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*Libertarian Communist Papers No 1*

# Thought, Organisation and Struggle

A Handbook of notes concerning  
the revolutionary project

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## **Introduction**

This text stands as simply for the purpose of debate, discussion and so internal education. It is the product of a lot of work and hopefully will provoke enough response to make it worthwhile in terms of eventually reaching some answers to very relevant questions.

## **0. OPENING**

What is our object? Revolution!

Our object is one thing and one thing alone - the revolutionary transformation of a vile and decaying society, the society of capital. In its place we seek the creation of the human society of communism, a society which is passionate, creative, peaceful and satisfying. We seek only that society which will truly satisfy all of our human potential and not keep it locked away or unused, nor allow it to be degraded or destroyed.

If we, then, have an object do we have a method of achieving that end? Our own condition necessitates that end - we are all human beings held within a historical process which gives us all a variety of choices:

- we can allow our situation within this society to go unaltered, allowing all deprivations, oppressions and exploitations;
  - we can actively comply or collude with that misery;
  - we can ignore that misery, we can call it something else or fatalistically tell ourselves that we have no part within the historical process;
- or
- we can understand that we have the capacity for action, for thought, for struggle;
  - we can understand that as various members of the social base, the layer exploited and oppressed by the minority of society and their agents, we have the capacity to alter that situation.

The working class as the base upon which bourgeois society, so-called civilization, rests, is the foundation of what passes for order now. It is from our labour and service that wealth is created but only because we allow that process of exploitation to continue. We live not as creative and conscious beings with control of our own lives, we live as objects subjected to all manner of limitations, we are merely the instruments of that structure called capital which itself is serviced and attended to by its own servants, the bourgeoisie. From this they gain and satisfy what they

consider to be their own rightful human potential but condemn us to an impoverished life in the face of that privilege and consumption.

This global structure of capitalist relations, class relations, cannot continue. Very soon there will be a final choice before us, we shall be faced with this - the creation of communism, or the elaboration of barbarism. But when will this choice be made? It will be made when it is a necessity! This may seem to be a sophistry - mere words - far from it! This society is seen in part or whole by many as barbaric, some can excuse that barbarism as the unfortunate but fatal result of human nature, some take a perverse joy in that barbarism, perhaps gaining a vicarious pleasure from a sense of superiority over the poor and exploited, some are simply indifferent or cynical. Once all excuses for action to change the course of history away from barbarity are exhausted, once there is no way that the bourgeois class can divert or derail that choice, then *the choice will be made.*

We have a choice before us - we can remain the human objects of this society, the instruments and tools of flesh used by the bourgeoisie in the service of capitalist 'logic', or we can take on the mantle of history and become creative subjects by thinking, organizing and acting within the historical arena. We all feel that we have a number of human qualities, we have the capacity for thought, we have freedom, free-will, we can choose what we wish to do. Each has a grain of truth and each has a measure of falsity. We exist within a world of historical determination - our knowledge, our capacity for thought, for understanding is determined by a number of factors: the possibilities at hand in each of our cases for learning, whatever we had to begin with at birth, and the various choices we have made in the learning process and how those choices themselves were determined; our activity is determined and limited in just the same way, our decisions to act similarly bound.

Thus, we begin with these premises:

that the present human condition for the many who comprise the base of society, the working classes, is a miserable condition, a condition of exploitation, oppression, limitation;

that we live within a class society where the many are simply the foundation upon which the wealth and satisfaction of the few is based;

that change must come about, if humanity is not to slide into barbarism then the necessity for communism has to be understood and acted upon;

that most of the working classes denied their true humanity have yet to understand that they are more than objects, that they can and must act if they are to achieve that humanity;

that a whole series of obstacles are in the way of that change;

that change is called revolution.

We have an end in mind, we have an idea. This is not simply an idealism, it is a concrete conception of the organisation of human reality, thus it is not a mystical construct, it is not some act of faith or poetic vision. It is a construction of principles which we have derived from a number of sources - it comes from our own experience of material reality, but that is not a dry and lifeless experience, it is a passionate measurement of what is and compared to what we know there could and shall be. That end is a direct result of what is. To move from what is, from our experience of the material reality of the present, to what could be, that envisaged end, requires revolution. Within the present we have a conception of the future, we have an end in mind, for that to be the case we have to achieve our major object, revolutionary change. The revolutionary project, having one ultimate end, is a series of steps, minor ends along the way. As with all forms of action it comprises a series of elements - an opening situation, a conception

of change, an actor - there is a beginning, end and agent. But this is not a page in a dry English philosophical treatise, nor is it a problem to be solved in such a way - we are talking here about global history, global political action and so we are talking about diffuse rather than discrete bodies, we are talking about complex struggles, movements of action, complexities of consciousness, motivation etc.

