

ANTI-AUTHORITY

DAILY REVOLT

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# RETURN FIRE

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INDIVIDUAL WILL DE-CIVILISATION

**We Are Not Afraid of Their Ruins...  
We Carry a New Chaos in Our Hearts**  
(rage and bile from the gut)

**Honor Amongst Thieves**  
(writing from the widening circles of the U.K. judicial estate)

**New Technologies, Extraterrestrial Exploitation  
and the Future of Capitalism  
& 'Let's Disconnect the Cables'**

**'A Smart New World of Slaves'**  
(the opening phases of Industry 4.0)

...and more!

**VOLUME 5, CHAPTER I**

**AUTUMN 2017**



*... the unknown, the uncertain, seduces me. I'm filled with a desire for adventure, and I don't give a damn for success.*

*I hate your society of bureaucrats and administrators, millionaires and beggars. I don't want to adapt to your hypocritical customs nor to your false courtesies. I want to live out my enthusiasms in the pure, fresh air of freedom. Your streets, drafted according to plan, torture my gaze, and your uniform buildings make the blood in my veins boil with impatience. And that's enough for me. I'm going to follow my own path, according to my passions, changing myself ceaselessly, and I don't want to be the same tomorrow as I am today. I stroll along and I don't let my wings be clipped by the scissors of any one person. I share none of your moralism. I am going forth, eternally passionate and burning with the desire to give myself to the world, to the first real person that approaches me, to the ragged-trousered traveller, but never to the grave and conceited wise-men who would regulate the length of my stride. Nor to the doctrinaire who would like to clutter my mind with formulas and rules. I am no intellectual; I am a human being – a woman who feels a great vibration within herself before the impulses of nature and amorous words. I hate every chain, every hindrance; I love to walk along, nude, letting my flesh be caressed by the rays of the voluptuous sun. And, oh, old man! I will care so very little when your society breaks into a thousand pieces and I can finally live my life.*

*Who are you, little girl, fascinating like a mystery and savage like instinct?*

*I am Anarchy.*

# WE ARE NOT AFRAID OF THEIR RUINS... WE CARRY A NEW CHAOS IN OUR HEARTS



Inmates of Swaleside prison (Isle of Shippey, U.K.), amongst the destruction of a wing during rioting 23.12.16; during a 26-day wave of prison unrest including the largest uprising for over 25 years (600 inmates of HMP Birmingham defeating multiple riot squads and burning the Offender Managing Unit with £6million damages, and attacking screws and setting fire to CCTV cameras at HMP Hull): this September another wing of HMP Birmingham was severely damaged in more disorder

[ed. – Written before the eventual passing of reforms to the Penal Code in the Spanish State, by the anti-psychiatry collective *Asamblea de Majaras*. In addition to its impact on those considered mentally 'unstable', it legalised abandoning imperiled migrants off the Mediterranean coast to their fate at sea, raised formerly-considered petty theft to a higher level of punishment, and upheld the life sentence. It passed beside the better-known 'Gag Law' that significantly constricts protest acts and underhandedly 'reduces' low-end jailable offenses to automatic crippling fines (thus increasing control while appearing less authoritarian by reducing jailings). We have nothing more to add to this text – which says nothing new, but is written with a lot of heart – except that we have taken the liberty during translation of amending the places where our social enemies are addressed as a "you": while we empathise with the need for cathartic expression, we don't direct dialogue towards those we aim to negate, even as a poetic exercise. The authors can contact us if they want to talk about this.]

## MACROCOSM: THE SURFACE CREATURES

Once upon a time an old country was scraped down to its bones while a new country was fashioned from the scraps of other ones from across the seas. Square fields and then square lawns held everything anyone could possibly want, and much more. Within only a few hundred years, vast stretches of artificial lighting would make the night sky safe: *Nothing slithers, nothing crawls under here!*

**And yet not everyone handled the transition well, then or now.** What was the meaning of a life spent in squares? Some fell ill, in various ways, and called out for help.

But the medicine people were long gone by then. Called alternately or overlappingly traditional healers, shamans, wortcunners (knowers of herbs), midwives, wise women, witches and other things depending on language and tradition, these were the wild ones who dwelt beyond village and hedgerow, at the edges of jungles and mountain hollows. Their conceptions of the world included nuanced sound and odor, creatures above and below, portals inner and outer. Their medicines came from stone and root and flower and meal and touch and prayer.

Naturally the medicine people were some of the first to be suppressed, as always, no matter the continent.

**And so new kinds of medicine people had to be developed in the new country, the kind who could think in squares,** to stitch together the people's minds and hearts. The first psychologists formed an abstract mental medicine they called New Thought.

Inharmonious thoughts, they said, were the source of all disease. This was in line with the dominant religious sects of the time, so New Thought looked a lot like old Calvinism [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg23*]. In either case, emotional spontaneity of any kind was extremely suspect.

The people themselves, then, were the source of their problems, not living in squares. To have healthy minds, they must think better thoughts. They must make their hearts small and predictable and ladylike.

**The New Thought fad passed, but not its main features, which soon enough formed the backbone of what became known as the self-help and mental health fields.** Herein one constantly examines one's inner life for incorrect or negative thoughts and hedonistic emotional excesses, especially in the case of positive and cognitive-behavioral psychologies [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg14*]. In the popular culture, even cruder New Age-type tenets, in which bad things such as disease happen due to incorrect personal vision, still reign.

**Chemically and/or mechanically suppressing negative thoughts and feelings has become almost a national religion,** thus returning us full circle back to Calvinism. The poor are poor, for instance, because poverty is all they strive for. In this land every negative thought, feeling or circumstance is ultimately one's own fault.

And so the people never did learn to fully touch or see their own grief, their anger over living in squares. There is no cultural container for a longing for the wild within and without. Strong emotions are supposed to play out on screens, not through bodies, unless they are bodies shown on screens.

This Imbolc<sup>[1]</sup> season let us begin to reclaim our wild interiors, our sadness, our anger, our irritability, our depression and disease and disease. Let us start here in the long reclamation of the wilds without, knowing that refusal of grief and death refuses also sensuality and rebirth.

1. ed. – Part of the *Wheel of the Year* annual cycle of festivals observed by some modern Celtic-inspired pagans; the first cross-quarter day following Midwinter (varying considerably in name and date depending on the group celebrating it).

We proclaim from our madness, rebellious and contagious, that we don't care about the penal codes and their reforms because we do not believe in their laws or in their disorders.

Since we were born we have lived in turmoil and subjected to the rule of law, the family, religion, medicine, school, work, husband, father, state... and disobeying them all, and for that reason they have labeled us with their despicable assortment of incurable and chronic diseases.

They condemn us for life even before we are born, and we will continue shitting on their scientific, political, economic, social and religious truths, because obedience and submission are the only true diseases.

We began a long tormented journey in which we were torn from our natural environment to join the system of a world to which we do not want to adapt. We will always be uneasy, unstable, critical,

irritating, miserable, emotional, passionate, restless, resistant, distracted, loving, hyperactive, overflowing... and warriors, because we will not give up germinating our madness in the face of the blackmail and emotional conflicts with which they want to domesticate us and the permanent confrontation between us and them.

We are sick with a dark bile of rage that stirs like a storm against all those who feel safe and secure in this uncertain world that, day by day, destroys us. They contaminate the air we breathe with sulfur and uranium. The waters of the rivers are increasingly toxic due to their heavy metal slag discharges. Their emissions of dioxides, methane and fluorinated polluting gases are suffocating and burning nature and putting at risk the survival of all animals, human or non-human, and plant beings. They covered the planet with a thick skin of toxic black paste and surrounded the territory with rail tracks, highways, metal fences, concrete walls, high voltage towers and barbed-wire fences... separating us from our siblings and neighbors and filling the atmosphere with electromagnetic radiation. They keep the mountains seriously ill from wounds opened by quarries, mineral extraction and deforestation. They imprison non-human animals to die in industrial farms, and they enlist us in industrial centers of penitentiary exploitation. They bomb civilian populations in the name of freedom, justice and democracy, plundering entire countries for questioning their hegemonic model of capitalist, white, patriarchal, western and Christian life, leading thousands of people into the blind alley of their misery, destruction and death.

And it is they, the self-proclaimed guardians of the freedoms of the world, of this destructive world order that is nothing new, who consider us "crazy" and "dangerous subjects" to justify our gags, the pharmacological straitjackets, the confinement to perpetuity and the death sentence. Our "madness" is not fooled by the modern designs of the democratized chemical lobotomies and shock therapies that they use as torment and torture in the most bloody of dictatorships... *because they fear us.*

They, those who throw us out of our houses, those who after exploiting us in their factories force us into unemployment. They, those who determine who has more "right" to live in a territory that is not theirs and in which they can only maintain their privileges by the harsh repression and by the destructive capacity of the weapons of their armies... *They fear us.*

They, the ones who subject human groups to a suffocating State of Exception [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg5*], surveilling each of their gestures and imposing the control of a police state... *They fear us.*

They, who deny our right as women to decide on our bodies, at the same time that they violate the bodies of the indigenous or those that they consider "less valid" with sterilization [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg29*]... *They fear us.*

They enclose us in their stale and tormented religious morals, they decide for us what our desires must be and they conceive no other reality than the model of duality. They impose their dogma that we can only experience ourselves as men or women and that only then can we love and desire ourselves, when the realities of our drives are much broader and more beautiful and are not determined by their prejudices. They have no scruples to sign treaties on the rights to sexual freedom, but then they impose their psychiatric treatments to eradicate our "transsexuality" and submit us to surgeries that shape us to the hegemonic binomial of a desire that we do not feel.

