

A Seasonal Message From The Other Dupont

Le Garcon Dupont

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This article is a short personal account by one of the members of Monsieur Dupont.

Our call to do nothing “was, and remains, a provocation”

From the Glossary section of the book, *Nihilist Communism*:

“Do Nothing: we came up with this during the activism debate at the beginning of our MD venture. It was, and remains, a provocation, we think it is important to say whatever it is possible to say within the pro-revolutionary milieu both to bring new terms of reference in and to illuminate the existing and usually unquestioned conventions. ‘Do nothing’ is an immediate reflection of ‘do something’ and its moral apparatus, which is how we characterised the activist scene. ‘Do something’ is an agitated reflex to stimuli, a theorisation of turning yourself into a bridge [we do not miss the irony and humour inherent in the choosing of our collective name, Dupont, here], there is a perceived urgency and a presupposition that the doer is doing something important but ‘do something’ also suggests ‘do anything’, a desperate injunction to press every button to save the world. We disliked the connotations of ‘do something’, and were aware that all the other stuff wasn’t getting talked about in the rush to make protest appear on the streets. ‘Do nothing’ means thinking about the reproduction of authoritarian and capitalist forms within this political milieu, it also ties in with our notion of revolutionary subjectivity and what is appropriate for the pro-revolutionary role.”

However, the concept of doing nothing is more than merely a provocation. It is a tool and a strategy which we will defend to the bitter end.

It creates a perspective from which it is possible to evaluate actual involvements and proposals; and this perspective can be reduced down to basic questions, such as: “If we did nothing, would it make any difference?”

‘Doing nothing’ is what the vast majority of the world’s population does. This is the basic proletarian stance and attitude. If most people do nothing then it is important to attempt to understand why this is the case, to see things from their point of view, and to understand why they may be right.

It is ‘the struggle’ and not the activist which decides what should be done. Thus, it is perfectly legitimate to go home and wait until the struggle reaches such an intensity that it drags pro-revolutionaries into it (against their will) — because that is the only point at which the pro-revolutionary can make a decisive contribution.

Nihilism

Our use of the word nihilism is specific to our project of finding new ways to engage both with events and the pro-revolutionary milieu. From the Glossary section of the book, *Nihilist Communism*:

“Nihilism: literally a belief in nothing. In basic terms it means being dispassionate about the pro-revolutionary movement and not getting sucked into other people’s pipe-dreams. What is in question here is not the material world itself nor indeed sensuous existence; it is not at all about indifference. We use nihilism as a description of a proper attitude or stance taken up in relation to the world. What we reject as inappropriate to the present moment is belief, which is a mental attitude that places an affinity for images above life experience. [...] In place of belief we assert the primacy of the senses arranged about a critical attitude. Therefore, while we are strategic communists with reference to the

future and its commencement in the breakdown of capitalism, we are, for the present, tactical nihilists. This gives us the freedom not to be misled by all the solutions to social conflict that are currently generated by the capitalist base [the false oppositions to the established order that are repeatedly taken from bourgeois ideology and promoted by those who claim to be anti-capitalist]. Nihilism is an armour that protects us from credulity and the complicity of the bad faith pro-revolutionary movement.”

Further Clarifications

Since the 1980's I have argued that pro-revolutionaries should forsake their 'middle class' jobs, or their welfare bohemianism, and spend time in factory conditions. We have done this ourselves, both before our 'politicisation', and, consciously, on purpose, after it. We do not say that you need to spend forever in this situation, but get enough experience to enable you to understand what is involved (of course, it does not necessarily follow that one will develop ones views during such an experience).

I have produced articles with such titles as, 'Get a job!' (meaning: get an unskilled job in a labour intensive workplace and industry, in which one is supervised rather than supervising, managed rather than managing). We think that the pro-revolutionary milieu should get off their backsides and do something positive and logical. Our view is that learning is best done through the process of doing, and observing honestly; and then reflecting intelligently on the things you do and what those around you are doing. Instead of always jumping in to put your own point of view across make sure you listen and observe carefully before making a comment or asking a question. We always have more to learn, and it often comes from the most unlikely of places.

