

Criticism of Neo-Luddism

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As communist militants, we give ourselves the task of analysing the history of our class as a necessary exercise, to extract from each experience the contributions that complete the red thread of the revolutionary workers' movement. We draw these lessons through the method that is the foundation of our doctrine and the guide for putting revolutionary praxis into practice. Our commitment to the future communist society obliges us to search in the past for those experiences that have highlighted the great contradiction that exists in the soil of today's society, as well as those that have enriched it in the formulation of our historical programme. One of those experiences that marked the history of the working class, coming with the birth of capitalism as a mode of production, was that of Luddism, and we want to give our perspective on this movement and the importance we believe it could have had in participating in a whole mass social movement, being a direct antecedent of the British labour movement. The Luddite movement, as an object of study, has been distorted by bourgeois historians, most of whom see it as a reactionary movement, as well as by misguided admirers, who subtract it from the universal experience of the workers' movement or who contrast it with its later development.

This semi-elaborated text seeks to reclaim Luddism from the hands of those who claim to continue the experience of General Ludd's army and who link it with a limited or fetishist critique of technique. Before we can begin this task, we must point out the origins of these groups or movements.

Introduction

As a result of the defeat of the world revolution, the revolutionary theses were confronted with a deviation from the programme, which was expressed within the Communist Party of the USSR and the Communist International, and

an identity of interests developed between the "proletarian" state and the party, which led to the counter-revolution of the 1920s. These dynamics took hold definitively in the 1930s, a catastrophic turning point for the workers' movement, the consequences of which we are still living through, but with less and less intensity after the fall of the Soviet bloc and the almost non-existent weight of the fake communist parties. With this rupture the thread that linked the proletariat as a class with its history, its party and its programme was severed, dissipating enormous amounts of combative social energy that the objective historical process still determined, pushing our class towards defeat in every assault and being unable, once again, to prevent the Second World War, a struggle of a bourgeois and inter-imperialist character.

Despite the domination of "national-communism" after the war, the existence of the USSR, as of the following experiments of the misnamed "really existing socialism", did not prevent the internal contradictions from being expressed and that little by little its existence as an "anti-imperialist" pole fell on deaf ears in the face of the truth that the red of the superstructure concealed. This distortion of reality was accompanied by the experiences of repression of the proletariat in the Soviet bloc, of ruptures between sister regimes, as well as of military interventionism as a tool of imperialist expansion. On the other hand, counter-revolutionary politics led to the union of the parties with the trade unions already subsumed by national capital wherever they had not achieved power, and the harmful action of these organisations paralysed and caused the failure of broad mass movements, as happened in May 1968, generating a very strong ideological reaction within capitalist society.

This political situation was preceded and accompanied by the great accumulation and worldwide socialisation of capital, which developed the totalitarian function of the state, which intervened to a greater extent in the economy as a whole and in the pacification between the classes, through social pacts with the trade union organisations. This meant in some countries the integration of the trade unions into the sacred unity of capital, corporatism, a situation which had been germinating since before the first great inter-imperialist war, but which was strongly promoted during the inter-war period and the war capitalism of the 1930s. It must be stressed that the Second World War was prepared by the economic plans of the states, such as the New Deal in the USA and the economic plans employed by the other democratic governments, as were the five-year plans for industrial development of Stalinism in the USSR, as well as those employed by the fascists. Finally, after the international devastation, the reconstruction was driven by the USA, the economic and political evolution, allowed to orientate of part of the gigantic military industry towards the mass production of consumer goods, giving a necessary basis for the Welfare States, consolidating new "middle classes", mass consumption, etc.

The consequence of this situation was that the forms of subjectivity that partially expressed the problems of the system itself were developing or deepening. Therefore, we think that this is the only way to understand, as we expressed in the text of Intersectionality, that the classical and emerging partial struggles developed strongly, trying to deploy a radical critique of the capitalist system from their own particularity. This logic of being and acting is still developing to this day. Among all these movements is the environmental movement, whose most radical expressions can be understood or identified with neo-Luddism, the feared enemies of technology and progress.

Neo-Luddism claims to be the heir of Luddism, but they could not have less to do with it

Neo Luddism

The neo-Luddite movement, as we have mentioned, has its antecedents in the environmental movement, a partial movement for the defence of nature against the impact of big industry, nuclear energy, etc., as well as its impact on the lives of citizens. From the 1970s and 1980s onwards, new or splintered radical currents emerged from some of the most notorious activist groups, such as Greenpeace, which were being partially phagocytised by state institutions or turned into lobbies (by having to give in to the bureaucratic formalities imposed by states in order to be able to present the legal battle against environmental problems), as with the end of the international experience of May '68. These currents of new and old activists broke with this dynamic, placing at the heart of the rupture the need to continue to employ forms of direct action that went hand in hand with ideological changes.

The activists of radical environmentalism were far removed from any proposal for emancipation that might be offered by the labour movement, indifferent to the close link that had always existed between social revolution and the defence of a better balance between society and the natural environment since the 19th century. Their influences came mainly from various experiences that had arisen prior to May '68, such as the anti-nuclear movement, and from new social movements and individuals, such as the activist The Fox or the Bolt Weevils movement in Minnesota, which arose from the agrarian petty bourgeoisie and was joined by various environmental activists in the United States. The sabotage actions that were carried out were aimed at denouncing the pollution discharged by companies in river areas by the former, and at preserving the environment and the rural landscape endangered by the new public electricity infrastructure by the latter, impacted by the contradiction between the development of the industrial system and the natural or agrarian world. Through all these movements, a whole struggle for the defence of the natural environment against the extraction of resources, large infrastructures through sabotage, which affected the profits of the companies, was promoted.

For us, however, these struggles could only indirectly demand patches for the damage caused by the aggressive development of the capitalist society, because this spontaneity was oriented in an interclassist and individualistic way, but they were an incentive for the activists.

Radical activists, also called ecoteurs, saw in these activities of protest and civil disobedience a potential for the struggle against harmful technologies and the laws that protected them, because they considered them a danger not only for nature and the environment, but also for human beings and existing community forms, as they led to the loss of ancient knowledge and know-how passed down for generations in rural areas. In the USA and other countries, groups such as Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front, Animal Liberation Front, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS), etc., were born and became international in scope, coexisting with a whole series of local, informal groups or quite active individuals.

Since the 1960s, a whole activity of dissemination and diffusion of ideas from the radical milieu called counter-culture had developed, based on a series of publications, both by activists and contemporary and nineteenth-century authors, such as Lewis Mumford, Jacques Ellul, Henry David Thoreau, etc. It also disseminated the set of groundbreaking ideas that emerged in those decades that influenced radical environmentalism, such as the anti-scientific spiritualist ideas and even the ideas of Situationism itself, but the dissemination, as a means of propaganda, of the *Ecotage!* book and other publications describing the forms of protest that the activists used in their struggle was very important. This activity would generate the breeding ground that laid the ideological foundations of radical environmentalism up to the present day. Various currents of thought were nourished by these contributions, mixing and sharing many theoretical elements, from anti-developmentalism, deep ecology, to theoretical developments such as primitivism, whether considered anarchist or not, and other forms of anti-industrial individualism, converging in what we would call neo-luddism today.

