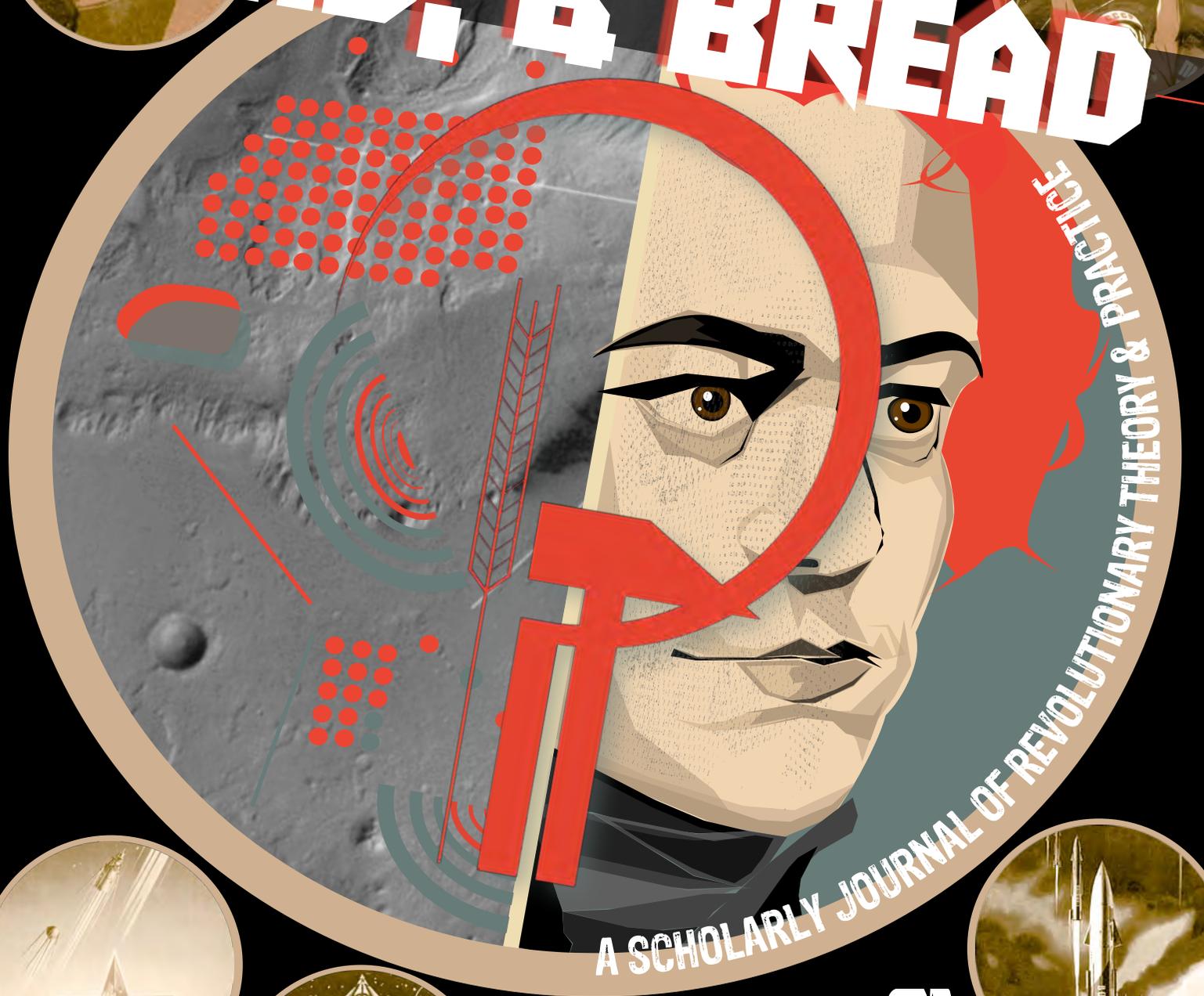


PEACE, LAND, & BREAD



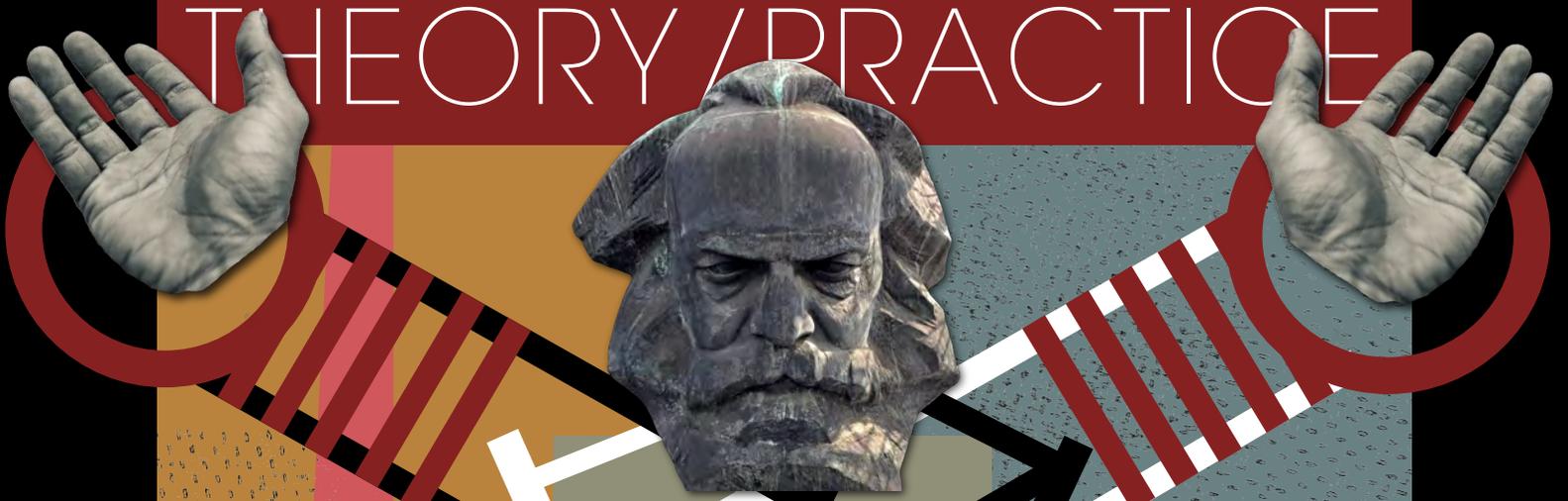
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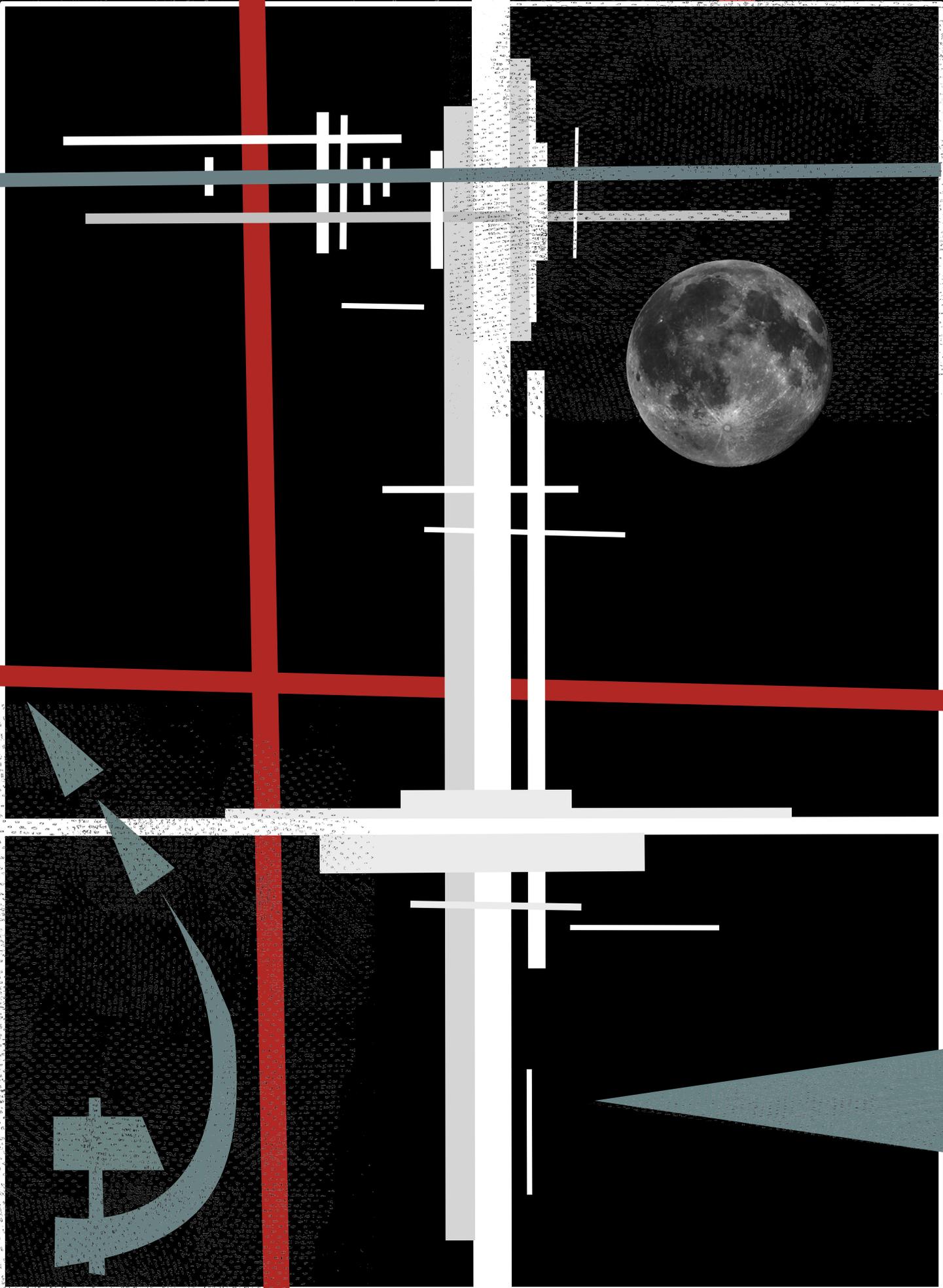
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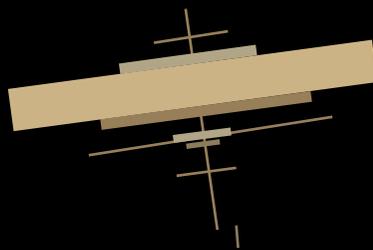
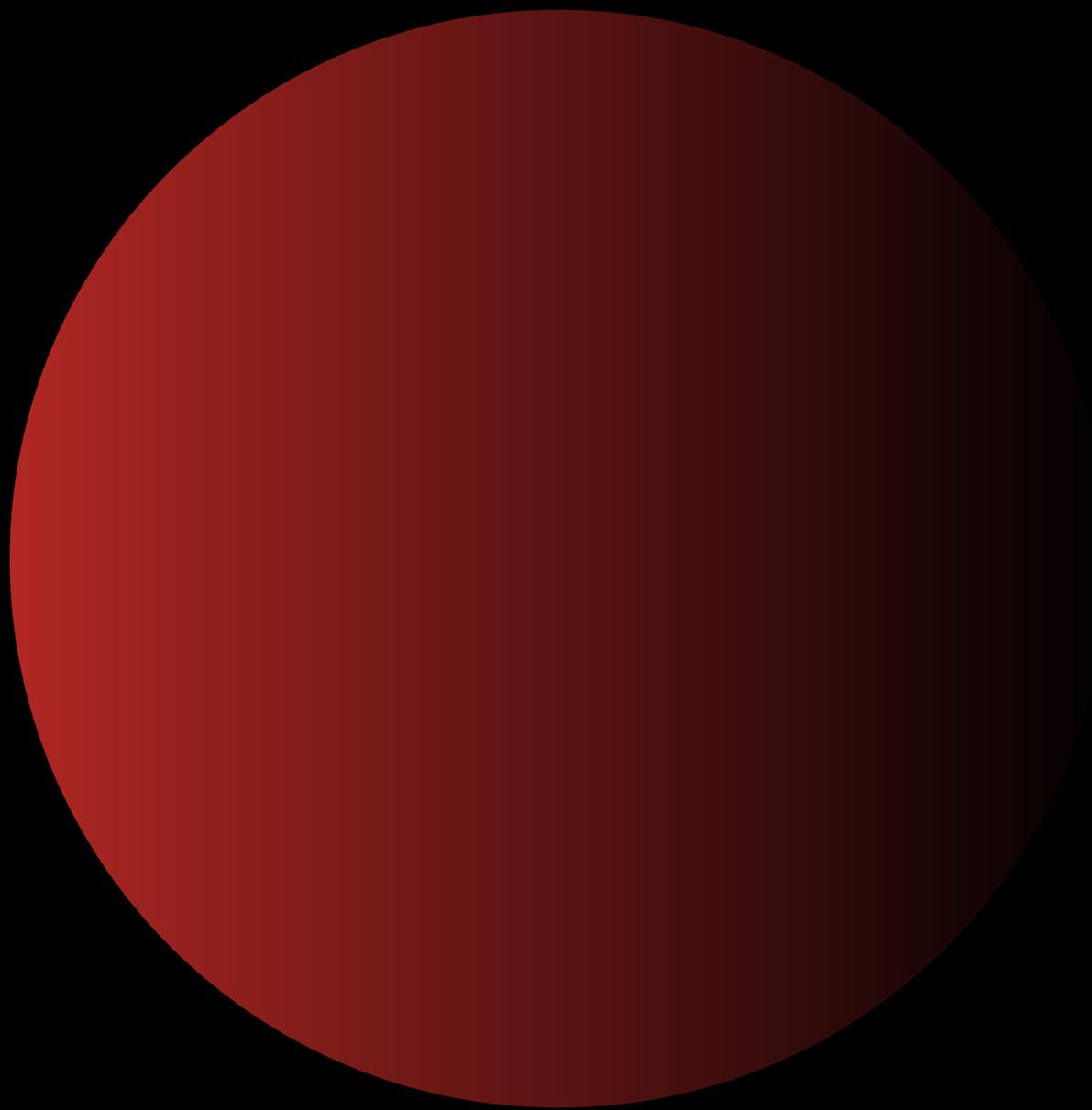
ISSUE

THEORY / PRACTICE



MAY





"There is nothing in the world but matter in motion, and matter in motion cannot move otherwise than in space and time."

V.I. LENIN

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PEACE, LAND, & BREAD

is a leading voice of international Marxist-Leninist scholarship, offering communist perspectives on politics, history, ecology, economics, literature, and aesthetics. Released quarterly, the print journal is dedicated to the publication of rigorous, peer-reviewed, and avant-garde works.

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Who we are What we do

Peace, Land, and Bread is brought to you by the research fellows at the Center for Communist Studies. The CCS is an international research center engaged in academic and public scholarship. We are dedicated to the advancement of Marxist-Leninist theory in the modern world.

The CCS was founded in 2017 by three early-career researchers and has since grown to a diverse and lively international fellowship of academic-activist scholars engaged in various aspects of research on the intersection of communist studies and law, philosophy, history, ecology, sociology, anthropology, education, activism, art, literature, and theology. The CCS exists to foster interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research amongst communist scholars and activists, and to build bridges between researchers, writers, theorists, and activists living and working across the globe. At present, our research fellows live and work in Brazil, Ireland, India, Vietnam, Africa, Australia, Wales, Canada, and the U.S.

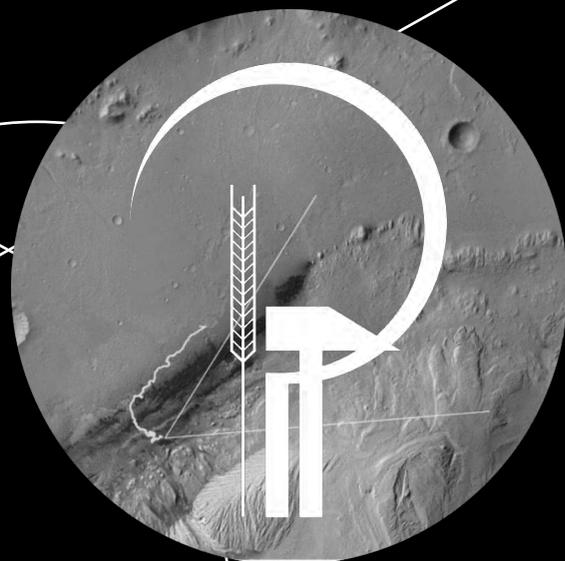
In addition to *Peace, Land, and Bread*, our CCS research fellows are engaged in other diverse projects such as our podcast *People's Pulse Radio*, the creation of audio texts, art and agitpróp, longitudinal research projects, dissertation and thesis projects, as well as the translation and preparation of out-of-print works of communist theory, writing, and journalism for our publishing concern, *Iskra Books*.

Peace, Land, and Bread is a vibrant reflection of our collective academic vision: diverse and rigorous peer-reviewed scholarship, with a place for all disciplines, academic standings, and peoples. Through *Peace, Land, and Bread*, we have created a platform for the scholarly publication of Marxist-Leninist research through which we aim to advance the academic and public discourse of communist theory, to raise awareness on the carcinogenic nature of capitalism, and to promote the material sustainability of real-world socialism, guided by the working class peoples and parties of the extant socialist states.

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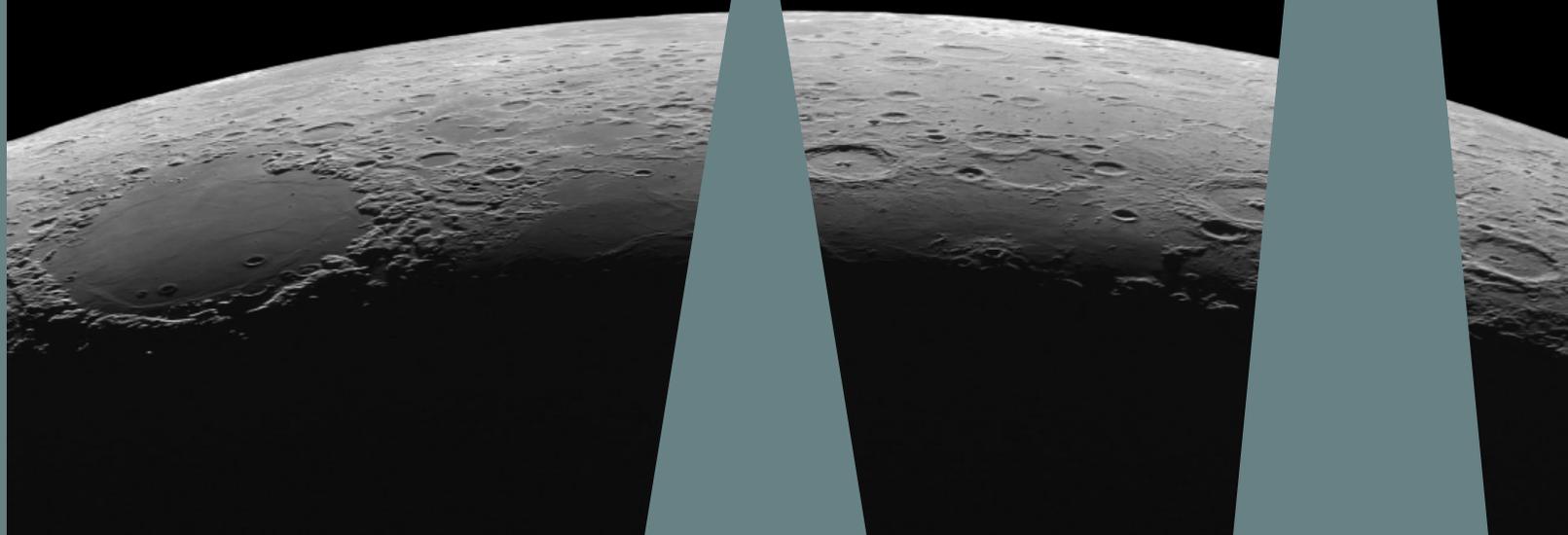
spective, he actively participates in the movement against the current global trend towards fascism and social chauvinism through grassroots movements in Honolulu, Hawai'i as well as producing both non-fiction and academic works that highlight capitalism's inequities.

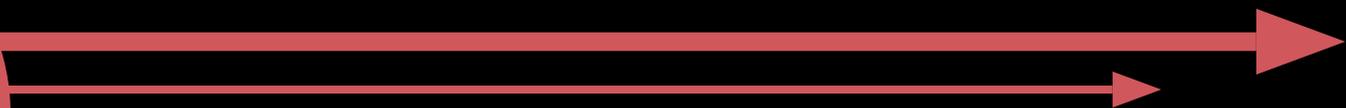
TALIA LUX has a Masters in Library and Information Science, and a Bachelors in Art History. She studies Jewish history, with an emphasis in anti-zionism, editorial cartoons and their impact on the working class, and communist history overall. She has been speaking out against injustices ever since she can remember, and firmly believes in Fred Hampton's statement that "theory with no practice ain't shit." Talia is a member of the Panther Solidarity Organization, and the Industrial Workers of the World.

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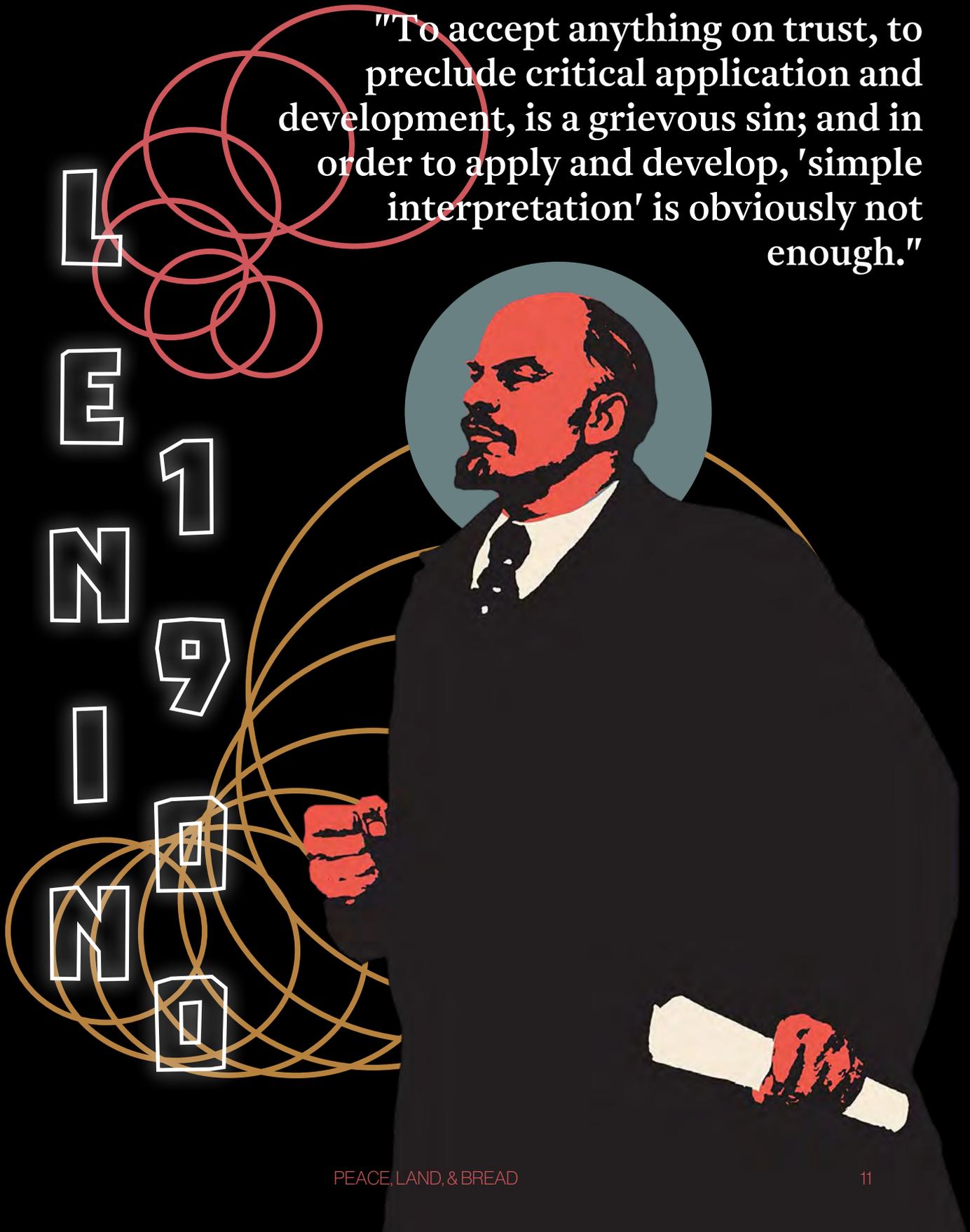
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"To accept anything on trust, to preclude critical application and development, is a grievous sin; and in order to apply and develop, 'simple interpretation' is obviously not enough."

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IN MEMORY OF OUR FRIEND AND COMRADE ZACK PATTERSON

THE REINFORCED STRUCTURE OF MODERN OPPRESSION

The Forces of Oppression now have many names: *Capitalism, Imperialism, Colonialism, and Fascism*. In the years since the Third Reich, they have redesigned and *sharpened* their model of deception. They furiously and effectively attack the psyche of the proletariat from multiple angles at once. They have convinced us that nationality, religion, language, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and numerous other aspects of the human condition define us *antagonistically*—at odds both with ourselves and other people. The oppressors intentionally restrict certain qualities of life in ways that impact only us, making us feel isolated. They do this to all of us at once. As I write this, they are trying to chip away at our recently activated solidarity by attacking the rights of trans people, of the disabled, of the poor, and of the rural proletarians, in an effort

to take the focus away from the rise of Black Americans against police brutality. They want us to see these issues as unrelated, as separate, so that our solidarity deteriorates. We, now more than at any time in the last sixty years, *must* be the vanguard and make sure our fellow proletarians understand that we are all in this together; and together we shall rise.

Before we can effectively do this, however, we must understand the conflict that lies ahead. Our oppressors have evolved beyond the simple fascist beasts battled by our ideological ancestors. Where our forebearers slew dragons, we now face a *hydra*. This hydra draws together all historical forces of oppression (Capitalism, Imperialism, Colonialism, and Fascism), and snaps at our lives with its many mouths. We must now combat these heads simultaneously. If we do not, the hydra will simply repair whatever damage is done,

regrowing one severed head by feasting upon the others. This oppressive, cannibalistic structure most clearly appeared after the American Civil War with the lease of prison labor. Because slavery had been abolished and slavocratic production had been taken from the early capitalists—but the proto-fascist institution of white supremacy had never been genuinely challenged (Lincoln himself was a white supremacist; see the *Lincoln-Douglas Debates*)—individual states were allowed to immediately begin implementing laws that were specific to freed slaves (see: *Mississippi Black Codes*). Thus began the mass incarceration of Black Americans, utilized, in part, to continue the exploitation of forced labor at only slightly more of a cost to the capitalist class than the previous costs of slave-ownership. This historical turn negated, almost entirely, all previous material progress made by the abolitionist movement while at the same time reinforcing the burgeoning capitalist class.

Material circumstances like these present a unique challenge to the individual, and to the proletarian movement more generally, because we must watch in every direction as this history continues to strike at us wherever we are weakest.

Now, more than ever, we must disrupt the narratives of the fascists who call our escalations *destructive* and *barbaric*, as well as the narratives of the liberals who cry out for reconciliation, peace, and electoral reform. Neoliberalism decries any discourse that does not focus exclusively on electoralism and reform, as if we still do not have thousands of refugee children held indefinitely in dangerously inhumane detention camps; as if the homeless and houseless have not been all but forgotten by society during this pandemic; as if the houseless numbers aren't about to grow by multitudes in the coming months as landlords begin evicting wage laborers who have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; as if healthcare is not restricted for a significant portion of the

working class; as if I could possibly list all of the active injustices foundational to American society. The fascists, the liberals, and the oppressors want nothing more than for the proletariat to focus on singular, putrid heads of the hydra, instead of stabbing the heart of the damned beast from which the oppressors scavenge their personal comforts.

Comrades, now is the time for unity. Now is the time for the various American socialist and communist parties, which have long been shattered and scattered by institutional mechanisms like McCarthyism and COINTELPRO, to put aside their individual prides, their egos, their insistences that *their* interpretations of their own theoretical tendencies are the *only* correct interpretations; we must unite under one singular red banner.

We must do this so that we can help the American working class to break the chains and to destroy once and for all the global tyrant that is *American Imperialism*. For the second time in all of American history we communists have a chance to become a true beacon of justice and equality; but, first, we must work to pry America's boot from the neck of the Global South. For without the support of American Imperialism, fascism will crumble under our masses worldwide.

