

# DEGROWTH DESIRES

CLASS WORK PROJECT

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WORKING CLASS CLIMATE ALLIANCE

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# From the Editors

Degrowth. What exactly does it offer? While it speaks of a world that centres social welfare, community cohesion, environmental justice and, ultimately, the disregard of economic growth as the defining societal objective, it is unclear how and whether this vision can be desirable to everyone. There is likewise a tendency in discussions within degrowth to overlook the significance of class politics, including the role working class people (as the broad base of society) must play in realising a post-capitalist, post-growth transition.

Therefore, this issue is an incipient investigation into desire as a central component in formulating a degrowth vision that can garner sufficient popular support to achieve its goals. To this end, we reached out to various individuals, ranging from academics to trade unionists, and authors to everyday working people and activists. With their insights, several approaches to desire and its relevance to degrowth are considered and explored. While by no means a comprehensive overview, the interviews and articles found in this issue attempt to take the first step in highlighting the multifaceted nature of working class desires alongside the roots of such desires and the systemic structures and processes that underpin them. As such, this issue paints only the initial few brush strokes of a very large and complex picture, providing a tentative overview of what working class desire means for degrowth.

The propensity in degrowth to assume

certain logics or avenues in its materialisation is one fundamental barrier explored. This approach can lead to essentialising groups of people and a presupposition of certain strategies without a genuine understanding or inclusion of various subjugated communities and the tensions within them.

Frequently idealising a preconceived sense of locality and community across space likewise leads some strands of degrowth to underestimate the need to more directly contest these spaces. Something that can only be done by appreciating and appealing to the desires of those most affected by capitalism and its ancillary systems that together dominate our world today. (As well as, vitally, of those who may even have a superficial or imagined stake within these systems).

Ultimately this issue seeks to highlight key oversights within certain strands of degrowth that could arguably be branded overly middle class, producing a brand of bourgeois agrarian localism that we believe would not be desirable to overworked, impoverished people due to its messaging, its impracticality, and its alienating approach and aesthetic. Effectively, we argue for a qualitative transformation of desire, as opposed to its quantitative limitation (which we believe is impossible in a free society), with a view towards challenging the capitalist monopolisation of desire by seeking the libidinal substrates for radical transformations. We additionally explore related questions—ranging

from the contemporary value of Luddism, to a critique of simulation in political activism within the elite space of the university—and consider why the far right may have become more desirable than the radical left alongside how the left itself may perhaps partly be responsible for this.

Finally, we take care to note that the working class is not homogeneous, and acknowledge that it cannot be easily defined but instead takes on different meanings across contexts and cultures. However, we also acknowledge that despite our best intentions, we received responses primarily from white, cisgender men and women, and so wish to stress that our picture of working class desire is far from complete or representative. We hope to address these gaping holes in future work.

We also seek to avoid essentialising ‘the working class’ as an automatically conscious, ready-made, always latently revolutionary subjectivity. Rather, we view the working class as a contested, contesting, proactive subject group, laden with tensions and reactions, and shaped by suffering decades of ideological and material assault. We therefore refuse to brand working class political activity of any kind as the result of foolish delusion, but as the articulation of real, often legitimate desires (or fears) expressed in a political sphere that lacks a powerfully libidinal left-wing project for working class people of all stripes. If a degrowth transition is to happen, this has to change.

# WHY DESIRE?

What is desire? How does it relate to politics? And what does it mean for degrowth?

by Adam Cogan



Enemies of revolutionary working class desire.

Desire has been a recurring concept in Western philosophical, psychoanalytical, and political thought. Baruch de Spinoza stands as one of the most influential early thinkers on the subject. He saw desire as a propelling force – one that urges us into motion. It fuels our drive to seek out joyous affects (pleasure, delight, joy) and avoid sad affects (pain, sorrow, displeasure). In effect, there is no real motion without desire. Similarly, Freud articulated the so-called ‘pleasure principle’ – the desire to seek pleasure and avoid pain, as well as the concept of the libido as a fundamental (and not solely sexual) drive for human behaviour.

Freud’s nephew, Edward Bernays, applied Freudian psychology to the task of manipulating desire on a mass scale, as outlined in his book ‘Propaganda’ (essentially an early manual for public relations and advertising firms). Bernays wrote that ‘desire is the steam that makes the social machine work’, understanding the need to manage

desire in ways that would grease the wheels of capital accumulation. Frankfurt School theorist Herbert Marcuse offered a similar though much more critical diagnosis with his concept of ‘repressive desublimation’, based in the idea that capitalist society represses or transforms subversive desires by allowing for their safe expression within narrow, conformist boundaries. Marcuse therefore argues that the revolutionary energies that previously existed – and were formed in part through the negation of desires – no longer exist because capitalism offers illusory and artificial fulfilment (through consumerism, etc.).

Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan stressed the role of lack in desire, suggesting that a sense of lack or incompleteness is fundamental to the human condition, and that this sensation fuels desire. French duo Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari rejected the concept of lack, and criticised the individualistic tendencies of Lacanian theory,

instead stressing the collective, positive and productive nature of desire. Of course, all these figures are white, heterosexual, cisgender men. As such, their conceptions of desire may fairly be described as not entirely representative. Indeed, desire has taken on a less abstract and more subversive form when described by more oppressed or marginal members of society, such as women, the LGBTQ+ community, and people of colour.

As an example, Mario Mieli, in his explosive manifesto ‘Towards a Gay Communism’, centres the liberational potential of queer desire, arguing that ‘the heterosexual Norm’ and the ‘repression and sublimation of Eros’ are ‘no longer necessary for the goals of civilisation and the achievement of communism, being in fact indispensable only for the perpetuation of capitalism and its barbarism’. Instead, he sees ‘in the expression of homoerotic desire a fertile potential for revolutionary subversion.’ Feminist psychoanalysts such as Luce





**Mario Mieli, a pioneer in centering queer perspectives on desire. Credit: Paola Agosti**

Irigaray likewise critique Lacanian and Freudian phallocentrism, arguing for a 'multiplicity of desires' whereby non-male desires become recognised on their own terms, rather than repressed, subordinated, or articulated solely in their relation to men.

To flesh out this picture in anything close to approaching completion would require multiple volumes. This is a necessarily incomplete and oversimplified genealogy of thinking on desire. But what underpins it all is the idea that desire is socially, materially, and economically constituted. It does not occur in a vacuum, it is not static, and it is not singular.

To summarise, then, we can broadly see desire as a motivating force that lies in all of us, something that is constantly being

produced but that can be formed and reformed according to different or changing conditions. Desire is the energy that underpins actions, decisions, conscious and unconscious interests and drives.

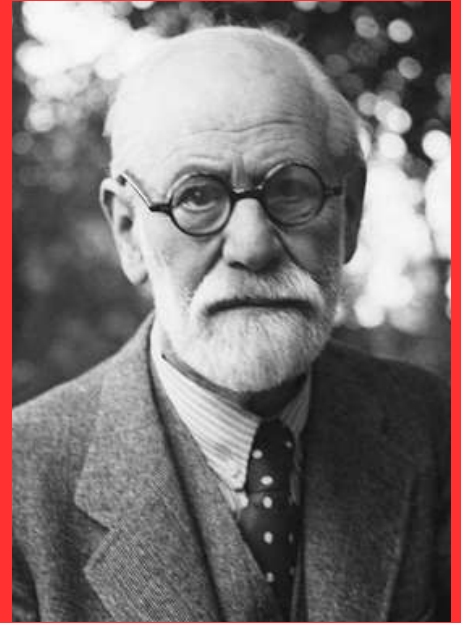
Desires can therefore be qualitatively different, with some desires being potentially more subversive or threatening to the capitalist social 'Norm' precisely because this 'Norm' struggles to integrate them. Such revolutionary desires are more likely to come from marginalised or oppressed groups whose very existence and liberty of expression tends to be most restricted under capitalism. Indeed, so much time is spent trying to manipulate or suppress revolutionary working class desires, through a process of what Mark Fisher calls 'consciousness deflation', due to the danger such desires pose.

**'DESIRE DOES NOT 'WANT' REVOLUTION, IT IS REVOLUTIONARY IN ITS OWN RIGHT, AS THOUGH INVOLUNTARILY, BY WANTING WHAT IT WANTS.'**  
**DELEUZE AND GUATTARI, ANTI-OEDIPUS**

It is also vital not to essentialise or generalise. As Fisher notes, drawing on standpoint epistemology through Nancy Hartsock and György Lukács, 'subjugated groups potentially have access to knowledge of the whole social field that the dominant group lacks'. However, 'members of subjugated groups do not automatically possess this knowledge as of right – it can only be accessed once group consciousness is developed.'

As such, desires formed within subjects, even those belonging to subjugated groups, are not inherently or consistently revolutionary or subversive in the face of capitalism. Desire must therefore always be viewed as a site of constant social, political, cultural contestation.

This conception of the political role of desire has significant implications for the degrowth project. Degrowth necessitates a reduction in material consumption. This would require a mass transition in consumer practices that is difficult to see occurring naturally without authoritarian intervention or eco-catastrophe. As such, desire – including the libidinal investment in growthism – must itself be transformed. Many degrowth theorists propose a quantitative limitation of desire–i.e., arguing that consumerist desire is ultimately inescapable and so a sort of (somewhat bourgeois) aesthetics of simplicity must



be cultivated to limit/reject it. However, acknowledging that desire is by nature illimitable (as it is constantly being produced and reproduced), it becomes evident that only a qualitative transformation of desire is possible.

Rather than disavowing desire (which Bernays would argue actually feeds consumer impulses through subconscious mechanisms à la Freud), we should view desire as a source of emancipatory, revolutionary potential. Capitalist monopolisation of desire should therefore not be taken as an inevitability, though it is unquestionably a pressing reality. In the end, a degrowth transformation cannot come through retreating from this tension, but by actively engaging and contesting the terrain through the formation of counter-desires, and through the liberation of transgressive, transformational desires currently subsumed or repressed by the capitalist 'Norm'.

The (re-)raising of subjugated group consciousnesses is an indispensable part of this process. Degrowth can therefore ill afford to remain a somewhat marginal, middle-class-led intellectual project if it seeks broader investments from the social majority, i.e., poor or working class people.

**Left: Feminist psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray. Right: uber phallocentrist Sigmund Freud. Bottom: The convergence of subjugated desires during the miner's strike of 1984-95.**



# DAN EVANS

**DAN EVANS IS A FORMER ACADEMIC SOCIOLOGIST WHO IS NOW A SUPPORT WORKER, WRITER AND TRADE UNIONIST BASED IN CARDIFF. HE IS AUTHOR OF *A NATION OF SHOPKEEPERS: THE UNSTOPPABLE RISE OF THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE*.**

WHAT DISTINGUISHES THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE AS A SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASS IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

I define the modern petty bourgeoisie as being divided into two fractions or strands (like a DNA helix). The first fraction is the 'traditional' or 'old' petty bourgeoisie, which is made up of small self-employed people, while the 'new' petty bourgeoisie are the sprawling mass of low paid white collar service workers.

## The Old/Traditional Petty Bourgeoisie

This fraction is a historic class that was identified by Marx and Engels. They were (and are) a unique class in that they occupied a liminal and split position in the class structure. Unlike the working class, they owned something (this could be tools, a workshop, or a small farm) and it was through this ownership of a small business (think of an artisan such as a blacksmith, carpenter, or tailor in a workshop) that they shared ownership of capital with the bourgeoisie; but equally—and unlike the bourgeoisie—they also had to sell their own labour, and had to work or starve. They were often very poor, which gave them much in common with the working class.