We have also argued that pro-revolutionaries should train themselves to write and speak so that they are really able to make contributions to discussion, debate, meetings, etc. Neither of us is an extrovert, but we have forced ourselves to stand up and be counted (luckily, when I stood up, no one noticed...).

Later in this article I come to a point where I quote someone describing me as a "wrist-slittingly awful donothingist". Ha! I haven't done much in my time, but I have done a little, which may, or may not, be worth considering before such intemperate assertions are made. I include this list not to show some of the things I have done, but to show how it is possible for those who describe themselves as libertarian, or anarchist, or communist (I mean those people who often say they want everyone to think for themselves), to mislead others with their forthright and unsubstantiated views on the intentions and activities of others.

I would also like to mention that it seems clear that everything in the milieu is about 'what we can do now'. This may seem like a reasonable strategy but, in effect, it also means that there is no learning from other people's efforts. Thus it is that individual experiences and observations are generally discounted in the name of some sort of perceived 'going forward'. Ever forward. The milieu is going forward? Do you think it is? What evidence do you have?

These are some of the groups I have been involved in (by which I mean being a proper member) and publications I have produced: Reading (it's a town/city, not a verb) Anarchists; Anarchist Communist Federation (great fun, lovely people, fond memories); Tottenham Claimant's Union (I learned a lot from my brief time here working with the wonderful Dave Morris); Thames Valley Class Struggle Anarchists; Communication Worker's Group (best job I ever had was being a

postman!); 'Anti Exchange and Mart'; 'Anarchist Communism or Death!'; 'Proletarian Gob' (the six issues of this were liberally illustrated with the exceptional graphic talents of Paul Petard); Subversion; 'What's Wrong With John Redwood?'; 'Spoofversion'; Anarchist Federation (less fun than the first time, but a great experience); 'Corpse of the Millennium'; Monsieur Dupont (words cannot express the admiration I have for the work of the other Monsieur Dupont); 'Nihilist Communism'; some of my writing has also been put onto Libcom.org. Of course, around all the items on the list above, I went on demo's, wrote leaflets, wrote for the group papers, sold papers at demo's, in the streets and at shopping centres ("Get 'em while they're 'ot, they're lovely!"), went to millions of meetings, got chased by police on horses. Little, insignificant to anyone but me, cherished and humorous memories are: disguising myself as a council office worker (clipboard and tie, to gain access to a council building before a Tottenham Claimants Union demo stormed the building – in the end the 'storming', and my presence as an infiltrator, wasn't necessary as they failed to lock the doors in time) before we ran around in the building and were eventually ejected by the police; opened up a couple of council houses (social housing), that had been sealed with huge steel doors, in the middle of the night in North London; stayed up all night producing the ACF paper Liberation, before taking it across London to the famous printers at Freedom. Smoked vast quantities of cigarettes. (If anyone reading this recognises themselves in the above then realise that I hold you in the highest esteem, really I mean love, for the brief but good times we had together, despite the fact that we can no longer work together.) I spent several years in the Post Office, delivering mail. Apart from being part of the 'rank-and-file' grouping, the CWG – which was so interesting because of the distilling of, and dissonance between the differing political perspectives; and also because of the differences that caused the dissolution of the group, which taught me, at least, so much – I was involved in a couple of strikes, and regularly resigned and rejoined the semi-official union committee at my workplace. Since the initial publication of Nihilist Communism I have been 'retired' from politics, although recently I have resumed my interest somewhat, and I am currently involved with 'Indigenous' issues in the area I live in. But this list and this kind of listing is pathetic; others would be able to trump me in descriptions of their heroic endeavours at every turn! I feel forced to write it because I seem to be being attacked on the grounds that I have done nothing at all, and advocate doing nothing at all. Everything I have written has been based on genuine experiences, and observations that have challenged my own ideas. A fabrication of who I am, who we are, is being created. This is being done by those who are in disagreement with us and who do not want to tackle the fundamental issues that have been raised. But for what purpose is this imaginary construct being built? Is it to discredit us in the eyes of others so that no one will bother reading our work? This is probably happening because those who would post such 'comments' are unable to properly engage with what we have written over the years: they have not got to the point, as I would see it, where they can understand what we are saying.