In trying to define "neo-Luddite ideology", without forgetting the differences, it originates in the academy of the 1980s, and focuses on the critique of the industrial or industrial capitalist system. This system, according to neo-Luddites, succeeded in imposing itself by dispossessing individuals of their creative capacity and means of subsistence, of their individual capacity to produce and decide on their daily affairs, destroying the old urban and rural communities. These producers became dependent on modern science, and technology, which were linked to the private profit of capitalists and states. This union resulted in a technocratic system of large corporations, which meant that society's decisions had to pass through the hands of scientists, specialists and politicians, as it needed to generate a body of specialists, where the role of the

average citizen in important decisions would be anecdotal, relegated to decisions of little importance.

This system, for the neo-Luddites, would have come to impose itself and dominate both human beings and nature, as if it were a system with its own existence, endowing itself with its own logic, or being considered by some as a new structure that modifies those relations that engendered it, and coming to be identified with civilisation. This would be based on a kind of scientific, rationalist, universalist, progressive and anthropocentric ideology, opposed to all kinds of considerations that do not converge in the benefit of industrial society. The human being would be tied to this society, in which he has lost all independence and would become a cog in the machine, segregating individuals without any awareness of the consequences of their actions and leading to the total imbalance of the human species with nature by disproportionately increasing the population, a problem which some neo-Luddites confront from a Malthusian perspective, as well as from a critique of the form of consumption.

This is why the technique and technology developed by this system, the way in which it is used, as well as the institutions generated, would be questioned partially or completely by neo-Luddites, depending on the degree of incompatibility they see in them with the future society, as they could not be fully apprehended either by individuals or by small communities, or they would have to be uprooted in order to recover the potentiality of the individual. The ideal community for human beings for some neo-Luddites would be the small collectivity of the rural environment or the small town, instead of the mega-cities, where the individual can live in community and where all needs can be managed democratically or directly. Neo-Luddites understand this system to be as anti-democratic as it is bureaucratic, with the aim of ensuring social control, which has developed the international division of labour through large means of production across the globe, and the massive use of natural resources such as energy. The system would also have needed certain tools, such as propaganda and mass consumption, to achieve products of mediocre quality for the majority of the population, with all current needs being artificial and created by the influence of technologies and the large volume that production would generate. These are necessary tools for the alienation and imposition of a deformed culture that determines a way of life, a way of life that makes the citizen unaware of the impact of what he or she uses.

The neo-Luddites linked this theoretical development with the analysis of the impact it has had and continues to have on the natural environment and on fauna, which would eventually lead to ecological collapse due to the contradiction between the development of productive forces and the continuity of living conditions on the planet, as developed by *Éditions de l'Encyclopédie des Nuisances*, because the technology developed by the system separates human beings from nature and increasingly opposes them as the system expands and

deepens its logics. The emergence and development of neo-Luddism coincides with the democratisation of new computer and mobile technologies, and its rejection is similar to that which could be generated by the widespread use of the automobile in the industrial cities of the 1960s and 1970s. Neo-Luddism has also denounced that the development of this society has led to a whole range of problems related to the illnesses that industrial society generates in individuals, as well as the impact on populations and consumers of the use of agrochemicals and genetically modified crops. Neo-Luddites link past and present technological development with the military industry and warfare, the "military-industrial complex", and point to the trend of the proliferation of those tools used by the state to control the population and maintain its domination over individuals.

Important for the neo-Luddites is the concrete role of science in building up the industrial or technical system. The new society would have subjugated all the knowledge and practices of the different forms of human society through science and rationality, with the aim of being prepared for the "mega-machine", making science a tool for domination. On the other hand, the technology produced by this society would have a political character for the benefit of the few, which could not be understood without industrial civilisation. Some forms of pre-existing technology, having been combined with science, would lead to a new form of technology that would have no other purpose than to reproduce the same society, since industrial society would have created specific social relations that introduced a form of alienation, which in its development would gradually take away space from pre-industrial forms as the possibility of existing for other alternatives, subduing the whole of human consciousness and making this a totalitarian system. Science, and technology would be impossible or almost impossible for the individual and small communities to grasp, as they would be destined for specific purposes, according to the neo-Luddites. This has led some of them to theorise that it would be necessary to create forms of technology more suitable for a democratic existence in community, to try to reuse existing ones, depending on the degree of compatibility with the same perspective, but there is a whole diversity of opinions in this ideological milieu regarding the possible usefulness of current technology. The consequence of this set of approaches would lead the neo-Luddites to identify their ideal in past models of society and therefore to consider to what extent they would want to go backwards with respect to technology, the primitivists being those who would take the anti-technological conclusions to the ultimate consequences or to the extreme, their model being that of primitive humanity.

Briefly, the primitivists' common proposal for social change would consist of returning to a "more natural" pre-technological state, eradicating any kind of domination over the human being, generated by the various societies that have existed up to the one developed by the current civilisation. This means that all the contributions generated by the various forms of human society, from the domestication of animals to agriculture, from engineering to science necessary

for the development of today's technology, etc., should be discarded. For us this has the consequence of condemning the creative, productive and co-operative capacities intrinsic to the species, considered by primitivists as disastrous for the human being, confronting the species with a characteristic part of itself, by identifying in these qualities and their results all the existing and past problems, the hierarchical systems, having as a final consequence the industrial society. Primitivists consider that human beings are fit to live in the primitive conditions of hunter-gatherer societies, due to the thousands of years of evolution of the species without technical systems.

Neo-Luddism, having as its antecedents the more radical environmentalist groups, rewards sabotage as the main method of action, accompanied by a theoretical development that is oriented towards propaganda and dissemination through individuals, informal groups, federated as well as spontaneous. Some neo-Luddites, in turn, consider it important to join various alternative projects, of a mutualist character, in which institutions are raised, projects are organised with alternative techniques of a democratic character, where the individual can realise himself, like giving support to other movements, and in the case of not being able to see a possibility of close transformation of society, give himself the possibility of escaping to eco-sustainable agricultural communities, to be able to live utopia today. Radical environmentalists, because of the way they acted, were and still are being labelled as Luddites, already as neo-Luddites, by their liberal critics, which led them to identify themselves as such. But not only that, as they linked their experiences with the Luddite movement, Luddism could be understood by them as a movement linked to the workers' movement, but always with a more radical character than that expressed by their contemporaries or by the next to appear. Despite this, the neo-Luddites consider that the Luddite movement was historically limited because it did not manage to develop a theoretical critique of what the introduction of machinery meant and, therefore, to understand the whole industrial system and its consequences, but it did manage to develop a practical critique, highly valued by radical environmentalism.

