

Alfredo M. Bonanno

The comrade who sets off in the fog every morning and walks into the stifling atmosphere of the factory or the office only to see the same faces - the foreman, the timekeeper, the spy of the moment, the stakhanovite with seven children to support - feels the need for revolution, the struggle and the physical clash, even a mortal one. But he also wants to bring himself some joy now, right away. And he nurtures this joy in his fantasies as he walks along head down in the fog, spends hours on trains or trams, suffocates in the pointless goings on of the office or amidst the useless bolts that serve to hold the useless mechanisms of capital together.

Remunerated joy, weekends off or annual holidays paid by the boss is like paying to make love. It seems the same but there is something lacking.

People are tired of meetings, the classics, pointless marches, theoretical discussions that split hairs in four, infinite delays, the monotony and poverty of certain political analyses. They prefer to make love, smoke, listen to music, go for walks, sleep, laugh, play, kill policemen, lame journalists, blow up barracks.

Hurry to attack capital, before a new ideology makes it sacred to you. Hurry to refuse work before some new sophist tells you yet again that "work makes you free." Hurry to play. Hurry to arm yourself.



ARMED JOY

Elephant Editions

INTRODUCTION

This book was written in 1977 in the momentum of the revolutionary struggles taking place in Italy at the time, and that situation, now profoundly different, should be borne in mind when reading it today.

The revolutionary movement including the anarchist one was in a developing phase and anything seemed possible, even a generalisation of the armed clash.

But it was necessary to protect oneself from the danger of specialisation and militarisation that a restricted minority of militants intended to impose on the tens of thousands of comrades who were struggling with every possible means against repression and against the State's attempt - rather weak to tell the truth - to re-organise the management of capital.

That was the situation in Italy, but something similar was taking place in Germany, France, Great Britain and elsewhere.

It seemed essential to prevent the many actions carried out against the men and structures of power by comrades each day from being drawn into the planned logic of an armed party such as the Red Brigades in Italy.

That is the spirit of the book. To show how a practice of liberation and destruction can come forth from a joyful logic of struggle, not a mortal, schematic rigidity within the pre-established canons of a directing group.

Some of these problems no longer exist. They have been solved by the hard lessons of history. The collapse of real socialism suddenly redimensioned the directing ambitions of marxists of every tendency for good. On the other hand it has not extinguished, but possibly inflamed, the desire for freedom and anarchist communism that is spreading everywhere especially among the young generations, in many cases without having recourse to the traditional symbols of anarchism, its slogans and theories also considered with an understandable but not sharable gut refusal to be affected with ideology.

This book has become topical again, but in a different way. Not as a critique of a heavy monopolising structure that no longer exists, but because it can point out the potent capabilities of the individual on his or her road, with joy, to the destruction of all that which oppresses and regulates them.

Before ending I should mention that the book was ordered to be destroyed in Italy. The Italian Supreme Court ordered it to be burned. All the libraries who had a copy received a circular from the Home Ministry ordering its incineration. More than one librarian refused to burn the book, considering such a practice to be worthy of the Nazis or the Inquisition, but by law the volume cannot be consulted. For the same reason the book cannot be distributed legally in Italy and many comrades had copies confiscated during a vast wave of raids carried out for that purpose.

I was sentenced to eighteen months' prison for writing this book.

Alfredo M. Bonanno

Catania, 14 July 1993

*Foward everyone!
And with arm and heart,
word and pen,
dagger and gun,
irony and curse, theft, poisoning and
arson, Let's make... war on society!...
Déjaque*

XI

Let's be done with waiting, doubts, dreams of social peace, little compromises and naivety. All metaphorical rubbish supplied to us in the stores of capitalism. Let's get rid of the great analyses that explain everything right down to the most minute detail. Huge volumes filled with common sense and fear. Let's rid ourselves of democratic and bourgeois illusions about discussion and dialogue, debate and assembly and the enlightened capabilities of the mafiosi bosses. Let's get rid of the common sense and wisdom that the bourgeois work ethic has dug into our hearts. Let's get rid of centuries of Christianity that have educated us to sacrifice and obedience. Let's get rid of all priests, bosses, revolutionary leaders, less revolutionary ones and those who aren't revolutionary at all. Let's get rid of numbers, illusions, quantity, the market laws of supply and demand. Let us sit for a moment on the ruins of history of the persecuted, and think.

The world does not belong to us. If it has a master who is stupid enough to want it the way it is, let him have it. Let him count the ruins in place of buildings, graveyards in the place of cities, the mud in the place of rivers and the putrid sludge instead of seas.

The greatest illusionist spectacle in the world no longer enchants us. We are certain that communities of joy will emerge from our struggle, here and now.

And for the first time, life will triumph over death.

Alfredo M. Bonanno

Armed Joy

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But all this must be able to communicate itself. The passage between the world of joy and the world of death is not easy. The codes are out of phase and end up wiping each other out. What is considered illusion in the world of joy is reality in the world of death and vice versa. Physical death, such a preoccupation in the world of death, is less mortal than what is pedalled as life.

Hence capital's capacity to mystify messages of joy. Even revolutionaries within the quantitative logic are incapable of understanding experiences of joy in depth. They sometimes hesitantly make insignificant approaches. At other times they let themselves go with condemnation not very different to that of capital.

In the commodity spectacle it is commodities that are considered meaningful. The active element of this accumulated mass is work. Beyond these components of the productive framework, nothing can mean something positive and negative at the same time. It is possible to assert non-work, not its negation but only a temporary suspension. In the same way it is possible to assert the non-commodity, i.e. the personalised object, but only in the context of 'free time,' i.e. something that is produced as a hobby, in the lapses of time conceded by the productive cycle. In this sense these signs, non-work and the non-commodity, in this sense are clearly functional to the general model of production.

Only by clarifying the meanings of joy, and the corresponding meanings of death as elements of two opposing worlds struggling against each other, is it possible to communicate elements of the actions of joy. And time we should not deceive ourselves that we can communicate all of them. Anyone who begins to experience joy, even in a perspective not directly linked to the attack on capital, is more willing to grasp the significance of the attack, at least more so than those who remain tied to an outdated vision of the clash based upon the quantitative illusion.

So the owl could still take wing and fly.

the number of 'guests' in asylums will increase correspondingly. The "homeland of socialism" has much to teach in this field.

The asylum is the perfect therapeutic rationalisation of free time, the suspension of work without trauma to the commodity structure. A lack of productivity without its denial. The madman does not need to work, and in not working he confirms the wisdom of work as the opposite of madness.

When we say "it is not the time for an armed attack against the State," we are pushing open the doors of the mental asylum for the comrades who are carrying out this attack; when we say "it is not the time for revolution," we are tightening the cords of the straight jacket; when we say "these actions are objectively a provocation," we are donning the white coats of the torturers.

