

The Hidden Struggle

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This piece has been written because of the contradictory and divisive attitudes and ideas on race and culture that currently exist, in society at large but especially in the anarchist and radical left movements. This is the seed of the piece, but analysis on this subject helps to reveal many things beyond it – as a result, the main body of the work attempts to develop our understanding regarding forms of control, how certain people see themselves or do not see themselves, and many things besides. The first task of this work is the analysis of some of the existent discourses on race, primarily in the form of a critique of ‘White Privilege Theory’. After this critique we simply take some of the relevant underlying issues, examine why contradictory attitudes and ideas are in existence, and move forward with the resolution to these contradictions. Hopefully the result is something that will help to cure the terrible and unnecessary divisiveness that has developed in this area within radical discourse, and also produce positive and strengthening ideas out of these contradictions and out of this division. The desire to move forward with ideas, and to strengthen our understanding as a whole, has led to many digressions and comments on specific situations within, chiefly, the anarchist movement – there are several of these at the end.

Note that this is primarily aimed at those who are ‘within’ anarchist, radical left or counter-cultural movements, or interested or familiar with the ideas of these movements – however it may be of interest to others also. When I use the words ‘us’ or ‘our’ within this piece, I am generally referring to people within these movements. I am writing specifically about situations within the UK in this work, but the core ideas should be applicable more or less to Northern Europe and to a lesser extent the U.S.A.

Unfortunately this had to be written in a fairly complicated theoretical style, as it grew out of analysing theoretical concepts. However, hopefully it has been made as accessible as it can be. Words whose use may not be clear even with the use of a dictionary have been defined when they arise. The main academic-style word that I will be using is ‘discourse’, which I take to mean the acceptable content and form of communication, i.e. what is said, what it is acceptable to say and how it is said. It is especially applied to formal communication and media, i.e. writing, debates, the content of films, etc. Different discourses can operate in different groups of people or in different media, so many of the discourses of for instance the anarchist movement or scene will be different to those you would find on the BBC, which would also be distinct from those you find in the Sun.

White Privilege Theory

White Privilege Theory (WPT) currently dominates discourse regarding racism, race and culture in the radical community, in Europe more recently than in America, from whence it comes. It is totally insufficient as a theory used by groups who aim for any kind of international perspective. It is equally insufficient as a theory dealing with any localised racial or cultural situation in Europe. Though I am not from the U.S. it seems to have a lot more relevance and value regarding the situation there, although some of the grave criticisms I will level in this piece will apply to the theory even when localised in the U.S.A. ‘Critical Whiteness’ theory is, if not exactly the same, very similar to it with many related ideas.

WPT is a theory which is used as the basis for certain workshops conducted at various radical events and locations. (It is also in my experience the dominant theory among far left or anarchist intellectuals, in so far as there is any debate or discussion regarding the matters of racism, race and culture). The workshops are notable for being in some cases ‘compulsory’ (though of course without any disciplinary measures behind them). They are also often characterised by a kind of ideological prescription (that is, ideas and theories that you are told are the case) that does not allow any form of debate or discussion. This situation is especially common at No Borders and Queer events. Similarly debate on the subject seems often underlaid with fear. We will be analysing the theory fairly aggressively, and this situation is the reason for this aggressive analysis. If a theory is aggressively pushed, it must expect to be aggressively analysed, especially if it has obvious flaws. After this analysis the piece becomes far less oppositional. So as readers do not initially get the wrong idea, we are not here desperately trying to show that such a thing as ‘white privilege’ does not exist in certain situations, for certain people, in certain places, at certain times. What we are critiquing is the way that this concept is applied to people, and some of the concepts and ideas that are often attached to it within discourse.

Here are some of the important ideas you may come across in the radical scene that are associated with WPT.

- White people are privileged in a number of ways that they do not consciously realise.
- There is an invisible web of hierarchical-style privilege that permeates the structure of societies that heavily favours white people.
- A conceptual division of the world into ‘white people’ and ‘people of colour’.

- The idea that racism is only possible from ‘white people’ towards ‘people of colour’.
- The idea that all white people are racist.

International Perspective

The above set of ideas are completely inadequate and counterproductive to anyone who wants any form of international perspective or who wants to think or act regarding any localised situation outside of ‘the west’. Firstly, as you can see, the above perspective is completely obsessed with white people. To have to tell far left/anarchists off for thinking the world revolves around white people is simply embarrassing.

Specifically, there are various racialised conflicts around the world that have nothing to do with white people. Many who have done migrant solidarity work, for instance helping out migrants on the ground in Calais, will be aware of sharp divisions and prejudices between different racial and ethnic groups. This is apparent in this immediate situation, but also from the life experiences of many of the migrants themselves. A friend of mine enquired after the story of a man who had a picture of himself wielding twin AK 47s; he replied he needed them to defend against Arab slave traders who targeted black african villages. There are also reports of racism operating as of late 2012 in the conflict in Mali.¹

WPT holds that white privilege exists everywhere in the world, and some would say that it has created racial prejudice in other places. This is true to an extent in for instance Africa. If it is true for the Middle Eastern world it is to a much, much lesser extent. But neither aspect of the theory applies in Japan, China, Korea and so on. They have never believed that whites were superior to themselves; on the contrary they have their own conceptions of racial superiority that go back thousands of years. Theories of white superiority have indeed affected much of the world, but do not be so blinkered and obsessed with this specific race and culture to think that they hold sway and have permeated everywhere, or that they were the first such ideas.

Going back to the situation in for instance Africa, ideas of white superiority have indeed made the situation worse, but being unable to talk about specific situations without the discourse being centred around white people is not going to help.

The Situation in Europe

Similarly there are many racial/ethnic/cultural conflicts within Europe that have little or nothing to do with white people. conflict between black and Muslim communities,

¹ e.g. “Mali: Racism Spurs Local Terrorist Defections.” <<http://allafrica.com/stories/201212190660.html>>

and Hindu/Muslim prejudice in Britain is well known, as well as for instance Soma-
lian/Jamaican conflict. What gives us the right to either ignore or make assumptions
about these conflicts? Why the fuck do we think that making anti-racism workshops
and anti-racism zines that completely revolve around theories of white privilege and
demand self-chastisement on the part of white people is a good idea? Such a stance a)
pretty much assumes that the participants or readers are white, or b) makes massive
assumptions about its ‘people of colour’ participants; for instance, that they must be
the victims and never the perpetrators of racism, and that when they are the victims
of racism the perpetrators must have been white and not anything else.

The points so far seriously call into question the division of the world into ‘white
people’ and ‘people of colour’. Conflicts and problems exist beyond these categorisations.
As a minor but embarrassing aside, the term ‘people of colour’ is just a slightly different
way of saying ‘coloured people’, which has notoriously racist overtones in the UK. I
was in a workshop that was underlain with WPT one time which used the distinctions
‘white people’ and ‘people of colour’, and right at the beginning a ‘person of colour’
said that he was uncomfortable with the term ‘people of colour’. hilariously — if you
have a dark sense of humour — he was immediately silenced by the ‘facilitators’ who
said that we were ‘not here to discuss semantics’. They actually acted completely justly,
because nobody was allowed to raise any dissenting voice in that workshop at all; they
made that clear at the start. I completely disapprove of using the term, but I am forced
to use it in this writing in order to criticise theories which make use of it conceptually.

The origins of WPT specifically can be traced back to some essays by Peggy McIn-
tosh in 1988. In one of these essays she lists aspects of white privilege that people
are unconscious of. In fact many of these situations are localised to the USA, apply
only to certain economic groups, or do not apply internationally, all of which problems
invalidate the theory in its current incarnation. For instance:

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most
of the time.²

... This is a problem of numbers of people in an area. This is nothing to do with
privilege. This does not apply if a ‘white person’ is in an area without a lot of ‘white
people’ in, or if a ‘person of colour’ is in an area with a lot of ‘people of colour’ in.

2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing
housing in an area, which I can afford and in which I would want to live.³

Anybody in the UK is lolling right now. I don’t think this was even true in 1988.
40 years ago, yes.

² “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by Peggy McIntosh. <jthomasniu.org/class/170/ec/peggy1.html>

³ Ibid.

3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.⁴

Again she is making assumptions about economic status and type of housing choice. I have been squatting for four years. This does not apply. This does not apply in Glasgow. This does not apply in Belfast. Please tell me why we are using this theory in Europe.

4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.⁵

The assumptions are just getting ridiculous now. Certainly, racial prejudice with regards to stop and search in London is a big problem. The MET is racist towards black people. This has been demonstrated as a fact, and it is a problem. Now, do you think the police in Glasgow, Belfast or Newcastle, where there are no very large ethnic minority populations and where for instance in Glasgow there are huge amounts of white gangs, or where in Belfast oppression and violence operate because of belief or ethnicity rather than skin colour, choose who to harass based on their race? No. There are about a hundred other things wrong with this point, but it can be a fun activity to think of them yourself. This point is relevant to the U.S.A. The theory was made for the U.S.A. Do not take a theory that was made for a specific place and forcefully apply it to a completely different place.

5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.⁶

The population of the UK is 85% white. Should we not expect the media in particular areas to proportionally represent the ethnic groups that make up that area? The alternative is for all media in all countries to represent all hundreds of races and ethnicities at all times, including languages etc. Are the ethnic groups present in the UK proportionally represented on for instance television? I cannot find statistics, but it is unlikely. The question is, whether we can find such statistics or not, who is actually represented or not represented, and why? This question will pose problems for WPT if, as I suspect, certain 'people of colour' groups are over-represented and others are underrepresented, and certain 'white' groups are over-represented and others underrepresented. This situation is one of a multiplicity of race and culture relations, not a binary.

Others of the points are actually valid for most 'white' people. Most of them however are gravely flawed, offensively so for anybody who knows anything about the current

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

UK situation or UK history. for instance, “23. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the place I have chosen.”⁷ This unveils another massive inadequacy that comes about when the theory is taken into Europe, the fact of, which should be completely obvious to everybody, racism from white people towards other white people. By the way, WPT is utterly insufficient as a theory in that it does not qualify what a race is. No matter about the technicalities of the point, the fact is that Irish people have been treated as a separate race historically, and suffered great prejudice from it. Remember the sign hung on many London pubs as recently as the 60s, ‘No Blacks No Dogs No Irish’ — or the extreme prejudice still meted out to whiteskinned Travellers of all kinds, Irish, Romany and New Age. I can’t believe anarchists here in the UK can allow the propagation of such a bullshit theory when so many of them fought with their own bodies to protect the travellers at Dale Farm. Or, are Jewish people classed as white people? If so, are we going to forget events as recent as those of 1933–45, or forget that the Aryan Brotherhood, the largest white supremacist gang in the U.S, has an initiation ritual in which the only race specifically mentioned as objects of conflict and hate are the Jewish? And if not, does whiteness then refer to ethnicity and not skin colour? What ethnicity precisely? With none of these options can WPT remain intact and respectable.