The link they make with this incipient workers' movement at the beginning of capitalism as a new mode of production is based on the attack against the new harmful technologies and the damage they caused to workers' and peasants' communities. There are different neo-Luddite perspectives on the phenomenon. In some cases, Luddites represented the possibility of having aborted the development of the industrial system because of its "revolutionary potential"; others consider that it may have been doomed beforehand. In general, neo-Luddites see the Luddites as having been able to realise the practical critique of the industrial system which they will deepen theoretically. They also see this movement as expressing the disregard of the authorities for what the introduction of machinery meant for the craftsmen and workers themselves, who were not consulted and could not really express their opinion,

as they should have had the right to decide on its introduction. The Neo-Luddites are considered to be their continuators because the Luddites, through their informal and secret organisations, linked to the people, took a strong stand against the introduction of modern technologies, against the owners of the factories that installed them, and even threatened the entire established order.

Luddism

The context of the Luddite movement is framed in a decisive historical moment, as it emerges at a high point of transition between modes of production, at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, a time when incipient capitalism was taking hold in the United Kingdom as a pioneering country. This country had experienced the concentration of land for wool production that drove manufacturing, and after a long journey led to the development of the great bourgeois textile industry. This was possible because manufacturing itself was geared to producing goods for both the domestic and foreign markets, and was putting exchange-oriented production at the centre of life. This historical process concentrated and developed capitalist private property and wage labour, thus extending proletarian status to broad layers of the population driven out of the countryside and destroying old trades that could not compete in the market. This situation was speeded up after various crises that facilitated the introduction of modern steam machinery, leading to the so-called industrial revolution, as this machinery transformed general productive activity, such as communications, and energised the process of proletarianisation.

To tell the truth, at the time of the emergence of Luddism, the modern proletariat was not very numerous, its activity was close to that of the old crafts and it was surrounded by a semi-proletariat which maintained links with the countryside and was still tied to its tools, and on the other hand there was hardly any pure agricultural proletariat. In those years, the existing guilds were losing their very being, for in some cases the guild masters were transforming themselves into capitalists, but mostly they were joining big industry together with the journeymen as soon as the guild could no longer compete in the anarchy of the market. In addition, the corporate remnant was generating an incipient form of organisation, the forerunner of the trade union or union. The framework in which social life was developing had been worn down in the preceding centuries, the 18th century being a century in which social transformations accelerated, developing an impoverishment that generated numerous hunger riots as well as machinery sabotage throughout this century.

If machinery was not able to have a significant impact until the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, it was because the guilds and guilds had for centuries hindered the entry of new inventions into the workshops of manufacturing production, both in the city and in the countryside, for up to that time the development of the commodity and competition had not

succeeded in eroding craft and manufacturing activity, since even the tools and the products of labour were tied to their producers. And it is with the development of real life that some of the guild masters became bourgeois, that the guilds in general weakened against the medium and large producers, because the flow of demand for goods by the intermediaries, mainly oriented towards the international market, necessitated the lowering of their cost. Finally, this led to the introduction of new steam-powered machinery, especially in times of crisis, saving the time of commodity production, individual labour in the face of increasingly socialised labour, grouped in larger and larger workshops and factories, requiring less skilled workers.

This introduction of machinery led to fierce competition between sectors of production, to the separation of the tools and products of the artisan and manufacturing worker, leading to an accelerated disappearance of the craftsman's trade. It involved the hiring of inexperienced labour, such as the proletarianised peasants and Irish immigrants who were concentrated in the industrial centres, as well as the children and wives of the same workers in the workshops and factories to supplement the family wage, but also the hiring of those manufacturing workers who stopped producing at home with their families. Moreover, the new activity that generalised machinery brought with it a drop in the quality of the products previously produced by the artisan workers, going from producing luxury, manufactured and unique articles to producing articles of low quality and equal quality, impoverishing wages and pre-capitalist communities. All this ended up provoking in the consciousness of these former workers a feeling of subjugation to the machinery and to the new conditions.

The conditions that existed in the countryside, following commercial expansion and mercantile production, had led to peasants turning to manufacturing on the one hand, or to being expelled from the land and having to emigrate on the other, as a result of the enclosures established since the 16th century, concentrating this surplus population around the workshops and factories, or in the workhouses established by the Poor Law. This process of proletarianisation pitted the displaced former peasants against the members of the guilds and corporations, who tended to reject the emigrants because they competed for lower wages, due to the high demand for labour by the former, in addition to the protection that existed for the old trades.

The social transformation that took place at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century was accelerated by the period of crisis and wars against France and later against the USA, and by trade blockades of the island, which led to periods of overproduction and unemployment, and generated strong social conflict as a result of this accelerated proletarianisation. This led the different governments to enact anti-union laws (laws regulating the instruction of apprentices against the functioning of the guilds; the Combination Acts that attacked the corporate union of workers; laws that put an end to the

limit on the number of machines that a manufacturer could acquire). On the other hand, they reduced the budget for certain state items, the result of military spending and the crisis that drained their resources (such as the Poor Law, which introduced workhouses as centres of exploitation to prevent begging or banditry in exchange for guaranteeing poor living conditions; the Speenhamland system subsidy, which combined with wages reduced the amount that the employer had to pay his workers; the limitation of aid to guarantee the sustenance of the poorest through the parishes, etc.). At the same time, the state itself pushed for the introduction of machines at a faster pace.

All this led to a generalised movement that expressed itself in various forms of protest, some of which were already politically charged, but the sabotage of machines was particularly noteworthy because of its generalisation. The case of the supposed weaver Ned Ludd was marked in the popular consciousness, as he became a legend, and after the organised destruction of machinery became widespread throughout the island in 1811, he became the symbol of this movement, becoming its "General" or its "King".

Although there were cases of competition between guild masters and owners of the new machinery, where there was still some unity between the guild masters and their officers, as happened mainly in France with the advance of the introduction of machinery to the north of the country in the second decade of the 19th century, in the United Kingdom the destruction of machinery was the result of the impact that the introduction of this machinery had on the producers themselves. In other countries, such as Spain in 1821 in the events of Alcoy, there were events of sabotage of machinery which, unlike in the British case, did not escalate into popular rebellion.

The Luddite movement was conspiratorial, informal and not very centralised. It was strongly linked to the towns where it was articulated, as well as to the corporations, secret committees and other existing associations, which allowed it to evade repression as it intensified in the heat of the struggle, acting as a rule in the dark of night. The care taken by the Luddites in their actions and organisation was due to the fact that the destruction of machinery could be punishable by years in prison, and from March 1812, after various legislative changes, by the death penalty. The Luddite territorial deployment was limited to certain regions of the kingdom in the early days, in the so-called Midlands, but eventually spread to a multitude of industrial regions, bringing the fighting workers beyond the differences between professions and bringing some of them into the Luddite networks. In some regions, there was already a strong fighting spirit before the emergence of Luddism.

