

VERY BORING

Marx has a utopian view of "capital". He is a sentimental romantic idealistic *believer* in capital as the progressive, universally totalising and revolutionising force. He *dreams* that capital successfully and completely subsumes all other social relations and social forms exclusively into its own process. Marx has a central paranoid dogmatic obsession with capital, he would like to believe that it has become the sole centrally determining explanation of anything and everything in the modern world. Marx believes capital will reduce all social contradictions and social conflicts into one big mystical messianic "dialectical" conflict between "bourgeois and proletarians", or between just two big camps centred on "bourgeois and proletarians", which will build up to the ultimate historical point where it will all go "POP!" and create one big totalised global revolution, impose the "dictatorship of the proletariat", resolve all the social contradictions and usher in one big world "communism" forever; bingo! just like that! If only all the problems in complex social life and life in general were so easy to solve.

But it is just judeao-christian-islamic religious paranoia to believe in one central unified history with one central time having a predetermined purpose, a predetermined history rushing up to one apocalyptic point ushering in the "millennium" or the "second coming" or the "rapture" or "dictatorship of the proletariat" or whatever. It is just mystical paranoia.

Of course in reality so called "Capital" (the self reproducing and self expanding exploitation of dispossessed free wage labour in an industrial commodity production process) never completely revolutionises or totalises in this way. In fact, despite much ultra-left and situationist talk of an omnipresent "late capitalism", "Capital" has not yet completely totalised to the level of the social world and human population as a whole. Also because of the very nature of its own process, it is never actually capable of totalising. The capitalist production process is certainly big and powerful but it never fully subsumes all social relations directly, or even indirectly, into its own social relations. Is it true, for example, that every moment of domination or patriarchy or despotism that ever existed in history can be exclusively explained as an expression of the development of economic "value", or of some mode of economic "surplus extraction", and subsequently "capital"? And even today can every moment of domination or patriarchy or despotism be explained *exclusively* in terms of serving capital accumulation and serving nothing else?



WHINGER PRESS

COMMUNISM, LIBERTY AND FREEDOM

(Some brief notes towards a libertarian communist critique of marxism)

(Yes it's boring)



WHINGER PRESS

MARX, A UTOPIAN LIKE US

Mr Marx, with Mr Engels as his side kick, puts on a big show in the famous 1848 "Communist Manifesto" and elsewhere of criticising and dismissing "utopian" socialists. He insists that he is not an idealistic utopian socialist himself, but to the contrary, a "scientific" socialist with a "dialectical" historical materialist system. And he insists that this wonderful system, *his* system, is the one and only correct system. Only *he* is right and all the other socialists are wrong, indeed he has designed his system so cleverly that he can *prove* all the other socialists are wrong, they are merely *utopians*.

But isn't this sneering at all the utopians just a sleight of hand diversion and clever conjuring trick? In reality Marx is trying to cover up his own utopian socialism, an ugly totalitarian centralist collectivist productivist anti-utopian socialism (far more grim and ascetic than any "phalanstere", the proposed idyllic community of the visionary utopian Charles Fourier for example). He is trying to cover up his own utopian socialism by planting it as a hidden "cookie" in what he claims is an objective scientific historical method. This supposedly objective scientific historical method is rigged and deceptively constructed out of supposed totalised "social modes of production" and "epochs" and "stages" and "fundamental classes" and the like, so that his anti-utopia just magically appears like a rabbit out of a hat in the form of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" at the end of the process. It is made to appear as if it were the natural inevitable outcome of a unified historical development when in fact it is just his mad, bad and dangerous religious apocalyptic millenarian fantasy, full of his own bitter and twisted prejudices and biases. We see a clear hint half way through the manifesto of Marx's centralist and collectivist and productivist anti-utopia when he lists the grim social democratic and state capitalist policies he favours; nationalisation of land and rents, heavy income tax, confiscation by the state of the property of all migrants ("emigrants"), nationalisation of the banks, state control of communication and transport, forced development of wilderness, industrial armies, tying agriculture and education to industry etc... (Just what the hell are these bullshit policies? Marx is prejudice against individualism and decentralism, he is bias towards the centralising tendencies of state capital which he foolishly imagines strengthens the workers and brings us closer to socialism. Historical events have now shown us that state capitalism under a "workers state" just keeps the workers in exploitation and misery and doesn't give us real socialism at all. And in any case the tendency in material production today is towards decentralism and so called "dispersed fordism". None of Marx's policies are in any way genuinely *communist*.) Marx disguises his ugly anti-utopian socialism while distracting the reader with a pre-conceived schematic *utopian view of capitalist development*....

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with one central time having a predetermined purpose, a predetermined history rushing up to one apocalyptic point ushering in the "millennium" or the "second coming" or the "rapture" or "dictatorship of the proletariat" or whatever. It is just mystical paranoia.

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Bakunin was a bit of a romantic fool and a political clown, but in his famous argument with Marx he was not wrong to point out the problem of "domination" as an independent social dynamic in itself. Marx was not a bolshevik, he was a miserable early social democrat, the dictatorial bureaucratic method of bolshevism was to come after his time. However it is easy to see why Marx's theoretical denial of domination as an independent social dynamic was to become such an attractive tool to bolshevism, and remains so attractive to today's squalid neo-bolsheviks. Lenin's perfect excuse for being a perfect tyrannical parasite. Marx is particularly weak when he tries to simplistically argue that, "The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." But even the real modern states that exist today are not concerned exclusively with just *bourgeois* affairs. They continue to involve some despotic, aristocratic, patriarchal, bureaucratic, etc. forms that can't be fully explained in terms of the "affairs of the whole bourgeoisie".

Some non-capitalist social relations continue semi-independently even today in what we are continuously told by most socialist and anarchist commentators alike is supposedly "capitalism" or a

"capitalist society". This basic "capitalism" or "capitalist society" *dogma* is repeated ad nauseum (by the CWO, ICC, ICG, ICP, Aufheben, SPGB, ACF, Solfed and too many others to mention), the majority who repeat it do so without even thinking about it. But it is questionable whether there really or fully is a "capitalism" or a "capitalist society" in the sense of one big unified homogeneous epochal capitalist mode of production, totally and exclusively accounting for the social environment and the population as a whole. The idea that there is one homogeneous all inclusive "society" is a piece of propaganda put out by the mainly bourgeois state, a piece of propaganda which is then sentimentally picked up and believed in by collectivist marxists and sociologists. Surprisingly, although the word "capitalism" is one of the favourite words of too many "vulgar" marxists, Marx himself never actually used the word "capitalism" in any of his writings, nor in fact did he ever use the term "capitalist society". Marxist theories of subsumption under "formal domination", as opposed to "real domination", are as murky as mud. They are the sort of theories that can only really be proven by dogmatically presuming them in the first place.

