

Communism of Attack and Communism of Withdrawal

[*Rough translation!*]

Marcel

[W]e shall be reactionaries and revolutionaries, heretics and prophets. We have never been further from and closer to Marx! Our contradiction is only his contradiction implied by his theoretical developments (J. L. Darlet, *Letter to Jacques Camatte*).

On many occasions we¹ have described communism as the movement of the proletariat within but against capitalism. We have assumed that this movement, i.e. the class struggle of the working class, in a *dialectical* manner, both have produced and been produced by the relations of capital. Thus we have stressed that it is this contradiction that provide capital with its possibility of development. From this perspective we have analysed this paradox as the actual contradiction between capital and labour. At several different occasions we have discussed and touched upon this, and with the help of militant inquiries we have tried to describe how this contradiction appears in reality. However, a text that inquire and define this paradox – i.e. the real movement of the proletariat – in a conceptual mode has been missing and for a long time been desired.

The aim with this essay, thus, was initially to define communism and the communist movement, and to explain why we saw communism as identical to the antagonist relation of the proletariat to capital. Thus the initial thought was to investigate what Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, in *Empire*, call '*the will to resist*'. However, during the course of writing, this changed, because, while we were working with the essay our perspectives radically developed. We fundamentally abandoned the mythology of Marxism about the proletariat, which in its turn led us to criticise that part of our dialectics that states that communism is the result of an internal contradiction to the relations of capital. This does not mean that we deny the dialectical process between capital and labour. What changed was not the notion of capital, but our outdated notion of the nature of the revolt. In glaring contrast to what we hitherto held – i.e. that communism is a not-yet denied asserting itself and thus must be born through the annihilation of capital's organisation of the working class – we now realised that communism must be understood as a 'mechanical' product rather than a phenomenon born from the relations of capital. Communism blocks and annihilates the dialectic of capital, it does not annul it. This was the only way allowing us to avoid all teleology and metaphysics while at the same time as maintaining our use of the critique of the political economy by Marx. Thus, today we stress that communism must be understood as something created artificially, as opposed to something born from internal contradictions.² To put it shortly: communism happens despite capitalism, not because of capitalism, but this "despite", however, means that the causal, logical and material cause of communism is capital itself.³

¹ We need to make clear that "we" does not refer to the entire editorial board of *riff-raff*, at least at present. It refers primarily to the author himself, Marcel, even though we all find his essay very interesting and thought provoking (Transl. note).

² The reader will note that this in no way means that we have fallen into a social democrat/Leninist or utopism. If so, we'd ought to search for the material means to realise the society of tomorrow. That would make us once again to fall into the same teleology we want to abandon. The development of what is today is only the development of our present society, i.e. the material community of capital. The only working cause communism can have in capitalism is the escape from capital. It is the abandonment, and not the development, that could give us communism. This focus upon escape is a consequence of our will to develop our hitherto notion that communism can not be understood as the continuation of capitalism, but only as its annihilation. Our desire to abandon capitalism is not grounded on the notion that capital has become a parasite, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri claim – we are no decadence theorists. Today we focus on the abandonment, since communism only can be produced by people abandoning those practices that constitute the abstract capitalist machine.

³ Even though we will discuss this later on in the text, partly with the same argumentation, we think that we already from the beginning have to point out that what we want with this essay is not to attack what usually is called *determinism*. For example, like the later works of Gilles Dauvé and Karl Nesic (*To Work or Not To Work – Is That the Question?* is a good example) (Published in *riff-raff* #5 (2003), transl. note) shed some light on the free and subjective action as a necessary ingredient in communist revolt. As a matter of fact, we want to defend so called determinism and try to point to its actual radicality. This so, because we stress that every act, and not only so called "free acts", but also cognitively phenomenon such as "free acts", reside on the ground that creates them. What determines a free act, for example, is free will, in its turn determined by a free acting subject. However, obviously we will not criticise subjectivism from the stupid point of view that we always are able to trace a causal chain of preceding pattern of practices, wills and motives

This essay is at the same time an inquiry and a reading. It is an inquiry inasmuch as it tries to define capital and communism, but at the same time it is a reading of Marx's unpublished sixth chapter of *Capital – Results of the Immediate Process of Production* – that we consider the key to understanding the present situation and of capital as such.

The essay is divided into five different sections. The red thread through them all is the relation between theory and praxis, that is, the organisational implications of communist theory. The first two sections define capital and labour, describe the relation between these two entities, and give a brief outline of the practical implications of this for the revolutionaries of today. The second section also discusses the need for capital to conquer the future and to organise it “timelynessly”. The third section inquires the difference between formal and real subsumption. In this section, we also inquire the transformation of concrete labour⁴ that the generalisation of real subsumption implies. The fourth section of the essay is a discussion on practical reflexivity and what distinguishes this method from Leninist and left communist perspectives. This section also contains a categorical definition of communism, and a discussion on the two modes of appearance of communism. The fifth and concluding section is more immediately organisational and practical related, since it presents a party theory and a proposal for future inquiries with the help of the communism typology presented in the fourth section.

The tautology of capital: labour and labour

[A]s long as the working class defines itself by an acquired status, or even by a theoretically conquered State, it appears only as ‘capital’, a part of capital (variable capital), and does not leave the plan(e) of capital (Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*).

It is well recognised that capital is accumulated abstract labour. Despite the difference between the two entities, both are part of one and the same dialectical process. The relation of capital – the pendulum, uniting and dialectical movement of capital and labour – makes labour capital, but the two different parts must be brought together by another element – money. On the other hand, money gets its power from the relation of capital, because the function of money is to unite circulation with production. The process of circulation is started by money (M) buying a commodity (C): M – C, but as Marx writes, this process of circulation:

is interrupted ... by P, in which the commodities L and MP bought in the market are consumed as the material and value components of productive capital. The product of this consumption is a new commodity, C', altered in respect of substance and value. The interrupted process of circulation, M – C, must be completed by C – M. But the bearer of this second and concluding phase of circulation is C', a commodity different in substance and value from the original C.⁵

Valorisation “pertains exclusively to the metamorphosis P, the process of production, which thus appears as a real metamorphosis of capital, as compared with the merely formal metamorphosis of

creating the present will and action. Neither do we wish to point to that obvious matter that dialectical materialists usually come out with, i.e. the presence of a continuous interaction between necessity and contingency. Rather, what we stress is actually that determinism is the condition of freedom, because it gives us the understanding of freedom as acting against that disposition that determines us. If, for example, the proletariat is predestined to produce capitalism, capitalism can only end if the proletariat denies its role as proletariat to become something different. If, thus, communism is a free act, then it is free because it means that people liberate themselves from what determine them, and mobilise them, to become the specific subjects they constitute today. Thus, with the theory of the philosopher G.W. Leibniz about possible worlds, we may say that communism is a possible world that is not impossible, but impossible with the actually existing world. What, a little pretentiously, is usually called the tasks of the revolutionaries is therefore to diverge those series of practices (for example the production of surplus-value) that make capitalism the present world (i.e. what makes communism impossible). By this, therefore, communism can become the compossible, actual, world. ... [cf. the book by Deleuze on Leibniz, esp. chapter 5] This diverging of the series of practice that individuate the capitalist individuals is thus not the product of those subjects that populate our world today, but a product despite the contemporary individuation – despite the far too contemporary and capitalist individuals.

⁴ Marx separates concrete from abstract labour. The concrete labour is the actual labour demanded for producing a specific use-value. But abstract labour, i.e. exchange-setting labour, is indifferent towards the specific form of the use-values and labour. Cf. Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.

⁵ Marx, *Capital* Vol. II (Moscow 1967), p. 48f.

circulation”⁶. The guarantee of valorisation is abstract labour. Abstract labour is the exchange-setting labour, labour power, that is, the commodity capital must buy to generate value. Labour power must be bought to become capital. Is bought labour thus capital? Yes, but even when labour power is bought, there exist a difference between capital and labour, and it is constituted by the two abstractions being embodied in different social groups: proletariat and bourgeoisie. The proletariat is exploited by capital, but the existence of this class is conditioned by the mediation of capital. The working class is conditioned by labour power. Without this, the working class would not exist. At the same time, labour power is conditioned by capital, just as capital is conditioned by labour power. Thus, we see that the working class is the class that makes the relation of capital possible.

The working class is an exploited class since it is exploited by a capitalist or a bureaucrat (for example acting for a State) who is buying a certain quantity of time from the labourer, labour power. The worker, however, is not paid for all the labour she performs. The unpaid labour is surplus-labour, and this surplus-value generates surplus-value, a surplus-value the capitalist (after having sold the goods) can cash in as profits, and thus more money. These new money, however, is not in themselves capital; they only become capital when they are invested in new labour power, so that new value may be produced. Thus, capital is construed on exchange-setting labour generating exchange-value, but this exchange-value in its turn must make possible yet more exchange-value. As we now can see, capital is a social relation, not, for example, a factory or a spinning wheel. Rather, capital is the relation organising labour in a certain way within the factory or by the spinning wheel, i.e. by making wage-labourers work in the factory or with spinning. Capital sets labour power in work and exploits this labour power for surplus-value through surplus-labour. This proves that there can be capitalism without capitalists (as in the U.S.S.R.), but that capitalism never can exist without an exploited proletariat, i.e. a class of wage-labourers. Then, if this class works in factories, hospitals, or offices doesn't matter.

We see that capital is a social relation whose working aim (and cause) is the production of surplus-value. Thus, the essence of capital is value, but for this essence to exist, production has to be structured by a certain pattern. The social relation of capital, thus, has material existence. This may seem obvious, but it is important to stress that we can't separate the form of capital (the real organisation of labour) from its content (the production of surplus-value making more surplus-value possible). The proletariat and the bourgeoisie, thus, are not merely character masks embodying certain content, but rather the appearances of these classes *are* identical with the social relation producing capitalism. For Hegel, and also for Marx, it is fundamental that essence appear as its appearance. That is, the essence of capitalism (abstract labour, form of value etc.) appears as most tangible normalities: labour, money and so on. Thus, there is no essence behind appearance, no content behind the form, but they are inseparable phenomenon. This means that Marx's abstractions, such as labour, exchange and capital, are concrete and actual abstractions. They are sensuous and determined by the historical era, capitalism, in which they exist:

Labor is not a “vague thing”; it is always some definite labor, it is never labor in general that is bought and sold. It is not only labor that is qualitatively defined by the object; but also the object which is determined by the specific quality of labor.⁷

Appearance follows from essence, but at the same time essence is its own appearance. The capitalist social relation is not placed inside production, but its essence is its own appearance: that is, wage-labourers working and sweating in factories, or wage-labourers working with spinning wheels. Thus, capitalism is a class society, and the existence of classes produce antagonism, at the same time as the classes are constituted by this antagonism. Class against class, workers try to escape work and the bourgeoisie/the State try to impose surplus-labour on the worker. The latter enjoy their alienation, while the former suffer and are obliged to work from their. From this argumentation it is obvious that the thesis put forward by the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek in his book *The Sublime Subject of Ideology*, i.e. that capitalism is defined by its symptoms, is fundamentally wrong. Žižek claims that capitalism is defined by the abnormalities created by capitalism, for example criminality, war, and starvation. Since this fundamentally Freudian theory

⁶ Ibid, p. 49.

⁷ Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, p. ??

of symptom, developed by Jacques Lacan, also is wrong when it comes to explain the psyche of a single individual, it is close to ridiculous when it is used to explain a social system. The extremities of a society never explain it. Quite the opposite: the normalities of a society explain its symptoms and extremities. The hunt for value and profits, for example, produce wars, it is not wars that produce surplus-value, even if war may help and intensify the production of surplus-value. Maybe better put this way, it is the normalities of the capitalist society, such as the production of surplus-value, that give, for example, war and criminality their capitalist mode of appearance. That is, in capitalism, profits and surplus-value are determining factors for the technological composition of war and criminality. Drug syndicates and other criminal groups, for example, are forced to use banks and other normal capitalist activities to wash money, and the activities of war waging parties are determined by capitalist phenomenon such as class struggle and economic crisis.

The close relationship between, a relationship which develops into an identity, appearance and content makes us overcome one of the weaknesses of Marx's, that is, his 'evolutionary optimism'. This tendency in the thought of Marx is seldom expressed explicitly, but, as Gilles Dauvé has noted, in some works, especially the political, it is the underlying logic.⁸ The characteristics of its time, *Aufklärung* thought and progress optimism of Marx see the forces of production as neutral phenomenon whose development is fettered and checked by the bourgeoisie. Thus, the proletariat must liberate the forces of production from those fetters imposed on them by capitalism: logically from this, socialism becomes workers' power and electrification, and communism becomes a utopia, a society where everything exist affluently. This tendency by Marx was developed by Engels, and the Marxism of the II:nd and III:rd Internationals, and in its most vulgar expression by the theory of decline by Lenin.⁹ This productivist Marxism is not only common for social democracy and Leninism, but also left communism may be included. The latter perspective is that there is a contradiction between the industrial production system and the bourgeois distribution system. From this follows that communism is a question of socialisation of the industrial production system and the development of a new distribution system. Commonly, this theory has led to designate finance capital as the main enemy of the proletariat, which in its turn has created a lack of understanding of the functions of industrial and total capital. In Nazism, fascism and Leninism, we may practically see what the theories have led to that, at the same time as they have considered industrial capital being a force of development designated finance capital as a parasite sector. It is interesting to note that it is 'social democrat' and humanist organisations, such as Attac, that today is the heirs of the political trend that historically has had its most forceful expression in Stalinism, fascism and Nazism. The theories identifying communism (or socialism, for that matter, including so called National Socialism) with the development of the forces of production are separating form from content, or *vice versa*. Capital is not analysed as totality, as a relation appearing in a given way, but rather the mode of appearance of productive forces is considered as neutral, and the inequality of capitalism is reduced to a problematic merely about the administration and distribution of the productive forces. The only thing to be changed, according to these socialisms on the left and the right wing, thus, is the relations of production. The forces of production, however, are to be left intact. Today we can see what the so called 'transition societies' – the socialisms – have led to. Socialism is socialisation, democratisation, and the generalisation of wage labour, and thus also unnecessary human suffering.

However, it has been stressed by many modern Marxist that there is another tendency in Marx than the one outlined above, and that this other tendency is an opening for an actual understanding of the forces of production. This other – or maybe first – Marx did not analyse the forces of production as neutral entities, but stressed that, just like the relations of production and distribution they have class and capitalist functions.¹⁰ Content is not separated from form, rather it is stated that

⁸ Cf. Gilles Dauvé, *Revisiting the East, And Popping in at Marx's* [a Swedish translation was included in our recent compilation of texts by Dauvé, *Vägrandets dynamik* (2004) (*The Tension of Refusal*); for a list of the English texts included, see www.riff-raff.se, transl. note].

⁹ For a discussion of this, cf. *Aufheben*, *Decadence – The Theory of Decline, Or the Decline of Theory?* Pts. I–III [translated into Swedish and published in *riff-raff* #6 (2004), transl. note].