Initially, because of its spontaneous character, it was linked to the general unrest, but without presenting a marked political character, because taking into account the first letters sent by the Luddites themselves to the factory owners,

these were aimed at threatening the manufacturers to remove the machines from production, to raise wages and to restore the previous working conditions. In the same phase of the conflict, letters were sent to various representatives of state institutions up to the king, in which the pre-eminence of a patriarchal relationship between king and subjects can be observed.

In some cases, the threats and sabotage had an effect, achieving partial but short-lived goals vis-à-vis their employers. Factory raids involved the widespread destruction of new machinery, while respecting those traditional tools, and led manufacturers alone or together with state institutions to hire or organise law enforcement bodies to secure the factories, in some cases even beating up the night raiders. The state tried to infiltrate informers and informers among the Luddites, but without much success, because it could not reveal the identity of these insurgents due to their strong connection with the people as a whole, as well as their clandestine organisation. At a certain point, the state deployed a number of soldiers in the towns concerned that was comparable to that deployed in the battles against Napoleon's France. The bourgeoisie tried in various situations to install machinery where there could be less resistance, where the workers were more dispersed, as was the case in rural areas, but in some cases without much success.

The professionalisation of the destructive activity would lead them to ask for financing from other workers such as medium and large farmers, as well as from landowners linked to the industrial bourgeoisie, even through extortion to obtain food, money, and they took advantage of various disturbances that took place to raid arms warehouses, although they also used the money collected to buy them. On the other hand, the repression unleashed in some of the areas with the greatest Luddite activity led them to settle in the countryside to try to cope with the various phases of combat that developed, such as guerrilla warfare and banditry, methods against which the government used those employed by the Napoleonic armies against the guerrillas in their military campaigns.

In 1812 the general virulence was exacerbated, hunger riots and disturbances broke out throughout the kingdom, the Luddite movement spread and took part in new regions as a spearhead (since other sectors affected by the social crisis were not so effectively organised and did not act in such a coordinated manner). In the heat of events, new forms of struggle developed in which mansions were attacked, clashes with the forces of law and order became widespread and ended in pitched battles, prisons were stormed, appeals were made that attracted miners and workers from other provinces to participate in mass protests, the militant population was incited to subversion such as the stockpiling of arms, etc. In view of the close collaboration between the bourgeoisie and the state to stifle the movement, some of the new threatening letters targeted both governors and, ultimately, the monarch himself, adopting a character that could be called Jacobin and which recaptured the spirit of the

English Revolution, the Levellers and the Diggers. From April 1812 onwards, open insurrection was on the cards.

At the same time, the workers as a whole experienced forms of solidarity that went beyond the corporate component, as the corporations defended their members against workers outside the organisation, such as those with lower qualifications, together with the demand for a minimum wage for their members, partially eroding this old pre-capitalist barrier, which was increasingly withering. Forms of solidarity were also expressed that went beyond nationality, with respect to the Irish proletariat emigrating because of the misery experienced at home. In general, higher forms of struggle and organisation developed against hunger, labour exploitation and the degradation of working conditions. For example, the pro-union organisations expanded considerably, such as the Mederos Union Society, headed by Gravenor Henson. These organisations were not as subversive in character as the Luddite movement, which, with the ebb of the latter, became more important. This type of organisation took on a more visible organisational form in order to bring different demands before the government, with the aim of solving pressing social problems, such as the attempt to establish by law a decent wage, the protection of the textile trades and the repeal of the Combination Acts, all of which were reforms or petitions of a legalistic nature, and which were supported by some sectors of the bourgeoisie. These enlightened sectors sided with the impoverished masses, but against the more subversive actions of the Luddites and the violent protests.

In May 1812, Prime Minister Percival, after receiving successive threatening letters, was finally assassinated, as he had played a decisive role in the repression of the movement. After this, the Luddites were subjected to several arrests, which led to a judicial process that resulted in several Luddites being hanged. The bourgeoisie and the state, which had felt the need to encourage the introduction of the new steam engine, despite the difference of interests between landowners and industrialists, between Whigs and Tories, deepened this unity in order to protect order in the kingdom, and the bourgeois character of the state could be glimpsed. The capitalist class saw in the Luddite movement a subversive movement of a Jacobin character, in cahoots with Napoleon's France, because it was causing social chaos, and had gone so far as to push for a united struggle to take up arms against the Crown and the state, slogans alluding to revolutionary France.

It is well known that the French Revolution of 1789 had a great impact on the intellectuals of the English petty bourgeoisie and enlightened workers in the last decade of the 18th century, as a result of the difficult social conditions in which the country found itself and the process of proletarianisation of these strata, as well as the character of the monarchy in the face of the democratic and republican impulse of the revolution. The spirit of the revolution and the spirit of social transformation that these social strata conveyed had a great

impact on people's consciences internationally, despite the limits they encountered.

The ideals of equality, liberty, fraternity and property displayed in revolutionary France landed on the shores of Albion and mingled with the old aspirations of the English Revolution, and Jacobin clubs were established in burghs all over the country. But this spirit suffered a severe setback in the consciousness of the British petty bourgeoisie as soon as the French Revolution resorted to the Terror, which led to the Thermidor, and led some of these strata to turn away from these ideals, becoming reactionary and nationalist. The survival of the Jacobin spirit was maintained in those clubs, which were close to the workers' guilds, and it was with the new social explosion that gave rise to Luddism that it returned to a certain prominence on the social scene, since protests of an anti-monarchist nature were already taking place in the first decade of the 19th century. As the Luddite movement found itself confronted not only by the individual bourgeoisie, but also by the monarchy as a whole, a republican and democratic spirit spread, although the movement failed to converge around a programme. Likewise, the influence that Jacobinism as a radical democratic ideology may have had is partially reflected in some of the Luddite letters sent to the royal representatives. Within the Luddite movement there was a diversity of opinions, but among them emerged components and leaders with definite political aspirations, such as George Mellor, with the prospect of gaining access to political power to secure a series of liberal democratic reforms, which were therefore more elaborate and far removed from the spontaneity that characterised them at the outset.

The Luddite movement underwent this process of political radicalisation at the same time as it was finding its limits, while social and class conflict was deflating, especially from the summer of 1812 onwards. The exhaustion and end of this initial wave led to a great repression in October of the same year, which resulted in numerous executions, but also in many workers being amnestied. Acts of sabotage continued to occur, but with less intensity across the map, until long periods of conflict began again, with oscillations, such as between April and October 1814, in 1816, until it was completely diluted from 1819 onwards. We can say that the Luddite movement, as a primitive form of the class struggle, had difficulties due to the stage of objective development, as well as internally due to the form of organisation, the capacity for coordination, the lack of extension in the countryside, of links with the workers as a whole and the diversity of spontaneous actions they carried out, as well as of consciousness and, therefore, of a complete understanding of what their aspiration should be. In the 1930s, along with an accelerated introduction of machinery into the countryside, it was the turn of the agricultural workers and peasants, who gave life to their own General Ludd, Captain Swing, coinciding in time with the Paris Days and which helped to give impetus to the Chartist movement.