They are the same ones who sign grandiose treaties and conventions on human rights of the child, affirming the obligatory nature of schooling, then deny them food. Children can die of malnutrition and hunger but *with compulsory education*, because they do not care that there are no fundamental principles that guarantee the feeding of the smallest and most needy creatures, only their training and control. It is they who go with humanitarian aid to invade those countries where the infant mortality rate is alarming, and to take their wealth in exchange for leaving all their poisons.

This humanitarian aid is their alibi for the looting, the plunder, the torture, the rape of the women and the destruction that they themselves will later rebuild according to their order. **As in the past, they keep leaving their trace of pain and desolation wherever they go.** They are the lords of death, those who invent pathologies to prescribe harmful palliative drugs. They claim to cure more and more diseases and they chronify our agony making us dependent on their medicines, their merchandise, the compulsive and unrestrained consumption that treasures property as a privileged inalienable right and not as the theft, looting or plundering of humanity.

They condemn us to a brutalizing leisure that reproduces their miseries and estranges us. We are sick because of their constant violence in all areas of our lives. We are sickened and exhausted by exploitation and by each of their moral and heteronormative prejudices. We are sick because of the deep discomfort caused by the daily alienation of a life that estranges.

They have the world in their hands and they will have our bodies bound but they will never manage to appropriate our will. Our convictions are solid and firm, and we

know that we are facing a disproportionately unequal struggle, but we will uphold our dreams and we will take not a step back. **That is why they fear us.** They are afraid of the overflowing wrath of the miserable. They are afraid of the implacable look of our rage. And that is why they are going to impose this new reform of the penal code behind the backs of the people and against the people, but not a thousand reforms, nor all the laws that fit in their miserable dreams, will silence our voices, nor exhaust our desire to fight against the epidemic of their culture of death.

It is we, the dispossessed, against them, the possessors. Their fear is reflected in each law; our blood is ignited and when they spill it, they will burn along with their world. We are children of a dignified revolution that germinates in memory and we will not forget, nor forgive.

We know that this autumn they will approve a new reform of the penal code. Another reform with which they want to gag and lock us up, without the ropes that bind us or the walls of the cells being seen. This reform is not just against us the crazy, the women, the transsexuals, the migrants, the resistant, the precarious... It is against all the people who defend ourselves from their greed and their unlimited abuses. It is against all the people who are aware that no government is going to bring us freedom. Their laws are against all those people who recognize that only we can decide on the destiny of our lives, and not the markets, the financial entities, the economic or political interests, the reasons of State...

In front of each of their repressive measures, we will remain firm and disobedient before all eventualities. Our resistance will stop being that of survival, to become a transforming struggle that will defend its spaces of freedom side-by-side. We will feel a lot of fear in front of their armies of thugs and hired mercenaries, but our courage, our determination, our desire to live in freedom, the mutual support and solidarity of our sisters and brothers, will help us **overcome all our fears.**

They can start building more prisons, asylums and gas chambers right now, because **the earth will be too small.**



Image from a flyer left at the site of an arsoned church construction in Peru, 11.06.11: "Family / School / Work / Psychiatry / Church - DESTROY WHAT DESTROYS YOU"

# HONOR AMONGST THIEVES

[ed. – From a two-part series 'At Your Service: Tales from Community Service', from [thesituationlondon.wordpress.com/](http://thesituationlondon.wordpress.com/)]

I'm going to dive straight in, it doesn't really matter how I got to this moment; from the hands of thugs in blue uniform, to the loving embrace of the sham judicial system weighted against the poor/non white and indeed anyone who doesn't fit the citizen factory's standard model, through the hands of a lazy probation office more concerned about why I identify as gender- and sexuality-queer than my welfare, broken wrist or what work I'd like to do; and finally into a council estate in Sydenham (South London) where I'm expected to clean railings for seven hours a day with one half-hour break and a theoretical further two fifteen minute fag breaks for no money whilst some middle aged, wannabe screw gets on my case every time I miss a spot.

I arrive at five to nine, and spend ten minutes looking for the room that we're supposed to be in; by the time I find it it's about ten past nine – today's particularly jobsworth supervisor decides that time will be taken off my hours and I will therefore have more to complete. Suddenly there is an explosion, five guys (two of them literally jumping out of their seats) start kicking off, fighting MY corner, telling the fucking supervisor that I don't deserve to lose 15 minutes from my days work and that they should give me a break. After about ten minutes the arguing subsides and low and behold by the end of the day I've been given my full time – this is the vein my day begins in, I feel like one of the tribe.

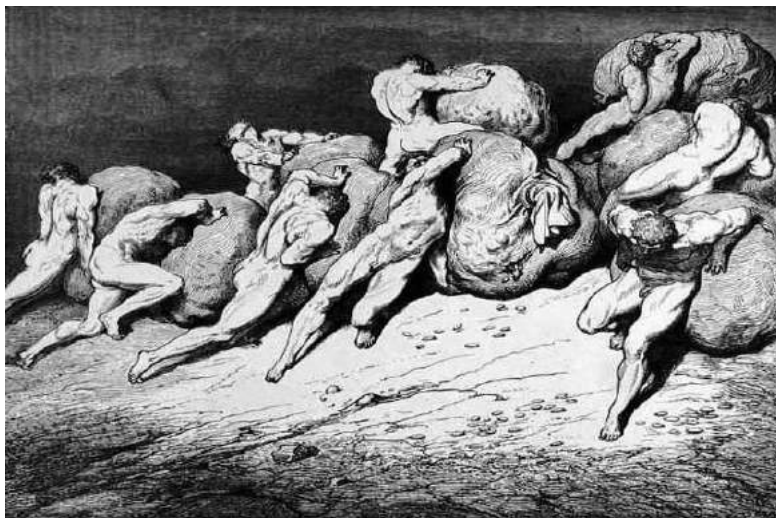
**Flash forward a day or to and I'm at another site in another part of the city sat under the shade of a tree, all of us (there are 4) convicts sharing a spliff and talking about our various crimes.**

I feel more at home here than I have in a long time, we take it in turns to watch each others backs, pick up the slack of the guy rolling the spliff, and cover for each other when someone wants to sneak off to the shop (an offense that can get you sent home, and therefore breached which means going back to court and potentially facing prison). Everyone here is friendly and helpful, of all the guys I've met on these "projects" not one has done any harm to an individual – all us are victims of a system that targets us for our

poverty, ethnicity, or lack of complicity with our own oppression/refusal to assimilate.

Like in the workplace, or the community, organizing happens through a series of friendships, and through organization we are stronger. Similarly to the workplace our organization is most apparent when we are in opposition, when we must fight for our survival, when we come into direct conflict with the authorities that are enslaving us. When a supervisor attempts to send one combatant home for not working quickly enough, our collective action, our friendship, and our realization of what this would mean enable us to combat effectively the wishes of the supervisor (who in this case has no understanding of the loneliness and alienation of the court room, the bias of the judge, or the reality of the prison) and protect our comrade through the threat of non compliance.

**Isolation is a parasite. In the footsteps towards our current situations, each of us was singled out, plucked from the homogeneous mass by the camera, the state thug, the security guard, the ticket barrier, the bank; isolated from our friends, our comrades, our lovers (physically in the cell, the prison, the courthouse, and mentally in so far as our charges, our convictions are our individual crosses to bear), and attempted to be individualized, demonized and disconnected. In finding each other, in sharing our stories and in experiencing struggle together we come a step closer to liberating ourselves both from our physical situations and our subconscious labels as outcasts; our high visibility jackets become a symbol of our brotherhood [sic] where they were intended to mark us out, to other us, and power shifts back into our favor, away from the hands of those who oppress us.**



“Judgement does not come suddenly; the proceedings gradually merge into the judgement.”

– Franz Kafka

Friendship sticks; there is honor amongst thieves. **Many friendships form from our “projects” which extend beyond the parameters of the seven hour days in which we are forced together.** Many combatants drive each other to and from the days slavery, we socialize after “work” and we learn more about each others situations, we build solidarity, we advise each other on claiming benefits, personal security against state intrusion, and on basic methods of survival in the face of capital. Together we make each other stronger.

**And then the state strikes me a blow.**

The phone rings: “Hello Mr / Mrs / n/a ———, I'm just calling from the control centre to tell you that you have been redirected to an A.P placement<sup>[1]</sup>; from now on you will be working X/Y/Z day in a charity shop; you will be the only community payback member at this placement.” End call. I protest to every level of authority, but that's just the problem: I am forced cap in hand as an isolated individual to the feet of my oppressor, without my fellow combatants to back me up I inevitably lose my battle and I'm shunted to the charity shop a few miles from my home. It's OK there (at the shop), the days are easier and as an individual I'm treated more fairly by those who own the rights to my body for seven hours a day

than on the “projects”, but I'm isolated and alone in my struggle against my detention. I find some solace in my sisters, brothers, and gender-fuckers enslaved on the workfare program<sup>[2]</sup> (what we share is of course that our bodies are the property of someone else, and our labour does nothing to improve our material conditions) who are similarly the victims of their own low economic status; but it is not the same, because whilst our

struggle is not connected; we are not organizing for the same freedoms or against the same oppression.

