

Anti-Proletarian Historicity: The Implications of False Subjects

"We awoke from the dogmatic slumber of historicity"

- Mario Tronti¹

“The trade union politics of the working class are bourgeois working class politics”

- V.I. Lenin²

Introduction

There is no joy in servitude, nor honor in dispossession which perpetuates such forms. The latter is manifested in a miserable obedience to what exists, fetishized in the abstract through an affirmation of exchange, a seemingly boundless cycle which breeds resentment even by the bourgeois victors and reactionaries who have shaped the day. But this form is also glorious, the procuring of our each and every needs, which have inflated throughout history and now balloon in the current epoch. Now more than ever we want to maintain wage-labor and the contradictions that feed us, then for our children to labor and take care of us in our old age. Labor is what defines us and our movement, so why shouldn't it reign? The proletariat too has shaped this day, after all.

Before we contract back to our own obedient monotony, let us consider the strange nature of positive historical formulas. It is embedded into the fabric of our movement to study the

¹ Tronti, M. (2009). *Our Operaismo*. libcom.org. <https://libcom.org/article/our-operaismo-mario-tronti>

² Lenin, V. I. (1902). *What is to Be Done?*. Marxists Internet Archive. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/iii.htm>

dispossession of the proletariat, and subsequently we have placed it as the primary revolutionary subject of a capitalist history. Simultaneously, much of our historical tradition-capitalizing on this subjectivity-has resolutely disengaged from any serious notion of proletarian capability beyond abstraction: wrestled with is the misery of poverty, varying decadent methods of coercion and control, not just for the use of capitalists but of the revolutionary proletarian nuclei.

Communists impose mass and tailist political policy, reify the worker as worker, lifting it to a pedestal of divine nature and moral fortitude. Subsequent solutions coughed up to address the crisis of the proletariat take their immaterial nature for granted, installing countless historical coups to address nothing at all but crises of production. What is oftentimes missed is the proletariat's own capacity within capitalist society to reproduce capitalist relations, its consciousness as a human embodiment of the division of labor and production, and its very negating capacities which have made the source of our hopes in the first place. We have lost sight of the latter for a sociological analysis of the concrete class itself: how the proletariat currently lives, supplanting how it could abolish itself.

This work studies various trends of historical Marxism and communist ideology, primarily Bolshevism and the enhancements made on behalf of Mao, as well as the likes of Bordiga, Tronti, Marighella and varying noteworthy urban guerrillas of the 70s, detailing the wide terrain of communism which hangs around the implication of a false subject. That is, that *the proletariat is not a mere subject of capital's dominion, but a driving force of history alongside the bourgeoisie*: following miscalculations on this front incorrectly estimates the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat at large, not due to a lack of contradiction, *but precisely because there is one*. Through statesmanship and moral agency, activism and technocracy, we are interested in some of the most positivist Marxist philosophies in precisely charting how far

removed-and how disengaged-from communist measures our heritage seems to remain, *how in denial these philosophies are of their own workerist affirmations*. Each a band-aid to a contradiction untreated by their imposition, each succumbing to the lie it feeds itself. This is not a historicity for sport: ranging degrees of separation dictate just how the proletariat is grasped and tortured by its own existence, and the existence of the forms which govern and therefore empower it.

Furthermore, we engage in this historicity to affirm what has become clear in our historical tradition: that much of the communist movement has long been in denial of its own *anti-popular* and *anti-proletarian* character, and its only task an offensive, the scope of which it has struggled to embrace: the very negation of the proletariat, to negate capitalist relations beyond capitalist identities, to dare to posit which that exists may die, not that it is grand.

This is to say the proletariat has a dual character, with the entrenched capacity to both maintain and end capitalism. As a *social class*, most outwardly in the most advanced economies-situated between Welfare and War States-the proletariat seems to be the vanguard of capital. It embraces imperialist war, declining rates of profit, wage labor, and the alienating individualism offered up in exchange for continued existence. At the same time it remains a social category whose continued survival maintains within *itself* the possibility for communism, and thus we still have academics and campus radicals carrying forward the banner of the proletariat in the present age.

Contrary to some of our predecessors, we put forward that it is neither a positive, class-affirming workerism, nor a positive contradiction of communist technocracy which can guide, inspire, or manage the life-time of the proletarian masses. The negation of the class

corresponds with its creation; history did not deliberate the proletarianization of the serf and slave, it immediately took from them their landedness and criminalized their vagrancy. Communisation will follow suit in the same rapid breath, if we can possibly help it.

A Balance Sheet for the Working Class:

The New Left's Foray Into Anti-Proletarian Identity

Marcuse considered that in the very essence of the working class we find a deposit of conservatism, which festers in spite of the grave challenges the class faces. An advanced capitalist economy could not level class, but it could level the investment of "the public" by identifying the lower classes' interest in maintaining bourgeois regimes, while dragging them away from disaffection through mechanized and white collar dispossession.