Why does Neo-Luddism Claim It?

Some of the neo-Luddite commentators describe the development of industrial capitalist society as a kind of imposition at will by a minority of individuals who sought to achieve personal gain or the imposition of their ideology, and who managed to unify the different power groups in order to attract the state and its tentacles to defend the new social project underway, and who took advantage of the situation of social misery to carry it out. This view, in our opinion, can only be realised by abstracting the introduction of the new machinery of the real state from the development of production and exchange, as well as the transformations that were taking place in British society as well as internationally. The mercantile dynamism of feudalism eventually triggered a clash between bourgeois and feudal social relations of production, triggering changes in the consciousness of its protagonists, which made possible the various bourgeois revolutions and the development of capitalism once they were freed from feudal shackles.

It is from the recognition of their reality that we could speak of the direction that the British bourgeoisie tried to give to the historical process, a process of an impersonal character that the bourgeoisie led, being first and foremost its product, to guarantee its needs as a social class in the face of the feudal society of feudalism. The development of the bourgeoisie, due to the importance it acquired as a class, transformed all the components of feudal society, developing a close relationship with more and more sectors of the aristocracy, which in turn transformed the economic and political interests of this social stratum. Therefore, one cannot ignore the interest in developing a state of affairs through the state itself, which legislated to establish enclosures, attacked the guilds, unravelled customs laws and feudal privileges. The clash between modes of production, favoured by colonial expansion and the opening of the world market after the arrival in America, must again be pointed out, without forgetting that this was happening within a set of competing states.

Neo-Luddism, if it wants to be understood as the heir of Luddism, is because it sees in that movement the first to challenge the industrial system that was developing strongly at the beginning of the 19th century, even if they were not fully aware of it and could not draw all the relevant conclusions for themselves, and defends it as a revolutionary experience against those who consider the destruction of machinery as something reactionary. We can agree with the neo-Luddites on this question in part, though not for the same reasons, for they consider that attacking machinery was and is attacking social relations directly, calling into question the whole of capitalism, as theorists such as John Zerzan explain to us. Neo-Luddites tend to make this identification, instead of understanding that this happens because capitalism is expressed in a fetishistic way, as if it were a relation between things and not between people. This position would say that all destruction of machinery in the history of the

industrial system would attack the system itself, but would not take into account, in our view, those scenarios where this form of action could be deployed and its purpose, as in cases of competition between different manufacturers or employers, as in the simple form of negotiation deployed by worker(s) against their employer through sabotage. Moreover, they celebrate every characteristic destruction of Luddism and oppose it to any attempt at machine management of the "Syndicalism" of those years, which made them fraternise with the petty bourgeoisie.

As we said before, the most active environmentalist organisations suffered various ruptures among their members, because some fractions that left those organisations saw in legal and institutional action a way of adapting to the system, to which they opposed the destruction of the new machinery, the infrastructure necessary to sustain it and the consumer goods developed by the industrial system, as a form of direct action, of propaganda by the deed. Focusing on any radical movement, they drew the conclusion that illegal forms were the most viable as revolutionary or subversive against the industrial system and domination, hence their criticism of the rising workers' movement for deploying a whole series of reform or democratic forms of struggle, as well as for their progressive view of the development of the productive forces, a stance which supposedly tied them to the very system they wanted to demolish.

Among the forms of action deployed by radical environmentalism, some have even seriously injured workers, usually unintentionally, but within neo-Luddism there are those who support forms of mystification of violence or eco-terrorism, Theodore Kaczynski being the most recognised of all. He realised his understanding of practical, clandestine action by sending letter or parcel bombs to scientists, politicians and executives of large companies, taking the lives of several people, whether they were his targets or not, but he also tried to put one of these explosives on a plane without success. The character of this type of violence not only started from the isolated individual, far removed from any social force expressed by the struggling classes who would use violence and convenient forms of it to defend and carry forward their historical programme, but also had a direction which did not distinguish the victims by class, as some of its actions, failed or not, affected proletarians as well as bourgeois. Ultimately, he deployed a form of individualist terrorism. Before he was arrested, he sent these mailings with the aim of having his subversive manifesto, *The Unabomber Manifesto: "The Industrial Society and its Future"*, of an individualist and anti-civilisation or anti-industrial character, published in different media. This individual has had and continues to have a great influence in the neo-Luddite milieu, although in this milieu or in the radical environmentalist milieu there have always been debates about the limits of violence.

It is notorious, then, the mystification of action in neo-Luddism, to the point of not being able to see whether the content of social movements has one

character or another, of not understanding the degree of awareness that these movements and their organisations acquire of the need for social change, therefore of the degree of understanding of reality and of the means they have put in place to pursue their agenda. That is why they can claim petty-bourgeois movements as the action of isolated individuals. There is certainly a logical coherence between the theoretical conception of reality and tactics in the neo-Luddites, which for us is not revolutionary. The violence against machines as a practical means employed by the Luddites and other machine destroyers is seen as a subversive activity in itself at all times, this activity being confronted with contemporary and later trade unionism, as well as the various forms in which the labour movement in general, parliamentary as well as trade union, and even the insurrectional, unfolded, pointing out that Luddism, as a revolutionary movement, has hardly been equalled by later experiences.

For us communists, not every moment is a propitious time for a social revolution to take place. Neo-Luddites such as John Zerzan and others point out that the irruption of organisational forms such as trade unions (more like pro-union organisations), as well as Jacobin political influence, were detrimental to the development of Luddism and revolution. As mentioned above, this pro-union movement had adherents both at the time of Luddism's rise and its ebb. The neo-Luddites imply that the coexistence of the two actors hindered a more militant path, pitted the movement against each other over means and ends, and spoiled the aspirations for emancipation. The very fact that the refluxing Luddite movement led to the rise of legal forms of action would be for the neo-Luddites another symptom that these forms of organisation were against the revolution. Therefore, for them, revolution was possible at that moment, as at any moment in history of great social ferment, of popular revolt, and it would only require a real will to achieve it.

Our conception of revolution leads us to understand that in order to be able to speak of the possibility of overthrowing capitalism at a particular moment in history, we must consider several questions: what society is made up of, both nationally and internationally (the degree of development of the productive forces, the division of labour and its character, the distribution of tools, means of production and products of labour, the forms of exchange, and thus the forms of property and existing social relations) and where it is heading. Depending on the stage of development of society and on the opening of periods of social conflict, we know which classes are on the ground, which are fighting and in what way. In the case of a conflict between classes, it is necessary to know which social tendencies are on the chessboard. If there is a convergence of economic and political interests among any of the social classes, one would have to understand what programme they would seek to deploy, the programme being the expression of their own being, depending on the stage of development and the degree of consciousness that the classes would have of it, and, finally, what practical means and organisational forms they would use to defend it.