Is racism only possible from ‘white people’ towards ‘people of colour’?

There are strands of WPT, and also far-left thought, that claim that racism is impossible from ‘people of colour’ to white people (whether they believe it is possible from one ‘person of colour’ to another I do not know). This belief plays into certain practices in the left-wing media, which I would never expect to publicly state such a doctrine but which seems to tacitly want to reinforce this belief. This practice of the LW media actually has some sensible motivations — shared by the way with Government and law enforcement — namely of course to quell racism among white people, which they believe has the potential to fare up. This practice is now arguably backfiring in the UK. It is accomplished by simply not naming racist or prejudicial attacks from ‘people of colour’ towards white people as being racist in nature. This type of racist attack is therefore invisible to white people unless they actually live in poor, multicultural areas, which is unlikely for anyone who actually matters to the literate world (middle class people). By the way, I am not trying to spread fear about such areas. I have lived in areas in which white people were a minority for 3/4s of my life, and I did not experience them as being especially dangerous. White people are by no means victimised in such areas — though there are a few exceptions to this around the country. All I am saying is that occasionally racist attacks or the unveiling of racist views towards white people happens, and that this fact is silenced by the media. Again, I would guess that they do this for relatively good reasons; this is no great conspiracy. But how does an intellectual theory dare to make an assertion that most of the people

⁷ Ibid.

of the world are not capable of racism? Firstly, through the aforementioned invisibility of such racism in the media. Secondly, through theoretical subtlety and the changing of certain words' meaning. Thirdly, through being fucked up.

Regarding the second point, there are several different arguments used to justify this kind of assertion. One you may come across is that racism is impossible without 'power' supporting it, and as 'people of colour' have no power due to the structure of society and the institutions that compose it a). holding all the power and b). systematically privileging white people and un-privileging 'people of colour', it is impossible for them to exercise racism. The problem with this is that power is not just held by the institutions of society; every human being holds potential power, which can be exercised towards other human beings in various ways including love, aid, direct violence, manipulation, creativity, etc. To take the negative example, one human being can kill another independently of a power structure, because they possess physical power either in the form of weaponry or being bigger, stronger or more skilled than the other. If you think this example is too individualised, a group of humans can also exercise said physical power over other humans for various reasons and motivations that again are not directly tied to any white-privileging power structure or discourse, including practical competitive reasons, cultural conflict, or ideological motivations that they have developed themselves.

Another argument is that as modern racist theory originated in claiming white supremacy, and was originally made by white people, that it somehow eternally retains this historical 'spirit' and can only ever be used in this sense. Besides the above arguments, direct examples are the easiest way of combating this point and also clarifying my theoretical arguments regarding the subject of 'power'. One type of racist attack that is often exercised against white people in Britain today is the following: in areas with large Muslim populations, white or black men can be attacked for walking with or being seen in public with what *appears* to be a Muslim woman (though the only criteria seems to be that she have brown skin). This happened to two of my friends in Bradford, who were beaten up in the attacks, and I later met a man from London who described being stabbed several times and nearly killed. This was a black man who was accompanying a young woman from a Muslim family to see her white boyfriend. This romance had been going on for a while, until eventually the family had suspicions and waited in a certain area for the young woman. They assumed my acquaintance was the person who was seeing her. Alternatively of course, there are occasionally random acts of violence against white people because of the colour of their skin, such as the case of the murder of Chris Yates, which is easily found in news stories via a search engine. This story does not contradict what I said earlier regarding the media; the media did not have to report it as a racist attack, as the courts did not classify it as a racist attack – this is despite witnesses overhearing clear racist attitudes.

Regarding the first examples – of violent racial/sexual control – this is one of the oldest, most pervasive, and most harmful types of racism; it is combined with possessive sexism and has as its object racial or cultural 'purity'. Of course, there are many

accounts of white people perpetrating this kind of attack (i.e. *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Emmett Till, etc. As an aside, you can also see an account of this kind of sexual racism in the black community in Elle Varner's 2012 music video 'I don't care'), and if you read the manifestos of white racist groups, this kind of sexual 'protectiveness' is notably present. It is an emotive subject that goes back to old days when women were regarded as possessions of a particular group, and if one group conquered another they would kill the men and take 'possession' of the women. This dates back to way before any kind of racial theory. In terms of power, in these instances the perpetrators' physical power was blatantly enough to exercise a terrible form of racism beyond any structure besides ancient, xenophobic patriarchy. A note on the leftwing media situation is that another reason they avoid the reporting of such events is that they are used serially by the extreme right to gather support for their racist, fascist parties. This is one of the reasons why, as I noted earlier, this apparent policy of left media is backfiring badly. If you are in an area in which such events happen, and the media either ignore or downplay the significance of them, you are clearly driven towards the right wing, as they are the only ones who take any notice of what is going on. If all the media was united in its condemnation of such events, and was united in, in their terms, 'naming and shaming' the small number of clearly racist attacks as actually being racist, just as they have done with instances of white-perpetrated racism, there would be one less reason — one less big reason — for people to gravitate towards the extreme right. Yeah, your theories are fucking up so bad that you are driving people towards nazi parties — well done.

A third argument you may come across is an attempt to change the meaning of the word 'racism' to mean only situations which are associated with a societal structure which privileges one group of people (white people) over another. This is just a straight changing up of the dictionary definition of racism, which includes the definition 'hatred or intolerance of another race or races'. To give them a little bit of credit, it has a small degree of validity in that the word racism DID specifically refer to the racist theories that were invented in Europe in the 19th century, however the word has extremely clearly changed in its meaning, as the dictionary suggests, and has had a changed meaning for an obviously long time. If WP theorists insist on alternative meanings to words, they need to be up-front about it and define all relevant words and which situations they can refer to; i.e. what word describes the above attacks, and are we allowed to consider the subject in enforced racism workshops?

Although there are these given explanations for the perspective, they are, as we see, obviously flawed. The reality of the conception that racism is not possible from 'people of colour' towards 'white people' is simply a fucked up one of denial of humanity, a denial which can usefully go either way — denying the humanity of 'white people' by according all the evil and power of the world to them, and associating all white people with the dehumanised structure that we in the radical left and anarchist movements are meant to be fighting against, or denying the humanity of 'people of colour' by implying they are somehow racially incapable of having the cruelty, intelligence, prej-

udice, independence of moral will and ability to create discourse that are necessary for any racist perspective. These are HUMAN characteristics; to claim them for one race is ridiculous, and, uh, racist.

Are all white people racist?

No, not all white people are racist (or if they are, so is everybody else in the world and there is no need to designate white people in this or any similar statement). I actually have no idea what the reasons behind such a theoretical conception are – they are probably variations on those given above, and would have similar answers. Some reasons why an unwelcoming atmosphere may be present in many white-majority communities are given later in this piece, but they are not due to racism. I would only say that if someone tries to argue the above assertion, ask their reasons and either argue against them if you are able to, or e-mail them to me or something.

The Cultural Question

An argument that could be given against many of the examples I have used so far is that they are demonstrative of something like a ‘culture clash’; that many of the conflicts derive from practical differences in culture rather than ‘racial hate’. This is certainly possible, but again, I have been using the terms of radical left race/culture theory, which refuses to talk about cultural difference. People do really need to start discussing problems of a cultural nature, and having sufficiently dealt with WPT using its own terms I will approach the fringes of the subject. Firstly note that if we start considering cultural questions in examples of racism from ‘people of colour’ towards white people, such as Muslim marriage law regarding the above attacks, then we also need to consider cultural questions as regards to instances of perceived white racism. The left does not want to enter into such considerations because it is still under the sway of Marxism, the ideas of which continually force it into an economic materialism; a refusal to consider any aspect of human relations beyond those of hierarchical economic oppression, class systems, material poverty or richness, etc.

What is especially sad is that anarchists are also generally attached to such ideas, even after our experience of creating so many autonomous spaces where we can see human relations and culture flowering beyond the necessities of hierarchy, the creation of new and beautiful things, and also clear, sharp cultural conflict, that exist without any clear economic divisions. I observe every week the necessities of squatting continually throwing up new living situations and combinations of people, but they are also continually separating and keeping apart groups with different cultural ways — approaches to drink and drugs is a big one, also approaches to the spaces we live in and relations with each other (i.e. safer spaces policies etc). If cultural differences keep apart small groups of mostly white people, cultural differences will also create divisions on a national scale across race/culture fault lines. If there are cultural differences that create conflict — which there are, here and all over the world — when they happen to be between people with different skin colours, they will at the same time appear as race conflicts to people who cannot see beyond the race question. Without considering questions of culture we will therefore be entirely unable to move forward with minimising or abolishing racism, which obviously still exists alongside cultural conflict. Unsurprisingly it is convincingly arguable that WPT and far left race discourse is reinforcing racism, through the process of making skin colour into such an important classification. I.e. through WPT it is entirely necessary to see a ‘person of colour’ as a ‘person of colour’ and a ‘white person’ as a ‘white person’; we should be aware of other dynamics which govern group relations besides this. Alongside culture, an equally rele-

vant concept here is the situation of a group, to understand which we must be aware of the history of the group. WPT is an example of situational theory in this sense; it differentiates and categorises groups, but instead of attaching properties to those groups, it makes us aware of the situations that the groups face. Unfortunately it is incredibly obsessed with one physical characteristic (whiteness) in considering situations, and is incapable of seeing deeper historical or cultural aspects.

The radical left/anarchist movements also cannot consider culture or history/situation because of the complex and fucked up relationship the industrialised northwest (corresponding almost precisely with the assumed ‘white people’ of WPT and excluding the ‘white people’ that WPT forgets about) has with its own culture and history; furthermore because of the particular relationship and viewpoint the radical left has on and with this culture and society. Though people seem to think we are solid in our aggressive stance towards ‘the system’ and the powers that incorporate it, our discourse is actually rent down the middle with the worst kind of contradictions, and it is in this subject that they become the most divisive and apparent.