¹⁰ Panzieri and Tronti are Italian Marxists who have developed these thoughts of Marx. Cf. for example *The Capitalist Use of Machinery* by Panzieri, and *Social Capital* by Tronti. Jacques Camatte and Gilles Dauvé are two French communists, having tried this too, however not in the same manner as the Italians. Cf. Dauvé, *Vägrandets dynamik*, and Camatte, *Community and Communism in Russia*.

the content appear as its appearance. The capitalist social relation is a specific organised combination of forces and relations of production, and it is this combination that must be changed.

To exemplify this connection between essence and appearance of capital by Marx, we will use the classical unpublished sixth chapter of the first volume of *Capital: Results of the Immediate Process of Production*. In a discussion on the twofold character of the commodity, Marx is writing, “To take the *use-value* first, its particular content, its further determination, was completely irrelevant to the definition of the commodity”¹¹. This means, that if a thing is to be a commodity this thing must embody an exchange-value. That is why the form of value, exchange-value is the primarily, and that the definition of the commodity, use-value is irrelevant. (In reality, however, use-value has its role since it is this use-value that the consumers want.) However, Marx is noting that it is different because, “It is otherwise with the *use-value* of the commodities functioning within the process of production. Owing to the nature of the *labour process* the means of production are first sundered into the *object* and the *means of labour*, or to define it more closely, *raw material* on the one hand, and *instruments, aids*, etc. on the other. These are the *formal determinations of use-value* as they emerge from the nature of the labour process itself, and they constitute the further definition of use-value – as far as the means of production are concerned”¹². The use-values in the process of production, thus, is not trivial “in theory”. These use-values have immediate functions in the organisation of labour. This is not only valid for mechanisms of supervision, such as the time clock, but the entire capitalist objectivity, i.e. means and forces of production, is in itself determined by class. Marx himself writes, “This *formal definition of use-value* is essential to the further analysis of *economic relationships*, of *economic categories*”¹³. The use-values of the capitalist commodities, thus, are not neutral phenomenon, but formal determinations of the relations of the capitalist economy. When we discuss this, we may not forget that, for Marx, labour power is the fundament of the economic relations of capital. From the passage above about the functions of use-values in the process of production we can deduce that neither the use-values formal determination of the reproduction of the labour power is neutral, but determined by class. For the individual worker money represents “*nothing but the means of subsistence available on the market* (or dumped on it on certain terms), and destined for the individual consumption of the workers. Money then is only the transmuted form of these means of subsistence which the worker immediately transforms back into means of subsistence as soon as he receives it”¹⁴. But the use-value of these *means of subsistence* appears in a capitalist form. The autonomist and situationist theorists deducing class struggle from the relations of commodity, thus, misunderstand the capitalist dimension of use-value. This so, because they identify communism with the liberation of use-values, in its turn making them blind for the originality of capital being exploitation of labour power (i.e. the production of surplus-value), rather than the commodity form. According to this follows that the communist revolution also has to revolutionise the capitalist use-values. This change, of course, will not make people in communism not needing use-values. Revolution is mutation, change, not annihilation. If we use food as an example it will mean that the food eaten in communism most surely will be different from what is served today. As a matter of fact, new forms of relations to food are often developed during revolutionary times. In historical insurrectionary situations we can see how the poor have stormed luxury restaurants to have orgies that have ended only when the insurrection has been struck down. In other situations peasants has fought for the right to hunt, while in other situations new attitudes to food, such as vegetarianism and fasting, have been developed.

As a matter of fact, Marx does not say that we can deny that the consumption of means of subsistence by the workers must, “be omcluded (calculated) in the labour process, just as the consumption of *matières instrumentales* by the machinery is reckoned along with the machinery itself. In that event the worker appears merely as an instrument purchased by capital, an instrument that requires a certain quantity of provisions as his *matières instrumentales*, if he is to perform his functions in the labour process”¹⁵. From this it is obvious that it is wrong to consider use-value as a “neutral” element and exchange-value as the specifically capitalist in the commodity.

¹¹ Penguin, 1976/1990, p. 979.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid, p. 979f.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 983.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 984.

Consumption society certainly has produced a variety of new desires and sensibilities for the modern man (who these days does not feel naked without Internet or a mobile phone?), but this is so only because the reproduction of labour power is a market with the possibility to expand, by stimulating and producing new desires for the individual consumer. During real subsumption the form determination of the process of production by the use-values, i.e. the material organisation of the economic relation, by, with Marx's words, becoming "specifically capitalist". This specifically capitalist organisation of production and reproduction achieve what the film maker, writer, and poet, Pier Pasolini, calls an anthropological revolution.¹⁶ The anthropological revolution adjusts the needs of people with the needs of capitalism, that is, everything we desire capitalism tries to provide us with value as mediator. Some of the best thinkers of our time, for example Jacques Camatte and Antonio Negri, have tried to describe this capitalisation of human needs and desires. According to them, man himself has become a capitalist being and therefore desires his own subsumption.¹⁷ However, this does not mean, for example, that people desire their work, but that they demand the money and the means of subsistence, i.e. the use-values, work and the wage can provide them with.¹⁸ But since the use-value of these means of subsistence is the form determination of capitalism, desire in itself leads to what is desired is ones own subsumption.¹⁹

During real domination there is no time and no place outside capital. This makes the worker not only embodying labour but also capital, for example by her role as consumer. In his book *Capital and Community* Jacques Camatte notes that Marx labels the real subsumption of labour by capital *Subsumtion* and not *Unterordnung*. *Unterordnung* is the German word for domination, while *subsumieren* indeed also means this, but the meaning of the word is to include something. It appears to mean that when Marx was writing about the real subsumption of labour by capital he meant that labour really was included in capital. Capital is thus incarnated into the worker. Thus Camatte wrote the following about real subsumption of labour:

It [capital] can only do this by appropriating labour-power to itself, and here, as in German, 'to appropriate to itself' (*sich aneignen*) should be taken literally, in its strongest sense. In the period of formal domination, capital does not manage to subjugate, and thus to incorporate, labour-power, which remains outside it, rebels against it to the extent of the putting in danger the development of the process, since capital depends on it completely. But the introduction of machinery transforms everything. Capital incorporates the human brain, appropriates it to itself, with the development of cybernetics: with computing, it creates its own language, on which human language must mote itself etc. Now it is not only the proletarians – those who produce surplus-value – who are subsumed under capital, but all men, the greater part of whom is proletarianized. It is the real domination over society, a domination which in all men becomes the slaves of capital (= generalized slavery, and so convergence with the Asiatic mode of production).

Thus it is no longer merely labour, a defined and particular moment of human activity, that is subsumed and incorporated into capital, but the whole life process of man. Capital's process of incarnation (*Einverleibung*), which began in the West about five centuries ago, is complete. Capital is now the common being, the oppressor of man.²⁰

With this transformation the individual is turned into variable capital also outside and as a matter of fact before work-life, and, as Pasolini wrote, this makes the worker embody class conflict as a totality. "The worker in herself is contradiction."²¹ With the anthropological revolution of capital, the individual worker is embodied in the capitalist dialectic. The individual worker becomes a capitalist micro cosmos, a small production plant. And ever more groups of people and social strata become proletarianised, turned into workers. However, Pasolini realised that also during real

¹⁶ See Pasolini, 'Development and Progress' ('Sketches of the Anthropological Revolution in Italy').

¹⁷ Cf. Camatte, *This World We Must Leave and other Essays*, and Negri & Hardt, *Empire*.

¹⁸ We are using the word 'desire' in the same sense as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari use the word. 'Desire' is not synonymous to 'need', but the force that constitute a society, an individual and other formations. Thus 'desire' precedes the constitution of society. However, this does not mean that desire is fortuitous, since it is determined by society or the organisation of the individual. Desire appear via 'machines of desire', and these machines are the components and forms of appearance that desire take. At the same time the 'machines of desire' are determined of the desires that constitute them. However, desire has the tendency to achieve leakage in the organisation of 'machines of desire'. This produces change and development.

¹⁹ Cf. the 17th Century philosopher, Baruch Spinoza. ...

²⁰ Camatte, *Capital and Community*, pp. 67–68.

²¹ Pasolini, op. cit.

domination efforts to create outsides are produced, that is, spheres and relations that leave capital behind. For example, this is achieved when people get bored of work and what usually is called consumer society²² and attack capital with theft, refusal of work, riots and strikes. Pasolini's understanding of the individual during real domination as both embodying labour and capital makes him develop a typology of the concepts *development* and *progress*.

We can define *development* as the social practices participated to by the subjectivity and constituent actions of the working class. This subjectivity and these actions are of course contaminated and enveloped by capitalism in what is usually called labour. Those who want development are the industrialists and the workers. "Of course it is as such as those who want 'development' in this respect are those who produce, i.e. the industrialists. ... On the other hand, the consumers of these superfluous goods are fully happy with such a 'development'." ²³ But at the same time Pasolini says that the worker, the exploited, is split. She also wants *progress* – that is, a communist development. Progress is thus to be seen as unmediated practice and communist relations. The development–progress dichotomy give us the image that the worker wants something as a "consumer" or as what we would call labour power, and at the same time that it is by being a consumer and labour power that she is given the material potential to produce progress. When people question the development of capitalism it must lead to the form determination by the use-values of labour power and the economic relations being attacked, or else this questioning will only lead to the development of capitalism. This is so since the content of capitalism (value-production) is immanent in the mode of appearance of capital (the industries, the shopping malls, etc.). It was obvious already for Marx that communism must be produced by the revolution of life and labour as such under capitalism:

In all revolutions up till now the mode of activity always remained unscathed and it was only a question of a different distribution of this activity, a new distribution of labour to other persons, whilst the communist revolution is directed against the preceding mode of activity, does away with labour, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognised as a class, and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc. within present society.²⁴

From this it is obvious that communism may not be described as the satisfaction of those desires that exist today. On the contrary we must examine how communist practices are produced when people demand relations, relationships and things that do not yet exist. According to Marx new desires are formed when people are faced with upheavals. This is what he means when he assumes that "[this mode of activity] is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc. within present society" Communism, the emerging dissolution, is given when people desire another existence.

The apocalypse fanatic Oswald Spengler's discussion about the difference between spiritual communities and cosmic entities may be illustrative of this situation. A spiritual community is, for example, a party or an organisation people chose to participate to, and this community aims merely to "a new distribution of the activity" (Marx). A cosmic entity on the contrary is an expression of the emerging dissolution. This is so because a cosmic entity you "devolve upon, and this with your entire being. It can be ecstatic as in Elusis or Lourdes or manly brave as the Spartans at Thermopylae and the last Goths at Vesuvius. It is formed by the music of chorals, marches and dances, and encouraged by the effects of bright colours and by jewelleries, costumes and uniforms."²⁵ The cosmic entities are cosmic since they develop new relations to life, the world and cosmos by the masses that wants to be absorbed by this entity. The spiritual communities are purely mathematical. They can gather people, spread and grow – but they always remain a sum, never an entity. Entities, on the contrary, are formed when there is the material possibility for the masses to be animated and united in new relations to the world (cosmos). The dilemma is that the cosmic entity is easily broken, and falls back to normality:

²² Consumer society is a problematic concept. This so, since consumption is a moment within production, labour power is consumed in production and is produced in consumption.

²³ Pasolini, op. cit.

²⁴ Marx, *German Ideology*

²⁵ Spengler, *The Decline of the West*.

During times of political unrest words can become destinies and public opinions passions. An incidental mass on the street may all of a sudden achieve *one* consciousness, *one* emotion, *one* language, until the incidental spiritual state disappears and everyone goes home. This happened everyday in Paris of 1789, as soon as the calls from the lampposts were raised.²⁶

We can see here another link between Marx's emerging dissolution and Spengler's cosmic entities – both direct a destructive critique against what is the present state of things. By the fact that new emotions, languages and desires are developed the present language, the contemporary emotions and the desires of today are questioned. If we link this irrationality to the discussion above about the form determining by the use-values of capital, we can see that the essence of capital, that is value, only can be attacked when the capitalist objectivity (including the capitalist forces and relations of production) are attacked. This we can notice for example in sabotage both inside and outside the factory. When a brick is thrown through a window or a shopping mall is burned down, not only the value relations are attacked (as when goods are stolen) but also the use-values that determine the mode of appearance of capital. However, it must be stressed that communism can only be produced by a positive and constitutive practice, by the production of new desires. The cosmic entity and the emerging dissolution, that is the becoming of revolution, must be distributed in the masses so that the unity of this multitude consist of individual and particular human beings capable of acting autonomously. Because destruction and the “call from the lampposts” do not in themselves change the world to the better. If it is something that has acknowledged and realised the thought of Bakunin that destruction is a creative force, it is capitalism. Capital must continuously negate dead labour and passed value to produce new value. However, this excludes the necessity of attacks directed against the old world. On the contrary, it is only the practical critique of people and concrete efforts to negate the present state of society that communism can be produced. Indeed Marx notes how important it is for capitalism to protect the objectivity of the process of production (its form determination). This appears through rationalisation of surveillance of constant capital.

Even beyond that, however, if the value of constant capital is not to be eroded, it must as far as possible be socumed productively and not squandered, since in that case the product would contain a greater amount of objectified labour within it than is *socially necessary*. In part this depends on the workers themselves, and it is here that the *supervisory responsibility of the capitalist* enters. (He secures his position here through piece-work, deductions from wages, etc.) He must also see to it that the work is performed in an orderly and methodical fashion and that the use-value he has in mind actually emerges *successfully* at the end of the process. At this point too the capitalist's ability to *supervise* and enforce *discipline* is vital. Lastly, he must make sure that the process of production is not interrupted or disturbed and that it really does proceed to the creation of the product within the time allowed for by the particular labour process and its objective requirements. This depends partly on the *continuity of work* which is introduced by capitalist production, partly however on uncontrollable external factors.²⁷

So, non-orderly and disobedient labour, sabotage and disruption of the continuity of labour are phenomenon that breaks with the objectivity of capital and tend to paralyse the capitalist relations. At the same time as subversive practices mean de-objectification, they can also mean de-subjectification. Since when the reproduction of the labour power is not succeeded, for example when it becomes disobedient, then the interpellation of capital has failed. Labour-power, thus, is both the subject and object of capital. Marx label labour the “*subjective condition*” of labour²⁸ within the labour process at the same time as he describes how labour necessarily is turned into an alien, objective element. The wage-labourer is the subject of capitalism, since the use-values that are raw materials in the process of production are turned into commodities through the intervention of living labour.

Now, however, in the labour process, we find the *transformation* of things, use-values, functioning as raw materials or means of labour, into a new use-value – the *product*.²⁹

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Marx, *Results of the Immediate Process of Production in Capital Volume I* (Penguin, 1976), p. 986.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 981.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 980.