## **1. REVOLUTIONARY METHOD AND MODEL**

While some think simply about the 'leadership of ideas', before that battle can be fought we need a revolution in ideas. The first element of that revolution must be to recognise that class war is indeed a war. It is a war fought with all manner of weapons, many used even before a shot will be fired, our three weapons are - Thought, Organization and Struggle. The bourgeoisie fights by enslaving us to its wages and its various idols, the working class fights by acting for its own ultimate interests, by taking itself seriously and so creating its own revolutionary reality.

Our object is the revolutionary transformation of society, why? Because we know that it is a necessity if humanity is to be all that it can be, and because it is a direct result of our own experience. It is not simply an intellectual question, indeed the intellectual impulse towards the revolutionary project is not enough, for a true commitment a direct passion towards it is necessary. We know that revolution is a necessity but why has it not occurred? There are two ways of giving the same answer - because the objective and subjective conditions have not been right, or it has not been a necessity for enough people that revolutionary change occur. There have always been reasons why the choice for the revolutionary alternative has not been made:

- at times wars of national defence have tied the working class to the maintenance of the status quo;
- or social democracy has deluded the workers into believing their interests are taken care of within the capitalist system;
- or simple and not so simple ideology, persuading people that reality is capitalist, nationalist, democratic, religious etc. and no other. But the revolution which will end all of that not only has to be objectively and subjectively founded, it also has to be made.

There are many theories of revolution, ranging from spontaneism to putschism, but all of them are flawed because they rest upon flawed models of humanity and history. Putschism (Blanquism) relies upon the notion that society is simply a mechanism of power and that history is a process of power. But is this the case, that we are part of the ultimate materialism - the history machine. I believe that such mechanical approaches are disastrous, because human society is not a simple question of power but involves creativity, imagination and passion. After all, is not the required revolutionary result defined in such terms, as being beyond a society of things and more a society of human relations based upon peace and plenty. It is a mistake, though, to overly emphasise this other side, the 'spontaneist' element of the revolutionary project:

- it stands as a denial of the 'trade union consciousness' thesis;
- stating that all the imagination, creativity and will is present or will be present within the working class when it is needed. Each extreme, though, is utopian, a denial of reality;
- authoritarian putschism can provide nothing in terms of revolution because it is not possible to hand down freedom from above, nor because it remains a limiting hierarchical structure and would likely remain so;

- libertarian spontaneism provides nothing because of its fatalism and because it fails to recognise the reality of power.

All revolutionary theories are an attempt to provide both a model and a method of revolution. If any method is to be generated then it must rest upon an accurate model of revolution. What then constitutes, or at least contributes towards a revolutionary model. To understand how to change society then that society itself must be understood, but not in generalities. It must be understood in its institutional and historical forms, as static formations and in historical processes. It must be understood as economic foundation, as political form and as everyday culture, as economics, politics and ideology. (See later sections on materialism and history)

We must gain a general understanding of history so that the process of change is understood, within that we must gain an understanding of people within that process, the relationship between person and institution, person and historical process (itself a product of people), person and ideology. Out of a full understanding of such general principles a model can be constructed but it must be remembered that such a model can never be treated as a hard and fast template, no understanding is ever complete, as human beings we are all fallible, consequently all must be capable of change when measured against experience. The revolutionary model is a product of the combination of the revolutionary end and our social and historical understanding. When we combine that model with a clear analysis and historical understanding, then we can generate our method.

Revolutionary method is an ongoing, everchanging, always refined and updated model of the journey from present to revolution, but it is not a simple road map, it is a complexity of its own. I doubt very much whether it will be the product of one person, this text merely being a contribution towards its elaboration. The revolutionary project will not be product of one but many, all involved in struggle gaining the experience required to ensure that the revolutionary project is a practical problem and not an intellectual exercise.

The revolutionary project is based upon a critique of society. That critique has two elements - theoretical constructions concerning history, theories of society, politics, economics, culture; and the analytical application of those theories to particular times and situations. The revolutionary project is the application of those theories and analyses to practise, but that also has two elements, as in theory and analysis, the general and particular - strategy or strategic thought and practice, the overall model of revolutionary change; and tactical thought and practice, the particular application of strategy in particular times and situations.

