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Industrial Domestication: Industry As The Origins Of Modern Domination

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their enterprise of domestication. English historians often find it unaccountable that the "industrial revolution" was not accompanied by a "cultural revolution" that would have integrated the poor into the "industrial spirit" (such considerations multiplied in the 70 s, when the extensive wildcat strikes acutely revealed its importance).

In France the bourgeois counter-revolution was above all theoretical; domination was exercised through politics and law, "the miracle that has kept people in a state of abuse since 1789" (Louis Blanc). The principles represented a universal project that promised that the poor would be able to participate when they adopted the structures in place. Around 1830, a sector of the poor took on the role of appealing on behalf of this promise. Demanding that any "who have been made inferior be given their dignity as citizens" (Proudhon). Beginning in 1848, the same principles were invoked against the bourgeoisie in the name of the "republic of work". And it is common knowledge to what extent the dead weight of 1789 would play a role in the crushing of the Paris Commune.

This social project split in two in the 19th century. In England, the capital of capitol social struggles were unable to merge into a unified assault, becoming travesties that remained on a level of "economic" struggles. In France, the cradle of reformism, this unified assault remained restricted to a political form, leaving the last word to the state.

We have described the beginnings of a process that is now reaching completion. The classical labour movement is definitely integrated into civil society and a new project of industrial domestication is now underway. Today the grandeur, as well as the limit of the movements of the past — which inevitably determine social conditions in each region of this world — have become fully clear.

— Leopold Roc

"If science was put to the service of capital, the recalcitrant worker's docility would be assured". — Andrew Ure, *Philosophie des Manufactures*, 1835

"In the past, if anyone called a tradesman a worker, he risked a brawl. Today, when they are told that workers are what is best in the state, they all insist on being workers" — M. Mav. 1948

The term industrial revolution, commonly used to describe the period between 1750 and 1850, is a pure bourgeois lie, symmetrical to the lie about the political revolution. It does not include the negative and flows from a vision of history as uniquely the history of technological progress. Here the enemy deals a double blow, legitimizing the existence of managers and hierarchy as unavoidable technical necessities, and imposing a mechanical conception of progress, which is considered a positive and socially neutral law. It is the religious moment of materialism and the idealism of matter. Such a lie was obviously destined for the poor, among whom it was to inflict long lasting destruction.

To refute it, it is sufficient to stick to the facts. Most of the technological innovations that allowed factories to develop had previously been discovered but remained unused. Their widespread application was not a mechanical consequence, but stemmed from a historically timed choice which was made by the dominant classes. And this choice was not so much a response to a concern about purely technical efficiency (which was often doubtful) as it was a strategy of social domestication. The pseudo-industrial revolution can thus be reduced to a project of social counter revolution. There is only one type of progress: the progress of alienation.

Under the previously existing system, the poor still enjoyed a considerable amount of independence in the work they were obligated to perform. Its dominant form was the domestic workshop: capitalists rented tools to the workers, provided them with raw materials, and then bought the finished products dirt cheap. For the workers, exploitation was only a moment of commerce over which they had no direct control.

The poor could still consider their work an "art" over which they exercised a notable range of decision making power. But above all, they remained masters of their own time: they worked at home and could stop whenever they felt like it: their work time escaped any calculation. And, variety, as well as irregularity characterized their work, since the domestic workshop was more often than not a complement to agricultural activities.

The ensuing fluctuations in industrial activity were incompatible with the harmonious expansion of commerce. Thus the poor still possessed considerable leverage, which they permanently exercised. The rerouting of raw materials was common practice, and fed a parallel market. Above all, those who worked at home could exert pressure on their employers: the frequent destruction of looms was a means of "collective bargaining by riot" (Hobshawn). Come up with the bucks or we'll break everything.

Factories Modelled After Prisons

It was in order to suppress the poor's threatening independence that the bourgeoisie saw itself obliged to directly control the realm of production. This therefore, is what governed the spread of factories. "It isn't as much those who are absolutely idle who wrong the public, but those who only work half the time," Ashton had already written in 1725. The military arts were applied to industry, and factories were literally modelled after prisons, which in effect made their appearance at the same time.

A vast surrounding wall separated the worker from everything that was external to work, and guards were assigned to turn back people who, at the beginning, found it natural to visit their less fortunate friends. On the inside, the initial goal of draconian regulations was to civilize the slaves. In 1770, a writer envisioned a new plan for making the poor productive: The House of Terror, in which the inhabitants would be obliged to work for 14 hours a day and controlled by keeping them on a starvation diet. His idea was not far ahead of its time a generation later, the House of Terror was simply called a factory.

to rush to salute as the representatives of the working class," as Edith Simcox pertinently noted in 1880. The immense mass of still intermittent and unskilled workers could not belong. They were the only ones who, when the trade unions' doors opened, preserved the legendary savage and combative spirit of the English workers — beginning a long cycle of social struggles violent at times, but lacking a unifying principle.