But when the worker gives this subjective force, *actu*, to the capitalist she is valorising and producing dead labour, which is passed living labour. Thus the worker “enters the process of production as a component of the *use-value*, the *real existence*, of capital, its *existence as value*. And this remains true even though that relationship only constitutes itself *within* the process of production...”³⁰ Thus dead labour is the capitalist objectivity which living labour (the subjectivity of capital) valorises. This relation is realised already with the emergence of capitalism. The object is dead labour and the subject is abstract labour, exchange-value setting labour. This illustrates how capital is built on a tautology: the relation is initiated by labour and ends at the same time with labour. This relation is tautological just the same for the individual capitalist since the relation starts with money G used to buy a commodity W that is sold which creates more money G’: G – W – G’. And the tautology emerges also for the individual worker since the relation, to her, starts with a commodity W (labour-power) that is sold for money G for which the worker buys her means of subsistence W (new commodities): W – G – W. Passed labour-power is invested in labour-power (subjectivity). Surplus-value and thus new products can only be produced through this tautological process. Marx writes:

Capital is not a *thing*, any more than money is a *thing*. In capital, as in money, certain *specific social relations of production between people* appear as *relations of things to people*, or else certain social relations appear as the *natural properties of things in society*. Without a *class dependent on wages*, the moment individuals confront each other as free persons, there can be no production of surplus-value; without the production of surplus-value there can be no capitalist production, and hence no capital and no capitalist!³¹

The fetish character of capitalism and the alienation of the worker are thus dependent of the division of labour and the separation of the means of production from the worker. The fetish character of capital, according to Marx, is the power that obscure the fact that it is labour-power that is the “subject” of the capital relation. This ideological “smoke screen”, however, is not the product of a false consciousness, but the real nature of the fetish character derived from the fact that the means of production are “leeches drawing off as large an amount of living labour as they can.”³² This “drawing off” really makes the subject inverted into an object, the machine is putting the worker in work. Thus we have a continuous pendulum movement between subjectivity and objectivity, and it is this pendulum movement – this dialectic – that is the capital relation. When Marx wrote that: “This [labour-] power which *maintains old values* and *creates new ones* is therefore the power of capital, and that process is accordingly the process of its *self-valorisation*. Consequently it spells the impoverishment of the worker who creates value as *value alien to himself*,”³³ he meant that not only is the worker alienated from the product she is producing, but that she also misjudge reality. The worker becomes unaware of the fact that it is she who generates value and produces the capital relation. The alienation of capital may however not be crushed merely by the working class seeing through the fetish character of capital. It is not sufficient that the worker realises that it is she who is the subject of capitalist history. Alienation is a material practice and thus must be replaced by new practices among ‘men’. Today it also is so that living labour appears as alien labour, despite the worker knowing that in the long run she is making the entire capitalist production possible. Most workers have misjudged the ideology Marx was saying affected ‘man’. They have seen through the fetish character of capital, but despite this they have not replaced capitalism with another order of things. With the words of Peter Sloterdijk, the capitalist subject has become a *cynical* subject. This cynicism demands a new form of ideology critique. It is not sufficient any longer to stress that the emperor is nude by saying: “It is we, the working class, that keeps the capitalist wheels turning. We are the power!” Quite the opposite, we have to immediately attack the relations that make people cynical and apathetic. Slavoj Zizek writes about this cynical development of the subject: “The cynical subject is fully aware of the distance between the ideological mask and social reality, but she nevertheless maintain this mask.”³⁴ From Marx, Zizek interpret the thesis about the ideological affected workers as follows:

³⁰ Ibid, p. 989.

³¹ Ibid, p. 1005.

³² Ibid, p. 988.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Zizek, op. cit.

they do not know what they are doing, and therefore they are doing it. But with the cynical subject it must read as follows: they know what they are doing, and they still do so. This widespread cynicism is no less than a sign of the anthropological revolution of capitalism. The workers not only embody labour, but the capital relation as such. The worker may not feel comfortable in working, but works nevertheless since it is the world of labour that makes her possible at all. Modern 'man' is imprisoned in the market; all community between 'men' is determined by what Marx called the community of money. This so, since existence and community is more or less impossible without money, i.e. labour. The real subsumption of labour makes capitalism a material human community, since the community of money occupy more and more of our existence. If this community is to be destroyed it must mean de-objectification of the form determination of the economical relations, at the same time as a de-subjectification of the quality of 'men' as use-value for capital, that is a de-subjectification of their function as the subject of the capitalist process of production.

The de-subjectification and de-objectification of these relations would achieve a revolution, but this revolution would not be caused by a crisis *within* capitalism, since crises only develop capital: new markets are created by new markets being extinguished. Communism can not be given by the contradictions that stamp capitalism; on the contrary, communism is given despite these contradictions. This is so because the possibility of communism to be constituted as a community can only be given if the crisis is developing to a crisis *for* capital, as opposed to a crisis *within* capital. Because the hostility and contradiction between the classes is part and parcel of capitalism, as a matter of fact the capital relation is nothing but the contradiction-in-process between capital and labour. As Machiavelli and Mario Tronti, each in his way and in his time, has shown, the bourgeoisie is all the time forced to relate to the constituent practice of the masses. Crises are repeatedly creating "cosmic entities", but these entities can never by their own power transcend the prevailing system. Even if individual capitals don't breed from the restless protests of these entities, total capital is vitalised by the class struggle of the proletariat, at least not if this class struggle is limited to a question of exploitation, the price of labour-power, etc. Historically we can see how total capital is developed by conflicts between classes, States and companies. This is so despite the fact that during the relatively short history of capitalism we have seen how many capitals have faced distress, and also extinction, by entire economies of different countries has crashed because of depressions, class struggle and/or war. This is not an oddity since capital is the movement between labour and capital – CAPITAL IS IN ITSELF ANTAGONISM. Abstractly, thus, we have the antagonism between labour and capital. It is a process without subject and without a goal, i.e. a non-teleological process, and this process can only transcend itself (in the Hegelian sense), but never extinguish itself.

Transcendence/abolition of the former antagonisms constitutes the former antagonisms on a new level and in new forms. Thus, communism can not mechanically grow from the dialectic between labour and capital, as for example Negri and the Johnson-Forest tendency stress.³⁵ (They

³⁵ See for example the important and interesting book by C.L.R. James, *Notes on Dialectics*, as an effort, from Marx and Hegel, to illustrate the real movement of the working class. "Hegel is here pointing to method in thought, but it is also method in objective development. The original conception of socialism receives further and further determinations, but everyone goes further forward and at the same time gets nearer to the original conception. The Soviet was nearer to the Socialist universal than the Commune, the Communist International nearer than the First and the Second. An European international of modern workers who have overcome Stalinism would be still closer to the original abstract universal of socialism than anything we have seen so far" (p. 183–184). For James the proletariat has *one* history, *one* movement that always relates to the socialist "abstraction" working as universal. It is however important to note that we are not turned against James's abstractions as much as his way of using them. We do not relate communism to the "universal abstraction of socialism" but to the attacks against the capitalist abstractions. Communism is not present in the "socialist abstraction" that the proletariat is to find to produce communism, because in that case communism would be a teleological and a cumulative process. On the contrary we find communism outside the proletariat in the movement against and turned away from the abstract machinery of capitalism. The idea of the Johnson–Forest tendency that the possibilities of communism exist in the proletariat we also find in their pamphlet *The Invading Socialist Society*. This text actually has a lot in common with the Antonio Negri type of autonomist Marxism. It is interesting to note that Negri who so harshly has opposed Hegel and dialectics reproduces just the hyper-Hegelianism he proclaims to avoid. In *Empire* his thesis is that communism is to be found in the multitude. In the same book he says that capital has been turned into a reactive parasite that only can act from without, breeding from the labour and creativity of the multitude. The potential of communism is thus to be found in the unification of the multitude with itself, a self-unification capital the parasite is counter-acting. In opposition to this we stress that *we are the parasites*, we parasite from and violate the capital relation. Labour is not a sick body to be healed from the continuous encroachment of capital, but communism is the disease that will kill the healthy body of capital, and thus of labour.

stress this because they have an affirmative notion of the constituent practice of the subject.) If communism is given as *Aufhebung*, i.e. as the internal result of the movement between labour and capital, then in that case communism would happen because of the contradiction-in-process which is capital. From this communism would be the result of capital itself, this do not necessary has to be determinism, but *de facto* is teleology. However, we stress that the causal and historical cause of communism is to be found in the contradiction with, and escape from, the contradiction of the capital relation. For the capital relation to be blocked an intervention is needed, that puts an end to the labour–capital dialectic. This intervention is the struggle of the working class against itself, the main expression of which is those mediations (for example the existence of a ruling class) that make capital’s existence possible. All other practices will only lead to the strengthening of the tautological development of capital. However, we would like to say that the focusing on the anti-dialectical nature of revolt does not make the Marxist dialectic superfluous. Nay, on the contrary this ought to lead to the insight that communism must be given by the annihilation of the capitalist objectivity and subjectivity. And this must happen when the subject of capital – the working class – abandons the monstrous dialectic it is contained by.

In the same way as a communist revolution impossibly solely can be the product of crisis, nor of internal capitalist contradictions, it cannot be the product of consciousness. The working class has already seen through the fetish character of capital, and the individual proletarian today is to a great extent aware of her position in the capitalist relations of production. However, this consciousness does not stop her alienation. All consciousness today is contained by the capitalist mega-machine, and thus there is only capitalist reason. All innovations and entrepreneurship is inevitably mediated by labour and capital. The criminal is in many ways entrepreneurship driven to its logical and most nihilist extreme. The gangster is one who will do anything for money. From this it is obvious that irrationality, as for example un-useful and altruistic actions and the lack of dialogue in and by protest movements, often may function as a first step towards subversive actions. A movement that stays within the existing moral order and does not tend to step beyond law and order will not evolve to what Marx labelled the party of anarchy in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. However, illegality and the questioning of the existing customs can not in itself overthrow capital. What is important is that the desires that are developed in a struggle cannot be realised within capitalism. When people attack capital without putting forward any demands we can see that exactly such desires are being lit up. When there is no communication or dialogue between the classes the dialectic between labour and capital has started to become weaker. The only interesting communication from a revolutionary point of view is the one that happens between people that try to break lose from the old world. This dialogue is the dialogue on the tactics and strategy of the forming of coming communities and the realisation of new forms of desire. If revolution is spurred neither by consciousness nor crisis, then it is so that the revolt must mean an activity where people escape from and attacks the capital relation through the development of desires and relations that cannot be satisfied by capital.³⁶

³⁶ Desires and relations are not however anything a ‘man’ is producing by herself, nor something produced spontaneously. Thus desires can be the product of capitalist crisis and anti-capitalist consciousness. Communist theory and capitalist crisis may participate in the production of subversive passion necessary for people to start transforming and attacking capital and its representation.

The constituting practice of capital: time and timeliness

The time is out of joint! (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*)

Time is everything, man is nothing; he is, at the most, time's carcass. (Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*)

Capitalism is the first mode of production to be determined by a need to conquer the future. Earlier modes of production, feudalism for instance, were forced to defend the past by organising the conservation of the present. In contrast to this, capitalism is constantly forced to organise the future. Capital is production of time to come. How is this production and organisation carried out? And what is time in its timely, capitalistic form?

One of the philosophical revolutions of Immanuel Kant, in *Critique of Pure Reason*, consists of situating the ego in time. The *sum res cogitans* of Descartes, I am a thing that thinks says, somewhat simplified, that something thinks and that it therefore exists, but the *cogito* of Descartes tells us nothing about the "foundation" of this existence, beyond pure reasoning. Kant is on the other hand interested in the foundation of this existence and to him the utmost determinants of this existence are time (and space). Our reason and our existence are thus determined through time and space. *I think* is determinable in the shape of time. Thus, time is no longer the measurement of movement, but the movement happens in time. When a human being thinks, this human thinks in time and thus also succession and change happen in time. Time is perceived by Kant as the possibility of change, since change is placed in time. Time is eternal and linear, it strives forward, wants to strive forward and everything is subsumed under it. Not even if the world ends would time disappear, since only the existence in time is temporary.

Critique of Pure Reason, which was published in 1781, preempted the bourgeois revolution in France 1789. Kant's philosophy founds our thinking by presenting the faculties which organise it, and Kant did this almost contemporary to the time when bourgeois revolt lays the foundation of dialectics, which later come to be the philosophy of capitalism. A new foundation for thinking and life is therefore constituted in the late 18th century. However, no revolution happens overnight. Drastic changes in the notion of time happened in Western Europe between 1300 and 1650.³⁶ Three hundred years may seem like a long time, but we must remember that in comparison to the existence of "primitive" societies, whose notion of time was determined by work cycles and the shifting of seasons, three hundred years is a ridiculously short time.

In peasant societies (even in modernity) the notion of time was mainly task oriented. Time was "experienced" and organised through the chores which should be done, and this also meant that the demarcation between life and work was very diffuse. According to E.P. Thompson "..."³⁷ The notion of time was first changed in intellectual circles, where life was not determined by working with the earth, but where there was a demarcation between occupation and life, work and leisure time. However, the machine which would generalise time in its timely form was of course the watch. Already in the 14th century church clocks and other public clocks were established in cities. But since the pendulum was first invented in 1658, these clocks were not very precise. The ringing of the bells was another way of generalising and democratising the dawning notion of time. The ringing of the bell made everyone – rich as well as poor – aware of when it was time to get up and when it was time to go to bed. In England land was donated to the ringers of the bells, since their function was considered that important in creating a rational time system, which schematised the day and organised work.³⁸ Further, the bellrings strengthened Christianity's grip over the human. Time (materialised through the ringing of the bells) reminded the human of her finity, a finity which could only be superseded by the acceptance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, the ringing of the bells was later replaced by sound and light signals in factory districts, and along with the pendulum and the pendulum clock, clocks would spread in a higher degree during the 1660s. The production of clocks actually became a large industry, and around 1680, the English clockworkers gained the upperhand of their competitors for at least a hundred

³⁶ Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture*, p. 9

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18

years.³⁹

When the English manufacturing industry was still limited to the household, or small halls, neither the spread of the clock nor the new notion of time caused a revolution of the production. In this industry people could control labour themselves. Therefore periods of inactivity was mixed with intensive work periods.⁴⁰ According to Thompson it was furthermore very common among the workers to sleep in and choosing to postpone work as long as it was possible. In a wide variety of professions, like shoemakers, tailors, coal mine workers, typographers, weavers etc. it was widely spread and accepted that not only Sunday, but also Monday, was a sacred resting day. The irregular labour time in the manufacturing industry was also combined with orgies of getting hammered and other festivities during the weekends. Victorian puritanism and the movement for soberity was therefore not only aimed at drinking as such, but also at the resting Monday, since they meant that this day gave people the opportunity of heavy drinking and partying. Even country workers' time at work seems to have been relatively irregular, since weather and the seasons caused large shifts in occupation throughout the year. The farm owners also had great difficulty supervising the country workers, since they could be spread out over fields and barns. One way of effectivising supervision and control of the country workers was enclosures during the 18th century. As we know, these movements also created a growing surplus of labour power, which made an expansion of the manufacturing industry possible. This meant that the manufacturing industry was moved out of households into larger halls, where a strict organisation of time and labour division would make the irregular labour time of the past effective and rational. Instead of workers coming and going as they pleased, and working with what they wanted in the workplace, labour was organised by specific persons doing specific chores.