More important than any of this meagre activity was the fact that I/we began to ask simple and obvious questions, such as: if the approach of communism relies on the accumulation of numbers of people who want communism to happen, and if we have been hard at work trying to accumulate these numbers over the years, why is it that the numbers are not increasing? Our answer to this problem was that we could either continue to spin our wheels in the same rut, or we could try other tactics, and other ways of thinking. We also looked at the way changes happen in the world. We asked if it was people who made the world or whether it was the world that made us. Is the world a cup made by us or is the world a cup which contains us? We looked at

events in history and we realised that the closest humanity has ever come to removing capitalism was during and immediately after World War One, and the reason for this was because in the enormous economic breakdown that occurred in various countries a huge number of people briefly saw the opportunity to live differently. These people were not politicians, they were not anarchists or communists, they were 'ordinary' people (of course, there is no such thing as an ordinary person, we are all screwed up, or victims of some kind of ideology to an extent; these people were religious, left wing, right wing, and, most importantly, proletarian) who experienced the turning upside down of their world. They did not have a plan. Those who did have a plan were the politicians, the anarchists, the communists, the leftists – and it was these people who were then briefly thrust into leadership roles. Unfortunately, in every situation, there were not enough nay-sayers, not enough people who had a clear idea about how so very many of these new leaders would sell-out, or would side with capitalism in the end. There were not enough 'kronstadters'. Too many pro-revolutionaries were simply confused by events and offered nothing useful, or worse, went with the leader-led flow that was busy recuperating capitalism. Of course, it is true to say that WW1 did not provide enough of an economic breakdown for capitalism to be removed, but still, it is interesting to see how events unfolded to the extent that they did.

From Nihilist Communism:

"Many pro-revolutionaries argue that there can be no revolutionary attempt without the significant input of a revolutionary consciousness, but we are not so sure. In fact we are so unsure that we cannot grasp precisely what they mean by the terms 'revolutionary consciousness' and 'working class consciousness'. We are also unsure whether these pro-revolutionaries really have a grip on the concepts they perceive to be indispensable. We try to keep an open mind about the events that will make up the revolution but we fail to see a revolutionary role for any form of political consciousness, revolutionary or otherwise. Quite the contrary, when we consider past revolutionary attempts and pro-revolutionary organisation and their political interventions we see in the function of consciousness only an inhibiting influence.

In our opinion a great number of pro-revolutionaries hold onto the Consciousness Model as part of the habit of being a pro-revolutionary. It is woven into their being; they must sell their paper, perform actions that are designed to inspire others, and defend the integrity of their group. However, we also think that most of them (and this includes most of those who do not belong to an official group, and who don't produce a regular paper) do not have a properly formed conception of what working class consciousness really is, or a working knowledge of how it is to be transmitted to those who do not have it."

We almost like this recent comment from Gilles Dauve and Karl Nesic:

"Communist revolution will never be just the product of free will. Capitalism is the mutual involvement of capital and labour, and the stages and crises of that involvement give the general framework of the proletarian movement. Not everything is possible at any given time. Revolution is neither the fruit of long-cultivated undermining action, nor of will power. It was off the agenda in 1852, in 1872, or in 1945 (although some mistook the end of World War II for the dawning of a new Red October). Critical moments give opportunities: it depends on the proletarians, it depends on us to exploit these capabilities. Nothing guarantees the coming of a communist revolution, nor its success if it comes. In chess, the theory is the reality: not in history. Class struggle is not to be understood with the mind of the chemist analysing molecular reactions. Communism is not to be proved." (Troploin Newsletter – # 4 – April 2007)

But we do not think that it is really getting to the point, it is inscrutable. I cannot tell exactly what is meant here. On the one hand it talks about a 'proletarian movement' and on the other it says that 'revolution is neither the fruit of long-cultivated undermining action, nor of will power'. It isn't clear to me.