"If the worker and his boss enjoy the same television program and visit the same resort places, if the typist is as attractively made up as the daughter of her employer, if the Negro owns a Cadillac, if they all read the same newspaper, then this assimilation indicates not the disappearance of classes, but the extent to which the needs and satisfactions that serve the preservation of the Establishment are shared by the underlying population...The proletarian of the previous stages of capitalism was indeed the beast of burden, by the labor of his body procuring the necessities and luxuries of life while living in filth and poverty. Thus he was the living denial of his society. In contrast, the organized worker in the advanced areas of the technological society lives this denial less conspicuously and, like the other human objects of the social division of labor, he is being incorporated into the technological community of the administered population.

*Moreover, in the most successful areas of automation, some sort of technological community seems to integrate the human atoms at work. The machine seems to instill some drugging rhythm in the operators."*³

In the "post-War era", Marcuse—like each of our model thinkers and statesmen we study later—is simply making an observation of his time. The traditional working class in advanced industrial societies had both been bought off and specifically “bourgeoisified” to such an invasive degree it no longer resembled an altogether revolutionary subject, in that historical understanding of the proletariat in Marx's time. Furthermore the surplus value extracted from them became further abstract in relation to increasing technologization. Workers worked, but increasingly saw less of their boss, less of their connection to the creation of a good, and less of the jungle of production swallowing them whole and spitting out a society of individuals with little social agency. Today, American workers are both the “bourgeoisified” and the “semi-proletarized:” productivity increases and there is less work to be had per worker (in terms of both time spent and physical output).⁴ Surplus value for many is growingly incalculable and most importantly increasingly immaterial, while growing numbers are simply contracted out on irregular times instead of bought for years. What little remains of the Welfare State meets us the rest of the way, as we enjoy some spoils of war yet afflicted by the constant shrapnel society imposed on our collective conscience.

³ Marcuse, H. (1964). One Dimensional Man. [https://files.libcom.org/files/Marcuse,%20H%20-%20One-Dimensional%20Man,%202nd%20edn.%20\(Routledge,%202002\).pdf](https://files.libcom.org/files/Marcuse,%20H%20-%20One-Dimensional%20Man,%202nd%20edn.%20(Routledge,%202002).pdf)

⁴ Giattino, C., & Ortiz-Ospina, E. (2020, December 16). *Are We Working More Than Ever?*. Our World in Data. <https://ourworldindata.org/working-more-than-ever>

Marcuse's thesis on revolutionary struggles (in)famously put forth a new vanguard with the likes of students and those increasingly alienated from production—including reserves of labor and unproductive labor—taking a central claim. Our writing is not an affirmation of such or an adoption of the New Left's more controversial programs. Rather, it is the acknowledgement that Marcuse was roughly half-right, and alongside his colleagues elaborated a criticism which the "Old Left" had never truly been able to swallow: The workers' movement in immediacy was not a movement against or for communism, but for work and *therefore* against communism as a relation. In great Empires such as ours, this contradiction only heightens, and as such walking through a traditional working class neighborhood today we only see the aftermath of the Hard Hat Riot. Those that expend their bodies the most seem to have no issue raising a blue-lined American flag.

Truthfully, there is no truth! The working class, as a *social class itself*, has no ahistorical character, and just as it does not act outside of history it cannot act outside of capitalism. It has been able to drive the hilt of the sword into the bourgeoisie time and time again, but as long as it dreams in the laboring day, it cannot turn the blade around. As a social organization, it can only operate as an identity within the confines of what rules exist, which have not only been personified by the bourgeoisie but codified and written into law by the proletariat. Sheer historical happenstance, again and again.

The coming revolution will not be a workers utopia then, but a denial of such.

The State, the Statesmen, the Workers, & the Gunmen

"In ordinary circumstances, contradictions among the people are not antagonistic."

- Mao Zedong⁵

What this section argues is that the reification of the worker—and the glorification of their contents—places communism as a historical impossibility, no matter the measure by which it is done: statism, trade unionism, guerrilla warfare. They all bleed elements of positivism, affirmation, but exist primarily because they implicitly concede that “the worker” is not enough to see the course. The worker must be made more productive to observe their own misery, to have their slavery aggravated in order for them to acquire the consciousness to rebel against it. Such dangerous lengths we communists will take to avoid the disavowal of dogma.