Already in 1700 time schedules and time supervisors were introduced in certain workplaces, both to counteract laziness and to map out the movements of the labour power. If anyone was late they were served with a fine. Thus, the new notion of time worked as a disciplinary force and this long before the industrialisation of the manufacturing industry. Therefore the time controllers were those who would come first to work, control when the other workers arrived and also divide chores. The first time clock system was actually introduced in a pottery factory in the 18th century.⁴¹ An early form of management literature was also written in the 18th century. For example, reverend J. Clayton's pamphlet *Friendly Advice to the Poor* from 1755, where Clayton writes that if the worker does not keep his hands working all the time and spoil his health with laziness, he dooms himself to no salary. Clayton even grumbled over the fact that the church was filled to the brim. They ought to be working! Not only was laziness punished, however, but a sense of duty was rewarded with money. However, the new notion of time was not merely produced by outer force. Inventions like the clock and ideological phenomena, as puritanism and other forms of strict currents in Christianity, worked as biopolitical instruments, since they created a sense of duty and a sense of measure among the individual believers. The new notion of time thus mobilised subjects with another notion of time, not only through labour division, supervision and bonus systems (for example, good workers could get their own watch), but also through puritan ethics. Puritanism claimed that working and punctuality was a sign that one was chosen by God. Protestant ethics, which was driven to its peak in puritanism, Calvinism and similars, combatted catholic contemplation and instead meant that practical life was the most important. Industrious and punctual labour was thus both working in the honour of God and a practice which made the teachings of predestination a material existence. As Weber described it, it was important to work, because it showed that one was chosen by God to come to heaven.⁴² Those who instead engaged in drinking, parties and always coming too late to work were predestined to go to hell.

We now see that Kant's notion of time as an eternal and linear phenomenon, time that organises everything in its timely form, is not a determination that is valid for all epochs. (Of course, this does not mean that time appears with Kant. It merely means that a certain notion of time appears with him. In the same way as Debord points out that history has not always existed in its historic form.⁴³) We can trace the origins of this notion of time to the clock towers of the States

³⁹ Ibid., p. 20

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 28

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 42

⁴² Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

⁴³ Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Chapter VI, "Spectacular Time")

and churches in the 14th century, organised ringing of the bells, the protestant's and protestantic sects' blessing of labour, the spread and generalisation of the clock and the primitive accumulation which forced people into wage labour. These phenomena meant the fabrication of the material and ideological foundations, which consolidated capitalism as a mode of production.

In primitive societies, in farmer societies and among country workers during feudalism (and later) the cyclical notion of time was predominant. The cyclical notion of time, and the individual human's experience of the constant repeat of life and death, originates from the organic relation between the country worker and the earth and the world. In these times the human, concrete labour was thus an activity which processed and used the earth. The earth was the foundation from which the human, through labour, conjured his wealth. Primitive accumulation destroyed this organic relationship with the earth. This was not primarily done by the later exploitation, instead of usage, of the earth by the factory system, but by making the human (in the form of labour power) the foundation of wealth. The capitalist takes energy and value from labour power, in about the same way as the farmer uses the field. Capital inverts the earlier relationship: instead of labour power collecting wealth from matter, matter/machines collect wealth from labour power. Concrete labour becomes abstract labour and the value of abstract labour, the value of labour power, is determined by the average time it takes to manufacture commodities. It is through the power of value over man that human activity become timely and placed in time. It is through value that time exists in its timely, rational and mercantile form: time as money, time as a measure of the value of labour.

The measure of labor is time. The relative value of products is determined by the labor time required for their production. Price is the monetary expression of the relative value of a product. Finally, the the constituted value of a product is purely and simply the value which is constituted by the labor time incorporated in it.⁴⁴

However, the development of capitalism from formal to real subsumption accomplishes a change in the capitalistic organisation of time. Loops arise in the straight line. This looped line of time is what Guy Debord calls pseudo-cyclical time.⁴⁵ But since Debord did not realise that the spectacle, that is representation, arises from the production of value and not from the relationship of commodities, he arrives at a peculiar view of the spectacle's notion of time. To him the representation of capital and pseudo-cyclical time is merely a transformation from quality to quantity:

Pseudo-cyclical time is the time of consumption of modern economic survival, of increased survival, where daily life continues to be deprived of decision and remains bound, no longer to the natural order, but to the pseudo-nature developed in alienated labor; and thus this time naturally reestablishes the ancient cyclical rhythm which regulated the survival of preindustrial societies. Pseudo-cyclical time leans on the natural remains of cyclical time and also uses it to compose new homologous combinations: day and night, work and weekly rest, the recurrence of vacations.⁴⁶

Debord's description of the return of cyclical time to capitalism is correct, but it has not so much to do with robbing decisions from people and making everything boring, as it has to do with the factual decisions that people make reproducing capitalism, since human needs de facto can be realised by capital, but only to a certain point, of course. Not only the situationists want to stop working. Most of us want to, but at the same time they want the use values through which capitalism appears.

During real subsumption time becomes more diffuse and harder to quantify, yet it is quantified and measured, which we can see in the global and local rationalising procedures of working life. Factories move from Bengtsfors to Gothenburg and from Gothenburg to Shanghai. Work organisation is altered, sociologists make time measurements and assembly lines are introduced or removed. But real subsumption of labour creates loops on the line of time. Capital becomes a world, an organism, and value, that is the average labour time, expands and determines yet more of our lives, even outside direct production. All the technical and social machinery that has been manufactured to hasten human activities are living depictions of how our world is dominated by

⁴⁴ Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*

⁴⁵ Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Chapter VI, "Spectacular Time")

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 112

time. Everything is accelerated and even time outside of production turns into money. The pace is accelerated to the point where all movement seems to stop and change seems impossible. Monotony and speed are not contradictory to each other. Microwave ovens, fast food joints and cellphones achieve alterations in time, and real subsumption of labour achieves an alteration of time. Formal subsumption pointed forward and the space outside direct production was time outside capitalistic organisation of time. Under real subsumption this relative autonomy outside of capital is destroyed, however, and along with this change the eternal, cyclical and heathen time, which characterised farmer societies, is resurrected. When capitalism becomes an organism this means that time again becomes cyclical. Cyclical since capitalism is founded on money buying labour power which creates more money: M-C-M'. If this tautological movement is not upheld, capital tumbles together with its timely, mercantile organisation of time. It is through M-C-M', the self-expanding value's need to be embodied in future capital and money, that capitalism becomes an eternal, cyclical recurrence. If something else than the capitalistic premises of production recur from the self-movement of capital, then the capitalistic mode of production can not continue to exist. To capitalism reproduction is thus a production: production of consumption, production of reproduction, production of new production. Everything is reduced to production for the sake of production!

That capitalism becomes organic is shown in the abstract equality that capital forces on the human. Everything is reduced to a question of time, money and work. During capitalism people's relationships with each other and the surrounding world is united by making the relationships, the surrounding world and the separate individuals available at the market. *The human community becomes the monetary community*. Capitalism tries to quantify all the phenomena it finds. However, this does not mean that all substantial values are reduced to functional values, as claimed by so different theorists as Heidegger, Baudrillard and Debord. Nor does quantification mean that all quality vanishes. Capitalism does not make everything uninteresting. Sexuality, just as any other joy or ecstasy, is for instance still a qualitative practice which can unify people. (Likewise anxiety, depression and other phenomena growing more frequent in our world, are qualitative phenomena.) Therefore, transforming all quality into quantity is not what capitalism does, but rather capitalism works by strengthening the existence of a fundamental difference between these two phenomena. Quality is thereby those things that one needs the most quantity of money to acquire: the most desirable commodities are also the most expensive. Thus, communism does not put quality against quantity, but it will probably mutate these two phenomena to the point where we won't be able to recognise them. Because, as Camatte has described, both quantity and quality are familiar to measurement of value, which is value:

[Q]uality and quantity both exist in close affinity with measurement, and all are in turn linked to value. Measurement operates to an equal degree at the level of use value, as well as exchange value. In the former case, it is closely bound up with one type of domination: use values measure a particular person's social position, and are also a measure of oppression they bear. Use values impose their own despotism, which envelops the other despotism (exchange value), and now also that of capital. Marx, in his notes to J. S. Mill's work, denounced utilitarianism as a philosophy in which man is valued only in terms of his use, while exchange tends to autonomize itself.⁴⁷

Therefore, the quantification of capitalism does not mean that all qualitative activity disappears:

In the automatic workshop, one worker's labor is scarcely distinguishable in any way from another worker's labor: workers can only be distinguished one from another by the length of time they take for their work. Nevertheless, this quantitative difference becomes, from a certain point of view, qualitative, in that the time they take for their work depends partly on purely material causes, such as physical constitution, age and sex; partly on purely negative moral causes, such as patience, imperturbability, diligence.⁴⁸

The quantification process is therefore primarily an illustration of the real transformation of concrete labour into abstract labour, but however this transformation does not imply that all quality vanishes – some workers are more competent than others, for example. This does not mean

⁴⁷ Camatte, *This World We Must Leave*, p. 132–133

⁴⁸ Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*

that abstract labour would lack a real existence, because the abstraction becomes real since labour is comparable and exchangeable, through labour time as the determinant of value. It is through time that all human activity is joined together in an organic system:

Is your hour's labor worth mine? That is a question which is decided by competition.

Competition, according to an American economist, determines how many days of simple labor are contained in one day's compound labor. Does not this reduction of days of compound labor to days of simple labor suppose that simple labor is itself taken as a measure of value? If the mere quantity of labor functions as a measure of value regardless of quality, it presupposes that simple labor has become the pivot of industry. It presupposes that labor has been equalized by the subordination of man to the machine or by the extreme division of labor; that men are effaced by their labor; that the pendulum of the clock has become as accurate a measure of the relative activity of two workers as it is of the speed of two locomotives. Therefore, we should not say that one man's hour is worth another man's hour, but rather that one man during an hour is worth just as much as another man during an hour.⁴⁸

Capitalism's organic development is not evolutionary, indeed it is successive but through leaps and small revolutions. Because value does not, in fact, dominate *all* parts of society, even during real subsumption there are terrains and spaces that capital struggles to internalise and revolutionise. In spite of this Marx calls his time "the time of general corruption, of universal venality, or, to speak in terms of political economy, the time when everything, moral or physical, having become a marketable value, is brought to the market to be assessed at its truest value."⁵⁰ According to Marx capitalism is an epoch where "everything that men had considered as inalienable became an object of exchange, of traffic and could be alienated. This is the time when the very things which until then had been communicated, but never exchanged; given, but never sold; acquired, but never bought — virtue, love, conviction, knowledge, conscience, etc. — when everything, in short, passed into commerce."⁵¹ This is not quite the case, yet. Not everything can be bought or sold on the market. Not even during real subsumption capitalism is total. In spite of that it is when capital becomes "specifically capitalist", that is through real subsumption of labour, that capitalism turns into an organism. But even when the time comes where everything passes into commerce, there will always be an outside which capital can not conquer. Because just like the human organism would wither away without oxygen, capital is dependent on an outer variable: *living labour*. Living labour is the oxygen of the capitalistic body. It is the practice which must be bought and placed in productive labour, in order for capital to continue its existence – without living labour, no value. It is living labour, which is the future, the time which capitalism must recreate; this because the human embodies time. This further depicts that it is *not* the subject which is placed in time, as Kant claims, but it is through the subject which time can exist. Humans – in the character of living labour – are what make time exist in its timely, measurable form. Therefore it is a fact, at least theoretically, that labour power at a given moment exists outside the dialectics of capital. This moment is of course at the point of consumption of goods or before the individual sells his labour power. However, capital constantly tries to limit this outside. In practice this outside does not exist for the individual human, more than in extremely limited forms, since even schools and leisure time become more and more productive and useful activities for capital. As we know, companies are gained by unemployment, for instance by lowering wages do to competition over employment. Furthermore our existence is more and more occupied by value. All activity is not yet mediated by value. So far, air is still free to breathe. That capitalism is trying to internalise its own border, living labour power, shows that it is in fact capital that is trying to accomplish the old communist utopia of uniting essence and existence; because essence (production of surplus value) is more and more determined by the human existence and not only through one human practice (abstract labour). Wage labour is generalised to such a degree that capital does not only become identical to the production process, but with the human itself.

Capital (...) capitalizes the proletariat –i.e. it creates in him the following behaviour: he considers himself as capital, thus must bear fruit, work has to be an activity with a view to profit, and nothing else. This phenomenon occurs simultaneously with the anthropomorphosis of capital: capital becomes man. Hence its domination becomes not only natural (...) but also human, and through this last

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

generalization of its being, it seems to disappear. When this happens, capital becomes the apologist for what was its main enemy – labour which produces surplus-value (hence profit).⁵²

This settlement between essence and appearance is, however, not only shown in the worker's transformation to capital, but also in the worker's attempts to attack what produces her disposition as worker – primarily the existence of an upper class – because through the unification of essence and appearance singular practices are given the ability to directly attack the relationship of value. Today, anti-capitalist activities can not merely be analysed as purely empirical events, they must be understood in relation to the concrete abstractions which capital implies: the commodity form, abstract labour, value etc. Of course, the working class' struggle has always been negative and antagonistic to the capitalistic abstractions, but with capitalism's development into an organism the relationship between what we can call concrete and abstract is strengthened. Because under real subsumption of labour singular practices never remain alone or "concrete" since every action has a unique potential to attack the capitalistic abstractions as such. This because real subsumption of labour means that the worker is included in capital and thereby becomes capital, that is capitalism turns into an organism.

But what is an organism, really? An organism consists of organs intertwined in a body which lives through the activity of organs. Capitalism is thus this non-productive body and the individual, factual, proletarians are "organs" which produce the connection and function of the body. Capitalism works as a human at sleep, because in sleep the human is incapable of acting. In sleep she becomes plant-like; there is no conscience, but merely existence. An existence which is determined by a certain repetitive task, for instance breathing. Oswald Spengler writes:

I tillvaron råder ett öde, i vakenheten hittar man orsaker och verkningar. För den ena är urfrågorna "när" och "varför", för den andra är de "var" och "hur". En växt har en tillvaro utan vakenhet. Under sömnen blir alla varelser växtlika: spänningen gentemot omvärlden slocknar, livets takt går vidare. En växt har bara relationer till "när" och "varför". De första gröna skotten som tränger fram ur den vintriga jorden, knopparnas svällande, hela våldsamheten i blomningen, doften, färgglansen, mognandet: allt detta är en trängtan efter ödets uppfyllande och en ständig längtansfull fråga efter "när". Frågan efter "var" kan inte ha någon innebörd för en växtartad tillvaro. Det är den fråga som varje vaknad människa dagligen ställer sig. Tillvarons puls råder ständigt genom alla släktled. Men vakenheten börjar på nytt för varje mikrokosmos. Det är skillnaden mellan fortplantning och födelse. Det ena bekräftar varaktigheten, det andra är en början. Därför fortplantas växten, men den föds inte. Den existerar, men inget uppvaknande, ingen första dag börjar breda ut sinnenas värld för den. [sorry, we couldn't find any English (or German) translation online].⁵³

Thus capitalism under formal subsumption was an awoken phenomenon which was "born" through the "conscious" actions of traders, bourgeoisie and proletarians, and the material consequences which earlier structural practices had led to. During real subsumption, however, capitalism has fallen asleep and must therefore constantly reproduce its own foundation. Like a sleeping body constantly must repeat breathing to wake up tomorrow, total capital must constantly generate markets, wage labourers and companies to be able to keep sleeping. It is only consciousness which can destroy capitalistic social relations, since it means that people withdraw the future from capital and use the aleatory possibility which exists on the basis of the foundation, on which capitalism rests – time in its timely form through production of surplus value. The possibility for communism is thus purely abstract in the proletariat's refusal to be proletariat. If the workers avoid recreating the social relations which generates surplus value, total capital will fall like a house of cards.