To say, then, that the Luddite movement represents a revolutionary movement above and beyond that of the revolutionary proletarians of 1917 would be to assert that at that time there was a social force that unfolded with homogeneous interests and a superior consciousness. This would totally disregard the revolutionary proletariat in Russia, because it mobilised for the end of exploitation, private property and for communism, that is, it was able to organise itself around a programme and a perspective of its own class emancipation which in turn could be a vehicle for the rest of the social strata in struggle and give itself the possibility of orienting the process towards the end of capitalism, but not only on the national but also on the international terrain. It would make no sense to reduce the historical importance of this movement, despite its fatal outcome in the counter-revolution, the fruit of the international ebb of the revolution, for this was its scope, of the consequences of the civil war as well as of the mistakes of the Bolsheviks, and of the reversal of the programme following the convergence of interests between some fractions of the party and the state. So to speak of the greater revolutionary importance of the Luddite movement, which hardly presented any internal programmatic coherence, since only a few members within it sought a Jacobin republican path, i.e. adhered to a bourgeois political programme, and which could hardly give itself organisational substance and direction to the general movement, would be meaningless, since it would not account for the real content of the two movements. This movement could hardly give itself an awareness of its real situation and of the tasks to be undertaken, the fruit of its historical moment and not of the simple will of individuals.

This neo-Luddite position, then, would imply remaining only with the forms of practical activity that the Luddites gave themselves, such as the defence of their former way of life. And in the consequences that the neo-Luddites would give to a possible success of the Luddite movement would be, on the one hand, the fact of considering that the non-introduction of new machinery could mean being able to abort the nascent capitalist system, managing to take a step backwards in history or being able to open the door to a different, equally stationary society. This possible understanding of the possibilities of the movement on the part of the neo-Luddites suggests that the historical process that led to the introduction of machinery, as mentioned above, would be ignored, since the actual extent of that process would have resulted in a slowing down of the unfolding of capitalism. On the other hand, to consider that a revolution that would put an end to exploitation could be achieved without an advanced degree of development of the proletariat, only made possible by the painful development of capitalism, and of class consciousness, as well as to consider that a society without a state, surrounded by other states, could have been reached, would in turn imply not understanding the real limitations faced by the Luddite movement, like any movement in general, and would be related

to a lack of understanding of what would be the real basis for the state to disappear in history.

Conclusion

We then affirmed that there was a historical limit at that time, because of the degree of development of the capitalist mode of production, which resulted in the inability to understand that what had changed their way of life was not the mere introduction of machines into the productive process, nor was it a casual convergence of interests between the owners of the machines and the state, but the ever fuller development of market production and the private ownership of the means of production, cause and consequence of the total separation of the producer from his tools of labour, of the peasant from the land, and thus the increasing necessity of having to survive through the sale of labour power (subsumption of labour to capital), that only through the process of class struggle and, through this, the emergence of the revolutionary theory of the proletariat, could the real bases for the transformation of society into a society without exploitation be laid.

Despite the courage with which the Luddites fought, like the proletarians, semi-proletarians and poor peasants as a whole, due to proletarianisation as the degradation of their livelihoods and their communities, they attacked the property of the capitalists, but without having the perspective of abolishing it. Thus we again affirm that their historical possibilities were to delay, if anything, the transformation of the nascent system, but not to abort capitalism, for it was productive activity itself that was moving towards a chaotic and anarchic competition in the market, nationally and internationally, which gave impetus to the technical novelties that had previously been paralysed by the lack of the appropriate social substratum.

It could also be argued that the limits of the historical period could only give the role of the most advanced political current as that of the radical democracy of Jacobinism, expressing the inability to transform the workers' struggle into a real class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie with a class character. Jacobinism, as a political conception, would have given itself the role of speeding up the remaining transformations of British capitalism, further developing equality between individuals as the democratic system, proper to equality between commodities on the market, but not the destruction of the emerging social relations, such as mainly the abolition of private property and wage labour. At that time, capitalism was beginning to develop fully, free of feudal or pre-capitalist shackles, and the Luddite struggle was halfway between the French Revolution and the rise of the revolutionary workers' movement.

And, despite this determinism, which is not fatalism, we consider Luddism to be part of our history, but we do not engage in the ahistorical folly of trying to

force the conception they themselves had of their ideal society as a communist conception, just as we do not dwell on the theoretical as well as the practical limitation they displayed. So, when we say that they are part of our history, we are referring to the history of the workers' movement, on its way to its conformation as a revolutionary class, regardless of the degree of consciousness that its protagonists presented about the concrete moment they faced, which, as we have analysed, reacted to capitalist social relations and forces in the only way they could understand them, and defended needs that Capital was denying them, in a very virulent way.

Something similar would happen to the various expressions of the workers' movement, both earlier and later, all of them with a different degree of social consciousness. The Enragés and the sans-culottes of revolutionary France expressed themselves in Babuism, the English workers in Chartism, as well as in the different tendencies of utopian socialism for the young workers' movement developed in the first half of the 19th century, from which they tried to put an end to their situation of misery. These political tendencies were insufficient in themselves, because they did not guarantee the independence of class political interests from the petty bourgeoisie, but they were necessary as practical and theoretical experiences for the proletariat.

And the fact is that, from periods of great combative activity, the class gradually equipped itself with the necessary elements to achieve a greater consciousness of its social being and its perspective of emancipation, until it was able to incubate and engender the Manifesto of the Communist Party. From this programme the political and historical basis for the social emancipation of the proletariat was laid, as the only revolutionary subject under the capitalist mode of production, which, because of its international scope, could only be internationalist, due to the global scope of the socialisation of labour that capitalism itself was leading. Through the theoretical developments that followed the various historical experiences, the programme was endowed with more content and those parts that the historical process had already surpassed were discarded. The real movement of the class itself, in which our historical comrades participated and led, generated the need to overcome the existing limits in its organisation and understanding of the task, making the class and its party converge in a dialectical unity, in the discontinuities experienced by the movement, because they did not tend to be gradual. And it is through the intermediate organisms of the class that emerged in ascending periods of struggle, especially those in which it was possible to break with the separation between economy and politics, that the consciousness germinated which linked the class with its programme and its party, where the minorities that were grouped in it went from being a product to a factor in the revolutionary struggle.

The neo-Luddites are in part an indirect product of the historical defeat of the proletariat and of the international political counter-revolution, as well as of

the individualism of the activists, whether or not from the petty bourgeoisie, who flooded the radical milieus from the 1960s onwards. This form of social activism is reproduced by trying to ignore the proletariat by putting into practice a firm will, trying to stir consciences without taking into account other aspects and in some cases justifying their form of activity through the existence of moral laws superior to those of man, but which in general are above historical reality, its necessary determinism, the class struggle, in order to try to destroy or slow down and limit the development of capitalist technique.

