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By Postliterate

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Our new age of capital — call it neoliberalism, consumer capitalism, whatever — makes it necessary to develop new modes of struggle. While much of the world (the “third world”) still contains material conditions ripe for the communism of the past — call it workerism, or “programmatism” if you’re *Théorie Communiste* — these modes of struggle are becoming obsolete in the motherland of globalized industry.

20th century communism (workerism) was, at bottom, a failure; not a moral failure, but a practical one. It is useless to argue over calorie consumption statistics under AES or how democratic Maoist China was — they did not precipitate communism, period. Yet so consistently did these movements fail, from anarchists to Leninist derivatives to even the democratic socialist experiments in Chile, being crushed by fascists or succumbing to capital, that it may be necessary to reassess the theory altogether.

Something consistent may be found in these movements — they were movements of *labor*, in the broadest sense. They were, philosophically, the affirmation of the labor side of capital, of the worker side of capitalism, of the “productive forces” side of the market. Yet not one of them freed themselves from these categories; in fact, they generally degenerated backwards into the womb from which these categories came from.

Marx is forgiven here. His time was even before the development of mass workerist mobilization. It is not necessary to expect him to have predicted the results of workerism, nor to chastise him for having succumbed to the workerist fervor of his time. Moreover, his form of organization was

no accident either, but was instead integral to the development of capital, for better or for worse. What remains important is only the analysis of new material conditions.

The affirmation of labor in a period of capital which is rendering labor obsolete is a square peg in a round hole; the valorization machine of capital must be stopped at the source — labor — only because conditions are ripe to do so. Only now is it clear that workerism was reformism, the affirmation of bourgeois ontology, and that the severing of the stream of labor itself is the final push towards the abolition of the present state of things. The refusal to work is thus the final decision. Not the refusal to work for a boss, nor for a profit, but to work at all.

Whether or not this mentality really is the only remaining path forward, I do not claim to know for sure. Whether some councilism which has yet to be implemented in its entirety, or some other mode of organization which has yet to prove itself, solve all of these issues without communization, I cannot say absolutely.