In investigating these contradictions, let us consider for a moment the concepts that we are dealing with when we are considering a question such as ‘white privilege’. Consider the points that Peggy McIntosh outlines, a few of which I have repeated, with criticisms, above. Note that though I have criticised their absolute form, these points do privilege many people. Underlying these points is a society and a system, a culture and certain institutions and powers. These differ in detail from country to country, but across the northwestern world at least — Europe and the U.S. — they are very similar in practice and effect. This society, culture, system, these powers, as we have noted, exclude many people from their substance. They exclude many people from their benefits. As they exclude, they of course include many. Race is a factor in the process of inclusion and exclusion, but it is not an absolute factor, to anywhere near the extent that WPT implies — i.e. ‘people of colour’ can rise to the very top of the hierarchies involved in the system and powers, and can become very influential and respected in the society and culture (though of course potentially still be subject to prejudice). White people similarly can be on the bottom. This is an important observation, but it is not the point I am trying to make. What precisely is the anarchist and far left stances with regard to the dominant society, culture, system and powers? We know that the anarchist stance is one of opposition, and that the far left stance is generally considered to be one of opposition, with some co-operation. In this opposition lies the largely unexamined contradiction; as well as the possibilities of opposition or support, within opposition we have the question of what we actually know and feel about this system and culture, what we recognise it to be. There are two stances or discourses here that are causing great confusion, the conjunction of which lie largely unexamined.

One is that which is historically derived from Marxism, the materialist perspective. In this perspective material situation is the most important aspect of life. Opposition to the system derives from the injustices associated with it; the tendency of the richest to preserve their wealth at the expense of others. The tendency of the most powerful to

exploit and abuse others. The tendency of the privileged (who are granted privilege by the system) to maintain their privilege. Injustice thus becomes central to the discourse — so at the same time, those who do not suffer from injustice, or who suffer from far less injustice in regards to their material situation (in terms of either wealth or their ‘rights’) are regarded as privileged, and are expected to either help those with less privilege or work towards some kind of revolution or construction of a system which will realise the goal of complete equality. Note that, in this conception, oppression and injustice are experienced by those either excluded by, on the periphery of, or on the bottom of the system, while those fully ‘inside’ the system, not under its heel, are regarded as privileged. It is of course an accurate description of the material processes, and social processes of exclusion, of the western system that is becoming and has become the world system.

The second is no less accurate. Instead of material life, it is concerned with social, cultural and spiritual life. We have noted that the system forcefully excludes some; it forcefully includes far more — it needs them to operate the system. At the same time its very nature has the potential to destroy any meaningful social, cultural and spiritual life for those positioned within it. The processes involved in this destruction are extremely diverse and complex, and I cannot enter into an exposition of what they entail here (though we will understand them far better at the end of this piece). It has already been done many times in radical, generally anarchist literature, and more importantly in fictional literature, music and art, in many different ways and using many different words, but all referring to the same processes.¹ It is in the artistic world that you will find the real exposition of this perspective, but this only lessens its importance if you have an over-intellectualised, dehumanised culture, which, oh shit, we do. I’ll just give a few song quotes to make the basics clear and to remind us of this perspective’s presence:

Crass-

“I’m just a person, a human being.

NO YOU’RE NOT YOU’RE A PART OF THE MACHINE.

You’re a part of the machine ‘cos we want you to be.

We’ve got you now, and you’ll never be free.” (‘So What’)

“And their systems, christ, they’re everywhere,

School army church, corporation deal,

A fucked up reality based on fear,

A fucking conspiracy to stop you feeling real”

(‘Banned from the Roxy’)

Radiohead-

¹ For instance, Grant Morrison – ‘The Invisibles’, Theodore Roszak – ‘Where the Wastland Ends’, William Blake, Fight Club (film or book), AK Thompson – ‘Black Bloc, White Riot’, etc etc etc.

“A patient, better driver, a safer car... At a better pace, slower and more
 calculated, no chance of escape
 Now self employed, concerned, but powerless An empowered and informed
 member of society, pragmatism not idealism..
 the ability to laugh at weakness
 Calm fitter, healthier and more productive, a pig in a cage on antibiotics.”
 (‘Fitter Happier’)

“Rows of houses, all bearing down on me
 I can feel their blue hands touching me
 All these things into position,
 All these things we’ll one day swallow whole
 ...
 This machine will, will not communicate
 These thoughts and the strain I am under
 Be a world child, form a circle
 Before we all go under
 ...
 Immerse your soul in love”
 (‘Fade out/street spirit’)

To those forcefully included in the system and culture described, escape is as much
 of a choice as the joining of the system is to those excluded from it — it is possible,²
 but more difficult than you would think, and many things bar the way. Discourses as
 to why privileged people remain privileged whatever they try and do, serially used
 to show that they have no way of ever identifying with or becoming one of the un-
 privileged, work with exactly the same degree of accuracy and precision when turned
 the other way into the second discourse. So the rich kid can never know what it’s like
 to be homeless because they can always ask mum or dad for money when it gets really
 bad? If the safety net is always there, then they can never, ever, walk the tightrope
 without a safety net. Do we understand the psychic effect this has, the claustrophobia
 it entails? Money is a minor issue compared to the systems which govern the behaviour
 of people. These have historically progressed from discipline, to surveillance, to internal
 surveillance through discourse, by which I mean in this case the words running through
 your head. Crimethinc, who could potentially be able to change the world if they were
 actually able to synthesise and move forward with the dozens of theories they take
 from other people and places, describes these systems like so:

“Covering the surface of this society is a complex network of minute rules
 and norms through which the most original minds and energetic characters
 can barely penetrate. People’s wills are not shattered, but softened, bent,

² See Note on the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire

and guided. We are seldom forced to act, but are constantly restrained from acting. Such repression does not destroy, but rather prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but instead compresses, stifles, and stupefies, so that each individual grows up into a dutiful lamb that needs no shepherding to stay within the fence-line. This is not political repression, which necessitates secret police and prison camps, but cultural repression, in which people police and imprison themselves.”

This is an accurate description of a significant part of the second discourse. Tellingly, this quote is taken from their piece entitled ‘Undermining Oppression’, which is largely concerned with privilege and uses white privilege almost exclusively as their ‘example’, a preoccupation that mirrors the current trend in the anarchist and radical left movements. After this accurate description, they then go on to state that what they describe exists and permeates everywhere. It does not. What they describe is precisely what is used to police and govern the ‘privileged whites’, those included by the system (which of course, as we have seen, extends far beyond ‘privileged whites’). It is the substance of the system. Any attempt to argue otherwise demonstrates the doublethink that is alarmingly common in the far left, in which we ‘know’ two contradictory facts. We KNOW that political repression as described by crimethinc is and has been used, is and has been necessary (to the authorities) to keep black people in America and black and poor white people in the U.K. down. We KNOW that black males are imprisoned at a completely disproportionately high rate. How can we know that and at the same time claim that they also ‘police and imprison themselves’? It is not they who imprison themselves, it is the authorities and powers of western society that imprison them. Evidently. This is political repression, not cultural repression, and it is doled out to those who are outside of or resistant to cultural repression. To bring it back to earlier terminology, those included by the system and culture are subject to cultural repression, those excluded are subject to political repression. Note that this political repression is often brought to bear *against the resistant culture*, such as the alleged propagation of crack cocaine among black communities in the 1970s, or the destruction of Aboriginal culture by concrete political policies of the Australian government and white Australian institutions and powers. This however is still political repression, not cultural repression. We have to rely on punk groups again to sum it up — remember that this was written after Joe Strummer took part in riots in black communities, and is thus derived from emotional knowledge and insight;

“Black people got a lot of problems, but they don’t mind throwing a brick
White people go to school where they teach you how to be thick”
— ‘White Riot’

Now, this is technically a racist categorisation if it were formed as a serious idea, but we understand that poetry and song are not trying to set out logical truths; this

statement is aimed at summing up a general situation. With great precision it sums up the situation that I have set out above; a politically oppressed group nevertheless are mentally free enough to rebel, while a second group do not rebel because they are indoctrinated and mentally controlled/inhibited by the same system that oppresses the first group. These groups of course in reality do not correspond precisely to racial groups, however it often happens that there are broad racial correspondences to the two different forms of control. One of the reasons for this will be that the processes of cultural oppression requires groups to be part of the Cypher culture, which is a specific though pervasive culture; if a group has its own resistant culture they will not be subject to this control in the same way – and one of the main ways culture is propagated is through parents to children, i.e. ancestry, i.e. race.

Privilege

All these observations relate back to criticism of the concept of white privilege, and privilege itself. Now, earlier we thoroughly attacked WPT for making its concepts absolute and making various assumptions about people of all skin colours. We saw that the privileges it names are not by any means held by all white people, especially when considering situations in Europe. However, we must acknowledge the existence of a politically/materially ‘privileged’ group and a politically/materially oppressed group. In the USA these groups may well correspond more or less to white people in the politically privileged group and ‘people of colour’ in the politically oppressed group (though this pattern certainly does not correspond to many). In Europe we need to understand that many white people are in the politically oppressed group, along with people of African and Middle East/Pakistani descent.

Besides these qualifications, our above observations should serve to massively qualify our use of the concept of privilege. Simply enough, we cannot assume an individual’s relationship to the external world on the basis of their skin colour. I shall go over the two basic points.

Firstly, we cannot assume that a privilege has been granted based on skin colour, because —

1. There is racism, prejudice etc between groups of white people across Europe.
2. The mechanics of race privilege as described by WPT break down with regards to law enforcement in poor, massively white-majority areas.
3. The mechanics of race privilege as described by WPT change in areas where white people are a minority.

Note that this is a criticism of WPT’s embarrassing tendency to make assumptions about people based on their skin colour, i.e. this point would not need to be made if

it were a better theory (or better applied by ourselves in the radical movement) and was applied to specific people in specific situations, not forced upon all people in ways determined by their external appearance.

Secondly however, relevant to but going beyond the race question, we must re-examine privilege itself, in that in cases where a privilege IS granted an individual or group by one part of the system or by a situation, another part of the system or the situation may oppress the same individual or group. In many cases the privilege will lead to the oppression; it is the ‘privilege’ of cultural assimilation and inclusion that leads to a group being left alone and ‘free’ to go about their daily life without hassle from the authorities – but the same cultural inclusion will in many cases lead to, or be associated with, the above-described cultural oppression and repression, taming and removing life from the supposed privileged. Similarly, there is a correspondence between material wealth and ‘involvement’ in capitalism, in that the degree to which you benefit from or acquire material wealth is linked inextricably with the degree to which you are bound and governed by that wealth and the system that created it; full involvement in the capitalist system will most likely lead to such oftenobserved phenomena as the replacement of human relationships based on personality and feeling to human relationships dictated by money. Even if the individual who experiences this situation is not aware of its degradation and emptiness, we are, or should be, aware of it.

If we see truth in these arguments, how do we then change our conception of what privilege is, and how we use the term? The problem becomes one of specific vs general use. The term is often used in a general sense, and by this I mean that we refer to an individual as being generally ‘privileged’, i.e. “You are a privileged person”, “they are a privileged group” — and this can be used to attack or silence a person, i.e. “shut up you privileged wanker”, or to assign properties or power dynamics to groups, i.e. “privileged people should behave in such and such a way”. I hope that in following the above arguments we can see this use of the term is dangerous and assumptive. There is no way of accurately assigning the property of ‘privileged’ to a person *in a general sense*, because privilege necessarily refers to a relationship to a system or structure, and we cannot know the individual’s full current or past relationships to those systems and structures.