On the other hand, the way some theorists of neo-Luddism interpret the struggle against capitalism on the basis of the destruction of machinery, as of objects of consumption, presents an eclectic perspective that does not realise that in this way they totally invert reality, for they take the oppressive and destructive phenomena of machinery on nature, as on human beings and their communities, as the immediate image that is presented to our consciousness and give it a theoretical form. After the efforts to give an answer to the capitalist catastrophe, their ideological elaboration has fetishised the social relations in things, precisely as it happens spontaneously in the consciousness of the social being of Capital, and therefore they only know how to give an immediatist and sterile answer.

Moreover, a systematic criticism of the communists by the neo-Luddites is the result of their misunderstanding of the experience of so-called "really existing socialism", because for them these countries were the implementation of communism and therefore the expression of the real goal of revolutionary Marxism. This will lead them to claim that communism is a failure, because of its bureaucratic component, its destructive action of nature, the fruit of its productivist logic, for according to neo-Luddism the communists allowed themselves to be dominated by the immense productive forces bequeathed by the industrial capitalist system, and that is why we communists can say that they are the indirect fruit of political counter-revolution. The neo-Luddites do not realise that the national-communist experiences were antagonistic to the revolutionary movement, and the ideological battle waged by them against this false communism can only lead to the further entrenchment of the liberal conceptions prevailing in the radical milieus. They criticise the founders of Marxism for not giving importance to Luddism and despising it, for ignoring the harm of the introduction of machines to the old producers. They also identify "progress" with morality and the unlimited development of science and technology as positive means to a more just and free society. For the neo-Luddites, the problem lies in the need to manage big industry and those technologies that lack a democratic character (all for the primitivists), and not in whether it is managed under socialism or under capitalism itself.

Actually, communists do not look aside when machinery and social labour, the science and technology contained in them, become forces that alone seem to

crush the workers like nature, and take away from the producer the ability to decide on the product of his labour, but we turn that inverted picture on its head. Marx contemplated this aspect of Capital and reflected it in his writings, as in the Grundrisse:

"The appropriation of living labour by capital acquires in machinery, also in this sense, an immediate reality. On the one hand, it is the analysis and application of mechanical and chemical laws, deriving directly from science, that enables machines to perform the same work that was previously carried out by the worker. The development of machinery in this way, however, only takes place when big industry has already reached a higher level and capital has captured and put at its service all the sciences; on the other hand, the existing machinery itself already provides great resources. Inventions then become a branch of economic activity, and the application of science to immediate production itself becomes a criterion which determines and encourages it. It is not along this path, however, that machinery has emerged in general, let alone the path that it follows in detail during its progression. That path is the analysis through the division of labour, which already transforms the operations of the workers more and more into mechanical ones, so that at a certain point the mechanism can be introduced in their place. (An economy of power). The determinate mode of labour is thus here directly transferred from the worker to capital in the form of the machine, and by virtue of this transposition, his own capacity for labour is devalued. Hence the struggle of the workers against the machines. What was the activity of the living worker becomes the activity of the machine. Thus the appropriation of labour by capital, capital as that which absorbs living labour into itself - "as if it had love in its body" - is brutally opposed to the worker."

Despite being part of the historical process, we affirm that machinery as well as present-day technology could cease to be a means of exploitation if, after the proletarian revolution, they are not driven not with the aim of increasing labour-time but of decreasing it, up to the abolition of wage-labour, For from the destruction of capitalism, the abolition of commodity and value, the new society would not have the aim of constantly expanding production, this being a fundamental development of the revolutionary theory of Marxism which we try to bring closer with the texts contained in our book "Towards Communism". This would result in ceasing to exploit the proletariat, which would put an end to social classes, as in ceasing to destroy the earth, which would stop or modify the form of extraction of resources that did not fit the new needs, as well as the inefficient and unconscious use of resources, and discarding those technologies that could not be exploited or transforming those technologies that remained necessary in order to be able to redirect them towards the ends of communism. With Marx again:

"But while capital only in machinery and other material forms of existence of fixed capital, such as railways, etc. (to which we shall return later) is conferred its proper form as use-value within the process of production, this does not at all mean that this use-value - the machinery itself - is capital, or that its existence as

machinery is identical with its existence as capital; just as gold would not cease to have its use-value as gold if it ceased to be money. Machinery would not lose its use-value when it ceased to be capital. From machinery being the most adequate form of the use-value proper to capital fixe, it by no means follows that the subsumption of the social relation of capital is the most adequate and best social relation of production for the employment of machinery."

Moving on to another important point in the critique of neo-Luddite ideology, there is the question of organisation, because it is contrary to any kind of centralisation, both for the revolution and for the organisation of future society, since it would propose a stationary society based on the existence of small communities, capable of managing existing resources democratically or directly, thus returning to the experiences of the old peasant world, or generating new ones in community. This obliges us to point out, for example, that the experience of the old European peasant communities of feudalism, like the pre-Columbian Indians, were not unaffected by their impact on nature, as they transformed large tracts of forest into fields of crops, and caused great fires that gave rise to desert plains in North America. It makes no sense, then, to idealise the old, small, pre-capitalist community. At this level of organisation in small communities, it is thought that they would be safe from the immensity of the large installations and machines set in motion by Capital, but would these communities be safe from the mercantile form of products and their exchange?

Capitalism, being based on production and exchange between private producers, on the social division of labour, and on a certain level of technical development, its foundations or bases would not disappear, but would remain in the same existence or larvae in an infinity of small communities from the beginning of neo-luddite social change. These would need to come into contact in some way, without forgetting that the abolition of private property would not be among the priorities for the neo-Luddites as a whole. That is why we affirm that the organisation of the activity in this world could not detach itself from its mercantile nature, because in the existing difference of resources between regions, as well as of productive capacities in each unit, it could not assure a communitarian autarchy, at least not as it was in the past, and if they wanted to share on the basis of gratuity, this communitarian form would present real and objective limits, because the low productive level is an important factor in history to give rise to conflicts, as well as to social classes and hierarchies, but not only. And given the current size of the human population, it would be difficult to imagine that these small communities could manage the world's needs.

This is why this whole approach would have reformed the form in which capitalism presents itself, a capitalism that would be inefficient when it comes to producing goods, and where sheer will is not enough to maintain the social edifice, the neo-luddite form of society would not be able to overcome the blows that reality would deal it, and the grey utopia of anti-development, social

ecology or primitivism would crumble at once or gradually until they consciously embraced the reality they were already practising.

For if you do not understand the material reality of the capitalist mode of production, you cannot even consciously do away with it. And this implies understanding how its concrete historical laws, its social relations, its economic mechanism, which start from the hell of production and are expressed in the heaven of law, the state and its association in supranational, imperialist organisations, through the market and the institutions of finance capital, and how this is expressed in the various aspects of social life. This social dynamic has an impersonal character that generates and develops a problematic in the relationship of human beings with themselves and with nature, developed to a global extent, as it managed to socialise production through its interconnectedness to a global extent, after boosting the productive forces in a grotesque and catastrophic way, but at the same time managing to reduce the working time necessary to produce general human needs. These needs existing in the form of commodities are alienated by Capital, which as Marx expressed in the Grundrisse:

To the same extent that labour-time - the mere quantum of labour - is placed by capital as the sole determining element, immediate labour and its quantity as the determining principle of production - of the creation of use-values - disappear; to the same extent, immediate labour is reduced quantitatively to a more meagre proportion, and qualitatively to a moment which is undoubtedly indispensable, but subordinate to general scientific labour, to the technological application of the natural sciences on the one hand, and on the other to the general productive force resulting from the social structuring of global production, a productive force which appears as a natural gift of social labour (even if [it is, in reality, a] historical product). Capital thus works for its own dissolution as the dominant form of production.