If the reader of Marx pays attention they will spot that he does actually undermine himself and admit that capital is not capable of being a totalising force in part 2 of the Manifesto. In one particular paragraph he makes the suggestion that, under conditions of bourgeois property, wage labour "creates capital". Several paragraphs later, however, he suggests something different; that in fact under conditions of bourgeois property wage labour creates "capital, money or rent." Think about it, why is the second suggestion made? If "money or rent" were already fully capital then the first suggestion would suffice and the second suggestion would be superfluous, "money or rent" would not need to be listed. Marx is letting slip here that that the capitalist production process not only helps to reproduce and maintain itself but also helps maintain alongside itself other social forms too, such as extra petty bourgeois circulation and landlordism which, although they may be turned into capital, are not necessarily in themselves capital. Capital *leaks* non-capital. Because of internal crisis and decay, capital is constantly throwing out of its process more and more redundant means of production and excess redundant workers it can no longer profitably absorb and employ. It can no longer use many of the redundant workers even as part of an active reserve pool of labour competing in the labour market, it is unable to absorb them at all. They become "surplus" population, and they get added to another "surplus" population, that of dispossessed peasants and peoples (small p) that capital was never able to employ in the first place. So of course capital is not capable of totalising, it is constantly expelling and throwing out means of production and population *out* of its social relations before it has even got round to absorbing them all in the first place.

To talk of capitalist production, as Marx does, as the "predominant" mode of production is also a problem. How, for instance, is it possible to measure the historic point at which production for exchange becomes "predominant" over production for use? Even if the majority of items that I produce happen to be exchanged rather than used without exchange this still doesn't mean that exchange was necessarily my primary motive for production. So how do you measure this?, particularly as it is impossible or has no meaning to measure production for exchange or a price against production that is not seeking a price. Even where production for exchange is very prominent does that mean all other moments of production can be explained exclusively in terms of it? "Predominant" becomes one of those dogmatic sleight of hand words that is used to try and force a presumed absolute totalisation which isn't necessarily there. And at what point did the supposed "bourgeois revolution" the Communist Manifesto talks about really happen? Did the "bourgeois revolution" fully happen at all?, or has it yet to be completed? Merchants already had a significant degree of power and influence in ancient Sumaria. Meanwhile, up to the 1990s, there were still *aristocratic hereditary*



peers voting on legislation in the British parliament! Isn't the "bourgeois revolution" just a grand myth invented by marxism?

Of course there are *peculiarities* in different times and places with regard to economic, social and material conditions, and these are likely to have an influence on the different peculiar shapes and forms that social struggles and class struggles might take. You are unlikely to find a mass industrial flying picket heading down the road in the 14th century, certainly not one that is driving in cars and down a motorway. Likewise a peasant revolt similar to the revolt of 1381 is unlikely to occur in the British isles in the 21st century. Nonetheless there is no absolute crude chronological determinism with regard to struggles around social relations. Even in medieval times there were some early examples of small scale industry employing industrial craft workers who would have downed tools once in a while, and even today you can still find a few semi-tied small farmers and crofters who are often grumpy about something or other. There were even workers' strikes in ancient Egypt!

The notion of "society" consisting of one total social mode of production that develops in "stages" and "epochs" is in fact a bourgeois productivist fantasy. The human populations and their histories are reduced merely to a series of homogeneous collective production teams whose only function is to produce and reproduce. Fredy Perlman (who was generally a good guy) unfortunately made this productivist mistake in the opening lines of his "The Reproduction of Daily Life" (Phoenix Press, P.O. Box 824, London, N1 9DL.) where he started: "The everyday practical activity of tribesmen reproduces, or perpetuates a tribe..." But sometimes the activities of individuals in a social group or community don't strictly fit in to what by any stretch of the imagination can be sensibly regarded as "production" or "reproduction" (unless you really want to stretch the meaning of words to poetic extremes). Sometimes social individuals may nonetheless engage in activity that is separate from the "tribe" or even anti-social. Sometimes the "tribe" (presuming there is a formal "tribe" in the first place) splits, or individuals wander off. Sometimes individuals engage in one-off non-repeated spontaneous activities for the fun of it, like random nonsense and humbug (ask me about it). On the other hand sometimes the individual just has a "bad hair" day, or sometimes random shit just happens. The whole of life can't be reduced simply to the functions of "production" and "reproduction". In the opening paragraphs of his "Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy" Marx sneers at the classical liberal economists like Smith and Ricardo for taking the "bourgeois fantasy" of the isolated enterprising Robinson Crusoe like individual producer as a natural eternal starting point of all economic history. But Marx himself is committing a similar error. While the classical liberals are romantic admirers of the individualist competitive entrepreneurial tendencies of bourgeois economy, Marx on the other hand is a romantic admirer of the centralising monopolist and collectivist tendencies of bourgeois economy. Marx just regurgitates the fantasy of monopolist and collectivist bourgeois who wish to see and engineer this "society" and any "society" as just a total social mode of production. Marxism, with its totalist-stageist-productivist-centralist-determinist paranoid apocalyptic ranting, is just a miserable mutant strand of bourgeois liberalism, *marxism is itself a form of bourgeois thought*.

Marx spent a lot of his time behaving like a sociologist birdwatcher. A birdwatcher will sit for hours in a hide peering out through a pair of binoculars watching the birds as a *detached observer*. The birdwatcher will then dream up ingenious expert theories about the social patterns the birds make as they sit in a bunch on a tree or fly in formation, but even if the birds could think intelligently would such theories have much useful meaning in the daily lives of the individual birds themselves? Marx spent endless hours hiding in the British library peering out metaphorically speaking through binoculars watching the humans as a *detached observer*, dreaming up theories about the social patterns the humans make as they go through the world over time. But to what extent do such theories have much useful meaning in the real daily lives of the individual humans, individual workers etc.? Today

they might have some useful meaning, but only in a limited way and only in the daily lives of a minority of individual workers. There are one or two good comrades who we know personally, who shall remain nameless, who seem to spend hours of their time sitting in the new building of the British Library and still carry on exhibiting the same amusing behaviour as Mr Marx. Comedy arises when the birds engage in a little bit of role reversal and start to observe the birdwatchers.