Distinct from this is using the term specifically associated with a certain privilege — for instance in the example of a materially rich person acting or talking as if they know what homelessness is like, it may well be appropriate to remind the person that they have no way of knowing what it is like due to their specific privilege. Similarly many people in the radical left act and talk as if they are politically oppressed when they are either clearly not politically oppressed, or their political oppression stems from them wilfully and repeatedly putting themselves in the way of the fist of political oppression, it being a simple and easy decision to remove themselves from in front of it. In this case again it may well be appropriate to remind those who talk or act in such a way that this oppression is not ‘native’ to them, while it is ‘native’ to many others. Bringing

it back round to the subject of race and culture, if we know or highly suspect that someone has not suffered oppression because of their race or culture it is of course right to suggest to them that their background or area of current and/or past residence has afforded them a privilege, and that they cannot know or accurately discourse about such oppression. Again I will remind us that, while most 'white' people in the UK have not experienced such oppression and thus at certain times should be reminded of this fact (in contrast to many people of for instance African descent), many other white people *will* have experienced it and we cannot assume this aspect of their past due to their skin colour. If privilege theorists wish, these notes are easily made compatible with the concept of 'Intersectionality' (which is the combination of different privileges and oppressions operating on a particular person), we are just extending the number of possible 'intersections' and extending the potential people to which the concepts can apply themselves (i.e. they must be extended to everyone).

So, to take an example. I had a friend who died recently. He was a white male. He was also a social recluse, who had not spoken to people for so long that before he died he refused to see even me, his old best friend. I mention that he died because the way of his death was linked to the way of his life. What are we to do with such an example? Are we going to take the medical route, and conclude he probably had some kind of mild or severe medical social disorder? You may if you wish, and I will reply that he had an unbelievably good sense of humour, and great emotional warmth and empathy. In examples like this, what happens to our inclination to note that it is the material, social and cultural surroundings of an individual which we must read in order to understand their situation? We cannot ignore, in noticing that he had failed to function socially, (or rather that he once had but had lost contact with this world), the broken nature of the culture surrounding him, the lack of community and support networks, and the fact that he rejected the culture that was offered to him, which was nothing other than the cypher culture, which, as he recognised, itself is nothing. His 'intersections' of 'privilege' were largely meaningless, because he did not exist in a social world in which they had meaning (besides the relative material comfort of living in the UK, something similarly available to people in the UK whatever their gender or skin colour – note here that he lived in, relatively to the rest of the UK, a very poor household). In contrast, when are we going to recognise the corresponding intersections of cultural repression and oppression, which he was unlucky enough to fall victim to? Recognising these factors does not remove our recognition of potential privileges. It merely makes us take each person, and case, as it comes, and not assume a privilege or an oppression until we recognise it. As people should be aware, my friend's case is by no means unique.

History and the Cypher Culture

This piece has largely been concerned with criticising and updating how the radical left discourses upon race, culture, and privilege. These are extremely important things to deal with, however updating our understanding of these topics should be fairly straightforward and brief. Importantly, a change in our perspective regarding these topics directs us towards another area of radical thought, one which is enlightened and freed for exploration as a result of our findings. This has been touched upon earlier, and is concerned with how those who are subjected to cultural oppression see themselves, understand themselves and go about fighting that oppression. Let us help our understanding of the situation by looking at the world depicted in George Orwell's 1984. There are three very distinct groups of people in the society he depicts, located specifically on the British isles. There is the Proletariat, the Outer Party, and the Inner Party. Note that these correspond to the working, middle and upper class (but transferred into a new control-situation). Of the first two groups, the lives of which he goes into in some detail, it is important in this case to note that they are subjected to two very different forms of control, which correspond precisely to the two forms we earlier identified. The detail of the control is different, the situation is different, but the purpose and form is the same. The 'Proles' are subject to political control, the 'Outer party' is subject to cultural control (and to political control if they break through the cultural control). If we consider privilege in this situation, it becomes incredibly plain (as long as you have read the book) that the concept is meaningless – because even though the outer party has more material privilege, life within it is so controlled and nullified that any reader would prefer the life of a prole. The cultural control is so horrifically depicted, so heavy (far heavier, of course, than that which we experience), that it is very clear to us that Winston must rebel not to give the 'proles' a better material life or political freedom, but to break out of and hopefully destroy the cultural control that *he*, and the 'Outer Party', are subject to. Interestingly, rather than thinking of those with political awareness, i.e. potentially those in the outer and inner party, as being the ones responsible for and capable of bringing about this change, he specifically writes "If there is hope, it lies in the proles". Thus for him it is the proles' responsibility to rescue the Outer Party from the horror of their situation, not the other way around. We are not in a situation this extreme, but it is important to notice the parallels of Orwell's depiction to the current state of affairs, and the fact that he identified the two different forms of control that were becoming prevalent.

What we can take from a comparison with the situation depicted in 1984 is that those subject to cultural control are in a specific position as compared to those subject

to political control, and that they cannot help the latter group without first breaking out of their own oppression, though ideally the two could potentially help each other at the same time. As we recognise situational differences, certain recent occurrences become clearer. Events in the UK between November 2010 to August 2011 especially benefit from such an analysis. Note here two famous clusters of events, the student/radical protest marches in late 2010 and early 2011, and the riots of August 2011. Comparisons between the two, and analysing the relationship of the radical movement to the riots especially, often prove controversial — but they do not need to be. For instance, the radical/anarchist movement has been criticised (by itself) for not really taking a large or enthusiastic part in the riots of August 2011. It would have been fairly impossible for them to do so. Why? This movement/ community is spread out across the country, localised in diffuse and changing neighbourhoods and towns, etc etc. It is spread thinly. Because of its diffuse nature, the only way that it can form a critical mass in order to make political action is by national or international co-ordination which concentrates on a decided-upon focus point, i.e. national or international communiques telling people about a march or action or protest in a particular area and a particular time. It can do spontaneous action, but only on a very small scale. Thus a few small groups of radicals/anarchists did join the August riots, but these were isolated decisions; they did not have the time or opportunity to co-ordinate mass action. Conversely the August rioters were mostly local to the cities in which they rioted; they had the ability to form a critical mass right there and then with little or no notice. Extremely importantly, they thus had many, many possible ‘bases’ in the cities to disappear to, strike from and sleep in, as well as complete local social networks. These facts enabled them to riot in a way which is impossible for the diffuse radical/anarchist movement to replicate, in this country at least (Bristol is at times an exception). The differences between the two groups who were central to the two clusters of events are simply the result of two very distinct groups rebelling and showing dissent in the ways available to them. These groups are not necessarily typified according to race or class, but by the situation they find themselves in and the type of control that is used to govern them (though there were racial situational elements operating as well, it seems). Note also that both groups represent those who are not accepting their oppressions, and are trying to escape or resist them. Accepting these differences as real might seem to some to be creating unnecessary divisions. Creating a division where there is none is a very dangerous thing, but equally dangerous is pretending a division does not exist when there is one. It is only in recognising a division that we can accurately notice the characteristics and effects of the division and so firstly, understand the actions and limitations of a group, and secondly work with specific characteristics to change the situation for the better.

Although we dismissed race as being a definitive dividing line or line of categorisation earlier, we also noted that there may be correspondence between race and different situational categories. As we noted earlier in passing, this is because race DOES have meaning — not in the sense of a particular race having particular characteristics, but

in the sense of race representing history, in the sense of ancestry. This is already part of our understanding of certain groups, though you are probably not used to it being so explicitly stated. The situation is most clearly demonstrated in the case of Afro-Caribbeans and AfroAmericans. For whatever motivation we have in mind, the combined race/history of these peoples is inescapable – whoever wants to try to forget it, you cannot. Some of this linking of meaning with race/ancestry is emotional or spiritual, and will thus be dismissed by various hard-headed rationalists. I would encourage them to think again on this subject, however luckily I do not need to present any arguments regarding it, because there are clear rational reasons why ancestry, going back hundreds or even thousands of years, is linked strongly to the situation of a particular individual and a particular group; we all know the massive effect that the culture and character of parents have on their children, thus obviously their parents had a similar effect on them, and so on. Early-age orphans have a different but comparable influence in the sense of wondering and romanticising who their parents were/are. Thus the events of generations ago reverberate in the descendants of the people who experienced these events, and thus groups who have experienced different situations in the past maintain these differences through the generations. The important thing here is to not use race as an external system of classification, i.e. not to assume that a person's ancestors had such and such an experience simply because of the colour of their skin, which would often be the case with for instance people with black coloured skin living in the west. However at the same time it will be necessary and useful to many to be aware of this history for both deep self-understanding, and external understanding of the situation, actions and culture of a broad group.

Obviously in the above paragraph I have been alluding among other things to the events of slavery and the extreme racism that led up to and followed it, leading to movements of black pride and self-awareness, and also nationalism etc. Now, it is very important to analyse this situation correctly. We can see that in this situation race has meaning, as it was because of a people's race and culture that they were targeted and serially used for slavery, and this race/history combination then served as a necessary uniting point in fighting for their freedom and in understanding themselves and attempting to create and maintain a healthy culture. However it only has this completely necessary meaning when it is localised in a situation where all or very nearly all black people are the descendants of people used for slavery and victims of an overarching racist society. For example, singling out 'black on black murder' for criticism as a recent song and also many black activists have done is fully justified when there has been clear historical and present racist oppression of the black community in which such murders take place. Such an oppressed racial community must unite and fight back. However if you take the concept and apply it outside of this situation, you are implying that violence within a race is worse than violence from one race to another – this is race-nationalism, and it is a simple and revealing step to rephrase such a discourse as applying to the white race, in which case its racist overtones become obvious. The important thing here is to note the danger of ancestral and historical

consciousness leading to race-nationalism and thus obliquely racist perspectives. Of course, if the historical consciousness is advanced and developed, any race-nationalism will be quelled through understanding of the facts (such as for instance that black oppressors localised in Africa played a very important part in much of the western slave trade. Note the existence of the Jamaican/Rastafarian word 'Nyabinghi', which means "Death to Black and White oppressors". Note that even though the Rastafarian movement emphasises race with pride, it also is realistic about the ability of people of any race to oppress).