Thus, Marx argued they were 'cut up into two persons'—half worker, half capitalist. Historically this split position—having small property and capital but also being precarious and dominated by big monopoly capitalism—produced chaotic politics which was often anti-big business but pro-property.

Marx and Engels predicted this class would basically be destroyed by the rise of large scale, industrial capitalism and so fall into the ranks of the working class. But this has not happened. Although the small self-employed shrank under the welfare state, they have grown enormously under neoliberalism and peaked at over 5 million people in 2019 (nearly the same size as the entire British public sector).

Traditionally, the petty bourgeoisie has had a number of avatars or personifications, evolving from the artisan, then the shopkeeper. In popular culture they have historically been a figure of fun—think of people like Boycey from 'Only Fools and Horses'—obsessed with social climbing and distinguishing themselves from the working class by their conspicuous consumption.

Today though, the class is

sprawling and varied, it can no longer be associated with these narrow stereotypes. The modern self-employed generally have no employees; they are often very poor (worse off than the conventionally employed) and include a wide variety of both skilled and unskilled work—tradesmen, small farmers, hairdressers, café and bar owners, personal trainers, dog walkers, lawyers, consultants, window cleaners, and so on.

Politically, the old petty bourgeoisie continue to have chaotic politics and tend to be overrepresented in right populist parties.

## The New Petty Bourgeoisie (NPB)

The new petty bourgeoisie are the sprawling mass of (often low paid) white collar workers in the UK, generally working in services (as opposed to production—i.e., people who don't make stuff). Think of a graduate in a non-graduate role, people working in sales, call centres, in the public sector, etc. The new petty bourgeoisie is a lot harder to define if we stick to orthodox Marxist approaches to class which tend to be based on ownership of the means of production. Many of the NPB don't own their own business, and often



# DEGROWTH NEEDS TO SOMEHOW UNCOUPLE ITSELF FROM IMAGES OF ECO-AUSTERITY AND EVERYONE 'HAVING LESS'



The ubiquitous Barratt homes associated with Deano memes.

despite having a university education they don't earn very much. Thus, 'on paper' they are often seen as part of the working class (often called 'the new working class', or part of 'the precariat'). However, historically there has always been a large section of low paid white-collar workers who have been culturally, socially and politically distinct from the working class, despite earning the same (or less). The union movement historically identified this group as a problem because of its hostility to unions and ideological closeness to management, and countless historical studies of clerks and other white-collar workers outlined the huge lengths that low paid white-collar class went to in order to distinguish itself from blue collar workers (e.g., living in different areas, having different cultural pastimes, having different family structures, not joining unions, etc.). This group is thus defined as a class fraction socially,

culturally, politically and ideologically (rather than based on ownership). While in previous eras this class tended to vote conservative, in the modern period it tends to vote for left-wing parties and has formed the main social basis for Corbynism, Sanders, Podemos, Syriza, etc. While both the old and new fraction are culturally and politically often very different, what unites them both (and distinguishes them from the working class) is their focus on social mobility and their slim status/stake in the system.

IN YOUR VIEW, HOW CAN DEGROWTH POSITION ITSELF AS DESIRABLE FOR THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE TODAY? AS YOU KNOW, THIS IS A SECTION OF SOCIETY WHICH IS MATERIALLY INVESTED IN THE CONCEPT OF ECONOMIC GROWTH (E.G. TO GROW THEIR BUSINESS, ETC.) AND IS ALSO SORT OF SUPERFICIALLY PROFITING FROM THE SYSTEM. BASICALLY,

THEN, HOW COULD THE LEFT (PARTICULARLY PROPONENTS OF DEGROWTH) GO ABOUT DISENTANGLING THAT LIBIDINAL INVESTMENT IN THE CURRENT SYSTEM AND FORMING A COMPETITIVE 'COUNTER-DESIRE' THAT WOULD SOMEHOW APPEAL TO PETTY-BOURGEOIS SENSIBILITIES?

I think the first thing to note is that despite the image of Deano [a UK meme depicting a stereotypical young provincial male with a boring, steady job, a new-build home, a nice car on finance, and low cultural capital], large sections of the petty bourgeoisie are very poor. And also that the boundary between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class is incredibly blurred as more and more people cycle between low paid work and bogus/low paid self-employment and back again. Thus, I don't think there is necessarily this big emotional investment in the capitalist system common among



the entire class, but rather the scraping for survival. Having said that, of course if you look at people like Tom Skinner [self-styled businessman and social media personality] there are certainly narratives of ‘rising tides lifts all boats’, and ‘we are the backbone of the economy’. In this sense, talk of degrowth will often be heard (not just by the petty bourgeoisie) as shrinking the economy and people getting poorer. This will need to be managed.

One obvious strategy in my view that the left in general should be adopting is looking to split small capital from big capital and take on big businesses. They are universally hated and above all by small businesspeople who are dominated by them. You can see a similar thing in the climate movement and the farmers’ protests across Europe: the small farmers should be split off from the big major polluting farms. Regarding the endless consumption element; yes, I agree there is in theory an obstacle with

people who are on the hamster wheel of class distinction and are endlessly buying new shiny things (because old, tatty and repaired is lower class). The answer to me is linking up with some form of consumer rights body. We are in a consumer society, but consumers have no rights and continue to get hammered by rising costs, planned obsolescence in cheap consumer goods, and so on.

So, while I don’t think consumption of goods will be done away with any time soon, we can do a lot of good by focusing on commodities which are built to last. This could be done hand in hand with, for example, ‘union made’ campaigns and onshoring manufacturing back to the UK. This should dovetail well with the campaign for degrowth in my opinion. Relatedly the Don’t Pay campaign [grassroots campaign for collective non-payment of energy bills] was very good and I think this should be linked up too. In terms of a counter-desire, I think we have to realise that a lot of petty bourgeoisie distinction

stems from the presence of an ‘underclass’ or visible lumpenproletariat and stigma against it. People are desperate not to fall down into this class which is growing all the time. This is expressed in terms of class aesthetics. But ultimately if you can improve the economy through redistribution of wealth to make less people live in poverty and improve the housing stock so that it’s not slum housing, you are in effect cutting off—in my opinion, anyway—a lot of the root causes of the desire for distinction. In short, ‘affluence’ doesn’t have to mean massive growth but it can mean safe communities, good ecological housing, and good public transport. Thus, for me, ‘degrowth’ needs to somehow uncouple itself from images of eco-austerity and everyone ‘having less’ (including ditching the term degrowth if necessary), because my vision of an ecosocialist society would look like futuristic abundance compared to what we have now.

Finally (this may not be what you’re asking but I think it’s

**Trico strikers lobbying for gender equal pay in 1976, a major show of unionised working class power.**

interesting), I think these small scale 'environmental' policies like ULEZ [ultra-low emission zones, met with much resistance in the UK and weaponised by the right wing] and default 20mph speed limits in Wales will antagonize people enormously because people can see that big polluters are being let off scott-free. They can see how bad public transport is, so these 'nudges' to change the behaviour of 'normal people' (which often involve taxing people more) are never going to work and will always cause backlashes. If we are not careful people will turn against the environmental movement entirely if it becomes associated with the nanny state pushing the little man around. This is a big danger.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN POLITICAL CHALLENGES FACING DEGROWTH, AND LEFT-WING MOVEMENTS MORE BROADLY, TODAY (I.E. WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES WE NEED TO OVERCOME TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE LASTING CHANGE)?

Big question. For me, in the UK the major political challenge is raising consciousness, because people are incredibly angry and ready for change, but this anger is often deflected elsewhere/seems incoherent. The irony is that the conditions are perfect for change—a pissed off populace, mass support for redistributive policies—yet the right is profiting more than the left. Why is this?



It's because the left is removed from working class communities, because the union movement is weak and because people spend 99% of their time online arguing about the Labour party.

We need a fulcrum to link up the labour movement, the green movement, other social movements (e.g. for Palestine, anti-war). In terms of the climate movement and the left in general, we have to realise that no mass movement can function without the active involvement of the working class involved in production (i.e., the people who make things)—this is particularly the case for fossil fuel industries in my view. For a transition we will need green manufacturing and lots of skilled jobs, so again in terms of narrative we need to be showing people that we are not calling for mass unemployment or a depression but instead a new form of abundance. A good example of this is with Tata in Port Talbot and Ford in Bridgend—we should be arguing that we can repurpose

these plants for green steel or green manufacturing.

This requires a number of big steps:

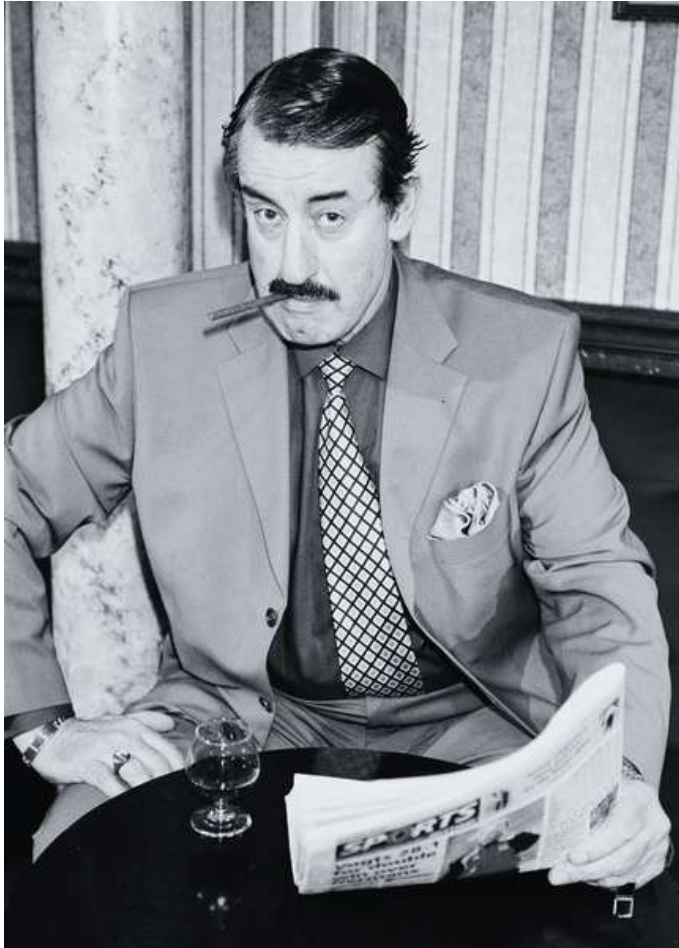
First, break with labourism (i.e. the primacy of the Labour party)—nothing is possible until people break with labourism and all its assumptions, from the model of political change (electoralism) to its technocratic vision of the welfare state (led by professional-managerial class experts).

Secondly, rebuilding the union movement. People criticize the green movement for not linking up with the Union movement, but this is as much to do with the dinosaurs in the union bureaucracy as the environmental movement—look at GMB, for example, advocating for more war and more arms production. The recent strike wave has at least illustrated to many rank and file trade unionists the problem of the union bureaucracy and their timidity. If more unions were willing to break the law (like XR, JSO, etc.) then the union movement would be in a better place.