The domination of labour by capital: formal and real subsumption

Capital, as a social mode of production, accomplishes its real domination when it succeeds in replacing all the pre-existing social and natural presuppositions with its own particular *forms of organisation* which mediate the submission of the whole of physical and social life to its need of valorisation. The

⁵² Camatte, *Capital and Community: the Results of the Immediate Process of Production and the Economic Work of Marx*, p. 156

⁵³ Spengler, *Decline of the West*

essence of the *Gemeinschaft* of capital is organization. (Gianni Collu, *Transition*)

As we have seen capitalism is built upon a contingent relation: the necessity to conquer the future. We have also seen that the need of capital to secure this contingent relation is getting even more acute when capitalism “enters” the real domination. Since when value is distributed throughout the entire social factory the antagonisms follow on. But what is real domination? And what distinguish real domination from formal domination?

Formal domination means that capital takes over means of production and makes them capitalist means of production. Labour is forced into capitalist domination (the factory). Labour becomes abstract labour, and we have already seen how this commodity makes capital possible. The material base for the formal domination is the primitive accumulation, which throughout history has forced people to wage-labour. (This primitive accumulation is still going on, despite the fact that the whole world is imprisoned by real domination.) Formal domination means production of absolute surplus-value by extending the work-day. Real domination is started by the technical transformation of labour. This transformation makes production turn from production of absolute surplus-value to production of relative surplus-value. Thus, relative surplus-value is a strategy that intensifies labour during the work-day. Early real domination thus only transforms the organisation of the factory and the techniques to exploit labour-power.

The production of absolute surplus-value turns exclusively on the length of the working day, whereas the production of relative surplus-value completely revolutionizes the technical processes of labour and the groupings into which society is divided.

It therefore requires a specifically capitalist mode of production, a mode of production which, along with its methods, means and conditions, arises and develops spontaneously on the basis of the formal subsumption of labour under capital. This formal subsumption is then replaced by a real subsumption.³⁷

The emergence of capitalism, or at least the emergence of the bourgeoisie, we can trace, historically, to the cities, most of all to the cities of Renaissance Italy. It is interesting to note that despite the emergence of the bourgeoisie had the city as its centre, the birthplace of capitalism was the industry, and the emergence of real subsumption, as Marx noted, is not the industry, but the factory in its more restricted sense. The centre of real domination, its essence, is indeed, just like the centre of formal domination, abstract labour. Real domination started in the modern and industrialised factory. Simply put, real domination is the introduction of new technology and the “real” organisation of the labour within the factory. However, real domination is not the disappearance of formal domination, for example as indicated by the extension of the work day. Thus it is important to emphasise that real domination does not replace formal domination. Formal domination is always there, as the basis. Thus we may say that capitalism works in a Hegelian way, since it is a good example of a capitalist *Aufhebung*. The former means of control are still there, but their weaknesses are overcome, and labour is now structured in a more sophisticated way. Formal domination becomes real. Marx describes this capitalist *Aufhebung*:

At any rate, if we consider the two forms of surplus-value, absolute and relative, separately, we shall see that absolute surplus-value always precedes relative. To these two forms of surplus-value there correspond two separate forms of subsumption of labour under capital, or two distinct forms of capitalist production. And here too one form always precedes the other, *although the second form, the more highly developed one, can provide the foundations for the introduction of the first in new branches of industry* (my emphasis).³⁸

As a matter of fact, real domination is intensified by its own consequences, i.e. because it “completely revolutionizes ... the groupings into which society is divided”. By the real domination of labour within the factory, capital becomes a permanent revolution. Real domination, however, spreads beyond its initial terrain, the factory, and transforms the entire society into an industry.

³⁷ Marx, *Capital* vol. I, p. 645

³⁸ Marx, *Results...* op. cit., p. 1025.

Society becomes capitalistic, but not immediately, but from the need for capital to transcend itself. The limit of capital is itself, it only needs to overthrow and revolutionise its own production, for example through the reiteration of its own history by new forms of movements of enclosure. Primitive accumulation, thus, is still working, not only in the so called “underdeveloped countries”, but also by the privatisation of former social properties in the “industrialised countries”.³⁹ Real domination, thus, is not the disappearance of earlier phenomenon, but runs through them, determines them. A primitive accumulation is still working, but it is enclosed by real domination, that works axiomatic. Despite this real domination already started during Marx’s time, but it was still limited to the factory.

Historically we can note that the labour movement, the organisation of the working class as labour-power, pushed formal domination into its real phase in certain countries – as in Russia.⁴⁰ The Russian revolution was transformed from a proletarian revolt to a capitalist ditto. In other countries we can see how the wave of class struggle 1917–36, fascism, the development of Keynesianism, and the victory of democracy over fascism, created a material possibility for real domination to step out from the factory, and instead develop the entire society to a factory. Real domination works geo-politically since it reshapes the world into a diffuse factory. Certain regions may be providers of raw materials, and other countries as providers of high skilled labour-power. This development has been described, for example, by Immanuel Wallerstein in his World System theory.⁴¹ But, as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt skilfully have argued in their *Empire*, this geopolitics is falling today. The demarcation lines between the “first”, “second”, and “third” worlds are more and more diffuse. Today we find hyper-modern technology in so called “underdeveloped countries”, and within the “industrialised countries” the “third world” emerges through a deserted countryside and poor suburbs.

Capital annihilates former obstacles, but only by producing new ones. It annihilates dead labour by creating new commodities. Markets are crushed, only for new ones to be created, and boundaries are wiped out from the maps, only for new ones to be drawn. Thus, capital is as much a permanent revolution and a permanent counter-revolution, it deterritorialises the terrain only to reterritorialise it. This restless and spastic development of capital is subsuming all human existence within itself. The separation between reproduction and production is wiped out, despite being maintained distinct for the individual capitalist and worker. During real domination it is not individual labour, but socialised labour, that decides the development of the companies. For example, it is shown by the development of technology and the growing needs for educated and skilled labour-power in companies/the State:

This entire development of the productive forces of *socialized labour* (in contrast to the more or less isolated labour of individuals), and together with it the *use of science* (the *general* product of social development), in the *immediate process of production*, takes the form of the *productive power of capital*. It does not appear as the productive power of labour, or even of that part of it that is identical with capital. And least of all does it appear as the productive power either of the individual worker or of the workers joined together in the same process of production. *The mystification implicit in the relations of capital as a whole is greatly intensified here, far beyond the point it had reached or could have reached in the merely formal subsumption of labour under capital* (the last sentence emphasised by me).⁴²

Thus, real domination develops social labour, which is total labour, by the reproduction of labour being ever more determined by capitalism. Science, and thinking as such, is drawn into this process, and it illustrates that real domination is not only reorganising the factory, but also schools, universities, the labour movement, indeed ‘man himself’. This is how real domination, in the

³⁹ We are very critical of the division of the world along “underdeveloped” and “industrialised countries”, we only use the miserable conceptions due to literary convenience.

⁴⁰ Goldner, “Communism is the material human community: Amadeo Bordiga today” (published in *riff-raff* #3–4, transl. note).

⁴¹ Balibar & Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*

⁴² Marx, *Results...* op. cit., p. 1024.

middle of the 20th Century creates what we above called an anthropological revolution: “The mystification implicit in the relations of capital as a whole is greatly intensified here, far beyond the point it had reached or could have reached in the merely formal subsumption of labour under capital”⁴³ The mystification is not only about the workplaces, but society as such. Real domination blows the limits of formal domination. Welfare society, mass consumption, automobile society, the whole “post-war” development is tied to real domination stepping out from the limits of the factory. The political phenomenon of our time – such as monetarism, globalisation, and privatisation – is just the same an immediate consequence of the intensification and development of real domination. The world is becoming more and more capitalist.

Therefore it is obvious that the dialectic between labour and capital is deepening, or rather being established, during real domination. Within the factory, of course, there has always been a dialectic moment between labour and capital, but during formal domination, and when real domination was limited to the factory, the labour movement had an autonomous space to be used. In this way the labour movement could formate itself, from capital, as a revolutionary autonomous force – in Parties, Trade unions, and Soviets. Obviously this space was used in a wrong way, since the working class lost initiative, but whatever could have happened, history illustrated that the proletariat a priorically became a capitalist category, and capital became a world, a society. That is why we observe conflicts throughout the entire social factory today. The possibility for autonomy of labour is disappearing, since real domination is blowing the limits of the factory. If the space for autonomy would have been here today, we would hardly have all the struggles we observe today in the social factory. It is just because of the lack of autonomy that the proletariat can revolt against real domination. Real domination, indeed, is about:

how not merely at the level of ideas, but also in reality, the social character of his labour confronts the worker as something not merely alien, but hostile and antagonistic, when it appears before him objectified and personified in capital.⁴⁴

What Marx describes as the social in labour, however, is during real domination identical with labour. This is so since real subsumption of labour means that capital use:

This entire development of the productive forces of labour, or the productive forces of directly social, *socialized* (i.e. collective) labour come into being through co-operation, division of labour within the workshop, the use of *machinery*, and in general the transformation of production by the conscious *use* of the sciences, or mechanics, chemistry, etc. for specific ends, technology, etc. and similarly, through the enormous increase of scale corresponding to such developments (for it is not only socialized labour that is capable of applying the *general* products of human development, such as mathematics, to the immediate process of production; and, conversely, progress in these sciences presupposes a certain level of material production).⁴⁵

Since, for example, science and other areas outside the immediate process of production gain an increasing role for capital during real domination, it means that the distinction between unproductive and productive labour becomes meaningless. Even though it is possible to see a difference between unproductive and productive labour, this difference is of no political importance anymore. This is so since both unproductive and productive labour are vital components of total labour, i.e. socialised labour. Marx claim that social labour is turned against the worker as an antagonistic and capitalistic power, also let us know that not only abstract labour, but also concrete labour, have to be attacked! Since socialised labour is not only abstract labour, but also concrete labour. Real domination, thus, organises also unproductive and concrete labour ever more capitalistically. Communism, thus, must be the annihilation of *labour*, and this is so, not

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 1024f.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 1024.

from principal or utopian causes, but because it is social labour, and not abstract labour, that confront the workers as an alien power that is necessary to resist. In practice it is labour as such (and not only wage-labour) that people are attacking when they in different ways are escaping labour or sabotage the organisation of work.

We have seen how real domination means that value and resistance are distributed throughout the entire society. The organisational implications of this are many, both for the class and for individual revolutionaries. At the end of the 9th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century the trade union movement was a threat for the development of industrial capitalism, in some parts of the world even a revolutionary threat. The organisation of the working class in trade unions was, among other things, a response to the production of absolute surplus-value. The demand was a shorter working day, and the utopia was that the working class should take over production. We know what the struggles of the labour movement participated to – the transition from formal to real domination of labour. The labour movement fought for the annihilation, or at least the change, of one of the axioms of capitalism – the production of absolute surplus-value – and capital responded by moving to the production of relative surplus-value, and by offering some space for the working class, as variable capital, within capitalism. In this way the dialectic between labour and capital was deepened, variable capital was accepted by the integration of the labour movement in the State. Thus, the labour movement, still an obstacle to the chase of capital for profits, becomes integrated in the State, immediately linked to the State and to economic growth. The trade unions, thus, are still a “barrier” for individual capitals, but necessary during the historical phase of real domination. This illustrates the reterritorialisation of real domination. Despite capital being a permanent revolution, it has use for stabilising instruments and mediating apparatuses. The integration of the labour movement in the State also meant that the class struggle in the 60s and 70s to a large extent became anti-union and anti-institutional. These new practices of the revolting parts of the working class forced capital, once again, to revolutionise its policy and its mediating apparatuses. Globalisation and monetarism are two consequences of the revolt of the working class at the time.

As we have seen, the transition from formal to real domination, and from early real domination to intensified real domination, that the autonomous and revolutionary space expressed in, for example, Bolshevism and Syndicalism, was annihilated. The inability of the working class to annihilate itself as a class during the era of formal domination changed the class composition, and the organic composition of capital. It produced a variety of mediating apparatuses. The organisation of the working class as variable capital, indeed class struggle itself, was, through the trade unions, tied to economic growth. In certain parts of the industry during the “post-war era” trade union organisation was obliged. Trade union organisation, thus, became, during this time, an axiom for capital. It did not happen by itself, of course. Struggles and blood-shed were needed. Real organisation of labour, thus, does not mean that formal organisation is impossible, but that formal organisation is part and parcel of capitalism. When revolutionaries are organised formally, it either ends up in the group only organising a few individuals, or that it is incorporated in the social relations of capitalism. The transition from formal to real domination does not do away with formal organisation, but it means that the separation between class and revolutionaries is made obsolete. Since the only practice that can be organised revolutionary is ones own, and since social labour is the enemy, an enemy that is present everywhere, we can against capital everywhere. According to Johan Forsberg the transition to real domination, from an organisational perspective, means:

All organizations, set up with a character of synthesis (ideological unity) inevitably means an alienating separation between object and consciousness. They reproduce, thus, the essence of the capitalist form of the state (the mediation of class struggle, in aggregation the interest of total capital against total labour). Practically this means that decision is separated from execution (no matter what degree of democracy), and that they become parts of the mediations of the representative-political sphere. The protagonists of such left organization believe that class struggle is played on the political scene only because it appears political inasmuch as it dissolves the old order. By imitating the appearance of class struggle (and not its essence – a break with the accumulation of value) it becomes a representation, and in itself a fetish, determined by the value relation. They organize a substitutionist pseudo-party, at best in a reified party form.

The Janus face of communisation: war communism and architecture

The utterance of the past is always an oracular pronouncement. You will understand it only as builders of the future and as people who know about the present. People now explain the extraordinarily deep and far-reaching effect of Delphi by the particular fact that the Delphic priests had precise knowledge about the past. It is appropriate now to understand that only the man who builds the future has a right to judge the past. (Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History, and Life*)

Communism is not the workers management of this mode of production, the conscious taking hold of its contradictions, taking up the development of the productive forces where capitalism itself is unable to continue. With no presupposition to be reproduced, communism is not a mode of production; it is not even a society in the sense of a totality encompassing the relations that individuals define among themselves in their singularity (Théorie Communiste, *Communist theory*).