When the number of opponents was small, the sub machine gun was effective. The State can tolerate a dozen dead. Thirty thousand, a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, would mark a turning point in history, a revolutionary reference of such blinding luminosity as to disrupt the peaceful harmony of the commodity spectacle. Besides, capital has more cunning. Drugs have a neutrality that bullets do not possess. They have the alibi of being therapeutic.

May capital's statute of madness be thrown in its face. May the terms of the counter-positions be overturned.

In capital's reified totality the neutralisation of the individual is a constant practice. The flattening of opinions is a therapeutic process, a death machine. In the spectacular form of capitalism this flattening is essential: without it production cannot take place. And if the refusal of all that, the choice of joy in the face of death, is a sign of madness, it is time for everyone to begin to understand the trap that lies beneath all this.

The whole apparatus of the western cultural tradition is a death machine, the negation of reality, a reign of the fictitious that has accumulated every kind of infamy and injustice, exploitation and genocide. If the refusal of this logic is condemned as madness, then we must distinguish between madness and madness.

Joy is arming itself. Its attack is the overcoming of the commodity hallucination, machinery, vengeance, the leader, the party, quantity. Its struggle is breaking down the logic of profit, the architecture of the market economy, the programming of life, the last document in the last archive. Its violent explosion is upturning the order of dependency, the nomenclature of positive and negative, the code of the commodity illusion.

*In Paris, 1848, the revolution was
a holiday without a beginning or an end.
Bakunin*

I

Why on earth did they shoot Montanelli in the legs? Wouldn't it have been better to have shot him in the head?

Of course it would. But it would also have been heavier. More vindictive and sombre. To lame a beast like that can have a deeper, more meaningful side to it which goes beyond revenge: that of punishing him for his responsibility, fascist journalist and lackey of the bosses that he is.

To lame him forces him to limp, makes him remember. Moreover, laming is a more agreeable pastime than shooting in the head with pieces of brain squirting all over the place.

The comrade who sets off in the fog every morning and walks into the stifling atmosphere of the factory or the office only to see the same faces — the foreman, the timekeeper, the spy of the moment, the stakhanovite-with-seven-children-to-support — feels the need for revolution, the struggle and the physical clash, even a mortal one. But he also wants to bring himself some joy now, right away. And he nurtures this joy in his fantasies as he walks along head down in the fog, spends hours on trains or trams, suffocates in the pointless goings on of the office or amidst the useless bolts that serve to hold the useless mechanisms of capital together.

Remunerated joy, weekends off or annual holidays paid by the boss is like paying to make love. It seems the same but there is something lacking.

Hundreds of theories pile up in books, pamphlets and revolutionary papers. We must do this, do that, see things the way this or that one said, because they are the true interpreters of this or that one of the past, those in capital letters who fill up the stifling volumes of the classics.

Even the need to keep them close at hand is all part of the liturgy. Not to have them would be a bad sign, would be suspect. It is useful to keep them handy in any case. Being heavy they could be thrown in the face of some nuisance. Not a new, but always a healthy confirmation of the validity of the revolutionary texts of the past (and present).

There is never anything about joy in these tomes. The austerity of the cloister has nothing to envy of the stifling atmosphere one breathes in their

pages. Their authors, priests of the revolution of revenge and punishment, pass their time weighing up blame and retribution.

On the other hand these vestals in jeans have taken a vow of chastity, so they also expect and impose it. They want to be rewarded for their sacrifice. First they abandoned the comfortable surroundings of their class of origin, then they put their capacities at the disposal of the disinherited. They have grown accustomed to using words that are not their own and to putting up with dirty table-cloths and unmade beds. So, one might at least listen to them.

They dream of orderly revolutions, neatly drawn up principles, anarchy without turbulence. If things take a different turn they start screaming, yelling loud enough for the police to hear them.

Revolutionaries are pious. The revolution is not.

I call a cat a cat.
Boileau

II

We are all concerned with the revolutionary problem of how and what to produce, but nobody points out that producing is a revolutionary problem.

If production is at the root of capitalist exploitation, to change the mode of production would merely change the mode of exploitation.

A cat, even if you paint it red, is still a cat.

The producer is sacred. Hands off. Sanctify his sacrifice in the name of the revolution, and *les jeux sont faits*.

"And what will we eat?" concerned people will ask. "Bread and string," say the realists, with one eye on the pot and the other on their gun. "Ideas," the muddling idealists state, with one eye on the book of dreams and the other on the human race.

Anyone who touches productivity has had it.

Capitalism and those fighting it will sit alongside each other on the producer's corpse, but production must go on.

The critique of political economy is a rationalisation of the modes of production with the least effort (by those who enjoy the benefits of it all). Every-

social orthopaedics. There will no longer be convicts. The criminalisation capital creates will be processed through asylums.

When the whole of reality is spectacular, to refuse the spectacle means to be outside reality. Anyone who refuses to bow down to the code of commodities is mad. Refusal to bow down before the commodity god will result in one's being committed to a mental asylum.

There the treatment will be radical. No more inquisitorial style torture or blood on the walls: such things upset public opinion. They cause the self-righteous to intervene, give rise to justifications and reparations and disturb the harmony of the spectacle. The total annihilation of the personality, considered to be the only radical cure for sick minds, does not upset anyone. So long as the man in the street feels he is surrounded by the impervious atmosphere of the capitalist spectacle he will feel secure from the asylum doors ever slamming shut on him. The world of madness will seem to him to be elsewhere, even though there is always an asylum available next to every factory, opposite every school, behind every patch of land, in the middle of every housing estate.

In our critical obtuseness we must take care not to pave the way to the State employees in white coats.

Capital is programming a code of interpretation to be circulated at mass level. On the basis of this code, public opinion will get used to seeing those who attack the bosses' order of things as mad. Hence the need to have them put away in mental asylums. Prisons are also rationalising along the German model. First they will transform themselves into special prisons for revolutionaries, then into model prisons, then into real laagers for brain manipulation, and finally, mental asylums.

Capital's behaviour is not dictated by the need to defend itself from the struggles of the exploited alone. It is dictated by the logic of the code of commodity production.

For capital the asylum is a place where the globality of spectacular functioning is interrupted. Prison desperately tries to do this but does not succeed because it is blocked by its claims to 'rehabilitation'.

The 'place' of the asylum, on the contrary, does not have a beginning or an end, it is not mutable like the spectacle. It is the place of silence.

On the contrary, the other 'place' of silence, the graveyard, has the faculty to speak aloud. The dead talk. And our dead talk loudly. They can be heavy, very heavy. That is why capital will try to have fewer and fewer of them. And,

only enter the world of creativity and play by transforming the subject into 'player,' the living creator into a dead person who cheats himself into believing he is alive.

There would no longer be any sense in talking about play if the "world of play" became centralised. We must foresee this possibility of capital taking up the revolutionary proposal again when we put forward our argument of "armed joy." And one way this could come about is through the management of the world of play from the outside. By establishing the role of the player, reciprocal roles and the mythology of the toy.