After my first day I call up a friend from one of my old projects. I discover that they too have been moved onto an A.P placement and are finding the adjustment similarly hard. We hang out and we chat about it, and we conspire to fight it, and we vent; but our ability to act in solidarity with each other has ultimately been stripped from us and it is hard to feel that same feeling of camaraderie when we are not fighting shoulder to shoulder any more.

**I continue to meet my fellow combatants from the "service" of the terrible community, and I will continue to do so;** the state can not take that away from us. I will continue to talk with them, to share with them, and to publish with them tales from our enslavement; we will never surrender.

My advice to anyone about to start on the community payback program would be to try your dammed hardest to get on a project, not an AP placement. You can help this process along, by answering your initial assessment questionnaire (which will be done by your case manager) in a way that makes it seem like you may need supervision. If they think you are likely to steal anything (bring up previous convictions or fixed penalties for theft if you have them), hurt yourself or anyone else or anything similar to this, you will almost certainly have to be put on a "project". Good luck to all future combatants.

1. AP or agency placement means a program of work that is not directly supervised by Serco [ed. – international corporation involved in probation schemes and other parts of the U.K. detention estate]/the state; it is outsourced to a charity or other organization who feels it can benefit from our slave labour in order to lower its running costs and maximize profit; from Serco's point of view these placements are gold-dust since they reduce staff costs massively (taking away the need for supervisors, much of the infrastructure etc) and from the state's point of view they are a perfect tool in isolating, alienating, and reducing our power; if we don't see each other we can't organize.

2. For more info on workfare see [johnnyvoid.wordpress.com](http://johnnyvoid.wordpress.com) & [boycottworkfare.org](http://boycottworkfare.org)

## MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

*"The psychiatrist concluded her evaluation: "I would consider this individual incorrigible. He has much hostility in him for being poor and seems to have an unending reservoir of energy. This type of habitual criminal neither profits from experience nor punishment. He can only work against society and thereby derive power, and he will always be able to find followers whom he can impress with his intelligence and destructive drives. He will never be able to work within society. Diagnosis: sociopathic personality, antisocial type." "* – Joseph Wambaugh, *'The Onion Field'*

It's already here, under the carpet, behind the sofa; the pedo, the bogeyman, those outlaws out there... Not in our home! Not in our English castle! Not our children! Send them to army cadets, think about revisiting church... look! Another royal baby, royal wedding, anything to distract us from the risk of the unknown, so we don't have to question our own comfort zone...

*It's behind you! It's behind you!* No it's fucking not. It stinks, it's right under the bridge of your nose. Here's how it goes: *Mr Acceptable is Mr Scared, Mr Scared never dares to do what he wants, Mr Scared becomes Mr Compromise, Mr Compromise just goes along with everyone else, Mr Compromise eventually becomes Mr Very Frustrated who turns into Mr Bitter who sees himself as Mr Hard-Done-By, without looking their relationship to the rest of the world, so Mr Misinformed goes quietly about his business, piling shit on top of shit, never really thinks and trips on every obstacle that comes their way, then when their life comes to an end, they're still in a muddle and can't decide whether they're just Mr Ordinary or Mr Blind! So they die as Mr Confused! There is no moral to this short passage because Mr Mediocre never saw himself as anything less or anything more than Mr Ordinary so had nothing of real value to say.*

We are slowly dying. Some of us are content and contain ourselves with punching out our own eyes, going blind and fading away. Some of us are never grateful, always asking why; stifled artists who want to see things a different way, like punching out windows to see if anyone will wake up! *Turn on the light!*

We end up doubting ourselves and our own assessment of what we feel is desirable. Glued to the spot, angry but unable to take action, forced to anesthetise the situation... self-harm

instead of state-harm. We internalise the misery nationally, state of the nation, *"it's your round John innit? I'll have another Guinness."*

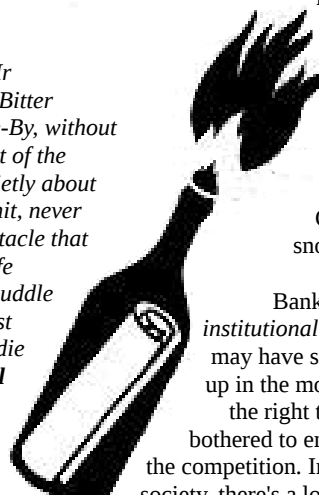
Do we live fake lives? **We wake up and the sun's shining, we are happy. No, wrong, we wake up, we take a happy pill, yeah now the sun's shining.** We drag ourselves to jobs that don't mean a thing to us; we do it because it brings in the cash, it is the only equation we have worked out to survive so far.

If we crave violence because our emotions are not being fulfilled, we can have virtual reality or some other simulation, and there's war reenactment tailored to business-as-usual. We can see nudity everywhere except out there in the streets, in our day-to-day lives; we can watch porn, maybe we can have sex, but is that the only level of connection? **Are people emotionally involved anymore? Is there any reason to be?** Are people connected, is there any community? Do we just sit in the pub or club and try to hear each other speak over the music and drunken voices, does it feel worth competing in the struggle to communicate? Where can we meet to try to build meaningful

relationships, instead of shallow acquaintances, where we live so separate from each other in our propped-up fantasy worlds? Where are people in their thirties; too scared to let their hair down?! Given up? Sat in the corner snogging Facebook?

Banksy [ed. – quasi-institutionalised Bristol graffiti artist] may have said some people just don't get up in the morning, they just don't have the right trainers; so they haven't bothered to enter the rat-race. They ignore the competition. In the commerce of daily society, there's a lot of people that are seen as drop-outs, but there are some of us even though conventionally crushed *we have risen in our own field*, to claim our own little bit. Because some of us know what is possible, the days when inside us we stride like giants in the knowledge that despite of all their security measures we are still able to lift our fists and strike their apparatus... even though we know inside we are not giants. Maybe fleas... difficult to find...

(G4S) warning this vehicle sometimes contains ANTI-SYSTEM SMART ROBBERS



# NEW TECHNOLOGIES, EXTRATERRESTRIAL EXPLOITATION & THE FUTURE OF CAPITALISM

[ed. – Translated from Catalan; a continuation of the work started by Distri Josep Gardenyes in an earlier text 'A Wager on the Future', a very incisive analysis of (among other things) changes in the property regime enforced by contemporary capitalism's cutting edge, as well as the futher-reaching colonisation of our imaginaries achieved by the above; expect excerpts in future volumes of Return Fire. Currently, the U.S. Government is preparing to revive the directive for a permanent American base on the moon to build to eventual missions to Mars; also, as 2017 draws towards its close, talk of weaponising space has also been back on their agenda, contrary to the treaty cited below.]

One of the themes mentioned in "A Wager on the Future" that was received with skepticism or even laughter was the affirmation that the colonization of outer space might be the only exit capitalism has from the crises it has generated.

We wanted to begin 2017 by dedicating a little more attention to this affirmation.

2017 is the year of Google's Lunar X Prize, through which the North American corporation (as important to 21st century capitalism as Ford was to 20th century capitalism) is offering \$20 million to the first company that manages to send a landing craft to the moon, drive 500 meters, and transmit high-resolution images back to Earth. But they have to do it this year. And there are already various teams that are getting ready to meet the challenge<sup>[1]</sup>.

One of which is Moon Express, which has already become the first company in history to receive legal permission, from the US government in this case, to carry out commercial exploitations on the moon's surface. If this team makes it to the moon – and they already have the necessary financing and a schedule of test launches – they won't only win the Prize, they will also drop off a commercial payload that represents the first step in setting up an equipment delivery service to the moon, which will make the lunar mining of Helium-3 (a valuable fuel for nuclear reactors) feasible.

Another company, Planetary Resources, claims that the mining of metals and water on asteroids could be a trillion dollar business. For them, water (and the hydrogen it contains, which could be used as spaceship fuel) is "the oil of space." These are not empty words. Planetary Resources is another company that has a business plan and the technology needed to begin carrying out the mining it envisions.

On the 14th of January, Space X returned to space. It's one of the companies of Elon Musk (who is also preparing self-driving



Castelo Branco, Portugal, 08/09/10: wreckage of a €3 million arson that destroyed all machinery and materials on the site of testing for the heat-resisting coating of the first European Space Agency space shuttle; the only institute carrying out such testing at that time

cars for commercial sale; the technology already works and the only obstacles are the legal regulations), the billionaire whose personal crusade is the colonization of Mars in the next two decades. Space X fixed a design flaw in its rockets and on the 14th made an effective launch, deploying 10 commercial satellites from the same rocket, which, subsequently, returned automatically to Earth, landing on a Space X drone ship waiting – with its entirely robotic crew – in the Pacific Ocean. The autonomous and reusable rockets (one could say, *environmentally friendly*) are one of the foundations of Musk's plan for reaching Mars in a commercially feasible way. He has already developed a business plan for developing the technology and acquiring the resources needed to complete the mission.