"Although the revolutionary initiative will probably begin in France, only England can have . . . a serious economic revolution. The English have all the necessary material for the social revolution. What they lack is the generalizing spirit and the revolutionary passion." This late 19th Century declaration by the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association contains both the truth and the false consciousness of an epoch. From a social viewpoint, England has always been an enigma: the country that gave birth to modern conditions of exploitation, and was therefore the first to produce large masses of modern poor, is also the country where institutions have remained unchanged for three centuries and the one that has never been shaken by a revolutionary assault.

Ready to Take to the Barricades

This is what distinguishes it from the relations of the European continent and contradicts the Marxist concept of revolution. Commentators have attempted to explain this enigma as a British atavism which led to the continually repeated tall tales about the reform and anti-theoretical character of the English poor compared to the radical consciousness animating the poor of France, who were always ready to take to the barricades. This type of ahistorical outlook fails to remember the abundance of theory during the civil war years of the 17th century and then forgets the persistence and violence which have always characterized the social struggles of the English poor. In reality, the enigma is resolved as follows — the revolt of the poor always depends on what it confronts.

In England, it was through the brutal force of a social mechanism and without flowery phrases that the dominant classes carried out

by the bourgeoisie gained the upper hand over social hatred only on the rebound. Once it had been relayed by the workers' representatives, who, in their struggles against their masters, now spoke the same language as they did. But despite religious forms that the domestication of thought could still assume its more efficient basis was the economic lie. It was during the second third of the 19th century, when the poor were subjected to the most degrading and mutilating conditions in every aspect of their lives, and when all resistance to the founding of the new capitalist order was defeated, that madly Marx, Engels and their followers greeted with satisfaction the birth of "the revolutionary army of work," and considered that the objective conditions for a victorious assault had finally come together.

In his famous 1864 address to the International Workingmen's Association, Marx began by drawing up a detailed portrait of the appalling situation of the English poor and went on to applaud "marvellous successes" such as the ten-hour day law (we've already seen what that was worth) and the establishment of manufacturing cooperatives, which represented "a victory of the political economy of work over the political economy of property". If Marxist commentators have amply described the horrifying fate of 19th century workers, they consider this fate to a certain extent inevitable and beneficial. It was inevitable because it was the unavoidable consequence of the demands of science and of a necessary development of "the relations of production". It was beneficial to the extent that "the proletariat was smited, disciplined, and organized by the mechanisms of production" (Marx)

The workers' movement was founded on a purely defensive basis. The first workers' associations were "associations of resistance and mutual aid". But if the poor in revolt had always previously seen themselves negatively, it was in and through work, which was forced to become the centre of their existence, that workers came to seek a positive community, one that was produced not by themselves, but by an external mechanism.

The "aristocratic minority" of skilled workers was the initial incarnation of this ideology "the sector that was of interest to politicians and from which originated those whom society was only too pleased

It was in England that factories first became widespread. Here, the dominant classes had long overcome their internal conflicts and could thus devote themselves without restraint to the passion of commerce. The repression which followed the millenarian assault by the poor — had also paved the way for the industrial counter-revolution.

It was the sad fate of the English poor to be the first to be subjected to the unmitigated brutality of this developing social mechanism. It goes without saying that they considered this fate an absolute degradation, and those who accepted it were scorned by their peers. At the time of the Levellers, it was already commonly considered that those who sold their labor for a salary had abandoned all the rights of "free-born Englishmen." Even before production began, the first factory owners were already experiencing difficulty recruiting workers and often had to travel long distances to locate them.

Next, it was necessary to force the poor to remain at their new jobs, which they deserted en masse. This is why the factory owners took charge of their slaves' dwellings, which functioned as the factories' antechambers. A vast industrial reserve army was constituted, bringing about a militarisation of the totality of social life.

Luddism was the poor's response to this new order. During the initial decade of the 19th century, a movement dedicated to the destruction of machines developed in a climate of insurrectional fury. It was not only a question of a nostalgia for the golden age of the craftsman. Certainly the advent of the reign of the quantitative, of mass-produced shoddy merchandise was a major source of anger.

The millenarian movements, active In Europe from the 13th to the 17th centuries, attempted to realize a Golden Age or state of grace in real life. They grew out of a messiahanic Christianity which saw temporal authority — church and state — as the anti Christ and a hindrance to the arrival of the millennium, the 1000 year rule of Christ on earth . Its adherents flaunted economic, sexual, religious and civic taboos, using a wide variety of tactics — some of them violent — to achieve their utopia. (See Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* an exciting and accurate, yet conservative view of the era.)