Rise, comrades, and unite, for the time that we have awaited and speculated upon for a century has now come.

Zack Patterson

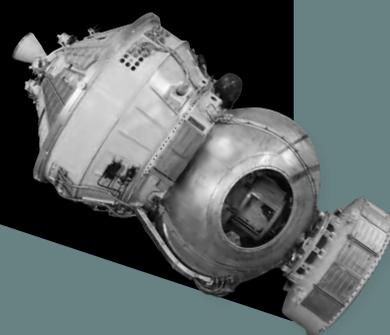
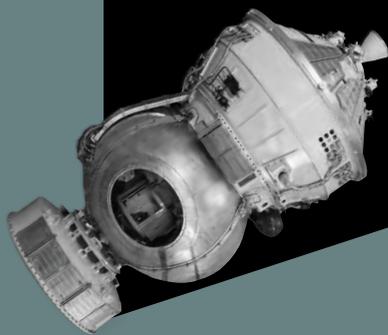
1987-2021

Zack—a war veteran, a communist, and a fierce advocate for racial equality and anti-imperialism—submitted this piece of writing to us shortly before taking his own life. Rest in power and in peace, Zack. We will miss you dearly.

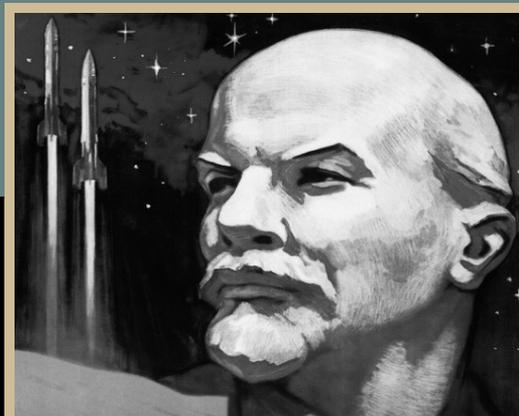
PEACE, LAND, AND



B R E A D



THE
REVOLUTION
IS STILL
UNDERWAY



A Full Year of *Peace, Land, and Bread*

An Introduction to Our Fourth Issue

Ben Stahnke, Editor



BEGINNING a project like *Peace, Land, and Bread* is never easy. To do something that has not been done since at least the days of the Comintern—that is, to produce, from the ground up, an avant-garde, peer-reviewed, and rigorous journal of multidisciplinary communist scholarship—is indeed something of a Herculean task. As we kick off the present issue of *Peace, Land, and Bread*, our fourth issue, and as we embark upon the second year of our publication, it only seems natural to reflect upon not only the origins of the journal, but upon the process of journal production more generally.

Back when several of our editors worked with the now-defunct Marx Engels Lenin Institute, we produced a solitary issue of what might be considered as the precursor-predecessor to *Peace, Land, and Bread*—a journal we called *Forward!: Popular Theory and Practice*. *Forward!* was fraught with editorial mismanagements and was met with a lukewarm reception; but the articles themselves were both critical and important. We realized, as *Forward!* flopped, that something as important as a scholarly journal of communist theory and practice needed not only a robust institutional and editorial structure to support it, but that it needed a robust and a keen readership ready to engage with the intellectual rigor of advanced proletarian theory. Those several of us—Ember, Ethan, and myself—left the Marx Engels Lenin Institute due not only to a crumbling internal infrastructure, but also due to an overwhelming desire to continue the

work of peer-reviewed publication.

From this move, our parent research center, The Center for Communist Studies, was born, and we set about quickly in working on the logistical infrastructure for the publication that would eventually become *Peace, Land, and Bread*. We organized our fledgling journal around several key principles: 1. that all materials *must* be freely available to readers at no charge—in other words: no paywalls, ever—and that non-profit print sales would only exist for those who work better with the print medium, 2. that the materials we publish must be held to the highest standards of academic rigor, peer-review, and avant-garde scholarship, and 3. that our editorial board must reflect, to an individual, our organizational principles of dedicated public scholarship, international solidarity, and anti-imperial/anti-colonial/pro-communist action. Trusting fully in the intellectual capacity of our readers, and working to deconstruct the oft-impenetrable air of mystique and confusion that surrounds peer-reviewed scholarship, we worked to imagine *Peace, Land, and Bread* as a ranked academic journal made accessible to those outside of the academy as well.

Responding to the debased, capitalistic, hypermonetization of research, as well as to the growing inaccessibility of knowledge, the mission of *Peace, Land, and Bread* was, and still is, to make rigorous academic scholarship both accessible and palatable with the interspersed of avant-garde design, poetry, and art; to make it colorful and an actual joy to read—as opposed to the sterile and dry academic journals currently in circulation—and to

make a communist journal that refused, on ethical and geopolitical grounds, to engage in the ideological and institutional attacks on socialist states in the Global South. Several journals of communist studies in fact exist, as well as the more popular democratic socialist and social democratic journals which align, in almost every case, with the anti-communist trope of the United States State Department; we envisioned *Peace, Land, and Bread* and a response to these anti-communist “socialist” journals which reflect, eerily, the many “socialist” (in name only) journals funded by the CIA and the so-called Congress for Cultural Freedom throughout the 1950s and 1960s to polemicize against extant socialist and communist action. *Peace, Land, and Bread* was to respond to this by taking an explicit communist stance; a stance that fed the publication of rigorous and peer-reviewed materials *supportive* of extant socialist states.

Further, we envisioned *Peace, Land, and Bread* as a scholarly journal that united communist action within the Anglosphere toward the purpose of furthering what is, in all actuality, the living political doctrine and thriving liberatory culture of Marxist-Leninist theory. Similar to the cultural commissions of the communist world in the 1930s, *Peace, Land, and Bread* would showcase the best visual arts and poetry *alongside* academic scholarship.

What began in 2017 as a dream of three graduate students and educators has since grown into the journal you read today—a journal recognized with both ISSN and ISBN, cataloged in the various Libraries of State in the Anglosphere; a journal replete with hundreds upon hundreds of pages of full color graphic design, art and poetry; a journal overseen by a solidary and tight-knit editorial board of just around twenty-six editors, readers, and reviewers; and a journal that continues to receive critical international praise for its work, for its rigor, and for its adherence to the anti-imperial political line abandoned by so many radical journals in the modern era.

This past year of *Peace, Land, and Bread* has seen us publish close to a thousand pages of cutting edge scholarship in the field of applied Marxist-Leninist and communist theory, it has seen us interviewed for, and presenting upon, our work through organizations like the Hampton Insti-

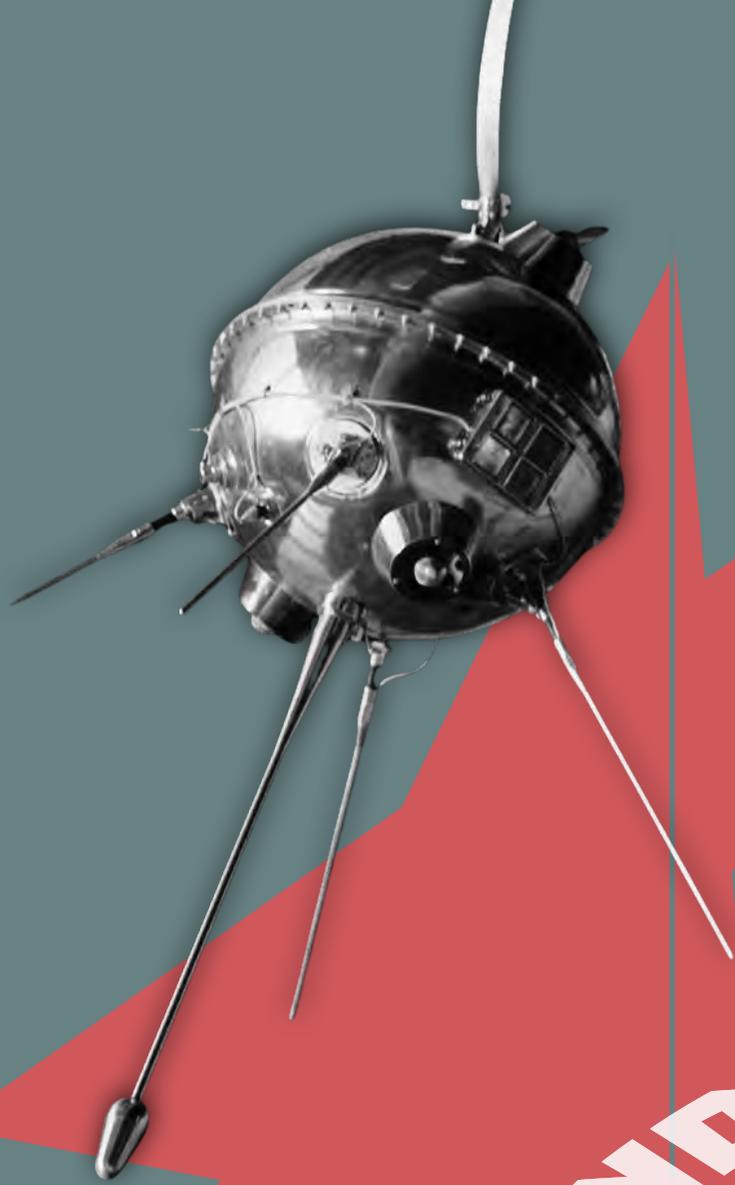
tute, Arizona State University, The Vanguard, and the Michigan Writer’s Club, and it has, probably most importantly, seen us on the *Peace, Land, and Bread* editorial board grow as scholars, editors, and as educators.

What you hold in your hands now is the end of a yearly cycle—the last, Herculean, eight and a half by eleven inch, three hundred (plus) page issue. You also hold the herald of a new yearly cycle of *Peace, Land, and Bread*. Our next issue will come in much sleeker and much more accessible at a svelte one hundred and fifty pages, along with a new seven by ten inch size, as well as a dedicated aesthetic style grounded in the communist avant-garde. Our previous four issues were themed: spring renewal for our first issue, laborwave for our second, constructivist and suprematist themes for our third, and now, here, Soviet science-fiction and an avant-garde of the Soviet film for our fourth issue. We’re excited for the future of *Peace, Land, and Bread*, and we know you’ll love what we have in store for the journal.

The current issue is, in my opinion, our best (and biggest) yet. We’ve brought back our readers’ favorite authors—Christian Noakes, Jackson Albert Mann, and Amal Samaha, to name but a few—and we’ve packed the pages with incredibly critical, poignant, and important works from Thomas McLamb, Talia Lux, Sam Glasper, and more. Our arts and poetry section is more robust than ever, and contains beautiful works of art from Sindyan, Ian Matchett, M.S. Evans, and others.

This issue reflects the ethos and the character of *Peace, Land, and Bread* more generally: that is, it is robust, rigorous, poignant, relevant, and timely. And it is emblematic of the iterative process of journal production as well: we’ve taken what we’ve learned over this last year and worked to make issue four the best and most comprehensive issue yet.

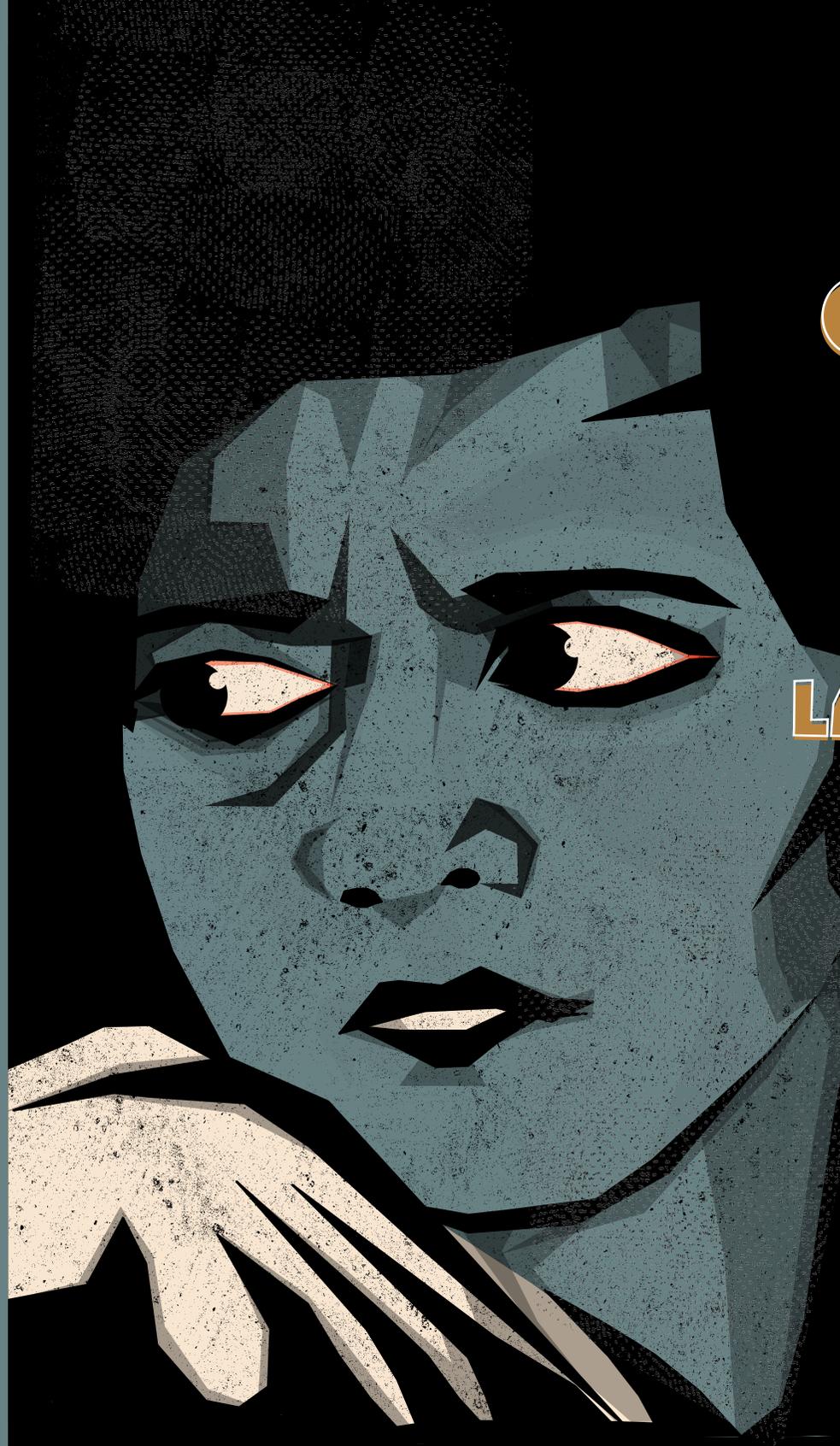
We’re incredibly honored to be on this journey of public scholarship and education with you all, in a time where it is most sorely needed—perhaps more than ever. We would not be who we are without our readers, our contributors, and without all of the hands and voices that go into this project, and it is to you all that we dedicate this, our fourth issue.



PEACE, LAND, & BREAD

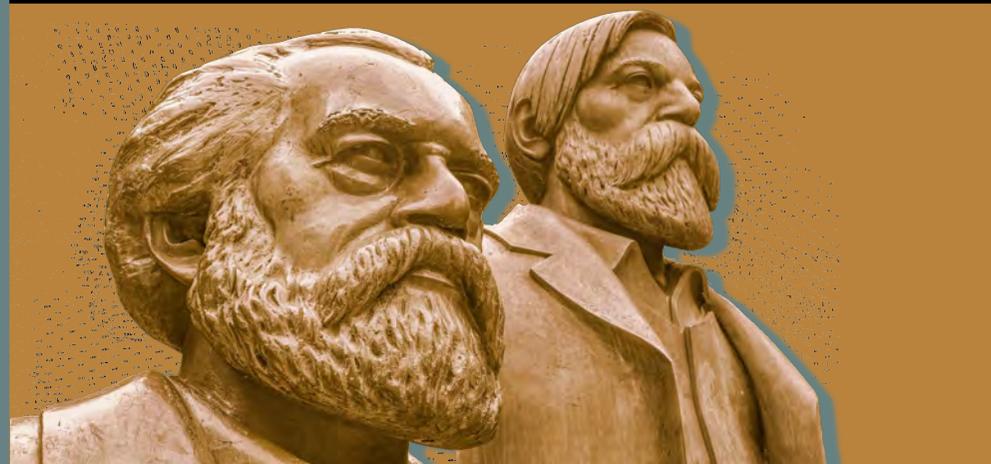


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HOW THE WEST IS UNDERDEVELOPING ITSELF

Amal Samaha

“[I]f ‘underdevelopment’ were related to anything other than comparing economies, then the most underdeveloped country in the world would be the U.S.A., which practices external oppression on a massive scale, while internally there is a blend of exploitation, brutality, and psychiatric disorder.”

- Walter Rodney

The paradigm of “development” is the chief way through which western economists, international relations experts, and policy makers make pronouncements about the past, present, and future of the periphery. Through them we are told that “developing” nations are mired in problems that are simultaneously easily solved and insurmountable; the product of contradictions which are first economic, then social, then political, and which are simultaneously being solved

through further investment and development, but seemingly never go away.

Throughout all of this, it is implicitly understood that this “developing” world is counterposed against a “developed” one, which has long since achieved those elusive qualities which the remainder strive towards. That the former cannot seem to achieve these qualities is met with frustration, apathy, and sometimes anger. Would it not be easier to simply force the qualities of the developed nations onto the underdeveloped—to intervene in their economies, political systems, and cultural lives? Can they be shown the essential qualities



that will inevitably lead to development, like liberal democracy, free trade, and, fundamentally, *respect* for those institutions?

When such interventions inevitably fail, it only serves to confirm the essential nature of what it means to be “developing.” There must be some other variable, essential to either the people or their environment, which has constrained development. Perhaps it isn’t the fault of the people; it is some microbe in the waters, some tropical disease, or some bloodsucking insect. Or maybe it is a parasite of a different kind, some deeply-held tradition, or superstition, that prevents the efficient exploitation of this forest or that wetland. Maybe it is a cultural predisposition towards corrupt governance that breeds bureaucratic parasites. Only once the parasites are wiped out can development go ahead unhindered.

But what if all the parasites are eliminated, and underdevelopment persists? Perhaps we have missed another parasite contained in one of the many differences between their culture and ours. Maybe it is better to do away with the inferior culture entirely, and transplant onto that nation a culture with a proven history of achieving development.

The paradigm of development is presented as a neutral, dispassionate way of looking at global inequality, one only concerned with measurable outcomes that empirically improve the lives of all peoples. But when the diagnosis of

the economic doctors fails to find the parasite at the root of the problems, cracks begin to appear. These economic doctors present themselves as performing a form of precise and delicate neurosurgery, but after a while, they begin to take the form of the medieval surgeon-barber, bleeding their patient with leeches in a vain attempt to balance humors.

The problems with the “development” paradigm have been well-known, and often commented upon. As we will see, whole schools of criticism have come and gone. Nonetheless, relatively unreconstructed “development” theories continue to crop up among international relations wonks, leading to, among other things, some increasingly derided headlines.¹

More importantly though, perhaps the reason outmoded conceptions of development continue to dominate public discourse lies precisely in the fact that they engender frustration and condescension when it comes to the perceived failures of the periphery. After all, most western interventions have been justified through attempts to impose the kind of democratic institutions seen to best correlate with development. Development experts and the journalists who take them seriously may be the thin end of the wedge, where the thick portion is interventionist factions like the “foreign policy blob” dominating the US Federal Government.²

Rodney's work must be understood as *counterposed* against this rigid, economic definition of develop- ment as relatively linear growth in Gross Domestic Product.

But what if the spotlight of “development” studies is instead shone on the core? Will we find, as studies of the periphery presume, the polar opposite of the “developing world?” Surely, in order for the intensely comparative study of development to make any sense, there must be a standardised set of rules about what constitutes a fully developed nation, be it a certain level of Gross Domestic Product Per Capita, a certain standard of human personal development and agency, or a certain level of productive forces. Certainly it cannot be a standard level of health security, as the COVID-19 pandemic has exploded any illusions of western superiority in terms of healthcare outcomes, such as existed on the eve of the outbreak. If there is ever a museum for artifacts of Western hubris, the 2019 Global Health Security Index³ for pandemic preparedness will take up a whole wing.

Immediately we can see that many of the assumptions of the development paradigm no longer hold, and instead it must be inverted to make sense of the world. Turning the development paradigm on its head is no easy task, but precedent has been set by Guyanese theorist Walter Rodney in his seminal *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.⁴ I will be examining how Rodney defined development and how he perceived differences between the developed and underdeveloped world. Crucially, I also examine how Rodney ultimately refused to reject development as a concept, but instead hoped

to change our understanding by rejecting theories of a passively “developing” world, and instead positing underdevelopment as an active process undertaken by western oligarchies.

I further examine what has changed since Rodney's assassination in 1980, what theories of development rose in his wake, and how the societies he described changed or did not change. In particular, I examine massive developmental changes that occurred in the core under neoliberal regimes, using the example of New Zealand. This includes the role of *reflexive-unproductive* workers in underdeveloping the core, which I began to uncover in my previous article for *Peace, Land & Bread*: “Innovators, Bullshitters and Aristocrats.”⁵ Following Samir Amin, I explore the possibility of two different kinds of development: one rooted in domestic exploitation of workers, and another in the exploitation of trade relationships.

Finally, I analyse more recent debates among Marxists on how we should think about development, especially in regard to the development of productive forces across the periphery, as well as ecosocialist “de-growth” arguments and Amin's theory of de-linking. I come to a conclusion that 21st century socialism cannot afford to be purely productivist, nor anti-growth, our only choice is to radically redefine what development means rather than uncritically accepting, or rejecting wholesale, its aims.



DEVELOPMENT AND WALTER RODNEY

Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* may seem to be a strange place to start. As we will see, very few development theorists in the core, even Marxist ones, have substantially cited Rodney as a development theorist in his own right. Instead he is seen as having produced a serviceable analysis of African development, without innovating in terms of the definition, cause, or purpose of development. I wish to challenge this by showing that Rodney prefigured several later schools of development discourse, and in fact the seed for a new development paradigm can be found in his work. Rodney's incredible prescience, and his pragmatism, are the reasons I base much of this essay in his work. I will start by examining the orthodoxies challenged by Rodney.

In Rodney's time, development was defined in a purely economic manner as a certain level of national income.⁶ This has changed considerably in the intervening years as more sophisticated bourgeois development theorists have come and gone, and we will return to this, but for the time being, Rodney's work must be understood as counterposed against this rigid, economic definition of development as relatively linear growth in Gross Domestic Product.

Another orthodoxy Rodney thought necessary to combat was the then-progressive insistence that underdeveloped nations be called "developing." This, he said, implies that nations in the periphery are capable of, and are in the process of, saving themselves entirely from conditions of underdevelopment, colonisation, and imperialism.⁷ On this, Rodney can only be considered to be entirely correct, as the underdeveloped nations he describes continue to have the same level of development relative to the West to this day. No indicator of this could be more tragic than the fact that the caloric intakes of average Africans Rodney cites, (some 1,870 to 2,290 calories per day) are virtually unchanged, with sub-Saharan Africans receiving about 2,100 calories per capita per day,⁸ some 900 below the recommended level.⁹

How then does Rodney define development, if not as a linear process of increasing incomes? Rodney begins by starting on a level of personal development: a many-sided process of increasing material and emotional wellbeing. Much of this, he says, is a purely subjective process of being able to achieve certain ideals determined by societal superstructures. The only universal statement one can make about personal development, across all historical epochs, is that its achievement depends entirely on environmental and social conditions.¹⁰ Human agency, rather than any growth metric, lies at the root of Rodney's work on devel-



opment.

Next comes development on the level of social groups, which lies in the ability to negotiate conflicts between individuals, be it between people within the group, with other social groups, or with nature.¹¹ On the societal level, it lies in the ability to free whole social groups from the conditions imposed upon them by nature, which is done through understanding nature (science), developing tools (technology), and organising labour as part of a mode of production.¹²

Neither of these higher levels of development negate the need for improving conditions on the level of individual development. On the contrary, for Rodney all development, no matter the scale, serves to increase the basic capacity for individuals to exercise agency, to achieve their moral goals, and to construct new societies. As we will see, this definition stands apart from many others as it is transhistorical; put in the right terms, it would make as much sense to an Achaemenid satrap as a Bohemian burgher or Indonesian planter. Other definitions, such as those based in liberal freedom, often only hold true for the current era, and even then it is debatable.

This definition must be transhistorical because to Rodney, all societies have undergone development, indeed they must have in order to exist at all.¹³ But this does not mean that all societies are *undergoing* development, indeed

many are prevented from doing so by either the imperialist reallocation of surplus value away from the point of origin, or by their own outmoded superstructural arrangements which prevent the efficient utilisation of resources.¹⁴ To be underdeveloped is therefore not a lack of development, but rather to possess a greater number of impediments than other societies which seek dominance.¹⁵

This brings us to Rodney's final innovation in defining development: it is essentially, *intensely* comparative. To speak of the development of one nation makes no sense whatsoever unless it can be counterposed against the development of another.¹⁶ Rodney's analysis of Africa's underdevelopment therefore rests entirely on his analysis of Western development, and the comparisons that can be made between the two.

Rodney's view of what constitutes a developed nation is then particularly important to us in understanding the shifting standards of development through the years. To him, the European and North American nations of the "developed world" are typified by a few shared factors: "the developed countries are all industrialised," and "most of their wealth comes from mines, factories and other industries [...]. They have a high output of labour per man in industry, because of their advanced technology and skills [...]. Their agriculture has become an industry, and the agricultural part of the economy produces more even though it is



small.”¹⁷

What is so striking about this description is how the West has utterly reversed course, or at least stagnated, in each of the points described. The core has rapidly de-industrialised in the years since Rodney’s death, with some countries such as the USA seeing the proportion of industrial employment shrink to levels unseen since the early 19th century.¹⁸ The core’s output of labour per man in industry has also shrunk down through a process of ‘bullshitisation’, or the proliferation of non-productive jobs, a concept to which I will return. The tendency towards automation of agriculture has also stagnated, if not exactly reversed, as agricultural capitalists across the West have turned either to outsourcing or to greater reliance on imported labour rather than costly capital intensification.¹⁹

None of this is to say that Rodney was somehow wrong, these were indeed the shared characteristics of “developed” nations in 1972, even if the overall trend towards deindustrialisation was already emerging. But if Rodney’s theory of development no longer holds true for the developed world, then what of the theories of development that emerged after his untimely death at the hands of a Guyanese government assassin?²⁰

MODERN THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

As Rodney identified, on some levels development is largely subjective, defined by individual moral goals and the limitations of societal superstructures.²¹ This is the reason development is so amorphous, and so easily distorted to advocate for purely ideological goals.

A quick overview of the history of development studies allows us to identify a few dominant tendencies among development theorists, as this will help us differentiate between the manifold definitions of development and the values underpinning each.

- *Economist approaches:* In the mid-20th century, all states measured their level of economic development against past levels through the use of unitary national accounting methods. Between the 1944 Bretton Woods conference²² and 1993,²³ Gross Domestic Product (the total value of final goods and services) gradually overtook both Gross National Income (the total value of citizens’ income regardless of location) and the Material-Balance planning of socialist states (measurement of all non-labour inputs vs. outputs). Economistic methods have always been criticised as lacking any direct link to quality of life, even by those who helped formulate them²⁴; however, these methods are still used as shorthand for devel-

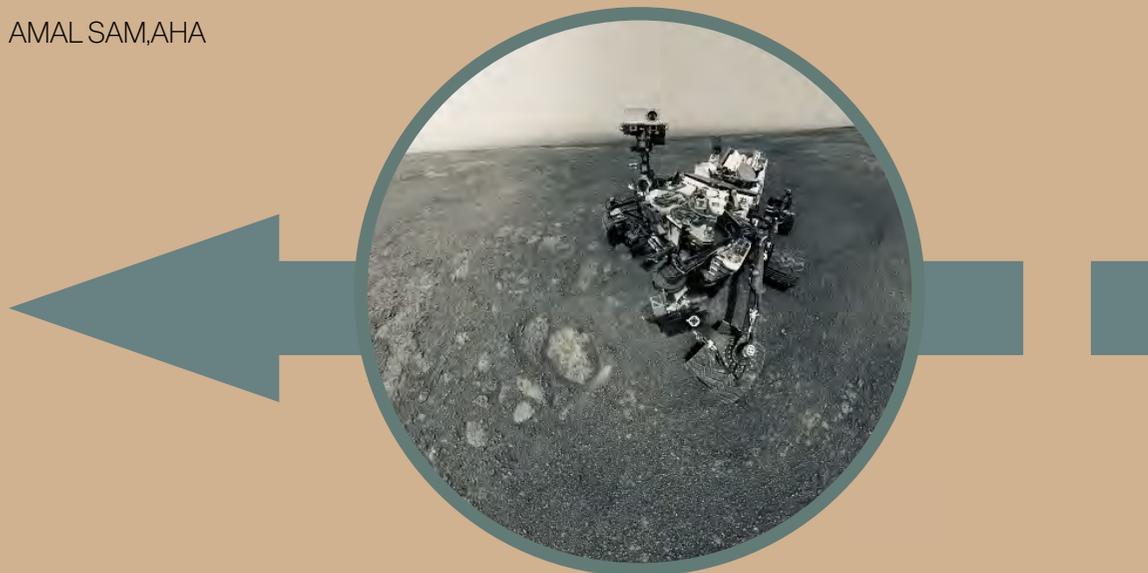


opment in many circles.