These are not isolated or insignificant companies. **And the State is also paying attention to extraterrestrial colonization.** The UN Treaty on Outer Space, from 1966, holds that space and space objects cannot be armed or claimed as territory, and that any economic activity had to be peaceful and for the good of all humanity. In 2015, in the Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act, the US government clarified the legal question, establishing the legal right of private companies to exploit the moon, asteroids, and other space objects. It gives private entities the right to own and sell resources extracted from space objects, but not to possess the object outright. **In effect, they can mine the moon until it's empty, but the private companies working there with their robotic factories couldn't be considered the owners.**

The dotcom boom, which burst in 2000, shows that immense amounts of capital can be invested in companies that do not generate any profits for quite a few years before provoking a crash (in this case, it

was six years). In fact, the crash didn't come until the moment when a few new corporations showed the capacity to become profitable and productive, corporations that today are among the most powerful in the world, like Google, Amazon, and Facebook. We are at the beginning of a phase of massive investment and growth in the new sector of extraterrestrial transport and mining. The venture capitalists of this sector enjoy the advantage that the logistical foundation of their dream (everything connected with the launching of satellites, with their crucial military [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg33*] and commercial uses) is already in place and profitable. Similarly, Columbus didn't have to invent the long-distance ships or the navigation equipment [to begin the European colonisation of the so-called 'New World'] (which had already been developed by the Portuguese in the luxurious commercial circuits of the Indian Ocean), he just had to take them further.

**They still have a few years to yield profits with extraterrestrial extraction before the bubble bursts. If they achieve it, capitalism will once again undergo an intense growth and the moment of maximum vulnerability and maximum popular rage that the institutions now face will have passed.**

Extraterrestrial colonization is no longer a trope of science fiction. But speaking of science fiction, we must also point out the great imaginary production carried out by Hollywood and other centers of cultural work, which have redirected our gaze to the colonization of space. Since the 19th century, there have been occasional works that posed journeys beyond Planet Earth, but the current frenetic production is qualitatively and quantitatively incomparable. Its effect is not only the normalization of extraterrestrial activity, it

also accustoms us to imagine the first steps of taking our civilization and the capitalist economy beyond the Earth's gravity well.



**We are on the cusp of an event as important for the advance of capitalism and the war against life as the colonization of the Americas.** As Bob Richards, chief executive officer of Moon Express, said, *"We are now free to set sail as explorers to Earth's eighth continent, the Moon, seeking new knowledge and resources to expand Earth's economic sphere for the benefit of all humanity."*

Faced with this new reality in construction, *what are we to do?*

The fetishization of new technologies, common among certain circles of social antagonists, is the cruelest possible self-betrayal, comparable to the racist and myopic celebration of colonialism offered up by Marx and his sycophantic followers<sup>[2]</sup>.

Luddism [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg53**] need not be a rejection of "all technology" (understood as any tool that human beings have come up with in the last hundred thousand years<sup>[3]</sup>), and in fact, the first luddites, slandered by Marx and other progressives, did not reject the artisanal techniques that permitted them to maintain control over their productive activity; they rejected the technological impositions that benefited the owners and violently changed their way of life, and they rejected the police power that made such impositions possible [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg85**]. Piracy, hacking, and the readaptation of technologies is a vital current that could exist in a fertile conflict with more naturalist currents. But the populist adoration of all new technology is an acritical gesture in support of the State and capitalism.

**A first step is the elaboration of a subversive critique, and above all a subversive practice, of the latest technological impositions on our lives.**

We are also faced with the theoretical task of conceiving how these changes will affect capitalism. As we affirmed in "23 Theses Concerning Revolt", the property regime that defined class society is already expiring. Outer space – for example a moon without owners, but with many

exploiters – could be the ideal terrain for deploying the new regime of exploitation, based in use and access more than in property (a relation that is too stable in the eyes of financiers and the State).

Another question is that of work. Various 19th century socialists confusedly predicted that technological advances would cause the inauguration of a society of leisure and abundance. **We should not commit a similar theoretical error now.** The State invents work. Profitability is a secondary concern. Productive work in space will be overwhelmingly robotic. This is a part of the same trend towards roboticization that we see in industry on Earth. And this roboticization has not represented, at any moment, a reduction in the human labor force on a global level. It means, on the contrary, a growth of wage work in the service, care, sex work, engineering, and design sectors. The final two are the domain of privileged workers, the intellectual capital which states will increasingly compete for, the producers of the ethereal merchandise of the new economy (and here we are thinking of the employees of Google and Apple, of the old corporations that have adapted to the new economy, and of the small startups, that produce programs, aesthetics, and systems).

The other sectors – service, care, and sex work – are feminized labor that now will become more generalized. **What effect will the monetization and generalization of the previously non-remunerated labors, that yesteryear defined womanhood and patriarchal segregation, have for the patriarchy?** We will leave the answering to more perspicacious comrades [transl. – *companyses, comrades in feminine*], but in passing we can point out on the one hand the new laws in various democratic countries ceding certain rights to trans people, and on the other hand the counterattack by the patriarchal institutions within the extensive growth of the Right<sup>[4]</sup>.

**Capitalism has always depended on slavery**, but the position of slavery within productive and reproductive processes changes, often as a response to our resistance (abolition of visible slavery in the democratic countries, feminist movements, autonomous workers' struggles in automotive factories...). What yesterday was a sphere of unwaged labor, tomorrow will be waged, and vice versa. Feminine labor is pushed into the labor market and productive labor becomes unwaged once again. **But this time, the slaves are robots and their activity is one hundred percent legible, rationalized, and surveilled: under State control.** The transition will not be immediate nor homogeneous. Surely several decades will pass before timber,

chocolate, and other sectors in the poorest countries find it profitable to replace their human slaves with robots.

The tendency towards roboticization will only make undeniable our own incapacity to take over the means of production, as well as the impossibility of the proposal itself. The majority of productive workers will be robots and the others will make up the most privileged stratum of the exploited. This reality has already come into being in a large part of the field of automobile production, the industrial process that defined the previous era of capitalism. **The most modern automobile companies and the IT companies already have mostly robotic factories, fabricating products ideated by well paid engineers and designers, those highly skilled workers with multiple degrees, who see work as self-actualization, people tied to the means of production and loyal to capitalism.**



It will be even more definitive in outer space, where nearly 100% of the workforce will be robotic, mining the fuels (green energy [sic] like hydrogen cells and nuclear) that will propel the next cycle of accumulation. And that cycle will be defined as the expansion of productive circuits to a new territory: the moon, the asteroid belt, and Mars; thus preparing the terrain for the subsequent cycle of accumulation, which might involve more human labor, the terraforming and settlement of Mars (following the pattern identified by [Giovanni] Arrighi<sup>[5]</sup>, of one cycle of geographic and institutional expansion, followed by another cycle that intensifies the exploitation and control within the previously colonized terrain<sup>[6]</sup>).

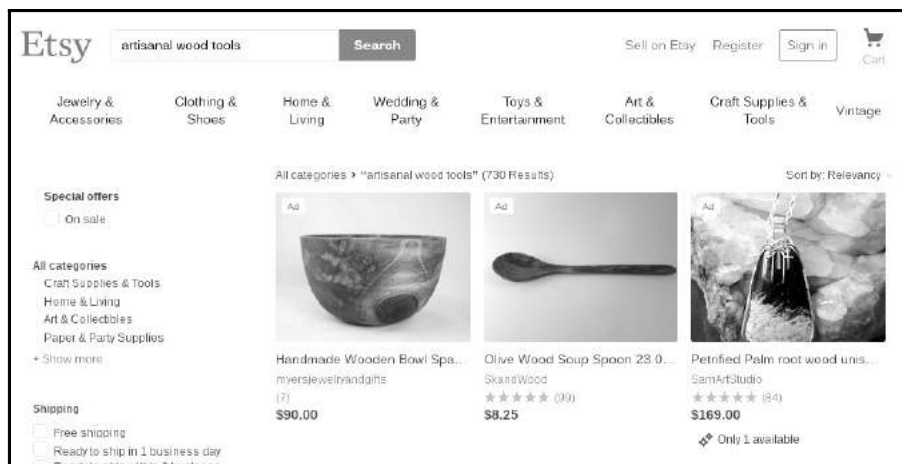
The means of production *are and always have been* a machine of devastation. We do not want them and now we cannot even seriously propose their expropriation. In the 21st century, there is no other remedy but to champion and practice the recovery of artisanal knowledge and skills that put life and survival, on a healthy and natural scale, in everyone's reach. **But this path of struggle, like any other, is mined with traps.** The principal trap is commercialization. With more privileged consumers – the designers, programmers, and systems architects – more artisanal



producers can be supported, above all when the tastes of the former show a decided preference for things local and eco-friendly. **Let's take the example of agriculture.** In a near future, it is possible that energetic efficiency (how many calories of energy go into producing one calorie of food) becomes a metric for evaluating the effective use of capital. For agriculture to be more sustainable and more energy efficient, machines and petroleum would have to be substituted by more human labor. **Faced with the danger of a population with no work, capitalists, and otherwise the State, have always invented new forms of work.** And the ecological crisis is proving to be ever more serious [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg15*]. A possible solution would be for capitalism to encourage local agriculture, making use of its new capacity for decentralization. Thus, it would take giant steps towards solving the ecological crisis (created in large part by industrial agriculture), it would give employment to more people, it would offer privileged consumers a new fetish product, and it would colonize small-scale agriculture, transforming it into a *legible* commercial activity when historically it was always a source of resistance and autonomy [ed. – see *Fraud, Fantasy & Fiction in Environmental Writing/The Invention of the Tribe/Q*]. In the poorer countries, in the absence of many privileged consumers and a strong state, NGOs could take charge of this process; in fact, they already are. In the US, where the portion of the population involved in agricultural work had already dropped below one percent thanks to hyper-industrialization, this turn towards agricultural growth via small-scale production is already happening. Farmers' markets, above all in the zones of Information Technology production, have already returned from oblivion to be once again a common affair.