Thirdly, rebuilding the cells of working-class movements and working-class communities /agency. I mean here literally rebuilding and protecting things like sports clubs, working people's clubs, libraries, community centres, and so on. These are the things that built and sustained the old workers' movement—actual brick-and-mortar institutions where people got together to build relationships.



Top: Boycie from *Only Fools and Horses*, a caricature of the petty bourgeois male. Bottom: Right wing politician Nigel Farage mixing with ULEZ protesters.



**IF YOU WANT TO WIN  
PEOPLE ROUND YOU  
WON'T GET THERE BY  
CONDEMNING THEM.**

Fourth, and relatedly, realise both the potential and pitfalls of social media and online organizing, alongside the ways in which Twitter polarizes people. I agree with Jane McAleavy that it does more harm than good. It's socializing many young activists into a form of purity politics that stops us engaging with people. If you want to win people round you won't get there by condemning them or not engaging with thorny subjects like immigration. This means listening to people if they moan about things like ULEZ, for example.

Finally, link up the working class, the petty bourgeoisie, and the progressive professionals (if they exist) through a cross-class coalition. This means identifying points of possible tension between classes and class fractions—and overcoming these means paying attention to point 4.





# Zosia: The Class Work Project



**THE CLASS WORK PROJECT IS A WORKERS' CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPING THEORY, ANALYSIS, AND PRACTICE AROUND ISSUES RELATING TO CLASS IDENTITY, OPPRESSION, AND STIGMA IN BRITAIN AND BEYOND.**

WHAT IS YOUR OWN PERSONAL VIEW ON THE DEGROWTH PROJECT?

I think degrowth is one of the necessary steps we as humans must take if we are to have any hope of saving the planet we live on from ourselves and the current dominant economic model we have created. The devil, however, lies in the details of how to go about it.

IN YOUR VIEW, HOW CAN DEGROWTH POSITION ITSELF AS DESIRABLE FOR THE MOST EXPLOITED SECTIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS TODAY? IN OUR STUDIES WE HAVE SEEN EXAMPLES OF "DEGROWTH LIVING" IN ACTION. THE EXAMPLES DEMONSTRATED 'SLOW-TECH' LIFESTYLES THAT WOULD BE COMPLETELY UNTENABLE FOR A SINGLE MOTHER OF THREE, AN URBAN SEX-WORKER, A DELIVERY

DRIVER, OR ANY OTHER SUCH PEOPLE WHO ARE COMMON THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. BASICALLY, THEN, WHAT COULD A WORKING CLASS DEGROWTH LOOK LIKE, IN A WAY THAT COULD POTENTIALLY TRIGGER A 'DESIRING' RESPONSE FOR OVER-WORKED, PROPERTYLESS, POOR PEOPLE IN THE UK TODAY?

While obviously, people can make their own decisions regarding their preferred lifestyle, I don't think projects such as the abovementioned are good or realistic ways to achieve degrowth on a large scale. Such a process will have to be based on shifting away from a hyper-consumerist society while allowing for a comfortable, safe and healthy life for all. This will mean a reduction of consumption in fields such as fossil fuels, fast fashion and animal products, but it does not mean that we will all have to go back to the lifestyle from before the Industrial Revolution. Many seem to forget that pre-Industrial Revolution, it was still the poor and working class people who were serving the needs of the middle and upper classes and that

the high-class ladies and gentlemen back then were not washing their own pants, heating their homes or carrying whatever heavy stuff they needed: their servants were. As such, promoting certain 'slow-tech' ideas to poor and working class people is doomed to meet with distrust and resistance, and rightly so. Just degrowth of the kind that will be able to get poor and working class people on board, instead of looking back to the past, would have to seek new, modern solutions that, together with reducing our consumption, will also address issues such as providing means to lead dignified life for all that will be based on mutual respect and equality. As a nerd, I see Solarpunk as a great example of imagining a world after degrowth and I think we can source positive, modern imaginations of degrowth from such art projects.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN POLITICAL CHALLENGES FACING DEGROWTH, AND LEFT-WING MOVEMENTS MORE BROADLY, TODAY? IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES WE

**Right: The Solarpunk aesthetic as modern degrowth imaginary.**

**Left: Working class women shouldering the majority of care work. Credit: Hallings Foto.**

NEED TO OVERCOME IN ORDER  
TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE LASTING  
CHANGE?

There are many. On the global scale, in my opinion, the greatest challenge lies in ensuring global justice, or, in other words, coming up with degrowth policies that will not be based on a demand to the so-patronisingly-called "developing countries" to halt their development.

At the crossroads of global and local, it is evident that anti-degrowth sentiments are being taken advantage of by the far-right to gain ground in the working-class communities, often by spreading misinformation, blatant lies or fear-mongering.



# MATT HUBER

**MATTHEW T. HUBER IS A PROFESSOR OF GEOGRAPHY SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY. HE IS AUTHOR OF *CLIMATE CHANGE AS CLASS WAR*.**

WHAT IS YOUR PERSONAL OF THE DEGROWTH PROJECT (VIEWED THROUGH THE INTERSECTION OF ECOLOGICAL CRISIS AND CLASS POLITICS)?

The very short answer is I think it is a huge problem from a strategic perspective. My argument is it only appeals to highly educated professional/middle class types who already live amidst 'comfortable' levels of consumption (and thus find the prospect of 'reduction' of 'excess' consumption highly attractive). But, capitalism is a system in which the vast majority of working class people face serious insecurity and deprivation and so would find such a program that centers 'downscaling'/'reduction' perplexing if not hostile to their interests. I have written about this in my book 'Climate Change as Class War'.

CONSIDERING DESIRE AS A MOTIVATING FORCE FOR POTENTIAL POLITICAL CHANGE, WHAT COULD A WORKING CLASS DEGROWTH LOOK LIKE, IN A WAY THAT COULD POTENTIALLY TRIGGER A 'DESIRING' RESPONSE IN MILLIONS OF OVER-WORKED, PROPERTYLESS PEOPLE WHO LACK IN TIME AND MONEY? IS A WORKING-CLASS DESIRE FOR DEGROWTH EVEN POSSIBLE?

I feel like to really answer this question I need to have read more psychoanalytic theory (Freud, Lacan and various interpretations from the Frankfurt School, etc.). But, from my more basic Marxist perspective, I think the working class under capitalism is exhausted and thus fundamentally has a powerful desire for free time. For me, the essence of Marx's vision of communism is 'free time'. So insofar as the degrowth movement centers the traditional working class/socialist demand for shorter worker hours it aligns with working class desire. Secondly, I think the working class has a desire for control over the things that matter in their lives (like work, access to key goods like energy, housing, food, and more). The problem with capitalism is not only that we have to work for capital, but also that the things we need (including a stable climate) are ceded to market forces out of our social control. Thus, the degrowth call for 'democratizing' the economy (again this is not new to degrowth, but for me is just fundamental to socialism for the last century plus) can align with this basic working class desire.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MAIN POLITICAL CHALLENGES FACING LEFT-WING MOVEMENTS MORE BROADLY,

TODAY? IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES WE NEED TO OVERCOME IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE LASTING CHANGE?

The left is highly concentrated among urban, highly educated professional class individuals in NGOs, academia, government and other sectors. It has found compelling political logics and arguments, but ultimately these mainly resonate internally among these often insular groups. There's a desperate need for the left to build an outward 'mass politics' that can speak to the vast majority of working class people (although, as a Marxist, I would never conflate education with class, it is clear that there is a divide along 'educational' lines here—some call it 'educational polarization' or the divide between what Piketty calls the 'Brahmin Left' and the 'Merchant Right'). What drives me a bit batty is the ways in which the left is so self-assured and morally righteous, when it clearly has not been able to build the kind of power or majoritarian politics to achieve any of its political goals.

# ALBERT BOTRAN I PAHISSA

UN HISTORIADOR I POLÍTIC CATALÀ. HA ESCRIT DIVERSES OBRES SOBRE LA HISTÒRIA DE L'ESQUERRA CATALANA I LA QÜESTIÓ NACIONAL AL PRINCIPAT. DURANT LA LEGISLATURA PASSADA AL CONGRESO DE LOS DIPUTADOS, DEL QUAL ERA DIPUTAT, VA POSAR SOBRE LA TAULA DIVERSES VEGADES LA QÜESTIÓ DEL DECREIXEMENT.

QUINA ÉS LA TEVA VISIÓ SOBRE EL CONCEPTE DE DECREIXEMENT I QUINES ESPECIFICITATS PRESENTA EL CONTEXT CATALÀ EN RELACIÓ AMB ELL?

El decreixement és una realitat irreversible perquè el creixement no pot ser infinit. Parlo en termes de límits materials del planeta, no de créixer en desenvolupament humà. El dilema, per tant, no està entre continuar creixent o decreïxer, sinó qui ha de decreïxer i com.

Catalunya i els Països Catalans estem dins el Nord Global, la part del planeta que consumeix molt més que tota la resta. Més en concret: la part del planeta que té un nivell de consum molt alt a partir de matèries primeres que extreu de la resta del planeta, començant pel petroli. Si no hi ha un canvi revolucionari en el Sistema-Món, tot apunta que el decreixement començarà per sota, és a dir per les economies més febles, les espoliades, dependents i neocolonials. Aquestes seran les primeres que col·lapsin mentre els països del Nord no voldran decreïxer i blindaran les seves fronteres contra les creixents migracions. L'alternativa passa per una consciència ecologista, internacionalista, anti-imperialista.

DES DEL TEU PUNT DE VISTA, COM ES POT PRESENTAR EL DECREIXEMENT COM UN PROJECTE DESITJABLE PELS SECTORS MÉS EXPLOTATS DE LA CLASSE TREBALLADORA CATALANA? DE MOMENT, AL MÀSTER HEM FET VIATGES DE CAMP PER VEURE EL DECREIXEMENT EN ACCIÓ EN AMBIENTS RURALS PERÒ AQUESTS AMBIENTS ESTAN LLUNY DE SER ELS MAJORITARIS A CATALUNYA. AIXÍ DONCS, COM HEM D'IMAGINAR I PROPOSAR UN DECREIXEMENT QUE PUGUI SER VIST COM A FAVORABLE PER LA MAJOR PART DE LA CLASSE TREBALLADORA CATALANA, QUIN PAPER HI HA DE JUGAR EL MÓN RURAL? I L'URBÀ?

És complicat convèncer algú que viu dins uns "privilegis" de que deixi de tenir-los. I en aquest cas, nosaltres, malgrat ser de classe treballadora, participem dels privilegis de ser-ho en el Nord global. Per tant convèncer algú que haurà de disminuir el seu nivell de consum, quan això ha sigut una via d'ascens social (ahora que una via per apaivagar la lluita de classes) no és gens fàcil.

No sóc pessimista del tot. La pandèmia demostra que la gent podem fer sacrificis per un bé superior, com és la salut pública.

Però també és cert que canvis profunds només són possibles en moments de crisi flagrant. En aquell cas va ser el col·lapse de les UCI.

La feina de conscienciació passa per aquesta visió internacional i solidària. Però també per qüestions que ens poden afectar directament, tant al Sud com al Nord, com ara el canvi climàtic.

També podem explicar que el decreixement pot significar un major desenvolupament humà en esferes no materials. Vull dir: la majoria de béns de consum que se'ns presenten com a necessitats són, en realitat, força superflus. Treballem per mantenir uns nivells de consum com a accés al benestar però en realitat allò bàsic és menjar, cures, salut, habitatge, transport, cultura, comunitat. I això es pot garantir democràticament al marge de com ho distribueix el capitalisme, que agreuja les desigualtats i ignora els límits físics. Així que l'altra cara de la moneda del descens de consum pot ser el descens del temps de treball, compensat per una millor dedicació a les cures, al treball comunitari, a la formació.