It is not at all clear, as Marx suggests back in the Manifesto, that all old fashioned sociological class barriers and divisions, social and cultural caste barriers etc., are being broken down and dissolved by capital and replaced by one big general social antagonism; "bourgeois versus proletarian". To the contrary sociological class differences still seem very much alive and are constantly being re-invented and built up again (complex professional and managerial hierarchies for example). Is it strictly true that in times of major social upheaval and social revolt the remnants of all other classes, aristocracy, landlords, bureaucrats, peasants, petit bourgeois, lumpenproletariat, declassé surplus population..., really do all get dragged into one big dialectical opposition centred on two camps; "bourgeois versus proletarian"? If Marx's predictions were correct then most if not all these remnants of other classes would have been dissolved by now. "The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry," he claims in the Manifesto. But even today, in the twenty first century, there are, due to a number of reasons like uneven development, large numbers of petit bourgeois, independent traders and peasants still in existence in the world for example. The ultra-marxist needs to explain how come there are still so many? And it is no good going round accusing people of being "petit bourgeois" as your favourite insult when at the same time you claim to believe the petit bourgeois effectively aren't supposed to exist any more.

The predictions of Marx in the manifesto regarding the conditions of the proletarians themselves are also a bit wobbly. "The various interests and conditions of life within the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level," he claims. For well over fifty years now this has been visibly untrue in the "first" world. It is also visibly untrue in significant parts of the "developing" world. Writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, Marx was unable to foresee the full extent of development of economic "keynesianism" and bureaucratic interventionism and "imperialism" in the twentieth century. As a result he was unable to foresee how the supposed general "law of value", and thus by implication the proletarianisation process for instance, could be subject to major historical distortions and suspensions, pushing the supposed "final crisis of capital" so far into the future it disappears over the horizon or becomes meaningless.

The "bourgeoisie" (burgesses) themselves have a long and complex history. In the form of the petit bourgeoisie (independent proprietor or merchant), who are not necessarily capitalists, they can trace diverse histories on and off going back thousands of years. This history is a lot more and a lot older than merely the history of the development of capital. But in the opening pages of the Communist Manifesto, Marx distorts and simplifies the history of the bourgeoisie in order to make it appear as being not much more than the history of the development of capital. Marx's attitude that the petit bourgeois and artisans and peasants and lumpens are always conservative and reactionary isn't objective analysis it is just *nasty prejudice*. Falsely predicting in the Manifesto that Germany was; "...on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation, and with a much more developed proletariat...", he goes on to predict that; "the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution." Marx here shows his germanic proletarian supremacism.

We are not living today in a completely "capitalist society", if we presume "society" then we are living today in a *mainly* "bourgeois society" which has today come to depend *mainly* on capitalist

production, this is a different thing. The struggle between capital and labour is undoubtedly a very major important struggle but it does not totally centrally determine everything, it is not the whole of social struggles. The struggle for a free communistic arrangement of things does not depend exclusively on the conflict between capital and labour, or on some "centrality of the proletariat". In any case the "proletariat" is never perfectly fully formed. Funnily enough Marx originally intended to publish his great work "Capital" with a title something along the lines of "A Critique of Bourgeois Political Economy" (or something like that) rather than "Capital". If he had stuck to his original idea the demonstrators at Jun18, Seattle, Prague, Genoa, wouldn't be calling themselves "Anti-capitalists" but "Anti-bourgeois political economists"!!! If there is a fundamental need to be "anti-" anything then it is a need to be first of all 1. Anti- domination and patriarchy, and 2. Anti- enclosure, commodities and alienated labour. And this remains the case whether there is a successful dynamic industrial capitalist production process supposedly "predominating" over our daily lives or not. It also remains the case under any pretended "workers state" or "anti-imperialist" regime.

Instead of a *visionary* utopianism, like the utopianism of Saint-simon and Fourier and Owen which Marx scoffs at, Marx presents us with a pseudo- scientific *schematic* utopianism. Marx has an idealistic imagined scheme of how the whole of history and social reality is supposed to develop and progress. Large chunks of marxist theory then consist of trying to distort, exaggerate, simplify or falsify social reality into fitting in with this ready made schematic utopian system or methodology. It is a very clever schematic utopianism, very well written, it goes on for lots of pages, (I wish I'd have written it myself).

Now utopianism is not necessarily a "bad" thing in itself. It is nothing to be frightened of as long as we have become consciously aware that it is just utopianism and not reality, and we don't try and despotically impose utopian models upon social reality. Utopias and utopian ideals, if accepted for what they are, can be useful for inspiring us and developing our critical thoughts about the present and possible future reality in a parallel hypothetical world. This is how William Morris used his own utopianism for example.

If the marxists would come clean and admit that marxist methodology is just a sophisticated schematic utopian philosophical narrative which is quite useful up to a point but doesn't explain everything and isn't compulsory all the time then fair enough. We can accept marxist methodology on that level and be able to live at peace with the marxists, we will even invite them round for tea. And many marxist theoretical tools are useful for looking at specific processes, commodity exchanges, the development of money, labour processes and production processes, and particularly for looking at the exchange of non-equivalents (the extraction of "surplus value") and exploitation inherent in capitalist wage labour for instance. But to raise marxist methodology to the level of some sort of invariant and unquestionable historically correct "scientific" *truth* which claims to explain the whole of human history and social life is dogmatic *humbug* of which we are deeply skeptical (often this is the position of neobolshevik humbug merchants, like various leninist, trotskyist, maoist and stalinist parties and gangs). So marxist utopianism can be useful, but the struggle for communism doesn't always have to depend on marxist methodology. If marxists want to dream up and inspire us with utopian theories of the "value" of labour then good for them, by all means they should go for it. But they shouldn't be allowed to get away with using "dialectical" trickery to claim their theories are the whole of objective scientific reality, or the one and only central truth. Marxism can sometimes be more useful and practical when you remove the bad influence of *Hegel*.

As proletarians and dispossessed, or those threatened with dispossession, we are, for the time being, stuck in ongoing imperfect and somewhat fragmented class struggles and social struggles the outcome of which are as yet uncertain. There is no one centralising political strategy, certainly no

neo-bolshevik international central committee, that can instantly genuinely resolve this. Right now the only honest answer to the question of how can we successfully organise and coordinate a whole world social revolution worth having (rather than a fake bureaucratic revolution or state capitalist revolution) is *we just don't know yet*. All we can do is engage in practical resistance and practical solidarity in the real struggles going on in the world, while developing and being inspired by critical utopian ideas which we keep in context in our heads at the same time. Concrete examples of practical resistance and solidarity might begin with such things as; both individual and co-ordinated go slows and overtime boycotts at work, resistance to housework, resistance by the unemployed to crap job offers and crap job schemes, in the community help in setting up, running and networking autonomous social centres, occupying land and growing veg to share, sharing tools, skills, space, encouraging the boycott of particularly nasty products of particularly nasty companies (it *does* make a small difference), refusing bills, costs, council tax, TV license,... And let's not forget simple *mutual aid* and *looking after each other* and international inclusive equal *solidarity*. If marxists climb down off their "scientific" pedestal and join in with the rest of the utopians, libertarian communists and social insurrectionary dispossessed, then maybe we can all struggle alongside each other as proud utopians together.