- *Holistic approaches:* By the 1960s and 70s, many economists had become increasingly aware of the failures of economic methods in measuring development. These included many loosely progressive figures like the social democrat Gunnar Myrdal.²⁵ These methods were in part inspired by calls from underdeveloped nations at the UN to develop a “unified” theory of development that could account for the problems of diverse nations,²⁶ and thus these methods share a transhistorical, and sometimes decolonial emphasis.
- *Radical approaches:* Around the same time many Marxist authors began writing on the subject of development theory, criticising the liberal notion of permanent progressive development, instead treating it as more of a zero-sum game wherein one nation’s loss is another’s gain. Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy, and other writers of the *Monthly Review* magazine contributed to this trend, which was later enriched with Arghiri Emmanuel, Charles Bettelheims, and Samir Amin’s contributions to the study of unequal exchange and wage theories of development blockage.²⁷ Such theories lost influence for many years but have been revived somewhat by Zak Cope, to whom I will refer later.
- *Diagnostic approaches:* Methods which rose to prominence in the 1980s and 90s share a common emphasis upon combining the quan-

tifiable, data-driven models of the economic methods, with the concern for human wellbeing and agency of the holistic methods. In doing so, they often settle upon a single metric which best correlates with development in the broadest sense. Such approaches have been championed by the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen whose work led to the UN’s Human Development Index (which combines health, education, and income into a standardised “score”)²⁸ and later to the “development as freedom” thesis. These methods, and particularly Sen’s “capability approach” are by far the most influential among modern NGOs,²⁹ rights groups, and the UN. The popularity of such theories in US academic and policy making circles has led some to call these problem-solution oriented theories “American development discourse.”³⁰

- *Critical Development approaches:* Gaining popularity in the mid 1990s to 2000s, several European theorists have questioned the development paradigm entirely. Typically these theorists seek to interrogate how development “works” or its rationality, following thinkers like Cornelius Castoriadis, Alan Touraine, or Zygmunt Bauman.³¹ Such thinkers have, naturally, gained little influence over policy, but they have influenced modern development discourse considerably, and some of their critiques of development discourse will be helpful later.



THE DIAGNOSTICIANS

Of the above, it is the diagnostic approaches which have come to dominate modern discourse around development. Each is centred around a preferred metric for development, or their preferred method for deriving aggregate scores from a number of different datasets. Like the UNHDI these scores typically rely on the idea that social factors like education, political freedom, or healthcare correlate directly with human development.

No development theorist is as widely cited as Amartya Sen, on whose work most modern development scholarship is based. Underpinning Sen's work was his effort, begun in the late 1970s, to synthesise different theories of equality common in welfare economics into a unified approach to equality that could inform further studies into development. Sen posited that rather than pure equality of opportunity (Benthamite equality), or a min-maxed approach to welfare in which only the worst off benefit (Rawlsian equality), welfare should be understood based on "basic capability equality," the real ability for people to undertake basic actions in the interests of themselves and their community.³²

Thus the American, diagnostic approach is based, like the holistic approaches, in human agency. Later, Sen re-framed development as a question of freedom,³³ an idea with a long pedi-

gree in American development discourse.³⁴ While Sen's definition of freedom is relatively sophisticated, the "development as freedom" thesis sometimes translated into little more than support for a very American "liberal dogmatism," already common in policy circles.³⁵

Had Walter Rodney been alive to see it, I imagine he would have levied many of the same criticisms he had of the economic approach against the American diagnosticians. These are:

- *Diagnostic approaches mistake consequences for causes:* Rodney criticises Western "experts" (those who are not openly racist at least) for "giving as causes of underdevelopment the things which really are consequences."³⁶ When groups such as the UN development programme list the educational, economic, and health outcomes of underdeveloped countries, these factors are essentially given as causes of underdevelopment when they are the long-standing consequences of imperialism.
- *Underdevelopment is seen as self-perpetuating:* If the consequences of underdevelopment are also their cause, the problem becomes a closed loop in which no development is possible. Rodney criticises this as an ahistorical claim which can serve to imply that underdevelopment is a consequence of the innate inferiority of underdeveloped peoples.³⁷
- *The effects of Imperialism are hidden:* If un-

The development paradigm changed the underlying relations in the systems it described, molding the real conditions of the world in its image; in other words, the map became the territory.

derdevelopment is its own consequence, then the widening gap between the underdeveloped and developed nations is seen as entirely unrelated to the problem of underdevelopment. As Rodney says: “Mistaken interpretations of the causes of underdevelopment usually stem...from the error of believing that one can learn the answers by looking inside the underdeveloped country.”³⁸ In modern development theories this is often accidental rather than malicious, as can be seen in Sen’s work on the Bengal famine wherein his narrow scope fails to take into account the actively genocidal policies of Churchill.³⁹ Similarly, dependency and exploitation is often erased in the modern vogue for “interdependent” theories of development.⁴⁰

In addition to Rodney’s salient criticisms of such theories I would add one other: The overriding focus on problems within the underdeveloped countries has masked not only imperialism, but the ongoing underdevelopment of the so-called developed countries. No longer can it be said that the world is neatly divided into camps, one of which unquestionably meets any and all definitions of development. Instead the question of “who is developing?” has become considerably more complicated.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand the complexity of whether the West is “developed” is to divide the question into a matter of whether the West meets the many different quantitative criteria for development used

over the years. I will begin with the ways in which the “developed” nations are superior.

When it comes to industrial output, a strong distinction between developed and underdeveloped nations is clear, but shrinking. Developed nations (here meaning the US, Europe, and Japan) are typified by shrinking industrial employment, rising productivity, and a (seemingly)⁴¹ high proportion of machinery to labour.⁴²

Developed nations also have extremely high average incomes, and high median incomes compared to other nations.⁴³ Many workers are employed in the “FIRE economy” of Finance, Insurance and Real-Estate, and employment is shrinking in other sectors.

Finally, developed nations score much higher on the Human Development Index of the UN Development Programme. This is calculated using GDP, Education,⁴⁴ and Health scores. While “underdeveloped” nations sometimes have a very high GDP, for the most part the developed nations have better education and health outcomes, and thus a HDI score much higher than their GDP would indicate.⁴⁵

However there are some ways in which the developed nations are inferior, or the results are quite mixed.

Developed nations tend to score very highly in metrics designed by development experts, but they often perform poorly in measures of a



country's success which depend on speaking to the people living there. Sometimes these results are often written off as byproducts of poor education systems, but I do not believe this can be true of every one of these supposed anomalies. Developed nations often have the most unpopular governments,⁴⁶ leading populations who believe things are only going to get worse, in stark contrast to several underdeveloped nations.⁴⁷ These populations have next to no political say, as hollowed-out democracies in which mass participation is obsolete are increasingly the norm.⁴⁸ Whether or not the response is logical, relative deprivation dominates the psychic landscape of the developed world, and some of the most developed regions suffer the highest suicide rates, especially those countries which have only recently become high-income information economies.⁴⁹

Underdeveloped nations also have a higher rate of profit,⁵⁰ in part because they have historically had a much lower Organic Composition of Capital, and thus their industry has not tended towards overproduction crises and loss of profitability. Because of this, and because of the need for developed nations to offload outdated or surplus fixed capital, they have also had a higher rate of capital intensification. This drastic change in capital intensity may mean that many peripheral countries have, or will soon have, a higher OCC than the core, especially as the latter artificially lowers its own OCC through unproductive workers.⁵¹

On the whole, it cannot be said that the quantitative aspects in which the West is lagging behind outweigh the aspects in which it is truly more developed, but there is also no clear standard for "mature" development.

In one sense the diagnostic theories of development "work" in that they assist quantitative comparisons between developed and underdeveloped nations, even if the quantitative gap between the developed and underdeveloped nations is closing on a number of levels.

But they also do not "work" in that they lack an internal rationality. As Castoriadis suggests, the conventional understanding of development is defined through the actualisation of a virtual state, implying some definition of "mature development" which simply doesn't exist in modern development discourse.⁵² Without a definite end-point of development, development suggests the "injection of infinity into the social-historical world," as Karagiannis says, implying an eventual, absurd mastery of all things: infinite growth.⁵³

This overriding, even absurd, focus on the quantifiable aspects of development hides the qualitative, structural, and relational changes that are taking place in the developed nations, and in-between the developed and underdeveloped nations. The fact that the modern development theory holds true for certain quantifiable changes does not indicate that it is not an increasingly obsolescent paradigm. The



late cybernetician Stafford Beer was fond of saying “absolutum obsoletum” (if it works, it’s out of date) in response to such systems.⁵⁴

The development paradigm changed the underlying relations in the systems it described, molding the real conditions of the world in its image, in other words, the map became the territory. For a long time, developed nations did develop themselves precisely because they were developed nations, and underdeveloped nations lagged behind because they were underdeveloped. Belief is a powerful thing, and through a number of mechanisms, from investor confidence reinforcing existing trends, to racist ideas entrenching themselves, to developmental determinism becoming the norm, development analysis served as a self-fulfilling prophecy, reinforcing the status quo.

The fact that some underdeveloped nations are breaking through this mold signals a profound shift in the winds. The quantitative measures will take some time to reflect the qualitative shifts below the surface, and we can only understand these shifts by looking beyond a diagnostic developmental paradigm.

A SKETCH FOR A RELATIONAL MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT

At certain points, Walter Rodney points towards a new paradigm of development, without necessarily discarding the previous one. Rodney was conscious of the utility that remained in the conventional development paradigm, and the ways underdeveloped nations could use it despite its growing flaws. He was explicitly conscious of the dangers of prematurely discarding the development paradigm entirely, saying he did not wish “to remove the ultimate responsibility for development from the shoulders of Africans.” Nonetheless I believe the basis for a more relational theory of development can be found in his work. Five points in particular are key:

1. Peripheral economies are fully integrated into the economies of the core,⁵⁵ and should be analysed as one system.
2. The core and peripheral economies exist in a dialectical relationship, and changes in one are largely proportional to changes in the other. One cannot develop without the underdevelopment of the other.⁵⁶
3. Peripheral countries suffer the most when the core countries they are linked to are undergoing hardship or are underdeveloping them-



While even bourgeois economists are ringing the alarm bell, the neoliberal states of the core live in what Kelsey identifies as a state of profound denial.

selves.⁵⁷

4. In many cases, what is presented as development is actually retrogression.⁵⁸

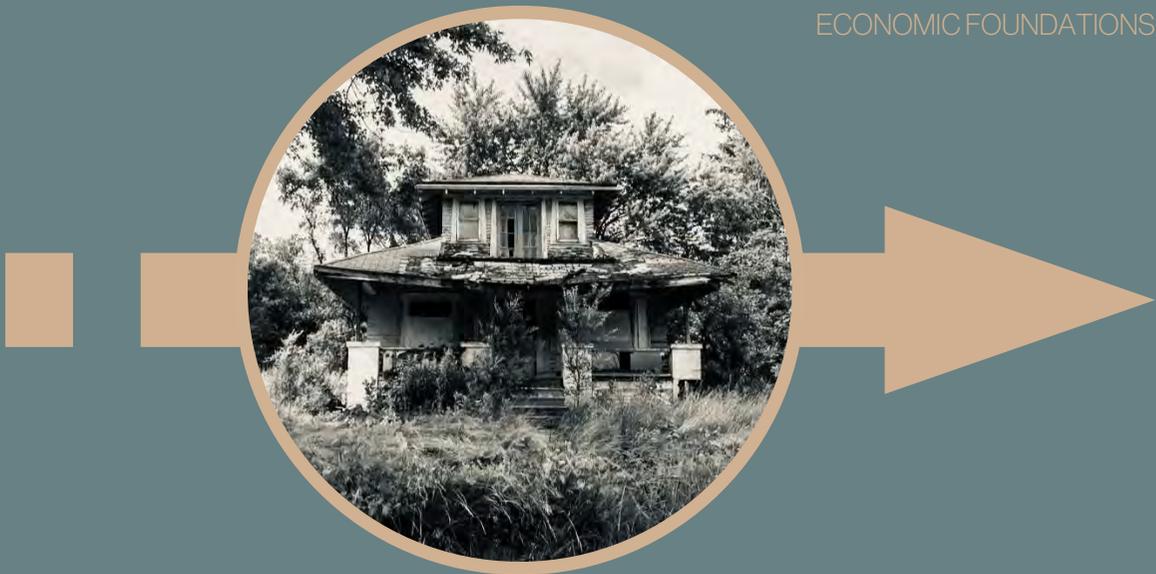
5. Development and underdevelopment are not fundamentally self-perpetuating,⁵⁹ but they have become this way through ideology.

In summary, I believe one of the main failures of previous development theories has been on the question of “where is development generated?” It does not occur *in situ*, instead a relational development theory would examine the development that occurs *in the space between nations*, measured in the transfer of value and power. This is a logical conclusion from Rodney’s assertion that development theory is an exclusively comparative study,⁶⁰ and development’s measurable qualities in core and periphery rise and fall in proportion to one another.⁶¹

In this relational model, I believe it is necessary to identify two different forms of development. On the one hand, there is development which represents an effort to synthesise and overcome the core-periphery dialectic. This I will term *autogenous development*. Contrasted with this is development which serves to exacerbate the underdevelopment of other nations, creating more specialised societies which exist only as parasites on the body of the peripheral nations, which I will term *parasitic development*.

This argument bears some resemblance to Samir Amin’s formulation of *autocentric* versus *extraverted* accumulation, autocentric meaning “accumulation without external expansion of the system”⁶² through a complementary relationship between the means of production and consumption,⁶³ and extraverted meaning that which is forced into specialisation to suit the needs of the core economies to gain cheap goods and reap the rewards of unequal exchange⁶⁴ (poor nations selling the product of many labour hours in return for the product of very few).⁶⁵ Amin’s theory is similar in that it posits “good” and “bad” forms of development, but these are uncovered through a quite narrow focus on conditions within a country, and through accumulative quantities within nations rather than transfers between them. The autocentric/extraverted accumulation dichotomy does not encompass changes within the core, wherein there is now less evidence for conventional autocentric accumulation.

Amin’s theory also has a different internal rationality, in that it defines developmental maturity as a “delinked” country which has completed the “sovereign project” of economics. This sovereign project can be measured as a percentage, thus Amin says China is 50 percent determined by its sovereign project, South Africa is 0 percent determined by its own, and so on.⁶⁶ Amin also has very different conclusions, to which I will return in the final



section.

Instead, the internal rationality of autogenic and parasitic development, or, to draw from Castoriadis, the “definition of maturity” in each, reflects their relationship to the development paradigm itself. Autogenous development in a society is mature once it sublates the core-periphery dialectic (eg. development which is no longer proportional to underdevelopment). Parasitic development achieves maturity when it is consumed by the core-periphery dialectic and produces paradoxical results (eg. a core country underdeveloping itself).

As we will see, parasitic development is by its nature autocannibalistic. It accounts, in part, for the logic of the neoliberal revolution in the West, and the hollowing-out of the liberal-democratic institutions and labour-aristocratic achievements consolidated in the era of class compromise. Parasitic development will lead, in the long run, to the underdevelopment of the core, unless countervailing tendencies emerge.



PARASITIC AND AUTOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT IN THE CORE

Parasitic development is certainly not new. Colonialism in all its forms, from the mercantilist settler-colonialism of the early American colonies, to the more advanced imperialist colonisation of Africa, has involved a parasitic relationship of some sort. However, I would suggest that until relatively recently, all forms of parasitic development were matched by a degree of autogenous development in the core. In the colonial and early imperialist stages, these two forms of development were relatively co-dependent, as parasitic development relied on autogenously-produced military and economic power to maintain a hold over the colonies, while autogenous development relied on parasitic expansion in the colonies to overcome European imperialist stalemates and “export the contradictions” (overproduced goods, surplus labour, etc.) produced by domestic crises.

These are more-or-less historical truisms, but the process deserves elaboration. The settler-colony of New Zealand serves as a good example as it has undergone four identifiable processes which illustrate different aspects of par-



asitic and autogenous development, both as a core nation in the present day, and as a semi-peripheral colony in its early history:

1. It has relied on autogenous development in Britain:

The New Zealand state's early history was marked by repeated appeals to Britain for settlers, investment, and military support. The industrial expansion occurring in Britain, itself the product of both intensified exploitation of British workers and imperial profits from the creation of forced markets in India and China, created the conditions for a British military, economic, and population growth that far outstripped any autogenous potential in the colony. An enormous imperial force was required to defeat the Māori Kīngitanga (itself often militarily superior, but economically inferior)⁶⁷ in the 1860s,⁶⁸ which was maintained largely at the insistence of the Pākeha colonists. In the 1870s, the colony expanded through a series of massive loans from British banks, while encouraging British immigration.⁶⁹ It is deeply unlikely that the New Zealand colony would have established itself without considerable British aid.

2. It has been hindered by parasitic development in Britain:

Early in the colony's history, British capitalists conspired to create more favourable condi-

tions for investment through interfering in the colonial land market and raising land prices,⁷⁰ immiserating early settlers as part of a conscious effort to escape domestic "over-capitalisation and revolutionary tensions."⁷¹

3. It has benefited from its own autogenous development:

After considerable foreign capital investment, the New Zealand economy became largely self-sufficient from the 1900s to the 1970s, dominating the world's wool and refrigerated shipping markets and creating the world's highest standard of living for the majority Pākeha population.⁷² This was dependent upon, but never less than equal to, concomitant parasitic development.

4. It has benefited from its own parasitic development in the Pacific:

Since the Seddon Prime Ministership New Zealand played the role of "junior imperialist" in the Pacific, subjugating island nations. These island economies, as well as the pre-1950s semi-independent Māori economy, served as vast reserve armies of labour, creating a racialised wage hierarchy that enriched Pākeha workers and "plugged gaps" in the main economy.⁷³

At this point it is worth pointing out that none of this is to suggest the co-dependence of auto-



genous and parasitic development in the colonial and early imperialist eras constituted some sort of “interdependent” development with relatively equal trade-offs. At each stage there were winners reaping the benefits of development, and losers who remained underdeveloped, usually Māori and Pacific peoples. Nonetheless, we can see from the New Zealand example that autogenous development was usually matched by some degree of parasitism, and vice-versa. Even if autogenous development was unlikely to succeed without some degree of parasitism, most development which took place in this era was the result of the intranational exploitation of workers from the majority national group (Pākehā), whereas parasitic development existed in a supporting role to increase industrial outputs (eg. through Pacific phosphate increasing farming output), ensure a labour supply, or act as a “market of last resort” for New Zealand industry (in the case of the Pacific, by providing a market for huge quantities of low-quality corned beef).

This was to change. On 26 July 1984 the neoliberal revolution began in New Zealand. Bruce Jesson captured the mood of the year in *Only Their Purpose is Mad* over a decade later:

“[T]he economy was controlled by producers;⁷⁴ these days the economy is run by financiers. A new elite has evolved globally, and the country is now run for the benefit of rentiers, not producers. Within New Zealand, there has been a phenomenal growth in that

strata of society that identifies with finance, a growth not just in numbers but in political and social impact. This strata represents internally the external appearance of financial markets on a massive scale. Finance has its own culture and, through a process of osmosis, this culture has spread throughout New Zealand society. It is the spread of this finance culture that has underwritten the New Zealand transformation.”⁷⁵

As Jane Kelsey and others have noted, the profound shifts in New Zealand closely matched global trends led by the financial centres of New York, London, and Tokyo,⁷⁶ and the zeal and speed with which New Zealand governments transformed the country make New Zealand the prototypical neoliberal state. In her book *The FIRE Economy*, Kelsey gives an exhaustive list of the changes New Zealand underwent, and the global trends they reflected. First the state transformed its relationship to the economy, becoming more intimate with finance by bringing ideologically committed neoliberals into the treasury, loosening restrictions on finance, and setting up a bonanza of asset sales.⁷⁷ Next the finance sector exploded in size as state owned banks were sold off and private banks reached record sizes, insurance agencies were concentrated into a duopoly, corporate raiders rebranded as private equity firms cannibalised the retail sector, and public/private partnerships (PPPs) took over the infrastructure of the state, even running local



governments.⁷⁸

This financialisation of society had a profound effect upon the autogenous developmental potential of New Zealand in two main ways. Production was entirely hollowed out, with real production falling from 35 to 22 percent of GDP. This was largely because of shareholder capitalism, in which each aspect of production had to justify its existence to shareholders, and the state and boardrooms began to respond to underperformance by stripping away supports to create a “dynamic” economy, in other words, by instituting mass layoffs and offshoring parts of the production chain.⁷⁹ As livelihoods began to suffer, and the cost of living spiked, the state hoped that savings and reinvestment would eventually fix most problems. This never happened, instead there was next to no reinvestment of profits, as it was nearly all paid out as shareholder dividends. Without savings, the economy came to be funded through debt. This was not public debt, which would have likely alleviated the situation, instead it was enormous external debt, a large part of which was intercorporate bank debt, which contributed to a balance-of-payments deficit and further lack of reinvestment.⁸⁰ As the late David Graeber noted, financialised economies really just act as cover for “colluding with government to create, and then trade and manipulate, various forms of debt.”⁸¹

As a Western, white nation, Pākehā New

Zealand demands a certain standard of living. But much as societal development is now funded almost entirely through external debt, personal, human development is now funded through household debt.⁸² With all forms of development in New Zealand now funded by unsustainable, often external debt, can we really say that it is autogenously developing?

Perhaps if this debt-driven society had, at its base, an internal locus of value creation, then we could say that it is. The answer to this lies in the class composition of such societies. This is a question I discussed at length in another article,⁸³ but suffice it to say that while the vast majority of people in core societies are still wage labourers, the kinds of wage labour being performed have drastically diversified since the mid-century height of industrial wage-labour, and many forms of wage labour which do not actually produce use-values have proliferated. Jürgen Habermas hypothesised that such labourers would increase the productivity of other wage labourers,⁸⁴ but David Graeber successfully argued that such workers really do not produce value on their own, nor increase efficiencies elsewhere.⁸⁵ These workers I called *reflexive-unproductive* labourers, which included think-tank employees, university administrators, management consultants, data analysts, supervisors-of-supervisors, et cetera,⁸⁶ all of whom now make up a large proportion of core workers.⁸⁷

Of course value must come from somewhere,

It is only natural that revolutionaries are among the few to speak of a transformational rupture in development, as only revolution can provide the political will necessary to overcome a totalising paradigm.

and as Zak Cope points out, unproductive workers in the core cannot create values themselves unless there has been a proportional amount of productive labour undertaken elsewhere.⁸⁸ In other words, a core economy which is entirely reliant on labour which is not autogenously productive indicates a displacement of the locus of value creation.

If we remember one of the maxims we arrived at earlier, development takes place in the transfers between nations, and this is especially true here. If a society seems to be developed, then we should expect to see signs of external transfers due to parasitic development. In the case of the core countries in the 21st century, most development is an expression of the Imperial Transfer of Value (ITV) identified by Cope, which is composed of direct value transfers, illicit financial flows, and unequal exchange.⁸⁹ Of these factors, unequal exchange, the inequities in the cost of peripheral labour hours vs. those in the core, is the largest component of value transfers. Through an exhaustive process of adding up various forms of ITV, Cope arrives at a total peripheral-core transfer of \$5.2 trillion annually,⁹⁰ of which over half is the product of unequal exchange.⁹¹ This is three times higher than intra-core transfers of wealth.

This may not seem like much when we look at the core nations' (as defined by Cope) combined GDP of about \$44.8 trillion. But when we consider the fact that only \$8.87 trillion of

this is savings, we can see that without parasitic development the core nations *would only have about two-fifths the wealth available for reinvestment.*

This seems to confirm Amin's hypothesis that the periphery is now needed to support the rate of profit in the core, mostly through unequal exchange.⁹² We can only conclude that parasitic development has begun to completely outweigh any autogenous development in the West.

Further confirmation of this comes from the unlikeliest of sources. Even major financial institutions like the IMF have started to be critical of overreliance on parasitic development over the last decade or so. A flurry of IMF documents with titles like "Too Much Finance?" have been released, but as an institution bound by its own propaganda to a certain extent it can hardly point out the contradictions of empire. Instead they provide amusingly simplistic explanations for the phenomena identified, such as that Finance becomes spontaneously unsustainable after taking up a certain arbitrary percentage of the economy.⁹³ Reading between the lines though, we can see that even arch-imperial institutions are becoming dimly aware of their own unsustainability and dependence upon a locus of value creation, even if they don't know where or what that is.

While even bourgeois economists are ringing the alarm bell, the neoliberal states of the core



live in what Kelsey identifies as a state of profound denial. Every effort of the state, even vital ones like crisis recovery, have been given over to the preservation of the current financial regime's credibility.⁹⁴ In many ways, the continued employment of liberal development rhetoric only serves to reinforce this denial. Developed countries *must be developed*, as their standard of living is all that separates them from the peripheral hordes.

In reality, the core countries are more dependent upon unsustainable wealth extraction than ever before. Their expenses are manifold: debt servicing, maintaining a superior standard of living, maintaining *just enough* manufacturing to out-compete peripheral manufacturers. All of this on a wafer-thin margin of profitability, and as a downward trend becomes more and more apparent.

But the trend towards parasitic development is only going to increase as the rate of profit in the core countries falls. In the mid 19th century, profitability hovered at around 40 percent return per unit of capital invested in the core countries. Between 1974 and 2010 this figure has hovered at around 10 to 15 percent. An optimistic projection of this falling rate of profit would have the core countries reaching 0 percent profitability by 2054.⁹⁵

To make up the shortfall, core nations will ramp up the rate of exploitation of the periphery, creating more and more specialised soci-

eties designed to absorb value from overseas more effectively. This will likely include further financialisation, an even greater proliferation of reflexive-unproductive jobs, and a greater reliance on debt to ensure standards of living than ever before. Fundamentally it must include increases to the wages of workers in the core as a means of perpetuating unequal exchange, however this is not to say that such workers will live in luxury. Household debt, and an ever-higher cost of living will likely far outstrip wages, and will in fact act to push wages up by forever staying slightly higher than people can afford.

But what of conditions in the periphery? Some states will likely achieve a degree of autogenous development. States like China already have, even if their increased productive potential enriches the core countries far more than their own workers thanks to unequal exchange. This will likely only abate once wages increase beyond the global median wage.

Other states will not be so lucky, and will remain permanently underdeveloped, locked in place and time by external pressures from the core countries. I believe a vision of the peripheral countries' future can be seen in the Pacific, where island nations which have long since been denuded of natural resources instead act as vast reserve armies of labour for the nations of the Pacific Rim,⁹⁶ with the only relief coming from small remittance incomes.⁹⁷ The core countries watch keenly, ready to force the sig-



nature of trade deals favourable to the core,⁹⁸ rather than allowing the development of multilateral ties which might provide mutual relief between peripheral nations. Any autogenous developmental potential is squeezed out through a combination of competition with Western goods, and an overreliance on foreign aid, which more often than not goes straight back to the core in return for basic imports.

CONCLUSIONS: BEYOND DEVELOPMENT?