**The new artisanry, in order to be subversive, must be luddite, based in practices of sabotage and in illegible networks (which is to say, opaque from above) of qualitative exchange (which is to say, gift economies [ed. – see 'Rejoin the Circle'], like those that were practiced in the most radical collectives during the Spanish Civil War). But today, the most relevant machines for sabotage are not mechanical looms but social machines, those that mediate communication, that produce and control the networks of socialization and sociability, and that define a way of being in the world.**

We cannot continue using arguments of convenience. Capitalism is also bad in moments of expansion and wealth; capitalist technology is also bad when it



works well and doesn't provoke any specific disaster. The only path of discursive attack we have left is a direct confrontation with the Christian spirituality that science as well as socialism inherited [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg40*]: the world, the universe, do not exist for our exploitation. There is no rationalist argument (not even within the parameters of liberalism's most radical current, veganism [ed. – see *Veganism: Why Not*] against the mining of the moon. It will not harm any human being or other animal, and according to rationalism, everything else is dead matter. The only solid arguments against capitalism's new atrocities are spiritual. They hold that the Earth is our mother [*sic*] and that we should adapt ourselves to the natural world rather than molding it according to our arrogant caprices; that filling the Earth or the Moon with holes in search of the latest valuable mineral is as unforgivable as massacring an entire people.<sup>[7]</sup> **Those who made use of scientific arguments to justify genocide, slavery, mining, and clear-cutting entire forests are the same – and their institutions are the same – as the ones who today are celebrating the imminent conquest of the moon and Mars.** And the technologies that will take us there (speaking of rockets) were developed by the Nazis in the course of the very same Holocaust that liberalism so hypocritically rejects, without ever rejecting its fruits<sup>[8]</sup> [ed. – see *A Green Anarchist Critique of Science*]. **But we have been rendered homage to humanism for so long that we can no longer raise our**



**Not outer space mining, but rather the moonscapes created on Earth by industrial civilisation; in this case, coal removal from below Hambacher Forest (see *Return Fire vol.3 pg91*)**

“On 20 July 1969, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the surface of the moon. In the months leading up to their expedition, the *Apollo 11* astronauts trained in a remote moon-like desert in the western United States. The area is home to several Native American communities, and there is a story – or legend – describing an encounter between the astronauts and one of the locals. One day as they were training, the astronauts came across an old Native American. The man asked them what they were doing there. They replied that they were part of a research expedition that would shortly travel to explore the moon. When the old man heard that, he fell silent for a few moments, and then asked the astronauts if they could do him a favour. ‘What do you want?’ they asked. ‘Well,’ said the old man, ‘the people of my tribe believe that holy spirits live on the moon. I was wondering if you could pass an important message to them from my people.’ ‘What’s the message?’ asked the astronauts. The man muttered something in his tribal language, and then asked the astronauts to repeat it again and again until they had memorised it correctly. ‘What does it mean?’ asked the astronauts. ‘Oh, I cannot tell you. It’s a secret that only our tribe and the moon spirits are allowed to know.’ When they returned to their base, the astronauts searched and searched until they found someone who could speak the tribal language, and asked him to translate the secret message. When they repeated what they had memorised, the translator started to laugh uproariously. When he calmed down, the astronauts asked him what it meant. The man explained that the sentence they had memorised so carefully meant ‘Don’t believe a single word these people are telling you. They have come to steal your lands.’”

– Yuval Noah Harari

voices in protest when faced with an atrocity that lacks human victims. But not even the contemptible people who think it is not wrong *per se* to mine the moon can deny that any introduction of new resources into the capitalist machinery will hasten the processes that are building us a prison society here on Earth.

The choice is between ecocentrism and totalitarianism.



Lake Lleu Lleu, Chile; threatened by mining scandium for the aerospace industry, local Mapuche (see *We Can Be Worse Still*) destroyed survey antennas and mobbed the governor promoting the project, destroying his vehicle, because as the formerly-imprisoned saboteur Jose Llanquileo explains, “[we Mapuche] don’t think humans are the perfect species that can dominate all the other species [but] just a part of the world.”

wars” were still very much a current topic in these United States, and if by that time the military phase of this genocidal campaign was confined to the west, far from Iroquois territory; still the Iroquois, and every surviving tribal society, were engaged (as they are engaged today to one degree or another) in

the bubble bursts and a new state (or group of states) must take up the lead in the reorganization of global capital. [...] The alliance between the merchants of Genoa and the military power of the Spanish state organized and impelled the first global cycle of capital accumulation. The next cycle was led by the new Dutch nation-state, the architect of the interstate system or the “Westphalia system” of territorial nation-states linked in a global economy that in essence remains valid today. The third, or British, cycle of accumulation saw the mechanization of industry and the extension of the world system to every last corner of the globe through aggressive colonization. And the fourth, American cycle of accumulation saw the intensification of accumulation throughout the map laid down by the British, and the creation of the global financial and political institutions that exercise power today. [...] In essence, merchants who had long been playing a particular game amongst themselves, with exponentially mounting stakes, began to invest their profits in state-making and war-making, not merely as another industry, but as a way to produce an expansion of the field in which their accumulation took place, and to produce the instruments to organize and regulate that field. Simultaneously, ruling elites began to extend their territorialist strategies for the control of the space-of-places in which state competition traditionally took place (the conquering of territory, cities, resources) into the space-of-flows in which the merchants operated (the capturing of markets, trade routes) as a way to fuel the engine of state growth. Capitalism as an interstate system rests on a dichotomous structure that balances, in ever changing measures, territorialist and capitalist strategies for global power and organization, operating simultaneously in a space-of-places and a space-of-flows.” (*Anarchy in World Systems*)

1. ed. – As of yet there is still no winner of the Lunar X Prize (despite TeamIndus from India having been tipped to win before dropping out), which since its announcement in 2007 has seen the deadline moved back multiple times; though as mentioned in the footnotes below, China landed its own spacecraft on the moon in 2013.

2. ed. – Author of ‘Capital’ and co-writer of ‘The Communist Manifesto’ with Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx, in his most influential years, basically “stated that indigenous Peoples must submit to proletarianization or disappear from the world. Anyone who did not slave for a master for monetary gain was a lumpen, and Marx saw them – always the majority of the population in industrialized nations – as reactionary, enemies of the working class. He used much the same rationale we hear today from far-right racists: Lumpen want to take our jobs (scabs). They are criminals. They are no-good layabouts alcoholics and drug addicts. They are whores. They are ignorant. As someone who has spent much of his adult life either homeless or in prison, but always struggling against the coercive forces of elite rule, I gotta say a big, ol’ “Fuck you!” to orthodox Marxists” (Rob los Ricos). His legacy could hardly be clearer than his words: “England has a double mission to fulfill in India: one destructive, the other regenerative; the annihilation of the old Asian society and laying the material foundations of Western society in Asia.” However, as an interesting and little-known side-note, Marx himself had something of a change of perspective in his later years prompted by his reading of Lewis Henry Morgan’s ‘Ancient Society’ (and especially its depiction, rightly or wrongly, of the Iroquois of America’s north-eastern seaboard) and exposed by the posthumous publication of his unfinished ‘Ethnological Notebooks’; thus he tossed aside his insistence on progressive human development necessitating a chain from “primitive” indigenous, to peasant, to capitalist labourer, to socialist ‘new man’. “In a note written just after his conspectus of Morgan we find Marx arguing that ‘primitive [sic] communities had incomparably greater vitality than the Semitic, Greek, Roman and a fortiori the modern capitalist societies?’” Thus Marx had come to realize that, measured according to the “wealth of subjective human sensuality,” [Iroquois society] stood much higher than any of the societies “poisoned by the pestilential breath of civilization”. Even more important, Morgan’s lively account of the Iroquois gave him a vivid awareness of the actuality of indigenous peoples, and perhaps even a glimpse of the then-undreamed of [by him] possibility that such peoples could make their own contributions to the global struggle for human emancipation. [...] When Marx was reading Ancient Society the “Indian

a continuous struggle against the system of private property and the State [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg59* and companion piece on *Colonisation*]. In a multitude of variants, the same basic conditions prevailed in Asia, Africa, parts of Eastern Europe, Russia, Canada, Australia, South America, the West Indies, Polynesia... [T]his study led him not only to dramatically and extensively alter his earlier views, but also to champion a movement in Russia [ed. – versus his previous bets on ‘developed’ Germany or England] that his “disciples” there and elsewhere scorned as “ahistorical,” “utopian,” “unrealistic” and “petty-bourgeois.” Even today such epithets are not unfamiliar to anyone who has ever dared to struggle against the existing order in a manner unprescribed by the “Marxist” Code of Law” (Karl Marx and the Iroquois).

3. ed. – This is not, in fact, the only way to understand or differentiate technology (for example, see *Return Fire vol.4 pg 53*); while clearly this is a vast and complex topic needing further exploration.

4. The first occurrence recognizes, in a strictly limited way, the mutability of gender, thus contradicting one of the bases of patriarchy [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg8*]. Currently, the progressive wing of the State presents gender identity as just another consumer choice, deactivating the more conflictive elements of the transgression of gender [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars; ‘Yet Another Fenced World’*], but it is a contradiction that cannot be permanently maintained. As such, it is different from the reformist feminist victory in which labor and political rights for “woman” were won at the cost of losing autonomous feminine spaces, a *quid pro quo* that preserved the power of the institutions. In that vein, we can note that against the snail’s progress of the institutionally mandated equalization of wages, the new high-paid labor that is cropping up like autumn mushrooms is squarely within the staunchly masculine information technology sector.