On either side of this are extremes which endanger the revolutionary project. There are those who harden their theorising and their ideas of organization and practice, making each a dogma, an unchanging paradigm. Rather than being revolutionaries those who hold to such become the bishops, priests and faithful of a pseudo-revolutionary faith. Or perhaps the only important task becomes theorising, here we meet the passive revolutionary, the pro-revolutionary academic, the philosopher. On the other side we meet those who rail against various dogmatisings. But without theoretical activity, analysis and the practise become foundationless. Such a revolutionary form is a form of idealism, whether it seems to have some theoretical, analytical or organizational form. The proper theoretical and analytical critique of society cuts out all forms of idealism and opportunism. Idealism comprises all those supposedly revolutionary forms which have no true intellectual basis, those forms which slide around on the

sands of anti-intellectualism or the precarious foundations of shallow social and historical critiques. Opportunism comprises all those forms which capriciously ignore the consistent application of revolutionary strategy but collect and hope to profit from a ragbag of different ideas and engagements. While headway can be made by gaining strength from those not motivated by the central core of capitalist oppression, we should not be swamped nor diverted by the peripheral.

The solid centre of the revolutionary project rests upon programmatic thought and action. This means steadfastly plotting a course along the revolutionary path, regularly ensuring that we are heading in the right direction, regularly taking our bearings by means of our principles, side-stepping or mounting any obstacles - but never stepping back, never wandering in circles, never blindfolding ourselves.

## ***2. EXPLANATION, MATERIALISM, CONTRADICTION***

How then to approach this whole exercise?

We must, first of all, generate or collect a general social and historical theory, perhaps by the critique of others.

We must then examine the revolutionary theories of others and so by critique generate our own model.

Our task then is the analysis of the present which can then form the basis for a revolutionary method.

But the first step is to answer the question of thought and analysis. What form of thought and analysis is required of this whole project. The answer I believe lies within the underpinnings of our whole approach - materialism rather than idealism, experience rather than dogma, logic rather than literature, imagination as incision but not fanciful flight, historically rather than ideally or iconically.

With respect to materialism we should not frame such an idea in limited and infantile terms. Materialism is not simply a question of giving matter primacy over mind, or nature over spirit, but is a question of treating the whole of human experience as matter or material. Be it a word, an idea, or a belief, it can all have material force depending upon what action derives from it. The idealist conception of the universe is simply a means of denying the human and so the displacement of the needs and aspirations of a certain section of humanity, those without power over the ideal, it is the classic ideology. As a general principle we can say that ultimate materiality has primacy over all else but this is in a logical sense - by this I mean that we can move from the physical to the biological to the social and economic to the 'cultural', but we must remember that our experience of each is normally combined with all. For example, our thought is culturally determined in that it is limited by the cultural construct of language, that our physical and biological experience is placed within social, economic and cultural settings. We do not have pure experience, we have an experience made by ourselves, human experience is human reality is human construction. Reality conditions our experience which comes to us out of a socially formed framework. We can not talk of perception being a faithful and true reflection of material reality.

The social and historical world is a world of dynamic change. Within that there appears institutions, apparatuses, frameworks or constructions which act or exist as positivities, however, there are also negativities which oppose and eventually destroy those constructions.

History is a process of development and decay, generation and degeneration, construction and destruction. Forms of activity, frameworks of practice answering our perceived needs and desires (or the needs and desires of those with the power to frame reality) are built and developed until they can no longer answer those needs and desires, or are overtaken by better or new frameworks and so are destroyed. The social historical world is dynamic in that it is based upon the growth and development of frameworks of power (economic, political, ideological, legal, cultural etc) which must eventually exhaust themselves. Is this because all forms of power imply those who have power and exercise it, and those who do not and have it exercised over them? In other words there is contradiction, struggle, class struggle.

Concerning contradiction - if history is dynamised by these contradictions are they all the same? Is it possible that in certain historical processes -  
positive and negative interact creating a third term where both are still present;  
where positive and negative resolve themselves only in a mutual destruction, where resolution contains nothing of the original two terms;  
perhaps more importantly, where following Bakunin, positive and negative combine leaving the negative as the resultant but as a creative yet indetermined force. In marxist terms contradiction occurs with the positive forming the basis of the resultant term, in libertarian terms it is the negative.