By breaking the bonds of centralisation (the military party) one obtains the result of confusing capital's ideas, tuned as they are into the code of the spectacular productivity of the quantitative market. Action coordinated by joy is an enigma to capital. It is nothing. Something with no precise aim, devoid of reality. And this is so because the essence, the aim and the reality of capital are illusory, while the essence, the aim and the reality of revolution are concrete.

The code of the need for communism substitutes the code of the need to produce. In the light of this new need the decisions of the individual become meaningful in the community of play. The lack of reality and illusory consistency of the death models of the past is discovered.

The destruction of the bosses is the destruction of commodities, and the destruction of commodities is the destruction of the bosses.

*The owl takes wing.
Athenian proverb*

X

"The owl takes wing." Many actions that begin badly come to a good end. May the revolution, put off by revolutionaries for so long, be realised in spite of their residual desire for social peace.

Capital will give the last word to the white coats. Prisons will not last much longer. Fortresses of a past that survive only in the fantasies of some exalted old reactionary, they will disappear along with the ideology based on

one else, those who experience exploitation, must take care to see nothing is lacking. Otherwise, how would we live?

When he comes out into the light the son of darkness sees nothing, just as when he was groping about in the dark. Joy blinds him. It kills him. So he says it is an hallucination and condemns it.

The fat, flabby bourgeois bask in opulent idleness. So enjoyment is sinful. That would mean sharing the same sensations as the bourgeoisie and betraying those of the producing proletariat.

Not so. The bourgeois goes to great lengths to keep the process of exploitation going. He is stressed too and never finds time for joy. His cruises are occasions for new investments, his lovers fifth columns for getting information on competitors.

The productivity god also kills his faithful disciples. Wrench their heads off, nothing but a deluge of rubbish will pour out.

The hungry wretch harbours feelings of revenge when he sees the rich surrounded by their fawning entourage. The enemy must be destroyed before anything else. But save the loot. Wealth must not be destroyed, it must be *used*. It doesn't matter what it is, what form it takes or what prospects of employment it allows. What counts is grabbing it from whoever is holding on to it at the time so that everyone can have access to it.

Everyone? Of course, everyone.

And how would that happen?

With revolutionary violence.

Good answer. But really, what will we do after we have cut off so many heads that we are bored with it? What will we do when there are no more landlords to be found, even if we go looking for them with lanterns?

Then it will be the reign of the revolution. To each according to his needs, from each according to his possibilities.

Just a minute, comrade. There is a smell of book-keeping here. We are talking of consumption and production. Everything is still in the dimension of productivity. Arithmetic makes you feel safe. Two and two make four. Who would dispute this 'truth'? Numbers rule the world. If they always have done until now, why shouldn't they continue to do so?

We all need something solid and durable. Stones with which to build a wall to stem the impulses that begin to choke us. We all need objectivity. The boss swears by his wallet, the peasant by his spade, the revolutionary by his gun. Let in a glimmer of criticism and the whole scaffolding would collapse.

In its heavy objectivity, the everyday world conditions and reproduces us. We are all children of daily banality. Even when we talk of 'serious' things like revolution, our eyes are still glued to the calendar. The boss fears the revolution because it would deprive him of his wealth, the peasant will make it to get a piece of land, the revolutionary to put his theory to the test.

If the problem is seen in these terms, there is no difference between wallet, land and revolutionary theory. All of these things are quite imaginary, nothing more than mirrors of human illusion.

Only the struggle is real.

It distinguishes boss from peasant and establishes the link between the latter and the revolutionary.

The forms of organisation that production takes are ideological vehicles to conceal illusory individual identity. This identity is projected into the economic concept of value. A code establishes its interpretation. The bosses control parts of this code, as we see in consumerism. The technologies of psychological warfare and total repression also give their contribution to enforcing the idea that one is human on condition that one produces.

Other parts of the code can be modified. They cannot undergo revolutionary change, but are simply adjusted from time to time. Think, for example, of the mass consumerism that has taken the place of the luxury consumerism of years gone by.

Then there are the more refined ones such as the self-managed control of production. A further element in the code of exploitation.

And so on. Anyone who decides to organise my life for me can never be my comrade. If they try to justify this with the excuse that someone must "produce" otherwise we will all lose our identity as human beings and be overcome by "wild, savage nature," we reply that the man-nature relationship is a product of the enlightened marxist bourgeoisie. Whyever did they want to turn a spade into a ploughshare? Why must Man continually strive to distinguish himself from nature?

merely tools, and as such should continually be submitted to critical evaluation. It is necessary to develop a critique of arms. Too often we have witnessed the sanctification of the sub machine gun, and military efficiency.

Armed struggle does not concern weapons alone. The latter on their own cannot represent the revolutionary dimension. It is dangerous to reduce complex reality to one single thing. In fact, play involves this risk. It could make the living experience become no more than a toy, turning it into something magical and absolute. It is not by chance that the machine gun appears in the symbolism of many combatant revolutionary organisations.

We must go beyond this in order to understand the profound significance of the revolutionary struggle as joy, escaping the illusions and traps of part of the commodity spectacle through the use of mythical and mythologised objects.

Capital makes its final effort when faced with armed struggle. It engages itself on its last frontier. It needs the support of public opinion in order to act in a field where it is not too sure of itself. So it unleashes a psychological war using the most refined weapons of modern propaganda.

Basically, the way capital is physically organised at the present time makes it vulnerable to any revolutionary structure capable of deciding its own timing and means of attack. It is quite aware of this weakness and is taking measures to compensate for it. The police are not enough. Not even the army. It requires continual vigilance by the people themselves. Even the most humble part of the proletariat. So, to do this it must divide the class front. It must disseminate the myth of the danger of armed organisations amongst the poor, along with that of the sanctity of the State, the law and so on.

It indirectly pushes the organisations and their militants into assuming a precise role. Once in this 'role' the player no longer has any meaning. Everything becomes 'serious,' illusory; it enters the domain of the spectacular and becomes a commodity. Joy becomes 'mask.' The individual becomes anonymous, lives out his role, no longer able to distinguish between appearance and reality.

In order to break out of the magic circle of commodity theatricals we must refuse all roles, including that of 'professional revolutionary.'

Armed struggle must not let itself become something professional, precisely that division of tasks that the external aspect of capitalist production wants to impose upon it.

"Do it yourself." Don't break up the global aspect of play by reducing it to roles. Defend your right to enjoy life. Obstruct capital's death project. It can

cle. Capital accepts the clash in the quantitative field, because there it knows all the answers. It has a monopoly of the rules and produces the solutions itself.

On the the other hand, the joy of the revolutionary act is contagious. It spreads like a spot of oil. Play becomes meaningful when it acts on reality. But this meaning is not crystallised in a model that governs it from above. It breaks up into a thousand meanings. The internal connections of play work themselves out in the action of attack. But the overall meaning survives, the sense that play has for those who are cut out and want to appropriate themselves of it. Those who decide to play first and those 'observing' the liberatory consequences of the game, are essential to the game itself.

