britain today the abandoned estates in former working class heartlands can be no go zones for outsiders, and some find themselves victims of racist harassment and violence. The situation in Germany today and from the early 1990s is different, where siege situations have provoked some migrants to return to their country of origin, or to move to another area where the state can do the harassment instead.

Fascist Scapegoats

Democracy is really elective dictatorship ♦ where government is established every five years and operates unchallenged. In other words government is the process of normalised repression, and its most authoritarian practice has been against the working class and the left. Policy towards migrants has been restrictive and racist legislation – detention centres, education, welfare, policing, family and work have all been restricted and practiced oppressively. Ostensibly measures that have been used to pull the rug away from underneath fascist groups by turning racist ideas into rhetoric and legislation, have in fact further justified those original ideas and contributed to their growth by legitimising them amongst prac-

tioners of such policy ie. Often state, private and/or quango employees. Whenever there are racist attacks public opinion is encouraged to blame the oppressed for their oppression and victimised status ♦ thus compounding the problem. The far right then is both an effective pressure group and a scapegoat, as fascists can be blamed when the states law fails to control the population. To combat fascism in the new conditions suggestions for the way forward will now be outlined.

AAF Praxis

For these reasons AAF is not only an attack on fascist parties, but has to attack the socio-economic conditions and bourgeois hegemony, and the historically racist establishment. AAF must seek to be the distilled essence of class struggle to achieve class consciousness and unity, the preconditions for effective class action and a growing class for itself.

Thus, functions of fascism for capitalism mean that anti capitalist politics as it confronts this fascism must go beyond a simplistic policy and tactic of attacking fascists, if it is to go beyond voluntarism. Anti fascism must seek to be the means whereby migrants can protect themselves in the first instance against threats to their existence posed by racists, fascists, and state policy, and also be a contribution to class consciousness in the broader community in which they are based. This is the way that an apolitical anti fascism can be turned into meaningful revolutionary activity by consisting of a practical contribution to empowerment of the diverse communities concerned. It is not a question of prioritising one community over another, but of achieving the class consciousness that recognises the original sources of official and unofficial racist activity.

Thus what can be termed welfare work should assume a central role and not be seen as merely social work, or charity, though welfare work is often controlled by charities. AAF should reclaim such work and give it the central role, meaning and revolutionary politics it had during the formation of the UK working class in the 19th century. In 21st century Britain many groups have sprung up to deal with the debris created by immigration laws, increasing incarceration, asylum policy and the withdrawal of welfare from these people. Some of these are; No Borders ♦ No Border camps and actions, Anti deportation campaigns, Campaign Against Criminalising Communities, Medical Justice Network, Stop Political Terror, Campaign to Close Campsfield, Regional Refugee Networks and more (Sivanandan, 2006). They all tackle problems which originate in or derive from the policies of government and strictures of the state (Sivanandan, 2006). Further, the wanton disregard for humanity is part of capitalist policy, it is the other, and we are not like them. Thus by working against the capitalism and its state another new range of values is being created, that is part of the values of progressive working class communities, and the general framework and flows of power that will form the determinations for social experiences and the possibilities of struggle.

Globalised Communities of Resistance

It is possible to speak of multicultural globalised communities of resistance because of the historical development of capitalism and the economics of expansion and imperialism. The working class was multiethnic as it was born through struggle according to Linebaugh and Rediker (2000), and a global Neo-liberal economics demands a multicultural working class response in the 21st century because of the similar causes of problems and resulting class experience. The dynamic of Anglo American imperialism is attempting to balance capitalist domination with the façade of electoral support, and therefore the war abroad is joined at home with the politics of divide and rule. Governments spin information and propaganda out to a willing corporate media, which is based on faulty or improved intelligence with a simplistic good v. evil stance, resurrecting a primitive racism (Sivanandan, 2006).

The 2 directions of policy, internal and external, cannot be neatly separated, instead they are parts of the same capitalist continuum, the war on terror and the war against migrants merge in theory and on the streets where racism cannot tell a settler from an immigrant, an immigrant from an asylum seeker, an asylum seeker from a Muslim, a Muslim from a terrorist (Sivanandan, 2004, 2006). Globalisation however, needs such confusion, in order for policy to seemingly justify and control bureaucratically the treatment of migrants and asylum seekers who were forced by capitalist market expansion to move. Also, to provide the rationale for Imperialism, militarily and economically, that ensures the conditions for this expansion. This is why globalisation has need for the nation state, still. The resulting nation, under siege at home and abroad, where repressive laws, more cuts in welfare etc are financing the ever growing global military industrial complex, and its particular manifestation in Britain is damaging the whole fabric of society (Sivanandan, 2006).

The Criminal justice system is attacked at all levels (Garland, Lea, 2002) and forced to assume a more punitive approach, protest is criminalised, and the central state gets more powerful. This circle then reproduces itself internally as cuts in welfare to pay for the criminal justice system lead to more prisoners, which leads to more cuts (Downes and Hansen, 2006). These examples epitomise the destructive reproduction theorised by Meszaros (2001). Thus it is the symbiosis of globalisation and racism, and Empire (Negri and Hardt, 2000) and globalisation, which now defines the parameters and content of resistance. The various issues which arise cannot be combated on their own, it is impossible to combat one without combating them all. Imperialism is the project, globalisation the process, culture the vehicle, and the nation-state the political and military agent (Sivanandan, 2004). The conflicts will develop in the epicentres of the multitudes experience, and the right to combat (Ruggiero, 2006) will take place in the age of the city and the planet of slums (Davis, 2006)

Practically AAF should mean

Disruption of Fascist activity in the community

Anti-Fa already contributes to this a little, although they are a relatively small group. Activity must go beyond already active militants and mobilise key groups of those attacked by fascism. For AAF to win the battle of ideas and effectively disrupt fascist activity it is the working class itself, including migrants, who must be involved in the struggles and play significant roles. It is politically uninvolved people who will be encouraged to participate in collective activity against the forces of reaction, both the migrants, first, 2/3/4/5/9th etc. generation and white people. This resistance will be built upon existing networks, projects and groups ♦ Tenants Association s, homeless projects, Migrant support groups, charities etc. should all be worked within to promote resistance to racists and fascists, both officially through policy and practice and unofficially beyond institutional structures in popular front manifestations, when physically opposing fascists in the community. This will be as bases of localised resistance, and should be of a network type ♦ the church hall, the political group, the monitoring group, the tenants association, the migrant self help group, the social centre, and this is the way that useful information can also be spread and generated. The historical memory of the class who have fought fascism, the elderly, should be merged with those who have fought fascism in the past decade and those who have yet to fight them. This is potentially a diverse and popular assault on fascism and fascists, and imagination and self-belief must be taken into the streets of our communities as the working class is encouraged to fight fascism.

Self Defence against racist attacks

This already happens on a mass scale (Bradford riots, Sivanandan, 2001) and sporadically from within the black and Asian communities. These initiatives, though often informal (Lux, 2006), should be encouraged ♦ especially where there is no institutional basis for fighting back, or where black and Asian militants are left exposed by other members of their community, even because of their exemplary direct action. Where ethnic minorities are visibly small then there may be some vulnerability and so the solidarity of the wider community should be mobilised.

Prioritise Revolutionary Politics over Bourgeois hegemony

Revolutionary politics should destroy the fascist/nationalist racism ideas base, and expose the romantic nationalism as no more than a façade for the ignorant. This is the ultimate tie that the state has upon the working class, now that the working class is without an obvious representative; the state appears at best to be a lecturing school teacher who disciplines, soft cop, and at worst the police who brutalise, hard cop. State power is exercised by welfare employees who are ultimately backed with violence (Poulantzas) from the enforcers for those who resist authority for whatever rea-

son. Unless the hold of this is broken then the working class can never be independent, let alone a revolutionary class.

Working with or for the Labour hierarchy, even indirectly, serves to discredit anti-fascists and helps the BNP appear as a radical alternative. Similarly the Communist Party has disappeared and the SWP have shrunk too, so the two central planks of a United Front strategy, mass working class reformist and revolutionary parties, are absent. Often, united front anti fascists e.g. UAF, and Respect, have diluted and compromised on the politics of working class autonomy, independence, and liberation, in order to target certain groups they have prioritised. They fail to gain a wider audience than the trade union bureaucracy, left Labour MPs, and water down their politics to a respectable labourism, or throw away liberation politics to appease a religious group. Thus, racism is de facto portrayed as the higher evil as sexism and homophobia present in some Muslim interpretations is discounted by Respect. Conversely, fascism targets the lower end of the working class i.e. the disenfranchised, and outside of the working class heartlands (the deindustrialised areas) the class basis is left unspecified, but is basically a little Englander mentality, often associated with a middle class classlessness.

It is ironic that those most oppressed by the capitalist state can be its strongest supporters ♦ through racist patriotism ♦ when it is the constituency with the least to gain from such support. Racism is at once a crude and sophisticated construction; the basis of racism is discontent and struggle, which fascists aim to racialise, which in turn shifts the blame from capitalism and the state who have created the situation with their power, onto the migrants and liberal/left. These issues are class issues and radical politics. Theory and practice are necessary to not only counteract capitalist strategy, but to set a working class agenda.

Fascists constantly use class issues to further sow discontent by racialising struggles. Their calls for segregation, repatriation, or forceful expulsion can seem like a radical response, but they only alleviate the symptoms of a class society which can only be cured by revolution. The status quo caused the problems; so it cannot be any part of a permanent solution. Crises in e.g. housing can focus latent racism and build upon popular media and government racism. Society is divided and categorised because that is how capitalism governs and can govern in the future, thus society is rebuilt in its own image as new issues are constantly generated within old themes. Hence, the different nuances of racism.