Perhaps the ruling class will succeed in their ultimate plan to impose a high-tech neo-despotism on the world, to monopolise and command the whole of the material world purely for their own elite perpetual indulgence and with not much need for further accumulation of surplus. In which case they will dispense with the need to depend on so much exploited human labour and in so doing dispense with the need, from their point of view, for the majority of the human population, needing only a few domestic slaves perhaps. On the other hand, maybe over time we will succeed in pushing back the forces of domination and ownership, commodities and money, and exploited alienated labour, and we will be able to move things in a more communistic direction. Who knows? There is no inevitability, there is no predicting. We are engaged in class struggles and social struggles partially out of necessity, we *need* to struggle against domination and exploitation in order to survive. We are also engaged in struggle because of desire. We *like* to cooperate and share things and practise mutual aid, we *prefer* global solidarity to lonely aggressive competition. We also engage in struggle because of idealism. We *dream* of different communistic worlds with universal abundant free access, free distribution, and free and equal voluntary communal social relations.

COMMUNISM, LIBERTY AND FREEDOM

It is part of the paradox of "bourgeois" liberty that it enables its own critique to come into being and flourish. A widespread conscious questioning of all the material conditions and social relations, including those social relations inherent in "bourgeois" liberty has become possible because of "bourgeois" liberty itself. Rather than being hostile and phobic of liberty and freedom and "individualism", communists should be, like their old friends the anarchists, enthusiastically in favour of them. If it wasn't for "bourgeois" liberty then there wouldn't have been any historic development of modern socialist, communist or anarchist thought or literature, there wouldn't be any *marxism* for instance. Nor would there be so much of a modern socialist movement or workers movement. Once the growth and development of bourgeois economic conditions over the last few hundred years has speeded up the letting loose of the ideas of liberty and freedom like a genie out of a bottle then

there is no shoving them back in. The workers and dispossessed, once they come under the spell of this genie, start to develop their own notions of liberty and freedom and turn them in opposition to the bourgeoisie.

It is funny how leninist marxists, for example, are quite happy to embrace the idea of a "dictatorship of the proletariat" and a "workers state" because this happens to be a convenient cloak for their own bureaucratic and state capitalist aspirations, but they wouldn't dare entertain the notion of a "workers liberty" being turned into the antithesis of bourgeois liberty. Here the prejudiced attitude of the vulgar marxist that liberty is inherently "bourgeois" leads them to an infantile level of argument, not much different to that which they accuse the anarchists of in regard to the anarchists' attitude to the state. Even marxists like the International Communist Group (www.geocities.com/Paris/6368/), who are not particularly leninists, specifically fetishise the political and social form *dictatorship* by choosing as their leading slogan; "Dictatorship of the proletariat, for the abolition of wage labour". But why not "Liberty of the workers for the abolition of all alienated labour"? or how about "Anarchy of the dispossessed for the end of all commodities"? In the modern context the political and social form *dictatorship* is no less a product and reflection of the mainly bourgeois conditions than is the political and social form *liberty*. If you were going to be ultra avant garde and theoretically pure about it you might argue that we want to "supercede" both "liberty" and "dictatorship". So why the deliberate fetishising by the marxists of *dictatorship*? We would rather fetishise *liberty*. And does not "dictatorship of the proletariat" in practise just imply the dictatorship of a self-managed workerist collectivist capital?

Obviously in a mainly bourgeois society atomised individual "liberty" and "freedom" go hand in hand with property, exploitation and the state. "Workers' liberty" under capital and the bosses begins with the mere rights of workers to be wage slaves and small consumers. Nonetheless we would heretically suggest that, even with commodity alienation and capitalist exploitation, the very existence of "liberty" and "freedom" and "individual choice" are preferable to their absence as is the case under more tied and bonded social relations. But the radical detournement of liberty and freedom by workers and dispossessed means reinventing them and turning them into something quite different, to serve our interests rather than those of the bourgeoisie.

The "state", whether serving the bourgeoisie or not, has always shown itself in practise to be bureaucratic and despotic, although it is claimed in utopian hypothesis, the "state" might be reduced to meaning merely the general social "administration of things" without necessarily implying domination or exploitation. The ideal of "Democracy", meaning the "rule of the voter-consumer -citizen People" appears more inherently tied to bourgeois society, forms and conditions. "Workers Democracy" appears more of a contradiction than "workers liberty" because "The People", involving a populist cross class amalgam with the ruling bourgeoisie and bosses, is already not the same as the community of struggle of workers and dispossessed and those facing dispossession (encroached upon peasants and artisan petit bourgeois). Although on occasions the term "workers' democracy" has been adopted in wildcat and social revolts. But "liberty" and "freedom" can come in the end to mean the social emancipation of workers and dispossessed from their very dispossession, their social *liberty*, and their universal *freedom* of access to the land and resources.

As for the individual and "individualism", and the prejudice against them among libertyphobic and individual hating collectivist marxists, Micheal Siedman has some interesting things to say in the introduction to his social history of the Spanish civil war "Republic of Egos". Under the subtitle "Bringing Back the Individual" he writes; "Two major traditions, the Marxist and, more inclusively, the sociological, have inspired the shift to the study of collectivities and social groups. Both traditions emerged from the positivist position that sought to determine the laws of history and therefore disre-

gard the unique. The marxist tradition views the individual as a member of social class that, in turn, struggles for survival and dominance.... marxism offers the tantalizing ideal of social reconciliation,... Although the sociological orientation is broader and less political, it shares the marxist view of men and women as social beings. This tradition argues that human subjectivity is unintelligible outside a social context. Society creates individuals, not vice versa (Lukes).", but, "...beginning with the individual and the personal is useful for historical understanding. There is no reason to accept a priori the philosopher's or social scientist's argument that man is merely a social being. Truisms, such as 'human subjectivity is unintelligible outside a social context' can easily be refuted by claiming that the social context is unintelligible without the individual. The priority of the social and the rejection of personal subjectivity should not be accepted on faith... The emphasis on the collective experience of a class or a gender assumes and even encourages the discovery or invention of a community or commonality that may not have existed."