Now, let us analyse and explore this ancestral/historical understanding with regards to for instance white Europeans, or specifically white English people, excepting the white ethnic minorities living in England. There are many problems here, but analysing them will hopefully be illuminating. The central contradiction or tension is between the need for all people to understand their cultural and political history, and the danger of racist perspectives. Instead of trying to dive in with theoretical distinctions, let us look at the history first. There are infinite amounts of it, but I will go into one history that people rarely seem to understand the importance of. In 1066 a military invasion of England occurred from neighbouring Normandy across the channel. The victorious leader/s of the invasion did not colonise England on a large scale, but instead replaced its upper class, almost totally. The language of the upper class became French and remained so for hundreds of years. Those who were not Norman were considered second-class citizens, also for a long time. The important thing to note here is that the upper class became distinguished by language, ancestry and culture from everybody else. Thus the upper class truly were a separate class, a separate people. The question here is, when did this change? We know that the languages converged later (an unusually large amount of time later) – but we also know that the classes never converged; the class distinctions remained, and still remain. So, England got 'taken over' by a small class of conquerors who became the comparably very efficient centralised rulers of the country, much more effective and centralised than the previous 'rulers', who were importantly not culturally or ancestrally distinguished from the rest of the people (i.e. had a more 'tribal' or familial mindset). After their control of England was complete, they pretty much straight away started to try to extend their control to Ireland, Scotland and Wales. After their command and control attempts in these places were as complete as they were going to get, they again looked overseas for more territories. The ruling class in England and later Britain was never truly overthrown – once for a small period of time, and then reinstated rapidly. The nature of this ruling class has only gradually changed, and arguably its actions and motivations have never changed.

We are not here trying to note a racial difference between an evil upper class and a good English people. What I am noting is the status of England and later Britain, and the generations of people resident there, as a host and tool of a clearly distinguished upper class, with great ambitions, in their games of power. How can considering race and ancestry help us here? Race in this case is a factor that can only be used incorrectly, to cause confusion and more oppression. The fact that this upper class and, in effect

until around 1945 (in this country), the people they were ruling, had white skin can and has been used to conceptually unify the rulers and the ruled. This can be done both racially/culturally and in terms of their actions – by both the upper or ruling class, in race supremacy theories, or by ‘radical’ theorists in the case of for instance white privilege theory, which is a reaction against race supremacy theories. Talking about ‘white people’ in this way thus is not useful at all (unless you want to control the people in question), as it is a false generalisation pretty much however you use it – we do not have a continuity of ‘white people’ in even as small an area as England, we have a continuity of white rulers, and a continuity of white ruled¹. In terms of ancestry, the upper class have always kept themselves separate from the rest of the population, and still do today. They selected who their children can see and socialise with, and still do. For the rest of the population, the concepts of history/ancestry are not useful as racial or separating concepts, but as ones of understanding.

The broad understanding required is that the ancestral population of England has gone through certain processes, had certain things imposed upon them which have had particular influences, etc etc. The specific understanding is what these particular influences are – i.e. what has the nature of this rulership been? Note that these influences will be highly comparable to those that the population of for instance France and Germany have undergone, though with a surprising amount of differences. We are actually used to discoursing and hearing discourse on this kind of subject when we talk with visitors originally from Eastern Europe about the inter-generational effects of Communism and the switch into Capitalism. We are not used to hearing discourse about cultural formations of the ancestral English people. Let us analyse why this is.

The basic reason is that it is taboo to consider this as a group of people. There are various discourses against it (that justify it being a taboo), unfortunately they exist in contradiction to our knowledge of a multicultural society; we know that a multicultural society is a society that contains and respects many different cultures; certain of these cultures, the cultures of minority groups, are ‘identified’ or known (in discourse, i.e. in the mass media etc). It is acceptable for these groups to claim one of the multiple cultures that co-exist in the multicultural society. It is not acceptable, or not imaginable, for one of these cultures to be that of the mass ancestral population. If they are ever imagined as having a culture, that culture is that of the whole society, which of course by definition must include all the cultures that make up that society. There are two main further reasons behind this curious situation. They reinforce each other, and also somewhat contradict each other. Firstly, the cultures of this group were in many ways destroyed, over generations, by the various indoctrinations into, and the internal processes of, capitalism, industrialisation, rationalism, individualism, etc etc. Thus it is natural that we do not consider this group as having a culture, because we

¹ Remember again that here we are talking specifically about England, Britain to a slightly lesser extent, Western Europe to again a lesser extent, and the concepts are expected to change when applied to the U.S.A or Australia.

know in our hearts that this culture was destroyed. This is a very general and broad way of understanding the ‘processes and influences’ I mentioned that the ancestral population of England has experienced.² It was destroyed both through cultural control and political control, and processes beyond both of these.

Secondly, the cultures that were destroyed were replaced by a single culture, the Cypher culture, which was in effect imposed from above, though over a long stretch of time. ‘Cypher’ culture means ‘zero’ or ‘empty’ culture. Thus cultural practices and relationships become dictated and transformed by the rules and practices of capitalism, industrialisation, rationalism, individualism etc etc. Now, we know that these processes, whether understood as separate strands, tools of certain powers, or summed up in the term ‘the Cypher Culture’, are imperialistic (either by their nature or by the hands that manipulate and spread them). Thus obviously by their logic they must propagate themselves. This is the reason why those native to Western Europe, and the descendants of Western Europeans in North America, with whom these processes and this cypher culture grew to its full development and completion, cannot think of this replacement for their destroyed culture as theirs – because it is designed to be spread to everyone. This is why claims of cultural imperialism are somehow unsatisfying – because the imperialistic culture in this case is not the culture of a certain people, but the replacement and destroyer of the culture of a certain people. Therefore they are left in a strange limbo; encouraged not to imagine themselves as having a culture, they are at the same time encouraged to imagine their culture as universal, and to spread it to everybody else. While capitalist economics have spread nearly everywhere, this cultural assimilation has by no means spread everywhere. The Islamic world is heavily resistant to the cypher culture, though it apparently presents in rivalry simply an older system of oppression. The cultures of many of the central and south people of Africa seem more or less resistant to it. Linking with earlier concepts, the cypher culture is basically the same thing as fully operating ‘cultural repression’.³ Thus where political oppression is necessary, it is likely that the cypher culture is weaker at that point. I do not know enough about South America and East Asia to comment on it there. My point in talking about specific areas is that it is incorrect to assume that everybody on the planet faces the same situation, either now or historically, with regards to the cypher culture, just as it is incorrect to assume that everybody on the planet

² I cannot go into a thousand years of history here. But for instance, a few notes on certain aspects;

“It was the sad fate of the English poor to be the first to be subjected to the unmitigated brutality of this [the industrial] 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 labour for a salary had abandoned all the rights of ‘free-born Englishmen.’” — also — “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.” — ‘Industrial Domestication’, Leopold Roc

³ The processes of its application could be described as ‘cultural oppression’.

faces the same situation with regard to human rights or political oppression/control. Furthermore, while the process of breaking out of this cultural control and also fighting political control will require international solidarity and co-operation, the process of breaking out of cultural control especially will necessarily require an acceptance of and development of already existing cultures, and the creation of new ones. Of course, these cultures are and will be limited in scale. Whether this will be a preliminary to a genuine, world-uniting force, culture or spirituality, or simply a preliminary to separate groups who nevertheless coexist on a friendly basis is yet to be seen; basically, at the moment the only contestant for such a world-uniting force is of course the cypher culture itself.

The realisation of a group's culture is the moment when cultural control is destroyed. Therefore the process of this realisation is a true 'revolutionary' goal. Note that a throwback to a past culture is not a possibility, but neither is ignorance of the past. Note also that the 'groups' I refer to are not set according to any real known category; they are to be discovered. Thus in England, as well as Muslims the main group resistant to the cypher culture is an inter-racial culture mainly composed of poor black and white people and taking from the historical cultures of both of those groups, but in reinvented and new forms. Then besides this there are counter-cultures, subcultures and movements whose genealogy (both in terms of the people who comprise it and its concrete and ideological history) is firmly rooted in western europe or white north america, i.e. the hippy, punk, anarcho-squatter, new-age traveller movements etc. These have a troubled history. In identifying the reasons for this, we can note that the people who comprise them very often spring from a background of the cypher culture, a background of cultural repression – to a greater or lesser extent.⁴ This background of cultural repression goes some way to explaining the trajectory of these western counter-cultural movements – to an extent they realise their cultural repression and thus attempt to create a meaningful culture opposed to or outside of the cypher culture. Trouble arises firstly when this conflicts with the Marxist or materialist perspective we mentioned earlier (concerned solely with material 'equality' and political justice), in which activists who are under the sway of this ideology perceive any movement which claims to be rebellious, but is not concerned solely or chiefly with the mission of material equality, as false, privileged, or in some way counter-revolutionary. This

⁴ It is important here to note that while the sub-group that could be vaguely identified as the 'white working class' in England have not been subjected to the same cultural processes and indoctrinations as the 'middle class', they have still been subjected to many generations of exposure to mass education, regimented work routines, individualistic ideological and economic environments, the thought-control effects of the structure of the English language, etc etc. Here is one identification of broad situational differences, arising from ancestry and history, between the white 'working class' and for instance the black 'working class'. (As an aside, again note that these are not attempts to create hard racial categories. They are aids to cultural/historical explanations for, for instance, the punk scene/movement/culture being disproportionately white, despite regularly crossing class boundaries. The only explanation for this disproportion that the radical left seems capable of is that of racism or exclusion, an incredibly harmful and inaccurate explanation.)

creates a highly divisive and damaging conflict, all the more damaging to the attempt to create meaningful culture or community because this attempt is very often not a conscious one, and if it is, is not usually backed up by any intellectual reasoning with which to resist intellectuals inclined to materialist theoretics. Of course, community or functional culture also require a high degree of unity.

Secondly, this attempt by these particular groups to create functional culture or community outside of the cypher culture faces a grave situational difficulty based on the 'privilege' or 'oppression' of inclusion. Let me help to explain this point with an anecdote. I was at a dinner with some people I had met for the first time. Several of these people could be characterised by describing them as left-liberal, and also by identifying them somewhat with the materialist perspective described. For various reasons, they were highly aware of my position as a part of the anarchist/squatting movement, and the aims and actions of this group were under critical scrutiny. One of the people was studying the black civil rights movement. She remarked that we should take note of what black communities did to both resist political oppression and to create strong communities somewhat independent of the society that was oppressing them so heavily. She described them as creating their own banks, churches, schools, shops etc etc – i.e. changing the problematic institutions surrounding them by taking control of them or creating their own (of course, they did not and cannot complete that process, but she at least considered them to have made substantial improvements in the area). Of course, this is impossible for counter-cultures which primarily spring from within the cypher culture, from within the system, to do – because they are not localised within a particular area. For a particular group to be localised within a particular area they must have a history of being separate from the other group or groups surrounding them. Note that this separation could be the result of racism and/or economic oppression, in the case of ghettoisation, or be a particular choice on the part of the community in question. Even if they want to, movements which seek to create a culture from a starting point of inclusion within the cypher culture cannot create this separation, because even if the movement finds many in a large population, they will be spread across it and embedded within it. Taking a look at the material situation in terms of space faced by these groups in the UK and Europe, taking and holding a single building, whether it be a squat or a housing co-op, is highly problematic and fraught with stress and difficulty – a street is impossible, a neighbourhood unthinkable (with maybe 5 or less exceptions across the entire continent of Europe which are in themselves instructive if analysed). The alternative which is taken is of course to engage in cultural and political war while embedded within the cypher culture and the city, which is a fight which is nearly impossible to win with our current tools (I am referring primarily to social, artistic and ideological (i.e., cultural) tools). The fight and war I refer to here is just that of the *maintenance* of a resistant culture. The further war of growth or changing of the surrounding culture is a laughable task as things stand.