Cases are often individualised, and this is further compounded by state and media treatment, and there is no automatic solidarity. Instead cases must be encouraged to shout loud, these cases then can become issues, and issues can become causes. Well thought out approaches and dialogue with oppressed communities, and radical class analysis and practice, could begin to make a difference and win people away from reactionary politics. This, coupled with open and honest political work with anti fascist groups, anti racist groups, migrant organisations, charities, trade unions, social centres and left groups may begin to form an informal popular front of horizontal and AAF rather than atomised traditional practice. Also this would be opposed to the traditional per-

spective of popular fronts which attempted to ally itself with anti fascist parts of the establishment in a vertical strategy. This will not happen overnight, further practice, theory and analysis, conferences, and meetings will be necessary, as well as much pavement travelling and dialogue within our communities. AAF should maintain its autonomy and politics, and promote them. Only in the instances where our autonomy is being threatened, for example, by dictatorial authoritarians, liberal peace police, or undemocratic structures, does AAF refuse to work with anyone.

Left communists criticise anti fascism for being reformist, and there has been some truth in this. In the past activists have promoted short term and reformist solutions ♦ vote anyone but the BNP when the others have been responsible for the current political situation. Instead, the creation of an alternative politics and hegemony is necessary, beyond a voluntarism that doesn't step outside of the status quo, or operates in isolation. Rather the aim of the popular front is to organically link these spheres of operation. The dichotomy between reforms versus revolution has caused considerable angst, and the New Left proposed to escape these ideological dead ends by arguing for reforms within a revolutionary strategy. The proposed popular front is an horizontal one that can work within and beyond council organisation, N.G.O s and voluntary groups, and other institutions of welfare provision. Any apriori suggestion that these are definitely impediments to re-aligning and creating popular fronts of anti fascist welfare and resistance are merely pseudo radical, proto religious ideological statements (Marx, Theses on Feuerbach). Rather, the obstacles and other problems should be openly discussed and circulated during this praxis, and the nature of the 21st century social conditions can then be theorised from evidence collected in this practice.

These revolutionary ideas should critique mainstream racist and liberal anti racist ideas, encourage action, and form a clearer picture of class divided society. At its best leftist anti fascism has been subversive in challenging the definitions of the institutional status quo, although this has rarely changed policy. In short such anti fascism has rarely been subversive even, barely undermining the status quo. The revolutionary agenda is in confronting the status quo not only with alternative definitions, but an entirely different way of seeing the world and an entirely new way of life; without the institutions of the status quo. In other words we are talking about working towards a situation of dual power, where the proto working class power is able to self help itself in the fields of health, education, work, defence and welfare ♦ to create a new alternative vision of a cradle to the grave universality based upon the sisterhood and brotherhood of everybody. The values of altruism, caring, sharing, and love of all people is a politics of self and class liberation, the irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist (Negri and Hardt, 2000, 413), that can create new communities of resistance (Sivanandan, 1982, 1990) ♦ it is the means and ends of a strategy of AAF. Thus the 21st century Marxists rediscover old themes of class formation (Thompson, 1963), and the means by which this is created is by constituent politics (Negri and Hardt, 2004).

First steps

Fascism is a political movement with a view of the world they want to live in. To be successful anti-fascism must fight, and win, not only in the streets but also the battle of ideas. It is not enough to show people that fascist ideas are wrong, AAF must also present ones that people see as being able to win concrete victories in the short term and outright victory in the long term. To win the battle against Fascism, capitalism and the state AAF must adopt a long-term strategy with social revolution at its core. It is a good time to be reminded that revolutions are social phenomena and revolutionaries cannot force them to happen. Therefore, revolutionaries main goals are to win the battle of ideas in practice to create a new movement and society. (As revolutionary anti-fascists what ideas does an AAF propose? AAF proposes that there is a need to eliminate capitalist society, abolish the state, and create directly democratic community and workplace structures to make the decisions that determine the context of our lives. Furthermore, AAF propose that there is a need to eliminate racism, sexism, homophobia, and all other oppressions by actively attacking those ideologies and supporting people who are struggling against them, especially those struggling from revolutionary perspectives.

Self defence

It is important to see the general welfare of migrants as a whole. Thus, state attacks on benefits, the use of vouchers, social exclusion, are as important a thing to be tackled as racism and physical attacks. They are part and parcel of the same thing, and to treat either as separate in practice is a theoretical mistake. Active engagement in the promotion and practice of community safety by protecting ourselves and each other from racist attacks and attacks by fascists is a priority. It can also be part of an anti social crime initiative where communities can defend themselves against those who prey on them, be they muggers or drug dealers.

Where there already are networks of defence people should participate as volunteers and observe what goes on; the everyday activity and beliefs that form a community. Do not think you know it all or shout about militant activity, it wins you no friends. Instead, listen, do not say anything, just keep a record of those who say things that are listened to and acted upon. When you have served some time, are time served, and have earned some respect through hard work and self effacing behaviour, then you maybe in a position to suggest tactics that can improve the effectiveness of what you are all trying to achieve. This may lead onto a wider agenda.

In diverse communities attempts at networking are particularly important, where the dangers of isolation and fragmentation are obvious. The elements/spokes which build the wheel of oppression must each be tackled and turned in the direction we want them to go. Thus, instead of political isolation and weakness we promote collectivity and strength. Practically instead of leaving individuals economically helpless on the streets, we promote collective economic welfare in social centres. In turn this creates

alternative values; instead of bitterness and resentment, we promote optimism and altruism. This is a politics of self and class liberation, of AAF as practical-critical and revolutionary activity (Negri and Hardt, 2004), and a constituent politics in British conditions for the 21st century.

The Range of Anti fascist politics possible

Practical suggestions for ways individuals can tackle fascism have been listed in Metcalfe (2003a). However, for those concerned about the most productive way to proceed as a class against fascists more theorisation is necessary, and the theoretical ideal type parts of the anti fascist continuum for those thinking about the way ahead today, and which are therefore possible to organise and practice so as to approach in the practical world, are;

At one end an 'unreflexive no platform' strategy comprising of militant anti fascist tactics. At the other end, social democratic strategy/tactics.

Moving towards the middle from the no platform end would be a reflexive anti fascism that took notice of local possibilities, and mounted direct action when they could win.

Moving towards the middle from the social democratic end would be passing information to the 'no platform' tendency, who could sabotage a fascist election attempt and help your social democratic strategy.

Moving toward the middle further still (theoretically) from the social democratic end would be the creation of a Unite Against Fascism type united front – social democracy on the streets, and at the ballot box. Respect would be a democratic part of this united front type.

Moving further towards the centre from the No platform end would be a working class popular front, that organised itself politically across group boundaries with the aim of chasing the fascists literally off the streets. It would network with 'respectable' social democratic' anti fascism to get info whilst not selling themselves out politically. It would prioritise the working class movement and migrants; or others victimised and oppressed by fascism theoretically and practically, because the ends ARE the means. This is anti fascist theory as a practice of self and class liberation. [1] This is also the ideal type I would like to see us move towards. [1] The informal popular front Lux (2006) describes could be part of the way forward, but the suggestion is that a more formal politics such as described could work in tandem with the informal popular fronts.

Conclusion

It has been suggested that anti fascist struggles epitomise the problems with the British left, and that existing practice against fascists is jeopardised by this sectarianism and a lack of critical

thinking. The range of anti fascist approaches has been described, social conditions identified, and a potential way forward that utilises these insights has been postulated. All that remains now is praxis.

Victory to the wreckers

There is almost hysteria from the media when they are confronted by images which do not suit the status quo of a technologically advanced and urban capitalist society, although they are very quick to resort to familiar methods of divide and rule.

They always want to construct the 'law abiding moral majority' who morally panics and who will be repulsed by such 'shocking images - but we have to show them to you after we have titillated ourselves'.

The problem with these scares is that they are not new, and the hype that surrounds them is counterproductive to an accurate understanding of the phenomena, and lets the authorities get away with half measures that are destined not to work. For example the current scares about 'dangerous knife gangs' in London are similar to the hysteria that surrounded the original 'Hooligan' gangs in late Victorian times; the difference this time was that they were Irish. Manchester changed to 'Gunchester' in the 1990's, but the problem was that the Scuttlers' were condemned in Manchester along similar lines approximately 100 years ago too. These are the products of your capitalist society boss.

The myth of the moderate "free born Englishman in his castle" runs deep in the national psyche, though this evolutionary national self discipline is just that, a conservative fiction. These respectable fears are founded upon mythology, such as the gallant 'British Bobby'. Around 1900 the Police around Tottenham Court road in London were known as 'the Butchers' for the way they kicked those who came into contact with them "from pillar to post" - 20 years later in Sheffield the 'Flying Squad' used similar notorious methods to control their areas. 'Community policing' is both a romantic ideal and a romantic myth, and an idealised policing certainly cannot be built upon the illusions of the past.

They assume we all forget that Britain is a small island with a long coastline, and nowhere is

more than 70 miles from the sea. Our language has many smuggling and wrecking terms, 'the coast is clear' - a saying that means it is alright to proceed because no coast guard, riding officers or customs and excise men are in view, 'worse things happen at sea' - speaks of the 1703 storm which killed over 2000 in the channel, and so Deal residents who suffered storm damage were to say 'worse things happen at sea' when comparing their own experience to recently departed sailors.

It can appear as if the shoreline was a boundary protecting Britain from the world, but the shifting nature of the coastline and sandbanks and its unpredictability mean that it is rather like 'No mans land', an area where the rule of law does not travel, a temporary autonomous zone. The Left often forgets all this too. Further, it is clear that such practice is a means whereby the media and politicians reproduce the status quo, as it is a continual disciplinary scare to encourage conservative beliefs - these are beliefs which can be associated with the Conservative party, but are not necessarily. Any behaviour can become like a reflex, which becomes conservative because it never changes its approach regardless of conditions or whether it is appropriate.

There have been signs of a renewal of interest in the maritime working class as "The Many Headed Hydra", by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, and published by Verso, testifies. The links between conditions on board ship, the politics, and activities of the international working class in London, New York and elsewhere were made clear in this book. The working class was multicultural at its birth. Other books include "Villains of all nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age" by Rediker, "The London Hanged" by Linebaugh, and the classic "Albion's Fatal Tree" edited by Douglas Hay and oth-

ers. Though wrecking has not had the attention it deserves despite its prolific worldwide nature. That is perhaps because the classes of people who do it are not usually those known for political campaigning, who go on to be journalists or Cambridge professors. This article aims to remedy this, and suggests that like attempts in Bristol (Bristol Radical History group) to have a radical analysis of slavery, that such initiatives are necessary if we are serious about political progress in these areas.