According to the council communist tradition, the practices of revolutionaries are limited to communication and discussion.⁴⁶ What revolutionaries are supposed to do is to reflect upon one's own situation. If revolutionary practice is not to end up in representative and alienating politics it must be executed by and through, what Leftist linguistics label, the working class. Revolutionaries, thus, are merely to try to participate in the discussion about the position and situation of the working class. In many ways council communism is the inverted image of Leninism. This is so because of the focus of the Leninists on the need for revolutionary activity from the revolutionaries. Gilles Dauvé summons the council communist theory in one phrase, "the workers themselves", and Leninism with one concept, "the Party".⁴⁷

The merits of the Dutch and German left-communism, apart from having described the autonomous struggles of the working class, are their insistence on reflection, understanding, as part of communist practice. But the council communists merely formulate one moment in the dialectics of communist practice. The other moment – intervention, change – is missing. For the council communist there is no dialectical courtship between understanding and change. A similar mistake is present in Leninism. For Leninism there is but one's own intervention. The Leninists substitute the real communist movement for their own practice. The Leninists separate subject from object. Their intervention is aimed at an object they do not belong to. Practical reflexivity means, contrary to the Leninist separation of subject from object, that intervention and reflection is taking place in the object the reflecting and intervening subject is situated in. Thinking and creating, the two phenomenons are parts of the same process – practical reflection – but they are not the same. The Leninist denies his own desires and needs, and aims his intervention to a world he does not belong to, and thus his activity fails. The council communist thinks that contemplation over the object she is part of is the same as changing the object. The Leninist is political, the council communist is apolitical.

Practical reflexivity, as formulated by Marx in his theses on Feuerbach, is the interaction between understanding and change. It does not mean that the two moments are united. Thinking and creating, contemplation and overthrow, maintain their individual characteristics. A practical reflexivity, thus, must be an actual practice and reflection over this practice. Philosophy must be realised, it must become practice. The practicing of philosophy is not a political practice from a political theory, but rather poetics from a poetical theory. ... Thus practical reflexivity results in a *theoretical poetics*, a process that is critical and constitutive at the same time.

⁴⁶ The 'best' contemporary example is the council communist network *Echanges et Mouvement*. Their aim is to discuss and circulate information on the autonomous resistance of the working class. If one read their Presentation, and their Bulletin, it is obvious that they regard all intervention to be external, and thus, from different reasons, "Leninism" (= to be condemned).

⁴⁷ Dauvé, *Vägrandets dynamik* ("Leninism and the Ultra-Left").

The council communist tradition is thus stuck in a dead-end, since its theory about the proletariat seems to mean: see, but not touch. This council communist heritage in some groups, such as *Aufheben*, has made them combine a non-dialectical notion of practice and theory with a sort of hyper-Hegelianism. *Aufheben* repudiates, for example, militant inquiries, and has no understanding of such a practice being an expression of practical reflexivity.⁴⁸ This is where the non-dialectical character of their perspective is appearing. Their hyper-Hegelianism is displayed when the group merely recognise that there is movement between labour and capital, a movement working by itself, which is to overcome itself without any external intervention. This is nothing but teleology.

In *Kämpa Tillsammans!*⁴⁹ we tried to develop a practical reflexivity, and because of that, we were always open with theory first of all being a tool for practical actions. The German group *Kolinko*, that for example has made inquiries in call centres throughout Europe, is saying that inquiry is the starting and the end of all understanding of the class composition today, but at the same time they are against revolutionary interventionism, since they say that this intervention is “external”.⁵⁰ Through the discussions within *Kämpa Tillsammans!*, however, we realised, as opposed to *Kolinko*, that it was just because we were both revolutionaries and workers that we could produce change. We affirmed this difference. We realised, thus, that our potential to change lay in us being labour-power, since it is this commodity that produces the tautology of capital, and at the same we understood that only as revolutionaries we could abandon our roles as proletarians, labour-power.⁵¹ Our problem was that we always were stuck within capital. What we wanted was to get “outside” capitalism. This understanding produced a distance to our own lives. Instead of some spontaneous sociology we systemised the knowledge we, as workers, reached purely “spontaneously”. We were, and are, revolutionaries, and it was as revolutionaries we inquired our everyday lives, but the power to change this everyday life arose from our roles as labour-power. This revolutionary element was the power, the phenomenon, and the distance that made us avoid the dead-ends of Leninism and council communism.

What we shared with the Dutch and German left communism was the insistence of the autonomous practice of the working class, and what we got from Lenin was the emphasis on the importance of ones own actions. Thus, practical reflexivity gave us the opportunity to develop a sort of *Bolshevism without a party*, an immediate and desire-oriented practice that avoided the mediating apparatuses that capital disarms class struggle with. However, it is important to point out that there is some trivial truth in the assertion by Lenin and Kautsky that workers only can reach trade-unionist consciousness, since a worker is nothing else then variable capital. And as long as the worker struggles as a worker, capital will evolve. It is first when this disposition is questioned that a revolutionary break can occur, and this break is the product of the working class producing a distance to the position that makes it a class. ... An intervention rests on a difference, kind of a distance. This distance is produced when the working class tries to get organised autonomously from the ruling class, and when the autonomy is given, it means, at the same time, that the working class is attacking the mediation that is the presupposition of its existence as a class. When workers are questioning their existence in practice, when they not merely feel their lives in capitalism as something they would like to revolt against, but, de facto, as something they can rise against, then a distance is produced between labour and capital. Organisation to break out from the labour–capital dialectic is nothing else but an intervention. An intervention, since the “working class” attacks its role as “labour-power”. This intervention is the communist movement, communisation, and such interventions are happening all the time, since class struggle is not independent from economy or total capital. The communist movement, thus, is the moment of

⁴⁸ Cf. their review of militant inquiries in general, and the *Kolinko* book *Hotlines*, an inquiry of the call centre sector, in particular, *Aufheben* #12 <http://meeting.senonevero.net/article.php?id_article=26&lang=en>.

⁴⁹ “*Struggle Together!*”, transl. note.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Hotlines*, by *Kolinko*.

⁵¹ The revolutionary, however, is not necessary synonymous to communist “consciousness”, even if it was so in our case. We do not, in any way, wish to reduce the importance of “theory” for the coming to be of communism, but despite this we define revolutionary practice as all practice aimed against and beyond the capital relation, indifferent to whether this practice is being revolutionary “articulated” or not. What is revolutionary in practice is only to be measured by the relation of the action to the capitalist abstractions, its potential to coming to be, not from the incentives that motivate the action.

interference that can produce a crisis within the capital dialectic, but communism as a society can not be given by the conflict between labour and capital, it must be produced by the intervention of a third element. *A counter-dialectic moment is needed to annihilate the capital relation. Capitalism must be attacked from the outside, through the escape from capital.*

Those perspectives that see communism as the result of the contradictions of an inner process is stuck within a teleological perspective. The working class, as it is today, can never produce communism, and the strengthening of the working class is the strengthening of the tautology of capital. Despite communism not being given by the process between labour and capital, the communist movement is a phenomenon that exists within and against capital. The development of the inner contradiction, i.e. the class struggle, thus, is necessary if capitalism is to be crushed. But the counter-dialectic element can only be produced by people organising relations that push aside the “economic struggle”. With the words of Lenin, “spheres outside the economic struggle” must be created. Refusal of work and wildcats are two examples of such spheres being created. Even during real domination people find pockets of resistance. In this way “spheres beyond” are created all the time, “distances” to and “outsides” of the labour–capital relation are created. Our problem is that these “spheres” are easily crushed by violence from the State, or captured by the capital relation. Besides this, even during real domination, living labour is given certain autonomy, since small and relatively meaningless pockets of resistance can work as a unifying force for capital. For example, they may get workers to feel all right at work, and thus make them avoid questioning their roles as labour-power. The socialisation of the working class is a double axe for capital, since at the same time it is the tying of the workers to the company they are working for and the tying together of the workers against the company. Even bigger conflicts, such as strikes, can strengthen total capital, despite all strikes is meaning problems for the struck company. That class struggle is developing capital we can understand by seeing capital as the accumulation of value, i.e. the accumulation of abstract labour. It means that capital is class struggle, since the accumulation of value is based on exploitation. The struggle about wages and the organisation of work affects the economic relations of capitalism. The struggles by the working class always cause crises, in the same way as crises give birth to proletarian revolts. In this way communism is not a social stage to be reached in the future, but the real movement, the communisation, displayed through class struggle. But is communisation identical to the movement of the proletariat, i.e. the class struggle? Yes and No. According to Marx, class struggle is the driving force of history, and since history is a movement without a goal, not even class struggle is predestined to end up in communism. In this discussion it is necessary to go back to Marx.

Marx never developed any explicit theory about the proletariat. But he noted that the proletariat is the revolutionary class that can overthrow capital, and this notion was the product of both deduction and induction. Marx deduced the possibility of communism from the fact that the proletariat possess the commodity, labour-power, that makes the capital relation possible. Labour-power is one variable, a floating and becoming entity, and according to Marx this is what gives the proletariat its revolutionary role. The inductive proof of communism was the real, actual, material movement – i.e. class struggle – that Marx metaphorically described as an old mole. Beside this induction and deduction Marx created a narrative about the proletariat. This story, probably the product of Marx’s evolutionary optimism, in short says that the bourgeoisie failed in realising the emancipation of humanity. The taking of power of the bourgeoisie, on the contrary, resulted in the proletariat taking over the baton from the bourgeoisie. Now this class was supposed to emancipate humanity, and this by emancipating the productive-forces from its fetters. Marx’s notion of the proletariat, thus, was not only deductive and inductive, but ideological. This, and the fact that real domination only had started in the industry, made Marx to develop a mythology about the proletariat, that for many a Marxist was developed into a repressive consciousness, and a dream in vain about a communism to rise from the internal contradictions of capitalism.

Today the proletariat is enclosed by capital, to an extent where labour-power and indeed the worker a priori has become a part of capitalism. The specifically capitalist mode of production, that Marx started to describe, has achieved a change in the appearance of capital, in its representation. That capital is a representation has been (mis-)interpreted in many ways. We use the concept of representation (*Vorstellung*) here in the sense that Marx used the concept; the representation is the mediation between form and content. That value has to be represented in

money, according to Camatte, is such a “Vorstellung”. “Value” we know is an abstraction, but a concrete and actual abstraction that is mobilised by the practice of the working class, an activity that gives money, the sensuous entity of value, its power. It means that capital is an externalised practice. The externalisation is determined by two factors. First, since the practice of people results in a relation that becomes external from the action that produced the relation. Second, since the relation of the working class to the means of production is external because it is mediated by labour-power and the existence of the capitalist class. This external relation is objectified by the fact that practice is externalised. That is, the externalised practice is experienced as something objectively given, not produced by human beings. This objectification is internalised by ‘man’. Thus, internalisation is a form of interpellation. Representation in itself is not anything that may be annihilated. Language, for example, is not merely a translation apparatus, but also a representation that gives the individual ‘man’ a “distance”, but at the same time it works as a “bridge” to other people. The problematic of capital as representation is about being a social relation that necessarily has to become objectified. That is, it escapes our control and determines our lives. It is so because capital is a tautology, whose fundament is $M - C - M'$, that is self-expanding value. Self-expanding value, as history has shown us, can never be controlled by a State or by the self-management of the workers. Value must be annihilated if we shall get rid of capital as representation.

During the specifically capitalist organisation of labour, in the material community of capital, there is a mutation of the representation of capital. Capital is no longer a representation whose appearance is only through money, but capital is represented by *all* the form determining use-values that constitute the proletariat as a capitalist variable! We have seen that during real domination in the process of production, the individual and actual process of labour are also determined by total labour rather than individual labour. It means that the representation of capital is changed, since it comes into action by the total worker that constitutes total capital. However, it does not mean that communism disappears as a possibility, but that the antagonism of the proletariat within but against capitalism is changed. This is so since real domination expands the definition of productive labour, and encloses unproductive and reproductive labour in what Marx called the total worker, i.e. the sum of all workers that constitute total labour (the sum of objectified labour).

... with the development of the *real subsumption of labour under capital*, or the *specifically capitalist mode of production*, the *real lever* of the overall labour process is increasingly not the individual worker. Instead, *labour-power socially combined* and the various competing labour-powers which together form the entire production machine participate in very different ways in the immediate process of making commodities, or, more accurately in this context, creating the product. Some work better with their hands, others with their heads, one as a manager, engineer, technologist, etc., the other as overseer, the third as manual labourer or even drudge. An ever increasing number of types of labour are included in the immediate concept of productive *labour*, and those who perform it are classed as *productive workers*, workers directly exploited by capital and *subordinated* to its process of production and expansion. If we consider the aggregate *worker*, i.e. if we take all the members comprising the workshop together, then we see that their *combined activity* results materially in an *aggregate* product which is at the same time a *quantity of goods*. And here it is quite immaterial whether the job of a particular worker, who is merely a limb of this aggregate worker, is at a greater or smaller distance from the actual manual labour. But then: the activity of this aggregate labour-power is its *immediate productive consumption by capital*, i.e. it is the self-valorization process of capital, and hence, as we shall demonstrate, the immediate production of surplus-value, the *immediate conversion of this latter into capital*.⁵²

Thus, we see that productive labour is expanding, since increasingly more functions of the capacity to work gets “included in the immediate concept of *productive labour*”. Under real domination, in this way, there is a permanent proletarianisation, and we can also see how real domination achieves the predestined anthropological revolution, since “the activity of this aggregate labour-power is its *immediate productive consumption by capital*, i.e. it is the self-

⁵² *Results...*, op. cit., p. 1039f.

valorisation process of capital, and hence, as we shall demonstrate, the immediate production of surplus-value, the *immediate conversion of this latter into capital.*” Also the total worker now becomes the mode of appearance of total capital! The dialectics between labour and capital now is not only about production, but also reproduction. Class struggle, i.e. the capital relation, today is not only the development and motor of our time, but this relation is immanent in every individual worker. What, then, happens to communisation in class struggle? And if communism never has been possible by the internal contradictions of capitalism – how, then, can we claim that communism is a real possibility?

The tendencies to communisation in the class struggle appear through the attacks against value. Gate-crashing and downloading of films, for example, are means many people are using today to escape the mediation of exchange-value. These means hits against total capital, since they liberate a certain amount of use-values from the total commodity that is produced by the total worker. These two practices are examples of communisation, but at the same time they illustrate how it is stuck inside capital. Communisation is immanent in the class struggle that not only develop capital, but that constitute capital as capital: downloading of films is good to certain branches of capital. For example, larger hard-drives are needed. In the same way, gate-crashing produce the need for security companies, such as Securitas, and better means of surveillance. The internal movement and contradiction of the proletariat, communism – the so called real movement – tends, however, to down individual companies, since it attacks the production of surplus-value and the companies’ accumulation. To limit the damage of the class struggle on individual companies, and to make capital, as such, possible at all, the State takes on its role of mediation. It decides on laws, controls and regulates labour and the movements of capital. Total capital does not only have interest, just like individual companies, in the working class being organised as variable capital through mediations such as unions, parties and also the State, but the working class must exist as variable capital if the capital relation is to be constituted at all. The function of the State, thus, is to achieve balance in the capital relation. The means to produce status quo, however, may very well be anti-union policies, neo-liberalism and draconian or even fascist means against the citizens. The State gives the legalist labour movement a material foundation for a constitutive policy with the crisis mediating function of the State. The labour movement can use this space by working for the interests of the working class as variable capital. This form of policy of the institutionalising labour movement historically has produced its counter-phenomenon, that is, what Karl-Heinz Roth called, the “other” workers’ movement.⁵³ This other workers’ movement, indeed developed even before Social democracy and Bolshevism, is nothing but the autonomous struggles of the working class, and it was this movement that Marx thought could produce communism; thus the watchword that the emancipation of the working class should be made by itself. This emancipation, however, is a myth, since by itself the movement of the proletariat, communism, can not blow up capital. As internal contradiction communisation is only a negation, and therefore it can only achieve de-subjectification and de-objectification of the capital relation. It must be complemented with the production of new relations between people. If communisation is to be emancipated from the dialectics of capital, an active and awaken participation is needed to break out of the class struggle from the capital relation. It can only happen when people try to dismount their part of total labour, which participate to the blocking of the accumulation of abstract labour.

