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Why is it That Others Feel No Interest For Us?

Frère Dupont

2007

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That is *us*. We are on the verge of recognising ourselves. We inscribe the area and the activity. It is us, us, us.

We are the ones who spend our energies in the struggle against capital. We define capitalism, we define the struggle against capitalism, we define ourselves as the agent of that struggle, and we sketch out the goals that we are fighting for.

But doesn't this involve only a very small number of people?

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And capitalism is a system of social relations that conditions the existence of billions of human beings.

So, if this system of social relations is so harmful why aren't there many, many more people involved in the struggle against it?

We don't want to talk about that. That does not belong to our model of effort and result of effort. Typically, we, who are in struggle, say it is a problem of consciousness: if people understood how they were exploited they would join with us.

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Dupont, F. (2007). *Species Being and Other Stories*. Berkeley:
Ardent Press.

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You mean, we mean, for the moment the struggle must continue without all these billions who do not grasp their situation, it must be continued by us who do understand, and it must be continued by us until the others get it at last.

Yes, and for us, burdened by the struggle, burdened by the absence of the billions, burdened by the struggle against the system of social relations which we can't overthrow until the billions join us, a certain logic takes hold and grips.

A certain logic, a spiraling logic of insular self-regard, takes hold.

The state, the system of social relations, could not withstand the force of many millions of individuals turning against it but it easily withstands the actions of the few that consciously oppose it now.

Even so, we continue to move against it in a manner that would suggest we were about to change to everything. If we are called to justify ourselves, when our first doubts begin, we say we act in the hope that it will inspire others to join with us.

But there is a moral undertow, we appropriate our own importance, we have captured and made our own a defined expertise. And we have no time to wonder why the others do not join us. We do not ask why over the passing of the years, the many past examples of our inspiring actions have yet to inspire them.

It is because they do not join us, because they are not inspired, because we are alone, that a certain logic, the spiraling logic of fuck-em-all-we're-going-to-do-this-anyway, a solipsistic logic, takes hold.

If billions turned against capitalism, they would sweep it aside and with little destructive effort. But we are few, and because we are few we must increase the destructive character of our interventions.

From this we come to understand that there is, in the achievement of social change, a ratio between numbers in the field and the force they are required to exert.

There is an inverse ratio between numbers in the field and the force that they are required to exert. Our crude and mechanistic understanding of history shows us that the greater the number involved in any campaign the more likely it is that the campaign will realise itself in a positive outcome—this is because less and less force is required over time to manifest what subsequently emerges, within the process of manifestation, as an accumulating mass of bodies, as a forgone conclusion.

Force of numbers mitigates the need for a force of acts. By contrast, as the number of individuals involved in an action lessens so the requirement for action on each individual increases; demand is thus transformed into necessity, and numbers must be replaced by activity.

Within the struggle against existing conditions the necessity for negative force increases as consciousness of the struggle degrades and is lost; this reaches its logical conclusion in the armed struggle where the bomb and the gun replace the presence of many thousands; in this case the gesture, that is the system and array of weaponry commanded by the active fragment, now insists on the fact of its representation of a constituency that has become entirely passive. This is the logic, the logic of our force substituted into the place of others, and that takes hold of our practice.

That is the logic that takes hold of our practice. We are locked into the account we give of ourselves, and of the world as we perceive it. Despite our small numbers and lack of success we are looped into conviction-politics—too much of what we are is at stake for us.

Suddenly, and despite our efforts, the dynamic of the struggle for a better world is narrowed down to *us* and *it*—we, it is us, who are against it, the state against the agencies of the state.

Our struggle is displaced into a theatre of gestures, meanings, representations.

And we forget everything but the minutiae of struggle, this struggle which has become a way of life, and an end in itself. This struggle, which we kid ourselves is about the world, is now no more than the means of legitimising a microcosm, a milieu, a particular way of life that is wholly reliant on its own defeat and the continuation of the world as it is as the condition for its perpetuation.

We cease our contemplation of the billions, and their implied veto of our position—all those others, who merely because they do not have our consciousness, become irrelevant to our engagement.

These others are no longer even a problem to us, we become indifferent to them. We forget that our actions intensify because they are not here. We never ask, what of the others? We do not ask, why is it exactly that they are not interested in us?

Why is it that others feel no interest for us?