Beyond Legality

I will not go over the legal position of the differences between salvaging and wrecking because the politically important fact is that there is no clarity in such a chaotic situation as a wreck and wrecking. The blurring of ownership rights, and responsibility and lack of responsibility for action, create conditions favourable for working class values to exert themselves historically. The space which is available for these working class values exists because of the classes' historical practice. Wrecking is the geographically ocean concentrated, frequently of rural based populations, which is analogous to urban rioting and looting.

Despite wreckers having an unlimited amount of time legally to report salvage there were howls of protest from the property fixated media about people 'travelling to wreck' from all around the country. This perhaps is a 21st century difference with traditional wrecking, when only local communities were engaged in the gathering of items of value. There were shrieks of indignation from the propertied middle class about the damage to their reputation 'when there is anarchy on our beach', which blended into a crescendo when the environmentalists feared for the ecosystem and the birds. However, there was minimal loss of oil, and beaching a vessel is a recognised method of preventing greater harm anyway, and the authorities handled this correctly. As if the vessel breaks up and sinks then there is next to no hope for ecological protection because of the difficulties involved in raising oil from the deep, and goods are often ruined in the deep too.

Wherever those in search of goods and a party came from, they took home; barrels of wine, motorcycles, cars, domestic appliances, furniture, clothes, china, paintings, cosmetics and perfume, cat food and bibles, and lots lots more. Watched by a crowd of onlookers. The Police were performing a function similar to policing a football match in that they observed and did not interfere most of the time.

Social Crime

This is only one instance and there have been others already in the 21st century which suggests an unbroken wrecking tradition dating back to antiquity. Contrary to popular belief there has never been a golden age of legality, the black economy was massive during the Second World War, in Victorian times too, and further back, the British poor have never doffed their cap to authority and always took what they needed. This applied to some from higher

classes who gave people time off, supplied their wagons, and sometimes took part themselves, including clergy. There is much testimony for this, such as the Llanelli magistrate who bemoaned his chances of stopping wrecking because so many wealthy and powerful people were involved.

This is what gives social crime its unique character, and also has confused a lot of leftists, though they only prove their lack of knowledge of dialectics. Social crime is a process which gains its popular support precisely because of a degree of classlessness, this does not negate the importance of the activity to the working class, and in fact it provides the necessary space and shelter from dampdown that authoritarians insist upon. Social crime is of interest to followers of Adam Smith as it is a free market paradigm, although it is also the space that alternative and collective values of the multitudes are practiced beyond neo-liberal economics, where the gift and sharing are an alternative anti economic order, and pleasure and celebration are found in the smaller and slow carnival of the party. Wrecking always consisted of a range of carnivalesque behaviours anyway e.g. there are many reports of wine and spirits being broken into on the beach, and a few died on the same beach surrounded by the debris of drinking. They died in an alcoholic haze of exposure.

The Wreckers

Bathurst, a novelist with an interest in history, has done academia a favour by publishing her book "The Wreckers: A story of killing seas, false lights and plundered ships". She has done a great amount of hard archival and interviewing work that would otherwise have been necessary for an up to date article on wrecking. Though, she has raised many important points which an experienced working class historian may have encouraged her to develop. Including a few basic lapses e.g. providing no definition of wrecking, or even saying that wrecking covers a range of behaviours and practices. Other further areas worthy of study are the blurred boundaries between salvage men, smugglers, wreckers, and pirates, for the Deal men could be all 4.

Bathurst has written a beautiful and aesthetically pleasing book, full of florid accounts and precise detail; whether it is describing the wonders of the sea or the intricacies of relevant legislation dating back approximately a thousand years. Whether it is; 1997 wrecks being plundered on the Scilly isles, or early 20th century wrecks from the Pentland Firth, Goodwin Sands, or the East or West coast. Bathurst describes the first statutes against wrecking in Britain are from the 12th century, and in that time only one person has been prosecuted for showing the false lights that wreckers are supposed to use. This shows that power, capitalists and their media must be in the business of constant myth making in order for them to rule. The book though never becomes tiresome to continue reading; the only thing that stopped this writer was the need for a cup of tea and dinner!

Goodwin sands are one place where the rule of law does not rule, the long strips of sands emerge periodically from the sea

for a short time in the channel, then just as quickly they disappear again twice a day. The tales of the old sea dogs, and the Chief Pirate of Pentland Firth are entertaining, and Bathurst divides the book into areas for study because the nuances of geography and economics necessitated such an approach to organise her material. There are many regional differences which have caused other authors to regionalise their writing in similar subjects e.g. Mary Waugh on Smuggling.

Bathurst shows that the line between salvaging and plunder is very thin, and sometimes overlaps, and wreckers on land can be viewed as land based pirates. The moral issues surrounding ownership confuses Bathurst however, and she thinks that people do not have a class based view of crime. So she compares a utopian view of robbery and burglary to wrecking and wonders why people view it differently. Of course people do have working class values when it comes to crime as other informal economies and Robin Hood attitudes exist, an example of which would be 'the Bankrobber' by The Clash, "Daddy was a bankrobber - but he didn't hurt nobody". So perhaps the contradictions Bathurst thought exist do not.

Differing Deferences

There was no interest in saving life from the sea until the early 19th century, so there was no coast guard, no national system of light houses, and no Royal National Lifeboat Institution (R.N.L.I.). It is here that British myth making again extends, to those 'warm-hearted fisherfolk who save lives for free'. Even Prince Kropotkin, one of the leading early 20th century anarchist theorists, glorified the R.N.L.I. as an example of people working in a classless manner, freely in cooperation. In a manner that was similar to later theorisation of self help Colin Ward was later to promote. However, this utopian anarchist theorisation is merely romantic, and it is essential to put class back in to the equation now.

In the early 19th century Lifeboatmen were recruited from wreckers because it was they who had the; interest, proximity, experience etc. and many of those interviewed by Bathurst are highly decorated lifeboatmen. This is one of the contradictions within a visibly deferent Britain, which 'respects class boundaries', when real behaviour is somewhat different. Thus, Britain's best loved charity is based upon piracy, who could blame those who risked their lives getting people off abandoned ships, a crate of whisky they tucked under their arm? This was and is viewed as just reward in goods, which would only be abandoned to the sea anyway, for the risks and escapades of dangerous work. Work at sea is still the most dangerous by far of all occupations, and the solidarity this builds within communities is some of the highest anywhere. So, the behaviour of the working classes is not as altruistic as first imagined by Kropotkin. Although Bathurst finds people are reticent to talk about 21st century wrecking at first, she does eventually find Lifeboat men who will admit it is still going on.

Finale

Wrecking and wrecks are unpredictable, although this does not mean that behaviour is unpredictable or that it is value free. Bathurst has created a valuable and entertaining addition to the literature on wrecking, and it should be read as entertainment and as suggestive rather than as a definitive finished account. This is not a dense fog Bathurst drops on the issue, but rather it is a story of hope and adventure, which is precisely the type of material you would expect from this subject. The politics of wrecking will continue to be an issue all around the world, in some places more than others, and if the Left is serious about politics maritime theory and practice is an essential part of this, for food and transportation amongst other things. That is the entire Left's Unfinished Business.

The Tribe Of Wombles

This article is a provisional attempt to trace the experience of some autonomous class movements in Britain, and is about the new and developing class composition

Such an analysis is meaningful as it may indicate the first elements of a platform to advance and further generalise the movement. There are no fixed boundaries within these class struggles so attempts to homogenise class-consciousness by Leninists and neo-Leninists are doomed to failure. Rather class identities in struggles cannot be subsumed, they will coexist and develop in a movement of movements as participants determine their own autonomy in relationship with their own and other groups via practical reciprocal solidarity.

In this article the poor is the preferred term for the section of the working class, which the neo-cons have labelled the 'underclass'. 'Multitude' has been the term used for the bulk of the working class, and sections of the middle class blurring with it, and the precariat is that substantial part of the working class that does not rely on full time permanent employment now - it is precarious. These are not separate identities either, there is blurring at the edges between the social groups given these labels.

Starting Place Blair's Britain is as blatant class confrontational as the Tories at the height of Thatcherism ever were, such as Peregrine Worthington: "New Tories are class conscious and we aim to be victorious". Instead the new regime reproduces class antagonism by several means; through control of the public services such as health, welfare, housing, the police, education, etc. and a minimum wage policy via family tax credit throughout the private sector. Capital autonomously reproduces itself too via extensive credit facilities

and traditional productive relations. London alongside New York and Tokyo, houses the majority of the headquarters of the world's top 200 multinationals, this is a global command and control capability. This is not counting the role of the World Trade Organisation or the International Monetary Fund (or similar organisations) in economic restructuring, and these are located and linked close to the centre of capitals power too.

British political elites, just behind those in the USA, adopted neo liberal economic policies in the early 1970s. The Labour Party abandoned Keynesianism in 1976, the Tory party of Thatcher, and its ideologue Keith Joseph, took command when the Labour party could not manage workers through the winter of discontent. Into the 1980's the technological revolution hastened economic relocation of factories from the West to the developing world as well as helping in breaking up formally state run business and enabling capital to work more efficiently on a global level through time/space compression.

Capital and governments thus generate the new international division of labour through economic coercion, and force via death squads in Columbia or Nigeria or starvation elsewhere. The rate of increase of a certain type of flexible working class is then encouraged, to organise the dynamic of class relations in a way that corresponds to their plans for political stability.