Writing on the relation of individualism to communism the american west coast magazine "Killing King Abacus" (P.O. Box 6404, Eureka, Ca95502, U.S.A. www.geocities.com/kk_abacus) has this to say; "Individualism and communism, a false problem -We embrace what is best in individualism and what is best in communism. -Insurrection begins with the desire of individuals to break out of constrained and controlled circumstances, the desire to reappropriate the capacity to create one's own life as one sees fit. This requires that they overcome the separation between them and their conditions of existence. Where the few, the privileged, control the conditions of existence, it is not possible for most individuals to truly determine their existence on their terms. Individuality can only flourish where equality of access to the conditions of existence is the social reality. This equality of access is communism; what individuals do with that access is up to them and those around them. Thus there is no equality or identity of individuals implied in true communism. What forces us into an identity or an equality of being are the social roles laid upon us by our present system. There is no contradiction between individuality and communism."

The most powerful weapon of bourgeois political economy is not the state in itself. The most powerful weapon of bourgeois political economy is the *liberty* and *freedom* of its money and commodities and capital and wage labour to move and exchange and be bought and sold and circulate and grow. Liberty and freedom are inherent in the mainly bourgeois state, but they also start to break free and end up opposing this state. When leftists morally condemn the "anarchy of the market" they deride "anarchy" and "individualism" and suggest that collectism or bureaucratic organisation and planning are the solutions to the problems caused by the bourgeois economy. But it is precisely the *anarchy* of the market that makes the market strong and powerful in the first place. Workers need to get hold of this weapon of *anarchy* for themselves. One of the objective lessons to be learnt from the history of the soviet union is that in the modern industrial world centralised planned bureaucratic command systems just can't sustain themselves on the long run. They can only be sustained for a certain amount of time by massive military and police despotism. But in the end they economically stagnate and implode anyway. This is the case whether there is "imperialist encirclement" or not. (And today we are far removed from ancient agricultural societies with central despotic overlords, like ancient egypt, that could only develop very slowly). Even today with "smart" weapons and "smart" technology it is debatable whether such a system could be made to really work in a sustainable way for a long time. Although this doesn't stop various factions of the ruling class from time to time attempting to suppress the so called "law of value" and impose such a despotic and barbarous system for a few years. Perhaps the U.S. government's "war on terror" is a retreat into such an attempt. One Russian woman who came to the U.K. some years ago after living under the Soviet Union for many years commented on life so heavily run by central bureaucratic collectivist planning;

"Bring back the individual"



"Imagine the whole of society being run by the gas board".

"Anarchy"; self organising, self regulating, free moving, non-hierarchical, autonomous grouping and networking, is on the long run a more clever and successful way of organising (whether bourgeois organising or non-bourgeois organising). Imagine if the movement of information on the internet were organised by a central committee, it would take two months to send an e-mail. The internet consists of self-routing packets of information moving freely around a self-building and self-expanding network not necessarily dependent on one single server or centre.

"Petit bourgeois!!!" will come the predictable jibe from the miserablist bolsheviks and leftists in knee jerk reaction to such heresy. The accusation of "petit bourgeois" is the favourite insult thrown around by the petit bureaucrat who aspires to become the big bureaucrat. And meanwhile, you have to give a little bit of credit to the real petit bourgeois, they have survived as long as any other economic class, and even today, despite predictions of their demise, many of them continue to insist on surviving.

Real communism is not the squalid totalitarian collectivism where we all have to be physically squashed up together and are forced to go to the committee meeting every evening and slave and subsist together in the same bureaucrat-commanded gulag dustbin. Communism is not just about changing the social relations it is also a question of *material conditions* and improving the quality of life of the unique individuals, it involves both universal free access and *abundance*. There wouldn't be much point in a "communised bakery" if it only carried on producing one mouldy variety of bread in limited quantity. A similar point can be made regarding "autonomous social" squat cafes that insist on serving up the same tasteless lentil soup every time.

Communism today is more likely to come out of liberty rather than out of despotism, so "libertarian communism" is our preferred individual choice.

AND ANOTHER THING

Starting with a recognition of the fact that there is no immediate fully formed "proletariat for itself" how do we go about attempting to struggle in the present? Taking a purely maximalist position, such as for example, "Capitalism is the problem and socialism is the solution" doesn't really get us very far, such a maximalist position is simultaneously virtually true and at the same time virtually useless. How does it help us deal with a complex fragmented social reality and the specific messy moments of conflict it throws up? If "Capitalism" is everywhere then where is the mass proletarian revolution leading to communism that ought to result from "Capitalism" being everywhere? (Every new year that goes by without world proletarian revolution must be a further year of embarrassment for marxism). And there is an even simpler question: if "capitalism" is everywhere then where is the mass proletariat at all?!! Whole theoretical journals, whole bookshelves, whole ultra-left sects, whole subsidised academic marxist departments have to be constantly employed to perform all kinds of theoretical and ideological contortions to try and force the reality to fit the "Capitalism" is everywhere dogma, but it is an impossible task. A simplistic variety of ultra-leftism is often based on the presumption of an ultra-capitalism, but does this ultra-capitalism really completely exist? A mystery occurs when "Capitalism" which is presumed to exist and exist everywhere which "...by its universal essence and by the simplification of class contradictions, creates the conditions for its own negation," (I.C.G.) goes on year after year visibly failing to bring about its own negation. And the

"Proletariat" which is also presumed to exist fails Messiah like to rise up and impose communism. So how do we explain the continuing mysterious lack of communist revolution and the continuing non-appearance of the revolutionary Messiah-Proletariat? Why the visible absence of revolution, the visible weakness of class struggle, the visible lack of the necessary communistic solidarity?