In Nihilist Communism we wrote of a brick wall that stands in front of all pro-revolutionaries, but most seem unaware of it:

"This brick wall is the fact that events will shape people's consciousness; events will make people act; consciousness is determined by the material structure of our lives; mass changes in consciousness come after changes in the material base of society. If communism ever appears it can only do so after the collapse of capitalism. Communism is not a movement, or a question of organisation; it is only a vague description of a possible way of life for humankind. Communism comes after revolution, and revolution will not be made by any of us. Our inevitable and necessary failure as pro-revolutionaries is written on this wall, just as is our failure, and our parents' failure to live fully as human beings. Against the missionary and dishonest optimism of pro-revolutionaries we posit a basic nihilism."

Does this mean that we advocate doing nothing? No. We like this, from the same piece as the quote above, again from Gilles Dauve and Karl Nesic:

"Communists get organised, that is, they organise themselves: they don't organise others. One of the worst illusions is the belief that all the conditions would be there for a revolution, all but one: organisation...or the information necessary for the proletarians to organise themselves."

We think that it is our role to continue to point out what the function of pro-revolutionaries should be; we think it would be useful if pro-revolutionaries asked the questions we have asked and then worked out new ways of engaging with each other and with the world around them. We think that if some theoretical nails were hammered into the politics of the pro-revolutionary milieu then that milieu might stop drifting constantly into support of supposed oppositions to capitalism that are fully contained in the ambit of capitalism, such as support (qualified or not) for 'anti-imperialist' movements and organisations. We would like to work with others on this project. Careful reading, and re-reading, of the work we have produced so far will give a good indication of where we stand. If you find that you are agreeing with us and are prepared to take on the kind of work that such understanding entails, then we encourage you to make contact.

Only this year, in regard to doing things and 'changing the world', Frere Dupont has written:

"The issue here is the location of relative potentials to change the world. Change itself, on the most basic level, is split into two parts: stopping what is going on now and creating something different. Whilst everyone in the world has a potential equal say in creating a new world, stopping the reproduction of the present social relation is in the hands of a relatively few. Of course, it does not follow that just because the creation of a new social relation will involve the conscious participation of billions of people that there must also be a conscious, subjective element involved in the destruction of capitalism, it could be that capitalism will be driven into the ground through attempts to save it. But if we continue to suppose that there will be a conscious active subjective role in the collapse of the capitalist social relation then the potential capacity to inflict decisive defeats against capital is not distributed equally."

There are a number of different ways of approaching this, the first would be just to look at the situation in the most capitalised sector of the world economy and identify that the number of workers who could really disrupt a highly developed national economy is relatively small and located in particular essential industries. Most of the rest of the proletariat in the developed economies would not be missed even if they went on strike for months.

If we approached the question on a global scale, we would see that there are more workers employed in vital industries (because automation tends to be at a lower level) but also that a relatively high number of 'our' economy's vital industries are located in the 3rd world. Taking these two facts together would suggest that if there were to be a conscious, mass-based, proletarian revolutionary subject that it is likely to originate amongst the recently proletarianised, living in recently urbanised areas, working in labour-intensive industries (at a relative low level of automation) located in low wage economies. Basically, on the traditional model, the revolution will begin in China and/or India.

(What would be interesting to think about is why this model might no longer work, e.g. if in the past, the revolution could not be realised in the west because of relative low level of development elsewhere in the world, could it be that a revolution in the east will not succeed because of the specific history of the West.)

I think you are asking, 'what does an individual do if they are far removed from the centres of production and yet wishes that the social relation would change?'