The British constitution, famously called by Marx an "antiquated and obsolete compromise

made between the bourgeoisie, which rules in actual practice... and the landed aristocracy' (1855, in Fernbach, Ed, 1973, 281), becomes a farce. The Royal soap opera as a figurehead and painful reminder of the antiquated political system ran by the power elite, with their de-humanising machine politics. The British middle class, who are the managers of this state of affairs and whom directly are responsible for the vast majority of informal and formal control mechanisms of the working class do bear a mighty responsibility for this. They are present in the media, education, work, the police, and other locations, and are characterised by having social power and higher wages.

All of these and the Labour movement itself are responsible for the historic depoliticisation of the working class in Britain. The Labour party and the unions abandoned the creative and self forming aspects of class struggle, and instead perpetuated their own power bases, leaving a political vacuum. Unfortunately, this was nearly from the beginning of these movements, and was based upon the mistaking of 'appearance' for the substance of power, but gathered pace post World War II. The gradual de facto removal of democratic working class dialogue and negotiations via; the ending of mass meetings and the shop steward collecting dues, or street corner politics - as politics itself deliberately became a forum for professional careers. Combined together to mean that there were fewer areas for working class initiative, choice and autonomous class formation. The class could not reproduce itself independently and/or politically, because the professional elites took the mechanisms of developing self-created genuine and organic popular working class politics away. They incorporate a number of dynamic working class people into the existing system, and some of these union leaders are on over £100K a year now. Thus, all the forms and instances of class autonomy were taken over or allowed to atrophy, meanwhile restructuring, confrontation, and purging scattered the most homogenous and militant sections (E.g. Miners, printers, power workers, railway workers, car workers). Of course, some class struggles are still fought as management seeks to impose cost cutting and work discipline thinly disguised as modernisation, e.g. firefighters.

Thus begins the crises of power relations and the state, the re-politicisation of the role of the police vis a vis working class struggles, in the 1970s onwards. So the scapegoat mythology and right wing ideology, so well spread by the right wing corporate media in TV, radio and newspapers, returns to help divide the working class. These 'Parasites' (single mothers, youth, ethnic minorities, unemployed, criminals, disabled, football hooligans, animal rights protesters etc) are then paraded periodically as the 'other' - 'we' don't want to be like them. It maybe controversial to include football hooligans in this list of oppressed, but laws firstly aimed at them to restrict their movement were used against political protesters next (the first anti-Stalking case prosecuted was a political one too), and movement is still not restricted for paedophiles such as Gary Glitter. Child abuse does not come highly on the list of priorities to work against for the power elite, instead they encourage divide and rule. In addition, it is no longer capital who exploits the worker; it is the asylum seeker, the workers who want to retire early, those who are sick, or the unemployed. The

message is that the working class must pay for the social disaster capital has created, 'Oi Worker! Don't expect anything other than endless work'. This discourse enters mainstream working class social experience as a disciplinary and ideological force; it is crude, and effective.

Machine Politics

The larger the political space managed by capitalist ideology, the wider the cultural territory and the system of values and behaviour that these impose on important segments of the working class. This in turn means that the form of the State becomes increasingly open and aggressive, that has its basic legitimating in the coincidence of State interests with capital accumulation and bourgeois freedom. By making itself the manager and interpreter of crises, the State form of the 'party system' is highly integrated with Capitalism, by a process of gradual abandonment of its autonomy and the adoption of Capital's ideology into governing practice e.g. New Deal. Therefore to discuss how the proletariat, and in particular the working classes, have survived the crises, tells us a great deal about the new class composition.

The Property Market and its Effect on Class Stratification

Property is the refuge for the security of the savings of the petty bourgeoisie, who ape the landed aristocracy. The booming private property market, itself a product of class disciplinary measures via the abandonment of universal state house building, further autonomously disciplines the desires of the multitudes via the spectacle; the standards, the false needs and wants that are encouraged. The contemporary era has been identified as being an arena of free will and voluntarism; "The city as the arena of choice. It is an emporium where all sorts of possibilities are on offer, a theatre where a multiplicity of roles can be played, a labyrinth of potential social interactions, an encyclopaedia of sub-culture and style" (Young, 1998, in Ruggiero, South, and Taylor, (eds) 1998, 69) which is increasingly being experienced in all areas, not just cities. The cultural capital and the real amount of capital of different social groups can compress this. In observations from Hackney some of the poor do not pay any attention to style, they are at the mercy of the market traders, the second hand shops, pound shops, or the cheaper stores like Poundstretcher. However, these are residents of one of the poorest boroughs in England, but are comparable with depressed areas of the north such as Consett and Middlesbrough.

As the state de facto privatises itself, e.g. closing and selling post offices, selling land, selling council and central government property e.g. M.O.D, the redevelopment of derelict inner city areas such as Docklands in London, but also including marina developments all around Britain, e.g. Falmouth, Bristol, Swansea, Liverpool, Sunderland, Hartlepool etc is all geared to producing profits for the managerial classes. Prices have increased everywhere, decomposing working class communities and fracturing

solidarity as people are forced to relocate. Instead, poverty spreads geographically, but not in terms of experience (causes) and internal composition (the vulnerable). Transport development and planning decisions influence the direction investment makes, and this is all done politically to disperse working class fractions e.g. 2012 Olympics in Stratford.

Along with booming share transactions, the tempo of property sales has given considerable impulse to the velocity of circulation of money, without it passing through a process of production. Just when the housing market was in its biggest downturn for 10 years Gordon Brown announces that he intends to tax land with planning permission - the addition of planning permission increases the value of land by approx 1000% or more - for the first time. The working class thus blurs with the petty bourgeoisie, some one foot in each camp, and others with the multitude of degrees possible, as a deliberate strategy of embourgeoisement is encouraged. The working class is encouraged to believe it can escape its' condition individually through work, rather than collectively through politics.

The attack on incomes via the cost of housing has a direct effect on class stratification's, and is a factor of violent proletarianisation; the enforced shift towards badly served peripheral urban areas or cheap property is a powerful factor of marginalisation. Resulting in more mixed class compositions in inner areas, though with remaining areas of struggle, the large estates, and more stark class composition in suburban and countryside areas as comparison between extreme wealth and extreme poverty becomes nearer geographically. Although this does not mean that the ultra poor are that geographically mobile, especially with the ridiculous price of national rail and transport costs in London and elsewhere. However, mobility in traditional segments such as gypsies and travellers still exists.

The reproduction of classes has entered a new stage, where legitimisation is a contested concept, of acceptance or refusal to accept the norms of social behaviour required and laid down by capital and the state. Classes have lost their identifiably objective characteristics, as seen from the outside, the force of redefinition and self-creation comes from below, in the continuous reproduction and invention of systems of counterculture and struggle in the sphere of everyday living experiences, which become ever more blurred and precarious, semi legal and illegal. The liberation of their areas of autonomy, outside and against official social institutions, is stronger than the system of outside values New Labour seeks to impose.

The subjective movement of the working class vanguard was achieved first through; piecemeal individual sackings, black-listings, and closures. Next, this is rapidly accelerated with political attacks on the central militant core of the working class; i.e. the Miners via mass closures 1984-90, and 1992- to date. In these and other periods of intense class struggle, trade union regular members become energised but with defeat come demoralisation, re-location and/or re-training, the sick (depression), or retirement. In short, class-consciousness is encouraged to disperse, and fragment.

A Developing Class Composition: The Role of multi-nationals, franchise, and the service industry

The jobcentre's are full of minimum pay 'McJobs' - the transnationals enlarge the power of the petty bourgeoisie via the franchise and other management tools, a manager thus becomes the boss who creates another layer of support within the management chain. Other large transnationals open up new service stores and offices that take advantage of new global purchasing conditions to supply the multitudes with cheaper goods. The national shopping chains have even created a new layer of 'value' products that are poorer in quality and even cheaper than what the working class was normally consuming. The breakdown of the divisions between work and leisure that public house opening hours visibly represented (during and after the First World War) have adapted to the new flexible labour market. Here however, the loss and dereliction of pubs and massive workingmen's clubs in working class heartlands is visible testament to the changing employment conditions. Recently a new pub chain has grown that is a hybrid of Fordism and post-Fordism - Wetherspoons, which now controls 5% of the beer market. It's economies of scale are found in massification of consumption whilst casual staff are encouraged literally to 'man the pump', rather than taking time out with customers staff work at a higher speed than before. This is similar to supermarkets whose '2 for 1' promotions mean there are no breaks in work pace for transport, warehouse or checkout staff. Higher sales volume guarantees profits.

Via the threat of benefit withdrawal the poor are forced to take temporary and short-term hours that suit managements timetable, however many have resisted by going onto sickness benefit e.g. Easington, County Durham, formerly the home of one of the most militant pits in an historically class conscious and militant county. Some of, if not the most militant workers in the Durham coalfield have been rendered politically marginal by abolishing their capacity to protest at work, enabled by former Miners en masse being paid off onto Incapacity benefits, but labelled 'redundant'. Though the aging population is generally creating a labour shortage this is filled partially by migrants, and labour is kept in a weak negotiating position by the general power of capital to set the agenda. The multitudes are not hopeless however, far from it, they are still trying to impose their own needs and wants upon capital, but self-valourisation is now largely taking place beyond the world of ordinary work.

Spreading self-employment, small business growth, small factories and traditional workshops, such as car maintenance, exhibit sharp contrasts and differences in their practice of class command. Some family concerns may still operate on a welfare model, but others employ casual staff who are treated with varying levels of contempt. It is the decentralised practices of multinational capital and the petty bourgeoisie, which creates the new terrain for the recompositional processes of the working class. In this a war of attrition rather than all out confrontation forced upon the working class, the levels of dis-homogeneity means that casual and informal staff cannot be the central social reference point for the class. Whose demands and forms of strug-

gle can be taken up at a general level of political objectives for the class in most or all of its locations as a means to improve their position as well. Instead of one section that is capable of uniting the wider movement behind them, a characteristic of the full employment era, there is a set of recompositional mechanisms that start from these levels of dis-homogeneity.