The community of joy is structured in this way. It is a spontaneous way of coming into contact, fundamental for the realisation of the most profound meaning of play. Play is a communitarian act. It rarely presents itself as one isolated action. If it does, it often contains the negative elements of psychological repression, it is not a positive acceptance of play as a creative moment of struggle.

It is the communitarian sense of play that prevents arbitrariness in choice. In the absence of a communitarian relationship the individual could impose his own rules and meanings that would be incomprehensible to anyone else, simply making play a temporary suspension of the negative consequences of his individual problems (the problems of work, alienation, exploitation).

In the communitarian agreement, play is enriched by a flux of reciprocal actions. Creativity is greater when it comes from reciprocally verified liberated imaginations. Each new invention, each new possibility can be lived collectively without preconstituted models and have a vital influence even by simply being a creative moment, even if it encounters a thousand difficulties during realisation.

A traditional revolutionary organisation ends up imposing its technicians. It unavoidably tends towards technocracy. The great importance attached to the instrumental timing of action condemns it along this road.

A revolutionary structure that seeks the moment of joy in action aimed at destroying power considers the tools used to bring about this destruction as just that, i.e. as means. Those who use these tools must not become slaves to them. Just as those who do not know how to use them must not become slaves to those who do.

The dictatorship of the tool is the worst kind of dictatorship.

Revolutionaries' most important weapons are their determination, their conscience, their decision to act, their individuality. Arms themselves are

Men, if they do not attain what is necessary, tire themselves with that which is useless.

Goethe

III

Man needs many things.

This statement is usually taken to mean that Man has needs, he is obliged to satisfy them.

In this way people are transformed from historically determined units into a duality (means and end simultaneously). They realise themselves through the satisfaction of their needs (i.e. through work) and so becomes the instrument of their own realisation.

Anyone can see how much mythology is concealed in statements such as these. If people distinguish themselves from nature through work, how can they fulfil themselves in the satisfaction of their needs? To do this they would already have become 'Man,' so have fulfilled their needs, which means that they would not need to work.

Commodities have a profoundly symbolic content. They become a point of reference, a unit of measure, an exchange value. The spectacle begins. Roles are cast and reproduce themselves to infinity. The actors continue to play their part with no modifications worthy of note.

The satisfaction of needs becomes no more than a reflex, marginal effect. What matters is the transformation of people into 'things' and everything else along with them. Nature becomes a 'thing.' Used, it is corrupted and with it Man's vital instincts. An abyss opens up between nature and Man. It needs to be filled, and the expansion of the commodity market is seeing to it. The spectacle is expanding to the point of devouring itself along with its contradictions. Audience and stage enter the same dimension, proposing themselves for a higher, more far-reaching level of reproduction of the same spectacle, and so on to infinity.

Anyone who escapes the commodity code avoids becoming reified and falls 'beyond' the real area of the spectacle. They are pointed at. They are isolated. If they refuse inglobation or an alternative form of codification, they are criminalised. They are clearly mad! It is forbidden to refuse the illusory in a world that has made illusion the basis of reality.

Capital manages the spectacle according to the laws of accumulation. But nothing can be accumulated indefinitely. Not even capital. A quantitative process in absolute is an illusion, a quantitative illusion. This has been understood perfectly by the bosses. Exploitation takes on different forms and ideological models precisely to ensure this accumulation in a qualitatively different manner, as it could not continue to infinity in its quantitative aspect alone.

The fact that the whole process becomes paradoxical and illusory does not matter much to capital, because it is precisely this which holds the reigns and makes the rules. If it has to sell illusion for reality and that makes money, then let's just carry on without asking too many questions. It is the exploited who pay the bill. So it is up to them to see the trick and worry about recognising reality. For capital things are fine as they are, even though they are based upon the greatest swindle in the world.

The exploited are almost nostalgic about this swindle. They are accustomed to their chains and have grown attached to them. Now and then they have fantasies about uprisings and bloodbaths, then they let themselves be taken in by the speeches of the new political leaders. The revolutionary party extends capital's illusory perspective to horizons it could never reach on its own.

The quantitative illusion leads to slaughter yet again.

The exploited join together, count themselves. Fierce slogans make bourgeois hearts miss a beat. The greater the number, the more the leaders prance around arrogantly and the more they swindle. They draw up great programs or the seizure of power. This new power prepares to set itself up on the remains of the old. And Bonaparte's soul smiles with satisfaction.

Of course, deep changes are being programmed in the code of illusions. But everything must remain subject to the symbol of quantitative accumulation. As militant forces grow demands for revolution increase. In the same way, the rate of social profit which is taking the place of private profit must grow. So capital is entering a new, illusory, spectacular phase. Old needs press on insistently, bearing new labels. The productivity god continues to rule unvalled.

How good it is to count ourselves. It makes us feel strong. The unions count themselves. The parties count themselves. So do we. Ring a ring o' roses.

And when we stop counting ourselves, we try to keep things as they were before. If change cannot be avoided, we will bring it about without disturbing anyone.

the spectacle. But when they break away from the deep significance that capital gives to production, this becomes extremely difficult.

In the second phase, questions of arithmetic and revenge do not make sense. If they are mentioned, they take on a metaphorical significance.

The illusory game of capital (the commodity spectacle) must be substituted with the real game of the armed attack against it for the destruction of the unreal and the spectacle.

Do it yourself.

"Do it yourself manual"

IX

It's easy, you can do it yourself. Alone or with a few trusted comrades. Great means are not necessary. Not even great technical knowledge.

Capital is vulnerable. It is sufficient to be decided.

A load of talk has made us obtuse. It is not a question of fear. We aren't afraid, just stupidly full of prefabricated ideas. We cannot break free from them.

Whoever is determined to carry out their deed is not a courageous person. They are simply a person who has clarified their ideas, who has realised the pointlessness of making so much effort to play a part in the performance that has been assigned to them by capital. Fully aware, they attack with cool determination. And in doing so, they realise themselves as a human being. Even if they create destruction and terror for the bosses, in their hearts, and in the hearts of the exploited, there is joy and calm.

Revolutionary organisations have difficulty in understanding this. They impose a model that reproduces the reality of production. The quantitative destiny of the latter prevents them from having any qualitative move to the level of the aesthetic dimension of joy.

These organisations also see armed attack also in a purely quantitative light. Objectives are decided in terms of a frontal clash.

In that way capital is able to control any emergency. It can even allow itself the luxury of accepting the contradictions, point out spectacular objectives, exploit the negative effects on producers in order to widen the specta-

In order to kill a cop, it is not necessary to don the judge's robes hastily cleansed of the blood of previous sentences. Courts and sentences are always a part of the spectacle of capital, even when it is revolutionaries who are playing the parts. When a policeman is killed his responsibility is not weighed on the scales, the clash does not become a question of arithmetic. One does not program a vision of the relationship between revolutionary movement and exploiters. One is responding at the immediate level to a need that has come to be structured within the revolutionary movement, a need that all the analyses and justifications of this world would never have been able to impose on their own.