QUINS SÓN ELS PRINCIPALS REPTES POLÍTICS QUE HA D'AFRONTAR EL DECREIXEMENT I ELS PARTITS D'ESQUERRES MÉS



ÀMPLIAMENT? EN ALTRES PARAULES, QUINS SÓN ELS OBSTACLES MÉS SIGNIFICATIUS QUE NECESSITEM SUPERAR PER TAL D'ACONSEGUIR UN CANVI POSITIU I DURADOR PER LA SOCIETAT CATALANA?

Són reptes similars als de l'esquerra de sempre: el poder el tenen uns altres i nosaltres, no. Com ens organitzem per a tenir aquest poder és el repte principal. Des del punt de vista català, la independència és una palanca per a capgirar aquesta situació. Ara bé, en l'època que vivim sí hi ha una evidència molt més accentuada dels límits del planeta i, per tant, l'objectiu de repartir la riquesa, central en l'esquerra, ha d'anar acompanyat de la consciència sobre els límits del creixement. Això sí que és més nou.

El que hem de tenir clar, i amb això torno a la primera pregunta, és que el decreixement és inevitable, la qüestió és qui el dirigirà políticament. Si ho fan les esquerres, els explotats, els espoliats, procurarem que sigui un decreixement planificat i just. Si es fa amb el sistema actual d'Estats capitalistes i preeminència del Nord, serà un campí qui pugui.



# Resisting the Capitalist Work Machine: Luddism

by Francesca Jobson



EXPLORING THE LEGACY OF LUDDISM AND ITS RELEVANCE TODAY.



'Oh, you Luddite!', one may exclaim as they accuse someone of being absurdly fearful towards today's modernised world and the marvelous progress, growth and prosperity that defines it. While a Luddite has been defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'a person opposed to new technology or ways of working', this deeply misconstrues what it does in fact represent. In an effort to dampen the rhetoric of anti-capitalism, the popular connotations of Luddism discourage people from resisting progress for fear that they too will end up like the doomed weavers of the 1800s.

The Luddites were a group of textile workers of 19th century England whose concern about being replaced by increasingly efficient technology led to them destroying multiple machines in an act of protest. Lasting from 1811 to 1816, they furiously resisted industrial capitalism and the inevitable implications it had on the lives and communities of workers. This manifestation of a working-class movement demonstrated the importance of militant tactics in challenging capitalist exploitation, alongside a deep comprehension of workers' own interests in order to organise and fight for those interests. What

is more, the anger of the Luddites was rooted in the desire to maintain the social relationships of workers with the skills they had crafted and mastered through their years of work; they recognised how novel machines were simply a tool for the bourgeoisie to deflate costs, increase productivity, and push the worker to 'step to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor' as Karl Marx remarked in 1876. Notably, the Luddites called for technologies that would bring autonomy and advantage to their communities.

In the end, the Luddite movement failed. The capitalists, Parliament and the Crown introduced laws that criminalised the breaking of machinery and union organising. British troops were enforced in the textile towns and various workers who were involved in the death of a factory owner were executed. Nevertheless, the destruction of productive property raised fundamental questions; what relationships do both workers and factory owners have with machines? Who decides how they are used? And, how do they (re)produce specific wage arrangements to the benefit of the capitalist?

Just as the factory and machine

owners despised the Luddites, the CEOs and corporate billionaires of the 21st century despise any labour movement that threatens their authority or demands better working conditions. Such threats are clear in the way that contemporary hegemonic narratives allow companies, the state and the bourgeoisie to avoid accountability as they, for example, implement surveillance within workplaces to extract maximum efficiency from workers.

The history of Luddism continues to be relevant when considering the relentless relationships between institutions, businesses, governments, workers and environments of today. As Steven Jones noted in his book 'Against Technology', the difference is, perhaps, that while the original Luddites focused on 'reassuringly clear-cut targets—machines one could still destroy with a sledgehammer'—much of the technology that pervades today's societies is intangible, invisible, yet omnipresent. Furthermore, modern technologies are underpinned by a neoliberal hegemony that has been (re)produced to normalise wage labour in a way that makes it acceptable and even desirable for individuals to live comfortably and





survive within the capitalist system.

The ways in which neoliberal capitalism has used and commodified desire, as Jeremy Gilbert points out, has meant that consumption, property ownership, political apathy and competitive individualism have become embedded throughout communities, undermining working class agency. Subsequently, multiple obstacles exist for the working class to realise their capacities and to build collective ideas and practices.

In this way, Luddism offers a pathway today through which the current capitalist system could collapse and be transformed. Considering the degrowth movement, Luddism presents opportunities for communities to challenge modern 21st century sociotechnical systems that iconise economic growth and work against the interests of the working class. A transformation like this demands a restructuring of the working class to seek and also create a 'new and comparable culture of radical knowledge and collective self-belief', in the words of Jeremy Gilbert.

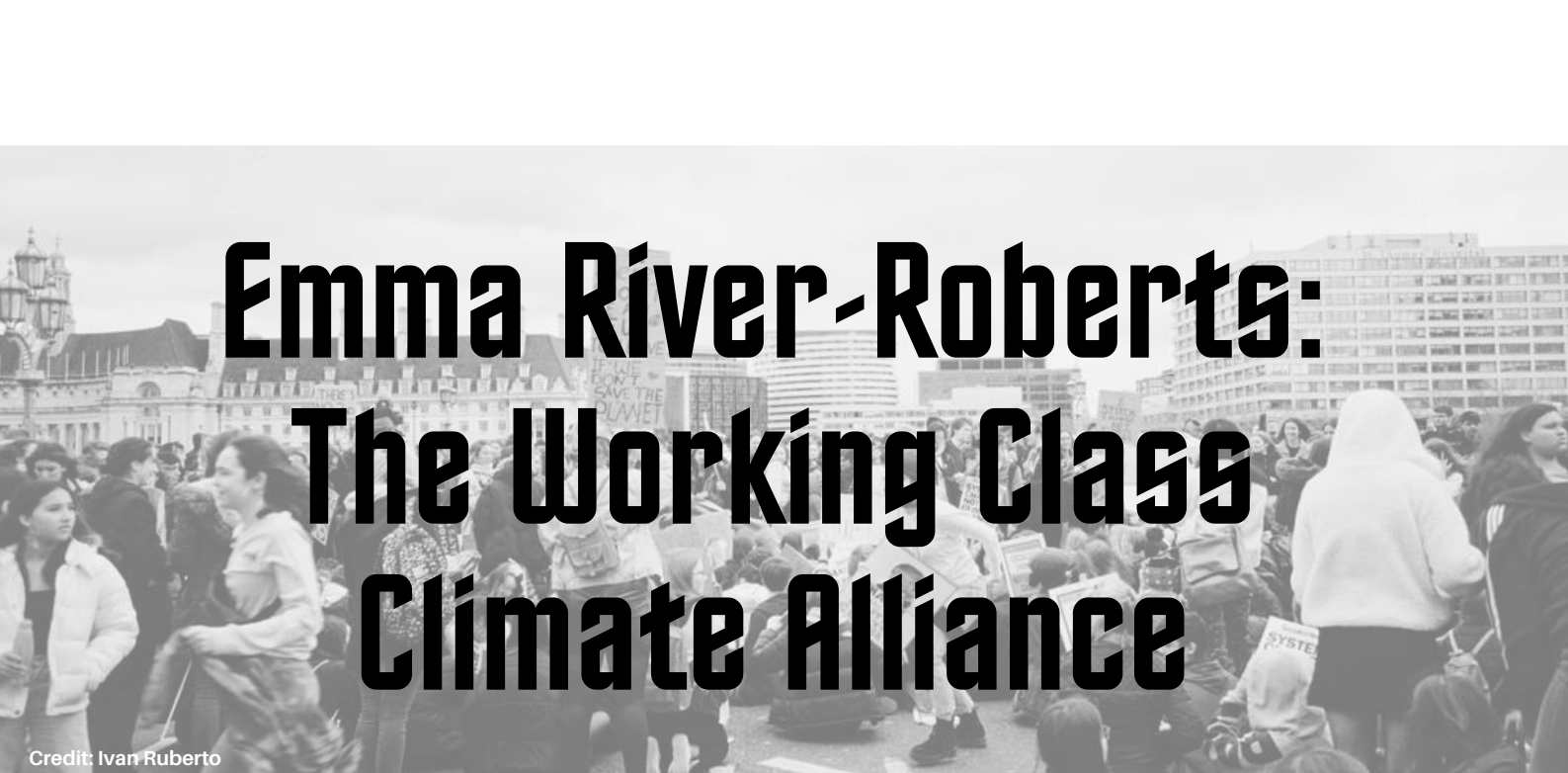
Rita Calvário highlights the ways in which counter-movements to capital and neoliberal hegemony can be born out of a collective desire and need for unification alongside the recognition of how labour, knowledge, land and bodies continue to be exploited.

In the Basque Country, re-peasantization has emerged through highlighting 'the possibilities and challenges of alternative economic practices in activating subjects towards collective mobilization'. However, Calvário also points out challenges around political agency in such movements; the precarity of making a living through alternative agro-food systems is evident in various issues such as access to land.

The story of the Luddites has been referred to as a cautionary tale, as socio-technological transformation may lead to unexpected outcomes that materialise in spatially uneven ways. Yet, to confront and dismantle the capitalist processes that continually fracture communities, polarise people, and undermine the individual's autonomy, Luddism acts as a rallying call for the working-class to build collective solidarity.







# Emma River-Roberts: The Working Class Climate Alliance

Credit: Ivan Ruberto

**THE WORKING CLASS CLIMATE ALLIANCE WAS FOUNDED BY EMMA RIVER-ROBERTS, A WORKING CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST AND AFFILIATE OF THE POST-GROWTH INSTITUTE. RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL OVERSIGHT OF CLASS IN DISCUSSIONS, SHE FOUNDED AN ORGANIZATION TO UNITE THE WORKING CLASS WITH MAINSTREAM AND DEGROWTH MOVEMENTS.**

WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ON THE DEGROWTH PROJECT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO WORKING CLASS PEOPLE?

It's a top-down relationship. For the most part degrowth has been shaped (and continues to be shaped) by those in the academic and policymaking professions, as well as middle class activists. This means that people are creating these radical ideas for a better future on behalf of others, rather than inviting them to the table to have an equal say. Academics have acknowledged that they produce class-blind approaches, however instead of actually going directly to the working class to remediate this, they seem to be trying to resolve the problem amongst themselves in an academic fashion –by writing, speaking/presenting about it, etc.

This is exactly what mainstream environmentalism (activists, politicians and policymakers) has

always done to the detriment of the working class—it has stereotyped them as ignorant, uncaring about the environment, and in need of educating. And it doesn't matter if the degrowth movement's intentions are different and they genuinely want to help, all the working class see is the same types of behaviours circulating amongst a different bunch of environmentalists, policymakers and activists. So they will (and indeed do) actively retreat from degrowth spaces because they pre-empt this type of marginalisation that they have historically always been confronted with. Degrowthers may be in pursuit of egalitarianism but they are yet to work out how to pursue it in an egalitarian manner.