Let us begin with migrants: precisely because it is a global city, London has the transport links, housing possibilities, economic opportunities, educational resources and political networks that have formed a fertile ground for the burrowing Wombles. International youth at the forefront of globalisation in terms of culture and economy, together with those who are not constrained by old models of politics have proved to be some of the most visible. The huge informal, legal, semi-legal and illegal economies are where the precarious nature of 21st century life is experienced. The official and unofficial labour markets are where the precariat are located in a widely differing and disseminated manner. This formal and informal dispersion of the labour force is in a condition between the formal and real subsumption to capital, far closer to complete subsumption though. Orthodox eyes see the resulting nature of the new class composition as being a marginalisation that is not political – rather their marginalisation is very political.

The working class is confronted by a position of weakness because whereas before the growth of factories was paralleled with the growth of trade unions to mediate the class condition with the bosses, in the present age there is no applicable organising method in the working class memory. The gradual way the new economy is experienced does not circulate knowledge of itself to others workers in an automatic manner, instead the conditions are experienced repeatedly by different individuals within the class and sections of the class. The class as a whole does not acknowledge that there have been significant changes to capital that demand attention, so, there is a crisis in existing trade unionism too. The transition whereby labour power becomes working class, enabled in the large workplace by massification itself; is a transition that the multitudes must win via political engagement that is by no means clear or simple. The process of sustained direct action and the spreading knowledge of it that can make up for the position of weakness the working classes are facing.

Resume

The London metropolis has and can play a crucial role. It has provided a material terrain of recomposition for diverse working classes in both formal and informal labour markets through the practical organisation of social centres that circulate struggles, which are both the means and ends of spreading working class consciousness through multiple forms of participation and propaganda.

Decentralisation

The chain of command has been decentralised and disseminated, it is a very powerful tool of class command. The workplace has become a place of dis-homogeneity, public sector jobs in the inner

city can be very diverse, almost a preserve of a new hierarchy, although some sections can suffer abuse and discrimination e.g. gay people. In other overwhelmingly traditional areas and in smaller private concerns, prejudice is commonplace to all without discrimination, only conditioned by individual abusers pet issues. Student-workers are encouraged to take up some of the part time jobs in a much-diffused way, a method of imposing class authority and discipline on trainee workers. Some old Wombles of student imagination and struggle have also started digging again, in social centres this time.

The State form in transition

Due to the demands of capital, from its earliest days the Blairite New Labour project had various roles. One role it had was making credible the state form inherited after 18 years of Tory authoritarianism had asked questions about its efficacy and neutrality. Content with going slowly at first with the New Deal targeting the welfare state, allowing the impression of change, the force and scope of change in a neo-authoritarian manner is now clear. This is not so much change, rather business as normal with an aggressive state form at home and abroad, from the welfare state to the market state. Rather than real direct everyday democracy, the appearance of democracy is encouraged as Scotland and Wales now have Assemblies in their capitals, and there are mayors in various places of England.

The multitudes are encouraged to act as judge and jury whether it is; on neighbourhood watch, in business where shoppers are encouraged to grass up shoplifters over the airwaves at Asda, at Marks and Spencer where staff are encouraged to grass up shoplifters and each other. Parents are stressed and threatened with punishment if they have unruly children too, councils and jobcentres encourage the grassing up of 'moonlighters' and tax cheats. While the DVLC is given ever more powers we are constantly reminded of, youth and others are targeted by ASBO's and curfews, and villianised by the true villains of the piece, the newspapers as binge drinking drug taking reprobates. This is joined together in multi agency work covering many issues e.g. when the police accompany dole and DVLC staff in random morning checks of work vehicles. The media encourages phone in's which are meaningless, and entertainment blurs with everyday life when we are encouraged to watch 'Big Brother' all hours of the day and night (even while they sleep), and vote through phone polls.

Many act as Judge and Jury as false options are placed before them, but this means that the Institutional forces of law (Police, Crown Prosecution service, Magistrates, Judges) have only a ratifying function – they take delivery of the unfortunate hostage, the tumour driven out of societal crises. The State form appears as a sort of Doctor, an immuniser of civil society, who deals with all our problems.

However, the cancer is really the state form. It is ironic that the crisis in the Criminal Justice System under the Thatcher

years when corruption was a large issue in the 1980's (such cases as the Birmingham 6, the Guildford 4 were famous) helped to take away the decision to prosecute from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service. Now, liberal New Labour in a realist guise is bringing back summary justice by the police for many offences in the form of spot fines, dispensing with any resemblance of justice by making the state and its forces more dictatorial. The myth of police acceptability frequently mobilised to eliminate working class memory – of PC Dixon cuffing Johnny as he steals an apple, is, as it always has been, a myth. From the mid 19th century foundation of the Police, the working class has always been the major victim of attacks from and opponent of the police.

Corruption too is endemic in the New Labour governing class that repeated the failings of the last Tory administration, but in a more culpable manner. Getting close to the corrupt and neo-fascist Italian political class of Berlusconi and his fellow travellers has been led from the front (Blair's Berlusconi holiday) and from the very beginning of their administration, though the role of other rich people should not be forgotten.

Mandelson was brought down twice by deals with the rich (1998 – Geoffrey Robinson, 2001 – Hinduja brothers) and there have been others scandals too (Benie Eccleston – Formula 1, Indian steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, and Iraqi Oilman Nadhmi Auchi). Berlusconi himself, the worst example of anti democratic elitist politics (of the type Blair aspires too), embroiled the Labour hierarchy from the 1990s onwards via employing David Mills as Berlusconi's lawyer, as Berlusconi created a party with no members and hence no democracy, and immunised himself legally from attack.

Their managerialism, present in such fields as education too, is another form of decentralisation of command and the dispersal further down the chain of responsibility, and it negates the qualitative function of the judiciary. Leaving the apparatus with discretion, the quantitative judgements when dealing with those situations before them in terms of the penalties to impose and in what numbers. This will undoubtedly increase hatred of the police, as they will appear to be the new moralist imposers of government laws, and lead to more instances of corruption by them too.

Although, Big Brother is elsewhere and everywhere. The attempt at imposing work discipline is the characteristic that joins all these policies together. Clearly with controls on the unemployed and the coming controls on those receiving incapacity benefit, and in a manner that separates the included from the excluded, the outlaws from the law-abiding in the rest. However, it must be acknowledged that there are blurred edges and experience of all these processes, although this does not alter the macro political economic dynamic in process.

The Crisis of political forms – The Meaning of the Area of Autonomy

The refusal to think by the left means that it remains stale and also that they use a redundant concept of power based on old class formations and political cycles; struggle, party, transition, civil war, and state power. This is a projection into the future based on experience from a time that no longer exists, rather than a lived experience within the liberated spaces of the present or in the zones of direct class command. This error turns into parody when groups troop down electoral channels and without blushing call themselves 'independent'. The rotten and decaying institutional form of politics, partly destroyed from within, abandoned by elements that are more aware, became a form of oppression that offered no scope for class formation and advance. Instead, practice, and consciousness deducible from such practice, has been repeatedly autonomous and authentically independent.

It is not possible to confine the new subjectivity within the terms of the apparently marginal or the counter culture, or to consider it an exclusive prerogative of those in the Metropolis. Attempts to create an opposition between the liberation movement and the 'realist' political cycle are false – as false as the theory that defines the new class composition as consisting of the unemployed alone.

The reality is that politics has undergone a critique and repeatedly tested in negotiation with state forces that have attempted to police the sometimes-violent struggles. New organisation has appeared and disappeared, obviously political, or suited to its tasks, politically legitimated by their presence within class fractions discussed already. New organisation is various tribes, and one of which is The Tribe of Wombles. This tribe's success, built from their understanding and anticipation of the forms of political behaviour that were characteristic of the new class composition, is because they experienced social life in a way the multitudes do. Without preconceptions, and this meant that their demands were de facto the demands of the new class composition – they shouted the slogans of the multitudes own struggles. Thus, it is this ability to read parts of the platform within the multitudes own needs and desires which turns multiple 'private' and individual experiences and subjects into a social expression of these issues, and into a cause. May the multitudes of Wombles multiply.

This article has taken inspiration from "The Tribe of Moles" by Sergio Bologna, who wrote in the midst of mass autonomous class struggle in Italy during the 1970's.

Polemic: Reading Autonomist Marxism Politically

Autonomist Marxism (AM) is closely associated with the innovations in Marxism that occurred in Italy in the 1970s e.g. Negri, and with Cleaver's original and subsequent work (1979). AM is defined by Cleaver as existing within the wider Marxist tradition, and as;

'a variety of movements, politics and thinkers who have emphasised the autonomous power of workers – autonomous from capital, from their official organisations (e.g. the trade unions, the political parties) and, indeed, the power of particular groups of workers to act autonomously from other groups (e.g. women from men). By "autonomy" I mean the ability of workers to define their own interests and to struggle for them – to go beyond mere reaction to exploitation, or to self-defined "leadership" and to take the offensive in ways that shape the class struggle and define the future' (De Angelis, 1993).

When identifying the Autonomous Marxist tradition in Britain there is no central organisation or figure(s), and instead Autonomous Marxism is diffuse. A search on google in the UK pages for 'Autonomist Marxism' reveals evidence for this perhaps isolated movement; the first and second listings are a critique of AM by a Trotskyist group, and the majority of the rest are individuals, booksellers, university based and similarly diffuse. There is a sense of collectivity, and there isn't – they know who they are, but nobody else does. So, abstracting from this and experience, the identification of some of the prominent Autonomous Marxists is subjective, however, this is balanced by a concentration on theoretical and practical evidence.

Producing highbrow ideas then only appeals to an educated elite; 'As people are not sheep, the task of socialist intellectuals is not to present the scientifically correct socialist gospel to people, but rather to assist in the process of making more coherent and articulate that which exists

in 'embryonic fashion'' (Kaye, 1992, 30). In short, this necessitates praxis in struggles, and ideally, the basing of participation upon equality in the here and now during already existing class struggles. Directly or indirectly treating people as 'dupes' with 'false' or 'inadequate' consciousness, reproducing the division of labour between the thinkers and activists, who could not raise their consciousness to a 'sufficient' level (all of which imply imbalances which can be hierarchical and authoritarian politics of power and authority), and have held the socialist movement back for too long. Those who abdicate responsibility for action must be included too, who instead sporadically and in a scattergun manner, produce theory alone.