We now see that communisation has two modes of appearance, two faces. On the one hand we have *communisation as internal movement in the class struggle*, and on the other *the external dimension of communisation*. These two moments are intertwined and often simultaneous, thus they do not imply any temporal difference. It has not to be that movement is happening before constitution, they are rather simultaneous processes. What is important to stress is that they are *not* deduced from each other. Since movement and dimension are produced by different forms of practice. However, the internal movement can be developed and advanced if the external expression of communisation is given, just like formal domination precedes real domination. The external dimension of communisation, thus, is determined by class struggle, i.e. communisation as internal movement. The internal movement is the negation, hence the movement of the proletariat within but against capital (de-objectification and de-subjectification), while the external dimension is the result of a purely constitutive practice. The latter must be given by the former having

⁵³ See Roth, *Die “andere” Arbeiterbewegung*.

produced a will by people to leave the old world. This will, or rather desire, that constitute the dimensional character of communisation, grows “spontaneously” and “unconsciously”, and it happens exclusively simultaneously with the destructive practices. Once again, it is not as such that first the proletariat destroys capitalism and then builds communism, in reality the two forms of communisation are exclusively simultaneous, which makes it difficult to separate them. The unconscious constitution of non-capitalist outsides has hitherto meant that the dimensional existence of communisation has been destroyed by internal limits, or the capital relation has succeeded in enclosing its outsides. Thomas Edward Lawrence, known as Lawrence of Arabia, knows how easy it is to be deprived of the power to change ones life:

We were fond together, because of the sweep of the open places, the taste of the wide winds, the sunlight, and the hopes in which we worked. The morning freshness of the world-to-be intoxicated us. We were wrought up with ideas inexpressible and vaporous, but to be fought for. We lived many lives in those whirling campaigns, never sparing ourselves; yet when we achieved and the new world dawned, the old men came out again and took our victory to re-make in the likeness of the former world they knew. Youth could win, but had not learned to keep: and was pitiably weak against age. We stammered that we had worked for a new heaven and a new earth, and they thanked us kindly and made their peace.⁵⁴

If communisation is to go from a negative critique of capital to a creative critique, i.e. the constitution of new non-mercantile relations, “outsides” of capital must be created in the struggle of the proletariat; Outsides that is external to the capital relation, communities not stamped by the capitalist contradictions. These outsides, examples of the external dimension of communisation, are created when people withdraw from their roles as labour-power. It means that the production of outsides is not made by the representative and substitutionist practice of revolutionaries or organisations, but must be the product of immediate and autonomous practice. The suicide of the working class must be its own work. It affects the contingent relation that capital is built upon, i.e. the necessity to conquer the future, since when more and more people are escaping capital, and when the internal contradictions result in immediate attacks against the State and the power of value, the future withdraw from capital. Insurguing people will be the building contractors of the future, that, with the words of Nietzsche’s, abandons history: “You have enough to plan and to invent when you imagine that future life for yourselves. But in considering history do not ask that she show you the ‘How?’ and the ‘With what?’”⁵⁵.

The internal and external modes of appearance of communisation may seem abstract, but when we consider that the internal communisation, the movement, is produced on capitalist terrain as a critique of this terrain, and that the external communisation, its dimension, is constituted by spheres outside of this terrain. We see the immediate use of the typology, because it gives us the opportunity to understand the different parts that constitute the communist potential of class struggle, which in its turn make us able to illustrate what processes that are simultaneous in a struggle (destruction, constitution, escape, attack, etc.). The internal movement against capital is the capital-negating tendencies in the actual class struggle, and the external dimension are the outsides where other relations than the capitalist relations are produced. The communes constituted when people escape the reactivity of class struggle. The spaces and outsides give people access to future communities and worlds. *Certain* tendencies in the soviets during the Russian revolution, and in the self-organisation of the workers in crisis Argentina in 2003 are examples of the dimensional appearance of communisation. The communes, thus, are outsides of capital. They are not to be mixed up with the seizing of the capitalist spaces of the workers, for example by self-management and socialisation. These outsides, however, are always surrounded and often happen during the blink of an eye, like when a worker steals time at work. The internal movement of communisation, thus, is war communism, the guerrilla warfare of the proletariat against capital. The external communisation, rather, is geo-politics, or maybe architecture; geo-politics that is not the expropriation of already existing spaces, but the production of new ones.

⁵⁴ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. s.22–23

⁵⁵ Nietzsche, *History and Life: An unfashionable reflection*.

Communism is a craft, a construction, not a society. Communism, thus, can not be given by the socialisation of the factories or the seizure of the State, but must be the de-territorialisation of the space of capitalism – but it is also therefore that communisation inevitably is started on capitalist terrain.

Lenin in Scandinavia: What must happen?

All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, to make it possible.⁵⁶ (T.E. Lawrence, *Seven pillars of wisdom*)

Similar to what Marx did with Hegel, Mario Tronti put the dialectics between labour and capital on its feet, when he wrote in his classic work *Lenin in England*:

We too have worked with a concept that puts capitalist development first, and workers second. This is a mistake. And now we have to turn the problem on its head, reverse the polarity, and start again from the beginning: and the beginning is the class struggle of the working class. At the level of socially developed capital, capitalist development becomes subordinated to working class struggles; it follows behind them, and they set the pace to which the political mechanisms of capital's own reproduction must be tuned.

The foremost theoretical achievement of Tronti is his recognition of the proletariat as the subject of capitalism, as it is its largest productive force and therefore its utmost guarantee – without proletariat, no capitalism. From this Tronti also drew the conclusion that it was the refusal of this productive force to be at the service of capital, which was the source of revolutionary potential. We can not leave this thesis behind, but we must evolve it. Communism can throw capital into crisis, but capital will overcome this crisis and evolves from it, unless communism flees capital through the leaking holes, created by class struggle in the capitalistic relationship. Tronti's correction of this dialectic was the starting point of his method to find what we call the internal appearance of communisation, i.e. the capital negating tendencies of class struggle: "Theoretical research and practical political work have to be dragged – violently if need be – into focusing on this question: not the development of capitalism, but the development of the revolution."

Lenin in England was not Tronti's political programme, but the name of his political project, which would lead to the development of *operaismo*.⁷³ The project was aimed at creating an adequate theory for understanding the relevance of the struggles of the working class, but at the same time Tronti realised that this class struggle will only work as an engine for capital if it is left on its own. Autonomous class struggle must evolve if a break with capital is to be accomplished. That is why Tronti – unlike German and Dutch left communism, which even earlier focused on the self-activity of the working class, but without turning the dialectic between labour and capital right – emphasised the importance of Lenin's insights on the necessity of a revolutionary party. He emphasised this in spite of the institutionalising power of the labour movement, which had the purpose of channelling and disarming proletarian class struggle. *Lenin in England* was therefore not only a project aiming at an alteration of the Marxist method, but it was also attempting to develop a modern party theory:

We know it. And Lenin knew it before us. And before Lenin, Marx also discovered, in his own experience, how the hardest point is the transition to organisation. The continuity of the struggle is a simple matter: the workers only need themselves, and the bosses facing them. But continuity of organisation is a rare and complex thing: no sooner is organisation institutionalized into a form, than it is immediately used by capitalism (or by the labour movement on behalf of capitalism). This explains the fact that workers will very fast drop forms of organisation that they have only just won. And in place of the bureaucratic void of the general political organisation, they substitute the ongoing struggle at factory level – a struggle which takes ever-new forms which only the intellectual creativity of

⁵⁶ Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. p.23

⁷³ See the *Kämpa tillsammans!* (Struggle together!) book *Vi vill ha allting!* (We Want Everything!) for an introduction to *operaismo* and autonomist marxism.

productive work can discover. Unless a directly *working class* political organisation can be generalised, the revolutionary process will not begin: workers know it, and this is why you will not find them in the chapels of the official parties singing hymns to the ‘democratic’ revolution. The reality of the working class is tied firmly to the name of Karl Marx, while the need of the working class for political organisation is tied equally firmly to the name of Lenin.

Today we have, thanks to the brilliance of Tronti, not only a well tested theoretical method that revolves around the opposition of the working class towards capital in order to understand the relation of capital and communism, but also a revolutionary party theory. But we also know that communism can not merely be a result of the internal movement of communisation. Communism can only appear as a community through a withdrawal, an abandonment of the relationship of capital. This means that if our observation of the two appearances of communisation is correct, then we have to go beyond Tronti’s alteration of the dialectics between labour and capital. Tronti realised that the proletariat was the subject of capital and therefore he also claimed that the proletariat was the subject of revolution. This polar premise led Tronti to a kind of parallelism in his theories – a parallelism that sees the class as both a subject for communism and as a function for capital, its subject. In this way we get two discourses, one that explains class action as labour power and one that explains class action as working class. Tronti meant that the contradiction between these two roles gave the working class a revolutionary potential. We agree, but only to a certain point. Because Tronti never formulated the abandonment, which the withdrawing character of communisation implies, Tronti only saw the internal movement of communisation and meant that this movement could break away from capitalism, thereby creating communism. Therefore communism remained determined by the conditions of the proletariat. In this way, the discussion of communism becomes merely a conversation on an appearance that is denied entrance. In the course of each and every insurrection, the working class repeats its attempts to become what it really is, the revolutionary productive force that is nothing, but must become everything. In each struggle we find the transformation of labour power into working class: the transformation of quantity into quality. Therefore, Tronti’s party theory brings with it the dualism, which we must abandon: the dichotomy between economic and political struggles. This dualism claims that a revolutionary party is needed, a revolutionary subject, which intervenes with revolutionary objectivity, class struggle, in order to develop revolution and not capitalism. But the production of subjectivity and objectivity within capitalism is *a priori* capitalist. An objective situation, which a subject can use in a revolutionary manner, can never exist. This is true since subjectivity and objectivity are capitalist “forms of organisation” during real subsumption. The revolt of today must be given by the historic possibilities of de-subjectification and de-objectification that are produced in class struggle. It is this project we call *Lenin in Scandinavia*.

Tronti’s project was not a rhetorical proposition or an attempt to inspire his own ranks, but an attempt to change Marxist theory and to find an understanding for the political organisation of the working class. We want to do exactly what Tronti did – revolutionise the understanding of class struggle, the revolutionary movement and “Marxist” method. Tronti had “orthodox Marxism” as his starting point, which is the Marxism that put capital ahead of labour. That was what he wanted to change and maybe that is why he could not come further – it ended up with only a correction. Today we must begin at operaismo and its correction of “orthodox Marxism”, but what we need to do is not to change the starting point. We still see labour as the starting point of the relationship of capital. However, this is not a blessing for us, but that which has forced a resolution with Marx’s mythology of the proletariat.

Earlier we have stated that the communist movement is not identical to class struggle, but that it is a tendency of this struggle. This tendency, internal communisation, are the practices which directly and without mediation turns against exploitation, that is value accumulation. Communisation does not pass through the reroute of politics, unions or distribution. This does not mean that union activists or political militants are unable to perform communising actions, for example wildcat strikes that avoid the mediation of unions. This avoidance of mediations not only makes communist practices immediate in character, but they also work “vertically” or even “abstract”, because the communist potential of the attack is the degree to which it is able to attack the relationship of value. Communist practice can therefore not be defined by organisation, but by its ability to strike at the heart of the beast – value. The communist movement is therefore a communism of attack, war communism, while the dimensional appearance of communisation, in

contrast, is a communism of withdrawal. We now see that both forms of communisation are dependent on the existence of the relationship of capital. They are factual and finite tendencies that arise through the working class' *autonomous* resistance to exploitation. Internal and external communisation are not superhistoric phenomena, they can only be understood in connection with value: the internal movement is the proletarian attack *on* value and the dimensional appearance of communisation is the proletarian escape *from* value. Both forms of communisation, therefore, have causal relationships with capital; war communism happens *because of* capital, while geopolitics happens *in spite of* capital. Our typology is therefore not an attempt to attack what is called the deterministic features of Marxism. On the contrary, we are here on the side of orthodoxy, since we try to show the radical function of determinism. To us, determinism does not mean necessity in effect, but only necessity in cause. That means that each action is determined, needed and caused. This does not mean the disappearance of freedom, but on the contrary the caused relationship is the premise of freedom, since we define freedom as a break with the "foundation" which predestines certain behaviours. That is why subjects are caused figurations, but since practices are the foundation which causes subjectivities the foundation is altered in accordance with the change of the subject's practice. It is not the subject whom performs practices, but practices that create subjects. We can try to shed a light on this from the performativity theory of Judith Butler. To Butler gender (that is sex roles) is not primarily a social construction, but rather a form of show. Gender is mobilised through acting. Sex roles are acted and the roles reproduced by people returning to their parts in the theatre which is reality.

Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions- and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them; the construction 'compels' our belief in its necessity and naturalness.⁷⁴

However, Butler's thesis is not to be interpreted as if the theatre hides a real subjectivity which is beyond spectacle, instead she tries to show how identities are purely discursive phenomena which are mobilised through the constant repetition of the shows, but the identity is never completely internalised, since the repetition is constituted by finite practices always forced to repeat. Subjectivity is thus not an essential feature which an individual embodies, but subjectivity is given through different types of manners and games. This game is a game with real and brutal rules; because those who break the rules of the game are punished in reality. If you stop playing the role of an honest citizen and start committing crimes you might end up in jail. If you break with the sex roles of society, not only do you risk expulsion, but even death. Thus the discourses are not in any way fictive, but very concrete. Butler is not trying to show that everything is really fiction, but only that the "foundation" of a society, in her case "male" and "female" are fabrications. The foundation is itself a product, constituted by different forms of practices:

The abiding gendered self will then be shown to be structured by repeated acts that seek to approximate the ideal of a substantial ground of identity, but which, in their occasional discontinuity, reveal the temporal and contingent groundlessness of this "ground".⁷⁵

When practices are changed, thus also the subjects who produce subjects are changed. For instance, if capital means capital in motion, that is self-expanding value in the form of money which is invested to generate more money, then capital needs certain subjectivities, for example wage labourers and capitalists accompanied by certain "props" like banks, money and production systems. At the same time capital causes these subjectivities and these props, which at the same time is the foundation of capital. Therefore it is a constant dialectic between "foundation" and "practices", between needed conditions and causing actions. The practices create the foundation, but the foundation needs the practices and determines their shape. Communism must be understood, therefore, as the attack on and escape from the practices which fabricates, and are fabricated by, the dispositions which cause capitalism. Because, in the same way as we grasp communism as a pattern of events, as a verb, as communisation, capitalism is a practice, or rather a series of actions which predestines capitalism, by individuating subjects into capitalist

⁷⁴ Butler, p. 178

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 179

individuals, among other things. Capitalism means, for example, that classes and other material variables as markets, bank systems, States and the likes exist and if these variables are disturbed, the “foundations” of the real abstraction that is called capital are paralysed.