I did also want to highlight, amongst the UK's working class people who are embracing degrowth, how they see their

relationship to it (this is ongoing research so I haven't published anything that I can refer you to). Broadly speaking, they see it as a necessary change to the economy but reject the qualitative transformations the movement endorses (such as the concepts of conviviality and buen vivir). They agree with these ideas in principle but instead see societal transformation as something that can only emerge through a reignition of their traditional working class values and practices –many of which are basically equivalents to concepts such as conviviality, etc. (They are also still committed to core approaches such as anti-imperialism and decolonisation).

So for me, having a positive relationship between degrowth and the UK's working class would likely come through advocating its economic aspects only, alongside



striving to bring back working class traditions in their own form. So I suppose it can be considered a separate school of thought to the Barcelona School. (There are still issues with class, however: many are reluctant to engage with middle class activists because of the historic aforementioned tensions). In the UK they've started to take things in a slightly different direction on their own terms.

IN YOUR OPINION, HOW CAN DEGROWTH POSITION ITSELF AS DESIRABLE FOR THE MOST EXPLOITED SECTIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS TODAY? THAT IS, WHAT COULD A WORKING CLASS DEGROWTH LOOK LIKE, IN A WAY THAT COULD POTENTIALLY TRIGGER A 'DESIRING' RESPONSE FOR OVER-WORKED, PROPERTYLESS, LOW-INCOME PEOPLE?

The movement needs to actually start engaging with the exploited first. Everyone comes to know and inhabit the world through the lens of their own personal circum-

-stances. Therefore in my case, as a working class white woman, I may try my very best to envisage a degrowth society that would suit a working class person of colour, but I will undoubtedly form an incomplete picture because I don't know what it's like to experience the world as a non-white person, don't fully understand certain cultural differences, etc.

We have to go into these communities and reach out to them directly to learn about what everyday life is like when it's good, when it's bad, and to talk to them about how degrowth is being practiced in more alternative spaces and whether they can imagine doing any of these activities in their sociocultural contexts and if so, what form it would take.

In order to trigger a desiring response for the working class we need to know exactly what a desirable society looks like from their viewpoints, beyond just offering policies like UBI, work-time reduction, etc. In everyday life we're confronted by new policy promises from politicians in the media, they need something more that they can relate to and subsequently become emotionally attached to.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN POLITICAL CHALLENGES FACING DEGROWTH, AND LEFT-WING MOVEMENTS MORE BROADLY, TODAY? AND WHAT ACTIONS DOES WCCA PLAN TO TAKE IN THE COMING YEARS IN RELATION TO THESE CHALLENGES?

I see four main points here:

Firstly, environmentalists have long been criticised for being too homogenous and middle class. However, when this is raised—including amongst the degrowth movement—it is often downplayed, dismissed, or interpreted as being in 'bad faith' and just a polemical attack. But if activists are serious about acknowledging how they have privileged from being a certain race, or talking about patriarchal privilege, the privilege that comes from being in the global North, and working to dismantle the oppressions that they have inadvertently entrenched through these positionalities, why is it so taboo for class to be included in this well? They are all interconnected.

Second, getting to the point where such groups don't just position themselves as agents of change, but as agents who are capable of change. People do not rally behind causes if they feel as if all their efforts will lead to nothing—research has for a long time shown that people need to believe that at least something can be achieved.

When we look at the dire state of society—the fact that people do not have access to the basics (healthcare, food, water), the widespread depletion of living standards, or that in many parts of the world you can get arrested for protesting—from an outsider's perspective, on what planet would a degrowth society ever be possible when populations cannot even mobilise for the basics?

For degrowth and left-wing movements to gain traction, there



## DISTRUST IN POLITICIANS AND POLICYMAKERS IS MASSIVELY HIGH.

**Keir Starmer, leader of the UK Labour Party: the face of stale, technocratic and anti-libidinal duplicity.**

needs to be more on-the-ground mobilising from the movement alongside people in their everyday struggles. (Although of course not everyone has the privilege to do this, e.g. someone with caregiving responsibilities). If these groups can form coalitions and make smaller gains (such as improving local housing conditions), then it provides empirical proof of the efficacy of people's collective bargaining power. It also shows that groups with different/varying interests are actually able to come together, put differences aside (because we all have differences) and work together so as to achieve a common goal(s). With these gains in hand, groups can then move onto bigger things. (This is not the only way that movements can position themselves as agents capable of change, but just to give an example of how it is possible to achieve).

Third, the right and far-right need a hell of a lot more attention. They position climate policies as

ideological attempts to 'control' the masses and 'spread our agendas'. They spread fear that climate policies will lead to financial precarity—and they're doing this very well in the mainstream and garnering a lot of support. And as people flock to these groups, other ideologies from the right and far-right become more entrenched (for example, restricting abortion rights, etc.) and become normalised amongst these people, leading to greater support which can then lead to a greater peeling back of our rights more broadly.

Finally, distrust in politicians and policymakers is massively high. People's living standards have plummeted, politicians from almost all parties have lied and are corrupt. This growing distrust is leading to higher cases of policy resistance—research has shown that people will resist progressive policies, even when they understand how much better off they'd be, because they don't trust the politicians/people advocating

them. They just don't believe that something will materialise beyond theory and false promises.

This negatively impacts degrowth and left-wing movements because, from an outsider's perspective, we represent the types of people who have lied to them in the past (academics, policymakers, politicians). From this stance, based on a lifetime of experiences they have no reason to trust us.

In terms of what the WCCA plans to do on each point:

- Initiate conversations on class tensions to create open spaces for dialogue.
- Address reluctance among working class individuals to discuss oppression by normalising these conversations.
- Basic steps include hosting discussions, online panels, and writing about class issues to move beyond perceived 'fringe' status.





- Normalising acknowledgment of everyday class oppression is crucial for building solidarity between classes.
- Integrate class discussions into campaigns and mobilisation efforts, emphasising systemic injustices and stereotypes.
- Deliver public talks in academia to normalise working class issues and encourage middle-class academics' engagement.
- Amplify instances of successful working class mobilisation, providing specific strategies for others to adopt.
- Facilitate connections between working class members and organisations for broader support and collective action.
- Build a network with trade unions, justice organisations, and other movements to foster solidarity.
- Overcome class tension barriers to unite working and middle classes, showcasing examples of successful collaboration.
- Future focus on addressing right and far-right issues, acknowledging the importance despite (currently) lacking concrete plans.
- From 2024, collaborate with the professional climate sector to research and address the impact of climate crisis on the working class.
- Include working class perspectives from the start to enhance receptiveness to policies and initiatives.
- Challenge the exclusive evidence-based approach in climate politics and shift towards a more inclusive engagement with the working class.
- Highlight reasons for the working class's ambivalence towards the climate sector and advocate for a bottom-up approach.
- Limit focus to the UK's professional climate sector to avoid reproducing a 'white saviour' narrative, while supporting global efforts through network-sharing.





# Far Right Desirability

by Adam Cogan

Across Europe, the far right has been gaining ground. A seemingly inexorable rise to power that leaves many of us on the left with a growing sense of despair. The reasons for this right-wing surge will no doubt vary from country to country in important ways, yet there are also significant underlying commonalities.

Foremost among these is a widespread disenchantment with an extreme centrist politics whose entire approach to government is to never do anything much at all. This politics is typically presented as sensible and reasonable as opposed to the baying spittle-flecked madness of right-wing populists and the ghoulish tyranny of left-wing dogmatism. Of course, it is the technocratic centrist who appears mad, tyrannical, and most of all dogmatic—repeating the same tired political gestures like a glitchy NPC, unwilling to change or adapt, convinced of their own moral superiority, their ‘pragmatism’ and ‘reason’, against all countervailing evidence.

Though, in typical fashion the sensible centrists—as they sense power slipping from their grasp—have lately begun to pander to those fever dream desires of the far right previously pretended to

be unconscionable. And thus, as ever, the centre shows its true colours, preferring to ally with fascists and reactionaries than even a moderately radical social democrat. After all, fascism is good for business.

## NEGGING DOESN'T WORK

As the lives of poor and working-class people grow increasingly precarious, the far right—like the post-break-up rebound you just know is a bad idea—slithers in offering an illusory sense of security, control, and—most of all—change. This can be an understandably attractive prospect for people who have been suffering under decades of ineffective governance. The far right is thus able to play on manufactured threats—immigration, culture war narratives, etc.—which are imagined to promise further ‘civilisational decline’. Conversely, the centre is associated with a stale technocratic elitism, managed by a privileged class of university educated professionals who many have come to distrust as self-serving (for good reason). Indeed, the very success of populist surges, such as that of

Trump in the US, can in large part be ascribed to self-stylisation as counter-elites: a rupture in the status quo, promising to ‘drain the swamp’ of intractable establishment politics. (This presentation is of course nonsense, as rich businessmen are the very definition of pro-establishment). The right is in this way able to present itself as more desirable than the radical left to many people because the left is to a significant extent closely associated with that privileged class in the popular imagination. In some ways, this is not an entirely incorrect understanding, hence its popularity. Broad brushstroke caricatures of the left depict it as insular, exclusionary, elitist, and sanctimonious. The question of how much of this is true should be a matter for deep and serious reflection.

Similarly, the left is also associated with a bourgeois brand of environmentalism that many instinctively fear as yet more forms of social control and prolonged austerity. In effect, if the left is unable to disentangle itself from these depictions and from its perceived relationship with the extreme centre, then it has

virtually no hope of triggering a desiring response on the necessary scale for progressive post-capitalist, post-growth transitions. Unfortunately, many of us on the left do indeed, at times, act out an uncompromising attitude towards those seen as holding unsavoury political views. Though challenging, and clearly not possible not to mention desirable for all people (particularly those most targeted or made vulnerable by right-wing abuse), it is still worth acknowledging that such people are part of the same body politic and need to somehow be brought onside rather than ceded to the right. Most concerning is a misanthropic tendency on the left (and more so among liberals) that dismisses such people as stupid. It should hardly need to be said that insulting someone's intelligence is not a good strategy for winning them over. Dan Evans has it right when he asks, 'How are you going to win people over if you don't really like them, and if you've got no connection with them?' And, as David Graeber pointed out, we may laugh at the right and its buffoonish avatars, smug in our superiority. But they keep winning, and we keep losing—so who are the real fools?

#### NATIONALISM AND LIBIDO

'Hitler got the Fascists sexually aroused. Flags, nations, armies, banks get a lot of people aroused,'

wrote Deleuze and Guattari in 'Anti-Oedipus'. Aside from its over-visual polemicism, this raises important questions about patriotism and nationalism. The left is typically wary of patriotism, conflating it with nationalism. Progressive standpoints more popularly revolve around abolishing the nation-state, and so it is natural any perceived celebration of it would be met with suspicion. However, the libidinal connection to place, community, the 'ingroup', and so on is undeniable. Yet, we too often cede this terrain to the right, who weaponises it—disfiguring it into a realm of racist law-and-order conservative nationalism. Instead, we should be contesting this terrain, articulating transformative visions of a left patriotism based not on the arbitrary contours of a map, but drawing on the need for a sense of place and belonging, an attachment to land and community. This likewise necessitates a conception of patriotism that excludes nationalistic, racist, imperialist, and indeed patriarchal tendencies. Ceding this territory in favour of a limp localism or a bourgeois-professional metropolitanism allows the right to occupy and manipulate these desire-laden territories in perpetuity.

#### POSITIVITY IS SEXY

Degrowth, and in many ways the

left more broadly, is associated with ideas of reduction, abolition, limitation.