Our mode of explanation and enquiry must follow these lines, moving from experience to explanation, from the particular to the general, to the particular. We should derive our principles from an analysis of our experience and then test them against further experience. But we have to include within this scheme the fact that we do not enter the whole process of explanation unaided, history has given us a variety of forms of explanation which can be built upon, tested and remodelled. Thus we form a means of explanation, a framework and method by which we can understand and then communicate concerning our experience and project. We also have to include the recognition that we are passionate, creative and imaginative people - thus we must take as part of reality those desires, our passions as a material force. We should not, though, fall into the trap of false science. If we take our thought too seriously, treat it as a sacred science, then we shall be overtaken by time itself, history will leave us with our theories as our own gravestones. The practice of revolution can only be a historically determined practice - that is both theory and practice change as objective and subjective conditions change. We have three great weapons - the knowledge of our fallibility, our ability to learn, our revolutionary commitment stemming from our humanity... the fact that we want it.

### ***3. CONSCIOUSNESS, POWER AND MORE***

Our first questions concerning the revolutionary project must concern a general social and historical theory. aside from a critique of political economy which should be made elsewhere, the tasks at hand are to provide an understanding of history, of how humanity moves through time, and an understanding of society, how humanity interacts and indeed acts. The first step I shall take will be to examine the concept of consciousness.

Before any action is taken it is thought, then the means are acquired, the action taken - thought, means, action. Thought is an example of consciousness. Thought is not an example of the idea. Idealists see thought as the idea, materialists see thought as consciousness. For primitive materialists, simplistic materialists consciousness is a product of the material world, as with

Plekhanov, Kautsky and Lenin. As a product it is simply part of a causal chain. The clue should have been seen in Marx's Theses on Feuerbach where the sensuousness of material is emphasised. The material world is a totality involving not only matter but its sensuousness, our consciousness of it, and how we act within it. It is not the inverted Platonism, the totalitarian realism of Lenin.

What determines consciousness? Consciousness implies a number of things. There always has to be a conscious subject and an object of consciousness. Someone is conscious of something. But that consciousness also has a framework - it arises out of a social grouping and has a means of expression, it has a means of communication for specific purposes. We think in particular languages, thought has form, and those languages are not private or personal but social. Our consciousness is thus initially determined by our language and how it is acquired. Language is a product of social history, of materialist social history. Although at base it is a product of our material needs, we must remember that we experience our needs as a totality, thus our needs go beyond the simple satisfaction of the physical they too are experienced. While we may talk of a hierarchy of needs and in certain senses the priority of certain needs, we can not talk about the priority of certain experiences. Our physical needs may express themselves more ferociously than others but they do not order themselves into a hierarchy of experience.

We can say that our consciousness is determined initially by these things:

- our material reality, the physical and social world which we experience, our experience of need;
- our means of consciousness, our language which is socially and historically determined and which is socially acquired;
- our action, our practice within material social reality.

Our practice can only determine consciousness because our action is part of material reality, by its results it is part of our experience. Consciousness is not a lifeless, static reflection but is an active element of material reality. What we do affects our own construction of reality. We are not born, learn and live a life with an unchanging sense of reality, reality is everchanging and so are we.

But is consciousness simply consciousness and nothing more? We must remember that our reality is a class society, a society of exploitation and oppression. The material reality of capitalism is that we have a functional position within the economy. With respect to the production and reproduction of everyday life we are placed in a particular relationship. We all satisfy our material needs in a particular way - there are those of us who can be called part of the working class, the social base, who may actually produce the 'wealth' of this society rather than administer it, its production, or own the means of its production; we may be part of the reserve army of workers waiting to pick up work where we can; we may work by supporting others who work, working so that they may earn. Work or the lack of it is a definite feature of our lives, our economic function determines our class (or at least goes some way to defining the limits of our action within class terms). Thus we may have a class consciousness, a consciousness of our place within political economic reality, but a real consciousness of class necessitates moving beyond the personal because class means common function, therefore, common interests. Action stemming from class consciousness may mean personal gain but by definition it means class action, class experience. But as class consciousness it relates necessarily only to economic reality and economic interests. Consciousness though can move beyond that which tends only towards the amelioration of exploitation, towards lessening the

weight of shackles. As a consciousness of economic interest and material need it is not a consciousness of creativity as a class. Revolutionary consciousness is a political consciousness which moves beyond frameworks of economic action and takes up the idea of the class as a historically creative force, ready not simply to protect, defend and ameliorate, but to negate and then recreate the whole fabric of society.