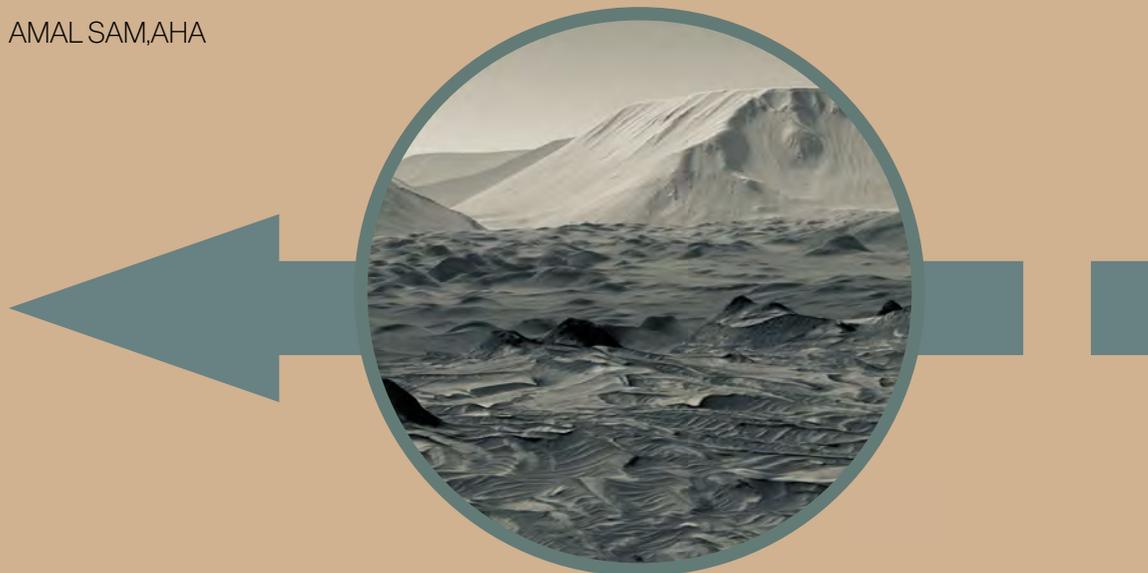
By this point I have discussed various theories of development and whether or not they help us explain our world, but there are other theories I have touched on which look past development, which question the rationality of development, or which reject development as an evil in and of itself. It's at this point that we traverse the gap between simply analysing the world, and asking how we are to change it.

As Castoriadis reminds us, it is rare for development theorists to speak of an endpoint. It is only natural that revolutionaries are among the few to speak of a transformational rupture in development, as only revolution can provide the political will necessary to overcome a totalising paradigm. Karagiannis goes so far as to

say that development discourse is tyrannical, as it takes over domains other than those ascribed to it.⁹⁹ It begins as economics, consumes the social, the political, and does not finish consuming until it has taken on a discussion of every aspect of the human experience. The only way to negate the tyranny of this discourse, she says, is to work through social and political approaches, and re-historicise the developmental paradigm, insisting that each theory of development is a tool, open to a multiplicity of outcomes.¹⁰⁰

It is for these reasons that I have written this as both a short history of development theories, while also rooting this in current and future catastrophe, exploitation, and suffering in the last section. Development discourse always serves to hide these facts, rendering them as small parts in a sterile whole. Perhaps this sanitising quality of development discourse, combined with the naked horror of our world, is why “development” can appear as an inherently toxic concept.

At the intersection of these problems is the fact that development discourse on the left has, tragically, become reduced to a relatively pointless debate about growth vs. degrowth. As Aaron Vansintjan points out, thanks to a misreading of what exactly de-growth arguments *are*, a number of socialists have come out in favour of increased growth, even in terms of the crude metric of GDP.¹⁰¹



Mike Macnair has effectively argued for a more nuanced position on growth in revolutionary societies, correctly pointing out that any socialist society cannot be based on maximising growth, or even efficiency. He traces the idea of *socialism as a developmental regime* back to certain assumptions of Marx in *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, and their later adoption by Lenin. The idea of the socialist developmental regime, at least one based purely on increased efficiency of surplus value allocation, was flawed, not in that the goal was impossible, but in that the best parts of the Soviet system were those which defied quantitative developmental rationality.¹⁰²

If we have learnt anything from the previous sections, it should be that we have very little to learn from purely quantitative theories of development. There is nothing wrong with measurement, but such approaches tend to overlook the less superficial, more qualitative and relational changes which societies undergo. I believe socialist economics should be fundamentally *ambivalent* to the question of growth or degrowth of total GDP, or efficiency. Much more important is the degree to which different kinds of development, autogenous or parasitic, are taking place within a society. Naturally, some sectors must shrink, others must grow in accordance with qualitative changes to the global system.

This argument is once again similar to one made by Samir Amin decades ago. Delinked

nations would neither expand nor contract, but would rather develop a “national law of value.” This would encourage qualitative shifts in the economy: agriculture would move away from export-oriented monocultures towards gardens for food sovereignty, higher wages at the expense of export competitiveness and so on. Amin insisted that this was different to autarky, and that trade would still take place,¹⁰³ but I think we must explain this further, and move beyond Amin’s sometimes nationalistic (or at least very nation-focused) formulation, as evidenced by the kind of societies he held up as excellent examples of delinking.¹⁰⁴

A relational view of development is incompatible with the negation of either development or relationality. The core-periphery dialectic cannot be overcome by mere disengagement by either core or peripheral nations. Rather it requires active efforts from both worlds to undertake autogenous development in different areas. In the core, this means the de-financialisation of societies, and a degree of re-industrialisation to compensate for a reduction in cheap goods gained through unequal exchange with the periphery. In the periphery, it would mean much of the same restructuring described by Amin, but this can only be done successfully if it is primarily performed through the proliferation of peripheral-to-peripheral transfers, or trade which does not involve unequal exchange. De-linking with the same emphasis on autocentric accumulation Amin de-



scribes simply would not work for nations without natural resources, such as the Pacific.

The necessity of further development in the core is evidence that we have moved past what I described earlier as the root of the radical development theories: that development is a zero-sum game as argued by Baran. In contrast, Macnair argues that, “[C]apitalism cycles between positive-sum games, which make inequalities tolerable and produce reformist versions of liberalism and technocratic progress ideologies, and negative-sum games, in which inequalities become increasingly intolerable.”¹⁰⁵

While I am not sure at which point one cycle has overtaken the other, it is certainly true that both can exist under capitalism. Conventional development theory deludes itself into thinking that development is a positive-sum game, and if we select our data carefully that might seem true, but conversely radical development theories’ zero-sum game almost seems to suggest that the only route to global liberation is the wholesale collapse, even retrogression, of the core countries. This idea has a certain attractiveness for anyone on the receiving end of imperial aggression and expansion, but I would suggest that political collapse is not the same as developmental retrogression. Once again it is the core’s capacity for parasitic growth that must be eliminated, while some autogenous development is necessary to save the captive populations of the core and end

their largely involuntary dependency on peripheral workers.

I wish to return to Rodney for a moment to assess whether I have kept to the key points outlined in my sketch for a relational development model. Peripheral economies are certainly integrated into the core economies, and are in fact becoming more so every day as the Imperial Transfer of Value displaces the autogenously-derived wealth available for reinvestment. The core-periphery dialectic is entrenched, and will continue to entrench itself until peripheral powers gain the wage levels necessary to combat unequal exchange (unless their leadership chooses competitiveness over higher wages). Under parasitic regimes, development is closer than ever before to a zero-sum game in which each win and loss is entirely proportional. As we can see, peripheral countries will suffer more and more as the core becomes more volatile, more dependent, more specialised, and more insecure in their hold over the world. What is now seen as development, especially in the core, is actually greater debt, greater insecurity, and greater reductions in human agency. Development is not self-perpetuating, but rather too much of the wrong kind of development will produce underdevelopment in the long run, even as those at the helm of society slip further into denial of this fact.

The core-periphery dialectic cannot be ignored. It cannot be disengaged from. As Huey Newton once proclaimed, reactionary forms



of relationality must be transformed into revolutionary forms.¹⁰⁶ Our task is qualitative transformation rather than quantitative incrementalism, or worse, retrogression. We must reject the unbuilding of the world.

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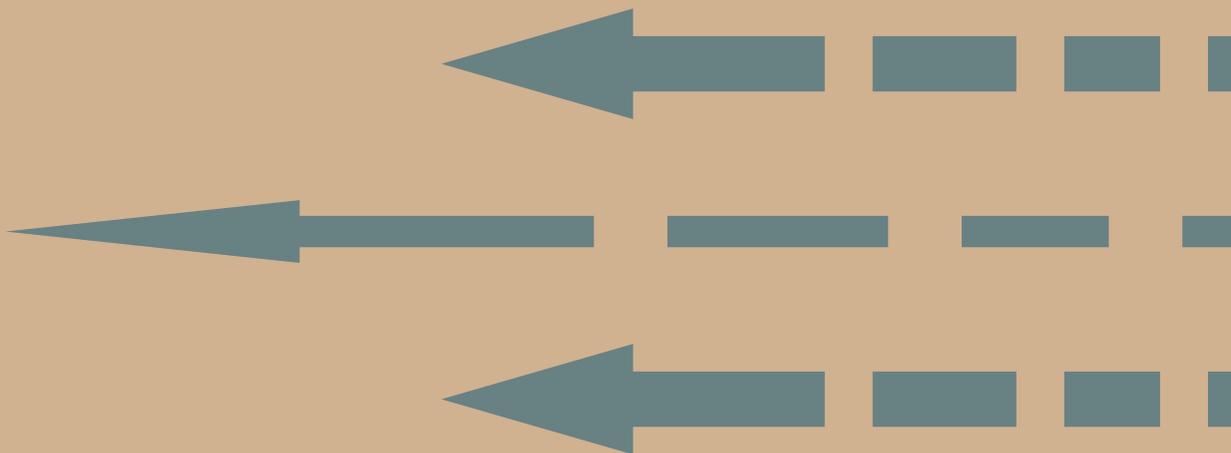
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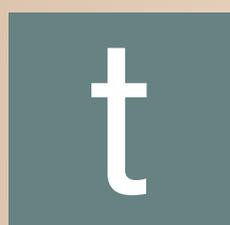




A PLANTER EMPIRE AND THE LAND QUESTION

C. Katsfoter

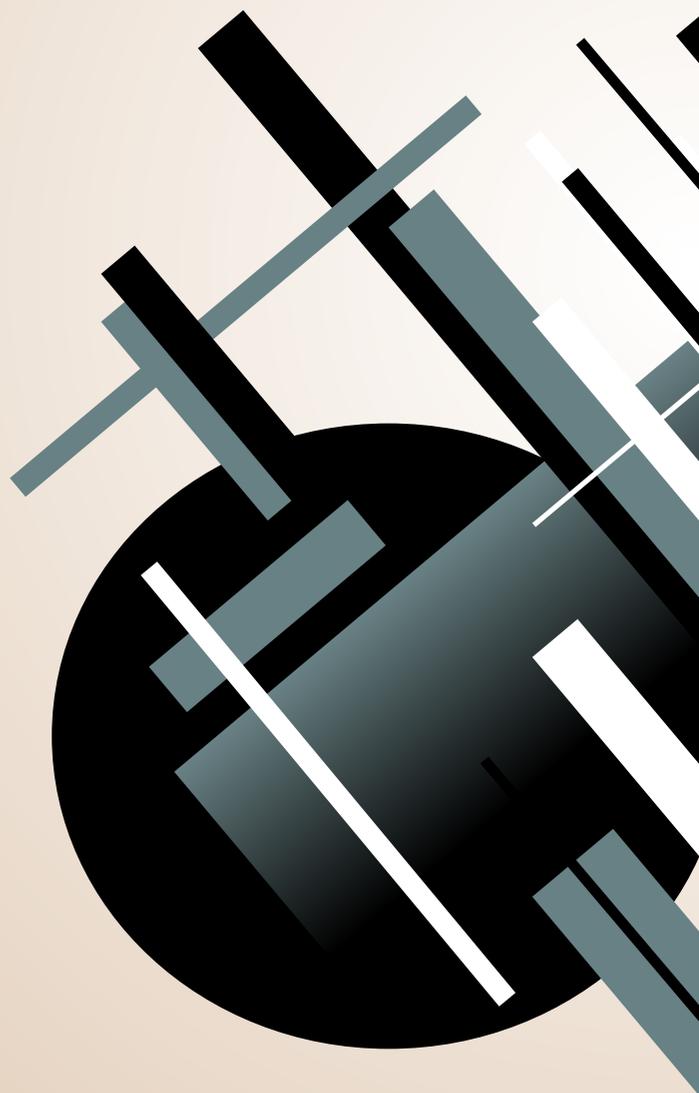
THE U.S. AS A SLAVER OF NATIONS

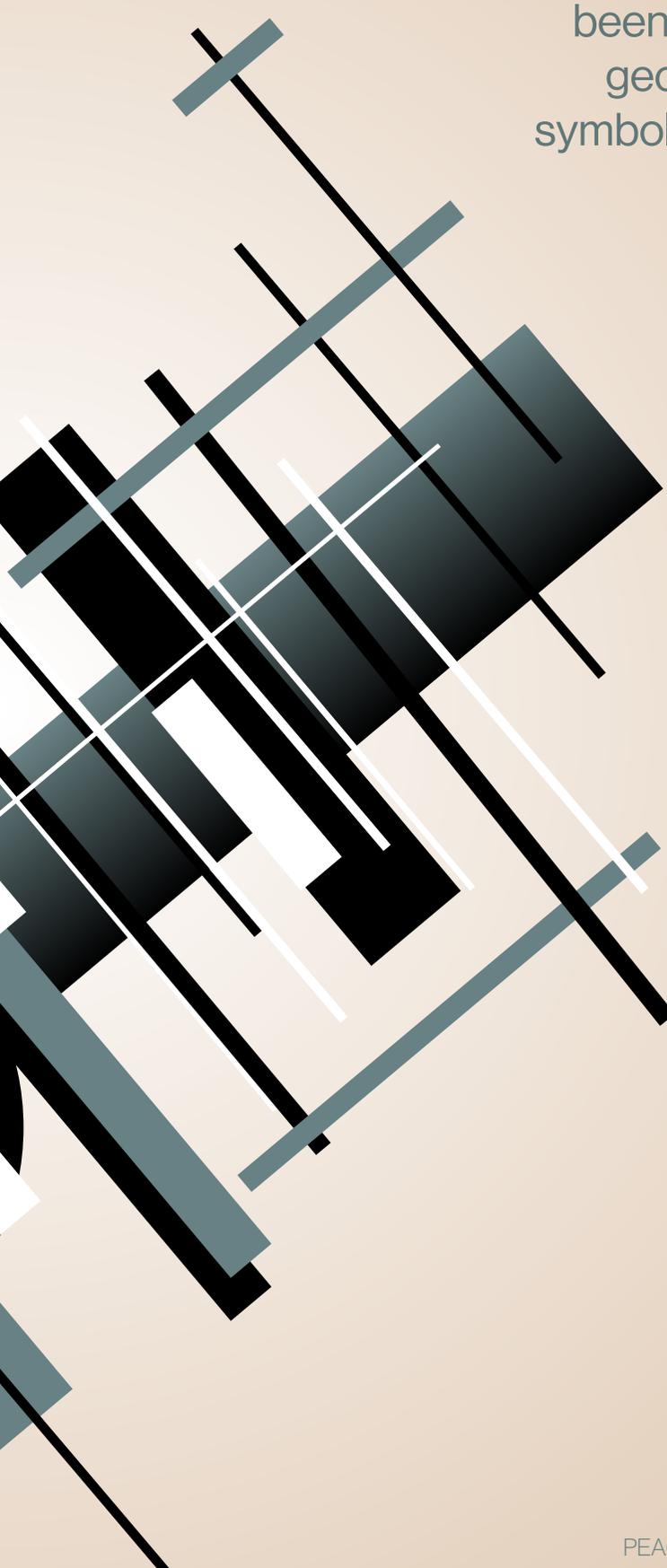


The US Empire is ruled by the so-called “white” nation. This national formation is composed of a more-or-less unified Euro-American culture that includes formerly oppressed nations such as

Italian and Eastern European Americans. This construct is, of course, far from a monolith. It orbits the central, oldest, and most powerful formation: that of the Anglo-American nation. Indeed, one often reads of “Anglo-American legal tradition,” indicating a strong continuity between the old White Anglo-Saxon Protestant nationhood at the heart of the US formation of the ruling class, and the modern category of whiteness. The white nation has absorbed wave after wave of European immigration, but erected walls against the other subject nations within the empire.¹

There are other nations in the empire; there are also national minorities.² The other nations are oppressed, to one degree or another. Some are colonies. All have been caged and trapped within the vast geographical territory of the empire where they are super-exploited and where phenotype itself has come to serve as a marker for nationality, and thus for the property-relations embodied in national oppression. This bundle of oppressions has come to be known as “race.” But “race” issues are really national issues; they are really issues of oppression based on pheno-





The oppressed and the exploited have been caged and trapped within the vast geographical territory of the empire, a symbol of super-exploitation and national oppression.

type and expression of physical and linguistic traits as identifiers of “racial” (really national) boundaries. The exact moment in time when racialization became a material force in the superstructure is up for debate (although a credible argument traces it to the beginning of European colonialism in the 15th century), but the fact remains that “race” preceded capitalist development through the mercantile-colonialist period, and likely found its full blossom in the plantation system of the Caribbean, where the race slave trade and genocide of Indigenous peoples laid the groundwork for planter feudalism.

WHAT IS A NATION?

“[A] nation is not a racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people... It goes without saying that a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end.”³

Josef Stalin tackled this subject exhaustively in his pamphlet “Marxism and the National Question.” He demonstrated that there are a number of factors that one must consider when determining whether an ethnicity comprises a distinct nation, and these are:

1. a common language
2. a common territory
3. a common economic life; economic cohesion
4. a common culture or psychological makeup (a common superstructure)

A colony is a discrete geographic territory which is governed by an imperial center for the benefit of the empire. Colonial relations are typified by the presence of a concentration of extractive industries rather than industries that produce finished commodities.

When we speak of colonized and oppressed nations, we have already determined that the membership of each discrete nation shares the four required traits of nationality. Most of the nations inside the empire possess English as a common language, although the Black Belt has its own variation (AAVE, or African-American Vernacular English) and the Indigenous nations have maintained or recovered their own languages. The Black Belt constitutes the territory of the oppressed Black or New Afrikan nation inside the empire, while Indigenous nations retain territory shaped through treaties with the settler state. It is critical to note that the territory of the Black Belt was created by colonial oppression. That is, the territory is not the original territory of the Black nation, but rather situated within the regions of Indigenous peoples who were already subject to colonization. Each of these nations has economic cohesion, that is, they are economically interrelated within their own bounds, and each of these nations have their own common psychological makeup, a common culture.

Identification of the imprisoned nations within the empire has been a constant struggle against white chauvinism. Anglo-Americans and Euro-Americans in particular have often held the viewpoint that, for instance, Black Americans are not a nation but an “ethnic minority” or “national minority” and that the chief desire of this population is assimilation into the Euro-American nation. This chauvinist view flies in the face of the works of Haywood, Nasanov, Lenin,

Stalin, and the members of the Sixth Comintern of 1928 who voted in favor of the Black Belt thesis, but it is a continuous refrain in the right-opportunist strains of communism inside the United States empire—and no wonder! The relations of production are such that the oppressed nations and colonized people provide a super-exploited workforce. White communists who fail to see this ignore the beam in their eye because they refuse to see the benefit they derive from the subjugation of their fellow countrymen.

PROPERTY RELATIONS OF THE COLONY

A colony is a discrete geographic territory which is governed by an imperial center for the benefit of the empire. Colonial relations are typified by the presence of a concentration of extractive industries rather than industries that produce finished commodities. A semi-colony is an ostensibly independent country whose politics are dominated by the interference of an imperial country or a coalition of imperial countries, and which is therefore run, materially, for the benefit of those imperial countries. Colonies may have a settler presence, or may remain majority indigenous.⁴

A colony is a super-exploited region in which the normal productive forces of the bourgeoisie are inhibited. In a colony, the imperial power seeks to dominate labor relations (for access to

Industry in the colonies is in a direct, antagonistic contradiction to the interests of the imperial bourgeoisie. It is this antagonistic relationship that is the primary contradiction of a colonial property arrangement, and absent this relationship a region cannot be said properly to be a colony.

cheap labor), extractive industries (for access to cheap raw material), land relations (to establish colonial offices, and to give land to choice supporters), and markets (to export finished goods and realize profits from manufactories in the imperial core). In traditional colonies, the territory is administered by the colonizing country. This may take the form of imperial governors, boards of control, direct sovereign companies such as the VoC⁵ or the East India Company, etc.

Neo-colonies (or semi-colonies) are subject to the same types of exploitation, but these are overseen by the comprador bourgeoisie who belong to the colonized nation. That is, native institutions are so wholly corrupted by imperial interference that the native government acts in the interests of the imperial populations located in the core, rather than for the native populations in the colonized country. The compradors act as imperial overseers for the oppressor nationalities; they are the agents of the empire, even as they wear the appearance of the national bourgeoisie (bankers, business owners, and politicians). The comprador bourgeoisie does not have an incentive to develop industries that compete with the imperial core, because they receive the benefit of imperial aid to keep their country pacified and line their own pockets. The comprador bourgeoisie surrenders control of their markets, their land administration schemes, and their industrial development in exchange for a portion of imperial plunder which is paid back to them as IMF loans, development loans, foreign aid, even shares in impe-

rial corporations. This is the most common form of imperial domination in the age of neo-colonialism, in which capital is sent into the colonies through private corporations, extraction occurs under the watchful eyes of comprador-governments, and no hateful flag of the conqueror nation is ever seen flying over a government building.

Inside the US territorial empire, the Indigenous nations are administered as colonies. While the empire pays lip service to the sovereignty of these territories, they are not independent of US policy. They remain subject to treaty annulment, land grabs, labor exploitation, and extractive exploitation just as surely as if they were colonies at a geographical remove. We can see the true nature of imperial exploitation of Indigenous territories in the Dawes Act of 1887 and the behavior of the Department of Indian Affairs. Indian agents have attacked formal native sovereignty since the treaties were first signed, and the federal government has been rapacious in its attempts to repossess granted territory, cut services, and otherwise under-develop Indigenous regions. Local American Indian bourgeoisie are discouraged from building up industry.

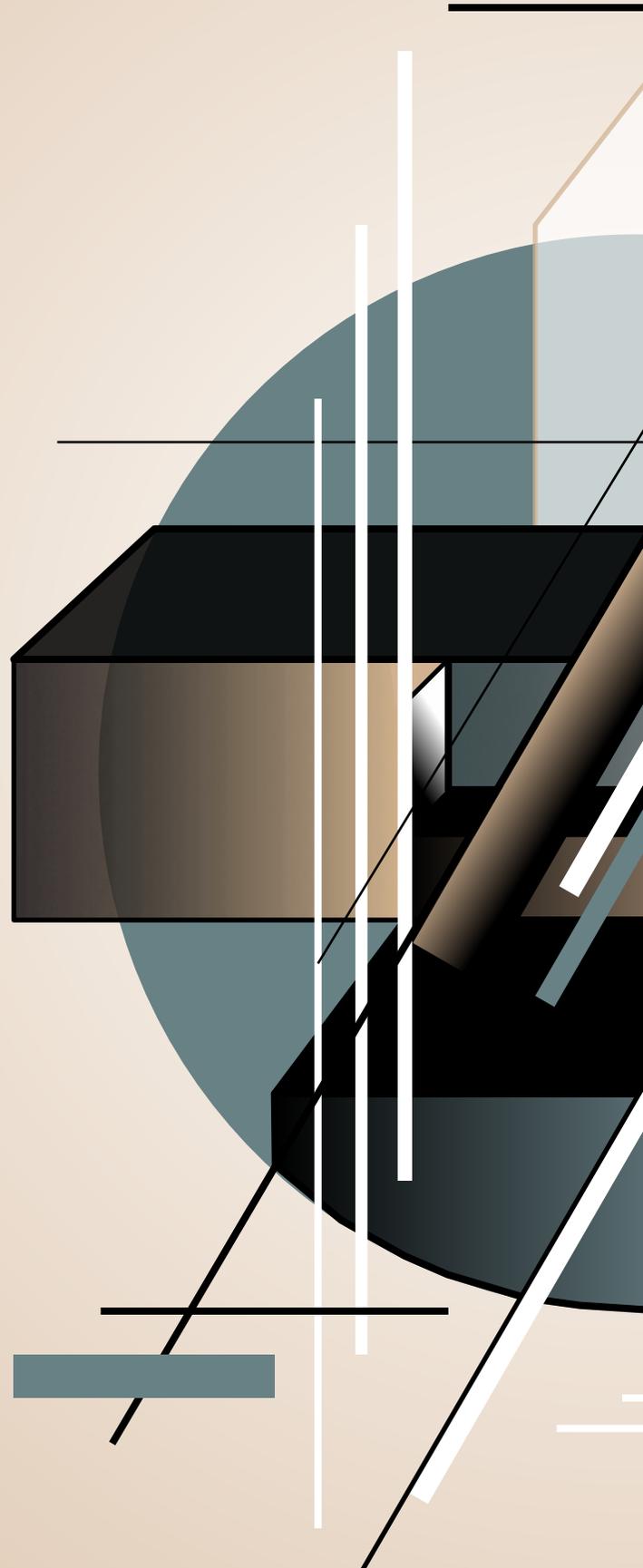
Industry in the colonies is in a direct, antagonistic contradiction to the interests of the imperial bourgeoisie. It is this antagonistic relationship that is the primary contradiction of a colonial property arrangement, and absent this relationship a region cannot be said properly to be a “colony.”

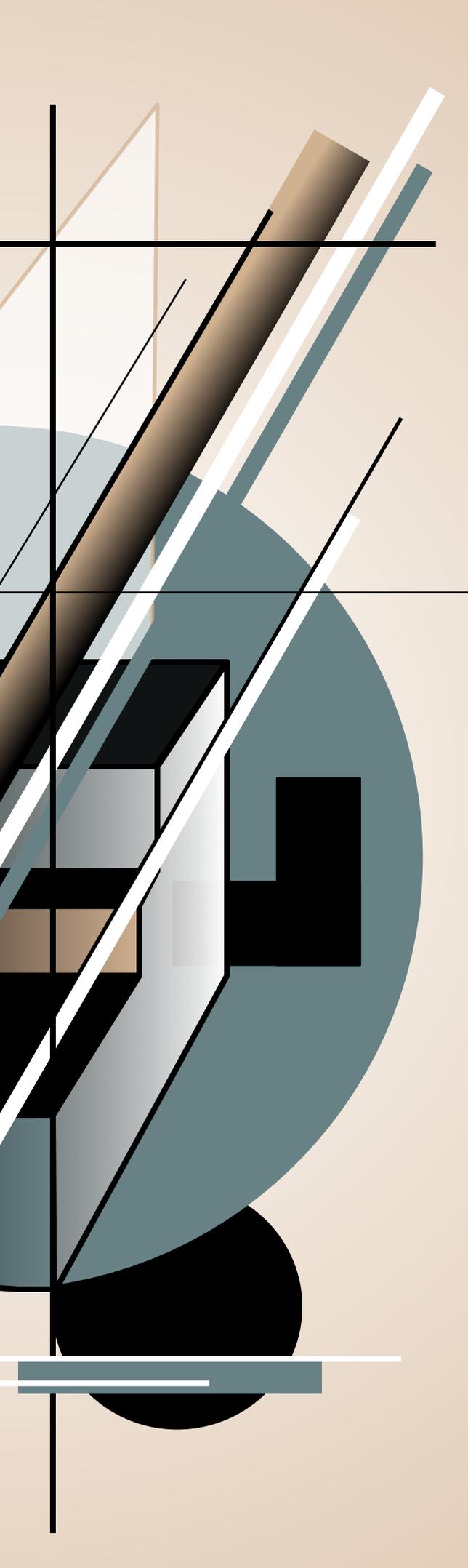
The Antagonism of Industry. Why is industry in a colonial region antagonistic to the imperial core? This question is of great import. If we could say “it is not,” then it would be possible for the imperial core to develop the colonies as it claims to do, to raise them up to the same standard of living as the imperial core, and for imperialism to proceed in a friendly manner to all nations, a rising tide that lifts all ships. This is demonstrably not the case. We have merely to look at the history of brutal colonial exploitation to understand that this cannot be. But why?

In order to answer this question, we must substantially understand the functioning of imperialism itself. Surplus capital is not directed to raise the standard of living of farmers, peasants, etc. in exploited countries, but rather to make use of the higher rate of profit in the “backward” colony. Of course, the colony is only “backward” because it was intentionally underdeveloped – through embargoes, war, export of its chief goods, and concerted imperial attacks on its home industries! Capital is not put to use in granting the colonies actual development, but rather in creating sites of extraction. These are loci where profit is gathered and siphoned off by the imperial power and its bourgeois agents.

Let us, for example, examine the imperial conquest of Iraq and its subsequent administration under the servant-government of the US bourgeoisie. The devastation of the imperial war reduced real wages in Iraq, and turned over the key oil fields to US imperial exploitation. The result:

In 2002, on the eve of the Second Gulf War, the GDP of Iraq was \$59 billion. Its per-capita purchasing power was roughly \$2,500. US exports comprised 46% of all exports, and US imports were less than 1%. The country had \$62.2 billion dollars of debt and received \$327.5 million dollars in economic aid. In 2004 the GDP had been reduced to \$37.92 billion. Per capita purchasing power was roughly \$1,500. US exports were 48.8% and US imports were 6.9% of total exports and imports respectively. The debt had ballooned to \$93.95 billion dollars, and aid was an amazing \$33 billion, billions of dollars higher.⁶





The complete destruction of Iraq and the influx of “aid” and US capital, alongside a substantial (nearly 3%) increase in US exports and very substantial (7%) increase in US imports represents the imperialist underdevelopment of a colony. The invasion collapsed the wage, transformed Iraq into a colony, and permitted US capital to “develop” its key extractive industry (oil). Crippling IMF loans, which are part of the modern US/NATO colonial order, ensure continuing government compliance.