This is good and right in many ways. However, reduction is almost always anti-libidinal in its perception. Gain is the opposite. The idea of gain ignites desire more readily than reduction. But the 'gains' offered by the right—security, control, safety—are illusory. The left needs to offer similarly 'positive' programmes based in concepts of radical abundance. Drawing on similar themes of security (in access to the necessities of life), control (of production, distribution; self-determination), and safety (from exploitation, violence). All things the right is unable to provide. Ultimately, it is imperative to deeply analyse exactly why the right is so desirable to so many people, to understand rather than dismiss the fears and desires of people being drawn to far right politics, and to find ways to transform these desires and address these fears by offering a positive vision for the future that is competitive (i.e. desirable) in general terms (not just in 'our' terms).

**Below: The flag of the QAnon conspiracy theory. A vehicle for political re-enchantment, nurturing far right desirability.**



# LORENZO VELOTTI

LORENZO IS A PHD CANDIDATE AT THE FACULTY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AT THE SCUOLA NORMALE SUPERIORE AS WELL AS A MEMBER OF THE CENTRE ON SOCIAL MOVEMENT STUDIES (COSMOS) AND THE RESEARCH & DEGROWTH GROUP.

IN YOUR VIEW, HOW CAN DEGROWTH POSITION ITSELF AS DESIRABLE FOR THE MOST EXPLOITED SECTIONS OF THE WORKING CLASS TODAY?

This is the most important question of the current phase of interlocking crises. If we are not able to explain why degrowth will not harm, but will benefit substantially, the 99%, then negationist right-wing governments supported also by the working class will win forever and condemn us all to ecological catastrophe.

I think that degrowth is an instrument of working-class struggle, or for a politics of the 99%. And that the only ones who would be worse off from a degrowth transformation would be the richest 1%. In fact, we are seeing all around us that, quite unbelievably, most people are working more and more while getting poorer and poorer, in a world that's rapidly ecologically deteriorating. It is almost assumed as something natural that we, as a generation, will necessarily live worse, socially and ecologically, than our parents. Degrowth proposes the opposite: a society in which most people work less, live better, and have the prospect of living on an inhabitable planet.

This is not magical thinking: scientists argue that the planet needs us to extract, transport, process, produce, and consume less. So, the environment would be quite happy if we worked less. And who wouldn't be? Who wouldn't want an extra day at the weekend, or to go home a couple of hours earlier each day to devote themselves to what they enjoy most: passions, friendships, caring for loved ones. But if all of us would like to work less, and if this would benefit not only us but the entire ecosystem of which we are a part, mitigating climate change and reducing resource consumption, why aren't we doing it?

Think, for example, that the great economist John Maynard Keynes in the 1930s predicted that, thanks to increased productivity due to innovation and technological efficiency, today we could work about 15 hours a week to produce as much as we did back then to meet our needs. Yet, we did not reduce time and redistribute labour to produce the same units, but kept the same time and produced twenty times as much! (and the satisfaction of everyone's needs has not improved particularly...)

Why could we decide to work less,

work all, ensuring a livable future on this planet and being better off, yet we don't?

Because we live in capitalism, that has three very problematic characteristics: first, it is a profoundly undemocratic economic system, in which you cannot democratically decide what you produce, how much you produce and how you produce it. This is due to the fact, secondly, it is an economic system where what matters is that profit is produced, i.e., constant and ever-increasing accumulation of capital. Finally, the materialisation of the quest for ever-increasing profit is the system's dependence on the constant growth of GDP, which socially and culturally dominates our imaginary.

These are the three reasons why environment and work seem to be in conflict. In fact, the labour/environment conflict is somehow both real and artificially constructed. Real in the sense that a rapid closure of fossil fuel industries and others will result in job losses, even if only temporarily. But the jobs versus environment conflict is also profoundly artificial, because both the environment and the workers would be happy with less work. The conflict is artificially produced



by capitalism. More precisely: by those who seek ever greater profit and constant growth through the parallel exploitation of nature and labour. Capitalism continues to grow, the environment continues to degrade, and inequality increases—for the same reasons: because capitalists take more from nature and labour than they give back. The conflict is thus invented, in the sense that the closure of economic sectors causes hardship only to the extent that the economic security of these workers depends on these sectors! In other words, an economic, political, or simply welfare system capable of breaking the link between having a job and having the right to a decent life nullifies the conflict. For the transition to be truly just, then, the priority is not really to 'create jobs', but rather to demobilise a part of work that is harmful today, to reshape the rest, and to make this process easier for everyone by decoupling work from the right to have a decent life. The policies needed to do this are already there! Policies such as a universal and unconditional basic income, combined with forms of universal basic services; the reduction of the working week for the same wage; a job guarantee that allows those who want to do public work, for example in the care of the environment and the land, in exchange for a salary paid

by the state, a reformulation of macroeconomic and social indices so that it is not the infinite growth of GDP that is pursued but the growth of people's well-being; combined with policies that foster the degrowth of material and energy flows like maximum limits on the use of certain resources; maximum limits on individual wealth through progressive wealth taxes for the ultra-rich, etc.

An incredibly successful example of a degrowth take to the ecological transition is the Italian case of the Ex-Gkn occupied factory. Workers were making car components for luxury cars, and on the 9th of July 2021 were fired. They occupied the factory the same day and made a strong alliance with the climate movement, and proposed two new bottom-up industrial conversion plans in which they would start to make cargo-bikes and low-impact solar panels to be then used in energy cooperatives. They are still resisting to this day and making popular crowdfunding campaign to make this workers' cooperative possible.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CARE AND THE URBAN COMMONS IN REALISING A DEGROWTH FUTURE THAT IS REALISTIC FOR EVERYONE, FROM BUILDERS TO SEX WORKERS?

The key to answering this question from a degrowth perspective lies in the concept of 'radical abundance'. The term is coined by Jason Hickel, but I'm currently writing a book that will possibly titled this way that argues that a Universal Basic Income would be a huge help in realising degrowth, also because both are based on the principle of radical abundance. The latter implies recognizing that scarcity is artificially constructed by capitalism and its past and present enclosures, and that if everything was shared more equally it would be enormously more abundant. Time, resources, land, housing, but also a fair share of 'consumption'. In a way, the elements redistribution/equality, degrowth, abundance go hand in hand.

Concretely, urban commons are bottom-up ways of freeing spaces from capitalist enclosures and transforming them into common abundance. Naples and Barcelona have many examples of this. These are places where care work can be carried out in common (someone has called them 'care commons'), hence better distributing the time and burden of it. Activists in the Neapolitan commons I researched often mentioned Universal Basic Income would give them the time to properly engage in commoning and caring for each other and for the urban commons they liberated.



**Left: Ex-Gkn factory workers on the march, Right: Can Battló, a self-managed occupied former factory in Barcelona.**





So, I imagine UBI, care and commoning as a triad that would make degrowth urban life desirable for all. You mentioned sex workers: I personally know a few of them in Barcelona who are deeply involved in urban commons, communal gardens, etc. They wouldn't call it degrowth, but there we go, it's a reality!

Although in the previous answer I talked about factory workers, I believe that the contemporary working class is way more intersectional than that of course, and that a new common identity, or revolutionary subject, would need to be found. In a recent academic article I published, I make the case for calling it 'The Caring Classes' (as originally suggested by David Graeber). This is important, because what non-alienated working has always actually meant is caring for others. That's what the working class mostly do. But reconceptualizing it as caring classes allows us to center subjects that are usually excluded from the classic conception of the working class.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MAIN POLITICAL CHALLENGES FACING DEGROWTH (AND THE LEFT) MORE BROADLY, TODAY? IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLES WE NEED TO OVERCOME IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE LASTING CHANGE?

This is a huge question. There is an interlocking cultural, economic and social system that is hard to break. To change everything, we need to start everywhere. We need to start creating degrowth/caring class alliances and structures in our neighborhoods and communities while building a revolutionary discourse that appeals to the majority. Capitalism is doing really badly, most people are suffering from it, and everyone knows all life is being destroyed, so, seen this way, it should not be too difficult.

**Right: *Norma Rae* (1979), iconic film depicting a working class single mother working in a textile factory fighting for justice in the workplace.**

**THERE IS AN INTERLOCKING  
CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
SYSTEM THAT IS HARD TO BREAK. TO  
CHANGE EVERYTHING, WE NEED TO  
START EVERYWHERE.**



# ACTIVISME, I SIMULACIÓ

Josep Maria Salleras i Mercader

El projecte de la construcció de l'hegemonia cultural marxista ha fracassat; a dia d'avui, pràcticament tot moviment d'oposició al capital ha quedat subsumit i integrat a les lògiques del sistema capitalista. La naturalesa colonitzadora del sistema ha copsat bona part del descontent i enuig en vers a ell, i l'ha transformat en una estètica, un símbol. D'aquesta manera, l'activisme es torna una simulació mental. Creiem i desenvolupem una identitat simulada per poder ensenyar com som i que, en definitiva, som algú. Si no mostrem el producte en què s'ha transformat la nostra persona, no som ningú. Es tracta d'augmentar el valor que ens assignen els demès en base a la nostra identitat construïda, no de tenir una identitat pròpia i definida. De ser valorats i vistos en ves de ser. De la mateixa manera que parlem d'un subjecte activista simulat, també hem de parlar d'un activisme simulat. Un activisme que molts cops ha abandonat el carrer per viure a les xarxes socials. Pensem que a través de la nostra opinió o de l'adopció d'un marc discursiu mental estem canviant les coses. Però aquest canvi no és més real que la identitat que construïm a través del discurs i el signe.

Molta gent amb vertader potencial revolucionari es queda a casa, fent activisme de sofà amb la seva sentida identitat esquerranosa mentre que al carrer la situació no canvia. Fer activisme és necessàriament fer praxis i també doncs, construir un subjecte i una identitat a través de l'acció i la interacció amb el món real. Aquest és l'únic subjecte que a dia d'avui pot constituir la punta de llança contra el capital, un subjecte allunyat del símbol i la simulació que aquest constitueix, i que lluita activament per canviar les coses a través de l'acció. Un subjecte que ha deixat enrere una identitat i uns valors profundament individualistes per trobar-se a si mateix en el col·lectiu i la militància. Un subjecte creat a través d'accions i no de discursos. Aquest és el subjecte que té el potencial per assolir un canvi real i necessari en la societat. I aquest subjecte ja existeix, hi ha molta gent fent feina i organitzant-se des de baix. Però se'n necessita més, es necessita aconseguir que tota aquesta gent amb potencial revolucionari que es queda a casa quan hi ha una vaga o manifestació surti també al carrer i entengui que si de veritat es volen canviar les coses, s'han de fer coses.

**ES NECESSITA ACONSEGUIR QUE  
TOTA AQUESTA GENT AMB  
POTENCIAL REVOLUCIONARI QUE  
ES QUEDA A CASA QUAN HI HA  
UNA VAGA O MANIFESTACIÓ,  
SURTI TAMBÉ AL CARRER**

El que ens diferencia dels demès són les accions, no els pensaments o partits a qui votem. I si les teves accions són les mateixes que les de la gent o grups ideològics a qui critiques, és perquè potser al final no sou tan diferents en el què de veritat importa: La praxis, pensar però sobretot fer.