While we are on the subject of identifiable groups arising from situational differences, let us consider the concepts of unity and alliance. We regularly hear the call for unity between different class groups or different cultural groups. This unity on a large scale does not exist at all. On a small scale it can exist briefly or enduringly in personal relationships. Unity means ‘to be one’. It means that all the people be one people, undivided. This is a very important goal – however, it is primarily a spiritual goal, and it is a goal that will not succeed for a very long time. To call for it immediately only makes sense if you have certain illusions, which unfortunately many in radical politics have. The most dominant of these illusions is that the things which are dividing people are themselves illusions created by hierarchical powers – this leads to a refusal to acknowledge separation as real, and accusations of reinforcing false boundaries against those who talk of separation as real. This is again true in a spiritual sense. It is not true in any practical or everyday sense, both social and material. Real unity between groups with different histories and situations can happen, but this is exceptional and should be treasured, not relied upon. One example is the already-mentioned unity between certain (generally working class) black and white people. Another illusion is that different groups can act in unity when they are in fact not unified. Something like this may be possible, but is very difficult, and requires the concept of alliance. This concept is missing from our discourse because, as we have noted, it is taboo to acknowledge group separations as being anything other than something we could change in a day if we just broke out of our external chains – and alliance is of course only a meaningful concept when it is applied to two *meaningfully separate* groups. WPT has a hilarious theoretical feature, in which it mentions alliance in the context of being a ‘white ally’. This is a ‘white person’ who is an ally to a ‘person of colour’. Unsurprisingly there is no such thing as a ‘coloured ally’. This is an example of WPT’s embarrassing tendencies to create false racial categories and then deny various needs and agencies from one or both of the groups. If we were truly separated into concrete racial categories, it would be necessary for ‘white people’ and ‘people of colour’ to be allied to each other, to help each other against the different oppressions they face. An alliance requires agency and co-operation from both groups, otherwise it cannot function. If we changed our calls for unity into calls for alliance, groups would hopefully, with effort, be able to tactically and strategically work together. In the political and social field, this is a realistic aim, unlike calls for unity. Again, the only effective worldwide unifying force that is currently existent outside of spiritual life is the cypher culture itself; enforced capitalism, enforced individualism, a prescribed rationality, etc. Music is an incredible unifying force, and is often effective on a large scale, but is still too culturally limited.

An extension of this line of enquiry relevant to the subject of racism is to consider the processes of inclusion, hospitality, welcome, friendliness and so forth. There is a discourse existing which notes how unwelcome many people who are not ancestrally European can feel in spaces which are composed of a majority of people of this background, even in such ideologically anti-racist scenes as the various radical counter-

cultures. Let us accept this as a truth for many people. The reaction which has so far been taken to this situation by the radical discourse is to blame racism or privilege on the side of the majority in these scenes. In considering an alternative explanation, let us consider the concept of hospitality. Hospitality is a tradition which accords care and aid to a traveller in need of it. A traveller is necessarily someone who has come to the area of the giver of hospitality from somewhere else. Let us remember that until very recently in human history, whether we consider ‘recently’ to be 200 years ago or 2000, which both classify as recent in many senses, a person coming from anywhere outside of the local area in which a certain tribe or people lived were considered outsiders (this can even now be observed in various ‘local’ areas in the UK). Logically then, hospitality is providing care and aid to an outsider or stranger (unless the traveller was known to the givers of hospitality). Hospitality used to be a highly important value in northern Europe, and is still today a famous attribute of various cultures around the world. It is a value that is equally famously often absent in modern northern Europe. Reclaiming this value requires finding generosity, trust and love, but equally the action of the giving of hospitality requires that the *conditions* for giving it are met. These conditions cannot be met if the person seeking hospitality is not considered as either somebody known or as an outsider/stranger. The cypher culture creates this situation, and radical ideology supports it. The situation created is one in which a person cannot find hospitality, because the stranger is considered not as an outsider or stranger but as an independent cell of the cypher culture who must be fully capable of supporting themselves materially and socially, as they are of course entirely equal and ‘the same’ on every level that matters as everybody else. Or perhaps they *are* viewed as a stranger instinctually, but it is impossible for somebody from within the cypher culture to offer them hospitality, because we do not have a metaphorical ‘home’, or in other words culture, to which to take them – we know this again because a) it is the case, and b) it is taboo to consider ourselves as having a place, home or culture.

The example of hospitality is one in which the relevant concepts are stark, but the same concepts apply for less extreme examples, such as the concept of inclusion – i.e. the example is exactly the same as hospitality, but instead of the starkly perceived ‘outsider’ you have somebody who simply feels somewhat excluded and out of place, and instead of the concept of providing food and shelter, you have the concept of making the person feel welcome and included. As with hospitality, for the process of inclusion to take place, a separation must firstly be recognised. Secondly the person must be included, which requires the people who are including the person to recognise what they are including them in. This of course requires self-knowledge and a recognition of a group’s own cultural and social processes. Again, the forces of the cypher culture, again supported by much of radical theory, prevents this selfawareness, self-knowledge and self-recognition from taking place. The only tool of inclusion, the only tool of self-knowledge that radical theory permits to groups separated by either culture, situational experience or ancestry at this point is that of knowledge of privilege or lack of privilege. This is completely insufficient knowledge with which to welcome somebody

into a community; it reduces all relevant factors to a single issue, and as we have seen, a misrepresented and misunderstood issue. This all results in a tragicomic situation where the excluded one knows and feels their exclusion, but those they are excluded from are completely incapable of recognising this exclusion, because it logically cannot exist, because everyone is exactly the same and shares exactly the same zero-culture. Inclusion thus cannot be achieved without a full knowledge of relevant separation, just as love cannot be achieved between two people without their knowledge of their own individuality, or their self-knowledge.

It is in this way that the creation of and simultaneous awareness of the culture and group of which one is part serves as an aid to inter-group relations, and to curing racism, in contradiction to traditional left-wing understanding – though it must of course be done without xenophobia or nationalism. This is perfectly summed up in the following quote from Sonia Sanchez, a poet of the Black Arts movement, speaking of what she felt the Black Panther movement allowed people to do:

“For us to begin to not only see the country, but to see ourselves and to love ourselves; when you love yourself, you don’t want to hurt someone else. And the other thing is that, when you love yourself, you treat people as an equal.”⁵

How many within the cypher culture, within the ‘privileged’, have learnt to see the country, see themselves, and love themselves? As another aside, repeated though important, let us note again here that this beautiful and true quote arising from the Black Power movement does not imply a similar White Power movement. As we have already noted, the black power movement only had meaning and truth because virtually all the people of a particular skin colour in a particular area (the U.S.) had a very similar group history and were/are oppressed and treated as a particular group because of their skin colour. If taken outside the U.S, and outside of that situation, a ‘black power’ movement becomes nationalistic and supremacist. The dangers of this have come to fruition in certain black supremacist discourses which are in existence today. Conversely, there is no situation which calls for white power or white unity. Just as with black people worldwide, white people worldwide are faced with many different situations and many different histories. Sanchez’s quote does not call for people to ‘see ourselves’ in terms of skin colour, but in terms of an ancestral group facing a particular situation. In this sense it is applicable to everybody, but indeed it is aimed here at those who have been taught to believe such an understanding is fruitless, or wrong, or racist, who are often white and whose white skin and position within the cypher culture allows this discourse to operate. We have mentioned that the overthrowing of this discourse and the simultaneous act of creating meaningful culture and community is necessary for personal and group liberation from cultural repression and control. It is also wholly necessary for worldwide political justice, for it is only when unified

⁵ ‘The Black Power Mixtape’, towards the end.

that a group can resist the controls exercised upon them by those people and systems in power, and to be unified requires unity in the sense of an ability to communicate on all levels (socially, artistically and ideologically (or in terms of values)) and the existence of in the first instance functioning communities (their particular spacial and networked configuration is not necessarily set), and in the second instance meaningful links between these communities. These two factors, communication and community, as described, are what composes a culture. As we have noted, and as is evident, the controls that are in place on the ‘privileged’, the outer party, the included of the cypher culture, are controls that make them suitable for the running of the machine. Thus their breaking of these controls to an extent breaks the machine automatically, and their successive unity enables its transformation.⁶

⁶ Many will be completely familiar with discourses like this, that call for personal ‘inner’ transformation that will result in the breaking of the system. They were prevalent in the 60s-70s and have been an undercurrent ever since. The differences between the discourse I present and these older ones are centred around the concepts of accepting division, creating limited unity and creating alliance. Because of the strong spiritual strain present in the 60s and 70s, individual liberation was understood to then automatically link up with the glorious and sacred unity of humankind, i.e. in other words the hippies assumed that their struggle for liberation from the cypher culture or ‘the system’ was the same as everyone else’s, and when they were liberated they would unify with everybody else. But because many different groups faced many different struggles, and people were not able to accept and work with this division, personal liberation resulted only in a failed unity and in disillusion. In another sense, their incorrect and naïve worldview concealed half their true task – because they assumed the world was already unified due to their over-spiritual perspective, the only thing they needed to do was find self-understanding and personal liberation and their task was complete.