For some Autonomists – the 'helpless proles' need their practice represented as joyous 'moments of excess' which the 'fashionable' have labelled as those fleeting times when working class self determination reaches a short lived climax (Leeds Mayday Group, 2001). This label, derived analytically and abstractly without reference to the rich cultural theory tradition of the British Marxist historians, or other Marxist sociologists and criminologists, is as a result a-political. A test, similar to the observations Professor Ruggiero makes, is whether working class people from areas such as County Durham would get involved in such practices of certain autonomists, and the answer is no. Not only do they not come across it, it would make no sense to their self-identity and class experience. So whom is the writing for?

Other examples include 'The Commoner' website, there is little sense that the writers are participants in class struggle, excellent articles some are, but there are poor ones too. The one on the black bloc (Corradi, 2001) is not only poor it fails to transcend liberalism, and Orwells famous saying about those who do not like the 'smell of the working class' is apposite here too. As

Corradi displays no knowledge of, nor involvement and passion of people, who are fighting for justice in the white heat of violent class struggles (Ruggiero, 2005). The article by the Leeds Mayday group (2001), apart from having similar faults to Corradi (2001) mentions they were in Class War many years ago for reasons that are difficult to understand. There is little passion or feelings that there are any class struggles these people are valouring, or participating in, certainly not on a regular basis, and as a result, there is no feeling that they view any class struggle as worth participating in. Many ideas synthesize in a gigantic theoretical totality, which appears like a confusing edifice people have to climb and prevents engagement with the very ideas, which are supposedly concerning and of concern to the masses.

There is also a great deal of theorisation surrounding the New Commons but this is idealistically and de facto liberally approached for they appear to believe analysis is enough, alone, to create theory adequate for general working class emancipation. Certainly there is little or no historical investigation of the 'Commons', in the British Marxist historian tradition – of which there is a multitude. What there is, is at a high level of abstraction, and certainly based anywhere but in Britain. So if they do not know what the old 'commons' were, how can they hope to be able to theorise the new, because they will not understand what is totally new?

However, is the noting of the absence of such analysis a British centric viewpoint? If this viewpoint is guilty of arguing that for revolutionary subjectivity in Britain there must be a full description of the totality of social life and the welfare, and formal and informal economy possibilities, then guilt is necessary for class-consciousness. The alternative as Thompson (1965) argued is that 'The Peculiarities of the English' are lost, and there is no praxis attempted with people who are experiencing these conditions, and any other description of their subjectivity, including denial that such a subjectivity is possible, would be an imposition of a false consciousness. Further, there are no historical subjects in such analysis; it is as if people are expected to arrive at the door of this sort of autonomous politics with no history of their own.

Ahistorical politics is not a Marxist approach, and working class consciousness itself is not ahistorical either. Not only does ahistorical analysis lose purchase on class-consciousness and experience, it loses the processes of social change, and working class accommodation and resistance to the new social conditions. Nothing is entirely new, there are always continuities and innovations, and this must involve the people who theory is supposed to be concerning. Scraton and South (1984) identify the 'unbroken lineage' between practices from the old commons and everyday working class perquisites, 'perks', and other income derived informally and sometimes illegally from work. Ignoring class history, and hence its consciousness, is something which Marxists have said capitalism, the media, and the education system has done.

The lack of an historical perspective to inform current theorisation is because of a lack of outreach and a testing of their ideas beyond the self-referential de facto elite who appear to pre-

vail. It is the inter connections across boundaries that are interesting (Foucault, 1980, Williams, 1961), rather than those which are contained within sealed artificial walls. There are ideological problems too, created by a lack of transparency regarding processes. It is also present in other attitudes and behaviour of 'individuals too good to pin themselves to a group or attempt to set one up'. As a result these types of people operate without responsibility in informal networks – A New 'Tyranny of Structurelessness', without any praxis or testing of their ideas even within the general Marxist milieu.

This article is comparable to E.P. Thompson's critique of structuralist Marxism too, but here it is autonomist analytical Marxism without class struggle or democracy that is the issue. As Thompson said, the starting point is already happening class struggle. Adequate theory does not develop without practice, and no practice no theory, and this means the working class on the move will develop theory to within developing situations. Not by one kept at a distance by culturally alien and de facto elitist practices. It is in the experience of 'objective conditions' that people fight out the class struggle practically, emotionally, culturally, and theoretically, and not the objective conditions and traditions some theorists may imagine.

Surrounding Mayday 2006 there was a 'high theory' autonomist conference in Cambridge, followed by a 'practice' conference at Leicester University, but perhaps this exemplifies the argument. This seems to be almost a Leninist approach to politics, with the 'professional revolutionaries' going to Cambridge and the 'Proles' allowed to Leicester. Perhaps this is wrong and great efforts for both these conferences to outreach and network were made, but there is no evidence for this. There was no publicity for these conferences at even the Capital and Class conference at Leeds University (April 2006), none at Alternative Futures and Popular Protest (April, 2006), or at "Discourse, Power, Resistance: Research as a Subversive Activity" (April, 2006), both at the Manchester Metropolitan University. These three conferences attracted many participants – there were 80 papers for one of these conferences alone, and there were some 'organic intellectuals' attending, apart from academics.

There is little unity in a movement that calls for unity, and is a contradiction that needs overcoming as it displays a marked lack of collective responsibility, political organising or ambition, and a de facto lack of faith in their own ideas. In an age of crisis, just when the situation calls for unity, political weakness also further compounds the failures, and inhibits ideas and tendencies towards more political success. Therefore, it is time to look to history and identify philosophy, tactics and strategies from other times and situations that may be useful today in the search for revolutionary subjectivity (Gogol, 2004). In Britain the New Left (Kenny, 1995), and authors such as Hill (1967, 1974, 1975, 1996) are examples, and in other times and places there is Antonio Gramsci, and Raya Dunayevskaya (Gogol, 2004);

'Ours is the age than can meet the challenge of the times when we work out so new a relationship of theory to practice that the proof of unity is in the subject's own self-development. Philosophy and

revolution will first then liberate the innate talents of men and women who will become whole. Whether or not we recognise that this is the task history has "assigned", to our epoch, it is a task that remains to be done' (Dunayevskaya, 1973, 292).

Gramsci

Gramsci's 'Organic intellectuals' were the dialectical embodiment of a developing theory and practice (Eldridge and Eldridge, 1994); there were no 'theorists here', 'practitioners there'. It is important to approximate or attempt to move towards an ideal situation where theory and practice are intra-connected within the whole, and it is this sense of journey that is important. People's lives must be totalised, and this means that people's choices must be coherent within all spheres of their life. It is dishonest, non-Marxist and not good enough to relegate practical politics to others, or to engage in practice with an elitist attitude. This often produces a politics that people can control and mediate whilst given the superficial appearance of radicalism; in short, this is an ideologically pure politics, which is divorced from the nuances, conflicts, red mist, and confused terrain of class struggle. Therefore, in contradiction to this, the appropriate ethical stance to use within the existing class struggles is Hegelian. It is necessary to see the ethical character of acts within class struggle, and working class politics itself, as something that is emerging out of these struggles and contradictions.

People are not perfect; they are not born as pure Marxist intellectuals. Instead there is positivity and negativity within all individuals and so an approach which is overly concerned about 'being correct all the time' does not allow individuals to develop and this is if there is an inclusive approach in the first place. This maybe partly why, 'organic intellectuals' have not played the important role Gramsci thought they would (Eldridge and Eldridge, 1994), and many organic intellectuals are necessary for a renaissance of the working class movement as they will be at least part of the living framework of such a movement. EP Thompson in "Homage to Tom Maguire"; "appreciatively revealed a political practice that embodied in real historical terms Gramsci's 'organic intellectual'" (Kaye, 1992, 108)

Thompson was right when he said bland correct language detaches radical politics not only from Marxism, but also from people themselves, from imperfect humanity and its passions and emotions. Our historical tradition has not been like this at all comments Thompson (Palmer, 1994). Going beyond Gramsci who wrote that the 'popular element feel but do not think', Thompson (1991) instinctively appreciated that it was popular working class traditions which were instructive. Thus, it is necessary to aim for a popular approach, which thinks and feels. This approaches the heart of what Marxism is - is it a theory of self and class liberation, or is it something else? Possibly a means by which people absolve their conscience, or make their careers.

By saying that some Autonomist Marxists concentrate on presenting pure politics, this itself could be seen to be contra-

dictory, because it could be argued that this reasoning itself is politically pure and detached? However, this criticism would be an inappropriate abstraction not taking into account relevant other political theory or praxis, and by not considering the practical focus on self-activity that is contained within other theorisation presented. The greater flaw of this article is that it is at such a level of abstraction it is divorced from class struggle which matters in political terms, for the advancement of the practical needs of the working class movement. It is hoped that rather than issue 'rejoiners', targeted autonomists will provide examples of practical theorisation of class struggles in motion they are a part of.

1967-2007 A Socialist Review

by Dave Douglass

Renewing the Working Class Movement. Where does the sleeping mighty beast go now, and what do we feed it?

To contrast where we were forty years ago with where we are now is to court utter depression and despair. Where was the certainty of the Marxist formulae, of the historic inevitability of socialism, so earnestly learned on the knee of the YCL? That was the implication at least, that the relentless march of the masses across the globe took us ever forward to the socialist horizon and the ever encirclement of capitalism forward imperialist forces? That ongoing inherent crisis of the system from which it cannot find resolution and needs only the slightest tilt of the masses to consign the whole rotten system to history's garbage can. A quick glance around would awake even the most restless dreamer to the conclusion that such a scenario was now fiction, even suppose it had seemed tangibly and verifiably true in '67. The balance of class forces have indeed shifted, or rather been shifted, and assuredly not now in our favour. It is the world communist 'movement' in all its complexities, which has been driven backward and with it the aspirations and forward movement of the world's peoples.