The interim government of Iraq, installed in 2004, was headed by Jalal Talabani, a former organizer for an independent Kurdistan. In 1990 he traveled to the United States to offer his aid to the US imperial forces in exchange for support for Kurdistan. In 1991 he worked closely with the imperial powers of the US, UK, and France to establish a “safe haven” in the Kurdish region. The fate of Kurdistan has been repeatedly used as a wedge by the imperial powers to develop its presence in that region; the Iraq war and the subsequent establishment of a semi-colony was no exception. Under the guise of “humanitarian aid to the Kurds,” the US has kept its troops on the ground in the region for 16 years.

The Indigenous Nations. Let us take a single Indigenous nation, the Mashantucket Pequots, as an example so we can better understand how these internal Indigenous colonies have been treated by the encroachment of capital.

At the time of the first colonists landing in the Pequot area, the nation controlled 160,000 acres of territory. By 1855, the State of Connecticut had reduced the Pequots’ holdings to 204 acres (a loss of 159,796 acres, 99.985% of the original territory). The land left to the Pequots was mostly unusable swamp. The Pequot Nation was essentially eradicated from its former territory and suppressed from 1638 (the end of the Pequot War) until 1983, when the nation was recognized after a protracted struggle with the US legal system. To this day, Anglo-Americans in Connecticut refer to the Pequots as a “fake tribe” who were “just after the money.” The process of genocide had almost been completed and its perpetrators had

forgotten about the Pequots, whose territory had been given over to the settlers wholesale.⁷

This created a federal land trust in the name of the Pequots and allotted \$900,000 to the tribe to acquire territory. It also legally extinguished the claims of the Pequots on any territory other than what it acquired by “normal”, settler land relations (purchase from Anglo-Americans) henceforward. Of utmost importance is the fact that the Pequot territory is held in federal trust.

These federal land trusts mark out a legal regime instituted under the Indian Reorganization Act and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. These trusts are administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This trust is a form of “white man’s burden.” This was articulated as late as 1942 as a “moral obligation[...] of the highest responsibility and trust” toward Indigenous nations. *Seminole Nation v. United States*, 1942. Although there is technically a fiduciary relationship between the Bureau of Indian Affairs (as representative of the US imperial government) and the nations whose lands are placed into trust, it is possible for Congress to “disestablish” any Indigenous nation’s land trust by vote, and for the federal/state judiciaries to do the same by interpreting treaties as “demonstrating a clear congressional purpose to disestablish or diminish” a reservation. *City of Sherrill, N.Y. v. Oneida Indian Nation of New York*, 544 U.S. 197, 212 (2005).

This conditional right to self-determination (conditioned on the Congress’ continued recognition of that right and decision not to disestablish the tribe) is only one of the many levers held over the Indigenous nations by the colonizers.

The Pequots, like many of the tribes of the northeast region of the empire, have essentially no industry. Their livelihood is entirely dependent on the parasitic “Indian Casino” model. The tribe is the 8th largest employer in Connecticut, serving as a locus of profit-extraction from other states. Three quarters of the Pequot casino revenue is extracted from out-of-state visitors.

The new Pequot territory is a rump-colony; it is politically isolated, its sovereignty is contingent on the good will of capital, and it was completely, physically colonized by settlers in the recent past. This is the end result of settler colonialism. “Territory is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element.”⁸ The remainder of the Pequot territory is administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, host to a pair of casinos, and without any productive industry. Gambling, by its nature, cannot valorize capital⁹; rather, the establishment of Indigenous gambling centers parasitically remove money from other productive circuits. The Pequot casinos pay \$228 million in taxes to the State of Connecticut and the Federal Government each year as a result of various agreements.

The unproductive labor in the Pequot casinos at one time produced a dividend per-capita payout to each of the members of the nation (of which there are some 1000). That was brought to an end in 2010. There are no productive industries in the Pequot nation; rather, they are paid low wages to help extract profit from the settler labor aristocracy and the petit-bourgeoisie who visit the casino. These funds are divided between the settler looter class in the form of the Connecticut State Government and the Mashantucket Pequot Endowment Fund, of whom the tribal council serves as the board. Indigenous casinos are a method of discouraging productive labor on Indigenous land; they do not serve to develop the capital of Indigenous people--the revenue, by law, must be used to fund tribal operations and government programs, to provide for general welfare of the tribe, and to make donations to charitable organizations, and these revenues must be distributed by the Board of the Trust.

The Mashantucket health services, post office, and transport services are all contracted out to the Federal Government, meaning a portion of the tribe’s income through the casino is paid back into the settler government itself. The CEO of either casino makes somewhere on the order of \$200,000 a year from their managerial capacity, clearly a petit-bourgeois position. This position has not historically been held by a

Subject nations are distinguishable from colonies by the fact that the development of industry in those nations is not in direct contradiction with the development of industry in the imperial core; the primary property relationship is not a land relation but rather a complex of judicial, legal, and property relations.

member of the tribe, although the current chairman of the tribe, Rodney Butler, worked for a year from 2017-18 as the interim CEO of the Foxwoods Casino.

Firmly integrated into the system of capital circulation, the casinos do not provide capital accumulation for the tribe; they provide money directly into lawmakers' pockets, and may in fact have established a comprador bourgeoisie among the tribal leadership (although this may be mitigated by the fact that they are subject to a radically democratic voting process every three years). This colony cannot develop industry, and is prevented from developing productive industries; to do so would put it into direct antagonistic conflict with the Connecticut Anglo-American industries.

While this is clearly tied to the material conditions of the Pequot people in the imperial northeast and those conditions are not replicated anywhere else, all colonized tribes are subjected to some forces that prevent them from material self-determination, through a combination of purposeful underdevelopment (either by the lure of casinos or through another mechanism) and legal disenfranchisement through trusts and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The same cannot be said of the Black Belt or the other subject nations.

Navajo Mining of Uranium. In 1990, the settler government in the United States passed the Radiation Compensation Act, formally and officially acknowledging its responsibility for the historical mistreatment of uranium miners.

The US government was the sole purchaser of uranium within the empire from 1948 to 1971.¹⁰ The existence of radiation poisoning was known and observed long before 1948; uranium-bearing ores had been mined for centuries in Schneeberg Germany and Jachimov Czechoslovakia for metals and manufacture of uranium dyes. An association between these mining sites and the prevalence of lung disease was first reported in detail in 1879.¹¹

Though the uranium mines in operation from 1948 to the present within the empire were private commercial concerns, the US government guaranteed purchase of the uranium ore and was the sole available legal purchaser. The location of the ore was concentrated on the Colorado Plateau in New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and Arizona.¹² The Navajo reservation was located at the edge of the uranium mining belt. This drew Navajo men to work in the mines. The reservation had little industry of its own, being a colony, and the cheap labor of the Navajo men was exploited in the grim, poisonous circumstances of the uranium mines.¹³

Miners were paid minimum wage or less. In 1949 one Navajo miner was earning an hourly wage of 81 cents.¹⁴ This is typical of the imperialist exploitation of a colony. Here we see the two major functions of imperial governance in the colonies: the super-profits garnered from low wages and the extraction of natural resources from the colonized territory into the empire for the benefit of the imperial bourgeoisie.

Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico, now governed by a strict Board of Control, is the archetypal geographically separated “external” colony of the United States empire. It was openly colonized under a US military governorship. The US provided it with a limited form of home governance, but when, in 1914, the Puerto Rican House of Delegates (unanimously) voted for independence, the US Congress denied them. In 1917, the US Congress “granted” Puerto Ricans status as citizens (if they were born after 1898). The entire Puerto Rican House of Delegates voted against it, and warned that it was an imposition in order to draft Puerto Rican men into the army for a US entry into World War One. Although Puerto Ricans can currently vote for their own governor, Puerto Rico is now under the real control of the Control Board, established by PROMESA (H.R. 5278). The Control Board is appointed by the president and can overrule all decisions of Puerto Rican public authorities.

Puerto Rico is heavily in debt as a result of the US imperial government withdrawing federal subsidies and favorable tax laws in order to better control the colony and open it further to capital development. It had the intended effect: it destroyed the Puerto Rican government’s ability to issue bonds, sent the economy spiraling into a depression, and has resulted in such neoliberal endeavors as the privatization of the former state electricity monopoly.

The lesson of the state electricity monopoly perfectly demonstrates the contradiction between the development of national industry in the colonies and the need for national industry to remain under-developed to provide cheap labor, markets for imperial corporations, and cheap natural resources. Using its colonial control measures, the US forced Puerto Rico to sell its electrical monopoly to private bidders. Rather than permitting the wealth of Puerto Rico to flow to its people, it is siphoned off through this and countless other destructive actions by the US imperialists.

PROPERTY RELATIONS OF OPPRESSED NATIONS

The CPUSA expressed the national question in the words of Harry Haywood thusly: “[i]ndustrialization in the Black Belt is not, as is generally the case in colonies properly speaking, in contradiction with the ruling interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie, which has in its hands the monopoly of all industry; but insofar as industry is developed here, it will in no way bring a solution to the question of living conditions of the oppressed Negro majority, nor to the agrarian question, which lies at the basis of the national question. On the contrary, this question is still further aggravated as a result of the increase of the contradictions arising from the pre-capitalist forms of exploitation of the Negro peasantry and of a considerable portion of the Negro proletariat (miners, forestry workers, etc.) in the Black Belt, and, at the same time, owing to the industrial development here, the growth of the most important driving force of the national revolution, the Black working class, is especially strengthened.”¹⁵

Subject nations are distinguishable from colonies by the fact that the development of industry in those nations is not in direct contradiction with the development of industry in the imperial core. For example, Latin-American and Black industry does not threaten the development of Anglo-American industry. The primary property relationship between those nations and the Anglo-American nation is not a land relation (unlike the Indigenous nations) but rather a series or complex of judicial, legal, and de facto property relations.

The Black Nation. New Afrika, the Black Belt, whatever name we wish to give it: there is, contained within the US settler empire, in the regions of old planter domination, a cohesive nation that remains in chains to this day. The legal forms have changed, but the material reality remains the same. Although the the Sharecropper’s movement of the 30s and the Black Power movement of the 60s both won concessions, those gains are now being walked back and overturned by the planter governments.¹⁶ The

The specter of Black rebellion has driven Bourbon planter reaction since the foundation of their class: the ghosts of Nat Turner and Toussaint L'Ouverture weigh heavy on the minds of the southern garrison-police.

oppression of chattel slavery has been substituted by debt peonage, mass incarceration (and the accompanying judicial slavery), uneven loan application/relief, uneven deployment of federal funds, ghettoization programs like redlining, and so on and so on. This new complex of property relations replaces the slave relation in form, but preserves the slave relation in function: to make Black property bear the brunt of capital appropriation, to make Black labor power cheap and bountiful for capital exploitation, and to keep Black communities from developing national consciousness and rising in an empire-wide rebellion. The specter of Black rebellion has driven Bourbon planter reaction since the foundation of their class: the ghosts of Nat Turner and Toussaint L'Ouverture weigh heavy on the minds of the southern garrison-police.

The Black Belt, a swathe of territory that describes a sickle-blade across the US south, is home to over half of the Black citizens of the empire. The original slave population was not a nation when it was transported. Those slaves were the children of many African nations, sharing no common language, culture, or geography. However, through the very act of bringing these people into the US south, the old planters forged a new nation. It is through the shared hardship of the slave relation that diaspora of disparate African nations were forced to share a geographical territory, to develop a common language, to share their economic relations. The free labor of this new nation was used to raise huge plantations; the slave power was the foundation of the entire southern planter way of life. In the north, the slave trade

was the basis of Bostonian prosperity. Without the slave trade, the settler colonies would have remained backward and undeveloped, mere sites of resource extraction for their European masters.

This nation was historically constituted by the conditions of transplantation into the US south; forged from a dozen home nations, tempered by the transport through the West Indies, and molded by the century and a half of chattel slavery through which its people suffered. This was the genesis of the Black nation, which was a nation in chattel slavery's chains. Even after the end of chattel slavery, this nation was singled out by the repressive apparatus of the post-Reconstruction Jim Crow period and the new legal environment that now prevails.¹⁷

In 2017, 58% of Black Americans lived in the south. Although this is substantially reduced from the height of the Black Belt (during Reconstruction over 2/3rds of the Black population was concentrated in the Black Belt), it remains the national territory of the Black nation. Outposts in the north were established after Reconstruction through migration away from the pervasive lynch terror of the Redeemers, the Klan, and their planter masters. These outposts were primarily industrial through the early and middle 20th century, focused in New York, Chicago, and California.

Race in the US empire is based on a phenotypical phenomenon; that is, the ruling powers want to know what you look like. Once they have determined your phenotype, they can feel comfortable sorting you into a racial-legal category, which determines your property relation-

ships to other races. The racial-legal category hardened after the end of overt racial slavery, integrated directly in the superstructure of US law, rather than the economic bondage of the slave, which exists in the base. Throughout the period of judicial segregation, this was encoded in the law. Jim Crow was not merely a psychological terror, but primarily an economic terror designed to make the vast swathes of “dangerous” former slaves into economic subjects of the ruling planter class. In fact, the primary mode of the economic terror exerted in the US settler empire is racial terror, and the primary method of digestion of recalcitrant populations is through colonial power and the further subjection of oppressed and colonized nationalities.

However, the efforts at stunting the development of the Black nation and deforming its shape ironically stimulated its cohesion. Jim Crow created a forced economic interrelationship; slavery forced a common culture; redlining and predatory lending practices have forced the creation of a Black national territory.

Why Is the Black Belt Not A Colony? What is the difference between the Black Belt and other Black national territories, and the colonized nations and semi-colonized nations that the US holds as imperial subjects? The Black labor force is not primarily used in extractive labor; that is, there is no contradiction between the development of industry in the Black national territory and the interests of imperial capitalists in the rest of the US empire. In fact, Black labor has been critical to spurring industrial development in Alabama, Chicago, St. Louis, and elsewhere.

In a colony, the creation of industry controlled by the national bourgeoisie is a revolutionary act. In the Black national territories, the national bourgeoisie have a much more complex relationship with the imperial bourgeoisie. They can not merely be divided into those compradors who serve imperial interests and the national bourgeoisie who can be harnessed for revolutionary ends. In the Black national territory, the national bourgeoisie can be either progressive or reactionary. There is a reactionary nationalism





that flowered in Garveyism and other separatist movements; these seek total withdrawal from the imperial territory.

In an oppressed nation, national self-determination must be safeguarded not only from right compradors, but also from right national bourgeoisie. Petty bourgeois nationalism is opposed to the proletarian nationalism of the Black nation. Correct analysis and correct theory will allow us to identify the most revolutionary tack to take in any given situation. Failure to adhere to correct analysis and failure to produce correct theory will permit the retrenchment of reaction or “great nation” chauvinism. We must fight both the assimilationist strain and the reactionary strain; these both arise from the relationship between the Black petit-bourgeoisie and the settler bourgeoisie.

THE CREATION OF INDUSTRY IS REVOLUTIONARY IN THE COLONIES

The establishment of national industries and the national control of markets inside colonies are revolutionary acts. This is because the national economy of a colony is in direct contradiction with the driving forces of the imperial economy. The imperial economy cannot permit national economies to develop, or else the profits the nation reaps will accelerate. Thus, all national ownership of industry, all national bourgeois accessions in colonies is inherently revolutionary because it challenges the world-imperial system of capital. It is the function of imperialism to export capital into the colonies in order to make use of the cheap labor. The development of national sources of capital challenge this, restrict markets for the imperialists, improve the living conditions of workers (and therefore raise the costs of operation within the colony, as the socially average labor reproduction cost rises). This, in turn, threatens the rate of profit.

Self-determination for the colonies includes control of the markets, the labor force, and industries to reside in the national bourgeoisie and to be taken from the compradors, foreigners, and imperial governors.

The same cannot be said for the oppressed nations; because industry and commerce in oppressed nations are not in contradiction with the imperial order, but rather are under the constant threat of imperial appropriation, subject nations develop two strains of reactionary ideology: reactionary assimilationism and reactionary nationalism. These must be counterposed with the one true revolutionary tack: proletarian nationalism and an answer to the Agrarian Question.

WHERE IS THE LUMPENPROLETARIAT?

The classical Marxist category of the lumpenproletariat is analytically incoherent. It represents a misstep in the theory of Marxism that has inhered in analysis for a century. To contest this, we must understand what we mean by class and quasi-class. A class is a group of people who share common interests based on their relationship to the means of production; a quasi-class is a cross-class group that share common interests based on their property relationships as they are codified in juridical and social structures. Marx argued that industrial society had reduced the complex network of classes down to three: the proletariat, the petit-bourgeoisie, and the haute bourgeoisie.¹⁸

The classes of prior economic modes persist even in industrial capitalism and certainly tend to dominate in the peripheral regions where capitalism has, through its own actions in the core, failed to develop. Slaves, serfs, peasants, debt peons, all continue to exist, partially digested, within the capitalist world.¹⁹

The lumpenproletariat was identified as that portion of the proletariat that is de-classed, turned into a semi-permanent surplus population, the standing ranks of the reserve army of the unemployed. To 19th and early 20th century theorists, these included the disabled, the unhoused, criminals, and other populations that they believed could not develop class consciousness. This is essentially a racist, ableist, relic. These surplus populations are part of the

class of people who would otherwise sell their labor for a wage. They are firmly proletarian. Their revolutionary potential is not only present, but heightened, due to the subjection of these groups (prisoners, unhoused, etc.) to additional outside pressures in addition to class.

Where apparent members of this class are not proletarian because they do not need to sell their labor, they belong to another class; powerful criminals that operate many criminal enterprises are bourgeoisie. Mid-level criminals may be petit-bourgeois. To classify all these groups as “lumpen” is analytically incoherent, a rewriting of theory to fit an ideological purpose, to exclude these groups from those with revolutionary potential. It is a form of begging the question that damages the analytical capacity of theory that attempts to deploy it.

This group is drawn overwhelmingly from the doubly oppressed proletarians of the colonized and oppressed nations. Criminalization along racial lines creates these conditions and acts as a radicalizing lever. The national proletarians are the heirs and inheritors of the national question – and it is their revolutionary nationalism that must drive the progress of national self-determination in the oppressed and colonized nations.

THE AGRARIAN QUESTION IS REVOLUTIONARY IN THE OPPRESSED NATIONAL REGIONS

“The [Black Belt] Question in the United States is agrarian in origin. It involves the problem of a depressed peasantry living under a system of sharecropping, riding-boss supervision, debt slavery, chronic land hunger, and dependency—in short, the plantation system, a relic of chattel slavery.”²⁰

In the period following the Civil War, 14% of the farmland in the US was owned by the Black nation. Black ownership of farmland is less than 2% throughout the US today.²¹ Most of the agricultural land in the Black Belt is owner-operat-

The COVID pandemic has increased the level of expropriation by disproportionately granting relief to Euro-American businesses. In material effect, this represents a massive shift in wealth.

ed.²² This statistic disguises what is essentially a Euro-American petty bourgeois relationship to the land, because these so-called owner-farmers, while they may be “operators,” employ farmhands, harvesters, and a great deal of labor outside of their own. The data provided by the USDA does not distinguish between one-family farms, in which the majority of work is done by the owners, and large-scale planting operations. These owner-operated farms make up 62% of the farms of the Black Belt, with the rest being landlord-owned farms. In both cases, these form the basis of power of both a Euro-American petty bourgeois and a Euro-American corporate bourgeois planter class, respectively. The farmland is firmly in the hands of two strata of the imperial oppressor nation.

The promise of Black land ownership may have completed the bourgeois revolution in the south after the Civil War – this was certainly its intention. The promise of Black land ownership was never carried out. The Union Army promise of “40 acres and a mule” never materialized. The lack of access to land has created a situation in which the Black nation cannot reproduce itself without going directly to the oppressor nation for the viands upon which it must live. It is cut off from the very lifeblood of social reproduction. In order to strike at this critical deficiency in the heart of the Black nation, we must support a program of land reform.

There was a minor shift in fortunes for the Black nation, and some families did manage to retain their farmland through the worst of the sharecropper years, the Depression, the bull weevil infestations, and the other crises (both manu-

factured and environmental) that beset Black land ownership in the south. But since 1950, 98% of Black landownership has been expropriated by banks, planters, and governments.²³ This represents the loss of 12 million acres of farmland. This expropriation was begun by illegal USDA pressures and loans, as well as loan denial by Euro-American controlled federal subsidy boards. By 2008, the process was completed with the mass-purchasing of land by enormous pension funds that put small farms out of business.

There were one million Black farmers in 1914. By 1992, that number had decreased to 18,000. Black Belt counties tend to be poorer than those around them, due to the expropriation, lack of federal services, etc. The COVID pandemic has increased the level of expropriation by disproportionately granting relief to Euro-American businesses. In material effect, this represents a massive shift in wealth. Black and Euro-American wealth has been fed into the government and then redistributed only to Euro-Americans. Nearly half of Black petit-bourgeois businesses have closed as a result of the crisis.²⁴ The number of total active business owners fell by 22%. Black business owners fell by 41%. Latinx business owners fell by 32%. Asian business owners dropped by 26%.²⁵ This is the property relation of race expressed by vicious action of the US government in response to the COVID crisis.

While the Black nation has been subject to vicious expropriation like the Indigenous nations, there has been no effort to liquidate the Black population in the same settler colonial manner. This is because Black labor is valuable

Self-determination is the rallying cry.

to the planters and their northern industrial allies. The use of Black labor to break white strikes throughout the 20s and 30s is a historically documented source of racial tensions. Development of national industry and national control of markets is not revolutionary in the oppressed nations; the oppressed nations are not limited to extractive industry by the oppressors, and development of national markets does not challenge the supremacy of the oppressor nation's economy. While the oppressed nations have their own economic life, it is not as subjected to the control of the oppressor nation; while they are subject to oppressor expropriation, that expropriation is not directed at extractive labor-power or direct land expropriation. Instead, the revolutionary position is to demand self-determination and land distribution to the oppressed.

The agrarian question can only be answered by giving soil to the tillers; the land within the national territories must be turned over to the oppressed nations. This would likely come as a step prior to collectivization. The Black nation and other oppressed nations must not be severed from the support of the earth and its fruits, or it can never know self-determination.

NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION FOR COLONIES AND OPPRESSED NATIONS

Self-determination is the rallying cry. Political self-determination is the same among the colonies and oppressed nations, but how that political self-determination will be realized is not uniform across colonies and oppressed nations. We must be careful to attend to the contradiction inculcated by the actions of the US empire as well; the Black nation, like the other oppressed nations (but not the colonized Indigenous nations) was created by imperial oppression. These nations were given a common

economic life and culture by virtue of the deformations imposed on them from outside. But these nations are still occupying a territory that is, or should be, under the sovereignty of Indigenous nations from whom it was stolen. This contradiction presents a point of tension that may yet prove to be non-antagonistic, but which must be carefully attended to.

ENDNOTES

1. The European immigrants of the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century comprised their own national minorities and even national enclaves until they were agglomerated into the Anglo-American nation; they now form a single national identity with ethnic variation; that is, the Euro-American nation.
2. The difference between a nation and a national minority is elaborated below, but turns on whether a cohesive common language, territory, economy, and culture exist for the national group. For example, Chinese nationals in the United States may be part of a coherent but vanishing nation in the form of the old segregated Chinatowns of San Francisco, New York, Boston, etc. Like the Black nation, the Chinese population in the west was imported for labor purposes by big bourgeoisie, in this instance railroad barons.
3. J.V. Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question* (Rus. 1913, Eng. 1935)
4. The theory of semi-colonies was most fully articulated during the Comintern sessions, and ultimately in the CPSU. See, e.g., J.V. Stalin, "Political Report of the Central Committee," *Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU*.
5. Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or the Dutch East India Company.
6. Data taken from the CIA World Factbook.
7. The refoundation of the tribe was undertaken after the last member who lived on the old Pequot reservation died, and the Anglo-American settlers of the northeast have a lot to say over whether her grandchildren, who refounded it, are "legitimately"

natives. No surprise that the settler nation wants to litigate who actually belongs to the oppressed nations and who's "just faking."

8. Patrick Wolfe, Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native, *Journal of Genocide Research* (2006), 8 (4), December, 388.

9. To valorize capital, the capitalist invests an initial amount to purchase labor power, the labor power throws capital into motion, and then the product of that labor power is sold for more than combined material costs, capital exhaustion, and wage paid, thus taking into itself a portion of the value of the labor power that it does not pay for.

10. PH Eichstadt, *If You Poison Us* (Red Crane Books, 1994).

11. Doug Brugge, *The History of Uranium Mining and the Navajo People*, Am. J. Public Health (Sept. 2002).

12. Id.

13. Id.

14. Id.

15. *The Communist*, Feb. 1931

16. The Voting Rights Act was recently made toothless by the removal of its pre-clearance provisions, for example. The garrison-police continue to terrorize Black communities across the country, but primarily in the Black national territories.

17. Obviously, like any struggle, there has been an uneven and staggered development in the Black Belt. The 60s saw an upsurge of revolutionary fervor and national consciousness won critical reforms – the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, Brown v. Board. However, those reforms have been systematically stripped away as the national consciousness faded (or rather, was suppressed by the state murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X., Fred Hampton, and countless other powerful Black nationalist voices – the ghost of Nat Turner rising from the grave!)

18. Quasi-classes include race, sex, and sexuality.

19. The uneven development of capital means that modern configurations still hold remnants of past classes that have yet to be fully integrated or proletarianized. The lessons of every successful revolution teach us this understanding: the USSR, PRC, Laos, Cuba, etc. all had more than the traditional three Marxian industrial classes.

20. Harry Haywood, *The Negro Question*, 11 (International Publishers, 1948).

21. Leah Douglas, "African Americans Have Lost Untold Acres of Land Over the Last Century," *The Nation*. Retrieved 18 November 2020.

22. Data from the USDA.

23. "One Million Black Families in the South Have Lost Their Farms," *Equal Justice Initiative*, October 11, 2019.

24. Pedro Nicolaci da Costa, "The Covid-19 Crisis Has Wiped Out Nearly Half Of Black Small Businesses," *Forbes* (Aug 10, 2020).

25. Claire Kramer Mills and Jessica Battisto, *Double Jeopardy: COVID-19's Concentrated Health and Wealth Effect in Black Communities*, Federal Reserve Bank of New York (Aug., 2020).

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T H E O F F S P R I N G O F



METROPOLITAN ANNIHILATION

**ARMED STRUGGLE
AND THE 1960S**

STUDENT MOVEMENT

SAM GLASPER

Components of Capitalist Society in the United States and West Germany and the Armed Struggle of the 1960s Student Movements

War is the Highest Form of Struggle for Resolving Contradictions

In 1966, Chairman Mao Zedong started what would become known as the *Cultural Revolution*. Calling upon young students, formed into militant Red Guard battalions, Mao exclaimed that “to rebel is justified,” ordering the student youth to “bombard the headquarters,” and to “oppose the four olds,”¹ breaking away from orthodox Marxism-Leninism. These political developments in the communist student left, which ideologically ruptured from the old communist parties formed in the 1920s, would be mirrored across the world. This rupturing of newly-formed radical leftist parties and their new ideological development would become known as the New Left: a youth-led revolutionary movement composed of numerous groups inspired by Mao’s Cultural Revolution, the fight for civil rights in the West, and the struggles for national liberation taking place across the Third World.² Amongst these new

groups were a distinct number of armed factions, arising from the blossoming student movements in West Germany and the United States. Taking inspiration from depictions of urban guerrilla war by Carlos Marighella and the *foco theory* teachings by Che Guevara and Régis Debray,³ these students would resort to violent protest as a way to incite proletarian forces towards a near-spontaneous revolt against capitalism in order to create the new socialist society.

Hung up in the dizzying sense of revolutionary possibility during the late 1960s (in the words of the former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, “[r]evolution seemed as inevitable as tomorrow’s newspaper”),⁴ two groups in West Germany and the United States came to especially emphasize the militant and violent struggle that was taking place between student leftists and the state. These two groups were known as the West German-situated Red Army Faction (RAF) and the U.S. based

How and why do white, formally educated, and typically middle-class students living in similar liberal democratic capitalist countries, turn to the gun?

Weather Underground Organisation (also known as Weatherman or the WUO)—two groups who made the transition from open legal student action organisations to insurrectionary underground factions influenced and guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought (ML-MZT).