And all this by denying property to the proletariat, extracting from its labour the maximum surplus-value for profit, though with ever greater difficulties in extracting it, because of the increase in the density of capital and its organic composition, eroding value as the source of the measure of social wealth. Despite this, as well as the tendential decline in the rate of profit, profit itself continues to be appropriated by the capitalist, for his personal enjoyment on the one hand, but essentially for permanent reinvestment in new capital with the aim of constantly expanding production on the other, this being an automatic, unconscious and uncontrollable process, typical of the dynamics of social being which makes the bourgeois a mere functionary of Capital. The capitalist, in order to be able to reproduce and maintain his class position, has to continue to bring to the market the commodities obtained through the exploitation of labour, directly or indirectly, by circumventing the competition between private producers. But the greater the development of capitalist private property, the greater the development of its historical negator.

This allows us to ensure the possibility of putting at the service of the proletariat and the future liberated humanity those productive forces which today are placed in front of us, as alienating forces, in order to be able to guarantee the world needs of the species, leaving no one behind and which will take into account future generations, thanks to the movement of communism. This movement will cease to be underground, because it will express the contradictions of capitalism within itself, between relations of production and productive forces, which will generate new periods of social revolution, as we set out in our text on the current revolutionary perspective, for which communism will have the possibility of incarnating its material force in the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, as soon as the proletariat manages to break the barrier between politics and economics, and thus be able to confront the bourgeoisie and its state, through its party and its programme. This programme or plan of sorts will be an anti-productivist plan, but not an anti-developmental one, and can only be implemented through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which can begin at the local level, and which, in order to succeed, will have to be extended from the joint movement of the world proletariat. Communism will not be built, because its bases are to be found in the existing productive forces, which must be liberated on the basis of the programme as an expression of the movement of the proletariat. This programme will adapt the means of production to the needs of the world proletariat, with the aim of putting an end to the mercantile form of products, means of production, land and labour power, thus transforming the way in which society produces and reproduces its living conditions, finally putting an end to social classes and opening up communism or socialism as a mode of production.

This dictatorship, which we develop in our audio, is the highest form that the class struggle takes when the revolutionary proletariat, through its party and supported by the intermediate bodies created during the revolution, has achieved power by destroying the bourgeois state. This semi-state will not be socialism, for the existence of the state implies that there are antagonistic class interests within society, because they extend beyond the borders, thus the persistence of the exploitation of labour, hence the need for authoritarian intervention against the rest of the classes, to the point of transforming the economic mechanism itself. We assume that a new and profound form of freedom cannot come about immediately under this state of affairs, although a new form of sociability for the proletariat will be foreshadowed as soon as the process is as broad as possible and allows the proletariat to develop its activity as a community or *Gemeinwesen* in all social dimensions. Moreover, from the transitional phase onwards, the form and content of all products and means of production will be transformed, ceasing to be commodities under the first phase of socialism, which would lose the fetishistic form proper to the social being of Capital, making Money disappear as a general equivalent, with the consequence that the products of social labour would be allocated according to the capacities,

and as soon as possible, according to the needs of the producers. This change would take into account all the misuse that has been made of a whole series of resources under capitalism, in small and large production, in the factory and on the land, in the various sources of energy, making use of all the finally liberated capacity of our species to meet the great challenges that we will inherit from capitalism.

During this process, as later under communism in a more comprehensive form, the various existing divisions in society will be ended, such as the social division of labour, retaining technical forms of division as long as these are necessary, but expanding the creativity and capabilities of individuals through the availability of free time; the separation between town and country, as well as ending the large population agglomerations in which today millions of proletarians live in small, unsafe and unhealthy houses, and achieving a better population distribution in space, and so on. After the birth of the new society, there will still be certain shortcomings of capitalism which the future producers will have to deal with.

The achievement of this transformation cannot be realised if there is no consciousness of the objective reality as well as of the pressing tasks to be undertaken, if social cooperation is not sought at the level of the great diffusion of the existing productive forces, for there will be no possibility of unifying even the species in a direction of emancipation and conflicts will continue to occur as they do today. Without a class leadership, both in the means and the ends to be achieved, there will be no existing struggle that will triumph over capitalism, for it will not be possible to undertake those tasks that will make it possible to make the productive leap to make the social classes disappear. Nor will it be possible to make a positive and rational use of those forces of nature, objectified in science, which human beings have come to understand and which are the key to leaving behind this present society, which will allow us from a certain moment onwards to get rid of those which are irretrievable, sooner or later, in order to best preserve our planet for future generations, despite the fact that capitalism used these forces in order to deploy and establish itself as the ultimate class-organised mode of production in history, which affected the Luddites themselves, their livelihoods and extinct communities so much.

The experience of the Luddites is inseparable from the history of the revolutionary proletarian movement, for they ensured the first learnings necessary to guarantee the development of class independence and our programme. It is only through this understanding of Luddism that we can really recover it and insert it into our memory as a class, and those who claim it from the academy as well as from petty-bourgeois and inter-class radical activism that dissociate it from the history of the revolutionary proletariat could not be further from it.

Recommended Materials

Books:

- Karl Marx, *Fundamental elements for the critique of political economy (Grundrisse) 1857-1858, vol, 2, Mexico. 21st century, 1972.*
- Julius Van Daal, *The Wrath of Ludd. Cabbage seeds ed.*
- Frank E. Manuel, Kevin Robins, Frank Webster, *Cursed Machine. Contributions to a history of Luddism. AliKornio editions.*
- EP Thompson, *The Historical Formation of the Working Class, England: 1780-1832. Laia Publishing House.*
- Murray Bookchin, *Social or Personal Anarchism.*
- Asa Ekengren San Andres - *Neo-Luddism in direct action environmental movements in the United States*

Articles:

- [Luddism for These Ludicrous Times](#)
- [Why the Luddites Matter](#)
- [Why elites" don't care if you "fear the robot":](#)
- John and Paula Zerzan: [Who killed Ned Ludd? \[1976\]](#)
- [Happy Birthday, King Ludd!](#)
- Christian Ferrer. [The Machine Destroyers \[1996\]](#)

Audios and videos:

- [Ludd's Friends](#)
- [We interviewed Adrián Almazán](#)
- La Nevera Vol.29: [Neo-Luddism in direct action environmental movements in the US](#)