This need is the attack on the enemy, the exploiter and his servants. It matures slowly within the structures of the movement. Only when it comes out into the open does the movement pass from the defensive phase to attack. Analysis and moral justification are upstream, they are nowhere to be found at the feet of those who come out into the streets, poised to make them stumble. They exist in the centuries of systematic violence that capital has exercised on the exploited. But they do not necessarily come to light in a form that is complete and ready for use. That would be a further rationalisation of intentions, our dream of imposing a model on reality that does not belong to it.

Let's have these Cossacks come down. We do not support the role of reaction, that is not for us. We refuse to accept capital's ambiguous invitation to control. Rather than shoot our comrades or each other, it is always better to shoot policemen.

There are times in history when science exists in the consciousness of those who struggle. At such times there is no need for interpreters of truth. It emerges from things as they are. The reality of the struggle produces the theory of the movement.

The birth of the commodity market signed the formation of capital, the passage from feudal forms of production to the capitalist one. With the entrance of production into its spectacular phase the commodity has extended to everything that exists: love, science, feelings, consciousness, etc. The spectacle has widened greatly. The second phase does not, as marxists maintain, constitute a corruption of the first. It is a different phase altogether. Capital devours everything, even the revolution. If the latter does not break from the model of production, if it merely claims to impose alternative forms, capitalism will swallow it up within the commodity spectacle.

Only the struggle cannot be swallowed up. Some of its forms, crystallising themselves in precise organisational entities, can end up being drawn into

Every now and again politics re-emerge. Capital often invents ingenious solutions. Then social peace hits us. The silence of the graveyard. The illusion spreads to such a level that the spectacle absorbs nearly all available forces. Not a sound. Then the defects and monotony of the *mis-en-scène*. The curtain rises on unforeseen situations. The capitalist machine takes a blow. Then revolutionary involvement is rediscovered. It happened in '68. Everyone's eyes nearly fell out of their sockets. All extremely ferocious. Enough leaflets to drown in. Mountains of leaflets and pamphlets and papers and books. Old ideological differences lined up like tin soldiers. Even the anarchists rediscovered themselves. And they did so historically, according to the needs of the moment. Everyone was very obstinate, including the anarchists. Some people awoke from the spectacular dream and, looking around for space and air to breathe, seeing anarchists said to themselves. At last! Here's who we want to be with. They soon realised their mistake. Even in that direction things did not go as they should have done. There too, obstinacy and spectacle. And so they ran away. They closed up in themselves. They fell apart. Accepted capital's game. Or if they didn't accept it they were banished, even by the anarchists.

The machinery of '68 produced the best civil servants of the new techno-bureaucratic State. But it also produced the anti-bodies. The process of the quantitative illusion became visible. On the one hand it received fresh lymph to build a new vision of the commodity spectacle, on the other there has been a split.

The ineffectiveness of confrontation at the level of productivity has become blatant. Take over the factories, the fields, the schools and the neighbourhoods and self-manage them, proclaimed the old revolutionary anarchists. We will destroy power in all its forms, they added. But they did not go right to the root of the problem. Although conscious of its gravity and extent, they preferred to ignore it, putting their hopes in the creative spontaneity of the revolution. But they wanted to keep control of production as they waited for the results from this spontaneity. Whatever happens, whatever creative form the revolution may take, we must possess the means of production, they maintained. Otherwise the enemy will defeat us at that level. And in order to do this they came to accept all kinds of compromise. So they ended up creating another, even more grim, form of spectacle.

And spectacular illusion has its own rules. Whoever wants to direct must comply with them. They must know them, apply them and swear by

them. The first is that production affects everything. Anyone who does not produce is not a man, the revolution is not for them. Why should we tolerate parasites? Should we perhaps go to work in place of them? Should we see to their survival as well as our own? Besides, wouldn't all these people with vague ideas and a certain claim to doing as they like not turn out to be 'objectively' useful to the counter-revolution? Well, in that case better attack them right away. We know who our allies are and whom we want to side with. If we want to scare, then let's all do it together, organised and in perfect order, and let no one put their feet on the table.

Let's organise our specific structures. Let's train militants who know the techniques of struggle in production. It will be the producers who make the revolution, we will only be there to make sure they don't do anything silly.

No, that's not right. How will we be able to stop them from making mistakes? At the spectacular level of organisation there are those capable of making far more noise than we are. And they have breath to spare. Struggle at the workplace. Struggle for the defence of jobs. Struggle for production.

When will we break out of the circle? When will we stop biting our tails?

*The deformed man always finds mirrors
that make him handsome.
de Sade*

IV

What madness the love of work is!

With great scenic skill, capital has succeeded in making the exploited love exploitation, hanged men the rope and slaves their chains.

This idealisation of work has been the death of the revolution until now. The movement of the exploited has been corrupted by the bourgeois morality of production which is not only foreign, but even contrary to it. It is not an accident that the trade unions were the first sector to be corrupted, precisely because of their closer proximity to the management of the production spectacle.

It is time to oppose the work ethic with the non-work aesthetic.

We must oppose the satisfaction of spectacular needs imposed by the con-

Hurry to say No, before the new repression convinces you that saying no is useless, mad, and that you should accept the hospitality of the mental asylum.

Hurry to attack capital, before a new ideology makes it sacred to you.

Hurry to refuse work before some new sophist tells you yet again that "work makes you free."

Hurry to play. Hurry to arm yourself.

*There will be no revolution until the
Cossacks descend.
Coeurderoy*

VIII

Even play is enigmatic and contradictory in the logic of capital which uses it as part of the commodity spectacle. It acquires an ambiguity that it does not itself possess. This ambiguity comes from the illusory structure of capitalist production. In this way, the game becomes the suspension of production, the parenthesis of 'peace' in everyday life. So play comes to be programmed and used scenically.

When it is beyond the dominion of capital, play is harmoniously structured by its own creative impulse. It is not linked to this or that presentation required by the forces of the world of production, but develops autonomously. It is only in this reality that play is cheerful, that it gives joy. It does not 'suspend' the sadness of the laceration caused by exploitation; but it realises it to the full, rendering it a participant in the reality of life. In this way it opposes itself to the tricks put into act by the reality of death — even through play — to make the sadness less sad.

The destroyers of the death reality are struggling against the mythical reign of the capitalist illusion, a reign which, aspiring to eternity, rolls in the dust of the contingent. Joy emerges from the play of destructive action, from the recognition of the profound tragedy that this implies, and an awareness of the strength of enthusiasm that is capable of slaying the cobwebs of death. It is not a question of opposing horror with horror, tragedy with tragedy, death with death. It is a confrontation between joy and horror, joy and tragedy, joy and death.