The most jarring occurrences of said “revolutionary affirmation” and positivist frameworks are almost always found in those which uphold the most distinct institutions of class society: the State, the Parliament, the Nation. The Soviet project did not introduce these variables to the international movement for communism, but it is one of the most obvious and influential examples. Its greatest sin was said to be no conscious decision of its own, but the conditions in which it was birthed: to militarize labor or to die trying was only a falsity of choice. A new philosophical birthmark then formed on communist praxis, which directly implicated proletarian self-action. Not only could workers not be trusted to take the revolution to its conclusion, they needed to be maimed and managed with State force to ensure a collective compulsion to labor. For the Soviets, this meant the crises of 1919, 1921, and 1922 could be resolved by simply reintegrating industrial management found under the tsar, while embarking on the crushing of independent organized labor. The totality of this period is bloody and lengthy, as Jonathan Aves surmised in *Workers Against Lenin: Labour Protest And the Bolshevik Dictatorship*:

⁵ Tse-Tung, M. (1957). *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*.
https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5_58.htm

“Communist Party labour policies after 1918 put the possibility of some form of conflict between the regime and workers on the agenda. They reintroduced the conventional styles of Russian management that workers had rebelled against in 1917 and invented new ones, of a moral or comradely type, such as subbotniki and labour disciplinary courts, and of a military type, such as Committees for Labour Conscription, to raise productivity. Both led to a greater use of coercion. These policies not only contradicted the aspirations that the bolsheviks had encouraged in 1917... Plans were completely unrealistic and the suppression of the unofficial economy meant that the target of the unrest that now broke out throughout the industrial workforce was the bolshevik dictatorship... Workers readily supported calls for greater civil and democratic rights, and sometimes resolutions that implied the end of Communist Party rule.”⁶

Thus the Bolsheviks by the early 1920s had become—by necessity as guarantors of the State—engrossed in managing labor productivity and labor discipline. While Lenin, Trotsky, and other prominent leaders often swapped positions on policy regarding this issue, the Party was widely in agreement on the valorization of the working class. They often delineated any opposition to this as a historical impossibility only able to be diluted down to reactionary views amongst the proletariat and peasantry.⁷ This historical resting point remains relevant in the construction of every Socialist State afterwards.

Conclusions from the Soviet project reveal that like the workers themselves, *workerism has a dual character*: as it puts the workers’ interests in primacy, it *by necessity* must reinforce all social vacuums which define this wage-labor. The State is therefore contracted out by the

⁶ Aves, J. (2021). *Workers Against Lenin: Labour Protest and the Bolshevik Dictatorship*. Bloomsbury Academic.

⁷ *Ibid.* Chapter 3.

classes as a default: it needs to be, in order to provide the conditions on which the worker sets course, fights, and wins the battles necessary to continue working. Thus, the Soviet case is not merely an example of a deformed movement strung up by bureaucrats, not a 20th century soap opera, but a Workers' State wrecked precisely by what it set out to be. The fact workers revolted consistently against such a regime illustrates the proletariat at its most negative, its most revolutionary consciousness.

In Mao one can find much of the recourse for an intellectual child of Bolshevik ideas: a Workers' and/or People's State crowned by a class-affirming outlook on the basis of stageist philosophy, and the prolonging of capitalist time to develop revolutionary forces. As the natural extension of Stalinist philosophy, we note specifically the emphasis on national democratic unity, the subsequent class collaborationism, and the role of State mediation in stifling conflicts and enforcing popular culture. Embellishing on workerist ideas and in the prolonging of time, we find what can only be an aggravation of wage labor and the worker's identity under the subjugation of the Nation-State.

The equation we arrive at is most accurately identified through the injection of "national-democratic unity" to the theses offered up by the Bolsheviks, giving way to the offspring of workerism: abstract "peopleism," mass politics containing everyone and everything. By unity, we refer to the smoothing over of contradictions and/or calculated deficiencies through political debate and policy, to pose the image of a homogenous society in which national character dominates in emphasis. This is often imposed at a point where communists and intellectuals apply a pragmatist's ambitions to the proletariat, especially when it is able to define it as weak and incapable of disposing of capital on its own, thus requiring the collaboration of as many beings and believers as possible. It is ironic that this position requires the outstanding

insistence of moral fortitude, of which the proletariat is likened as a benevolent, almost mythical force with good in its heart. For most Socialists throughout history, as much as today, this scandal is no less appealing, as it marks an intermediary point where we are all somehow quietly tamed and therefore susceptible to the happy project where "Workers Deserve More!" in Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, where we aren't yet dead enough to go all-in on a revolutionary node. The reformists in any society are always quick to impose breaks in history, in the name of historicity itself.⁸

"The problem of the proper relation of accumulation to consumption within each of the two sectors of the socialist economy -- the one where the means of production are owned by the whole people and the other where the means of production are owned by the collective -- and the problem of the proper relation of accumulation to consumption between the two sectors themselves are complicated problems for which it is not easy to work out a perfectly rational solution all at once... Socialist relations of production have been established and are in correspondence with the growth of the productive forces, but these relations are still far from perfect, and this imperfection stands in contradiction to the growth of the productive forces... Apart from correspondence as well as contradiction between the relations of production and the growth: of the productive forces, there is correspondence as well as contradiction between the superstructure and the economic base... The existence of bourgeois ideology, a certain bureaucratic style of work in our state organs and defects in some of the links in our state institutions are in contradiction with the socialist economic base... Government personnel are not sufficiently experienced and have to undertake further study and investigation of specific policies. In