5. ed. – “Arrighi revises both Marx and world systems theory to define four stages of capitalism, each marked by a systemic cycle of accumulation. [Paramount to this revision is Arrighi’s identification] of capitalism as a dichotomous fusion of state and capital. In this view, the State is far more important than a mere “organizing committee” for the bourgeoisie, as Marx and Engels, covetous of a state of their own, would have it. [...] Each cycle begins with the rise of a new leading state and form of institutionalized planning that organizes a global accumulation of capital, subtly interrupted by a signal crisis that heralds the switch from industrial to financial expansion, experienced as a golden age that marches inevitably to the terminal crisis when

6. ed. – “The next cycle of accumulation, if it is to happen in any way similar to past cycles, will have to expand into outer space. A robotic workforce (resistance free) carrying out mining on asteroids and the moon, and the chemistructural development (pre- or sub-infrastructure, the organic basis already existent on earth that makes infrastructure meaningful) of Mars. (A subsequent cycle of accumulation, feasibly, would be based on colonization). Meanwhile, on an earth with new possibilities for green management (statist environmentalism has only ever come at the expense of externalizing impact, and what could be more external to the biosphere?), an expanding consumer society in an ever more capricious service sector and a highly paid design sector (with the private cities of Google and the NSA, perhaps, as the dichotomous model). [December 2013], China landed a rover on the moon. Anyone who mistakes this for an extremely tardy attempt to keep up with the Jones’ is missing its significance. China has guaranteed itself access to processes of capital accumulation in space. With a space program far cheaper than the US government’s, [they have become] the first country to match the US for new satellites in space, and they have also developed killer satellites and other anti-satellite weapons that could destroy all of the expensive little orbiters on which global communications, and the US capacity to deploy military force around the world, across the Pacific for example, depend. With no need to overcome US superiority head-on, just as the Dutch navy and American colonial army often used guerrilla tactics or evasion to confound a superior force, the Chinese have the potential to make US military might meaningless, and the liquid capital to give themselves the advantage in outer space investment. As higher levels (in this case perhaps literally) of competition require higher levels of collaboration, it is unlikely that terrestrial states, at least in their present form, will find themselves adequately equipped to the task of organizing capital accumulation beyond planet earth. Power structures like Google may prove vital in organizing the new material expansion and also linking the

power of terrestrial states to achieve the cultural unification necessary for the regulation and organization of capitalism. After all, the totalitarianism that liberal freedom most requires is not the secret police nor the torture chambers of the Communist Party (although these will never go away, neither in China nor in the US), it is the panopticon society [ed. see **Return Fire vol.4 pg9**], the apparatuses of communication, the instantaneous imposition of legibility on oral culture, and immediate enclosure of any new commons, that the likes of Google and Apple have already achieved [ed. – see the supplement to **Return Fire vol.4; Caught in the Net**]. If these changes come to pass – and they will to the extent that we allow them to – there will no doubt appear another wave of leftists who claim that it was all an economic operation, that the State has now expired, that capitalism is self-regulating, that the decentralized forms of production that are coming to the fore are the new reality. They willfully forget how much state power continues to concentrate, how the new decentralized industries only function in relation to unprecedented phenomena of concentration, that without drones raining missiles from the sky, there are no iPhones, that without nuclear submarines, there are no satellites, and without the State, whatever its form, there is no capitalism” (Anarchy in World Systems).

7. ed. – One could certainly say that mining the moon impacts other very profound relationships it has with varied plant, human (menstrual cycles being an obvious example) and other animal life, ocean tides, etc.; but we wholly agree with the need for an approach embracing what Western culture exorcises to the separated realm of the ‘spiritual’.

8. ed. – As well as the many things utilised by the victorious Allies after their dismantling of the Nazi state and recruitment of many of its elements, the anarchists Silvia, Billy and Costa reminded us during their court statement when on trial for a planned attack on the laboratories of IBM in Switzerland (see **Return Fire vol.4 pg73**) of a famous example: “The German branch of IBM, Dehomag, whose publicity proclaimed in Gothic characters: “Hollerith’s perforated cards allow you to see everything”, traded with the Nazis as well as with the American government throughout the war. It took half a century for us to discover, thanks to the American journalist Edwin Black, the responsibilities of IBM and proto-computers in the Holocaust: “When the Nazis tried to identify the Jews by name, IBM showed them how to do it. When the Nazis wanted to exploit this information to launch the expulsion and expropriation campaigns, IBM provided the necessary means. When the trains had to run by a timetable, between cities or concentration camps, even in that case IBM showed them the way[...] The application of the Nuremberg laws was based entirely on Hollerith technology, the only one capable of establishing the genealogical trees that the Reich needed [in a short time] to identify all the half-Jews, the quarters, the eighths and even the sixteenths, with the speed and exhaustiveness hoped for. [...] IBM did not limit its business to the Germans alone, even though they were among its best customers in the 1930s. Undoubtedly convinced of the neutrality of technology, Watson, its boss, sold machines to [U.S. President] Roosevelt at the same time as Hitler. [Three days after the attack on Pearl Harbor] the US Census Bureau could provide various reports on the Japanese population of different cities in the United States, by place of birth, citizenship, sex, etc...” Thanks to the applications IBM and the responses provided during the 1940 census, the Census Bureau had been able to determine the ethnicity of all Japanese-Americans. The American administration used the Hollerith systems to draw maps of population density by locating people by block of houses – even if the census was anonymous and without address – and “allowing to organize the movements of populations [of

Japanese origin] towards concentration camps” starting from ‘42.” Similarly, it was Nazi concentration camps where the gene and biotechnology industries of today were first spawned in earnest, the now re-branded ‘life science’ companies. Just as transhumanism (see **Return Fire vol.4 pg43**) is nothing but another name for the stinking eugenics philosophy that the Nazis embraced, like Americans, Swedes and British (and more) before them.

## ‘LET’S DISCONNECT THE CABLES’

[ed. – Below we reproduce a translated version of a claim (in which we take responsibility for any mistakes during our editing) for actions against one of the major new tech companies blazing a path in the new workhouse conditions and also implementation of workplace robotics, Amazon, in Berlin. So far, the pre-Christmas period of 2017 has indeed been the season for opening fire on this multinational I.T. and trading hydra: we learned of this attack at the same time as several Amazon pack stations were paralysed by unspecified means in another German city, Munich, specifying the same solidarity with the years-long struggle of Amazon workers against their working conditions, which was manifesting in nationwide Block Black Friday protests on November 24th. Meanwhile, anonymous arson wrecked a significant amount of stock on the third floor of an Amazon distribution centre in Rugeley, the English Midlands, during the crucial lead-up to the capitalist frenzy of the holiday season; the same sweatshop had a similarly mysterious fire at the same time last year. As was noted by the saboteurs of Munich; “[s]mooth logistics is the prerequisite for Amazon’s ‘Prime’ concept of fast delivery of orders. We remain unpredictable!”]

In solidarity with Amazon’s fighting workers and in support of Block Black Friday, we attacked three express vans labelled with ‘AZ Amazon’ and ‘drs amazon’ in various ways during the night of November 23rd – burned down, stabbed tires, smeared with paint, and left the call: ‘strike!’

There was this side note in the media, as once again a ‘terrorist’ was arrested – Amazon denounces the potential terrorist customers in the search for hydrogen peroxide [ed. – for making explosives] already the next ingredients for the big bang – thanks to the algorithm...

**The basic bet of Amazon and Co. is that with all the feedback-loops, the sensors, microphones, cameras and data, you can not only add value but end up with the technological attack on your body and your actions.** There is a twofold of constantly consuming and directing on the one hand and the control and delimitation on the other: whether it be the emotion detection with cameras, which already takes place in the shops, smartphones as perceptual aids, Google Home<sup>[1]</sup> or the scary spy dolls in the nursery<sup>[2]</sup>.

Consumers of the global flow of goods are supposed to be rewarded for unsolicited emotion surveillance with personalized and controlled advertising. While on the faces of

“The end of a millenium is fast approaching and the circle will present itself again, always the same and always different. The rapid destruction of world resources [sic] carried out by the plunderers in power is an inescapable fact. This will either be brought to an end, or it will be transformed when the included of tomorrow build one world suited to their own needs and another for the needs of others. In other words, even the present battle against the wastage of natural resources could become an industry in the future, the foundation of the exploitation of tomorrow. That is why we propose an immediate systematic attack on all the forms of capitalist expression, both in the backward ones still linked to rapid and irrational exploitation and the more advanced ones linked to the electronic control of the planet. In a not too distant future they will shake hands, crushing us in the middle. In order to do this we must have the courage to look backwards as well as forwards. Backwards to seek certain values that are no longer considered ‘modern’. In this research we could single out a few elements that relate to human action: consistency, courage, respect for one’s fellows (human or animal), being harsh with oneself, frugality, a correct consideration for the environment. But others too that are only apparent in contrast: play, love, fantasy, joy, tenderness, dreams.” – Alfredo M. Bonanno, 1989

all those who are up to something criminal, the tension may become apparent before the impending shoplifting or breaking away; anything out of the rut of normalization.