Ranged against revolutionary consciousness though are forces with consciousness of their own. The bourgeoisie has a consciousness of itself as a class, just as the aristocracy had a consciousness of itself as a historic force, they have a consciousness of their own social historic position and their power - what they can do and what they will do. Class war like every war has at least two sides. As part of that class war the bourgeoisie (and their instruments, institutions and apparatuses) attempts to arrange material reality according to its own interests rather than the interests of the working class. Those interests involve both satisfying their own material needs (profit, wealth) and protecting their class position. To a great extent the means to each end coincide.

But then am I not going against certain orthodoxies in suggesting that some things which appear to be superstructural are in fact part of the material base? Or am I saying such? Certainly the coercive state apparatuses (legal, military, police formations) remain wholly part of the superstructure and support and enforce one or more state ideologies, ruling class ideologies. Other traditional state apparatuses may or may or be termed ideological and thus superstructural. In a fatuous sense health and education are economic formations by virtue of being employers. They also have other functions - the health system sustains capital by repairing its workforce; the education system supports capital by preparing its workforce through training and ideological mystification or motivation. Are they then productive forces by producing and reproducing the forces of production, by their preparation of labour power. Education also has an effect upon the relations of production in that it has an effect upon the control of production, but in this sense the modern state, the state capitalist state, has more effect. (See Marx, Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy; Alan Carter, Outline of an Anarchist theory of history, in For Anarchism, ed. D. Goodway, Routledge.)

The traditional marxist model sees the structure of social history as being this:

forces of production - material

relations of production - social

state superstructure - ideological;

where primacy begins with the material and moves on to the social and ideological. But as I have already said material reality includes much of the above. This is not to say that I believe that the social and ideological material in and of themselves, but that they form part of material reality by directly impinging upon the material.

Our consciousness is largely made up of our conception of reality, how reality is constructed for us and by us. Part of that construction of reality depends upon how we are connected to material reality, that is how we function as economic agents - producers. Because this is a society of the wage and the labour market, our economic agency is how we satisfy our material needs - the wage. By selling our labour power, we enter into particular relations of production which themselves imply a particular construction of reality, as do the tasks themselves. Relations of production are part of social reality, while productive tasks relate to economic and technical reality. Where our subjectivity combines with our construction of reality we discover

our interests, another section to our consciousness being part of what motivates us, those interests (particularly our material interests) are part of our class consciousness (which is either active or passive, taken seriously or cynically). Our interests can be taken as purely personal, as individual interests, only casually class interests, or as truly class interests. We can accept what is given us and subordinate our interests to the structure of power, remaining at the level of personal interest, we can take up our class interests and raise ourselves to the level of class economic interests, or we can take power seriously, understanding that power can be taken from the bourgeoisie. We can take ourselves as a creative force, a historic force, acquiring a revolutionary consciousness, taking up the project of the social revolutionary transformation of society. How those interests are articulated, how consciousness is articulated depends very much upon what action is seen as possible.

Power is the ability to do; to change one's material reality, to create. Our ability to act though is limited by a number of factors:

- it is limited by consciousness in that action is limited by what is seen as possible, we can only do what we conceive as a possible action;
- our particular material reality itself limits the scope of our action in that the relations in which we are involved limit our action.

Our power is a function of our place within material reality, particularly within the economic process, because our place within it gives rise to our interests, helps frame our consciousness and gives us our material resources. All action requires resources, be they subjective, social or material. Our power is framed by what we see as possible, what we know how to do, the system of social and cultural rules which we obey and the material resources we have with which we may act.

Power in social terms can be seen in this way, as the ability to order one's reality and so also the reality of others. It is the ability to order their behaviour. As in these cases:

- a worker's power consists chiefly in selling or not selling their labour;
- likewise in the workplace there are those on the other side of the class divide who order the behaviour of workers, they decide what they should and should not do, to some extent obviously a worker may have a range of possible action but that range is determined for them by their work and those who control it;
- outside of the workplace there are other situations where control is exercised in one or more ways, by institutions, apparatuses, institutionalised social relationships, as in such things as patriarchy, the legal system, education and so on.