⁸ DSA Program. (n.d.). <https://program.dsausa.org/>

*other words, time is needed for our socialist system to become established and consolidated, for the masses to become accustomed to the new system, and for government personnel to learn and acquire experience."*⁹

The contradiction thus becomes not of class and the forms which govern, but of managing the class to drive internal contradictions moot. Yet as we understand history, even the most lavish embellishments of unity-especially the great Fascist and Imperial projects-ultimately cannot hedge a bet with success, they cannot murder their way to the end of history without ripping their own hearts out. Projects fall, empires collapse, and States are crushed, in proximity to the class contradictions which led to their rise. Mao recognizes this, but in recognizing the anxieties of the proletariat and poor peasants can only offer up more abstractions in the name of democratic pacification. *Thus, nothing can be done but embellish the systemization of enslaving, desiring to make the slaves aware of their slavery, to release them at some further point of history when it is convenient and their sentience has been established.* On contradiction and struggle, Mao further verifies his opposition to class struggle as a fetish relying on "common sense" and "reasoning with the people".

On class contradiction:

"It should be admitted that among the masses some are prone to pay attention to immediate, partial and personal interests and do not understand, or do not sufficiently understand, long-range, national and collective interests. Because of lack of political and social experience, quite a number of young people cannot readily see the contrast between the old China and the new... or the long years of hard work needed before a fine

⁹ *Ibid.*

socialist society can be established. That is why we must constantly carry on lively and effective political education among the masses and should always tell them the truth about the difficulties that crop up and discuss with them how to surmount these difficulties." ¹⁰

On resolution of class struggle:

"We do not approve of disturbances, because contradictions among the people can be resolved through the method of "unity -- criticism -- unity", while disturbances are bound to cause some losses and are not conducive to the advance of socialism. We believe that the masses of the people support socialism, conscientiously observe discipline and are reasonable, and will certainly not take part in disturbances without cause." ¹¹

Naturally as he comes to the contradiction of the State with a passage of blanket education, he envisions the working masses in China by degree to be fixed according to an idealist, *popular* program. The largest error he makes is the supposition of Reason: the workers are no longer a force of negation, but simply a noble savage with a cornucopia of admirable values and reasonable conscience. They are loyal subjects waiting, wanting to be governed and fed into the productive process. Moreover, the weakness of the entire people's dictatorship rests upon the construction of national morality where all social decisions-both of workers' obedience and the State's governance-are made on the behalf of this charitable goodness. Irrespective of this, any great statesman should be able to assess what motivates a riot one day or an uprising the next is not a common deficiency of reason or logic, but precisely the demolition of existing reason and logic systems. The breaking down of society rests upon the failure to meet the needs

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

of the people; A poor peasant riots and seizes goods not because his reason has suddenly vanished, but because he has experienced the negation of it.

Mao's understanding that classes are shortsighted is no doubt correct, but it is the rock on which the Chinese State was formed. To then posit that this can be circumvented by feeding democratic ideals through a tube merely exposes the creaking fragility of such ideology.

We can only come to the conclusion another statesman has decided his revolutionary bloc is not enough. In Mao is indeed a positive reflection of the proletariat as a humble laboring force, a modernizing Messiah whose sacrifices will bring communism into the world. In that it is a class-affirming attempt at the negation of existing social relations, the modern Chinese State's project is concluded by these accounts. Carrying Mao's sentiment of bureaucratic education, the only tangible string we can expect is the lineage of the bourgeoisie's statesmen offering to train up the Chinese apparatchiks themselves, to fully optimize and modernize the fledgling Socialist society. The Workers' State is not only the materializing and deposit of class antagonisms, a tool to be equipped by the ruling class with force. *It is precisely a program of workerist pacification at the moment the proletariat is ungovernable, of tailing the lowest stratum of society while mutilating the advanced workers, totalizing the mode of production within one country, in both the name and denial of the proletariat.*

Bordiga understood many of the faults in these totalizing approaches *precisely* because he recognized the plausible faults of workerism: the workers themselves, irrespective of whether society had reached an "advanced stage," maintained a conservative streak when addressed as a hand of capital. While it is often understood that the Second International were shameless

bureaucrats bureaucratizing their bureaus, the relationship of this precocious entitlement to workerism meets the knife's edge that is cheap mass politics.