Amazon is at the forefront of this poker game. **Last year Amazon was the company with the most research expenditure worldwide.** So there are already test phases with supermarkets without staff. ‘Amazon Go’ relies on customers being registered via app when entering the store, as well as the products that are removed from the shelves – the *working customer* in the panoptic shop. So soon will also burst the service bubble, the reservoir for the countless industrial workers.

So we end up with the fighting workers of Amazon, which are already monitored in the panoptic factory at every turn by means of permanently connected with wireless devices in the warehouse.

If it is primarily about the ‘optimization’ of the work processes, it is about two things in the supervised supermarket: on the one hand, to reduce the costs; the working

customer, who serves themselves, boldly pays independently, and does not need service staff. **On the other hand, it's about the information which gets generated.** Who will stand in front of which shelf and how long? What emotions can be read in the pace? When do I shop happily, when I was previously depressed and slowly walked through the isle?

This is about much more than marketing and product placement, because the online giants are already making almost as much profit through sales and advertising, as with the personal data they are collecting diligently and suggesting life-saving technologies for the whole of humanity. While labour exploitation is almost on a perfect level, profits are now generated through generated data and information of the customers – through access and control of human behavioural patterns and their generated needs: the working customer.

We do not want to be governed by information – and to the satisfaction of the managers' faces, blissfully grinning at the thought of the dull masses who are storming the shops on Black Friday like controlled zombies.

So we also participate in a labour dispute, although we actually insist on vehemently refusing wage work and on trying to keep each others away from it.

**The conflict of the striking workers at Amazon represents for us only a part of the gigantic problem of the change of the working world, the isolation of the battlefields and the isolation of the struggle.**

And also the strikers will suspect that in ten years there will be no picker and packer anymore, because Amazon is already working on computer-controlled drones to staff the warehouses.

*Let's disconnect the cables  
Let's be more than a zero and a one*

The white transporters are certainly still in your streets.

**– autonomous groups & others**

1. ed. – So-called 'digital assistant', like its competitor Amazon Echo; a 'smart' device that critic John Simpson notes can "eavesdrop on everything from conversations to your toilet flushing habits to children's movements and the books on bedside tables. They would know when you go to sleep and whom you wake up with."

2. ed. – Presumably a reference to the "My Friend Cayla" doll, another 'smart' device (this time for children) that connects to the internet via Bluetooth and carries out conversation when asked questions; incidentally also collecting and transmitting everything it hears to a voice recognition company in the U.S. The doll is now banned in Germany, but on sale in the U.K. For more on 'Internet of Things' innovations, see the supplement to **Return Fire vol.3; Smarter Prison?**

## 'TOOLS OF THE TECHNOLOGY'

The online sales (think Amazon) that are the major factor provoking the closing of shopping malls and the recession among retail giants rely on warehousing and delivery. The first is already largely roboticized, and the second is one of the prime fields for the development of autonomous and drone technology by the likes of Tesla and Amazon. Meanwhile, cashier positions in supermarkets are already being replaced by "automatic" checkout. And a few hip brand stores have started deploying what some of us were predicting when RFID tags [ed. – see the supplement to **Return Fire vol.3; Smarter Prison?**] came out: a dystopian parody of the free warehouses of the anarchist collectives in the Spanish Civil War, where anyone could just walk in and take whatever they needed. The catch, in the modern version, is that when you walk in with your mobile device, they have your bank information, so when you walk out with the products, they get deducted automatically. A shoplifting proof environment in which the potential thief is the person without a cyborg phone.

Anyways, with the roboticization of industry, which is already well under way, it was the service sector that was supposed to save the economy, creating new jobs so you still have consumers to buy all the useless, toxic shit being produced. And the service sector is still growing, but the bigger chunk of it is on the cusp of a huge decline, at the exact same moment that roboticization is on the cusp of huge steps forward in every sector, as well as a new sector, extraterrestrial exploitation, something that's discussed here.

Roboticists – experts and people who are making a huge amount of money off this shift – are actually really scared. They keep improving AI, but at the same time they're worried about how they might bring about the total collapse of the economy, an unfortunate surge in unemployment, or the obsolescence of the human species (there are different versions, the latter is Elon Musk's take). Tellingly, they keep on designing, and keep on profiting, but they're worried. This behavior belies the idea that technology is useful, that it is dependent on human will. I'll skip the debate over absolute truths for now, but in the present moment, when technology resides at the scale of the organization of human society for the satisfaction, not of biological needs but of economic and ultimately technocratic needs, there is no such thing as freedom unless we're talking about the intent to destroy the whole fucking system. Even elite designers are just tools of the technology, the way the factory worker is an adjunct to the machine (in contrast, possibly, to the artisan, who develops and deploys her [sic] own tools).

Barring some big surprise, if things keep advancing in this direction, solutions like a universal wage become necessary. A growing part of the Silicon Valley elite already supports the universal wage. It's progressives who are making the proposal, but we need to be clear that it reflects the needs of social control, and nothing else, the same way that welfare was an attempt to institutionalize the poverty and racist exclusion that fueled the struggles of earlier generations [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg48**]. Marx was dead wrong. Socialism was not the result of the evolution of society's productive capacities. Our productive capacities were never so scarce as to rule out universal abundance. Socialism, if it comes, will be a strategic imposition by the State, taking advantage of the evolution of its capacities for social control, as a needed measure to bail capitalism out once again.

In the meantime, workers can expect to find their bread and butter in the sectors with a future. For the privileged workers, this means design, programming, and applied scientific research. For those of us without degrees, or for the suckers who went for humanities, this means the parts of the service sector that are in expansion: restaurants, tourism, and in general the production of experiences, which, sickeningly, turns out to be driven by people's need to post content on their social media[...]

Restaurants and bars are already a major employer for suckers like us, but it will go a lot further. Extreme sports, self-improvement, personal trainers. Sex work on steroids<sup>[1]</sup>. Lines will blur, and the affective economy will come to define a much larger part of the service sector. The isolation and misery that the traditional family engineered and that internet and entertainment technologies took down to the ninth layer of hell will be solved by new employment categories that don't yet explicitly exist. We can talk about a suicide economy: the new sex/affective/entertainment/experience worker will help us find the will to live again. Self-care will become a growth sector.

1. It's always disappointing when needed and intelligent critiques gain traction right at the moment when capitalism needs them (I won't say they arise at this moment, as though Capital calls the ideas it needs into being, since they tend to exist long before, though they remain obscure). Unfortunately this seems to be the case with sex work. It's great that the victimistic views of priests, social workers, and essentialist feminists have been challenged, but the possibility of a radical practice within sex work may well depend on the ability of sex workers to stake an innovative position in the struggle against capitalism, because it is in the interest of the new economy for sex work to be re-legitimized and diversified.

# 'A SMART NEW WORLD OF SLAVES'



## Click- & Crowd-Working in Platform Capitalism

"Crowdsourcing" is a mixture between "crowd" and "outsourcing". Jobs are no longer deferred to employees of a company, but dumped on an army of digitally working nomads. The crowdworking-platform 'Mechanical Turk' by Amazon is one of many that offers minimal assignments. 500,000 people in 190 countries stand-by for assignments like the editing of websites, texts, product descriptions, or the transcription of audio.

The starting signal to use the swarm of "clickworkers" was given by Amazon in 2006. when the corporation started to sell CDs. Hundreds of thousands of CD covers had to be checked for sexual content before they could be uploaded onto the digital platform. A task a computer wasn't good at accomplishing because of its nebulous criteria. In imitation of decentralized distributed computers in the cloud, Amazon thus invented *the crowd* – a kind of "massively parallel" human computer: **twisting the human-machine relation, the computer now asks people to help it with its work.** Everybody could sign in on a digital platform to check CD covers for a couple of dollars per hour. Succeeding this specific task Amazon elaborated its job platform. Amazon charges 10% of the total fee paid by any "employer" for the accomplishment of a task mediated by Amazon. What is paid is left to the employer. The status the micro-workers assume in a job like this is that of a modern-day labourer. The question of working contracts or social security is obsolete. The unilaterally defined terms of the service platform rule in favour of the employers's despotism. Isabella Mader put it these words: "*wage theft is a feature, not a bug*". Payment is often considerably delayed – sometimes deferred. Amazon clearly states on its website what the balance of power looks like: "*If the work performance does not meet your standards, reject it and don't pay the worker.*"

In Germany also, crowdworking platforms are growing, like the Berlin company CrowdGuru or Clickworker GmbH from Essen and there is no saturation in sight. As soon as a task can be precisely framed and modularized it can be outsourced to "non-employees". For most tasks a minimum fee is determined – most of the time announced as a competition. The only one paid is the winner of this competition – all the others will go empty handed. Platforms that pay per hour offer an app for download. The crowd worker has to use it to log in when they are working on a billed task. But not only the working time is scored. In irregular intervals (six times per hour) screenshots are made and keyhits and mouse movements per minute are registered. "*We don't control, we facilitate the framework for protection and trust*", says one platform manager. "Trust" is generated by accessible evaluations, similar to those of online delivery services. Employers evaluate the work of their digital nomad visibly to all potential future employers. **To keep up the appearance of fairness, micro-jobbers may also pass judgement on their employers (that will not have any effect though).**

Even if a small bohemian world thinks they can design their lives in a more flexible and autonomous fashion as freelancers "*in the name of enhanced autonomy*" ([Michael] Burawoy) and push the fusion of work and free time under conditions of maximized independence of location to the limit: the popping-up digital sweatshops will ultimately serve to weigh down wages – in every branch of business. The german trade union Verdi rightly states a "cannibalisation of the employment market": Freelancers will do the same work on worse conditions. The DGB (German Trade Union Association) sees that as a "modern type of slavery" where everybody tries to underbid everyone else to gain acceptance of a bid. In case of sickness and age things get even more ugly for crowdworkers. There is (currently) no social security or reliable work regulation which heed this kind of labour without rights. To be able to reject any claims made on them Uber and Deliveroo avoid calling their drivers "employees" speaking of them as self-employed instead. *Welcome to a smart new world of slaves.*

## Permanent Evaluation Through Digital Recording

All digitally recruited on-demand-service-providers share a common fate. Their work performance is constantly rated and assessed. Digitally received benchmarks

that are highly differentiated allow algorithmic measuring of the individual engagement of anybody working on demand. Thus immense pressure is created to adapt behaviour to tap into enormous reservoirs of self-optimization and self-ratification by means of competition.