A more realistic map for those whom, like many of the hippies, begin from a point of cultural repression and (historical) oppression within the cypher culture, is to firstly realise their position, secondly join with others who are in a similar position, thirdly with these people undergo individual and group transformation, including the creation of new and functioning cultural forms, and fourthly attempt to form alliances with other groups *if their aims coincide*. Beyond that is impossible to see. The first two happen automatically and constantly, but we are stuck on the third point, firstly due to its difficulty within the system in which we live and secondly because of ideological confusion which prevents its conclusion and constantly creates division. The third and fourth points could also be undertaken simultaneously. To the extent that I am familiar with it, the anarchist movement in the UK constitutes, besides its valuable and necessary political activism, an attempt to create a culture and community and a simultaneous attempt at alliance between different cultures/communities. These remain largely subconscious attempts, i.e. they are happening anyway without people needing to think about them, without theorists needing to tell people that they are happening. (This is the way it should and will stay, as the heart of the movement as I see it does not rate words or theory very highly. I am writing for the purpose not of informing or guiding the heart of the movement, but of correcting a minority of ‘intellectuals’ who are causing serious division). Thus the two very broad strands of the movement, corresponding very roughly to what we understand as the ‘middle class’ and the ‘working class’ (though these terms are now largely meaningless; the difference between the two groups is now one of culture – these cultural differences arising from ancestry and personal history rather than current economic status), find themselves constantly separated, no matter how hard they try – and yet they must form an alliance, and do form an alliance to a greater or lesser extent of success. Noting why and how this alliance forms will be necessary to help us understand how to form other alliances across greater degrees of separation.

Notes on certain specific topics

The Escape from History

Many readers will react extremely negatively to concepts of ancestry and so on. Firstly, as mentioned above, note that these concepts are not presented with the purpose of promoting groups on ancestral bases, but rather to explain the prevalence of people of certain ancestries within certain groups, and also to help groups understand their situation through their history. If the groups are both not racist/xenophobic, and also self-aware enough to be welcoming, people from many different historical backgrounds will however be present within them to certain degrees, as needless to say there are always people who tire of the culture around them and are attracted to other and different forms. At the same time, of course new configurations of people will create or attempt to create new cultural forms. My emphasis on history and ancestry is not because I want or believe it to be the prime and governing factor; it is just one of several factors, but one which is generally completely ignored, and thus needs emphasis.

Another, perhaps deeper reaction to the concepts of ancestry will be the desire and will within many individuals to regard themselves as simply a 'human', an individual free from history and from the actions and situations of their ancestors. Who is this 'escape from history' available to? And how much of it is acting in accordance with the will of the cypher culture, which is happy for people to escape from cultural/historical attachments – as the only 'rules' and knowledges then surrounding that individual will likely be those of the cypher culture itself? Our actions in this area must be centred around equalisation. We must recognise that the escape from history is far less available to those from designated and assigned cultural groups and races than to those embedded within the cypher culture, and thus help them to enact the escape when necessary. We must also enable people arising from within the cypher culture to embrace history and ancestry. Thus we must move from a situation where some people are in a position of designation, of inability to escape from their ancestry and race, and others are in a position of enforced non-designation where embracing their ancestry and race is taboo, to a situation where both options are available to all groups and individuals. Witness the current situation where for example it is incredibly difficult for a black person to escape from viewing themselves and being viewed as a black person (though this fact is something which is allowed to be celebrated), whereas many white people in such countries as England serially seem to view themselves as

not having a race at all, and view those who do see themselves as white (without being ashamed of this), or who display for instance celtic or nordic symbols and runes, as being incredibly suspect. Of course, as race privilege theories have noted, at the same time as it being easy for white people to consider themselves as being ‘free’ of race, just as in the cultural situation it seems easy for them to view their race as some kind of ‘default’ or norm.

Can the concepts of equality apply to discourse as well as material relations? Probably not – certainly it is not as seemingly straightforward as demanding material equality, but at least, all people should be able to love what they are, and, if they wish, forget, discard or experiment with what they are if they can.

No Borders

Many readers, if familiar with the radical movements in Europe and beyond, will be aware of or active in the No Borders movement. This is a movement or ideology which seeks to destroy all borders and allow a free flow of people around the world, without hierarchical and authoritarian controls. If we are to follow this course, how can the ideas presented here help us? I believe they call for an immediate shift in the focus of No Borders from the practical aim of creating a no-borders situation and helping migrants, to a dual task in which the practical side remains the same, but the very difficult and underestimated task of developing our cultural understanding and creating solutions to situations of cultural conflict is seriously undertaken as a mission both for theory and for practice. As a movement it must, for instance, fully accept that there are currently issues of racial and cultural conflict going on in the UK that have little or nothing to do with the actions of the BNP, i.e. that these problems would remain if far-right ideology and organisations in the UK were completely destroyed. In fact without development of the understanding of, and real solutions to, issues of cultural conflict, if all far-right ideology and organisations were somehow destroyed they would be re-created very quickly (it is here that we are failing the fight against fascism). These structures, besides being representative to an extent of ingrained and automatic racism and xenophobia, are also a reaction to unresolved cultural conflict that nobody is able to deal with or even talk about – as mentioned earlier in this piece. So many people in the UK are aware of these problems that the apparent fact that radical ideology broadly, and the No Borders movement as a factor within that, seem unaware of them (otherwise it would be a top-priority issue) is indicative of the socioeconomic demographics of these movements – though this specific makeup should not be seen as a bad thing, it must be something that people are aware of in order to protect against blind spots in perspective.

The simple existence of these problems does not necessarily imply a fundamental problem with the No Borders philosophy, however it does make it completely necessary for this movement to develop tools to deal with them. What makes this task 10x more

crucial and important is that as a movement which is generally critical of capitalism and certain aspects of western societal structure generally, we are therefore opposed to many of the things which allow unifying elements between different cultures who share the same space, and are also opposed to the structures which firstly, bring many people to the UK in terms of motivation, and secondly, call for people to come here (it was of course the needs of industry and capital which began the mission of multiculturalism, and this history should not be forgotten). The general contradiction, and one of the problems we have to deal with, are clearly defined by the story of two friends who had been very active in migrant solidarity activity in Calais, who went to Morocco to investigate the potential for a No Borders outpost there. Things were developing fine except for the fact that one of them, a white female, found it difficult and unpleasant to live there at least partly because of the attitudes and behaviour that very many of the men displayed towards females, with specific racist sexual behaviour towards white females. Thus a mission that seeks to encourage the unity of people and cultures is confronted directly by problems that arise between cultural and racial groups, and does not know how to deal with them. In fact, perhaps we have many of the tools we need to hand, but are afraid to use them – an acknowledgement of an existence of a certain amount of racist/sexist attitudes towards white women would be a first step that would allow this situation to be either gradually resolved or faced directly using anti-racist tools, however we are terrified of making this first step, for many reasons, some of which have been covered in this piece. Note, vitally, that the acknowledgement of a racist discourse towards white women existing in many cultures around the world is not a racist stance. What would be a racist stance is if we believed or used the discourse, which is also in existence, that men with brown or black skin, or Muslim men, had racist and sexist attitudes towards white women. This is not the truth, nor what needs to be said. The existence of racist and sexist discourses and attitudes, among other problems, in certain cultures does not imply that all people within those cultures share those discourses, just as the existence of racism in western cultures and discourses, among other problems, does not mean that all white people are racist. All it means, just as in the case of western racist discourses and attitudes, is that we face a hard struggle to help change these discourses and attitudes, and that while they still exist we need to be able to resist them and fight them if necessary, just as white racism must be resisted and fought until it is changed.

Materialism & the Struggle for Meaningful Existence

Earlier in this piece I presented two discourses, one that can be clearly linked to Marxism (the materialist discourse) and another with a different genealogy and different areas of focus. They are not presented with the purpose of implying that they

are opposites which necessarily cancel each other out. In fact they can arguably aid each other if used in the right way. The problem is the tendency for the Marxist or Materialist discourse to be reductionist or imperialistic; that is, to want to explain everything using a few concepts, and to want to extend those concepts to all areas. Thus while some hard-headed materialists could regard some of the concepts used in this piece as being invalid or nonexistent, others would accept them but want to link them to materialist concepts that ultimately fit them in with the overarching Marxist or materialist theory. Just as we have analysed in the case of group relations, I would advise such ‘soft’ but still imperialistic materialist attempts to instead follow the course of acceptance of separation and development of alliance instead of enforced and false unity. There is no reason to link everything back to Marxism anymore; in doing so you are simply following an old, dying but still desperate desire to solve everything in one theoretical stroke, just as the purpose of the theory is to solve the problems of the world in one unified blow of the hammer. Materialism is part of a philosophical duality consisting of Materialism vs Idealism. This is just one of dozens of philosophical dualities, and just like all the rest, all the aspects of human life do not fit into its binary mode of classification. Again, this is not an attack on the commendable and developed theory on the materialistic aspects of history and political & social life, it is an attack on the imperialistic designs of these theories, when they have them. The conscious alliance of the two perspectives I have described, that concerned with material justice and that concerned with cultural, social and inner life, is potentially anarchism’s greatest strength – it already has them both, a head and a heart; if they were able to respect and understand each other, and act in synchronisation without seeking dominance, we would be in an incredible position.

Other cultures have already achieved this synthesis, the most obvious example being the Rastafarian concept of Babylon. This is very often used to refer to the oppressive fist of the authorities, i.e. the police etc, but also to refer to the *social* environment created by capitalism and its accompanying systems. Thus the war against Babylon is both a material war and a social, cultural and spiritual war. For instance, referring to concrete political and authoritarian powers:

Right about now me come fe warn everyone
 About the wicked Babylon them plan
 ..
 Me say you hear ‘bout the police bill
 Say if you no strong, you ‘bout fe get kill
 — Ranking Ann, ‘Kill the Police Bill’¹

¹ This song, highly conscious of the oppression experienced by black people in London, is at the same time equally conscious of similar oppression experienced by white people. i.e. referring to police powers present in Northern Ireland that were planned to be granted to the police in England (the planned ‘police bill’ of the title):

Or referring to a social and spiritual environment:

For so long I have been in Babylon
I cant even get to sing Jah Jah song Oh frustration's dance surrounds me
oh yeah
Not even one man I see to assist
— Don Carlos, 'Jah Jah Please hear my Plea'

This is also a perfect example of the inevitability of cultural separation. Though the concept is highly advanced, it simply will not gain widespread acceptance within the radical political movements of Europe because these movements are generally highly resistant to the Old Testament affiliations of the concept and the surrounding beliefs. Thus these movements must be able to create their own synthesis.

Gender and Privilege

Of course many of the findings in this piece may relate to this area; some of them can be extrapolated, it may be that others can not be. My own investigations into this subject will require a separate piece of writing.

The Conspiracy of Cells of Fire

The now-famous Revolutionary Organisation of the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire are described by various sources as being from pretty highly 'privileged' backgrounds. If you read their communiques, they are very clearly fighting for political justice. They are *just as clearly* fighting for personal liberation from what I have called in this piece the Cypher Culture. Check these quotes:

"Because its your system itself, the hypocrisy, poverty contextual and material, *fake culture, empty relations*, oppression, exploitation of nature, that "supplies" new urban guerrilla warfare with dozens of undisciplined revolutionaries."

