

1 May 2021...

After lockdown, let's look at the situation we're finding around us.



The pandemic has been the starting gun of a huge project of capitalist restructuring in which we are rapidly getting lost. London is already well within the bounds of being a 'smart city' — this means that every molecule in this seething metropole is in the process (or already) brought into one great artificial network: capitalism certainly, but largely virtual, nearly autonomous, diffused into everything around us, and into ourselves, into our bodies, into our minds.

Right now we are in the middle of a vast labyrinth. A spotless, serene dreamworld is being constructed. Total efficiency, total interconnection, total isolation. The world is being rapidly shrunk into the shape of what can be calculated, predicted and processed by Artificial Intelligence, Augmented Reality and the Internet of Things. The last vestiges of vital and human connection are being flushed away, replaced by the management of this routine of ruthless exploitation and utter despair.

All the while the living earth is being incinerated — it's already too late to stop this. We are already in the middle of the mass-extinction catastrophe. No worries. Capital will be here to transition from the 'destructive' practices of fossil fuel extraction to rare earth mineral mining (used for solar panels, wind turbines as well as all the smart technology their world is now predicated on), they're already using slave-labour excavation in Guinea and the Congo. And the masses in our former colonial outposts fleeing death and chaos from the resultant shortages and resource wars? Well, the Napier Barracks Concentration Camp, the thousands washing up on the shores of the Med, the militarised border and detention system, gives you a taste of how they'll deal with that scenario.



All the while markets drive into permanent instability, as familiar patterns fall away, 'productive' industry continues to be abandoned and speculative finance reasserts its domination over the world economy: there will be (and already are) massive crashes and crises. Not a problem. We remember the last decade of punishing austerity, the hurling of swathes of the exploited onto a scrapheap, the wiring of every aspect of our existence into a rapacious so called 'gig economy' at the same time as Victorian-style slum conditions increase at the margins, masses of this city can't afford food, unemployment exceeds 1981 levels: the playbook here is very well established.

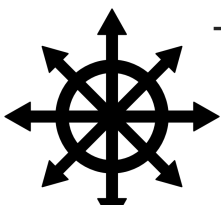
All the while surveillance technology — London already bristling with cameras, but supplemented by GPS, by our 'devices', by the very world we trudge through — is going into overdrive. Drones can be thrown into the mix too, and soon will be as common a sign of our ongoing occupation as patrol cars. Oh well. We know exactly how this will all be used. The same way that this country has built a sprawling carceral system to tag, bag and warehouse anyone who falls through the cracks of this megamachine — not to speak of the brutal treatment reserved for anyone with the audacity to stand and fight it. This 'bill' gives us an idea of which direction we're heading in on that front.

So we're losing our grip on things; the world is changing very quickly and we hardly know what to do with ourselves. Any form of struggle which has as its basis performative activist gestures, 'community organising' (whatever that means), 'raising awareness', enlisting more members to a party, issuing demands for reform: these are not just quantitative and reactionary, they correspond to a world which no longer exists. The way that capitalism is going (and has been for a while) is to actually realise Thatcher's dictum, to get rid of 'society'. In this neo-feudalism there simply are no 'politics', no 'rights', no 'democracy', no 'community', not even in name — there is nothing to even pretend to be able to influence. Just a churning vortex in which we are destined splinter and lose ourselves, winding out our time 'waiting' for something to break us out of this nightmare that will never come. Without dignity-- without passion, numbed, smothered, empty.

But we still have one thing that is really dangerous. We have an idea. An idea worth taking risks for, worth wagering what's left of our lives on. If we can gain the courage of our convictions we can set off on an adventure to assert, proudly and without fear, a reality — a way of being which can explode the contours of the future that's been laid out for us, of the grave that's already been dug, and is beckoning for us. Because this is exactly what power lacks. It can't even comprehend it. When it looks at the instability and chaos of our day it can only see something to be managed. It only sees the path of reintegration. But we can just about make out, if we try, something very different: a whole series of vulnerabilities, both material and mental (the terrain of battle is now everywhere), on the basis of which we can map out a plan of attack. Because once we smash the illusion of inevitability, once we assert the beauty and strength of our idea against this world, everything about it can be reinterpreted. There is no longer a population to be watched, tracked and managed. There is an area of contained individuals any one of whom may have the same anger, the same dreams, as we do. There is no longer an economy to sacrifice to. There is an exploited ready to fight alongside against exploiters **whose power is fragile and whose claims to legitimacy are long gone**. There is no longer an encroaching technology. There are so many nodes of an infrastructure, weak points ready to be targeted. Crucially there is no more inertia, there is an old world to be dispatched with, and a present moment, so long occulted and put off, ready to be seized back together, to be experimented with, to be lived to the full.



But what does this really mean? Do we just wait around for the next riot? What do we even do in a situation of mass insurrection? Are we to just be spectators, cheering on the ghettoised and excluded? Maybe contributing our own stone? And what happens the day after? The truth is that, at the moment, everything 'goes back to normal'. We need to take stock: we are already in a situation where they can't keep control of the streets, in this new climate of 'managed' instability. Just look around this burning earth today, even this country can't escape that trend, a quick glance to the west will satisfy you of that. In order to have a true, qualitative shift, we must break out of every routine, including those adorned in 'violent' trappings. We want to diffuse amongst ourselves and express to the world a vision of insurrection and social war which goes beyond fights with the cops — because contrary to anarchist lore the police are not the real enemy, they are simply in the way. The real enemy to confront with violence is our own reduced conception of what is possible, of what it means to live. To strip the mask off power, to see this system as the weak and frail thing it is, **we must see what in us, despite all appearances, is really strong**, and this is our capacity to begin an infinite, limitless, revolt, to break open our reduced imaginations— to wager our lives on that which cannot be represented, mediated or modelled. Against that, the courts, police stations, parliaments, boardrooms, the military, silicon valley, the chamber of commerce, the NATO/G8/G20/COP-?, the 'anti-terror command' centres, become what they really are — just so many absurd spectacles, with so many hammy actors, waiting to be charged off the stage, when the audience no longer has it in them to watch and cower in the dark a second longer.



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