Through an evaluation of the aims, goals, and ideological makeup of the RAF and the WUO, the following article seeks to establish how and why white, formally educated, and typically middle-class students living in similar liberal democratic capitalist countries, turned to the gun. The key question of this piece seeks to not only explore revolutionary violence on the left, but also how nominally young white students can come to resort to, and empathize with, the same violent struggles of colonised peoples against their oppressors. The question means to analyse how the ideological lens and material conditions of a young and vibrant left-wing

force that employed violence as a practical use for change, came into fruition by the late 1960s. This piece further strives to investigate the nature of violence between leftists against opposing forces within capitalist society and the continued political relevance of these struggles beyond the late 20th century, at a time of rising neo-imperialist war and fascist power.

In order to contextualise and investigate the armed struggles of these two groups, this article means to analyse three key components of capitalist society in the late 1960s that helped push white leftist students living in liberal democracies to use violent protest. Precisely how these components of Western capitalism came to influence the student's propensity towards violence, and help create the conditions for armed struggle and its advocacy by student activists, shall be the primary investigation of the essay.

The first section seeks to look upon the influence of Third Worldist ideology on the RAF and the WUO during a decade of imperial warfare, most emphatically seen in the Vietnam War. The section means to analyse the viciousness of imperialism on colonised peoples, their response via the means of armed national liberation struggle, and how these events came to affect the white student left's own position on the use of violence. Besides the Vietnam War, issues such as the Palestinian liberation struggle and the internal colonisation of black populations in America will also be explored in order to gauge how the white student left positioned itself in this global conflict and came to confront its own society's white supremacy.

The second section of the article shall analyse the tendencies of anti-communism in West German and U.S. societies and how the violent reaction by the forces of the state apparatus in both countries came to push the white student left underground. The section will inquire into questions such as the collusion between U.S.



state forces and far right groups and the legacy of Nazism in West Germany, in order to explain the rhetoric of prevalent anti-fascism in both countries' student movements and how this came to prompt their turn to violence. As well as analysing the RAF's and WUO's own readings on neo-fascism post-World War II, the section will explore the crossover between surviving fascist structures in the post-war West and decaying capitalist forms of reaction in response to times of crisis.

The third and final section examines the impact of consumerist, mass media society in the post-World War II West and how the "spectacle" of post-industrial capitalism impacted the thinking of New Leftists and influenced their actions. The relationship between armed students and the media will also be scrutinised in order to analyse the role consumer society plays in creating the conditions for "spectacular" acts of terror.

The article shall then conclude that although the two groups no longer exist, and indeed failed in their short-term goals, their legacy is still prevalent post-Cold War due to the continuation of national liberation struggles and the endurance of the aforementioned components of capitalism that first led to the armed rebellions of the white student left.

The Wretched of the World: Imperialism and Third World Revolution in the Western Radical Left

Major political developments in the Global South would come to have a decisive impact on the new generation of leftists coming into fruition by the 1960s. In terms of creating the conditions for violent struggle amongst the student left, one of the most important developments was U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. Regarding the war and its highly destructive elements, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) president Paul Potter stated that:

[T]he people in Vietnam and the people in this demonstration are united in much more than a common concern that the war be ended. In both countries there are people struggling to build a movement that has the power to change their condition. The system that frustrates these movements is the same. All our lives, our destinies, our very hopes to live, depend on our ability to overcome that system.⁵

The system Potter is referring to is imperialism, the policy of extending the rule or authori-



Student organizing in the US organized itself around opposition to the war of aggression in Vietnam

Pictured above, a Weatherman poster announcing the *Days of Rage* protests in 1969

ty of a capitalist empire or nation over foreign countries, or of acquiring and holding colonies and dependencies as part of the final and highest stage of capitalist development in order to ensure greater profits for the bourgeois class. In the industrialised and developed part of the world, banks are merged and industrial cartels are formed as monopolies are created in order to expropriate capital from the underdeveloped nations' economies. Taking inspiration from Vladimir Lenin's writings on imperialism, New Left students would come to see the Vietnam War (as Lenin saw the First World War) as "an annexationist, predatory, plunderous war".⁶ Whilst many students believed their organisations to be the vanguard agent of change under the Leninist concept, a New Left understanding of the situation broke with orthodoxy and came to regard imperial warfare in a specifically Western context. Imperial war was seen largely as a symptom of the degeneration of Western civilization, of the futility of bourgeois rationality, which had become the same as technological rationality. Antiwar protest, direct violent confrontation with the enablers of the imperialist bloodshed, was thus a politics of redemption according to New Left activists.⁷ From this basis, the student left in the US and West Germany would begin to develop their own ideological understandings of the war and how best to oppose it.

As the war in Vietnam dragged on throughout the 1960s, the student left in both West Germany and the U.S. began to escalate the scale of its opposition to the war. By 1965, United States B52's had begun bombing cities in North Vietnam as well as surface-bombing rural districts in South Vietnam. In response, on Feb. 5, 1965, 500 students split off from an anti-war demonstration through West Berlin and attacked the U.S. embassy. In the attack's aftermath, posters went up stating "For how much longer will we tolerate mass murder committed in our name?"⁸ This early action

and its reasoning would come to define the newly formed anti-imperialist struggle of armed actors within the student left in the U.S. and Germany. American and West German New Left communists in this era were united, above all, by their mutual commitment to a revolutionary brand of anti-imperialism, whose defining principle was that the prosperity of advanced industrial societies depended on the economic exploitation of developing countries, evident in the intensity with which the imperialist nations of the First World battled left-wing rebellions in the Third World. Che Guevara's global call to "create two, three, many Vietnams!"⁹ succinctly conveyed that the greatest contribution First World radicals could make to Third World struggles would be to bring the war for socialism home to their own nations.¹⁰

Through analysing Weatherman's own communiques and writings, it becomes clear that this strain of revolutionary anti-imperialism heavily influenced the groups turn to violent action. When commenting on the Days of Rage (a militant protest in which Weatherman-led working-class youths would, armed with 2x4's and other weapons, attack police and destroy property in the affluent Gold Coast neighbourhood), Weatherman leader John Jacobs believed that:

Weatherman would shove the war down their dumb, fascist throats and show them, while we were at it, how much better we were than them, both tactically and strategically, as a people. In an all-out civil war over Vietnam and other fascist U.S. imperialism, we were going to bring the war home. 'Turn the imperialists' war into a civil war', in Lenin's words. And we were going to kick ass.¹¹

As can be seen, Weatherman's propensity for street fighting and further armed actions was shaped by their anti-imperialist reading of the

Vietnam War. Through seeing themselves as part of a planet-wide revolution, Weatherman were to be regarded as part of an international anti-imperialist army. WUO leader Bill Ayers had set out this global perspective in both the Weatherman Manifesto of June 1969 and the "Strategy to Win" pamphlet in September of the same year. This formulation of anti-imperialism as a core tenant of Weatherman philosophy would push the group into a position that underground resistance would best serve to defeat imperialism at home, in support of the colonised masses.

Weatherman's view that they were bringing the war directly to the heart of the empire would go on to guide the groups bombing campaign against various institutions the WUO alleged contributed to global imperialism and the subjugation of Third World peoples. Citing historical examples from the Third World such as the success of terrorism in the Algerian Revolution, the National Liberation Front's executions of government officials in Vietnam and the Tupamaros in Uruguay, Weatherman justified their insistence on violence with "the historic rationales behind our political theories."¹² These theoretical justifications would go on to lead to the bombings of the Pentagon on May 19th 1972 (the birthday of Ho Chi Minh and Malcolm X), of the New York headquarters for IBM, Mobile and General Telephone and Electronics (accusing them of profiting "not only from death in Vietnam but also from Amerikan imperialism in all of the Third World")¹³ and the Oakland offices of Anaconda Copper (a financial supporter of the U.S. backed Pinochet regime in Chile). These bombings and the WUO's rationale behind them, give credence to the view that Third World revolt and the ideology of anti-imperialism had pushed New Left students towards a position of violent struggle. Weatherman reasoning and theoretical writings from the group further support this argument that Western



student leftists had found themselves allying with Third World revolutionaries in a violent struggle against imperialism.

Insights into the West German student left and the RAF also displays the influence of anti-imperialism in moulding the student movement towards more violent means of action. The RAF co-founder and first generation leader Andreas Baader would expand upon this in his remarks on the group's turn to armed struggle, articulating in one communique that "The colonised European comes alive, not to the subject and problem of the violence of our circumstances, but because all armed action subjects the force of circumstances to the force of events... I say our book should be entitled 'THE GUN SPEAKS!'"¹⁴ Taking inspiration from Maoist teachings that "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun,"¹⁵ and that "the triumph of the revolutionary Third World over the reactionary First World depended on bringing the battle from the margins to the centre of the empire,"¹⁶ the Red Army Faction would build upon existing

grievances with NATO and Vietnam in the student left and take them into a position of fully fledged armed struggle against imperialism.

Through their visits to Vietnam in the mid-1960s, German student leftists based their affinity with the Vietnamese rebels on what they saw as the close parallels between West Germany and South Vietnam. Both countries had occupying U.S. armies and governments whose true purpose—behind the rhetoric of defending liberalism against Soviet backed agents—was to contain indigenous revolts. The poet Erich Fried starkly asserted this connection with the following poem: "Vietnam is Germany/its fate is our fate/The bombs for its freedom/are bombs for our freedom/Our Chancellor Erhard/is Marshall Ky/General Nguyen Van Thieu/is President Lübke/The Americans/are also there the Americans."¹⁷ From this relationship came first solidarity with the Vietnamese people and, later on, active involvement in their struggle. This involvement came to fruition when in May 1972, the RAF bombed two U.S. bases

killing 4 soldiers and injuring 18 others in response to recent U.S. bombings in North Vietnam which the RAF denounced as "...genocide, the slaughter of a people, Auschwitz."¹⁸ The violent praxis of a group of white student leftists in solidarity with the Vietnamese communists was rationalised by RAF fellow travellers on the left as a way in which to strike out against an imperialist army wherever they may reside. The leftist legal aid group Rote Hilfe, gave the very same defence of the bombings explaining that "If imperialism is a worldwide system, and that it is, then the struggle against it must be waged worldwide. It will and must be a violent and armed struggle, or it will not be waged at all."¹⁹ Furthermore, the first generation RAF leadership's defence lawyers at trial argued that the US government had violated international law with its military intervention in Indochina and because West German air bases were used, they could be considered as legitimate targets for international retribution.²⁰

Further violent actions by the RAF and the WUO can also be attributed to the strain of anti-imperialist thought within each group. The WUO's affiliation with America's black power groups (the Black Panthers specifically) and the RAF's relationship with the Palestinian resistance groups can both be looked at as deliberate acts of engagement in a worldwide struggle against imperialism, with colonised armed organisations at the helm. The West German New Left looked at the Palestinian struggle in increasingly positive terms as the '60s dragged on, seeing the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and its secular leftist armed factions as engaging in an emancipatory struggle against an aggressive settler colonial state. By 1968, "Radical anti-Zionism and solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle became in the eyes of Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS) a revolutionary duty, equally as much as support for the Viet

Cong."²¹ This ideological development in the West German student left would go on to determine joint RAF-PLO armed actions which included the armed hijacking of Lufthansa Flight 181.

Likewise, the WUO's armed actions in conjunction with black militants (such as the Brink's robbery of 1981 which left three police dead) were influenced by a belief that the white skin privilege of the white working class virtually precluded the possibility of an alliance with oppressed blacks living in the internal colonies of ghettos. The black colony within the U.S. would thus have to carry out the war of liberation on its own, with aid from only a few enlightened white revolutionaries, specifically the Weathermen who would act as a vanguardist white fighting force against racism. This view of supporting black resistance by any means was expressed by one anonymous Weatherman who asserted that "We understood that to say we dug the Black Panthers and yet not be willing to take similar risks, would make us bullshitters and racists."²²

This section contends that the rise in anti-imperialist thought processes in the student movements of West Germany and the U.S. had come to influence the acts of violent protest by the RAF and the WUO. The chapter's investigation thus offers the view that it is the white student left's greater affirmation of solidarity with Third World resistance groups that emboldened the white radicals to partake in acts of violence against the institutions of global imperialism. It is precisely because of this turn to anti-imperialism that the student left used the tactics of bombs and bullets as a means of change.

Decaying Reaction: Anti-Communism and Fascist Repression in the Post-World War 2 West

As the New Left grew political power in the West, so too did the counter-revolutionary role of the state within these capitalist societies. The New Left theorist Herbert Marcuse catalysed this moment as the time when the state abandoned the “repressive tolerance” that Marcuse said was at the heart of liberal democracies such as the U.S. and West Germany, which gave way for repression pure and simple.²³ Given the historical role of white supremacy in the U.S. and Nazism in Germany, this repression would come to be seen by the New Left students as a form of fascism that sought to crush their burgeoning movements by any means necessary. The Black Guerrilla Family (BGF) founder George Jackson defined this fascism in capitalist society as the following: “Fascism must be seen as an episodically logical stage in the socio-economic development of capitalism in a state of crisis. It is the result of a revolutionary thrust that was weak and miscarried — a consciousness that was compromised.”²⁴ Jackson developed this New Leftist understanding of fascism as a form of capitalist repression further, stating:

The purpose of the chief repressive institutions within the totalitarian capitalist state is clearly to discourage and prohibit certain activity, and the prohibitions are aimed at very distinctly defined sectors of the class—and race—sensitized society. The ultimate expression of law is not order—it’s prison.²⁵

These repressive institutions (which the French Marxist Louis Althusser would distinguish as the Repressive State Apparatus, i.e. the institutions of the police, the army, and the

courts, which enable the ruling classes to ensure their domination over the working class)²⁶ would likewise be heralded by the student left’s armed organisations as a fascist monolith that dominated Western society. In the U.S., the Weather Underground would see this in terms of America’s history of white supremacy and the way in which institutions repressed minorities and communists through violent and covert operations. Within West Germany, the Red Army Faction outlined the fascism in their nation simply as a continuation of Nazi ideology that had been allowed to resurface in order to counter the country’s New Left. These definitions of fascism in society allowed the student leftists to justify their violence as a moral response to fascist brutality unleashed upon their movements.

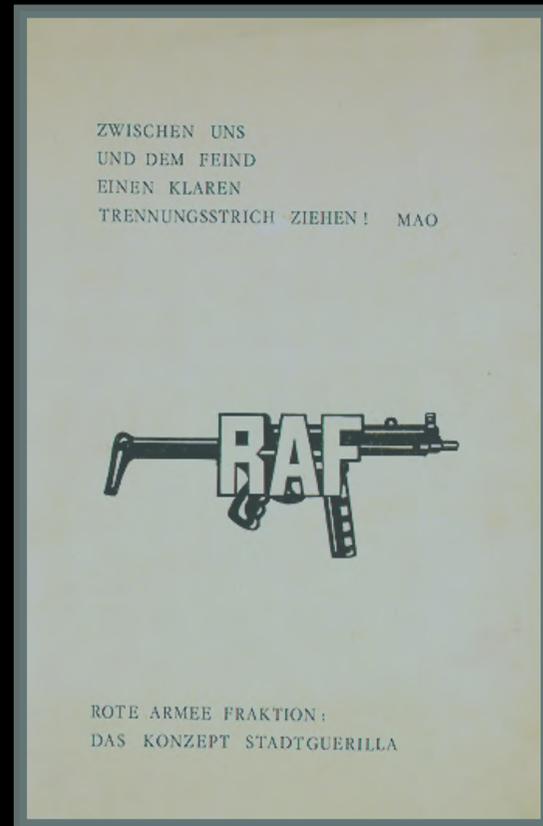
The Red Army Faction’s armed struggle against the West German state itself was seen by the group as a way in which to physically confront Germany’s Nazi past and its continued presence in the post-war years. The group’s very name was a use of situationist detournement, combining the names of the Soviet Red Army and the British Royal Air Force in a facetious nod to what both did to the original German Nazis.²⁷ In their fight against the West German state, and detailed in the group’s communiques, the RAF equated the political and judicial custodians of the Federal Republic with the Nazis. This reading of West German fascist continuity found material manifestations in the makeup of high-level political society within the nation. As of 1965, 60 percent of West German military officers had fought for the Nazis, and at least two-thirds of judges had served the Third Reich. In addition, some high-ranking officials in the Federal Republic had been Nazis. Most notorious was the Christian Democratic Union’s (CDU) Kurt Kiesinger, who years before becoming federal chancellor in 1966 had held an important position in the Nazi propaganda ministry.²⁸ The

absence of a complete break with Nazism in West Germany affected the young leftist students in a profound way, leading them to a path of violence that sought to compensate for the virtual absence of violent resistance in Germany to the Nazi regime. In this capacity, lethal violence promised to liberate RAF members from the psychological and political burdens of the past and break the chain of German guilt.²⁹

The Red Army Faction's anti-fascist struggle against the state was thus informed by the belief that Nazism had never truly been purged from German society and it would be up to the militant youth to do what their parents could not do and expunge fascism from society. The second-generation RAF leader Hans-Joachim Klein outlined this armed anti-fascism stating:

From the beginning the RAF has always said: the important thing is to exacerbate contradictions in such a way that the situation becomes more and more openly fascist. The important thing is to make the latent fascism that's predominant in West Germany clearly visible. After that the masses will rally round.³⁰

The role of the RAF's armed campaign summarised here suggests that through violent actions the group would awaken the German people to the realities of fascism felt by the students through making it more prominent, due to the inevitable excesses of repression by the state apparatus. This brutality was already felt by the students on two prominent occasions that served as a catalyst for the radical students' turn to violence. One such event was the police shooting of student demonstrator Benno Ohnesorg during a protest against the state visit of the Shah of Iran. In response to the killing, future RAF founder Gudrun Ensslin exclaimed ominously: "This fascist state means to kill us all. ...Violence is the only way to answer violence. This is the Auschwitz gen-



The RAF, De-Nazification, and the German Student Movements

Pictured above, the RAF publication, *The Urban Guerilla Concept*—written by RAF co-founder, Ulrike Meinhof.

eration, and there's no arguing with them."³¹

The killing and its reaction would develop an atmosphere amongst the student left that they were being targeted in much the same way as Jewish people during the reign of the Nazis. This view became ingrained in the minds of the most radical students when the second prominent event of fascist reaction occurred to the student left. On April the 4th, 1968, the distinguished New Left student leader Rudi Dutschke was critically wounded in a shooting by the far-right fanatic Josef Bachmann, an avid reader of the notoriously anti-communist Springer press who had ran a Red Scare campaign against Dutschke. Amidst the violent reaction by the students (which included the fire-bombing of Springer press news vans and the beating of Springer affiliated journalists)³² the Berlin Evangelical Student Union also released the following statement relating to the Springer press: "Since the Third Reich, the object of attack has been switched: the hooked Jewish nose in *Der Stürmer* has been replaced in the cartoons in *BILD* and *BZ* by the beard of the student, considered subhuman like a gorilla."³³

These events and the lack of adequate de-Nazification in West Germany would go on to prompt and justify numerous anti-fascist RAF actions. The most infamous of these violent actions was the kidnapping and execution of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, the president of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations and former SS officer under Holocaust architect Reinhard Heydrich. Through this action, the RAF had wished to confront the state with its own contradictions and highlight the fascist reaction felt by members of the group as students and communists. In a communique regarding the action, the RAF stated: "By taking Schleyer prisoner, we confronted the FRG state with its problem of legitimacy—using this bureaucrat from the Third Reich and its successor state, a state which was entirely

shaped from the outside and imposed internally."³⁴ Likewise, the assassination of Supreme Court President Günter von Drenkmann by New Left students was justified by his Nazi past, a line of thinking exemplified in the New Left tract *Revolutionärer Zorn* who wrote in response to the killing that "fascism comes as the punishment when one fails to advance the revolution."³⁵ These major events in West German radical history focus upon the relevancy of fascism in the students' struggle and further show precisely why New Left students strayed towards violence.

The Weather Underground meanwhile had a similar understanding on the legacy of fascism from the previous generation and the need to exterminate it through militant means, in the same regard as the West German student leftists. For example, in an act of international solidarity with their fellow student leftists, activists in New York (including future Weathermen David Gilbert and Jim Mellen) called for emergency demonstrations against the local office of the Springer press affiliated *Der Spiegel*. The event would turn into a riot after an anarchist collective from New York's Lower East Side called "Up Against the Wall Motherfucker" burned a German flag which gave both Mellen and Gilbert their first violent confrontations with the police.³⁶ The link between the West German students' fight against fascism and the Weather Underground would be furthered during the events and analysis of the Weatherman's Days of Rage. Before the riot, Weatherleader Bernadine Dohrn stated to the group: "We are not going to be good Germans in a Fascist State."³⁷ hinting at the lack of action by the Germans against the Nazi regime, a sentiment shared by the RAF.

Further impressions on the Days of Rage by the student left provided more insight into the anti-fascist rhetoric of the WUO. The Seattle Weatherwoman Susan Stern described the political impact of potential deaths during the ri-

ots as the following: “Mr. and Mrs. America would . . . see our bodies being blasted by shot-guns, our terrified faces as we marched trembling but proud, to attack the armed might of the Nazi state of ours.”³⁸ The Yippie student activist Stew Albert provided another anti-fascist narrative that justified the moral impulse of the violent event, stating:

What if you picked up a history book and read that in 1938 a thousand University of Berlin students ran through the streets on behalf of the Jews in the concentration camps, breaking car windows, knocking over fat old German ladies, and beating up members of the Gestapo? The Pope would bless them, Mao would write an essay on them, Nehru probably would have liked them, trees would be planted in Israel for them, even Nixon would have dug them. On a moral level, they’re perfect.³⁹

The view that the U.S. was similarly fascist to Germany would be explained, and used as a basis for violence, by the WUO when it came to examining U.S. white supremacist violence and an akin anti-communist agenda which gave the pretext for Weatherman to turn to violent protest.

Weatherman’s shift to the armed underground was also strongly influenced by the repressive measures of the state, specifically against communists and Black Power activists. One such measure was the targeted killings of activists by law enforcement which was to have a decisive impact on the WUO’s turn to a bombing campaign against the police. A key example of these killings was the 1969 murder of Fred Hampton, a 21-year-old leader of the Chicago Black Panther Party who was drugged, shot at, and then finally executed at point blank range whilst he slept next to his pregnant girlfriend in his apartment.⁴⁰ The assassination of such a renowned figure in the

"What is a policeman?
He is the active servant
of the commodity, the
man in complete
submission to the
commodity, whose job
it is to ensure that a
given product of
human labour remains
a commodity, with the
magical property of
having to be paid for,
instead of becoming a
mere refrigerator or
rifle — a passive,
inanimate object,
subject to anyone who
comes along to make
use of it."

-Guy Debord



Black Power movement greatly impacted the left and Weatherman specifically as they had worked with Hampton within Chicago. Speaking on the murder, Weatherman David Gilbert would go on to say that “It was the murder of Fred Hampton more than any other factor that compelled us to feel that we had to take up armed struggle.”⁴¹ However, a second act of repression would further highlight links between white supremacy, state institutions and fascism in the United States. In Greensboro, on November 3rd, 1979, five members of the Communist Workers’ Party were killed in a drive by shooting by members of the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party. It would later be revealed that FBI informants and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents had colluded with the far-right shooters in order to put a stop to Maoist organising within the black community in Greensboro.⁴² This repression from the state apparatus and collusion with far-right forces highlight the similar feeling within the U.S. left that fascism had ingrained itself within the nation and would need

to be militantly confronted.

The investigations within this section posit that both the WUO and the RAF’s analysis of post-war fascism had provided both groups with a moral incentive to target members of the repressive state apparatus that they saw as no different to the Nazis before them. This thought process would be realised in the final words of RAF commando Holger Meins on his deathbed from hunger strike with his defining statement that “In the final analysis, you’re either human being or pig.”⁴³ Similarly, a leader of the White Panthers—a group allied with Weatherman—issued the following public statement on violence against agents of the state: “I don’t want to make it sound like all you got to do is kill people, kill pigs, to bring about revolution, but ... it is war, and a righteous revolutionary war.”⁴⁴ These statements, and the analysis provided in this chapter, illustrate why a perceived atmosphere of fascist repression in the West provided the vindication for the student left to use violent means.

Obey, Consume, Conform: Consumer Capitalism and Culture in the Late 20th Century

In the post-war years following the destruction from World War Two, a new economic era for Western nations began as a result of the rising hegemony of the United States and its corporations through the Marshall Plan. With new-found markets becoming established and goods now flowing through Euro-America, a form of advanced capitalism would come to be entrenched within the West. The writer Fredric Jameson defined this society as “New types of consumption planned obsolescence: an ever present an ever more rapid rhythm of fashion and styling changes, the penetration of advertising, television and the media generally to a hitherto unparalleled degree throughout society.”⁴⁵ The analysis of this new post-industrial form of capitalism, which emphasised the role of products, signs, and individual consumers in society, was to be a key segment of New Left thinking and would go on to influence the countercultural views of young militant students. This line of thinking would be best outlined and explained by the Situationist International founder Guy Debord who diagrammed the new functions of the capitalist state in consumer society, commenting:

What is a policeman? He is the active servant of the commodity, the man in complete submission to the commodity, whose job it is to ensure that a given product of human labour remains a commodity, with the magical property of having to be paid for, instead of becoming a mere refrigerator or rifle — a passive, inanimate object, subject to anyone who comes along to make use of it.⁴⁶

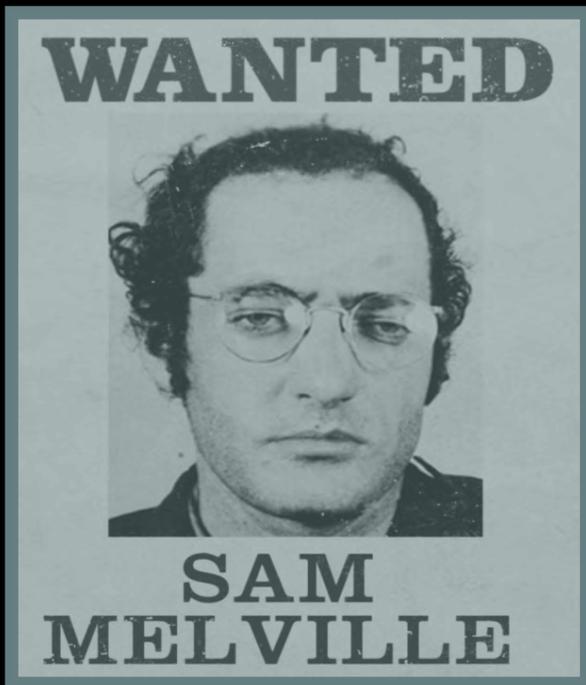
This belief, articulated by Debord and the Situ-

By the end of the armed campaigns, most of both groups’ membership were either dead, in prison, or had turned their backs on armed resistance in favour of becoming functioning members of capitalist society.

tionists, expanded upon Marx’s writings on alienation and the fetishism of commodities by stating that the hardening of the role of commodities in advanced capitalism had placed the need by state forces to protect consumer products far above the protection of working people. It was a view to be shared by both the Red Army Faction and the Weather Underground who aspired to overcome the individualism and decadence they saw as integral to consumer capitalism through cultivating an appreciation of the collective enterprise and of the kinds of discipline required for their dangerous political work.⁴⁷ The attempt to form a counter to consumer society would direct both groups to use violent protest as a way in which to bring down the cultural commodity-driven values that governed advanced capitalism. However, the spectacle of mass media, now ingrained as a part of consumer society, would also subtly influence the armed student

“We must move to a place beyond all known issues [...] What we want is salvation from a meaningless annihilation. To not be cremated for Coka-Cola and plastic flags [...] on the moon.”

-Sam Melville



groups' use of armed actions as the relationship between the students and capitalist mass media developed further and further with each passing armed attack. This rapport would display the ways in which the society of the spectacle would only come to increase the spectacular nature of both groups violent acts and thus displays, as this chapter shall argue, that the proliferation of mass media (and the media's attempts to commodify and profit from spectacular violent acts and even the students own violent deaths) would come to increase the militants' tendencies to use violence as a tactic.