The *insurrectional* anarchists are right, therefore, when they define what we call communisation as attack, because communisation takes on a character of attack when it strikes capital accumulation and the relationship of value.⁷⁶ This is not only seen in the informal class organisation in workplaces, which we described vividly in *riff-raff* #3–4, but also in riots and looting in the sphere of circulation. Both class struggle in the labour process and the struggles in the sphere of circulation work as negations. These negations are, as we have already noticed, in themselves inadequate to produce communism. This is because they are either channelled and lead to reforms or are superseded. Of course we are not opponents of reforms and changes within capitalism. We are not the Jesuites of revolution that forsake our immediate needs for the best of the future. It is not neglect – but struggle – which is needed in order to produce a revolution. But what we focus on here is only this: a negation can not constitute communism. To Mario Tronti and the entire theory production following him, communism was possible through this negation. They were satisfied with describing the internal movement inside capital, communism, which tends to abandon capital. But this movement is merely a negation, a critique of capital. Class struggle is the self-criticism of capital, the process which launches capital into crises. These crises regenerate capital. The only chance to stop this is if the second appearance of communisation is constituted with such force that capital loses its grip on the future. Communism, the potential death of capital, can not come from the dialectic between labour and capital, but can merely be produced if the blockage of capital by class struggle is simultaneous with a constitutive process which replaces the relationships of capital with new relationships. Our revolution must be double.

Lenin in Scandinavia is thus an attempt to develop a revolutionary theory which examines both appearances of communisation, with the aid of our typology of communisation. We can simply not abandon the investigation of the negation just because only the withdrawing tendencies can constitute communism as community. We do not throw earlier theories and notions overboard. We merely expand our view by trying to emphasise how the working class both acts destructively and constitutional. This form of constitution is not a form of self-valorisation, however. It is not an affirmation of what already is, but of what is to come. It is a production of demands which brings a new future, another world. With the second tendency of communisation we want to try to describe the revolutionary coming-to-be, thinking becoming in its coming-to-be. The two appearances of communisation can therefore not be seen as two abstract and theoretical notions, only useful in discussion regarding practice. They must really become part of a factual practice and this by working as *guidelines* in our own intervention in the capitalist terrain. In this manner *Lenin in Scandinavia* is an organisational project, or if you like – a *party theory* for the 21st century.

Many entirely abandoned all party discussions due to operaismo and the French communists, which focused on working class autonomy. Council communism was resurrected and an anti-Leninist left was formed, where maybe “anti-Leninism” was mostly a fear to substitute class action with own action. In reality it often led to the substitution of own action with non-action of a theoretical model (the working class). The most interesting theoretical contributions from this time, both from Italian autonomist Marxism and French ultra-left, thus tried to overcome the party theories of council communism and Leninism. In 1962 Jacques Camatte’s *Origin and Function of the Party Form* was published and seven years later Gilles Dauvé published his article *Leninism and the Ultra-Left*. What both articles aimed at was supersession of the dichotomy between spontaneism and voluntarism/activism and producing a party theory, which did not abandon Marx’s insistence that the liberation of the working class must be the action of itself. Dauvé examined how capitalism itself produces a revolutionary party, which is a revolutionary movement:

Capitalist society itself produces a communist party, which is nothing more than the organization of the *objective* movement (this implies that Kautsky’s and Lenin’s conception of a “socialist consciousness” which must be “brought” to the workers is meaningless) that pushes society toward communism. Lenin saw a reformist proletariat and said that something had to be done (“socialist consciousness” had to be introduced) in order to turn it into a revolutionary proletariat. Thus Lenin showed that he totally misunderstood class struggle. In a non-revolutionary period the proletariat cannot change capitalist

⁷⁶ To get the insurrectionalists’ view on attack, see “Some Notes on Insurrectionary Anarchism” in *Killing King Abacus* #2. <http://www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/kka/NTINSUR.html>

production relations. It therefore tries to change capitalist distribution relations through its demand for higher wages.⁷⁷

The revolutionary party was to Gilles Dauvé simply the objective, revolutionary movement. The party was not a formal product, but a material one. However, Dauvé claimed that the intervention of revolutionaries could contribute to the formation of this party. Communists were not supposed to wait for D day, when the communist party was materialised.

Communists represent and defend the general interests of the movement. In all situations, they do not hesitate to express the whole meaning of what is going on, and to make practical proposals. If the expression is right and the proposal appropriate, they are parts of the struggle of the proletariat and contribute to build the “party” of the communist revolution.⁷⁸

It is interesting to notice that Gilles Dauvé regards the task of communists as attempting to abridge the separation between revolutionaries and the proletariat. Revolutionaries are to give practical suggestions on the development of class struggle. What Dauvé proposes is therefore the perspective developed by Camatte (which he later abandoned), based on Amadeo Bordiga’s insistence that neither revolutions nor parties are created, but lead. In contrast to the party theory of Dauvé, Jacques Camatte focused on the difference between formal parties and the historical party in *Origin and Function of the Party Form*. Young Camatte wrote this text to defend the originality of Bordiga and the Italian communist left. It was an attempt to work against the neo-Leninist currents within the International Communist Party, to which both Bordiga and Camatte belonged at the time. The party theory of both Bordiga and Camatte was based on their opinion that Marx’s theory was a theory on the proletariat. Marx’s critique of political economy was thus a theoretical expression of really existing communism, proletarian class struggle. The historical party was, to Camatte, a notion synonymous to the communist programme formulated by Marx in his works – implicitly or explicitly. This meant that when factual and formal parties, organising the proletariat, deviated from this programme, they were no longer a manifestation of the historical party, i.e. the communist programme. The historical party was not a product of revolutionaries’ activism, according to Camatte, but primarily a product of material circumstances, that is a party which materialised through the formal organisation of the proletariat: That is why Bordiga claimed that, in contra-revolutionary times, times when the historical party could not materialise, revolutionaries should not primarily conduct in activism, but work to develop and defend the communist programme, for instance by developing Marx’s critique of political economy. Because, according to Camatte and Bordiga, the critique of political economy was nothing else but the theoretical expression of communism, which is the party of communism: the working class movement inside but against capital.

Marx and Engels did not content themselves with an ‘intuition’, they showed the reality of the programme. Every time that the question of revolutionary struggle was not central to their activity they returned to their ‘theoretical studies’ i.e. to specify the programme.⁷⁹

The two theories of Dauvé and Camatte have the merit, just like the class composition discussions of autonomist Marxism that they are trying to describe the material and objective ground of movements. Both depict in a refined manner how the theoretical analysis of capital can be intimately intertwined with the practical attempts to demolish capital. Understanding and creation does not become the same, but they are woven together and an important insight is formed, which we can not be without: *without revolutionary theory, no revolutionary movement*. In spite of this, we must abandon both of them. Camatte, who himself abandoned his theory in 1969, meant that the thesis on one historical party (singular) and several formal parties (plural) rendered a superhistoric abstraction on the proletariat.

The factual proletariat, the contemporary, is a finite and situated object, it exists in time and space, and it is this contemporary proletariat that fights inside but against capital, and that historically has organised in different forms of formal and material parties (workers’ councils in

⁷⁷ Dauvé, *Eclipse and Re-emergence of the communist movement*, p. 65

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75

⁷⁹ Camatte, *Origin and Function of the Party Form*, p. 10

Germany, IWW in USA etc.). Thus the historical party can be identical with the situation where the working class constitutes itself as a material party, but in that case the historical party is not the same historical party, because the actually existing proletariat is not the same proletariat. It is not the theoretical model “proletariat” which fights inside but against capitalism, but specific subjects that, determined by their disposition as proletarians, carry on class struggle. So even if the factual struggles of the proletariat were reformist or within capitalism, this theory claimed that the proletariat was still revolutionary.⁸⁰ It was this way Bordiga and Camatte could construct a history of the historical party, in the succession of Marx. The theory of the proletariat was, in this way, turned into a myth of the proletariat, the factual working class was substituted with an abstraction that never existed in reality.⁸¹ The problem with Camatte’s and Bordiga’s party theory was thus that they misinterpreted the actual proletariat for the virtual, the theoretical proletariat which Marx worked with as a figuration, as a theoretical model, in some of his works, for example *Capital* and *Grundrisse*. (However, in other works Marx used the actually existing proletariat, for example in *The Civil War in France*, but in these works Marx rarely formulates the devastating, communist critique of capital which he does in his more purely theoretical works.) Camatte later formulated harsh criticism of his own theory of the distinction between formal parties and the historical party:

Here is the weakness: there is a true proletariat, but it does not have the consciousness, thus it is not the true one. But here comes an explanation based on various theorizations of the integration of the proletariat into bourgeois society. Always the crisis destroys it and, then, there would no longer be an obstacle to the proletariat-consciousness meeting.⁸²

Camatte’s party theory thus reproduced the flaws in Tronti’s theory on the working class. The critique we have aimed at Camatte’s notion of the proletariat is valid as a critique of Gilles Dauvé’s party theory as well. Dauvé too deduces the revolutionary potential of the proletariat from the abstraction which Marx labored with in his theoretical examinations and not from the factual and heroically struggling working classes which exist in reality. But even if we read the party theories of Camatte and Dauvé “nicely” by instead describing the historical/material party as identical with the class struggle of the actual working class it is clear that these theories, just as Tronti’s party theory, merely focus on the first appearance of communisation – that is the capital negating tendencies in class struggle and since class struggle gets in focus, communism becomes a question which is given through this class struggle. Therefore the material party and the historical party are adequate theoretical notions if we limit them to function as illustrations of capital negating tendencies in the class struggle of the proletariat. If one looks at this in a shallow manner, it may seem as if these notions can assist us in the understanding of how and why there is continuity between different forms of organisation in the working class, but in that case we forget that the material party is a product of an actual proletariat. That is why it is not totally misleading to claim that the material party lacks history. The struggles fought by Russian proletarians in 1905 and 1917 were not the same struggles as those fought by their Spanish class comrades in 1936. This does not mean that there are no analogies between these two historical situations, but the interesting part is that these similarities are greatest when it comes to the critique of capitalist abstractions: value, labour etc. This depicts that the history of revolutionary activity is not a tale of what already is, but instead a history of coming-to-be, about human attempts to abandon the present. It is the history of defying the historical situation, which paradoxically provokes different attempts at accomplishing change. That is why it is correct to say that the first appearance of communisation, the material party, lacks real history, because its history is merely local and negative, it is the odd history of finite empirical entities’ attacks on real abstractions. The external dimension of communisation, however, has a more traditional history since it is an invariable. This is because the external dimension is untimely. And untimeliness has indeed a very rich history. They are the tales of all the practical attempts to supercede the present. Therefore, neither Dauvé nor Camatte, or even the autonomist current, can give us a theory and history of

⁸⁰ That the working class’ struggles have been revolutionary is true to such extent as the revolutionary part of these struggles of the empirical proletariat is this concrete entity’s attack on the capitalist abstractions which constitutes capital as capital.

⁸¹ Instead they should have examined the finite, specific, proletariat’s relation to the superhistoric abstractions which are very concrete during the entire history of capitalism: for example the commodity form, value, abstract labour etc.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 28

what could be called *the party of abandonment* – that is the movement which does not merely throw capital into crisis, but also has a potential to destroy capital since its activity is aimed beyond the concrete abstractions which constitute capital.

Furthermore these party theories are also inadequate when it comes to the understanding of proletarian class struggle. First of all because they only state what *is*, the present and the past. They only focus on the fact that a party (i.e. a revolutionary movement) has become objective, that it has materialised. But the theory does not help us investigate what this party can *become*. These party theories never ask the question: can this class struggle free us from class struggle? Second all of these party theories lead to the focus on how revolutionaries can create a meeting between the working class and revolutionary theory. But today we claim that such a meeting is pointless. What we have to do is to develop our own activity and that is why we use theory. According to Dauvé the separation of revolutionaries and workers can only be abridged by an open insurrection. We know today that such a separation is fictive. The only organisation which can be organised in a revolutionary manner are one's own attacks on value. Revolutionaries do not need to intervene towards the working class, but merely the relationship of capital, communists should not *suggest* actions, but *conduct* subversive practice. This is what we call *bolshevism without party*; conscious intervention to strengthen the capital-negating tendencies of class struggle.

Then, how is this done in practice? One way is using the contribution of practical reflexivity using militant inquiries.⁸³ Militant inquiries are tools that work inductively and intervening. Inductively since they help us describe the state of class struggle and intervening since they can contribute to the development of these struggles. A more systematised expression of militant inquiries in Sweden today is *Motarbetaren* ['the counter-worker'] – an information leaflet circulating in workplaces in different parts of Sweden. In *Motarbetaren* tactics outside of unions are described and spread, which workers use to ease up life in the workplace. The information leaflet makes people meet, if only indirectly. Those spreading and reading *Motarbetaren*, taking its message seriously, are already today trying to produce new relations built on other forces and values than representative values. *Motarbetaren* is therefore a modest attempt at spreading self-activity, since production of self-active people today is a necessary part of a future, successful revolution:

When revolution is unleashed there will be no need to justify what is happening; rather it will be a question of being powerful enough to avoid abuses and excesses. And this is possible only if individual men and women, before the revolutionary explosion, begin to be autonomous: since they don't need any leaders, they can gain mastery over their own revolt.⁸⁴

Bolshevism without party is therefore the name of the strategy we propose in class struggle, it is the direct participation in the *movement against value*, but this rebelliousness must be combined with the *escape from value*. This escape from the dialectics of capital is produced by actual peoples' opposition to capital, not by itself. Class struggle is constituted through the relationship of capital. But what we call *the party of abandonment*, that is the escape from the dialectics of capital, can never arise spontaneously, even if this party have been produced unconsciously many times. *The party of abandonment* is characterised by its practice, not by its form. *The party of abandonment* is therefore the practices which constitutes outsides, relations which escape the capitalistic ones. What we call "Lenin in Scandinavia" is therefore also a project to develop a history, theory and practice around *the party of abandonment*, which since the birth of capitalism has tried to leave labour, capital and all other capitalistic abstractions in history's dustbin.⁸⁵ The two appearances of communisation thus demands two forms of activity from revolutionaries: both the immediate and direct commitment in class struggle and also the attempts to produce terrain and spaces already today (if only in theory), which can bring us away from the dialectics of capital. We sincerely hope that our readers will aid us in this hard but exciting work ahead of us.

⁸³ Most of *riff-raff* #3–4 concerned militant inquiries. Furthermore, two militant inquiries were published. One analyses the class composition in a warehouse and the other describes class struggle in a hamburger restaurant.

⁸⁴ Camatte, *This World We Must Leave*, p. 123

⁸⁵ We think an article like Gilles Dauvé's and Karl Nestic's "To Work or Not to Work? Is that the Question?" (published in *riff-raff* #5), is a good example of a starting point for a historical inquiry of this kind.