Although it is not much of an answer, I think it is better not to set up 'solidarity' groups as these tend to become quickly clogged by the vicarious conventions of third worldist ideologies. If one accepts the structural limits on the possibility of communication but nonetheless wishes to continue to transmit a message anyway, there remain a couple of (more or less marginal) options:

1. Take a job under factory conditions and attempt to live your values, celebrate your anti-work ethos, organise your fellow workers, communicate your message in that circumstance most hostile to it.

2. Aim to make contact with workers in essential industries:

- This may involve leafleting at factory gates.
- Attempting to make contact with targeted workers socially via shared interests.
- Pay someone to translate your works into Mandarin."

Of course, despite all the history of what we have said and done, we are portrayed as people who advocate sitting around twiddling our thumbs, or as 'Paul', on Anarchist Black Cat, writes:

"Teh internets is a boon to these people as now they don't even have to bother printing pamphlets or books, they can just spend their lives online spewing bile at the world and building their websites."

Apparently we don't bother printing pamphlets, books, magazines and such... what evidence could this assertion be based on? We have previously said that we do not like the Internet, that we prefer print, and proper correspondence. From 'The Wind-Down of the Clockwork Lips' (a pamphlet produced by the other Dupont in 2003):

"It is therefore unfortunate that since the dawn of the info-age, the ability to properly discuss has formally declined and this has dragged the quality of pro-rev consciousness with it. It is ironic – is it not? – that the most forward thinking fragments of society should become one of the first social categories to become enslaved by the technology of mere information. We suggest proper writing and less emailing."

I would strongly argue against spending any serious time participating in any kind of email/discussion forum argument. These forums often seem to be merely a sign of lives that could be better lived. I have looked through a couple of the discussion forums and, like the unpleasant anger that can be found in comments put under YouTube videos, they are liberally spiced with uninformed quips and slurs and macho assertiveness. There is a shocking glibness prevalent in these discussion forums. This is how many, and certainly the dominant voices, come across.

Do these people really want to present themselves to others in this way? Not everyone who contributes to these sites can be this bad, surely?

Discussions are often sidetracked into personal abuse and confrontational or little-gang-style humour. It may be that this is a feature of general human discourse, but the fact is that emailing and discussion forums exacerbate this human frailty. It also often seems that these discussion posters have nothing better to do than while away their time on these forums. As 'Jen' says in the UK comedy TV series, 'The IT Crowd', after she has joined a 'social networking' site and become obsessed with it: "I feel so social." ...

Discussion forums on the Internet are good representations of the laziness that has existed across the pro-revolutionary milieu for many years. There is too little thinking and too much asserting; there is too little intelligent challenging of positions and too much defensive belittling of others; too little effort and too much laziness. These forums become dominated by those who wish to dominate them, for whatever reason they wish to dominate. Discussion forums drain the energy and spirit from those who do want to achieve some development in their thinking. Maybe it is 'human nature' that causes these forums to become so draining; maybe it is the 'nature' of the Internet? I am not sure. I do know that politicians I associated with before the rise of the Internet would direct their sarcasm and supposed humour at others in the same milieu with the same enthusiasm as they seem to do now on the Internet. You've got to laugh, Monty Python said it well, I quote from memory: "Who do we hate more than the Romans? – The Judean Popular Front!"

The machinery of the computer and the Internet can be used not only for the passing on of simple information, it can become a tool to extend thinking and experiment with ideas through writing. If the computer and Internet is to be used like this then it is certainly worthwhile. It is then simply the modern equivalent of correspondence by letter, the writing of books and articles, and researching in a library.