The development of the Red Army Faction's anti-consumerist and anti-materialist ideology began with what was to be the group's very first destructive action. On April 2, 1968, future RAF leaders Gudrun Ensslin and Andreas Baader set fire to two department stores in Frankfurt. Whilst the action ostensibly protested the Vietnam War, the choice in target was a specific one that targeted the consumer mindset of modern West Germany in a deliberately militant way that sought to undermine the whole system. Future RAF leader Ulrike Meinhof would convey this very point, writing in support of her future comrades that "The progressive moment in the burning of a department store doesn't lie in the destruction of commodities but in the criminality of the act, its breaking of the law."⁴⁸ This anti-consumerist notion would be intrinsic to RAF ideology that developed into believing that the West German superstructure represented a repressive totality, rooted in a commodity fetishism that exerted a pervasive "Consumterror" ("terror of consumption").⁴⁹ The RAF would collectively detail this development, writing in 1972:

The system in the metropolises has managed to drag the masses so deeply into its own filth that they seem to have largely lost the feeling for their position as exploited and oppressed, of their situation

as object. So much so, that for a car, a pair of jeans, life insurance, and a loan, they will easily accept any outrage on the part of the system. In fact, they can no longer imagine or wish for anything beyond a car, a vacation, and a tiled bathroom.⁵⁰

The communiques of the RAF highlight a key component of the group's armed struggle which consciously rejects the narrow pursuit of self-interest and superficial comfort through ever-expanding consumption that was alleged to be at the heart of advanced capitalist culture. Another RAF communique linked the group's violent struggle directly with consumer society stating that "Those who don't defend themselves die, those who don't die are buried alive in prisons, in reform schools, in brand new kitchens and bedrooms filled with fancy furniture bought on credit. **START THE ARMED RESISTANCE NOW! BUILD UP THE RED ARMY.**"⁵¹ Through these visceral and eye-catching communiques, combined with their spectacular armed actions, the group borrowed methods from Antonin Artaud's theatre of cruelty that (like the RAF) sought - through transgressive and horrific theatrics - to shock an audience out of their cultural desensitization from mindless consumerism.⁵² These communiques and actions all point towards an underlying viewpoint of the RAF that sought to directly confront consumerism through militant actions and violence.

The Weather Underground meanwhile also faced a similar quandary confronting consumer culture within the United States. Deeply rooted within this quandary was the issue of being authentic in an atmosphere of alienation from the rise of product-based sign value.⁵³ This belief in authenticity held by the Weather Underground was shared across the U.S. New Left and especially within the countercultural student bodies that inhabited leftist spaces at the time. The New Leftists Ralph

Larkin and Daniel Foss summarised this position stating that to be "real" in the face of mass consumer capitalism meant "being what one becomes upon rejection of the conventions" learned through one's mainstream socialization. "From one's current perspective," these "amounted to 'bullshit,' 'lies,' 'brainwashing,' a 'phony mindfuck,' etc."⁵⁴ In other words, in order to triumph over consumerism, one would have to reject the cultural conventions through militancy against the very system and forge one's own authentic self through confrontation. This viewpoint would come to be epitomised by the Weather Underground fellow traveller and New York Collective leader Sam Melville whose group bombed numerous corporate buildings and U.S. army offices. In his communiques to the world explaining his actions, Melville stated that "...corporations have made us into useless consumers, devouring increasing quantities of useless credit cards and household appliances. Jobs are mindless. Vast machines pollute our air, water and food."⁵⁵ Writing from prison, he would further state that "We must move to a place beyond all known issues... What we want is salvation from a meaningless annihilation. To not be cremated for Coka-Cola and plastic flags . . . on the moon."⁵⁶ These actions and writings display the influence that consumer society played into driving New Left students further into militant actions.

The shared aims and views between Melville, the WUO and other militant students, presents how the turn to armed actions occurred due to the desire (in a culture that produced floods of shoddy and "plastic" commodities) to be authentic in one's life (that is, to be authentic revolutionaries) and to demonstrate this authenticity in the most militant fashion (first by street-fighting, then by bombing).⁵⁷ Weatherman's anti-consumerist agenda was further evidenced when the group sprung out counterculture figure and LSD gu-



ru Timothy Leary in a jailbreak, stating that “He was a political prisoner, captured for the work he did in helping all of us begin the task of creating a new culture on the barren wasteland that has been imposed on this country by Democrats, Republicans, Capitalists and creeps.”⁵⁸ For the WUO, the jailbreak emphasized not only the need for militant action in getting results but also the need to create a new authentic culture which breaks completely with the alienating, capitalist and consumerist society felt in America. A view best summarised most simply by WUO leader Bernadine Dohrn who once commented that “After the revolution there won’t be any commercials.”⁵⁹

However, advanced capitalist culture in the West would also have a unique effect on the armed actions of the militant student groups by the time of the late '60s. The spectacle of mass media in both the US and West Germany would play into numerous groups’ praxis when considering violent actions of a spectacular nature. This was demonstrated by Baader’s belief

that “The revolution won’t be built through political work, but through headlines,”⁶⁰ a belief which espoused that the media’s highlighting of spectacular actions such as bombings and hijackings could wake the masses up to their own alienation. By the end though, in both the US and West Germany, the most violent and spectacular New Left student groups would end up becoming products themselves in the commodified news cycle of mass media. In the words of Debord, the revolutionary groups “became fodder for the media machine.”⁶¹ and in spite of trying to create an anti-spectacle through bombings (which were supposed to interrupt the spectacle of everyday life) the eventual deaths of many student militants in armed actions would end with the commodification of the students’ corpses.

For the RAF, this moment would be the deaths of founders Ulrike Meinhof, Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe in Stammheim prison and the public display of their bodies for the press to capture. The use of mass media was deliberate and was used to un-

derline the defeat of the RAF's first generation by the state in a spectacular fashion. In the U.S., this moment would be best captured not by the Weather Underground but by the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) another New Left armed organisation with roots in the student movement which engaged in dialogue with Weatherman. Like the RAF, the SLA explicitly used media orientated strategies (such as the kidnapping of Patty Hearst and her eventual active participation, caught on camera, in an SLA bank heist) and were also portrayed as 'folk devils' by the mass media. Finally, like the RAF, they were to die spectacularly in a shootout with police that ended with the firebombing of the group's base. Their charred corpses were, like the RAF founders, captured and put on display by the nation's news media.⁶² Both events show how, despite the New Left students' attempts to use the media spectacle to their own advantage, the group's members would remain little more than commodities in the eyes of mass media society. Both the media and the student's usage of each other as tools though did increase the propensities for violence to occur from both state and leftist actors and thus shows the role consumerism played in driving spectacular violence forward.

Within this section, consumer society's alienating aspects (as well as its spectacle in the form of news media) have been analysed as major reasons for the turn to more violent and attention-grabbing armed actions by the most radical New Left students. The investigations in the section have offered up the conclusions that the rise of commodities, the need to be authentic and militant in a 'hyperreal' society and the influence of mass media all contributed to rising violence from the New Left students' organisations. In the end, both the society of the spectacle and the fetishization of the commodity incited alienated students to use militant acts in their struggle against the state.

The End of the Rule of the Pigs is in Sight:

Concluding Comments

In answer to the question of capitalism and youth violence, the analysis offered in this investigation of student revolutionary violence in the late 1960s proposes that key components of Western capitalism did influence the student leftist's propensity to use armed protest. Examinations on both discussed groups offer key insights into the thought processes of the most radical student leftists. The lines of thinking convey a sense of great conviction to not only make revolution in the First World, but also to confront the flagrant injustices committed in the name of capitalist ideology. In confronting this ideological force, the groups happily committed themselves to a process of revolution that emphasized violence in the overthrow of the ruling class. For example, Weatherman once prophesied that "Our humble task is to organize the apocalypse!"⁶³ and, in confronting the heavy response from state forces, stated that "If it takes a bloodbath, let's get it over with."⁶⁴ Similarly, the Red Army Faction delved into violence further and further as the struggle continued, once stating that:

...the apologists for the hard line will find out that they are not the only ones with an arsenal at their disposal. They will find out that we are many, and that we have enough love—as well as enough hate and imagination—to use both our weapons and their weapons against them, and that their pain will equal ours.⁶⁵

These statements encapsulate both groups' struggle against the capitalist state. A struggle which led both groups down a path that relied on violence more and more as either a means for survival or for reprisal against what they saw as further injustices committed on the world stage.

Neither the Red Army Faction nor the Weather Underground's campaigns of armed actions brought about the immediate end to imperialism, fascism, or consumerism in the capitalist West. By the end of the armed campaigns, most of both groups' membership were either dead, in prison, or had turned their backs on armed resistance in favour of becoming functioning members of capitalist society. The campaigns did, however, confront these key components of capitalism and may have acted as an embryonic form of what further resistance could look like in other times of revolutionary possibility in the First World. The lessons learned from the 1960s New Left students by today's revolutionary left will be important to study, as capitalism further develops into its late-stage format. With poetic optimism for this potential future of new left-wing armed actors, the RAF concluded in their final statement that "The revolution says/I was/I am/I will be again."⁶⁶

When concluding on the violence, struggle and repression felt in the New Left students' campaigns against capitalism, the position of the radical and revolutionary left and the reasoning behind the violence would be best recapitulated by the artist Jean Genet in his statement to the world:

Violence and life are more or less synonymous. The grain of wheat which germinates and breaks through the frozen soil, the beak of the chick which cracks the eggshell, the fertilization of the female and the birth of the young can all be accused of being violent. Yet no one would put on trial the child, the women, the chick, the bud, or the grain of wheat. The charges brought against the Red Army Faction and the trial of its violence are real enough. But Germany, accompanied by the rest of Europe and America, are trying to fool themselves, and the trial against the violence is precisely what that brutality consists of. The greater the

brutality and the more demeaning the trial, the more violence becomes imperative and necessary. The more destructive the brutality, the more the violence which is life will require heroism. As Andreas Baader has said 'Force is an economic power.' We owe it to Andreas Baader, to Ulrike Meinhof, to Holger Meins, to the Red Army Faction in general, to have made us understand not only by their words but by their actions outside and inside prison that only violence can stop human brutality. More or less unconsciously, everyone knows that behind these two words – trial and violence – is hidden a third one. Brutality. The brutality of the system.⁶⁷

The statement by Genet best epitomises the meaning behind the New Left's struggle against capitalism. It was a violent one but one that was motivated by imperialist bombing in Vietnam, fascist murderers in Greensboro and consumerist alienation in the Western metropolis. It was precisely this brutality that led to New Left student violence.

Endnotes

1. Cheek, Timothy. *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History*. p. 198
2. Bacciocco, Edward. *The New Left in America: reform to revolution*. p. 21
3. The strategy of foco theory posits that a dedicated band of revolutionaries can launch very small-scale, roving semi-guerrilla warfare at any time, which will serve as a focus and inspiration for the rapid growth of more general guerrilla warfare and/or a general uprising capable of seizing political power. The theory is that these paramilitary roving bands can themselves create the necessary conditions for revolution through their vanguard actions and moral example.
4. Abu-Jamal, Mumia. *We Want freedom: A*

- Life in the Black Panther Party*. p. 105
5. Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. p. 177
 6. Lenin, Vladimir. *Imperialism and Capitalism*. p. 33
 7. Aronowitz, Stanley. *When the New Left Was New*. p.34
 8. Vague, Tom. *Televisionaries: A Red Army Faction Story*. p. 8
 9. Guevara, Che. *Message to the Tricontinental*. p. 9
 10. Varon, Jeremy. *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*. p. 7
 11. Gillies, Kevin. *The Last Radical*. p. 7
 12. Stern, Susan. *With the Weathermen: The Personal Journal of a Revolutionary Woman*. p. 210
 13. Berger, Dan. *Outlaws Of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity*. p. 131
 14. Vague, Tom. *Televisionaries: A Red Army Faction Story*. p. 50
 15. Zedong, Mao. *Problems of War and Strategy*. p. 224
 16. Goldsworthy, Rupert. *CONSUMING//TERROR: Images of the Baader-Meinhof*. p. 3
 17. Varon, Jeremy. *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*. p. 34
 18. Moncourt, Andre. *The Red Army Faction, A Documentary History: Volume 1: Projectiles for the People*. p. 178
 19. Varon, Jeremy. *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*. p. 213
 20. Vague, Tom. *Televisionaries: A Red Army Faction Story*. p. 67
 21. Martel, Christoph. Nur die besten Absichten: Das prekäre Verhältnis der deutschen 68er zu den USA und Israel. p. 25
 22. Varon, Jeremy. *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*. p. 110
 23. Berger, Dan. *Outlaws Of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity*. p. 61
 24. Jackson, George. *Blood in My Eye*. p. 137
 25. *Ibid* p. 99
 26. Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. p. 92
 27. Vague, Tom. *Televisionaries: A Red Army Faction Story*. p. 32
 28. Varon, Jeremy. *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*. p. 33
 29. *Ibid* p. 13
 30. Goldsworthy, Rupert. *CONSUMING//TERROR: Images of the Baader-Meinhof*. p. 92
 31. Sánchez-Cuenca, Ignacio. *The Historical Roots of Political Violence: Revolutionary Terrorism in Affluent Countries*. p. 209
 32. Drake, Connor. *Terrorists' Target Selection*. p. 156
 33. Goldsworthy, Rupert. *CONSUMING//TERROR: Images of the Baader-Meinhof*. p. 38
 34. Moncourt, *The Red Army Faction, A Documentary History: Volume 2: Dancing with Imperialism*. p. 298-299
 35. Gassert, Philipp. *Coping with the Nazi past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict*. p. 266
 36. Varon, 2004, Jeremy. *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*. p. 36
 37. *Ibid* p. 85
 38. *Ibid* p. 76
 39. *Ibid* p. 86
 40. Churchill, Ward. *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*. p. 69-70
 41. Berger, Dan. *Outlaws Of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity*. p. 120
 42. Waller, Signe. *Love and Revolution: A Poli-*

cal Memoir : People's History of the Greensboro Massacre, Its Setting and Aftermath p. 475.

43. Goldsworthy, Rupert. *CONSUMING//TERROR: Images of the Baader-Meinhof*. p. 110

44. Eckstein, Arthur. *Bad Moon Rising: How the Weather Underground Beat the FBI and Lost the Revolution*. p. 115-116

45. Jameson, Frederic. *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern*. p. 19

46. Debord, Guy. *The Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity Economy*. p. 3

47. Varon, Jeremy. *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*. p. 9

48. *Ibid* p. 41

49. *Ibid* p. 42

50. RAF, *The action of Black September in Munich - on the strategy of the anti-imperialist struggle*. p. 6

51. Vague, Tom. *Televisionaries: A Red Army Faction Story*. p. 21

52. Goldsworthy, Rupert. *CONSUMING//TERROR: Images of the Baader-Meinhof*. p. 18

53. A term made popular by Jean Baudrillard which showed how the use of the commodity as a form of communication in contemporary culture and society has come to the point in which the real has disappeared and is replaced by models "more real than the real".

54. Larkin & Foss, *Lexicon of Folk-Etymology*. p. 363

55. Pickering, Leslie James. *Mad Bomber Melville*. p. 35

56. *Ibid* p. 73

57. Eckstein, Arthur. *Bad Moon Rising: How the Weather Underground Beat the FBI and Lost the Revolution*. p. 50

58. Berger, Dan. *Outlaws Of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity*. p. 139

59. *Ibid* p. 158

60. Goldsworthy, Rupert. *CONSUMING//TERROR: Images of the Baader-Meinhof*. p. 75

61. Scribner, Charity. *Buildings on Fire: The Situationist International and the Red Army*

Faction. p. 32

62. Goldsworthy, Rupert. *CONSUMING//TERROR: Images of the Baader-Meinhof*. p. 179

63. Buhle, Paul. *The New Left Revisited*. p. 230

64. Varon, Jeremy. *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*. p. 309

65. Moncourt, Andre *Daring to Struggle, Failing to Win: The Red Army Faction's 1977 Campaign of Desperation*. p. 19

66. RAF. "The Urban Guerrilla Is History...": *The Final Communiqué From The Red Army Faction*. p. 20

67. Burns, Tim. *Against the Grain: More Meat than Wheat*.

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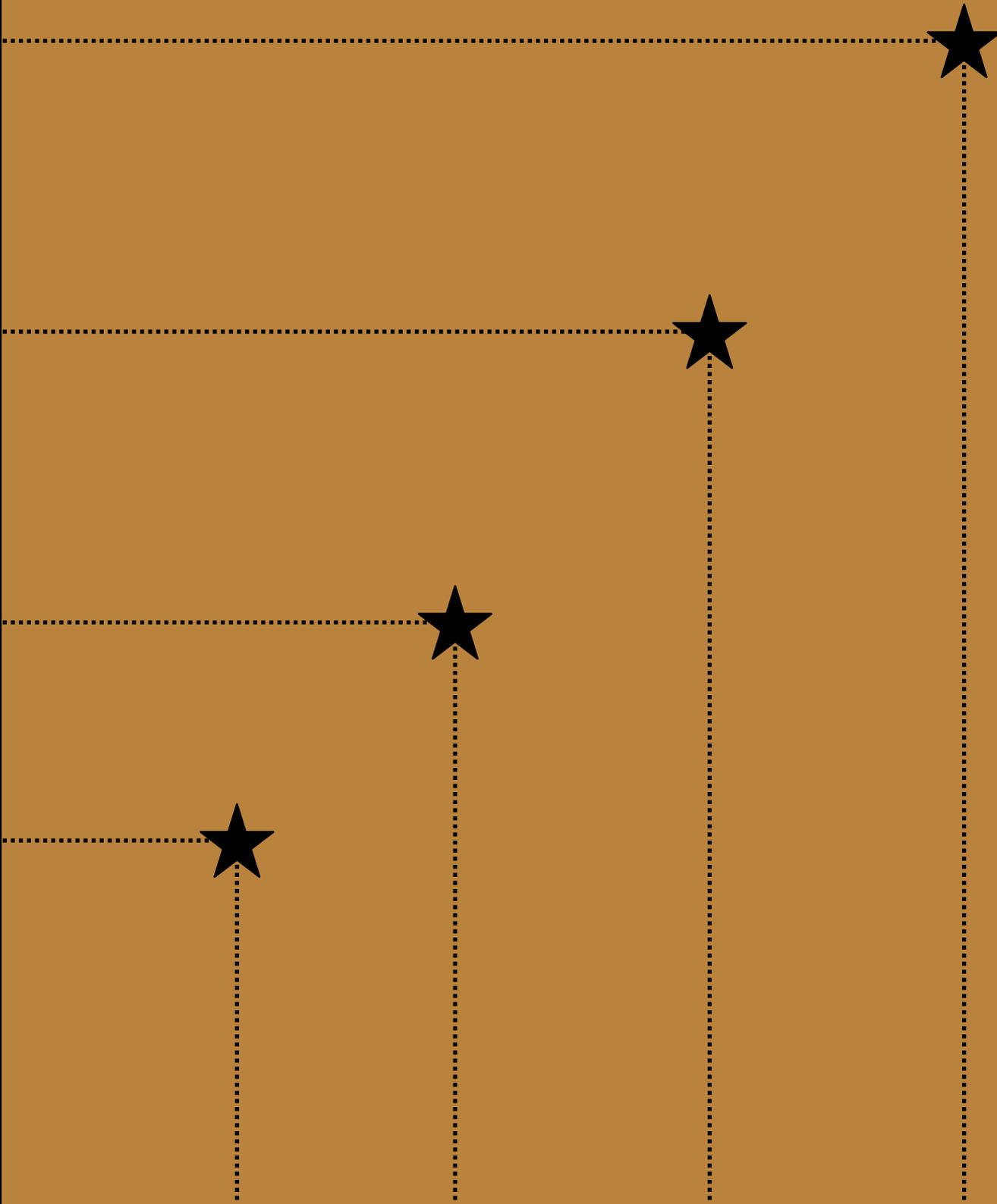
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Title:

International Capital and the Imperial Periphery:

A Marxist Case Study of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall and its Conditions in Lebanon 1997-2018



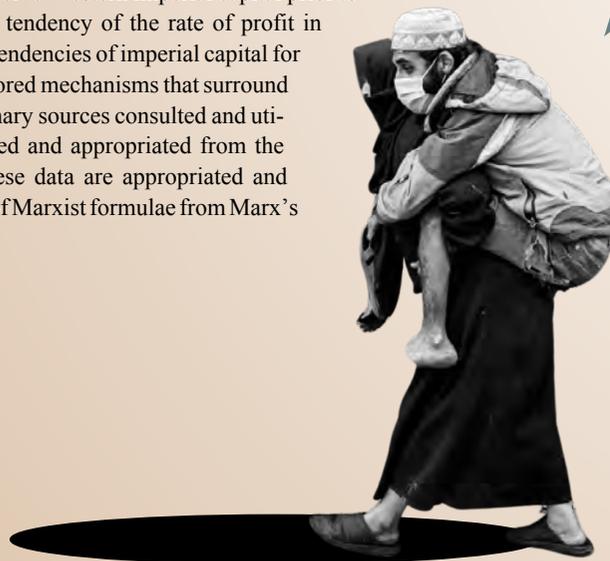
Thomas McLamb

Author:



Marx's *Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall* provides a theoretical foundation for calculating the economics of the social condition of the proletarian-capitalist relationship under capitalism. This study examines the tendency of the rate of profit in Lebanon, 1997-2018, for the purposes of identifying the place of Lebanese profitability within the schema of international capital, specifically that of the dominant Western capitalist economies. The author finds that the existing data on the Lebanese economy challenge the existing Western-centric thought on the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Additionally, the author finds that the restorations and declinations of the Lebanese rate of profit appear as mirrored inversions of the world rate of profit.

This article argues that an examination of the rate of profit in Lebanon can provide a more thorough empirical understanding of the role of Lebanon in the schema of international capitalism. In its examination, this article utilizes a slew of orthodox and contemporary Marxist economic methods to study the rates of exploitation, rates of profit, and tendencies of imaginary spheres of capital to serve Western imperial capital prior to capital in the imperial periphery. The tendency of the rate of profit in Lebanon is examined in relation to the tendencies of imperial capital for the purposes of illuminating the oft-ignored mechanisms that surround the Lebanese crises of capital. The primary sources consulted and utilized for this article have been gathered and appropriated from the World Bank economic databases. These data are appropriated and serve as functional variables in a series of Marxist formulae from Marx's *Capital* Vols. I-III.



International Capital and the Imperial Periphery: A Marxist Case Study of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall and its Conditions in Lebanon 1997-2018

The tendency of the rate of profit (ROP) to fall is the fundamental observation to any significant application of Marx's theoretical works onto the crises of capitalism. Marx's work on this tendency posits that the profit mechanisms that sustain the expansion of capital itself are not infinite; or, capital cannot enjoy endless growth. Where the rate of profit is in decline, investment in imaginary capital increases alongside the rate of exploitation in the imperial periphery. Through the cycles of expansion and contraction of profitability, the general rate of profit over time can be observed to be in steady decline in the imperial core. The rate of profit is often temporarily restored or stagnated in the West through social-democratic reforms, i.e., the welfare state, or through the neoliberal programme of allowing the economy to 'bottom-out.' Underneath these Western restorations of the rate of profit are the processes by which capital externalizes its crises onto the peripheral developing economies of the world. Despite the temporary imperial restorations of the ROP, it remains in decline with its restorations lasting only a few years at most before dropping lower than previously. This article examines the process of imperial restoration by externalizing crises onto the periphery in a

case study on the Lebanese ROP from 1997-2018 as a means of confirming the thesis that the imperial ROP enjoys temporary restorations through externalizing crises onto the periphery; in the case of this analysis, Lebanon.

This article will serve as an empirical Marxist analysis of the rate of profit in Lebanon. This case study will examine the international capitalist economic conditions that saturate the movements of profitability as well as the existing tendencies of Lebanese profitability within the greater context of international capital. The primary documents of reference in support of these theses on Lebanese profitability are almost exclusively data series adapted and re-framed from the World Bank data collections on Lebanon from 1997-2018. The primary method of presentation utilizes the interpretations of calculating rate of profit from Michael Roberts' means of measuring surplus value from large-scale national data series.

This article utilizes in its analysis the concrete form of measure in Marx's Volume III of Capital whereby money is the unit of measure rather than the previous form of measure via. labor-time in Volume I. The existing literature on the

V.I. Lenin's general thesis on imperialism and the export of capital from the dominant capitalist economies is that capitalist economies, within their home borders and in search for greater degrees of profit, must rectify their unsustainable national projects with the expansion of their spheres of capital into the underdeveloped world.

appropriation and rectification of these two forms is best described in J.S. Szumski's *The Transformation Problem Solved* where Szumski asserts that the Labor Theory of Value proper in Volume I is best understood as an abstract form of the empirical money-measured form of Volume III. Szumski concludes that while the LTV serves as an explanation for the nature of profits, the formulae relating to the rate of profit in Volume III serve as empirical tools for understanding the processes of commodity production in capitalist economic form.¹

The literature on the falling rate of profit is immense with little consensus to be had even amongst so-called Marxist economists, but of most note for the purposes of this article are the works from British economist Michael Roberts as well as the works on crisis by Wolfgang Streeck. Roberts' work serves as the proof-of-concept work for measuring rate of profit utilizing principally bourgeois data series. *The Long Depression* by Roberts demonstrates the mechanisms and symptoms of the declining rate of profit within the imperial sphere of capital as well as the means by which it restores itself temporarily.² Streeck's arguments in *Buying Time* are much more compatible with the general theses of this article. Streeck's work on the occasional recent crises of capital posits that capitalism not only has a limit on the amount of

profit it can extract before it resorts to the gambling of imaginary capital, but that capitalism finds a limit in the ways that it can extract profit in a democratic society.³ Streeck's work is utilized in the following research as a means of examining the ways in which democratic capitalist societies within the imperial core externalize their internal contradictions of democracy and profit by exporting misery to the periphery through mass external debt stocks. This paper finds its place in the scholarship as a specific case study on the role of Lebanon in the crises of international capital during the Long Depression as well as a confirming thesis on the tendency of imperial capital to project its crises onto the imperial periphery.

The Rate of Profit in Lebanon

From 1997-2002, Lebanon enjoyed a steady increase in profitability with little to no stagnation or decline (See Figure 1). The rate of profit from 1997-2018 presents a different process, showing the typical stages of expansion and contraction identified in Ernest Mandel's *Late Capitalism* in his work on the long and short-waves of capitalism.⁴ Wages in Lebanon fluctuated year-to-year while fixed capital ownership

Rate of Profit in Lebanon, 1997-2018

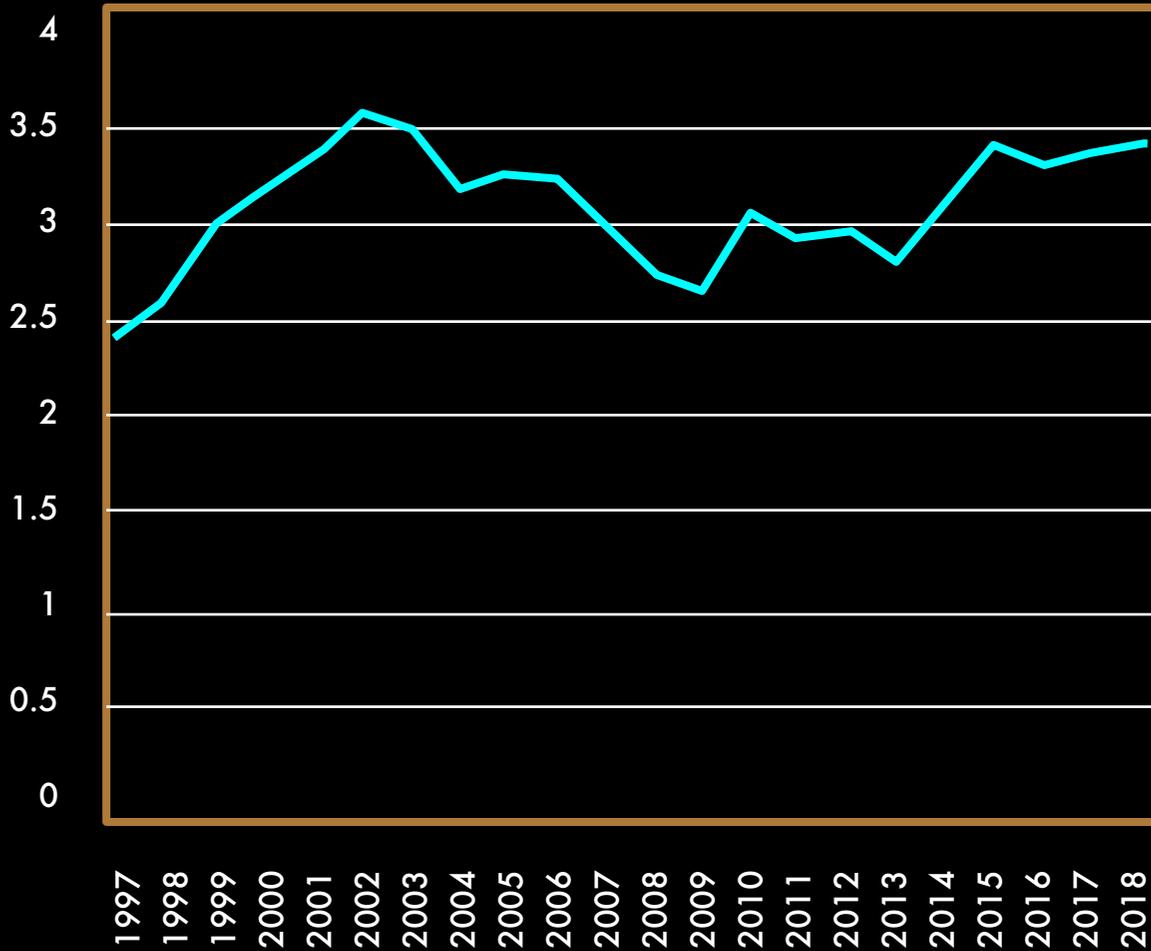


Figure 1. Source: Author's Calculations via. World Bank, Lebanon Data Series. Rate of Profit Calculated utilizing Marx's orthodox formula and Roberts' interpretation, $S/C+V$.⁶

in this period experienced multi-year contraction leading into revitalized increases in ownership over the means of production from 2000-2008. Somewhat expectedly, and despite the cycles of expansion and contraction in both wages and capital goods' ownership, nominal GDP increased at steady rates with little-to-no contraction.⁵ The rate of profit in Lebanon has gone through a general stage of decline from 2002-2018 but a general incline from

1997-2018. The cycles of Western capital and their consequences in the periphery develop a ripple effect of long-term development of externalizations of crisis.