Henceforth, the time it took to accomplish a task became more important than the quality of the result and this devaluation of the contents of all work accomplished led the poor to attack work in general, which thus revealed its existence. But Luddism was above all an anti capitalist war of independence, an "attempt to destroy the new society" (Mathias). As one of their tracts read, "All nobles and tyrants must be struck down."

Luddism was heir to the millenarian movement of the preceding centuries, and although it no longer expressed itself as a universal and unifying theory it remained radically foreign to all political outlooks and to every economic pseudo-rationalism. During the same period in France, the silk-workers uprisings, which were also directed against the process of industrial domestication, were on the contrary already contaminated by the political lie.

"Their Political understanding deluded them about the source of social misery and distorted their consciousness of their true goal," wrote Marx in 1844. Their slogan was "live working or die fighting."

Imposing Industrial Logic

In England, while the nascent trade union movement was weakly repressed, and even tolerated, destroying machines was punished by death. The unwavering negativity of the Luddites made them socially intolerable. The state responded to this threat in two ways: it organized a modern professional police force, and officially recognized trade unions. Luddism was first defeated by brutal repression, and then faded away as the trade unions succeeded in imposing industrial logic. In 1920, an English observer noted with relief that "bargaining over the conditions of change has prevailed over only opposing change itself." Some progress!

Of all the slander heaped on the Luddites, the worst came from labor movement apologists, who regarded it as blind and infantile. Hence the following passage from Marx's Capital. Representing a fundamental misinterpretation of the era: "Time and experience

and their moral adhesion to this world. This excluded rabble, which could still dream of a land of plenty.

The initial goal of forced labor in the factories was, above all, to limit this threatening potential, and to integrate it through a powerful social mechanism. The lies of the English bourgeoisie still lacked the refinement which characterized their counterparts on the other side of the Channel, which allowed the latter to disposes the poor, initially, through ideology. Even today, the English defenders of the Old World project their moral rectitude as opposed to their political opinions. The particularly visible and arrogant frontier which separates the rich from the poor in this country (France) is at par with the feeble penetration of the concept of individual and legal equality.

While Puritan moral indoctrination had the initial effect of unifying and comforting everyone who had a particular interest to defend in a changing and uncertain world, it devastated the lower classes, who already found themselves bent under the yoke of work and money, and put the finishing touches on their defeat. Thus Ure recommended that his peers maintain the "moral machinery" with as much care as the "mechanical machinery" in order to "make obedience acceptable." But, above all, this moral machinery was to reveal its harmful effects when it was adopted by the Poor, stamping its imprint on the nascent labour movement.

The campaign to civilize the Poor

Worker sects multiplied, and Methodists, Wesleyan Baptists, and others recruited as many faithful as possible into the Church of England, a state institution. In the hostile environment of the new industrial cities, the shivering workers withdrew to the solace of the chapel. There is always a tendency to rationalize insults when revenge does not take place. The new workers' morality turned poverty into a state of grace and austerity into a virtue.

In the industrial areas, the union was the direct offspring of the chapel, and lay preachers were transformed into trade union representatives. The campaign to civilize the poor that was conducted

were already completely dispossessed, saw themselves deprived of even the idea of plenitude.

The Puritans-Scum

It was in Protestantism, and more precisely its Anglo Saxon Puritan variation, that the cult of utility and progress found its source and legitimacy. Having made religion a private affair, the Protestant ethic confirmed the social atomisation caused by industrialisation: individuals found themselves alone before God in the same way they found themselves isolated with respect to commodities and money. As well, it professed the precise values that were required of the poor: honesty, frugality, abstinence, thrift and work.

The Puritans, scum who relentlessly fought against parties, games, debauchery and everything that was opposed to the logic of work and saw the millenarian spirit as the "stifling of the spirit of enterprise" (Webb in 1644), paved the way for the industrial counter revolution. Moreover, it can be said that the Reformation was the prototype for reformism: as the product of a dissent, it, in turn, favoured all dissenting points of view. It "did not demand that one become a Puritan; it demanded that one be a believer. Any religion would do."

It was in 1789, in France, that these principles were to be fully realized, as they definitively shed their religious form and took on a universal one through law and politics. France was a latecomer to the industrial process: an irreconcilable conflict between the bourgeoisie and a nobility that was wary of any mobilization of money. Paradoxically, it was this delay that led the bourgeoisie to advocate the most modern approach.

In Great Britain, where the dominant classes had long ago merged along a common historical path, "the Declaration of Human Rights took form, dressed not in a Roman toga, but in a robe of the Old Testament prophets" (Hobsbawn). This is precisely the limit, the incomplete nature of the English theoretical counter revolution. Citizenship was still ultimately based on a doctrine of election, through which the elect recognized each other by the fruits of their labor

were needed before the workers learned to distinguish between machines themselves and the manner in which they were used by capital, and to direct their attacks against the specific social context in which they were used, and not against the physical instruments of production themselves."

