

Title: The common is the social!

1: Modern society has been understood as 'economic' society (market capitalism) and 'political' society (state planned society). Now it is time to focus on "social society", i.e. to find the way out of the dilemma of the 'disembeddedness of the economy' and to investigate the social nature of society in its parts and as a whole .

2: Work remains the most important medium of the construction of the social (Cf Claus Offe and others who have suggested that this is no longer the case..) Work can be different things. Here I will consider only the work which is part of the social exchange of labour, with particular focus on its qualitative aspects.

3: The organisation of social production is changing from the disaggregation-reaggregation principle of Taylorism into what might be described as exchange and combination of homogenous work results. As already Marx predicted (Grundrisse), the worker will not be part of the machinery but its operator. His/her work will be based on the common stock of knowledge and its results will be integrated in the total body of work and knowledge.

4: Social labour produces use values which are of a qualitative nature and do not fit into the commodity form. They can be subdivided into categories like interpersonally communicated effects (teaching, caring, etc), production of symbolic meaning (texts, software, pictures, formulas, design, music), forms of knowledge (information, knowhow, procedures), etc. The new forms of social labour develop in all sectors of society, but more rapidly in some than in others.

5: Contemporary capitalism is desperately trying to cope with this new reality. Vaguely sensing the new character of labour they speak about "human capital" and they use all their ingenuity in order to force qualitative work results into pseudo-commodities (tapes, discs, copy-rights, patents, etc) and commodified "services". See also the ongoing struggle for and against the capitalisation of internet files, code sharing etc.

6: Knowledge effects and service work can only be understood in terms of the social relations in which they are produced and consumed. The symbol analysts and the service workers represent qualities which are called for by modern capitalism, but which can not really and fully develop inside the capitalist mode of production. They are classes which will have to look for social forms of organisation which transcend capitalism. If they can join forces they may be able to build a social mode of production and a new society: the social socialism and the communal communism.

7: However, for a long time the new forms of social production will co-exist with industrial and even pre-industrial forms of production throughout the world. But already today, even in the so called underdeveloped countries, we can see how industrial production turns into automated systems operated by symbol analysts and service workers.....