Perhaps the good people who administer these sites should begin by closing down the discussion forums and only allow news and finished writing to appear on their sites. If people are forced to map out their ideas fully, in final draft form, then they are forced to think as clearly as possible. And if people are forced to reply to these articles in a full and final-draft way then the people who respond are also forced to think clearly and explain fully. It seems to be the tendency on these discussion forums for people to hide their lack of information, or lack of genuine analysis, behind clever one-liners. Clever one-liners also serve the purpose of keeping your voice in a prominent position without having to resort to thinking or an open minded, generous and honest approach to others. Yes, it might take a little more effort to extrapolate your thoughts properly, but, honestly, what else is it that you are doing that is so important that you have no time to thoroughly describe how you think, and why you perceive this as important to the world? For myself, this process has enabled me to continue to learn and continue to develop my ideas. The 'information age' in which we live provides too much irrelevant information and this encourages too much pointless and frivolous commenting. If the pro-revolutionary milieu wishes to overcome the inherent problems of the information age then we suggest that people stop 'commenting' (see the amusing comments below) on things and only submit well-thought out theses for public, or political milieu, perusal.

You've Gotta Laugh

In *Nihilist Communism* we wrote:

"For undermining the practice and status of political activism we have been vilified for being ridiculous and slanderous and insincere; indeed this name-calling has spread like village gossip, and no contemplation of our ideas is possible without the unintelligent repetition of the exact wording of this judgement on our moral lapse and our outsider status before any consideration of our actual ideas is begun."

We wrote this in 2002. Below are the words of 'georgestapleton' (WSM) and '888' ('six years in the AF,' apparently) on Anarchist Black Cat and Libcom. 'georgestapleton' wrote this in 2009!:

"From what I know The author was in the AF and was a bit of a gobshite. So when he left the AF and wrote a book noone read it because no one took him seriously. I could be wrong though."

'888' writes:

"FYI Monsieur Dupont is the wrist-slittingly awful donothingist extreme end of anti-organisational "ultra"- "left" irrelevantism. The AF was unfortunate enough to have him as a member for a few months in about 2000. This particular brand of completely insane and soul-draining politics makes me want to run around like a headless chicken screaming "do something! anything!""

"They are nutters one of whom wasted a few months in the AF about 7(?) years ago trying to argue for absurd ultra-ultra-left positions that amounted to extreme spontaneism, anti-organisationalism and determinism. They are a waste of time."

Here is another disappointing comment on our work, from 'Spikeymike' on LibCom:

"The original edition [of Nihilist Communism] was definately worth a read despite some anti-organisational tendencies..."

"Some"? If one reads a piece of writing and then passes judgement on it in a public forum it is always good policy to ensure that ones comment reflects what was actually in the writing. A large part of our critique examined the organising tendencies within the far left and the way that far left activists hold onto a belief in the possibility of being part of, or creating, a movement of people towards communism. We suggested that the belief in the possibility of this process resembled religious belief, or, more generally, 'the religious dogma that states that there will be an ultimate triumph of good over evil'.

This is part of what was actually written in the book:

"Movement and movements: There is an idea that the world and history is somehow linked to an idea and the idea is progress. We hear a lot in the media nowadays about the rapid pace of change in society. There have been a number of technical innovations and these have allowed for some spectacular events but in reality the actual structure of society has not altered for about a hundred and fifty years. We are stuck in orbit. Most theoreticians on the left disagree with this. For reasons of novelty and academic ambition they are always coming up with new concepts about how capitalism has transformed and how society has passed into another age; there is always another philosophical sensation. But life at the bottom, where capital is not afraid to bare its teeth and show itself for what it really is, goes on unchanged. [...]"

There is an idea in the pro-revolutionary milieu that as well as the reality of experienced capitalism there is a reality in idea form that is expressed in anti-capitalist action (mostly unconsciously) as a movement for communism, and is made up of various political movements that exist in the present and have existed in the past. Many pro-revolutionaries think that all of these add up to a

generality that is taking shape in the shadows and will carry on growing until it is so powerful it will be able to overthrow capitalism and establish itself as communism.

There is an immediate problem, of course, with this: most of the movements participating in the movement towards communism do not know they are participating. It is not an explicit project of theirs but has been interpreted by pro-revolutionaries who insist that communism is implied within the organisation and its relation to capital as it is within capitalism itself (these movements being the objective expression of that).