The accessibility, speed of arrival and friendliness of Uber drivers is evaluated in each fare. Those who reject fares on their drivers app will score less. Those who get stuck in traffic jams and are replaced with a click by impatient customers not only lose their fare, but run a risk of losing their so-far-high scores. The number of points gained, determines which drivers are preferably assigned, and thereby what these mostly precarious drivers will earn. The price of fares from Uber is about 25% less compared to common taxis anyway. Additionally another 20% from this dumping price will go off and be transferred to Uber for acting as agent. What looks like a computer game from the outside, haggling after high scores, is inevitably internalized as one's livelihood.



Companies like Foxconn and Amazon even manage to generate a next to all-encompassing registration of all off-line working steps through consequential application of high-tech surveillance. The rating of employees in some of the Amazon plants is even more insidious (see the passage *Efficiency-Training Humans to Become Machines*). Because of the high rates of sickness of up to 20% the gigantic online retailer introduced a presence bonus. Not only for every single employee, but for team-rating. Especially robust teams that called in sick less than others received a bonus of 70-150 Euro a month per person. **This not only poisoned the atmosphere at the workplace, it also negated sickness as a normal part of life;** especially as a result of a monotonous one-sided work induced stress[...]

## Efficiency-Training Humans to Become Machines

Amazon employees work under enormous stress. Contradictory to their contract of employment, most of them work overtime and on Saturdays. Strictly hierarchical so-

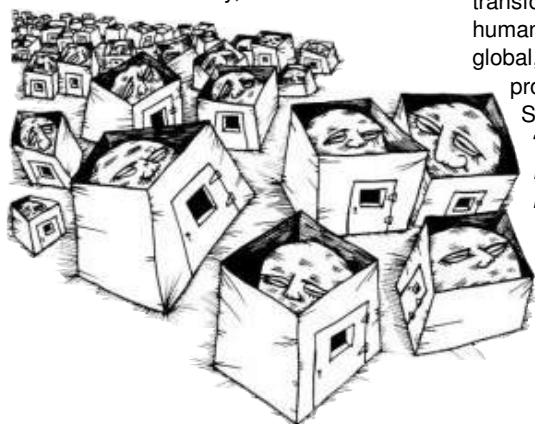
called leaders pass down pressure to the pickers and packers of their team by listing their mistakes. Pickers "pick" the ordered articles from the shelves walking up to 20km a day – trackers record their walking performance to the split second by allocating exactly wherever they are, while a hand scanner records all the work sequences involved determining the next step. **If a picker is delayed the system triggers the alarm: leaders automatically receive a message on their screen. A so-called feedback ensues.** "For the sole reason of optimizing the process", of course. Packers also have a minimum to perform: to pack 200 individual parcels or 100 multi-parcels an hour. But the constant rating of the employees is not without consequences: a green card means praise, a yellow card is the equivalent of a written warning. Three yellow cards mean dismissal.

**The requirement: everybody is supposed to be above the average. What is mathematically impossible is the dynamic principle of continuous re-enforcement of work pressure by competition within the staff. The consequence: an overall coercion to self-optimize<sup>[1]</sup>.**

Even if employees want to rationalize their tasks to avoid unnecessary walks penalty points are dealt out. Any deviation from the algorithmic allowance will be sanctioned – for the sake of standards. Any trace of individuality means a loss of control – loss of replaceability. Amazon wants every employee to be replaceable by a colleague anytime – without losings at handover. An informant from the administration reports: "My working instructions dictate the exact position of my keyboard and mouse on my desk. And also where my waste-paper basket sits under my desk. It is absurd and oppressive".

### Dequalification by Digital Production Lines

What production lines have only managed rudimentarily, the



algorithmization of the working process manages to take to a whole new level of perfection: the complete quantification, standardization and thereby compulsory acquisition and devaluation of work – formerly only in production, now also in administration and development. In more and more office jobs the individual work load is also rated and controlled by a ticket system. What is already standardized by exactly defined specifications of performance in service and typical call center jobs now expands to the more freely organisable office job settings. In future the office person will work like at the production line. Companies will try to concentrate the unavoidable creative work on a few well-paid employees.

*The result: a few jobs in the development department where people tell computers what to do. And more and more devalued jobs where the computer tells people what to do.*

The separation of creative assignments that will remain the prerogative of people in the long run is a necessary requirement for (future) "robotization" of thereby other tasks devalued [ed. – see *New Technologies, Extraterrestrial Exploitation & the Future of Capitalism*]. Amazon's pickers etc. will no longer exist in its most modern German plant Winsen, near Hamburg in Lower Saxony. At the end of 2017 robots will bring the required shelf segments to the packer, who will pick the required product to pack it.

### Industry 4.0: Running the World as a Company

Industry 4.0 is the term to describe the whole of production. A new regime of production that aims to control all global production and cash flow, as well as the workforce behind it with the help of a digital infrastructure. There is the talk of a fourth industrial revolution after mechanizing in the 18th century, electrification in the 19th century and automation of the 20th century.

The propagandists of Industry 4.0 are designing a scenario in which humans, machines and intelligent systems are transformed into an integrated digital-human workforce and become parts of a global, highly efficient, self-controlling production process applicable at will. Supposedly needed therefore is an "architecture and a system of regulations consisting of millions of inter-linked instances adding value worldwide[...] that is safe, robust and highly accessible."

The emphatically launched virtually necessary hype already has left huge traces. Compass, a German start-up in Silicon Valley

analyses procedures of companies to automate the working process. Artificially intelligent controlling systems are supposed to ensure a seamless integration of robots into the working process. Competition with robots devalues human workforce at a ripping pace. Foxconn wants to automate some of its plants in China completely, and replace all human employees by robots. In Kunshan, China, Foxconn has dismissed 60,000 of the once 110,000 employees in 2016 for the fabrication of iPhone7, and replaced them with robots. According to South China Morning Post 600 companies in Kunshan are supposed to add robots to their production line which will result in a wave of mass layoffs.

**[...] If less and less people work and the necessity of labour as a normative force of order only applies within strong limits then disciplining by labour will no longer be sufficient to maintain (self-) governance.** The solution for the ruling class is already perceivable. The future order will not only be based on the evaluation of work, but by judging and adding value to any individual activity and life-expression. Self-employment will be extended to every area in life. People have long since stopped being members of their workforce only. Their assets as a whole are so much entangled with themselves that they themselves become added value. We sell *ourselves*, not only our manpower [sic]. The social value determined by the rating and scoring of networks like Facebook [ed. – see the supplement to *Return Fire vol.4; Caught in the Net*] advances to the real economic (self-)worth.

[...] We have to attack the evaluation process and the participative enforcement of ourselves through permanent (self-) measuring as a basis of being (heteronomously) steered.

[ed. – Edited slightly from the original translation.]

1. ed. – "In the technology industry, corporeal manipulation is a rite of passage. Fledgling startup founders tote bottles of open-source future-smoothies to exempt themselves from the time-wasting ritual of the lunch break. They convince themselves that intermittent fasting and geometric nootropic pellets will stimulate their mental faculties. As self-proclaimed "biohackers," they purport to treat their bodies as computers – machines that require inputs in order to generate outputs. [...] Yet, while the [Silicon] Valley acolytes voluntarily reboot their bodies in pursuit of seven- or eight-figure salaries, workers placed lower in the socio-corporate pecking order face far more invasive, paternalistic forms of bodily control – with no such promise of flush autonomy. [...] Companies like Walmart and Humanyze are encroaching on their employees' bodies with RFID-chip implants [ed. – see the supplement to *Return Fire vol.3; Smarter Prison?*], badges that record audio and movement, and "self-improvement" health campaigns" (*Our Bosses, Ourselves*).

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*inside front* – Emile Armand

**'Tools of the Technology'**  
– from 'Between War &  
Retail Meltdown'

**'A Smart New World of Slaves'**  
– from 'Between  
Karoshi & Surplus'

Articles referenced by title throughout this  
chapter in **[square brackets]** which do  
not appear in the previous pages appear  
in the other chapters of this volume.



“Long live  
the weeds  
and the  
wilderness  
yet.”

– Inversnaid

PDFs of this chapter, other  
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A photograph showing a dense forest of tall, thin trees in the foreground. In the background, a city skyline is visible across a body of water, with mountains in the distance under a clear sky. The image has a slightly grainy texture and a soft focus.

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