Strengthened by this ideological armour we go out into the streets. Here we run into the reality of a struggle that is structured quite differently, from stimuli that do not enter the framework of our analyses. One fine morning, during a peaceful demonstration, the police start shooting. The structure reacts, comrades shoot too, policemen fall. Anathema! It was a peaceful demonstration. For it to have degenerated into individual guerilla actions, there must have been provocation. Nothing can go beyond the perfect framework of our ideological organisation, as it is not just a 'part' of reality, but is 'all' reality. Anything beyond it is madness and provocation. Supermarkets are destroyed, shops, food and arms depots are looted, luxury cars are burned. It is an attack on the commodity spectacle in its most conspicuous forms. The new structures are moving in that direction. They take form suddenly, with only the minimum strategic orientation necessary. No frills, no long analytical premises, no complex supporting theories. They attack. Comrades identify with these structures. They reject the organisations that give power, equilibrium, waiting, death. Their action is a critique of the wait and see suicidal positions of these organisations. Anathema! There must have been provocation.

There is a break away from traditional political models. This becomes a critique of the movement itself. Irony becomes a weapon. Not closed within a writer's study, but *en masse*, in the streets. As a result, not only the bosses' servants but also revolutionary leaders from a far off and recent past find themselves in difficulty. The mentality of the small-time boss and leading group is put in crisis. Anathema! The only legitimate critique is that against the bosses, and it must comply with the rules laid down by the historical tradition of the class struggle. Anyone who strays from the seminary is a provocateur.

People are tired of meetings, the classics, pointless marches, theoretical discussions that split hairs in four, infinite delays, the monotony and poverty of certain political analyses. They prefer to make love, smoke, listen to music, go for walks, sleep, laugh, play, kill policemen, lame journalists, blow up barracks. Anathema! The struggle is only legitimate when it is comprehensible to the leaders of the revolution. Otherwise, there being a risk that they might let the situation go beyond their control, there must have been a provocation.

Hurry comrade, shoot the policeman, the judge, the boss. Now, before a new police prevents you.

sumer society with the satisfaction of Man's natural needs seen in the light of that primary, essential need: the need for communism.

In this way the quantitative evaluation of needs is upturned. The need for communism transforms all other needs and their pressures on Man.

Man's poverty, the consequence of exploitation, has been seen as the basis of future redemption. Christianity and revolutionary movements have gone hand in hand throughout history. We must suffer in order to conquer paradise or to acquire the class consciousness that will lead us to revolution. Without the work ethic the marxist notion of "proletariat" would not make sense. But the work ethic is a product of the same bourgeois rationalism that allowed the bourgeoisie to conquer power.

Corporatism resurges through the links of proletarian internationalism. Everyone struggles within their own sector. At most they contact similar ones in other countries, through the unions. The monolithic multinationals are opposed by the monolithic unions. We will make the revolution, but save the machine, the instrument of work, the mythical object that reproduces the historical virtue of the bourgeoisie, now in the hands of the proletariat.

The heir of the destiny of the revolution is a subject destined to become the consumer and principle actor of the capitalist spectacle of the future. Idealised at the level of the clash as the receiver of its outcome, the revolutionary class disappears into the idealism of production. When the exploited are enclosed within a class all the elements of the spectacular already exist, just as they do for the class of exploiters.

The only way for the exploited to escape the globalising project of capital is through the refusal of work, production and political economy.

But refusal of work must not be confused with 'lack of work' in a society that is based on the latter. The marginalised look for work. They do not find it. They are pushed into the ghetto. They are criminalised. All that then enters the management of the productive spectacle as a whole. Producers and unemployed are equally indispensable to capital. But the balance is a delicate one. Contradictions explode producing various kinds of crisis, and it is in this context that revolutionary intervention takes place.

So, the refusal of work, the destruction of work, is an affirmation of the need for *non-work*. The affirmation that Man can reproduce and objectify himself in non-work through the various kinds of sollicitation that this stimulates in him. The idea of destroying work seems absurd if it is seen from the point of view of the work ethic. But how? So many people are looking for

work, there are so many unemployed, and you talk about destroying work? The Luddite ghost appears and puts all the revolutionaries-who-have-read-all-the-classics to fright. The rigid model of the frontal attack on capitalist forces must not be altered. Past failures and suffering are irrelevant: so is the shame and betrayal. Forward comrades, better days will come, forward again!

It is enough to show what the concept of 'free time,' a temporary suspension of work, is bogged down in today to scare the proletariat back into the stagnant atmosphere of working class organisations (parties, unions and hangers-on). The spectacle offered by the great leisure organisations is deliberately designed to depress even the most fertile imaginations. But this is no more than an ideological cover, one of the many instruments of the total war that l* es up the spectacle as a whole.

The need for communism transforms everything. Through the need for communism the need for non-work moves from the negative aspect (opposition to work) to the positive one: the individual's complete availability to himself, the possibility to express himself or herself, absolutely freely, breaking away from all models, even those considered to be fundamental and indispensable such as those of production.

But revolutionaries are dutiful people and are afraid to break with all models, not least that of 'revolution' which constitutes an obstacle to the full realisation of what the very concept means. They are afraid that they might find themselves without a role in life. Have you ever met a revolutionary without a revolutionary project? A project that is well defined and presented clearly to the masses? Whatever kind of revolutionary would be one who claimed to destroy the model, the wrapping, the very foundations of the revolution? By attacking concepts such as quantification, class, project, model, historical task and other such old stuff, one would run the risk of having nothing to do, of being obliged to act in reality, modestly, like everyone else. Like millions of others who are building the revolution day by day without waiting for signs of a fatal deadline. And to do this you need courage.

With rigid models and little quantitative games you remain within the realm of the unreal, the illusory project of the revolution, an amplification of the spectacle of capital. By abolishing the ethic of production you enter revolutionary reality directly.

It is difficult even to talk of such things because it does not make sense to talk of them through the pages of a treatise. To reduce these problems to a complete and final analysis would be to miss the point. The best thing would

By moving into the nowhere of utopia, upturning the work ethic in the here and now of joy in its realisation, we find ourselves within a kind of movement that is far from the historical forms of organisation.

This structure is continually changing, so escapes crystallisation. It is characterised by self-organisation of the producers at the workplace, and self-organisation of the struggle against work. Not taking over the means of production, but the refusal of production in organisational forms that are continually changing.

The same is happening among the unemployed and casual labour. Structures emerging on the basis of self-organisation, stimulated by boredom and alienation. The introduction of aims programmed and imposed by an outside organisation would kill the movement and consign it to the commodity spectacle.

Most of us are tied to this idea of revolutionary organisation. Even anarchists, who refuse authoritarian organisation, do not disdain it. On this basis we all accept the idea that the contradictory reality of capital can be attacked with similar means. We do so because we are convinced that these means are legitimate, emerging as they do from the same field of struggle as capital. We refuse to admit that everyone might NOT see things the way we do. Our theory is identical to the practice and strategy of our organisations.