If we take a glance at the reality we find ourselves stuck in and surrounded by we see some of the leading bosses have already unleashed what is but the opening chapter of a full scale capitalist-imperialist-barbarist-despotist war on the whole world. A huge cloud of fear and tension and depression hangs over much of the population. As we pointed out in a previously published leaflet, here in a place like London, where we are writing this, it is difficult for many to talk openly or think straight about their immediate daily life conditions. If we talk at all, we talk of this or that detached issue, or meaningless consumer distractions, or ruling class political speculation in the media (for instance the No War But The Class War Group in London which we have participated in have wasted far too much time distracted with idle speculation about bourgeois geopolitics). Meanwhile rising stealth taxes indirectly help to pay for stealth bombers, many of us are tied down non-stop in daily life survival with little time for anything else. Many are pushed into deeper debts and longer working hours and extended commuting time (as for myself I wander from the insecurity of dole claim to brief temp job and back as "lazarus" proletarian). Half the infrastructure and services like transport don't work properly. The streets are full of snarling grim faces and are ruled by the techno-despotism of state repression on the one hand, and by antisocial competitive aggression and predatory gangsterism on the other (even if they break the state's laws and are "corrupt" the state much prefers predatory gangs to any outbreak of real community). It is difficult to express and try and encourage any optimism in the middle of all this. In London even the massive demonstrations against the warmongering appeared mostly, apart from the skoolkids walkouts, kind of subdued and sullen, unlike in America and many other countries where the demos appeared to have a bit more anger and passion. Is there any silver lining at all to any of these clouds? Well if you're paying off a mortgage it's supposed to mean that for the time being you're physically in possession of some sort of house of your own to live in, and more people in this part of the world are supposed to have their own place than before. Near deflationary conditions (and the capitalists are genuinely scared of these) might mean for those of us on low or fixed incomes that at least some things, like some food items, remain relatively cheap or even fall in price for a temporary period before they get round to directly imposing cuts in our wages or benefits or even seize what little savings some of us might have. Maybe continual infrastructure breakdowns and transport breakdowns will provide certain groups of public sector workers with a degree of sectoral bargaining power, while also providing other groups of workers with an excuse to take some days off work... OK we are basically clutching at straws here. But why for instance didn't the firefighters' dispute lead in practise to an immediate wider spreading of worker solidarity across workplaces such as might have occurred in the seventies? Why didn't the anti-war demos, huge in size, not lead to a sustainable aggressive social movement across communities? or manage even to find any point of focus for material resistance or anti-economic refusal against war austerity the bulk of the movement could participate in?

We might try and explain the lack of open solidarity and more visible class struggle as being due to "atomisation", but this isn't really saying very much. A certain degree of "atomisation" is a virtual truism with any social environment where there is some commodity relations. There was plenty of commodity relations in the early seventies but there was also a lot more visible aggressive class struggle. Indeed "atomisation" isn't even strictly always to do with commodities; it might just mean a certain amount of individual separation, isolation, solitude, space,...in any case some of us could positively do with a bit more individual physical space... Obviously we have to look at some of the

changes that have happened in the last few decades. Since the seventies in the "west" there have been major waves of de-industrialisation and a resultant shrinkage of mass industrial general labour and a relative shrinkage in "traditional" working class communities based significantly on such labour. There has been a big growth in service sector employment, and this service sector has become more complex and specialised and sectoralised internally. This sectoralisation is further entrenched and reinforced by partial suspensions of the "law of value" leading to partial suspensions of the free labour market and partial suspensions of the "proletarianisation" process. Parts of the professional and managerial and bureaucratic sectors are given special protection from competition and permanent subsidy by state intervention. Whole industries and service sectors may be given special state subsidies and contracts or be run as protected state monopolies thus sometimes protecting from competition and further impoverishment the workers in them. So the working class community/communities at large are increasingly based on a complex sectoralised service sector labour which doesn't always have the immediate bargaining power of a direct finger on real dynamic industrial commodity production. As a result when it attempts to struggle it does so starting from a position of awkward complex sectoralisation and at the same time, although they are still able to attack the capitalists' profit making, can often only attack the capitalists' profit making *indirectly*.

Meanwhile back in what is left of "traditional" manufacturing industry a greater proportion of the few million workers still there are casualised, work long hours for employment agencies, quite often don't even have the basic legal protections and guarantees they are supposed to have ("illegal" migrant workers etc.), and are constantly shifted around from factory to warehouse to factory... This is a bit like prisoners being individually constantly moved around in the prison system to stop them coalescing and organising. There is a contradiction in this in that workers make contact with many different production centres and have the opportunity potentially for a high degree of interworkplace networking, but usually they are just too knackered and overworked and in dispersed transit to be able to do much about this. We are not aware of any major movement of alternative autonomous rank and file unionism or networking emerging in practise for example, despite any occasional attempt that might occur by fringe autonomous or syndicalist activists to try and spark one off (we are not slagging off such attempts).

Also we shall spare the reader one of our usual rants about the isolation and disempowerment of being a longterm welfare dependent, other than to say it is very difficult in reality to organise any kind of ongoing "unemployed workers group" or "claimants union" or even informal community spirit- edness and an open sense of solidarity. And so far we haven't even mentioned the fragmentations, differences and inequalities re-enforced by the housing system, nor touched on the issue of open state repression being used to isolate and disperse any open expression of workers solidarity or community solidarity. Needless to say all of these things make the immediate spread of wider class solidarity far more difficult when specific individual disputes and issues blow up. There isn't necessarily a coherent mass working class "in itself" there in the first place just waiting for the right ultra lefty intervention or the correct autonomist leaflet to spark it into general social revolt as a united working class "for itself". If these obstacles to solidarity are bad enough regionally then they are even greater internationally, particularly when you take national borders and the various uneven effects of "imperialism" into account.

Communitistic solidarity doesn't come about instantly by appealing to proletarians and dispossessed to stop looking at the television and believing the media and instead suddenly recognise their simple supposed homogeneity of material conditions and thus interests as a class, a unified "proletariat", which they were only unable to see because they were watching the television. To the contrary, communitistic solidarity, if it is to come about, will have to involve a difficult process of facing up

to, and attempting to overcome, the fact that different groups of workers and dispossessed start off from NON-universal, complex and subtly different material conditions in a world economic and social environment which is not yet fully integrated or unified, and probably never will be. There is no unified class "for itself" because there is no coherent class "in itself". What is referred to as "capitalism" is NOT "universal". It is not just a matter of bourgeois media propaganda or lack of consciousness or even "false consciousness", the problem is that materially worldwide different workers and dispossessed do not yet form a homogeneous and universal "Proletariat". The "Proletariat" is just a very long term hypothetical utopian tendency which in reality never fully or perfectly forms because of real specific counter tendencies. We might accept for instance Otto Ruhle's description "Only in the factory is the worker of today a real proletarian... outside the factory they are a petit-bourgeois.." (quoted in "Bordiga versus Pannekoek" Antagonism Press, BM Makhno, London, WC1N 3XX. www.geocities.com/antagonism1). But we disagree with the "workerist" political positions that Ruhle and some other councillists tended to derive from this. It is only if you dogmatically presume there has to be a centrality of the proletariat or insist communism has to be *exclusively* the work of one proletarian class that Ruhle's description is likely to push one to "workerist" positions.