We think this is too complicated, too theological, and too dishonest to be an accurate description of reality. Communism exists nowhere in the world at present and nor will it until after the collapse of capitalism and the reorganisation of the material base of existence [the way we procure our living conditions]. All existing political movements, despite their radical pretensions, are determined by the capitalist material base and are therefore more or less contained within present conditions. We see no solution to capitalism either through the becoming of some idea of communism out of capitalism or from any political movement. We see the end of capitalism only in its self destruction. We see that this destruction may be caused by the working class who have been created by capital and are an absolutely essential component of capital. If this component malfunctions it could cause a crisis that destroys the whole system. In that event it is possible that a new material base may be organised by the working class that it creates out of a theoretical ideal of communism combined with the establishment of the primacy of human needs as the sole reason for the base. Ideas and movements can only make a difference to the nature of reality when they have escaped their determining conditions. Only when capitalism is destroyed will communism appear as a possible way out.”

Below are another couple of comments, taken from Libcom.

‘Farce’ (AF):

“Nihilist Communism is possibly the wankiest name for a political tendency ever. Even worse than post-left anarchism. For all I know, they could have a decent critique, but to me everything about the name “nihilist communism” just screams “I probably wear a beret and go to poetry nights of my own free will.”

‘Devrim’s’ (ICC) reply:

“Yes, it is awful. One of the two people who wrote the book came out of the A(C)F. I used to know him [MD note: indeed! And happy memories!], and we worked together on Communication Worker.”

What kind of comical closing down of ideas is being done here by these political experts? In opposition to this buffoonery I would suggest that maybe the title of a book, or the name of an organisation, is less important than what the book says or what the organisation does... it’s just an idea... but I don’t want to interrupt people in their fluffy pre-occupations with style.

As I said above, everything in the milieu is about ‘what we can do now’. This may seem like a reasonable strategy but, in effect, it also means that there is no learning from other people’s efforts. Thus it is that individual experiences and observations are generally discounted in the name of some sort of perceived ‘going forward’. Ever forward. The milieu is going forward? Do you think it is? What evidence do you have?

One more thing, as I shuffle away, Colombo fashion: I suppose that it was inevitable that the development of my ideas, which led to a significant critique of the whole political milieu with which I associated, should cause me to become considered some sort of ‘threat’ to those who are content in their world, or the world they have helped create around themselves. Any threat that we have posed has always and only been to tired thinking and bad practice, never to the

deepening of the critique of capitalism or the examination of the conditions and possibilities of human life on Earth.

It is important to emphasise that my critique has always been directed towards the whole of the, as I would describe it, far left: libertarian communists; anarchist communists; anarchists; anti-parliamentary communists; council communists; anti-political-ists; autonomists; primitivists; spontaneists; insurrectionists; etc. This includes all the 'ultra-leftists', except for Sam Moss and Paul Mattick (however, we have reservations, or qualifications to make about some of their theses). When I began to develop politically during the 1980's I never thought that one day I would be accused of 'ultra-leftism', which is generally a poorly-used pejorative term amongst English speakers. Since Monsieur Dupont's critique is equally directed at the 'ultra-left' as anyone else, we feel that we do not deserve the dubious honour of that particular title. Anyway, the disparate grouping I am referring to could also be described as the bad faith and good faith pro-revolutionary milieu (see Nihilist Communism for an explanation of these terms).

I critique the philosophical and methodological foundations of this milieu (of which, of course, I am a part) because I think that there needs to be a deeper understanding of what it is really doing, and what it is really saying. If this self-reflection does not occur then this milieu, in our opinion, continues to pose a certain degree of threat to the chances of capitalism, or the huge machinery of exploitation and alienation that has developed from it, ever being removed from the planet. If there was a true and total economic collapse next week there would not be enough nay-sayers to make a difference, just as in past events, there would not be enough 'kronstadters' to point out the dangers in a revolutionary situation.