The differences between ourselves and the authoritarians are many. But they all collapse before a common faith in the historical organisation. Anarchy will be reached through the work of these organisations (substantial differences only appear in methods of approach). But this faith demonstrates something very important: the claim of our whole rationalist culture to explain reality in progressive terms. This culture bases itself on the idea that history is irreversible, as well as that of the analytical capacity of science. All this makes us see the present as the point where all the efforts of the past meet, the culminating point of the struggle against the power of darkness (capitalist exploitation). As a result we are convinced that we are more advanced than our predecessors and capable of elaborating and putting into practice theories and organisational strategies that sum up all the experience of the past.

All those who reject this interpretation automatically find themselves beyond reality which is by definition history, progress and science. Whoever refuses such a reality is anti-historical, anti-progressive and anti-scientific. Sentenced without appeal.

Let us leave those who love the spectacle of capitalism alone. Those who are quite happy to play their parts to the end. These people think that reforms can really change things. But this is more an ideological cover than anything else. They know only too well that changing parts is one of the rules of the system. Fixing things a little at a time turns out to be useful to capital.

Then there is the revolutionary movement, where there is no lack of those who attack the power of capital verbally. These people cause great confusion. They come out with great statements but no longer make any impression on anyone, least of all capital which cunningly uses them for the most difficult part of its spectacle. When it needs a soloist it puts one of these performers on stage. The result is pitiful.

The truth is that the spectacular mechanism of commodities must be broken by entering the domain of capital, its coordinating centres, inside the very nucleus of production. Think what a marvellous explosion of joy, what a great creative leap forward, what an extraordinarily aimless aim.

Only it is very difficult to enter the mechanism of capital joyfully, with the symbols of life. Armed struggle is often a symbol of death. Not because it gives death to the bosses and their servants, but because it claims to impose the structures of the dominion of death itself. Conceived differently, it really would be joy in action, capable of breaking the structural conditions imposed by the commodity spectacle such as the military party, the conquest of power, the vanguard.

This is the other enemy of the revolutionary movement. Incomprehension. Refusal of the new conditions of conflict. The insistence on imposing past models that have now become part of the commodity spectacle.

Ignorance of the new revolutionary reality leads to a lack of theoretical and strategic awareness of the revolutionary capacity of the movement itself. And there is no point in saying that there are enemies so near as to make it necessary to intervene right away without looking at questions of a theoretical nature. All this hides the incapacity to face the new reality of the movement and avoid the mistakes of the past that have serious consequences in the present. And this refusal feeds all kinds of rationalist political illusions.

Categories such as revenge, the leader, the party, the vanguard, quantitative growth, only mean anything in the dimension of this society, and this meaning favours the perpetuation of power. If one sees things from a revolutionary point of view, i.e. the complete final elimination of all power, these categories become meaningless.

be an informal discussion capable of bringing about the subtle magic of word-play.

It is a real contradiction to talk about joy seriously.

*Summer nights are heavy.
One sleeps badly in the tiny rooms. It is
the Eve of the Guillotine.
Zo d'Axa*

V

The exploited also find time to play. But their play is not joy. It is a gruesome ritual. An awaiting death. A suspension of work in order to lighten the pressure of violence accumulated during the activity of production. In the illusory world of commodities, play is also an illusion. We imagine that we are playing, while all we are doing is monotonously repeating the roles capital has assigned to us.

When we become conscious of the process of exploitation, the first thing we feel is a sense of revenge, the last is joy. Liberation is seen as setting right a balance that has been upset by the wickedness of capitalism, not as the coming of a world of play to take the place of the world of work.

This is the first phase in the attack on the bosses. The phase of immediate awareness. What strikes us are the chains, the whip, the prison walls, sexual and racial barriers. Everything must come down. So we arm ourselves and strike the adversary for their responsibility.

In the night of the guillotine the foundations for a new spectacle are laid. Capital regains strength: first the bosses' heads fall, then those of the revolutionaries.

It is not possible to make the revolution with the guillotine alone. Revenge is the ante-chamber of power. Whoever wants to avenge himself requires a leader. A leader to take them to victory and restore wounded justice. And whoever wants to avenge himself desires the possession of something that has been taken away from them. Right to the supreme abstraction: the appropriation of surplus value.

The world of the future must be one where everyone works. Fine! So we

will have imposed slavery on everyone, with the exception of those who will make it function and who, precisely for this reason, will become the new bosses.

No matter what, the bosses must 'pay' for their blame. Very well! We will thus have carried the Christian ethic of sin, judgement and reparation to within the revolution. As well as the concepts of 'debt' and 'payment,' clearly of mercantile origins.

That is all part of the spectacle. Even when it is not managed by the power structure directly, it can easily be taken over. Role reversal is part of the technique of drama.

At a certain level of the class struggle it can be necessary to attack using the arms of revenge and punishment. The movement does not possess any others. So then it is time for the guillotine. But revolutionaries must be aware of the limitations of such arms. They should not deceive themselves and others.

Within the paranoid framework of a rationalising machine such as capitalism the concept of the revolution of revenge can even become part of the spectacle as it continually adapts itself. The apparent movement of production comes about with the blessing of economic science but is still based on the illusory anthropology of the separation of tasks.

There is no joy in work, not even in self-managed work. The revolution cannot be reduced to a simple reorganisation of work. Not that alone.

There is no joy in sacrifice, death, revenge. Just as there is no joy in counting oneself. Arithmetic is the negation of joy.

Anyone who wants to live does not produce death. A transitory acceptance of the guillotine leads to its institutionalisation. But at the same time, no one who loves life embraces his exploiter. To do so would mean they are against life and for sacrifice, self-punishment, work and death.

In the graveyard of work, centuries of exploitation have accumulated a great mountain of revenge. The leaders of the revolution sit upon this mountain, impassively. They study the best way to draw profit from it. The charge of violence must therefore be aimed against the interests of the new power cast. Symbols and flags. Slogans and complicated analyses. The ideological apparatus avails itself to do what is necessary.

It is the work ethic that makes this utilisation possible. Whoever loves work and wants to take over the means of production does not want things to go ahead blindly. They know by experience that the bosses have had a strong

Life is so boring there is nothing to do except spend all our wages on the latest skirt or shirt. Brothers and sisters, what are your real desires? Sit in the drugstore, look distant, empty, bored, drinking some tasteless coffee? Or perhaps BLOW IT UP OR BURN IT DOWN.
The Angry Brigade

VII

The great spectacle of capital has swallowed us all up to our necks. Actors and spectators in turn. We alternate the roles, either staring open-mouthed at others or making others stare at us. We have alighted the glass coach, even though we know it is only a pumpkin. The fairy godmother's illusion has foiled our critical awareness. Now we must play the game. Until midnight, at least.

Poverty and hunger are still the driving forces of the revolution. But capital is widening the spectacle. It wants new actors on stage. The greatest spectacle in the world will continue to surprise us. Ever more complicated, better and better organised. New clowns are getting ready to mount the rostrum. New species of wild beasts will be tamed.