How does social change occur? We can say that change occurs when:

- first of all, there is a necessity for such change;
- and secondly, the subjective and objective conditions allow that change. Because human society is materially based it is when material conditions determine that change must occur. Society has a material form and a material content, there are the means or the forces by which it produces its material needs and there are the forms of organization or the relations of that production. When these two aspects of society come into conflict then change must occur. for example, every form of organization of society asserts a particular material culture, it promises a particular form of life, when it can no longer fulfill that then some sort of change must take place. Social change is effected by social forces, the best known form of social collectivity is 'class'.

## **4. CAPITALISM AND THE ECONOMY**

We can say that material reality has two main divisions, the objective and the subjective. The objective aspects of material reality are the ground upon which the subjective rests but they are not exclusive layers, they intertwine, each having an effect upon the other. The objective ultimately derives from our basic physical needs and has, historically, been added to producing a more complex material culture as time has passed. The subjective fills out that material culture with social and cultural rationalities, explanations, systems of meaning. Objective material reality, we can describe as the means by which we produce and distribute to satisfy our needs, simplistically it can be reduced to our economy.

But is it the case that our economy is the means by which we satisfy our needs - No! it has gone far beyond that. An economy as a material culture involves production and the technical culture which supports that production, and it involves forms of distribution. As a capitalist economy it is concerned with the production of capital, its generation, its regeneration and expansion. As an expanding form capitalism means expansion in terms of markets, not only territorial and social markets hitherto unconquered, but also markets created out of technical advances giving us new commodities and by 'marketing', markets created by artificially new needs or desires. Thus the economy grows by means of an expanding material culture and expanding norms of consumption and distribution.

What is capital though? it can have many forms. Strictly as money or credit it is capital in potential, only when it is employed in the attempt to make profit and hence more capital, is it capital itself, capital the relation. Capital is derived from profit which is made by extracting a surplus from labour employed in some form of production process (or a service process). Capitalist economy works via the market which is the moment of exchange, exchange being made in some form of money for all things are given a quantitative value, a money (or exchange) value in the market. Present in the market are commodities, commodity services, and labour power which is itself treated as a commodity, that is a utility and an exchange value, thus workers are reduced to objects, things.

Capitalism at each moment can be viewed in terms of its means of production and the technical culture that asserts, its relations of production, its relations of distribution and accordingly also it asserts norms of distribution. Capitalism not only buys labour power on the market, that labour having a value, both in its use as a generator of surplus, and in exchange, it also creates norms of distribution, it makes promises concerning consumption, standards of living. These promises or norms are equated with the price of the reproduction of labour, the wage, are one of capital's weaknesses. Workers are thus doubly reduced to objects, machines for the production of a surplus and machines for the consumption of that produce.

Class can be determined by relation to the system of production, but classes are not rigid social layers, they are tendencies being not only layers of society but questions of interest, material interest, consciousness and action. Every system of production throws up its own class divisions, consequently we have at present a social base which involves not only those directly involved in the process of wealth production but others. At the heart of the social base are those producers who work, sell their labour but have neither any ownership of that process but no real control over it. There are those outside of the process of production but depend on it, either for future employment and so a wage, or because act in its support dealing with the social aspects of it - as in those who work in the home, those who were part of production but now are too old. There are also those who have had their ability to produce taken away, be they the

disabled or dispossessed.

Beyond this there are those who may exhibit some of the characteristics of the petty-bourgeoisie. It has been a current trend in some areas of capital to force those with certain skills or no other opportunity to become their own employer. In some cases this may break an element of the working class away from the class by giving them new interests in terms of profit, whereas in other cases it may simply mystify the situation by the reintroduction of the wage relation in a new form or under a new name.

A crisis in capitalism, a critical point which demands change, comes about by the development of a number of tendencies within capitalism. There is always the problem within capitalism of being unable to satisfy the demands of workers, of being unable to deliver the norms of consumption which it promotes. Secondly, there is a tendency for capital to be unable to continue to grow because it has no further markets to exploit, be they internal or external markets. Capitalism is a system of circulation but it is also a system of unequal exchange, in other words, however much it tries it can never retrieve all of the value produced by it because profit has to be taken. Thus, there is always a tendency for the rate of profit to fall. There is a related tendency for capital to reach a level of capacity of production which produces more than can be sold. Internationally unequal exchange can be seen more clearly, the poor world has been exploited by loans (and so debts) and by trade. The poor world has a position in the international division of labour giving it the responsibility for the supply of cheap raw materials, cheap manufactures and labour. But at a certain point this exploitation must end, just as wages can only be depressed so far in the rich world. Without the capacity to buy the market, the point of exchange, breaks down. If the poor world is made poorer, if the worker is made poorer, how can the capitalist sell their commodities.