Aquesta crítica també s'estén a les universitats, espais especialment prolífics a l'hora produir activistes simulats totalment aïllats de qualsevol praxis revolucionària. La universitat contemporània produeix subjectes profundament polititzats que paradoxalment estan, en la seva majoria, totalment desarrelats de qualsevol activitat política. No obstant això, aquests subjectes es consideren profundament polítics i les seves idees esdevenen la llum que els guia. Aquestes idees i els dogmes que desprenen però, no representen res real, només il·lusions, paraules, signes. I en això es torna la seva acció, en una il·lusió. La teoria només existeix com a discurs, no com a fet. Així doncs, cal reformar la universitat promovent-hi la praxis. Cal interaccionar amb el món de forma directa des de les universitats, no només observar-lo des d'una òptica presumptament neutral. Sinó, només seguirem desbuixant més i més una realitat que cada dia se'ns torna més aliena i hiperreal.

# MARTIN EMPSON

MARTIN EMPSON IS AN AUTHOR AND ACTIVIST LIVING IN MANCHESTER, UK. HE IS AUTHOR OF 'SOCIALISM OR EXTINCTION: THE MEANING OF REVOLUTION IN A TIME OF ECOLOGICAL CRISIS'.

WHAT POSSIBILITIES DO YOU FEEL DEGROWTH OFFERS THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE IN THE UK TODAY, AND HOW COULD THE LEFT (PARTICULARLY PROPONENTS OF DEGROWTH) GO ABOUT FORMING A 'COUNTER-DESIRE' THAT APPEALS TO THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE?

The people who are most invested in 'growth' from a production point of view are the people who own the means of production—this would specifically mean the capitalist class, and those politicians and others within society, who have a vested interest in capitalism continuing to develop. The petty bourgeoisie tend to hang on the coattails of these producers; if capitalism is growing then they hope to get a larger section of the wealth generated by workers' labour. An expanding capital tends to mean there is more surplus value to go around—some of this will be expended in the businesses that are owned by the middle classes. Growth in this sense is different to the desire to grow a business, by which people tend to mean having a larger set of opportunities to sell products or offer services, rather than a particular obsession with the accumulation of capital that lies behind capitalist growth.

I don't think the left should particularly worry about the desires of the petty-bougeoisie.

I think our task is to build a working class movement that can independently fight for its own interests and is extensive and powerful enough to win them. Once this happens, revolutionary history tends to show that the petty-bourgeoisie tends to fall in behind the workers movement, or oppose it. In which case the workers' movement should expropriate their capital and use it in their collective interest.

EXAMPLES OF DEGROWTH 'LIVING IN ACTION' OFTEN PLACE EMPHASIS ON THE SEEMING IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL LIFESTYLE CHOICES FOR THE DEGROWTH MOVEMENT. ARGUABLY, THIS IS UNTENABLE FOR A SINGLE MOTHER OF THREE, A WORKER OF THE GIG-ECONOMY OR ANY OTHER (UN/UNDER)PAID AND MARGINALISED INDIVIDUAL.

This is absolutely correct. The strands of the degrowth movement that focus on 'living in action' or individual transformation offer nothing to the working class.

THEREFORE, HOW CAN DEGROWTH BE INCLUSIVE OF, AND DESIRABLE FOR, THE WORKING-CLASS TODAY, THAT DOES NOT UNDERMINE BUT INSTEAD EMPOWERS OVER-WORKED AND PROPERTYLESS COMMUNITIES?

Whether or not you subscribe to

degrowth as a concept, the idea that we need to create a society that is not economically driven by the need to accumulate wealth for the sake of it is appealing.

My difference with degrowthers tends to not be on their vision of a more egalitarian, more socially just society, but because you cannot break capitalism from the growth imperative. This is part of its DNA. In this sense the environmental movement can only win working people to it if it is prepared to argue for improvements that benefit the poorest, most exploited and oppressed. Happily, most degrowth theorists do support such changes—better wages, better (and more) jobs, more sustainable economies, production for need—not profit, more education, health, and so on, alongside sharing the general ambitions of a world without war, imperialism and restitution.

But such ambitions have to be fought for, and too many degrowth thinkers ignore the struggles that would have to be undertaken to win these reforms. They won't be handed down, precisely because they are a challenge to the capitalist imperative. Thus the question of winning such reforms—that can improve lives and create a more sustainable world—are inseparable from the fight against the capitalist system as a whole.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN



## POLITICAL CHALLENGES FACING DEGROWTH, AND LEFT WING MOVEMENTS MORE BROADLY?

I think this is closely linked to my previous answer. The barrier is the nature of capitalism itself. A system where production is organised to maximise profit, and where individual capitalists are compelled to accumulate (grow) to stay ahead of their competitors. Thus growth arises out of the twin divisions in capitalism—the exploitative relation between the ruling class and the working class, and the competition between capitalists themselves.

So the barrier then to winning reforms, and winning an economy with a smaller ecological footprint, is a system that is prepared to use extreme violence through the capitalist state, as well as tactics like divide, rule, colonialism, and racism to divide working people. Our side needs to create movements that can unite

struggles across divisions—for example, linking the fight against racism and for refugees, with fights for better housing, education, and healthcare,—and base them on the working class.

I don't think the left should particularly worry about the desires of the petty-bourgeoisie. I highlight workers, repeatedly, because it is workers' labour that keeps the system functioning and thus workers who have the power to both stop the system and replace it with something based on new mass, participatory democracy. Such a system of democratic economic planning could redistribute wealth and organise production in collective interests. It is only this sort of mass movement that can hope to defeat the capitalist state.

The barrier is the nature of capitalism, but capitalism also erects further barriers that hamper and undermine the workers' movement as well. So overcoming

these is the challenge for the left, the degrowth movement and others. Failing to address questions of the movement is the greatest weakness of the degrowth movement, because it shows that degrowth thinkers are failing to consider how to challenge the system.

One thing the left can do is to try and build bridges between movements now and towards the future. For instance, in Britain I've been involved in the Million Climate Jobs campaign which seeks to mobilise trade unions and workers' organisations around the fight for a creation of jobs in the immediacy that will reduce emissions now, as well as giving workers' confidence to fight for further changes. That report (4th edition) can be read online here: <https://www.campaigncc.org/climatejobs>.





# Patricia Rivera: AVV Montcada Can Sant Joan

Credit: Ivan Ruberto

**EM DIC PATRICIA RIVERA, TINC 29 ANYS, SÓC ANTROPÒLOGA SOCIAL I CULTURAL I VISCA A SANTA COLOMA DE GRAMENET TOT I QUE SÓC FILLA ADOPTIVA DEL BARRI DE CAN SANT JOAN. DES DEL 2018 SÓC CONEIXEDORA DEL CAS DE CAN SANT JOAN. I DES DEL 2021 (QUAN VAIG COMENÇAR A FER EL MEU TFM SOBRE LA PROBLEMÀTICA DE LA CIMENTERA AL BARRI) PARTICIPO AL MOVIMENT REIVINDICATIU QUE HI HA AL BARRI.**

CONEIXIES EL CONCEPTE DE DECREIXEMENT ABANS D'AQUESTA BREU ENTREVISTA? COM CREUS QUE EL PODEM RELACIONAR AMB EL CONFLICTE QUE TENIU AL BARRI DE CAN SANT JOAN AMB LA CIMENTERA? CREUS QUE EL VOSTRE CONFLICTE AMB LA CIMENTERA S'HA D'ENGLOBAR EN UN DISCURS MÉS AMPLI DE CRÍTICA AL CAPITAL COM APUNTA EL DECREIXEMENT? PODRIA SER AQUEST UN TERME PARAIGÜES PER DIFERENTS LLUITES AMBIENTALS?

Coneixia el terme però és cert que em va desconcertar una mica quan volies parlar amb mi sobre aquest tema. Era desconcertant perquè em preguntava el decreixement en base a què. Llegint la primera frase del concepte que em deies per WhatsApp, ja entenia al que t'estaves referint. En primer lloc perquè a títol personal estic d'acord amb ell i em sento còmode

per la meua ideologia. I en segon lloc perquè degut al que penso i qüestiono dels sistemes de producció capitalistes, també és una qüestió que defenso i defensem com a col·lectiu en la lluita contra la cimentera. Tot i que més endavant ho explicaré millor (i parlo des de la meua opinió) no només lluitem contra una cimentera, lluitem contra totes les indústries que generin aquest model de producció i consum que no és sostenible i perjudica al medi ambient, persones i altres éssers vius.

Tot i així, és cert que la proximitat al conflicte fa aterrar la problemàtica en un conflicte més palpable. Això fa que ens organitzem col·lectivament i lluitem en concret contra la cimentera Holcim-Lafarge ubicada a Can Sant Joan. Però quan parlem de les problemàtiques que comporta tenir una indústria al

nostre costat el que estem dient i reivindicant és que aquests models ja són antics i no són sostenibles a cap lloc. Per tant, no només volem tancar aquesta cimentera. Volem tancar totes les cimenteres perquè a tot arreu es pateixen els mateixos problemes.

**AQUESTS DISCURSOS  
REIVINDICATIUS SORGEIXEN  
D'UN BARRI VULNERABLE I  
QUE ESTÀ FART DE SER ELS  
POBRES QUE SEMPRE ES  
MENGEN LA MERDA.**

Quan hem anat al Parlament de Catalunya hem anat acompanyades, per exemple, amb activistes de la Plataforma Residu Zero perquè estem d'acord amb el seu discurs i creiem que el seu argumentari és complementari en la lluita contra de la cimentera i,



**Pols sobre plaques solars.**

Al barri de Can Sant Joan, posem especial èmfasi en el nostre context local particular, però quan s'acabi aquesta lluita (en cas que s'acabi positivament pel barri) no acabarem de reivindicar ni acabar de donar suport a altres llocs on encara estan ubicades aquest tipus d'indústries.

El barri de Can Sant Joan és un barri perifèric i vulnerable a nivell socioeconòmic. No només de l'àrea metropolitana de BCN, si no també perifèric del seu propi municipi. És cert que Montcada té una morfologia particular per com està ubicada i construïda. Però aquestes barreres físiques (carreteres, vies de tren, etc.) són bretxes reals. És a dir, l'ajuntament o qualsevol institució preferiria invertir en Montcada Centre abans que en el nostre barri.

El que volia dir amb això és que el fet que hi hagi en un barri tan petit com és Can Sant Joan (un barri sempre molt reivindicatiu i organitzat sociopolíticament) lluites que confrontin discursos hegemònics que s'imposen en el

nostre sistema de producció i consum és molt important perquè aquests discursos reivindicatius sorgeixen d'un barri vulnerable i que està fart de ser els pobres que sempre es mengen la merda.

La nostra lluita organitzativa contra la cimentera em sembla molt potent perquè va més enllà de que una cimentera tregui 'fum' negre per la xemeneia de la fàbrica. Assenyalar que un científic/expert diria un tecnicisme per parlar sobre aquest fum i potser no es referiria amb aquesta paraula, però això és una altra qüestió que jo particularment defenso. I és l'expertesa del col·lectiu (en aquest cas el nostre) sobre el tema. És molt interessant com persones que no saben de química, de partícules, etc. ara per defensar-se amb arguments s'han fet experts i poden parlar amb una ciència (ciència popular) que no deixa de ser menys que la ciència del saber expert diguem-ne. Són dues ciències i sabers que es retroalimenten.