*"The degeneration of the social-democratic parties of the Second International and the fact that they apparently became less revolutionary than the unorganised masses, are due to the fact that they gradually lost their specific party character precisely through workerist and "labourist" practices. That is, they no longer acted as the vanguard preceding the class but as its mechanical expression in an electoral and corporative system, where equal importance and influence is given to the strata that are the least conscious and the most dependent on egotistical claims of the proletarian class itself."*¹²

Essentially, Bordiga argued workerism directly leads to a class-affirming expression most socially reproducible, by courting the least conscious of the proletarians and providing piecemeal strategies only such a cohort would find acceptable. His distinction between working masses and party, then, was to be expected:

"When referring to the modern proletarian class, we must conceive of this process not in relationship to a trade category but to the class as a whole. It can then be realised how a more precise consciousness of the identity of interests gradually makes its appearance; this consciousness, however, results from such a complexity of experiences and ideas, that it can be found only in limited groups composed of elements selected from every category. Indeed only an advanced minority can have the clear vision of a collective action which is directed towards general ends that concern the whole class and which has at its core

¹² Bordiga, A. (1921). Party and Class.
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/bordiga/works/1921/party-class.htm>

the project of changing the whole social regime. Those groups, those minorities, are nothing other than the party." ¹³

For Bordiga, it was not a matter of intellectuals simply telling the proletariat to be class conscious, reasoning and debating with them to maintain a toiler's life. Rather, it was the entire plane of struggle on which the proletariat battled that needed to be decided by the party, for what ends, and at what cost. He, similar to Mao, admits that "the individuals in that great remaining mass have neither class consciousness nor class will yet and live for their own selfish ends, or for their trade, their village, their nation, then it will be realised that in order to secure the action of the class as a whole in the historical movement, it is necessary to have an organ which inspires, unites and heads it – in short which officers it." ¹⁴ The defining thread between the two is the proletariat's—or working masses'—inability to act as a revolutionary subject without an advanced organization and subsequent dictatorship of the class (an implication that class society simply rearranges itself). For Mao, the ends of course justify the means, so any measured count of class consciousness and cheer can be diluted with national unity through democratic means. It also meant the total imposition of the nation above class as a means to override the proletariat's relative inabilities. Bordiga firmly instructs that the class presupposes the party, yet that "the party actually is the nucleus without which there would be no reason to consider the whole remaining mass as a mobilisation of forces". ¹⁵ Thus the proletariat is only to be seen as a revolutionary subject as long as its advanced detachments can possess its body.

Our departure from Bordiga rests on his defining of the party in relation to the proletariat's consciousness. We would argue that such a complexity of experience and ideas is

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

only an aspect in the composition of social life. By this we understand that class consciousness is not an attraction or science to be understood by people, but how people are immediately thrust into the world, both negative *and* positive, how they pull from the world and rejoin it obediently. As all social conditions are entrenched under capital, class consciousness is also exhibited by those who lash out in reactionary ways, exhibit supposed anti-social/individualist behavior, and so on. It *is* class conscious for a laboring class to maintain its existence under capital, to recognize its masters and its fate as slave, as long as it cannot feasibly imagine or live any alternatives. It is class conscious to maintain what one derives as the source of all social life (capital). Every living decision, from opting for unionization at a warehouse, eating meat instead of beans, to choosing a religion, is emblematic of what is both present in capital and therefore what is in the class, and how it relates to capital. These decisions all demonstrate an attempt to meet human needs, both necessary and artificially raised ones. If Bordiga was to be correct, then the vast majority of humanity throughout all this time was simply idling by, sufficiently droning on in sleep until the avant-garde forms. No, the masses had concrete needs to live, needs which were ultimately in many cases fulfilled by toil and wage slavery, then recreated in abstraction, before being chased after again. The game of the productive forces has long provided the bounty of a good life, and the billions of laborers who have lived in modern, imperialist Empires or whom have risen into relative affluence of need were simply not tricked to keep the gears turning. Unconscious or conscious, they have chosen to maintain the machinery in which our nightmares reside.

We do not pick and choose what we want of the proletariat: the stupor that blinds its vision is no fog at all, but the real needs of the proletariat at any given time, which can attempt to be reconciled through a variety of the epoch's more illicit concoctions. Thus, the proletariat as a

social class has dual character, with the capacity to both create and destroy the coming insurrection. Its real potential remains in its violent declassing, and the dissolution of its relation and consciousness.

It would be easy to mock Bordiga's remarks on consciousness with a gesture towards the workerists of today, and those of yesterday who took Italy by storm. Yet precisely the issue is the emptiness of Italian workerism itself, whether relying on anti-popular or popular detachments to make popular decisions, it is the consciousness of the social class that wills it *toward* work, toward capitalist reproduction and administration. The following statement from Tronti is the prototype from which the workerist movement both innovates upon Leninist Statism and flattens itself:

“First the workers, then capital”; that is, it is workers’ struggles that drive the course of capitalist development.” (Tronti, 2009)

The workers' movement has indeed shifted the trajectory of capitalism and its personification by the bosses. Tronti is right, and this is exactly the problem. The worker-capitalist dichotomy is one of love. This must be our primary contradiction with workerism as positivism: the worker can eventually dictate its own construction and development, and will happily do so. The worker-through its sale of labor power-congeals and solidifies the relationship of capital: capital as relation is nothing without the worker's labor power. And of course the means of production likewise develop the worker as a historical category, and dispossession inflicts a paralyzing war of attrition, injecting it with equal parts painkillers and venom. First removing them from the soil, where such holy emancipation

bestowed the proletariat as commodity to complete capital. Then from the confines of vagabond lifestyles through legislation and State violence.