## **5.STATE AND IDEOLOGY**

Given that there is class struggle and a tendency towards crisis how then is the tendency towards social change slowed and altered? Why hasn't the revolution occurred already?

It was said that the state was simply a parasitic off-shoot of the ruling class, involving an army and a bureaucracy which are the means by which the ruling class asserts its power over the producing classes. In the classical period of industrial capitalism and before the state was certainly parasitic in that it produced nothing and was a drain on the surplus created by capital. Now, though, we live in a state capitalist era. The needs of capital required that the state move from its position as a structure built above society in general to become a material force in a wider sense. The state was to become a material support service for capital through:

- huge arms spending, the armed forces (especially earlier in the century) becoming a tool for rearranging the world market, and a means of creating profit for some capitalists, soaking up spare industrial capacity;
- the creation of a welfare state, taking on the education of a workforce to provide skills necessary for the new complexities of production, healthcare to keep the workforce available for production, payments to keep the spending power up of those vulnerable through such things as unemployment, child-rearing, age etc., providing adequate housing answering a basic material need of the workforce;
- nationalising areas of the material support services required by the economy, as in transport, power, water, health, and ailing industries which may still be necessary in terms of both levels of

employment and what they actually produce;

- arranging also the rules of the nation's economic space, altering various limits on relations of production etc.

Thus, the state was not simply an off-shoot of the bourgeoisie but was to become a major area of its own employment. The economy was to become a national economy, not an economy of individual capitalists. National interest was superior to the particular interests of individuals or fractions of the bourgeoisie, and so the fraction with state power ordered the economy by command (in so far as they were cooperated with by other fractions), the state became the administrator of national capital.

as that administrator it organised its income, its taxation, to supply and fund its various apparatuses staffed by different fractions of its own bourgeoisie and middle classes, with its own 'producers', its own workforce, each with their own interests and areas of power. These apparatuses can be categorized as coercive, ideological and material support. The coercive apparatuses include police, armed forces, justice etc. and fulfill essentially the same coercive functions as before. They enforce the social norms of the bourgeois state - how we are expected to behave. The material support apparatuses supply what is needed to keep capital and society in general, functioning at a particular level of technical and material culture, and within particular economic and financial bounds. They supply those things that the capitalist can not supply for themselves on the grounds of cost, size or complexity.

The ideological apparatuses, the systems of education, the media or information system, and so on, function so as to create a reality which serves capital. They serve to control by controlling consciousness itself, by means of the creation and diffusion of ideologies which give versions of reality and so norms of actions acceptable to capital. Ideologies relate directly to fractions of the bourgeoisie, to areas of power, thus, parts of society align themselves behind sections of the bourgeoisie - be it the right, centre, or left of capital.

By creating norms of behaviour and norms of belief, society can be split into the normal and the abnormal. Once there is this split coercion and repression can be employed against the dangers of abnormality - hence the process of criminalisation. A society in danger is a society which can be unified in the face of diverging class interests, people can be persuaded that their interests coincide, that there is a civilization to be protected. Part of what is created is a system of 'knowledge' which elevates the prejudices and interests of a class to the level of truth and so valid for the whole of society (whether there is any truth in the matter at all).

## ***6. CRISIS AND ORGANIC CRISIS.***

History proceeds by developing all of the forces within it, its forces of production and its ideological and coercive forces in the pursuit of the satisfaction of the needs of different classes within it, the needs of the ruling class and the needs of the producing classes assigned to it by its bosses, until those forces and needs become explosively contradictory.

A political or ideological crisis occurs when the state and its ideological apparatuses, along with the bourgeois fractions within them, can not persuade the class that their interests remain the same, that their visions of reality coincide.

An economic crisis occurs when the circulation of goods, money and capital break down so that

the normal operations of capital, profit and accumulation, slow or halt. A structural crisis occurs when the economic crisis can not be overcome because the whole system has become an impossibility, when it has become impossible to reform the system and set it functioning again. When we see these combine we see an organic crisis. From the point of view of the class history reaches a critical point when there is such combined crises, when the ruling class can not provide answers for the problems besetting it, when it can not divert or destroy the intensified class struggle arising out of that historical situation.