Most of the pro-revolutionary milieu, as it is now, in my opinion, would be swept into silence by the revolutionary working class, they would not be able to offer any warnings based on their supposed knowledge of how these things can go wrong because they would be too confused about what was happening, or they would end up cautiously supporting leftist recuperations of capitalism, until they realised, too late, that they should have known better. Our role, as pro-revolutionaries is not to make revolution, that task is beyond us, and any conscious willing of it; our job is to point out the dangers that face a revolutionary or insurrectionary proletariat – our job is to expose those ideas and practices that will lead back to subordination and back to capitalism. If we want to have the capability to do this when and if the time comes, then we had better start training ourselves now. Too often in the past, as at Kronstadt, the stand against the recuperation of capitalism was made too late.

There is an interesting partial exploration of my involvement in the far left in the article, 'Why Did You Join The AF For A Second Time?', which is published in Letters Journal 3 (available from, www.littleblackcart.com).

Finally, it should be noted that in my first stint in the Anarchist Communist Federation, during the 1980's, along with all the other work I did, I helped draft the Aims and Principles. These are pretty much still the same as when I worked on them. Most of Points 4 and 7 still contain the actual phrases which I wrote. (The adoption of the Aims and Principles was a negotiated process; thus there is one line in Point 4 regarding support of resistance to 'political and economic colonialism', with which I still disagree.) I was also the person who, when we decided to change the name of the ACF journal, suggested and argued for the name 'Organise!', and that name remains to this day.

If I am regarded as a 'nutter' by people who are, or have been, in the AF then it surely must be that these people have been given little indication of the history of the ACF/AF. This is interesting

in itself. The most well-articulated critique of the modus operandi of the AF and groups like it has been delivered by one of its once-core members. How does the AF respond to this? Firstly, there is no response, no engagement with the critique. Secondly, there is the wild assertion that I am an idiot or madman! Where do these newer adherents to Anarchist politics get their ideas? What kind of historical process is being engineered here, or allowed to develop in the AF and across the milieu? These things are interesting.

Of course, it would be easy for long-timers in the AF to say I had no influence, but that would be a misleading denigration of the efforts I put into that organisation and elsewhere; and for those who knew me to allow slurs on my character to continue would reveal poor personal principles. It is OK to intelligently criticise ideas and actions, of course.

I am amused by the description of me as a ‘gobshite’, the term ‘georgestapleton’ has coined, as it reminds me of Proletarian Gob, but really, my nickname amongst ‘comrades’ in the 1980’s/1990’s, unbeknownst to me at the time, was ‘Nice Pete’. I couldn’t believe it when I heard that that was how people identified me, I would have preferred something like ‘Hard as Steel Pete’, or ‘Good-Looking Pete’, but it wasn’t to be. Suffice to say, I was hardly a gobby nutter.

As always, we propose hard work and honest toil. We do not, however, believe that heroic hard work in itself guarantees any kind of material (external), or personal (internal) success; and it is important to state that useless hard work is basically useless. We have consistently called for honesty, openness, self-reflection and discussion in the pro-revolutionary milieu. We have taken the time it takes to think and write properly. We believe that an ongoing examination of the milieu’s self-interests and motives, aligned with an effort to be as true to ourselves as possible, is the only way that the pro-revolutionary milieu can escape the rut in which it finds itself. If it wants to make sense, to each other as well as to others, then the pro-revolutionary milieu really does need to speak without pretence, without laziness, without recourse to mantras, dogmas, codes and village gangsterism.

The milieu must, in our opinion, endeavour to put an end to its politically evasive, clannish and mystifying thinking. Lies do not become us; it is time to take a harder line.

From Nihilist Communism:

“The pro-revolutionary role of the anarchist is to say only that which an anarchist can say, sometimes this means utter marginalisation in the present and perhaps for ever, but there is a chance that the lone, negative voice may have a profound impact in some unforeseen [immediate or distant] future, when conditions have changed. This is the guiding principle of MD’s policy of engagement.”

Le Garçon Dupont, December 2009

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