Recognition of material differences between various workers and proletarians and dispossessed: different labour processes, qualitatively different *forms* as well as *levels* of impoverishment, different degrees of abstraction and freedom of labour, hierarchies of command amongst labour, different relations of different sectors of workers to capital, directly "productive" labour, "service" labour, unwaged labour domestic/ tied etc., global disjointedness of proletarians because of disjointedness in the world economy,... does not preclude attempts at worldwide solidarity but, by necessity, under current conditions, has to form the starting point of attempts at such solidarity. We do not have to wait for a perfectly developed capital to give rise to a perfectly formed Proletariat. More capital development will descend into more barbarism which crushes real individual live proletarians and works them to death. A perfectly formed Proletariat is a perfectly dead proletariat. We don't agree with some marxists who think the more "capitalism" we have the nearer we get to communism. We don't agree with "Troploin" when, in issue no.3 of their newsletter (Aredhis, B.P. 20306, 60203 Compiègne Cedex, France.), they argue that the evolution of capital does not take us closer to or further away from communism. The more capital develops the greater the number and the greater the suffering of the real live worker-humans who are oppressed and exploited and chewed up and spat out beneath it, the more screwed up and damaged and dangerous and barbarous a place to live in the world becomes. The very fact that yet more history has had to be lived with the shadow of capitalist exploitation going on is already a setback for communism. Any chance of communist life becomes more difficult because the very existence of life itself becomes more difficult. The longer it goes on the worse it gets, we are genuinely running out of time. When capital finally goes into decline and decay the proletarians as live human variable capital get pushed into decay also, that often tends to mean their *physical destruction*. It is only if you insist on seeing all of social life as just one absolute opposition between the forces of "Capital versus Proletariat" on a completely abstract level that you can't see this and imagine it doesn't really make any difference to communism how long the march of capital goes on. We are not sure this is quite what "Troploin" are arguing, but it is what others have argued.

"Troploin" do criticise the "revolutionary reformism" of Marx and Engels, which urges the bourgeois to "develop capitalism and create the conditions of communism". They point out: "Among other things, Marx supported the German national bourgeoisie, praised Lincoln, sided with quite a few reformist parties and unions while relentlessly targeting anarchists... Shall we also have to agree with lenin (because he acted like a new "revolutionary bourgeois") against Gorter and Bordiga? And

was Roosevelt a better (though unconscious) contributor to human emancipation than Rosa Luxemburg?... The communist movement cannot be understood through models similar to those of the reproduction of capital... The communist revolution is not the ultimate stage of capitalism... Determinism would gain credibility if it gave us useful forecasts."

We need to attempt to fight and practise communistic solidarity NOW, and such solidarity is not a total monopoly of proletarians. Proletarians are important, not because of some mystical dialectical messianic millenarian historic mission, but because right now they happen to be numerically a particularly large element of the human population who also happen to have consciously or unconsciously an urgent need for communism, who are temporarily in a directly advantageous position to pull the plug on wage labour and capital, currently the main source of economic power of the bosses, in a potentially communist way. But this situation is not indefinite, the more the individual proletarians get exploited, chewed and crushed and dumped over time the more they run out of chances. Pulling the plug on wage labour brings industrial capital process to a stop, but it doesn't necessarily bring an immediate complete end to all bourgeoisie and all commodities. The bourgeoisie is not completely a tool of the industrial capital process or completely at the mercy of general "autonomous" economic forces. The industrial capital process can also sometimes be a "toy" tool of the bourgeoisie. Some bourgeoisie existed before the industrial capital process, the industrial capital process can function without specifically separated bourgeoisie (workers co-ops etc.), patriarchal bosses and simple commodity exchange were quite happy to exist for ten thousand years without industrial capital processes. Even today not every moment of commodity exchange is necessarily either directly part of, or even indirectly in the service of, the capital accumulation process. Some petit commodity exchange today is still *extraneous* to capital, some circulation will always continue to be extraneous to capital.

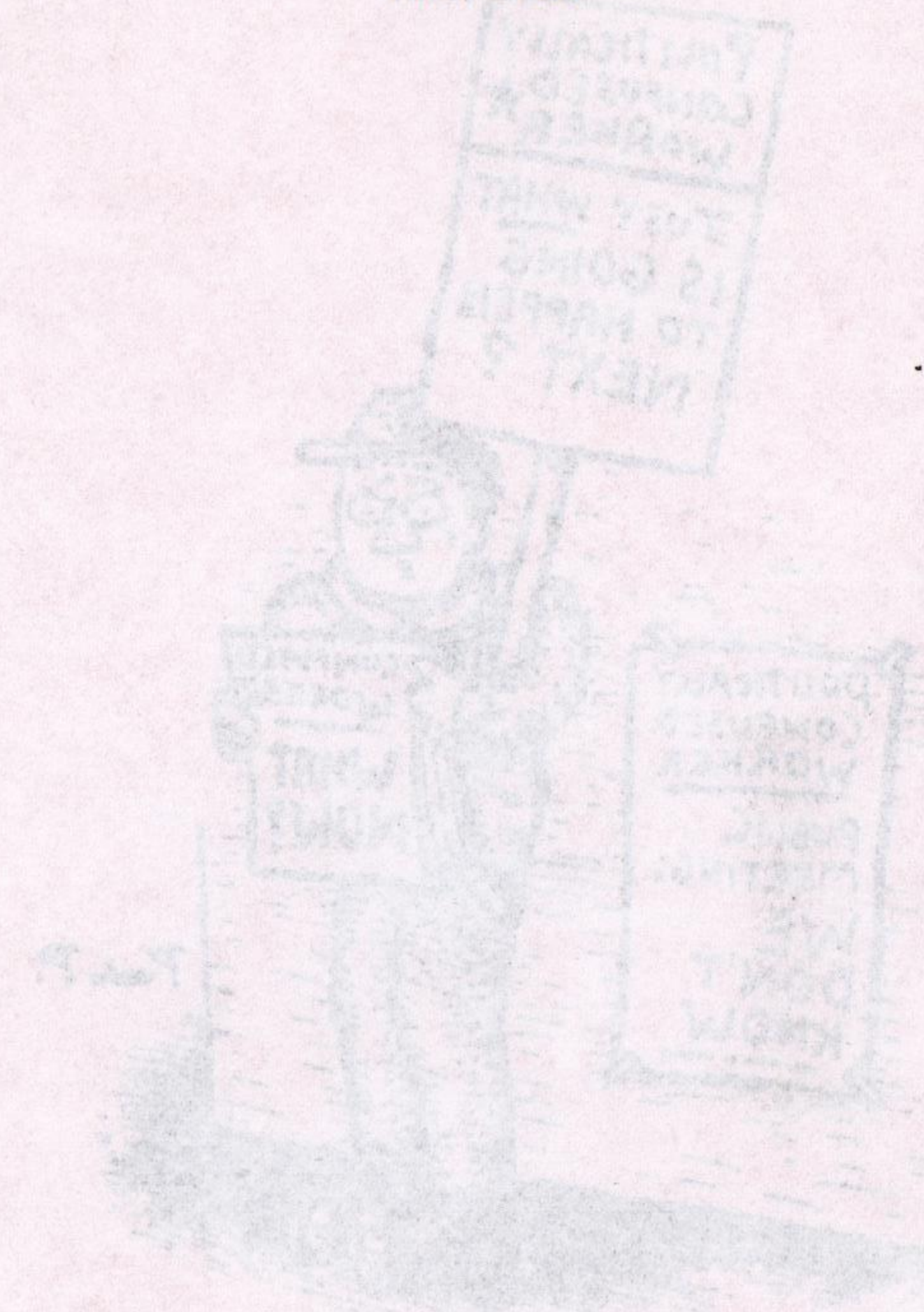
The vulgar marxist notion of historical progress, that capital development is good for us because it destroys the peasantry and builds up the proletariat into a fine organised revolutionary army to make "The Communist Revolution" as one big parody and pantomime is disgusting objectionable poison (the amount of genocide and suffering in the last 80 years excused by this ideology!!). Does anybody today genuinely believe that mass industrialised agriculture, whether run by corporations or even self managed industrial workers collectives, is the best way of producing good healthy food for everyone to eat? Rather than being a "progressive" development it is a huge disaster for humans and the planet. In those parts of the developed world that no longer have many peasants and small farmers left it may become necessary as part of the social struggle to reinvent a free communal peasantry to grow decent organic food to eat. As we have said, capital development does not organise proletarians into a fine revolutionary army, it dispossesses them, weakens them and isolates them further and further and finally works them to death. In his very late writings Mr Marx recanted a bit and admitted that not all the peasants had to be wiped out for communism to be achieved by proletarian revolution after all, but this admission was a bit late in the day.