"We are not fooled by the *crippled freedom* they promise us *on fat screens, in fast cars and in comfortable apartments*. We seek *the authentic side of life outside the limits* of a society that reciprocates between angry outbreaks of

And some things them a-do now in Northern Ireland
And now them-a bring it here in England
Dem have de power fe set up roadblock
So you better watch out if you're poor or you're black
In the end these powers were not granted to police in England, but remained in effect in Northern Ireland.

economic claims and big intervals of hibernation. Not us, our comrades set fire to the quiet nights in the metropolis, despise the laws and have their vision clear of the hypocrisy of urban culture. We are the reversed image of society in the mirror. We are anarcho-individualists and nihilists and we know that we are conducting a minority struggle with a powerful price.”

— Both from ‘Letter from newly imprisoned members of the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire’.

Note in the latter quote that they regard themselves as being ‘promised’ fast cars and comfortable apartments, I would guess something that only the richer stratas in Greece would be promised. And another:

“[I do not address this to] a society that *in the place of its heart* has placed a bunch of keys; car keys, house keys, keys to the fence, keys to intellect, keys to compassion, and it locks, locks, locks its fears, hushing in front of the screens and smiles in front of the shop windows. I am addressing the *undisciplined* and *untamed* spirits of our era...” — ‘Letter from Christos Tsakalos’.

(emphasis added in all cases)

We can see from these quotes that the R.O.C.C.F, one of the most ‘serious’ incarnations of political radicalism in Europe in terms of its willingness to commit violence and risk long stretches in prison, fully recognises and takes seriously the form of oppression that I have termed the Cypher Culture. It is completely vital that the broad movement in the UK and beyond also takes it seriously in terms of theory (by that name or any other); to neglect to do so is an anomaly that, as we have seen, compromises our clarity and can be traced to either outdated forms of political theory or the influence of discourses that stem from the cypher culture itself. Note that the R.O.C.C.F has chosen, among other things, to break through their alienation and cultural repression by becoming ‘true’ violent revolutionaries. I will only note that while such an action can be fully relied upon to break one out of alienation, if the action does not bring about or help to bring about a full anarchist revolution or destruction of hierarchical relations, it will not help anybody else. The creation of a living culture is the alternative.

The Far Right

At the same time as fighting the far right, we must also understand why people are drawn to it. Let us take the main group which fuels the far-right, which as far as I can see is white working-class men. As we noted earlier, this group’s culture(s) have been destroyed and re-destroyed several times over. They have been destroyed by the

systems used over the centuries by the various groups in power. Helping this group to understand this is very important, and possible, because it is evident that they feel its destruction – except of course, the various immigrant cultures are now blamed for this destruction. Helping them to understand their real situation and real oppressors would be very difficult to do, but we currently make it impossible by not being able to engage in this sort of discussion at all. We know that economic or materialist-based anger is going to increase in the coming years due to the current economic situation, and this is the area in which we are comfortable trying to stir up support. Potential anger stemming from cultural repression and cultural destruction is completely ignored by us up to now, and is manipulated against us and against others by the very same powers and systems who accomplish this destruction. This is a massive strategic oversight. Often when somebody says ‘look at what has happened to this country’, we hear a racist – actually what we need to hear is somebody who truly feels the destruction that has been done to this land and the cultures and people within it, who simply needs some education about who the real culprits are. Thus one of the main reasons why people become drawn to the far-right is transformed into the potential for anti-authoritarian self-empowerment. A complication that we need to be aware of here is that it is the concept of identity that is manipulated and fought over, not culture, though culture underlies identity.

Contradiction

Contradiction is a natural part of life; it is arguably a fundamental part of each one of us. It is especially notable as part of the personality and the totality of what a human being is, or what they seem to us to be. If contradictions are so natural, why have they been identified as problems in this work? Let us consider the nature of a contradiction. In the case of a human being, it is two or more forces or traits that oppose each other, that are inconsistent, that are incongruous – and if we thought about humans in a very mechanical way, that are illogical. This is not usually a problem (unless taken to an extreme – and is often a beautiful thing) because the totality that is ‘behind’ the contradiction is always apparent to us – we can potentially see the unity that is the human being behind the contradiction, and see the contradiction as making up the human being. To insist that human beings become free of contradiction would be to make them into robots. This kind of contradiction is certainly possible in the realm of words and ideas, and is often a sign of a very accomplished and ‘deep’ idea or system of knowledge, or spirituality, or work of art; as you progress through the contradictions, you find resolution and unity. The problem with the discourses and the contradictions we have analysed here is, not that there is not unity behind the contradictions, but that this unity is something which is hidden, which we are unaware of, and which we are *not allowed to see*. When a contradiction artificially hides its resolution, there is something very sinister operating; we can see this in the contradictions and the unity

behind the contradictions that are portrayed in the book 1984. Just as in 1984, the unity behind the contradictions is not something which is balanced and beautiful, like a human being or a work of art, or certain mystical or spiritual ideas, it is a part of the ugly system of control, that if we were aware of, we would reject. Hopefully this work has helped to unveil a small part of these systems of control.

The UK

Note that when we refer to the UK, we do so because the smaller nations that comprise it share a language, and share open borders. This is relevant because the situations that exist in for instance Scotland, cannot therefore be dismissed by for instance workshops in England, unless we specifically define a locality beforehand. Meanwhile when we refer to England or the English, we are doing so because this ancestral group has undergone a series of experiences and has been operated upon by various powers and discourses quite different to those experienced by for instance the Scottish or Welsh. This is chiefly relevant in this work to how a group is ‘allowed’ to see themselves as having a culture or identity; i.e. this is much easier for Scottish or Welsh people to do (though this does not mean that this ability is without problems).

While on the subject of the UK, we noted earlier the near-unbroken continuity of power that has resided in London for nearly one thousand years. In the shadow of this power, and remembering the very frequent frustration people voice with the passivity of the various movements in England, we would encourage people to do the equation $1+1 = 2$ rather than $1-1 = 0$. The solidity of the power residing here is due to its strength, and the passivity of the people directly under its shadow is due to its cunning. Thus instead of attributing the continuity of power and the passivity of the people with weakness, we associate these things with the relative material and, especially, discursive and psychological strength of these powers. If we regard the situation in this way, a small step, a small rebellion, ceases to seem pathetic in comparison to the action of Greek or German activists – it becomes highly powerful, an insult in the throneroom. This perspective must be adopted if any ‘progress’ is to be made at all, otherwise we will be lost in negativity.

Methodology

There is no formal academic methodology behind this work. It consists chiefly of the analysis of discourse. Reason and logic are applied to the content of discourses. This is probably distinct from the academic discipline of ‘discourse analysis’. What many academically-minded people may object to is that at many points the content of a discourse is identified without ‘proof’. Often this is because I am referring to informal discourse that does not really exist in writing, it exists in words and ideas

between people. If it does exist in writing, it exists at the same time, separately, on the level of spoken words and internally held ideas. It is often these that I am analysing. Certainly readers may have reservations about how something is identified. Objections in this area are welcomed, because they help the project of the analysis of discourse; i.e. debate in this area will clarify our discourse. Currently debate or development of thought in this area is very limited.

Anecdotes are used at several points. Let us note some features of anecdotes. Firstly, you have to simply trust that I have portrayed them in what I believe to be a true fashion. This is an advantage that we can gain over those in academic circles, who cannot entertain such trust. Accepting this attempt at truth, they then become completely relevant, even though they are a single case. This is because events do not happen completely randomly; they are tied up in certain forces, or attitudes, or discourses, and reveal these things to be existent. If these things are existent, then they must also act on other people. Thus when we give an anecdote about the material poverty of a single family, we fully understand that this is representative of a similar poverty of many, many others. How could it not be? Our ‘natural’ understanding in this area is actually incredibly helpful and sophisticated. For instance, we understand that the poverty that this fictional anecdote is representative of only extends to a limited area of the world, *where those relations and conditions exist*. For example, again, say we presented an anecdote describing the poverty of a single family in the UK. Would we think that this was an isolated case? How can a level of poverty exist in isolation? We would understand that certain forces and powers were behind this poverty, and that these forces and powers also act on other people. But we would also understand that it was representative of a UK-level of poverty, and that poverty in other areas of the world would have a different material nature. The case is exactly the same for anecdotes about attitudes or inner or cultural status. Attitudes do not exist in isolation (except in very extreme circumstances, which we are not dealing with) – while discourses by their nature operate across many people, and are derived from operating across many people. The only problem remaining is whether the anecdote is presented truly, or whether there is some subtlety within it that the presenter has not noticed.

End

Let us sum up, briefly, the main findings of this piece.

Firstly, we criticised WPT's assumptive and generalising nature, especially when this theory tends to be 'enforced'. Many of the ideas contained within it are not 'wrong', but need to be used specifically and carefully in certain situations. Some of the theoretical concepts we often encounter as accompanying or making up this theory are however, extremely incorrect and harmful, and we must pretty much forget them. We noted that privilege theory itself is also often in danger of being used in an assumptive and generalising fashion, and also needs to be kept specific.

Secondly, growing out of the above subject we noted the reality of two separate discourses within radical movements in the west, two separate cries of anger; the materialist and the cultural/psychological/spiritual. We noted that we are often conscious only of one of these discourses, the material, and that they can be conflicting. We noted two different forms of control, political control and cultural control. The two discourses are responses to the two different forms of control. Throughout we have developed the understanding that we must be fully conscious of the cultural/psychological/spiritual discourse, for it is this awareness, and development of these faculties, that breaks us out of cultural control. This is the hidden struggle. Our lack of consciousness of cultural control and of ourselves, our tendency to denigrate our attempts to break out of cultural control by forging new cultures, by making life meaningful, is identified as a sinister and harmful force, one which is linked to the forces of cultural control, and one which is unfortunately very strong even in our movement.

We characterised the forces of cultural control, and the result of it, with a name, the Cypher Culture, which means the empty or zero culture. Some curious aspects of certain groups' relationship with it were identified; contradictions that are right out in the open, that we already understand yet do not understand, such as the knowledge that we do not have a culture, and the simultaneous knowledge that 'our' culture is and must be everybody's culture. The image comes of the Cypher culture covering all of us with a layer of zeroes, like a wiped hard drive.

Lastly we commented on several specific situations using the results of our findings. One of the main practical conclusions we came to was the importance of the ability to acknowledge separation and difference, especially when this is accompanied by self-understanding. This acknowledgement enables us to, firstly, differentiate ourselves from the all-encompassing cypher culture around us, and gives us important tools to work toward liberating ourselves from it in the sense of creation and self-knowledge. It

enables us, hopefully, to work with other groups as allies. It will also hopefully develop our ability to include those who wish to be included.

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