This materialistic conception of the neutrality of machines sufficed to legitimatize the organisation of work, iron discipline (on this point Lenin was a consistent Marxist), and ultimately everything else that followed. Allegedly backwards, the Luddites at least understood that the "material instruments of production" are above all instruments of domestication whose form is not neutral because it guarantees hierarchy and dependence.

The resistance of the first factory workers manifested itself primarily over one of the rare things that belonged to them, and of which they were being dispossessed: their time. It was an old religious custom not to work on either Sunday or Monday, which was called "Holy Monday." Since Tuesdays were dedicated to recovering from two days of drinking, work would not reasonably begin until Wednesday. Wide spread at the beginning of the 19th century, this holy custom subsisted until 1914 in some trades. Various coercive methods were employed by the bosses, without success, to combat this institutionalised absenteeism. It was with the introduction of trade unions that Saturday afternoons off from work were substituted for "Holy Monday." This glorious conquest meant that the work week was extended by two days.

Holy Monday did not only call into play the question of work time, but also the use of money, because workers did not return to work until they had spent all of their salary. From this period on, the slave was no longer considered simply a worker, but a consumer as well. The need to develop the internal market by opening it up to the poor had been theorized by Adam Smith. Moreover, as Archbishop Berkeley wrote in 1755, "wouldn't the creation of needs represent the best means of making the nation industrious"

In a manner that was still marginal, the salary allotted to the poor was thus adapted to the necessities of the market. But the poor did not use this additional cash as the economists predicted: the increase in salary was time gained over work (a nice twist on

Benjamin Franklin's utilitarian maxim time is money).Time gained by being away from the factory was spent in the well named public houses (during this period news of revolts was communicated from pub to pub).

The more money the poor had, the more they drank. The spirit of commodities was first discovered in liquor, to the amazement of the economists, who claimed that the poor would spend their money usefully. The temperance campaign jointly conducted by the bourgeoisie and the "advanced and therefore sober fractions of the working class" was more an exhortation to use their salary wisely than a response to a concern about public health, (the even greater damage caused by work did not induce the bourgeoisie to call for its abolition). One hundred years later, the same sectors were unable to fathom that the poor would deprive themselves of food in order to buy a "superfluous" commodity.

Savagery Always Returns

Propaganda to encourage saving was introduced to combat this propensity for immediate spending. And again, it was "the avant garde of the working class" that instituted savings establishments for the poor.

Saving increased both the Poor's dependence and the enemies' power: capitalists could rise above temporary crises by lowering salaries, and could accustom the workers to the idea of accepting the minimum necessary to sustain life.

But there is an unresolvable contradiction: each capitalist demands that his slaves, as workers save, but only his workers; for him all the other slaves are consumers and as such are obligated to spend. This contradiction could not be resolved until much later when commodity development permitted the establishment of credit for the poor. In any event, even if the bourgeoisie had succeeded in civilizing the poor's behaviour at work for the time being, it could never totally domesticate their spending.

After the suppression of Holy Monday lengthened the work week, "workers from then on enjoyed their leisure time at the work place"

(Geoff Brown). Slow-downs became the rule. It was the introduction of piece work that ultimately imposed discipline in the workshops, forcing diligence and productivity to increase. The major result of this system, which began to spread in the 1850's, was to compel the workers to internalize industrial logic: to earn more, it was necessary to work more. This, though, had a detrimental effect on everyone else's salaries, and the less ardent could even find themselves out of a job.

The answer to the resulting all out competition was the establishment of collective bargaining to decide the amount of work to be done and its distribution and remuneration, leading to the implementation of trade union mediation. Having won the victory over productivity, the capitalists consented to a decrease in the hours worked. The famous ten-hour law, although in effect a victory for trade unionism, represented defeat for the poor, cementing the defeat of their long resistance to the new industrial order.

The omnipresent dictatorship of necessity was thus established. Once the vestiges of the former social order were suppressed, nothing remained that could not be reduced to the imperatives of work. The "struggle for existence" was all the poor had to look forward to. The absolute reign of necessity, however, cannot be understood as simply a quantitative increase in scarcity: it was above all the colonization of the mind by the trivial and crude principle of utility, a defeat for thought itself.

It is here that we measure the consequences of the crushing of the millenarian spirit that inspired the poor during the first phase of industrialisation. During this period, the reign of brutal necessity was clearly conceived as being the work of one world — the world of the Antichrist based on property and money. The idea of the suppression of necessity was inseparable from the idea of the realization of the Garden of Eden of humanity, "the spiritual Canaan where wine, milk and honey flowed, and money did not exist" (Coppe). With the defeat of this attempted inversion, necessity attained an appearance of immediacy. Henceforth, scarcity appeared to be a natural calamity which only a more extensive organization of work could remedy. With the triumph of the English ideology, the poor, who