On a pessimistic note we see current attempts at class struggle are weak, fragmented and heavily contained. There appears no end in sight to this. We see no visible "revolution" in the near future, nobody in such a context is objectively "revolutionary". We may have to face up to the fact that the libertarian communist world social revolution we desire is a vision that we will never see accomplished in our lifetime. Communism; not a totalitarian centrism, or apocalyptic millenarianism, but a world movement of equal mutual-complementing and mutual-interacting diverse human communities and individuals without bosses, commodities, alienated labour, etc. We may have no choice but to

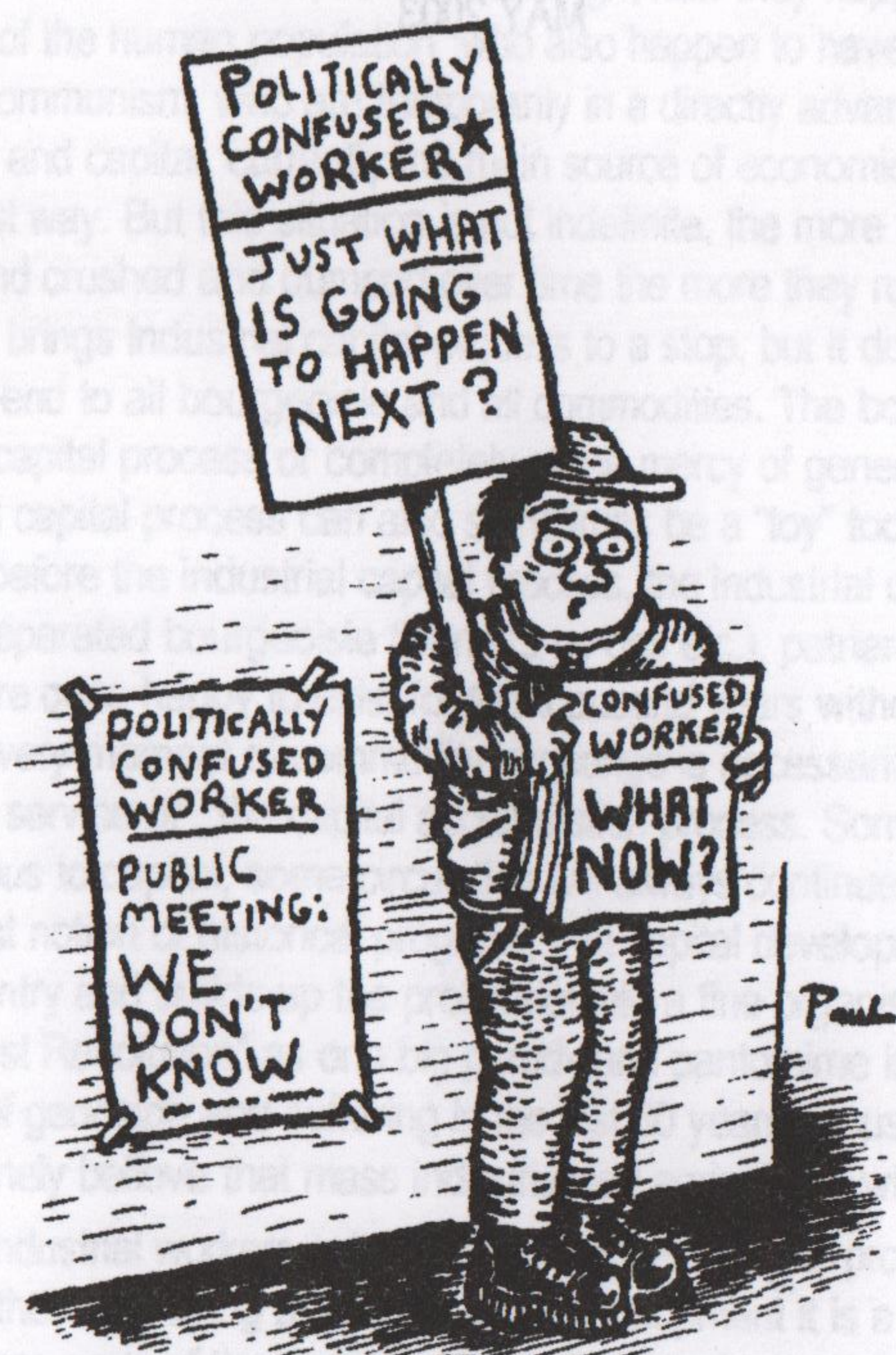


content ourselves for the time being with limited working class social amelioration and mutual aid. This may sound like a temporary withdrawal into a radical pro-communistic "lifestylism", practising active social resistance to further absorption into commodity economy and wage labour as far as we are able. We may have to admit this is the case and live with it for now.

Paul
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"We only wanted to be loved"