“The proletariat created by the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers and by the forcible expropriation of the people from the soil, this “free” proletariat could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufactures as fast as it was thrown upon the world. On the other hand, these men, suddenly dragged from their wonted mode of life, could not as suddenly adapt themselves to the discipline of their new condition. They were turned en masse into beggars, robbers, vagabonds, partly from inclination, in most cases from stress of circumstances...In Italy, where capitalistic production developed earliest, the dissolution of serfdom also took place earlier than elsewhere. The serf was emancipated in that country before he had acquired any prescriptive right to the soil. His emancipation at once transformed him into a free proletarian, who, moreover, found his master ready waiting for him in the towns, for the most part handed down as legacies from the Roman time.”¹⁶

If Tronti is correct, we could consider capitalist development through many different reflections. Humane and bright, accommodating just as much as it stamps out the masses in blood. And it is so. Thus the bourgeois and the worker would run parallel forever, perhaps having been brought into this world from God or a magic spell. Genesis is not as important as Revelation. Workers as a *historical category* are then simply a mere productive force to factor into ongoing equations. Even further, it must be said that struggle identified by affirmation is a relational framing of dissent within the current social relationship of capital, and that it does not

¹⁶ Marx, K. (1867). Economic Manuscripts: Capital Volume I.
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch26.htm>
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch28.htm>

necessarily imply the latter's dissolution as much as its mastery of totalizing social life. Thus in our working class neighborhood, the flag will never be displayed at half-mast.

Today with artificial intelligence we see, just as industrialization in the past, capital's incessant need to monitor, then modify its children. The reserve army of labor skyrockets as a quarter of the working population has become "functionally underemployed" (The condition of remaining unemployed and looking for a job, but involuntarily working part-time, as well as those earning poverty-level wages, at less than \$26,000 annually before taxes.)¹⁷ More workers occupy one or frivolous several service sector jobs with no real companion but the self. All of these are new dictations by capital, which is simply the terms and agreements of previous workers' struggles and the rejection of manual work. This influences the means by which the masses struggle, but simply as an input into the new Great Society birthed from the last. There is now little break or dictation from workers as long as they are workers, for the term "workers' movement" itself implies the movement for better work. This simply refines the class for further production, even as the most happily protagonized it could be. As it is aptly put, "Nothing can make it an attractive prospect to wipe the asses of pensioners for minimum wage".¹⁸ Workerism is a sweet image in a dead society.

If workerism is to be fought, this opens up a horizon where we must in immediacy to act in negation of such, upon the multiplication of communist measures. There is no going back to

¹⁷ Ludwig Institute for Shared Economic Prosperity. True Rate of Unemployment. (2026). <https://www.lisep.org/tru>

¹⁸ The Invisible Committee. (2005). *The Coming Insurrection*. libcom.org. <https://libcom.org/article/coming-insurrection-invisible-committee>

the drawing board after the strike, or bringing the strike to its completion. We chase the end of endings.

Finally then, we can consider the efforts of the urban guerrilla as a potential grounds for such communist measures, a militant unit preceding the measure, for the immediate purpose of bringing about the measure. In absence of “propagandizing” the masses and stereotypical Party work, we take seriously the question and implications of the guerilla to communise. Irrespective of this, the historical track record is not superb primarily because of the imposition of class in immediacy, often for the sake of the class itself. After the New Left of the 60s and amidst the stratification of the early 70s New Communist Movement, many serious revolutionaries began to consider the means by which their student movement failed to produce a longer window of opportunity. Primarily beginning in the early 70s, we begin to see the normalization and adaptation of the student movement's ideals into the Greater Society-the freedom of rock and roll was finally for all-with a tiny detachment prolonging such a death through guerrilla aims. While righteous in spirit, these urban guerrillas still operated under the cage-like class affirmations of their predecessors, employing the same facetious dialectic as the Bolsheviks and Mao. How to mold or appraise the proletariat as a mere subject of the capitalist relation-rather than an active part in it-is the question, not the negative social movement as a whole. The initial logic below by the West German Red Army Faction remains on this terrain:

"Unlike in Italy and France, the spark of the student movement here failed to ignite the prairie fire of class struggle, and it was at that point that it collapsed. It could enumerate

the aims and contents of the anti-imperialist struggle, but it could not be the revolutionary subject, could not offer the necessary organizational structure".¹⁹

In this sequence the guerrillas admit the failure of the student movement, but in utero provide an explanation of the happenings of the greater proletariat. It is not just that RAF's schematic deliberately exercises the obvious shortcomings of the student movement, but just as it could not be the revolutionary subject, it understands the West German proletariat itself could not relate to the aims and contents of the anti-imperialist struggle. They expand on this further:

"Under the existing conditions in the Federal Republic and West Berlin, we doubt it will be possible to create a strategy to unify the working class or to create an organization that could simultaneously express and initiate the necessary unifying process. We doubt that the unity of the socialist intelligentsia and the proletariat can be "molded out of" the political programs or the declarations coming from the proletarian organizations...We believe that without a revolutionary initiative, without the practical revolutionary intervention of the vanguard, the socialist workers and intellectuals, and without concrete anti-imperialist struggle, there will be no unifying process. Unity can only be created through the common struggle of the conscious section of the working class and the intellectuals, one which they do not stage-manage, but which they model, or else it will not happen at all."²⁰

The primary aspect to consider is that at a time much similar to ours, they too are able to grasp the limits of grand transactions of consciousness. Whereas Bolshevism buried the workers

¹⁹ Red Army Faction. (1971). *The Urban Guerilla Concept*. German Guerilla. <https://germanguerilla.com/1971/04/01/the-urban-guerilla-concept/>

²⁰ *Ibid.*

alive, training them to accept wage-labor as a necessity or to face capital punishment. Whereas Mao argued workers needed to be debated and reasoned with on a scale of tedium so national it would no longer render an antagonistic class but a people's state. Whereas Bordiga offered that as an advancement of the class, the party intellectuals were the sole means by which the proletariat itself could have revolutionary aspirations and thus that party education and training was critical to building a movement. Through their experience and historical site, RAF is able to identify the student movement's downwardly mobile anxieties do not seem to reflect the angst of the workers, and no amount of words will overcome that. If there was such a threshold, enough transactions of speech with a communist would have already made the whole world red. No, the RAF was correct: negative class consciousness and human desperation did not seem eager to be diffused at levels required for a revolutionary epoch.

Unfortunately for the RAF itself, despite making extensive ground on the lack of radical transcription they fall apart on another basis, simply reimagining ways to transcribe communist idealism via activism, in this case armed resistance. The advancements made give way to the question of practice, and for RAF the primary distinction with which they diverge from their predecessors ("practical revolutionary intervention of the vanguard") rests on the means by which transcriptions occur. Ruthlessly critiquing-and for good measure, it can be said-academics for perpetuating academia and trivial nonsense at the expense of a serious revolutionary moment, RAF argues that such debates cannot lead to anything decisive, that ideas alone are not enough. As for practice and the material manifestation of ideas, they are unable to consider practice as the extensive of ideals, instead hiding behind prose which suggests practice is a physical, earthly truth altogether different.

*"The Red Army Faction asserts the primacy of practice. Whether it is right to organize armed resistance now, depends on whether it is possible, and whether it is possible can only be determined in practice."*²¹

Bordiga famously speaks at length on activist-adventurism, so while much can be said a simple referral may very well suffice. We are not concerned with that much now, but rather the site of intervention RAF defines as historically necessary. Their primacy of practice rests on the notion that both the proletariat and the intelligentsia is asleep, that acts of violence may surely awaken them. But our departure from them is the same as Bordiga: as a social class, is it not possible the West German workers were already expressing an aspect of their class as they continued to toil? While the early Post-War period was the new nation-state's most impressive, the FRG still posted unemployment levels of less than 1% by 1970, and yet only 2% by 1980 despite the international crisis.²² Social benefits also infamously ballooned during this period.²³ All this further provokes the dubious claim that in every worker a dormant hope lies, waiting to be ignited from a deep, dark sleep. Regardless of polemic or car bomb, the case is the same as China in the 50s or Russia in the 20s: The group both places workers as righteous beyond maintaining capital, while acknowledging such obvious shortcomings that forms of coercion, class-collaborationism, and adventurism must prevail as a means to communism. Assuredly this does little but reintegrate the manager within society and the worker beneath him, but equal in a transaction with him.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Schindler, M. (2013). What Does the Crisis Tell Us About the German Labor Market? <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/display/book/9781616354244/ch004.xml>

²³ Süß, W. (n.d.). From Reform to Crisis. The West German Welfare State During the Great Coalition and the Social-Liberal Era. <https://zzf-potsdam.de/en/research/projects/from-reform-to-crisis>

Relevant to the developments of urban guerrillas beyond the RAF are the seeds for this thinking: derived from Carlos Marighella's Manual, which rests on the assumption that the working masses are inherently good, and just cause-communism-would naturally gravitate to them.

*"The urban guerrilla has an advantage over the conventional military or the police. It is that, while the military and the police act on behalf of the enemy, whom the people hate, urban guerrilla defends a just cause, which is the people's cause. The urban guerrilla's weapons are inferior to the enemy's, but from the moral point of view, the urban guerrilla has an undeniable superiority. This moral superiority is what sustains the urban guerrilla. Thanks to it, the urban guerrilla can accomplish his principle duty, which is to attack and survive."*²⁴

Ironically this logic immediately departs from the goals of the urban warfare-transcribing revolutionary ideals onto the masses-by setting in the sights of "attacking and survival". Ultimately the class struggle is abandoned as Marighella presents the first criteria of practice and what this attacking and survival entails.