On the face of it, we, the world's working people, were winning. In mass armed anti-imperialist struggles across the globe, Imperialism was being defied, often at great cost, by utterly impoverished people desperate to free the lands in which they lived. Despite the most ruthless application of war technologies and sophisticated weaponry, along with unrestrained brutality and genocide Imperialism from Europe and America no longer had it just their own way. Although the

nature of these anti-imperialist struggles varied together with the political agenda's and complexity, the predominate ideologies or at least the rhetoric was overwhelmingly one of socialism.

Within those movements, the struggle for genuine workers power and workers control reigned. Anti-imperialism was a platform on which we would fight for genuine power to the people and not another set of despots. Debates on the direction of third world countries across the world were marked by the question of socialism and genuine social democracy, often in the teeth of autocratic or totalitarian misleaders.

The role of the USSR is too hefty a question to deal with in this review, suppose I had a bland answer to the problem, which I do not have. It wasn't and hadn't been for some time a model of socialism, nothing within the structure allowed for actual peoples power let alone 'soviet democracy'. But the agenda set by the struggle to achieve, and the struggle to retain, the revolutionary gains of the workers revolution was entirely genuine and essential. I am not of course talking here of defending the so-called workers state as the Trots would have put it. But of defending the rights of the workers in the USSR to reclaim their revolution; to take back the organs of power and rebuild the soviets, the democratic workers and soldiers' councils and committees.

Nowhere could the bureaucrats of the USSR answer this impulse and ongoing movement by naked defence of privilege and state cap-

italism for want of another description. Instead, they had to hold fast to the rhetoric of socialism and communism. Nonsense of course in the context of their bloated privilege and dictatorial power, but this debate, this imperative of socialist ideology imposed far-reaching demands upon the structure of that state. Not least of these was to act as a mighty counter-balance to total world domination by US Imperialism, which acted as the General In Chief of Imperialism per sae. It forced the USSR to support, militarily and with logistical support liberation fighters across the world. In no short part of course this assistance and solidarity was a political bureaucratic sprat to catch a potentially genuine revolutionary mackerel. At other times, the bureaucracy was incapable of either abandoning the struggle or subverting the direction it was taking. Although the struggle for workers democracy had been crushed in fact within the walls of the USSR, not only could they not stop it breaking out everywhere across the world, they were often forced to assist it. In the process, the potential for renewed revolutionary struggle at home was always there.

Masses of workers and soldiers within the so called 'USSR' isolated from debate with the world communist movement, with the multifarious strands and currents of revolutionary ideology, denied the truth of their own history and counter-revolutionary events didn't know what sort of state they were in. Overwhelmingly, workers and soldiers believed the world they lived in was a socialist world, that their cause was a socialist cause. Whatever the true nature of the state they lived in, by and large they actually believed in the socialism and communism they had. The impact of the revolution braying on the doors across the world, sooner or later was going to come back home and some scales were set to fall from millions of eyes.

Across Europe, tens of millions of workers belonged to trade unions. Mass strikes had swept the continent for more than a century. Two world wars had stamped in blood the cry for real social change and class justice. Most of the Unions had cut their teeth in the struggle for workers democracy and civil rights. Mass social democratic parties and communist parties talked the rhetoric of socialism, even Communism. The agenda was set and the debate was fully engaged in, among the mass ranks of the workers themselves, and screamed at the traitors and misleaders of those parties. Anarchism, syndicalism and revolutionary communism addressed questions, and advanced principles and ideas hardly new to the solidly proletarian masses across Europe. At times mass uprisings rocked the cities, the red and black flag was seen advancing at the head of millions, general strikes seized European capitals by the bollocks. Needless to say, many of these movements were betrayed or misconstrued from the outset by 'leaders' custom built to do just that. But that is not the point. The maelstrom into which we as revolutionary socialists intervened was one with cultures and currents and a resonance with the main actors on the stage, the European working class.

Across North America, unions were in a desperate fight to survive murderous attempts to eliminate them. Shootings, bombings, economic sabotage and the blacklist were employed as freely as the whip had been in days gone by. A new revolutionary movement was emerging from the ghettos. Black workers and dis-

enfranchised youth kicked their way from the gutter, guns in hand declaring a doctrine of socialism and communism, signed themselves up as part of a world revolutionary struggle, the black face of all humanities struggle. The anti-war movement and the counter culture were subverting the foundations of the mightiest monolith in the world.

In the Middle-east, although the anti-imperialist, pan Arabism, movement was complex and varied, the most dynamic and demanding aspect to it, was socialist and communist. Palestinians saw themselves as part of the global struggle for a better world, a secular socialist world. In Libya, Syria and Iraqi Baathists and other insurgent teams at least paid lip service to a doctrine of socialism and genuine people's power. This is not to say by any means that that was the result, or even the real intention of the host of tin pot hob stomp dictators, but that this was the ideology they were forced to address because this was the ideology aspired to genuinely by the mass of the people and the soul of the insurgency.

In a sentence, the prospects in 67 were optimistic, we could see the revolutionary process which was pushing back the structures, or knocking them down, which was opening up areas of freedom, sexual, social, artistic and political. The Beatles were right; everybody across the world was talking 'revolution revolution revolution'. A step back to where we are now reveals over all an entirely negative contrast. The so-called 'USSR' whose tortured and agonising death had lasted so long finally ended. The revolution, which had started with such dynamism and optimism, was finally defeated, after decades of external subversion and aggression and internal decay. Worse in many ways, the ideology of Communism had been made to stink in the nostrils of the worlds peoples as Western ideologues of all descriptions rushed to describe the degenerated carcass as an example of what happened when the workers tried to take over their own lives.

Imperialism was given its head once more and unabated launched counter-revolutionary, anti democratic coups and movements across the world. The World Bank and the IMF would dictate the terms of life for the worlds most impoverished peoples and preside over the deliberate starvation of millions in the cause of the free market. Rich and opulent western capitalism would dictate to Africa just who ruled that continent. Or as they had said in Vietnam "it might be your country but that don't give you no god damn right to walk around as if you own the place".

Across the world, we see the rise and dominance of reactionary ideologies and structures. Even insurgency is marked by counter-revolutionary doctrines and demands, particularly in the Middle East where reactionary Islam and medievalist fundamentalism marks the process of resistance to Western Imperialism. This in turn has set a reactionary agenda within minority communities of Western Europe, and in the process caused white middle class leftist liberals to take to the hills or form rotten alliances with reaction.

Within America has come the rise of Christian medievalist fundamentalism, and the growth of backward and reactionary

ideologies, a war on science on debate, on sexuality and civil rights. In the White House the so-called 'neo-cons' set a nakedly imperialist free market capitalist agenda, reinforced by bombs and bullets. They are cheek by jowl linked to the far right ideologies of reactionary Zionism and racialism, which poses the genocidal elimination of the whole of the Palestine.

The European working class had been pulled up by the roots with virtually the elimination of the manufacturing proletariat. The mass industrial centres of ship building, heavy engineering, mines, docks, and motor manufacture, long the centre of total union commitment and socialist ideology have been closed en masse. The communities on which they were built are everywhere across Europe abandoned and are now the source of growing despair or far right racist backlash. Countries like Britain are more and more simple service and consumption sumps, which contribute little or nothing to the actual material wealth of the world. The knock on effect of this is to encourage the masses of working class people to identify with notions of private wealth, consumption and pointless accumulation, in contradistinction to cultures of production, equality and communal wealth.

Heavy manufacture and extraction has now been exported abroad to the Third world countries but also back through time, with conditions and wages back to the level we first encountered them in the dawn of the nineteenth century. Nowhere is this more marked than China, which now fully embraces the doctrine of capitalism and the market. Two thirds of all the miners who die in the world, die in China. A slaughter, which rivals the worst carnage of Europe and America together more than a hundred years ago. Poverty wages and sweatshop conditions mark the manufacture and production of the world's wealth, coupled with ruthless repression of unions and independent fight back workers organisations.

Socialism as an ideology has been ripped out of the heart of mass parties purporting to represent and speak for working class people and their aspirations and everywhere it is replaced with naked Thatcherism and dog eat dog individualism. On the so-called 'far-left' unprincipled and opportunist bodies are everywhere in retreat from principles and Communist vision. Unholy alliances with reactionary religious and right wing moralist feminist creeds have dropped all defence of secularism, and demands that religion and the state stay out of the bedroom. Or that we defend a women's right to choose, sexual freedom and opposition to censorship and state control over the minutia of our lives. Right wing moral crusades are launched in alliance with Muslim and born again Christians and middle class right wing feminist agenda's are being embraced. Interest in the traditional white working class patently an embarrassment, the so called 'left' is far more inclined to confront the workers of traditional working class Britain than engage them with any hope or vision for a future which some how includes them..

In the face of the growing environmental disaster creeping across the world, 'greens' and middle class liberals deny any identity with the human race and seek to opt out of any meaningful resolution to the fact Humans Now Dominate The Planet. In an effort to unmake the wheel, they seek to unmake twenty-first cen-

tury peoples, in the hope we can revert to some sparse populated green and agricultural fifteenth century utopia, bereft of mass transit, mass production and power, and based upon some soft-spoken peasant commune. They see not that it is humanity's destiny to manage the planet now that we, by our very existence have altered it, that we must use our science and technology to plan the earth rather than abandon either.

So where do we go and what do we do? Someone once said, that if the working class decided to ride humanity to hell, then we as communist visionaries and activists would have no choice but to leap on with them, in an effort to alter the direction the reigns were pulled in. The working class changed though it is in its manifestations and compositions in the west, still very much is the proletariat powerhouse and gravedigger of capitalism across the bulk of the planet. In Latin America, we see the start of fresh green shoots, and old doctrines of socialism and communism re-emerging. However, with the balance of hindsight, we know from history not to repeat the mistakes of leadercentricity, or party elites. In the middle east, although reactionary Islam holds the high ground the secularists, the socialists the communists, of Palestine, Iran, Kurdistan and even war ravaged Iraq are still holding their ground, refusing to concede to the mullahs and reaction. In the USA, a strong counter culture of 'liberal' tolerance, of genuine democracy, of old fashioned American socialism and working class identity is regaining ground on the back of the anti war anti state corruption movement. American is indeed no longer the land of the free but it is still tenaciously the home of the brave.