The supporters of quantity, the lovers of arithmetic, will be first in and will be blinded by the footlights. They will bring behind them the masses of necessity and the ideologies of blackmail.

But one thing they will not be able to get rid of is their seriousness. The greatest danger they face will be a laugh. In the spectacle of capital, joy is deadly. Everything is gloomy and funereal, everything is serious and orderly, everything is rational and programmed, precisely because it is all false and illusory.

As well as the crises, as well as other problems of under-development, as well as poverty and hunger, the last fight that capital will have to put up, the decisive one, is the fight against boredom.

The revolutionary movement will also have to fight it's battles. Not just the traditional ones against capital but new ones, against itself. Boredom is attacking it from within, is breaking it up, making it asphyxiating, uninhabitable.

value of labour. The search for joy can only come about through the search for play.

Play thus means something different to what we are used to considering it to be in the dimension of capital. Like serene idleness, the play that opposes itself to the responsibilities of life is a false, distorted image of what it really is. At the present stage of the clash and the relative constrictions in the struggle against capital, play is not a pastime but a weapon.

By a strange twist of irony the roles are reversed. If life is something serious, death is an illusion, in the sense that so long as we are alive death does not exist. Now the reign of death, i.e. the reign of capital, which denies our very existence as human beings and reduces us to 'things,' seems very serious, methodical and disciplined. But its possessive paroxysm, its ethical rigorousness, its obsession with 'doing' all hide a great illusion: the total emptiness of the commodity spectacle, the uselessness of indefinite accumulation and the absurdity of exploitation. So the great seriousness of the world of work and productivity hides a total lack of seriousness.

On the contrary, the refusal of this obtuse world, the pursuit of joy, dreams, utopia, in its declared "lack of seriousness," hides the most serious thing in life: the refusal of death.

Even on this side of the fence, in the physical confrontation with capital, play can take different forms. Many things can be done 'playfully' yet most of the things we do, we do very 'seriously,' wearing the death mask we have borrowed from capital.

Play is characterised by a vital impulse that is always new, always in movement. By acting as though we are playing, we charge our action with this impulse. We free ourselves from death. Play makes us feel alive. It gives us the emotion of life. In the other model of acting we do everything as though it were a task, as though we 'had' to do it as some kind of duty.

It is in the ever new emotion of play, quite the opposite of the alienation and madness of capital, that we are able to identify joy.

Here lies the possibility to break with the old world and identify with new aims and different values. Even if joy cannot be considered Man's aim, it is undoubtedly the dimension that makes the clash with capital different.

organisation on their side in order to make exploitation work. They think that just as strong and perfect an organisation will make liberation possible. Everything they can do must be done, productive growth must be saved at all costs.

What a swindle. The work ethic is the Christian ethic of sacrifice, the ethic of the bosses on the basis of which the massacres of history have followed each other with worrying regularity.

These people cannot comprehend that it is possible not to produce a surplus value, or that one could even refuse to do so. That it is possible to assert a will not to produce, capable of struggling both against the bosses' economic structures and the ideological ones that permeate the whole of Western thought.

It is essential to understand that the work ethic is at the basis of the quantitative revolutionary project. Any argument against work would be senseless if it were made by revolutionary organisations with their logic of quantitative growth.

To substitute the work ethic with the aesthetic of joy would not prevent life as so many worried comrades would have it. To the question: "What will we eat?" one could quite simply reply: "What we produce." Only production would no longer be the dimension in which man determines himself, as this would be transferred to the sphere of play and joy. One would be able to produce as something that became nature itself. So it would be possible to stop production at any moment, when there is enough. Only joy is uncontrollable. A force that will multiply the creative impulse of the revolution a thousandfold.

It would not be possible to measure the social wealth of the communist world by an accumulation of surplus value, even if it were managed by a minority calling itself the party of the proletariat. This situation reproduces power, and denies the very essence of anarchy. Communist social wealth comes from the potential for life that is realised with the revolution. Capitalist accumulation must not be substituted by a quantitative accumulation (even if managed by the party), but a qualitative one. The revolution of life takes the place of the simple economic revolution, productive potential that of crystallised production, joy that of the spectacle.

The negation of the spectacular market of capitalist illusions will create another kind of exchange. From fictitious quantitative change to a real qualitative one. Distribution will not base itself on objects and their illusionist reification, but on the meaning that the objects have for life. And this must be a life meaning, not a death one. So these objects will be limited to the precise

moment in which they are exchanged, and their significance will vary according to the situations in which they are exchanged.

The same object could have profoundly different 'values.' It will be personified. Nothing to do with production as we know it now in the dimension of capital. Exchange itself will have a different meaning when seen through the refusal of unlimited production.

There is no such thing as liberated work. There is no such thing as integrated labour (manual-intellectual). What does exist is the division of labour and the sale of the workforce, i.e. the capitalist world of production. The revolution is the negation of labour and the affirmation of joy. Any attempt to impose the idea of work, 'just' work, 'self-managed' work where the exploited are to reappropriate themselves of the productive process without exploitation, is a mystification.

The concept of self-management of production is only valid as a form of struggle against capitalism, in fact it cannot be separated from the idea of self-management of the struggle. If the struggle is extinguished, self-management becomes nothing more than self-management of one's own exploitation. If the struggle is victorious, the self-management of production becomes superfluous, because after the revolution the organisation of production becomes superfluous and counter-revolutionary.

*So long as you make the throw yourself,
everything is skill and easy winning; only
if you suddenly become the one catching
the ball that the eternal playmate throws,
at you, at your centre, with all his
strength, in one of those arcs of great,
divine bridge builders: only then is being
able to catch*

Rilke

VI

We all believe we have experienced joy. Every one of us believes we have enjoyed ourselves at least once in our lives.

Only this experience of joy has always been passive. We happen to enjoy ourselves. We cannot 'desire' our joy just as we cannot oblige joy to present itself when we want it.

All this separation between ourselves and joy depends on our being 'separated' from ourselves, cut in two by the process of exploitation.

We work all the year round to have the 'joy' of holidays. When these come round we feel 'obliged' to 'enjoy' the fact of being on holiday. A form of torture like any other. The same goes for Sundays. A dreadful day. The rarefying of the illusion of free time shows us the emptiness of the mercantile spectacle we are living in.

The same empty gaze alights on the half empty glass, the television, the football match, the heroin dose, the cinema screen, the traffic jam, the neon lights, the prefabricated homes that have completed the killing of the landscape.

To seek 'joy' in the depths of any one of the various 'renderings' of the capitalist spectacle would be pure madness. But that is exactly what capital wants. The experience of free time programmed by our exploiters is lethal. It makes you want to go to work. To apparent life one ends up preferring certain death.

No real joy can reach us from the rational mechanism of capitalist exploitation. Joy does not have fixed rules to categorise it. Even so, we must be able to desire joy. Otherwise we would be lost.

The search for joy is therefore an act of the will, a firm refusal of the fixed conditions of capital, i.e. its values. The first of these refusals is that of the