Això ho remarco perquè quan vas a institucions o t'enfrontes a aquestes indústries es defensen en la ciència, en el saber expert i en els seus estudis científics. Tota impressió i experiència viscuda de les persones que viuen cada dia al barri i pateixen les problemàtiques de la cimentera no es valora de la mateixa manera i és una llàstima. Per tant, tornant al tema, no només la nostra lluita és més àmplia, per exemple, que el fet que el 'fum' de la cimentera expulsi partícules contaminants i tòxiques i s'acumulin a les cases (finestres, balcons...) i els cotxes. Es tracta de qüestionar una indústria que és

contaminant i que no pot produir de la mateixa forma que ho feia fa 100 anys. És cert que hauran adaptat algunes màquines per normativa europea però al final no deixa de ser una indústria contaminant i que no és sostenible. Per això, estem a favor d'un canvi en el sistema de producció i consum perquè sense un pla d'acció cap al futur, que és inexistent ara (tot i que existeixin objectius com agenda 2030), no anem enlloc. Aquest canvi dins de les lògiques en les que ens movem sona fàcil dir-lo però és molt complicat d'aplicar pels grans interessos que tenen multinacionals com Holcim-Lafarge entre d'altres indústries i empreses que tenen un gran pes a la societat, tant en l'economia com la política.

Quan vam anar al Parlament juntament amb la Plataforma Residu Zero per reivindicar aquest tipus de solucions davant d'aquestes problemàtiques ens deien alguns partits (PSC i Junts) que sonava utòpic. I quan preguntaves si estaven fent els deures en tenir clara la ruta cap a una transició més sostenible i un canvi de model la resposta no existia perquè ni la contemplen. Ja sigui per pressions polítiques, econòmiques, o perquè a vegades si ets d'una classe social 'X' no penses, veus ni vius la problemàtica que de la mateixa manera que una altra classe social l'està patint. També perquè les persones som molt de 'ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente', amb lo qual, moltes vegades, el fet de que la contaminació sigui invisible per exemple, fa que tot no es vegi tan malament. Hi ha estudis





### Cimentera de Lafargue.

científics (que clar, són estudis contractats per empreses) que diuen que 'no estamos tan mal'. I com ens deien al Parlament (PSC) no cal alarmar a la societat d'aquesta manera fatalista. Però lo cert, és que amb aquest model de producció i consum no anirem molt més enllà. Al igual que els cotxes no es pensava que podrien utilitzar-se d'una altra forma que no fos amb benzina, hem d'anar mica en mica canviant aquest paradigma, qüestionant el sistema de producció i consum. Perquè clar, també s'ha de parlar de la 'necessitat' que tenen algunes persones de tenir un cotxe. Però això sabem que forma part del sistema cultural que fa que tinguis aquest pensament. Si tens una parella monògama, una casa pròpia, fill/a, nebots/des i un cotxe propi ets considerada una persona d'èxit. És a dir tot el que tingui a veure amb la propietat i el individualisme és positiu.

I cal assenyalar que nosaltres com a participants de la societat tenim responsabilitat en com consumim

(tot i pertànyer a un sistema de producció capitalista). Però per mi és molt important remarcar la culpa que tenen les grans multinacionals, perquè tot i que la gent s'organitza en contra de les seves polítiques i s'aconsegueixen coses, són les que hegemònicament dirigeixen per la desigualtat de poder que tenim una en vers l'altra.

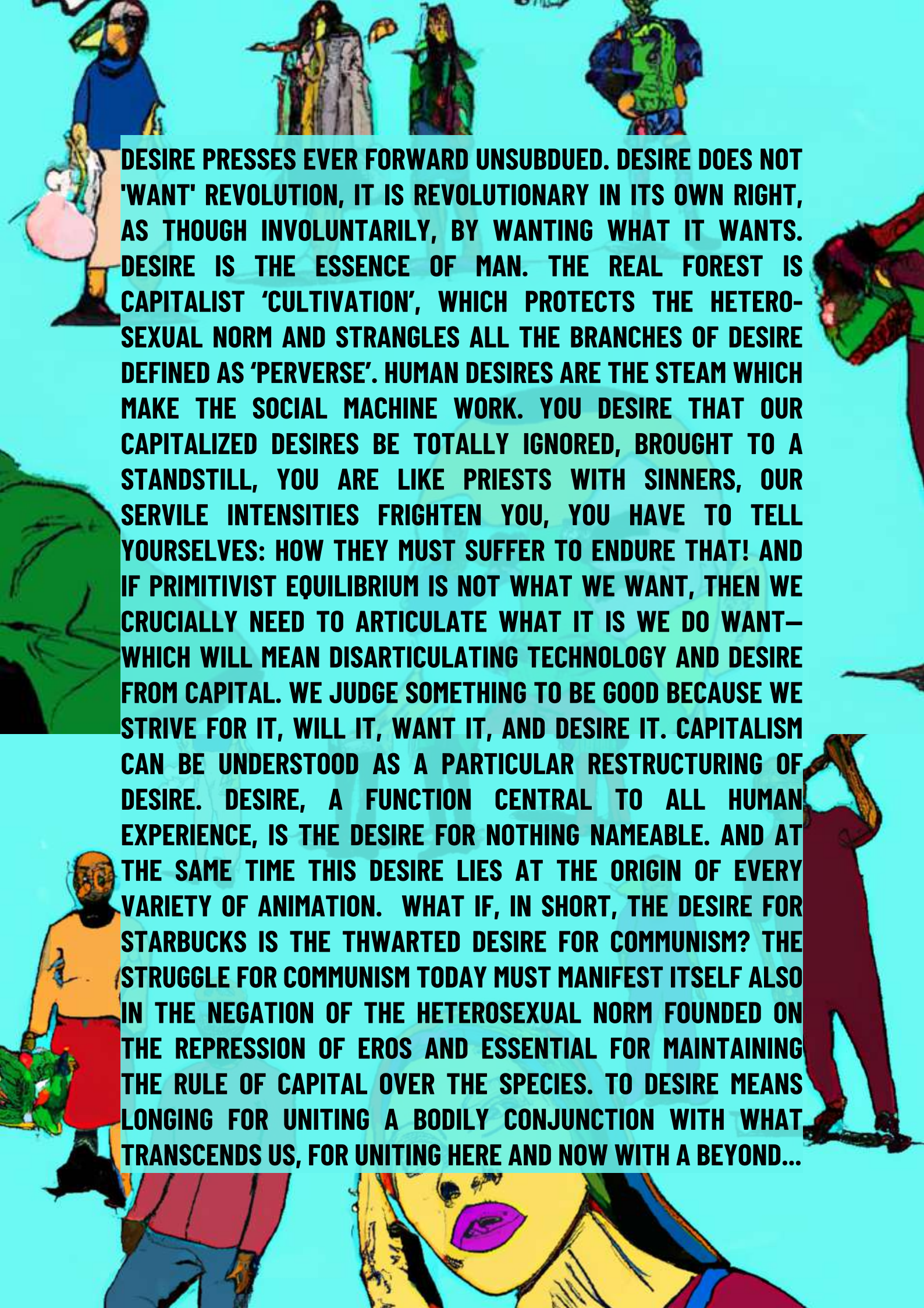
DES DEL TEU PUNT DE VISTA,  
ÉS EL DECREIXEMENT UNA  
IDEA ATRACTIVA ALS ULLS DE  
LA CLASSE TREBALLADORA?

Hauria de ser-ho. Per mi ho és. Perquè al final aquests sistemes de producció i consum són creats per afavorir als més rics. El que passa que aquí entrem en un tema interessant i és com aquest consum es considera positiu per la classe treballadora. És a dir, sempre s'han fet pelis, o veiem casos a la tele on es remarca com a vegades els pobres (la classe social treballadora) poden arribar a tenir diners i tenir una millor qualitat de vida. Ara, amb aquestes lògiques

de consum el que fan és que sentis que anant de vacances a Tailàndia seràs més feliç o a ulls de la societat et consideraran com a una persona que li va bé la vida tot i ser pobre.

Perquè al final, la gent no vol ser pobre, saps? Vol tenir qualitat de vida i això haurien de ser condicions bàsiques per a tothom. Però com no ho són, passem a que si tens 'X' mòbil ets molt guay. O com ara, si no pagues plataformes com Netflix, Amazon, etc. et pots quedar fora de converses perquè no tens accés a aquest tipus de coses i no pots interactuar amb la gent. I es genera un pensament de he de tenir això per poder integrar-me, ser part del col·lectiu i no quedar-me fora perquè seré considerat/da com un/a marginat/da.

En definitiva, un altre cop ens trobem amb la mateixa problemàtica, i és l'individualisme i la propietat fruit del sistema de producció i consum capitalista. El fet de tenir coses, comprar i exposar davant la societat que tens això i que no ets un/a marginat/da, fa que la gent i tu mateix tinguin una visió del consum positiva. Quan en realitat estàs afavorint al mateix sistema de producció i consum que t'està explotant a la feina perquè la gent ara vol un servei de consum immediat, o de qualsevol tipus i s'ha d'enviar del país que sigui, etc.



DESIRE PRESSES EVER FORWARD UNSUBDUED. DESIRE DOES NOT 'WANT' REVOLUTION, IT IS REVOLUTIONARY IN ITS OWN RIGHT, AS THOUGH INVOLUNTARILY, BY WANTING WHAT IT WANTS. DESIRE IS THE ESSENCE OF MAN. THE REAL FOREST IS CAPITALIST 'CULTIVATION', WHICH PROTECTS THE HETEROSEXUAL NORM AND STRANGLES ALL THE BRANCHES OF DESIRE DEFINED AS 'PERVERSE'. HUMAN DESIRES ARE THE STEAM WHICH MAKE THE SOCIAL MACHINE WORK. YOU DESIRE THAT OUR CAPITALIZED DESIRES BE TOTALLY IGNORED, BROUGHT TO A STANDSTILL, YOU ARE LIKE PRIESTS WITH SINNERS, OUR SERVILE INTENSITIES FRIGHTEN YOU, YOU HAVE TO TELL YOURSELVES: HOW THEY MUST SUFFER TO ENDURE THAT! AND IF PRIMITIVIST EQUILIBRIUM IS NOT WHAT WE WANT, THEN WE CRUCIALLY NEED TO ARTICULATE WHAT IT IS WE DO WANT—WHICH WILL MEAN DISARTICULATING TECHNOLOGY AND DESIRE FROM CAPITAL. WE JUDGE SOMETHING TO BE GOOD BECAUSE WE STRIVE FOR IT, WILL IT, WANT IT, AND DESIRE IT. CAPITALISM CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS A PARTICULAR RESTRUCTURING OF DESIRE. DESIRE, A FUNCTION CENTRAL TO ALL HUMAN EXPERIENCE, IS THE DESIRE FOR NOTHING NAMEABLE. AND AT THE SAME TIME THIS DESIRE LIES AT THE ORIGIN OF EVERY VARIETY OF ANIMATION. WHAT IF, IN SHORT, THE DESIRE FOR STARBUCKS IS THE THWARTED DESIRE FOR COMMUNISM? THE STRUGGLE FOR COMMUNISM TODAY MUST MANIFEST ITSELF ALSO IN THE NEGATION OF THE HETEROSEXUAL NORM FOUNDED ON THE REPRESSION OF EROS AND ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING THE RULE OF CAPITAL OVER THE SPECIES. TO DESIRE MEANS LONGING FOR UNITING A BODILY CONJUNCTION WITH WHAT TRANSCENDS US, FOR UNITING HERE AND NOW WITH A BEYOND...