Here in Britain we are posed with large-scale collapse and defeat of the Trade Union Movement with all that engenders for worsening terms and conditions for the mass of working people. The wholesale destruction of manufacturing, and the industrial genocide committed against traditional working class communities has left a massive residue of disposed white workers and their families in large traditional centres of industry now baron of meaningless work.

At the same time the switch to process, service and small scale operations have had deeper social impact by the effects of migration and immigration. The claim that such workers 'are welcome here' is a good sentiment, but misses the point they were dumped here by design not good intention. The aim of mass migration and 'free labour markets' was to impose a dead hand on domestic workers attempts to regroup and reorganise. Millions of foreign workers, with little or no social base, with little or no social interaction with the existing workforce and working class communities were a recipe for social unrest and division. At least one million Poles are now working in Britain, most without any English, subsisting on the minimum wage, dispersed in individual pockets and groups across the cities and countryside, at the disposal of every petty rule and harsh disciplinary action by employers. The same is true of masses of Kurdish and Iraqi workers and those even further impoverished and depressed from Africa and indo china etc. The aim of this influx was not to create social harmony, united working class action, internationalism and solidarity but exactly it's opposite. The aim was to break the class identity of the workers as a second tranche to the mass closure of traditional

industry. It was to break collectivist identities and common working class cultures and history. It was to drive down wages, conditions, more importantly social horizons, and overall class perspectives. Needless to say none of this is the design of the incoming workers who want nothing more or less than to live, but the notion that this influx of millions of unorganised and estranged workers is somehow a progressive plan is misplaced to say the least. Its intention was to break the power of the British workers further. Our response must be to meet the challenge.

I know of no other way, than back to the basics of uniting workers across nationality and culture based on unions, and self-help working class community. We have started within the Trade Union Movement to organise unorganised workers across industry and community. Membership of unions, is starting to rise again, migrant workers are at the forefront of many of the most important minimum wage struggles. We have to start rebuilding those industrial and workplace fight back organisations of the class. We have to start rebuilding the vision of a world without capitalism and imperialism. Movements rather than parties, which are rooted to workplace organisation and communities. Social and political structures, which celebrate class cultures, art forms, and music in all their diversity. Not one of the groups of immigrant workers coming to now enrich the British working class come from cultures which are not based upon class oppression and class resistance and carry with them visions of socialism, communism or anarchism. Not one of those communities battered and abandoned though many are, which they are coming to, is bereft of struggles of the workers and attempts to smash the social system. Not one of the employers seeking to take on en mass workers from around the globe gives a bugger from where you come so long as you work your bollocks off for her/him and make lots of money for him/her. We have ready built a collective identity and vision, but our task is now as in 67, to make workers see it, and realise it again.

First, though, for Communists we have to restate where we stand ourselves, what is our vision of the world we wish to see and fight for? What are our principles? The separation of state and church/religion. Defence of secularism. Defiance of all Gods and masters. The right to read and think what we like. No censorship. A women's right to choose, no retreat on rights to abortion on demand, to free contraception. Sexual freedom, no repression of sexual expression. The right to organise in an out of Unions, no rule book dictatorships. Armed defence and revolutionary preparation. Freedom of movement, no curfews. The right to free assembly, and demonstration. If this is a minimum checklist those other forces outside of the working class who seek to work alongside us will have no doubt that these are our principles, these are our 'cultures' and ones we will not weaken for some short term cross class alliance or political campaign.

Kick a girl when she's down

By Ian Bone

'In common with many another part of our culture football was a working-class pursuit colonised by a middle-class establishment.' D.J. Taylor

You may have thought that this quote was a recent one. No, Taylor was not talking about the middle-class discovery and colonisation of football by David Baddiel, Nick Hornby, et al, in the 1990s, but the same process happened 100 years earlier too. Football which had been a glorious free-for-all and rebellious chaos, was in the 1860s studiously authenticated by a vigilant bourgeoisie. The Football Association (F.A) founded in 1863 by a cabal of former public schoolboys was intended to provide the fast spreading national pastime with a rulebook, protocols, and above all, a moral attitude. This blends with the Victorian 19th concern for state formation, the means whereby social life was measured and regulated.

Suitably enough its first annual competition was won by the Wanderers a famous public school old boys side. It took another decade for anyone beyond the catchment area of the southern public schools to breach the citadel, when Blackburn Olympic saw off the old Etonian's in 1884. What a class war clash that must have been. The previous final 1883 had been a benchmark - the last final in which an amateur team of privately educated gentleman defeated the tough bunch of doggers from beyond the Trent who would come to dominate the game. After the initial breakthrough by Blackburn Olympic, the next three seasons saw Blackburn Rovers win the cup. The days of matches conducted

by moustachioed army subalterns and bachelor university dons watched by a handful of toff cognoscenti had passed. In their place marched a procession of northern working-class sides based on factory, foundry, or working men's club whose progress around the country was trailed by thousands of fiercely patriotic local supporters. Within 20 years the rule of the gentleman had gone given way to the ascendancy of the proletarian player.

So, football remained a working-class sport for another hundred years reaching its zenith in the huge post-war crowds of 80,000 plus at grounds like Maine Road or the Valley with thousands of cheery faced rattle waving lads to the fore.

Fast forward to the premiership now and there is hardly a young lad to be seen, the rowdiness and liveliness of the newly liberated 1960's youth has gone. The average age of a spectator at a premiership game this season is 43 years old. At premiership season ticket prices, who could afford to take their kids to a game? The corporate box holders - Roy Keane's prawn cocktail chatterers - and the super rich and the class tourists of the middle class - have effectively cornered the market in match day tickets. Featured on one of those 'Relocation relocation' type programmes last month was an interior designer looking for a designer Pad in North Devon. One of his particular requirements was satellite TV reception because he was a Chelsea fan - 'never miss a home game' - since fucking when pall!

Being a fan of one of the leading premiership clubs is

now a must have identity for the middle-class upshifters and downsizers. The middle classes have effectively wrestled football watching back from the working class restoring their hegemony they lost to Blackburn Olympic in 1884.

The softening up in this was done by the Nick Hornbys and David Baddiel in the early 90s - middle-class nonentities striving to attach some interest to themselves by appropriating working class culture. How often have I read a piece about a gang of these class tourists 'going to the dogs at Walthamstow' - wowie fantastic - like no one's ever done it before these fascinating people 'discovered' it? Going to the dogs - who would a thought of that! By their very presence they remove it from the mundane to the fascinating!

Now the middle class seek to colonise and dominate every aspect of working class life. Take comedy. I was reading a fascinating piece on comedian Ed Byrne's exciting move to a £500,000 cottage in Suffolk following the well trod path of Rick Mayall, Jennifer Saunders, Harry Enfield, Ben Elton and all into Tory voting countryside Alliance supporting membership. Scratch a new successful pop band, and you will not have to go far to find a fingernail of toff underneath.....or film... listen to the director of HOT FUZZ talking about his wonderful years as a 'bluecoat boy' at public school in Wells.

The upper classes used to confine themselves to dominating government civil service, finance, diplomacy, land ownership, army, and church, but now they design to achieve total domination of every aspect of working class culture and appropriate it for themselves - before selling it back to us as if authenticated by some fucking toffee-nosed Soil Association type arbiter of the organically authentic working class experience. Even the anti-war protest movements are dominated by Oxbridge Toffs like Ken Loach Tariq Ali Tony Benn the Pinter's the Redgraves.....

The working class who are not complicit in these cultural takeovers - left outside with their noses pressing in - are then demonised as 'Chavscum'. The white working class are now the only section of society it is 'okay yah' for the middle class to insult politically correctly now, so dominant has the hold of middle-class leftist identity politics become, enabled by a compliant media, some ran by the same people (BBC).

So, imagine their unconfined joy when one of the deeply loathed and feared CHAVSCUM says something 'racist' - hence the demonisation of Jade Goody. Goody made some off the cuff racist remarks mixed in with some feisty class antagonism about not wanting to be pushed around by a snob. The sluice gates of class loathing and fear were well and truly opened for every toff and middle-class apologist to vent their class hatred on Goody.

No media commentator mentions the class background of these people who were not brought up in the posh houses and public schools of the privileged. Where the privileged are taught and learn their skills of social control, to continue their class rule. The rules now mean that you are meant to participate in the 'correct way' to progress in their institutions with nicey nicey middle class manners. When people do not comply, then sexism against the working class becomes apparent, 'these people' are 'not properly educated you know', breed

other rebellious children and are 'welfare scrounging single parents'. The range of traditional bourgeois reasons to hate the workless working class has blended into a single political attack.

'SLUTS' said Edwina Curry on Question Time to loud applause.
'TARTS' said Carol Sarler on BBC News.

This is class hatred against the working class with a vengeance. Would any other section of society than the white working class have been abused in this way? 'Pram Face' and 'Chip Shop' cannot have been far behind and if you could have added the prefix 'Council estate', to 'tarts' and 'sluts', then the applause would have been even louder. The demonisation of Chavscum by the media is part of the reason why there is little faith in the political system, and why a section of society are turning to the BNP who appear to be the only ones not excitable by off the cuff racist remarks - which people can mean nothing by. So a by product of this middle class strategy is creating the very political force which they claim to loath the most.

On a wider social and house prices level - how do you keep such chavscum out of your highly desirable school catchment area? Why you invent a whole new bogus way of keeping the working class out by disguising your class cleansing. You campaign for 'independent shops' and launch campaigns to keep supermarkets out of your area - supermarkets means cheap food - and we all know that chavscum eat cheap food - not like the raspberry compote eaters infesting the hospitality boxes of your local premiership football corporation.

Come back Blackburn Olympic - your class needs you!