"The urban guerrilla must know how to live among the people, and he must be careful not to appear strange and different from ordinary city life. He should not wear clothes that are different from those that other people wear. Elaborate and high fashion clothing for men or women may often be a handicap if the urban guerrilla's mission takes him into working class neighborhoods, or sections where such dress is uncommon... But the fundamental characteristic of the urban guerrilla is that he is a man who fights with

²⁴ Marighella, C. (1969). Mini Manual of the Urban Guerrilla.
<https://files.libcom.org/files/MarighellaManual.pdf>

weapons; given these circumstances, there is very little likelihood that he will be able to follow his normal profession for long without being identified by the police. The role of expropriation thus looms as clear as high noon. It is impossible for the urban guerrilla to exist and survive without fighting to expropriate.”²⁵

Thus urban guerilla warfare, for all of its gestures toward proletarian morality, cannot help but remain privy to the creation of the militant class above the proletariat, one that creates no value, but expropriates it. Heroism and righteousness aside is the question of the proletariat and the revolutionary project at hand. If one cannot simply debate and befuddle the working masses out of inquiry and into the mechanics of working life (Mao), nor raise their consciousness through leadership, education, and commandeering (Bordiga), nor expect to break out of capitalist cycles through the immediacy of capitalist categories and identity (Tronti), there remains but one historical claim: the militancy of dual inspiration and abstraction. One can admire the hero, but must not fall privy to the latter abstraction of the class struggle itself. It is no coincidence that in their very infancy, the first pitfall of both the great statesmen and guerilla icons of history involves an abstraction of class itself, an excuse reintegrating and intensifying class for benevolent ends. What this tells us is not that either/or is simply a poor plan, but a moralist project detained by its own adherence to capitalist norms. Communism is not a battle of borders and fronts but a means of life, subjugated by borders and fronts. The moment one dictates struggle on the basis of either becomes what Bordiga himself warned about: Mistaking the party from its position within the class, not outside of it, dictating the formations of the proletarians in another Great War.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

The bourgeoisie revolted to carry their propertied existence into the next century; we could only be so lucky to do away with what binds our class now. One could consider us post-proletarian, but we consider "anti-proletarian" more fitting, as we are the negation of all the pleasant capitalist identities. There was never a time at their heart an ardent communist was not anti-proletarian; the lucidity of life stole from them such and manufactured a pragmatist's politic. Marxist Communists throughout the last 2 centuries simultaneously place the proletariat as the moving force of history, while showing doubt in their ability to do as such. This is because the Marxist pole, all praise to its allure, has mostly found allegiance to a popular identity. Just as the great social democrats and radical workerists stood on top of a mountain, singing with a shrill voice how great the worker was, the working masses adopted a feedback loop, embellishing on the slogans of workers' power, control, "deserving-ness(...?)", etc. What has been crushed and stomped on through these slogans is not an authentic, invariant slogan, but the natural anti-identification billions of toilers throughout history have pondered and subscribed to. That one is more than a worker, one is Catholic in all worldly affairs of a new social accord.

Impending Negations

The search for a revolutionary project can be found in the negation of the most antagonistic and alienated masses of society; technologization further pushes to the margins millions of workers whose very own productivity has made them obsolete. This does not necessarily include the working class in its entirety—an engineer at a weapons contractor, for example, is explicitly tied to the proliferation of further weapons—but in the growing ranks of millions of semi-proletarians and downwardly mobile workers at large, especially in declining suburbs, towns, and city outskirts. Here we can see the personification of not just anti-bourgeois

but anti-proletarian character, which must be met with a series of communist measures to multiply toward communism itself.

But the solution is not workerism or positivism: The democratic-socialists, Statesmen, and union organizers make for foul company as they flock to this populist draw. We are not subscribing to tailism, but simply anti-popularity. The classes of this world will chastise our movement, conscript from their ranks to stifle it, but that is to be expected in a relation that is truly free, truly democratic, and promotes rates of objectivity so unheard of in any other era. There is no cakewalk waiting to happen, no magic waiting behind one's eyes. Furthermore, the ahistorical imposition of a large working class force waiting for consciousness to strike is exposed through the theory and policy of communism itself. We are all conscious in casting our bets, and the working class has made it abundantly clear its categorization necessitates capital and political-economy.

We must go to the proletarians who are so thoroughly declassed that their social composition reflects a fragment of the iterated proletarian condition. Trends in employment reinforce this view, the new avant-garde swelling out of the ground below just as the liberated serfs and peasants overran the towns as criminals. Workers whose slavery has been negotiated down to less strife, less aches and pains, yet erupting into all the timezones of life. Workers who have buried the 8 hour day, haunted by the commodity-form as they face the dread of doing nothing, yet for little money or pleasure.

We are running out of productive work for the proletariat, for it has lingered too long on the expanse of earth-shattering productivity. This coincides with the second-coming of Social Democracy and the re-emergence of the Communist movement.

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