Figure 1 displays a far different tendency in the ROP than the world rate of profit calculated by British economist Michael Roberts. Roberts' work is certainly the most orthodox of contemporary Marxist economic analyses, though unlike other contemporary Marxists, Roberts at-

One need not observe for long to see that where the imperialist rate of profit is in decline, the rate of profit inclines in Lebanon. Where the Lebanese rate of profit is in *decline*, the rate of profit experiences *incline* in the imperialist economies, though to less significant and far more temporary degrees.

tempts to understand the functional crises of capital as an international phenomenon. While Roberts' work on calculating a world rate of profit is well deserving of praise for its significance in analyzing the profitability and exploitative processes of imperial capital, Roberts does not, nor do any of the prominent Marxists of the 21st century, attempt to measure rate of profit in the imperial peripheries. Roberts' work is derived from calculating a world rate of profit comprised of only the G7 and G20 spheres of imperial capital. In the case of the imperialist accumulation of capital, Western capital externalizes its internal crises onto the imperial periphery. In the case of the United States, this process has presented itself in the form of the endless wars, economic sanctions, proxy wars, and state-funded terrorisms in the Middle East and elsewhere. The subject to observe then in this case study is the relationship of the rate of profit in Lebanon with the international rates of profit.

V.I. Lenin's general thesis on imperialism and the export of capital from the dominant capitalist economies is that capitalist economies, within their home borders and in search for greater degrees of profit, must rectify their unsustainable national projects with the expan-

sion of their spheres of capital into the underdeveloped world.⁷ One-hundred years after Lenin's works the spheres of capital in the Western imperialist world have more-or-less subsumed each other into one dominant sphere of capital comprising all of the G7, arguably the G20, economies. These economies have woven a web of interconnectedness by which the economic processes of one affect the processes of the other. Just as these economies affect one another, they too subjugate the economies of the developing spheres of capital, certainly including the economic processes of Lebanon.

From 1997 to present the G7 economies have experienced a declining rate of profit that proceeds immediately from the neoliberal austerity programme of '83 - '86. Where the rate of profit is then in decline in these imperialist core economies, the rate of profit has a general pattern of incline in the periphery, again in this case, Lebanon. Until roughly 2002, during the period of the Long Depression, empire's ROP remained in a general tendency of decline.⁸ It is this moment when one can observe the temporary restoration of the ROP from 2002-2004, coinciding with the end to Lebanon's steady incline in the ROP. As expected, the restoration of the imperialist ROP lasted only a few years

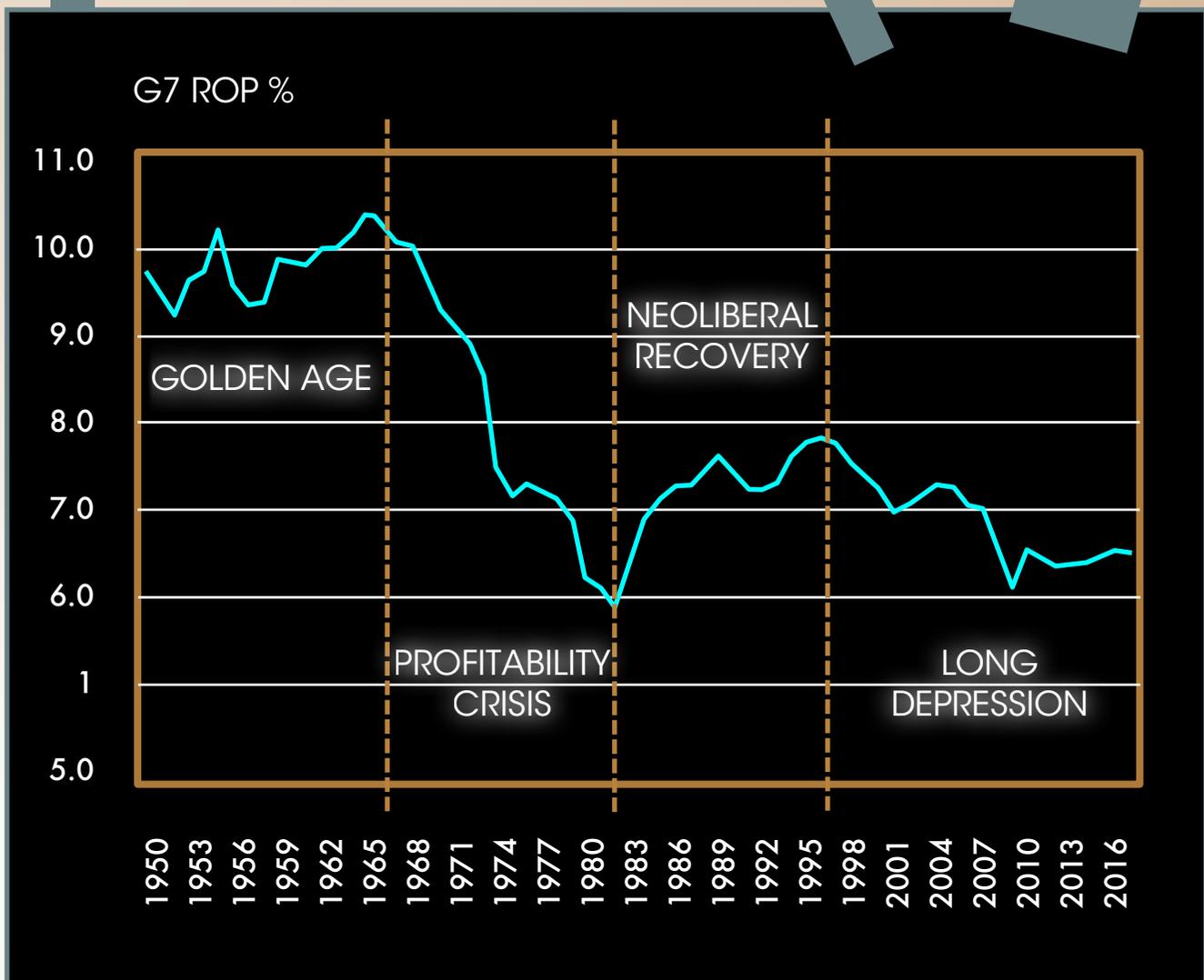


Figure 2. Source: Michael Roberts' calculations of a World Rate of Profit. Alternatively, data are available in Michael Roberts, "The Long Depression: How it Happened, Why it Happened, and What Happens Next." (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016).⁹

before sinking to a rate at nearly the same level of the profitability crises four decades prior during the international crash of '08 (See both *Fig. 1* and *Fig. 2*).

One need not observe for long to see that where the imperialist rate of profit is in decline, the rate of profit inclines in Lebanon (See Figures 1 and 2). Where the Lebanese rate of profit is in decline, the rate of profit experiences incline in the imperialist economies, though to less signif-

icant and far more temporary degrees. Because these imperialist economies are far more developed than that of the periphery and their spheres of capital are far more accumulated towards-monopoly, the fluctuations in the rate of profit are far more exaggerated with restorations occurring over shorter periods of time than in the peripheral developments.

The period of decline of the ROP in Lebanon remained after the imperial restoration largely

Trade in Lebanon, 1997-2018 (% of GDP)



Figure 3. Source: World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files.¹¹

due to the Israeli invasion, occupation, and bombarding of Lebanon in 2006 and subsequent universal recession of 2008. While Ernest Mandel’s discoveries on war economies in *Late Capitalism* present a thesis that mass production during these eras oft encourage short-term restorations in profitability for the imperialist country, the reality of this imperial restoration is that the hinders of profitability are merely externalized and projected onto the imperial subject.¹⁰ Crisis cannot be simply erased within the imperial core, rather it is pushed outwards onto developing economies. Take the Israeli invasion of Lebanon; Profitability is generated in either function or attempt in the Israeli imperial core during the oc-

cupation while profitability experienced immediate contraction and subsequent long-term slow growth in Lebanon, the imperial periphery.

In addition to the obvious circumstances of the impacts of imperialist occupation and military bombarding of Lebanon, trade indicators 1997-2018 illuminate the involvement of outside spheres of capital on the general exploitation of Lebanese production. Trade in Lebanon has only exceeded the GDP twice between 1997 and 2018; first in 2008 at 106.63% of GDP, second in 2011 at 102.14% (See Figure 3). Where the rate of profit experiences steady inclines from 1997-2002, a declining rate of

Rate of Exploitation in Lebanon, 1997-2018

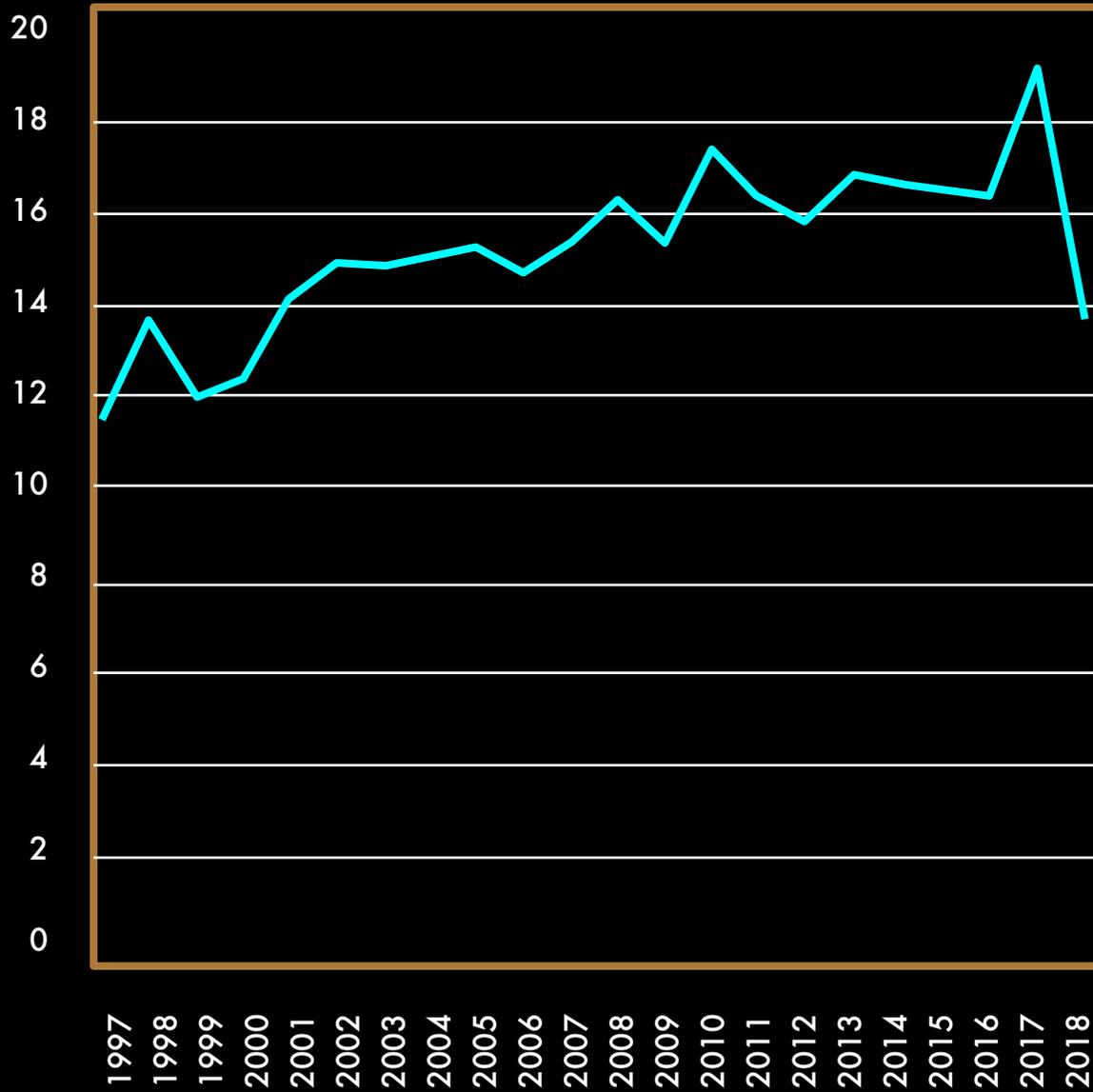


Figure 4. Source: Author's Calculations via. World Bank, Lebanon Data Series. Rate of Exploitation calculated using S/V .¹²



Percent of External Debt to GDP in Lebanon, 1997-2018

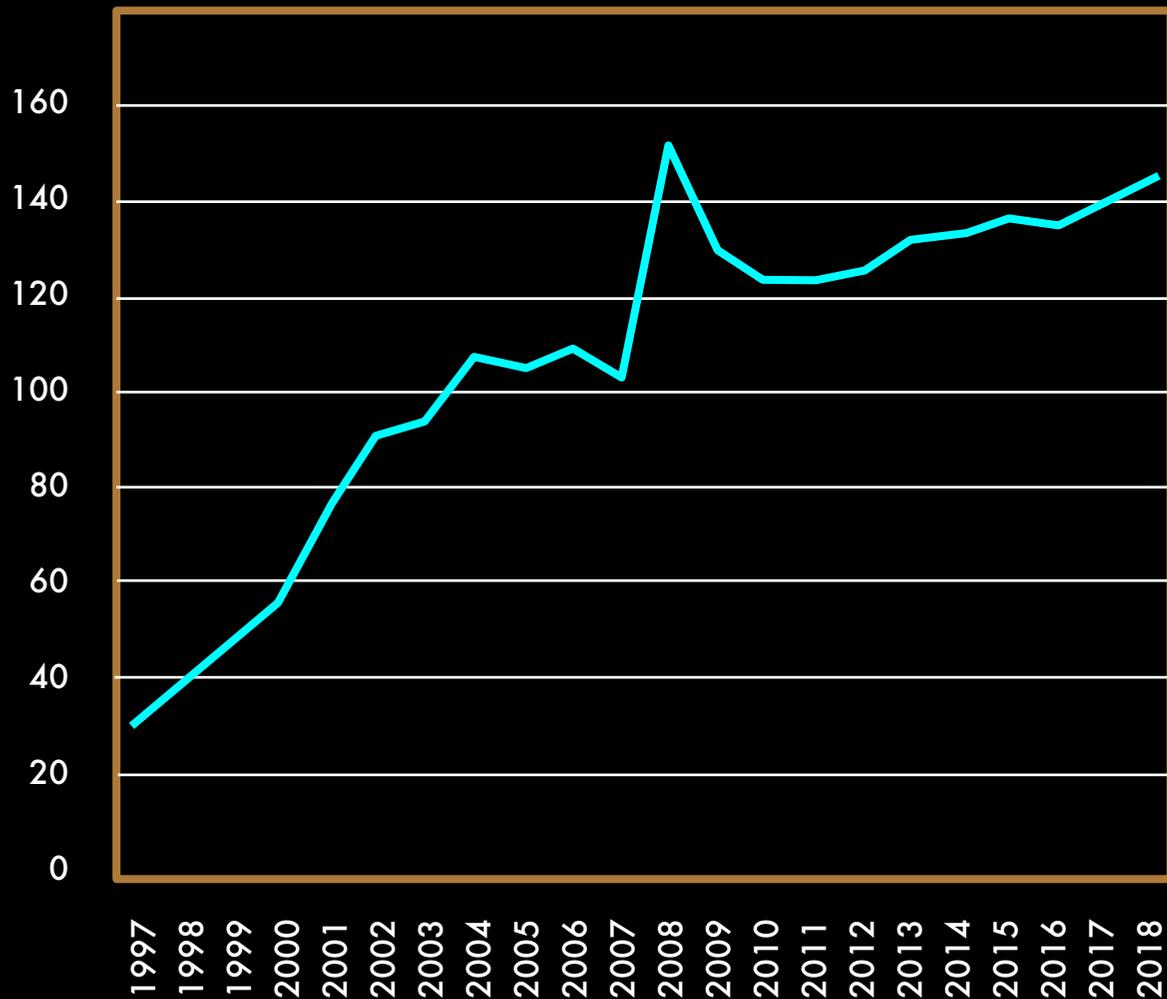


Figure 5. Source: Author's Calculations via World Bank, Lebanon Data Series. Calculated using Ext. Debt/GDP.¹⁴

profit correlates directly with rapid increases in foreign trade, nearly double from '03-'04. This process suggests that the declining rate of profit is certainly tied to contradictions of production rather than consumption as many bourgeois economists suggest today. Regardless, profitability suffers within the Lebanese sphere of Lebanon while it serves to restore imperial capital. Where foreign trade increases, there is a

direct and proportionate pattern of higher rates of exploitation of Lebanese proletarians (See *Figure 4*).

Just as trade in Lebanon with foreign spheres of capital follows an inverted form of the cycles of declination and inclination of the Lebanese rate of profit, it follows the restorations of imperial capital of its own tendencies. Exploitation is thus in a general upwards trend where trade in-

creases in Lebanon displaying confirmation of the thesis that restorations in the rate of profit in the Western world are not simply the product of insular economic policy in the imperial core but rather the product of externalizing crises onto the periphery. Crises are externalized onto Lebanon for the purpose of serving imperial restoration.

The data series on the rate of exploitation in Lebanon show two things. First, the confirmation of a near identical percent increase over the 21-year period of exploitation and increases in trade. Second, the series shows the tendency of exploitation to increase where restorations in the imperial rate of profit occur. There is the elephant in the room that is the 2008 economic crisis that resulted in a near universal decline in the rate of profit in the core and peripheries of empire. Despite this fluctuation, the tendency of trade to increase in Lebanon as capital is accumulated in the imperial core alongside the rate of profit to follow a mirrored path of the rate of profit in the imperial core allows one to see the process that crises are externalized onto the periphery by the core during the long-term decline and crises of imperial capital.

Trade and exploitation are only functional aspects of the greater processes of externalizing crises from the imperial core onto the periphery. The crises of late capitalism in the Western imperial core largely result in the form of imaginary capital. Imaginary capital is most succinctly described as the moneyed processes of capitalism built solely from speculation or gambling. These imaginary spheres of capital are most often observed as stocks, bonds, shares, or debt stocks.¹³ The observations and analyses presented thus far have established the mirrored relationship that Lebanese capital experiences under the subjugation of imperial capital. The means by which this happens is less clear, though observing the processes of external debt accumulation in the periphery can illuminate far more.

The declining rate of profit makes necessary the speculative gambling of finance capital where they substitute profit-extraction from commodity production for profit-extraction through accumulation of imaginary capital. Lebanon is not exempt as a subject to this speculative gambling of imperial capital. While the rate of profit has not been in decline in Lebanon from 1997-2018, it has certainly experienced inclines in trade, exploitation, and investment from foreign capital gamblers during periods of imperial decline (See all previous figures). As shortly as possible, where empire is in decline, debt, or engagement in imaginary capital, is on the rise in Lebanon. The consequences of the declining ROP within the spheres of empire take the form of imaginary moneyed investments into Lebanon resulting in higher degrees of exploitation with each passing year. These moneyed investments are attempts, and often successes even if temporary, to restore the rate of profit by artificially increasing the rates of exploitation and consequently profit in the imperial periphery. For Lebanon, these speculative gambles by the imperialist are exhibited in the data series examining external debt in *Fig. 5*. This external debt places the imperial periphery in a capitalist sphere of rent-owing economy indefinitely to the imperial core when the external debt (money owed through imperial gambling) surpasses the GDP.

Figure 5 displays the historic increases in the levels of external debt to GDP in Lebanon. As shown, in 2004 the percent of external debt to GDP exceeds 100%. These levels of external debt are indicative of the general health of the imperial spheres of capital though they secondarily indicate the general tendency of profitability in Lebanon.

Profitability will increase in the imperial core until it can no longer extract value through simple commodity production within the national borders. This failure to extract profit further signals the decline in national profitability and

the initial stage of capitalist crisis. The crises faced by Lebanon at present then are two-fold. First, Lebanon is subject to the endless externalization of crisis onto its economy by the insufferable gambling of imperialist capital. Second, Lebanon is subject to its own development of crises through mass accumulation of debt and the exploitation of its own commodity and value production by empire. Empire's enjoyment of the fruit of imaginary capital has merely been through the partial replacement of its own exploitation via commodity production with the exploitation of peripheral spheres of capital, all of which have been party to the continuous process of the accumulation of capital towards-monopoly of the few richest capitalists in the world.

Concluding Remarks

The rate of profit in Lebanon indicates a mirrored relationship with the international rate of profit calculated in Roberts' work from 1997-2018. This mirrored relationship illuminates the patterns by which the imperialist countries of the world externalize their crises onto the Lebanese economy. Imperial capital cannot endlessly extract profit from its own core, it must engage in international expansion of its processes of production. Lenin's observations in *Imperialism* allow us to understand the theoretical means by which this happens, though Marx's work in *Capital Vol. III* allow us the tools to calculate these processes ourselves. The rate of profit is certainly not in decline in Lebanon, though where it experiences decline, profitability is temporarily restored within the imperial core. There is at present a rapidly increasing level of wealth inequality alongside an ever-increasing rate of exploitation within Lebanon's sphere of capital, though these developments are not isolated, they are subject to the movements and unsustainable nature of international capital. It is my hope that these data presented, and the analysis provided, serve in

some way as a reference point for the work contributed in the future on the condition of capital in the periphery.

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12. Formula used to calculate rate of exploitation is again an orthodox Marxist formula, S/V . Where S = Surplus value and V = Variable Capital. See previous notes for clarification on calculating surplus value in the $S/C+V$ formula. Data series utilized via. World Bank National Accounts, OECD National Accounts data files, International Monetary Fund, Government Finance Statistics Yearbook. See [6]. Formula used appropriated via. both Marx’s *Capital* and Michael Roberts interpretation thereof. See also; Michael Roberts, “Marx 200: A Review of Marx’s Economics.” (Lulu.com: 2018). See also; Michael Roberts, “A World Rate of Profit: A New Approach.”
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**LAND,
LEGITIMACY,
AND THE
POLITICS OF
CONTROL**



WAKING UP FROM THE AMERICAN DREAM

Christian Noakes

A Marxist Critique of Homeownership and the Accumulation of Wealth



Popular conceptions of private property and ownership are shaped by ideological forces which lend themselves to the structural stability of capitalism. As a fundamentally bourgeois concept, private property “appears as an inner part of the individual, one of his fundamental ‘rights’, something his freedom is founded on.”¹ To *possess* is seen as a means to self-improvement and self-realization. This is particularly true with regards to homeownership in the U.S. Vale² identifies three interwoven strands of national homeownership ideology:

Jeffersonian ideas of property in the foundations of America, the American Dream and mobility through ownership, and patriotism/nationalism. To the latter we can add anti-communism, which was intimately linked with the moralizing of ownership and the prevailing jingoism of the early 20th century. One of the key component that set the modern ideology attached to private property apart from its Jeffersonian roots was the preference by both government and private industry toward small-scale homeownership in industrial cities and surrounding suburbs.³ Following the Second World War, a reinvigorated middle class and widespread suburban development spurred a

wealth



property



status



happiness



housing boom that cemented homeownership at the center of the American Dream.

The American Dream is a national narrative of equality and exceptionalism—one which claims that economic mobility, and ultimately happiness, are simply a matter of personal perseverance, optimism, and investment. While it has developed over time, it is foundational to the collective conception of freedom, equality, opportunity, and healthy citizenship. This spiritual component is complimented by a materialistic drive of ownership which is considered the means of attaining the American Dream. Rooted in capitalist values, this national narrative is “the spiritualization of property and consumption, the investment of joy and dignity in consumption and property ownership.”⁴ A core assumption of the American Dream is that equality of opportunity provides an avenue for the working class to accumulate wealth and therefore improve their quality of life. In the 1920s, home ownership became a central component and has persisted to this day as one of the primary embodiments of the American Dream.⁵ Due, in part, to the blossoming of the credit industry, a nascent mass-consumer economy, and an increase in housing investment and land speculation, the ability to own one’s home became synonymous with American ideals of self-creation and moral citizenry. The single-family home has since been regarded as the sturdiest of socioeconomic ladders.

However, many of the material or economic benefits of homeownership are prematurely assumed to be inherent outcomes. Given its ideological construction under capitalism, and in the U.S. more specifically, there is an unconditional acceptance or “blind necessity”⁶ that homeownership is an effective means of upward mobility and equality. However, such views lack empirical justification. While assessing the validity of concepts as subjective as the American Dream or freedom can be problematic, there are several ways of measuring the complex relationship between the ownership of property and wealth accumulation on which such amorphous concepts are built.

This paper contributes to the understanding of how the accumulation of housing-based wealth is contingent on who the owner is and the context of where the property is located. In more general terms its aim is to shed light on how private property—much like education and occupation—can be used as a means to perpetuate, intensify, and structure social stratification. I argue that homeownership intensifies inequality; it does not reduce it. This is counter to popular beliefs surrounding the ownership of private property as an egalitarian means of economic mobility and as an avenue for the most disadvantaged to achieve higher socioeconomic status. By comparing the housing values for Black, white, and Asian homeowners in different contexts, I move beyond the assumption of property as a unilateral means to opportunity



and social mobility. While homeownership can provide the opportunity to accumulate wealth, promoting access to ownership under resilient structural inequality does not adequately address the disparity in housing value or wealth more generally. If the outcomes of ownership vary significantly by place and race then homeownership can reinforce social stratification. Capturing this variability is central to deconstructing popular assumptions of ownership and addressing persistent inequality.

The volatile nature of the nation's housing industry also complicates matters. In times of crisis, the bottom drops out, but some fall further than others. These "boom and bust" cycles

may therefore actually reinforce structural inequality. Contrary to the view of crises as failures of the housing system, this paper considers how crises provide structural maintenance and the creation of new markets. In this light, the 2008 crisis represents the latest stage of a built-in process that reoccurs in order to maintain capitalism through mutation. By looking at housing values during the last major housing crisis, I hope to better understand patterns of accumulation at the national and regional level and the implications of ownership in the post-crisis housing market.

This paper is organized around the following questions: How were the housing values of owners from different racial cate-

gories impacted during the last major U.S. housing crisis? How were patterns of appreciation and depreciation of housing value affected by location (urbanicity and region)? How did the housing crisis, and the Great Recession it spawned, change patterns of accumulation? By answering these questions, I aim to address the implications of building wealth through ownership. Further, I also aim to provide greater insight into the role of crises in the processes of accumulation and the restructuring of housing markets.



The Literature of Inequality

While income inequality remains a serious concern for social scientists and policymakers alike, ethnic and class stratification appears to be even starker when one considers *wealth*.⁷ Wealth serves as a more precise measure of socioeconomic status than income because it considers all assets owned by individuals or families. Home equity accounts for roughly 60 percent of the wealth for the nation's middle class.⁸ This makes questions of access to ownership and the accumulation of wealth attributable to ownership vital to understanding and

adequately addressing the persistent racial wealth gap in the U.S.

Patterns of access to home ownership are highly racialized. Sykes⁹ shows that region, age, and income affect both non-married Black and white women similarly while the effects of education and labor force participation increase the likelihood of ownership more for white women. Overall, non-married white women are more likely to own their homes compared to their Black counterparts. Charles and Hurst¹⁰ also observe a disparity in ownership which they attribute, in part, to Black-white disparities in both applying for and having mortgage applications accepted. Access to the credit necessary for many to own their homes make banks a central institution which people rely upon to build wealth.

However, the long-established public-private partnership of government, private lenders, and real estate have created a housing market that codifies the exclusion of Black communities from housing-based accumulation—a core component of the American Dream. Encouraged in part by appraisals and maps from the Home Owners Loan Corporation, lenders have excluded communities deemed undesirable—often informed by racial or ethnic makeup—from cycles of reinvestment in a practice known as *redlining*.¹¹ While many working-class white communities also received the lowest possible grade due to their low appraisal value, virtually *all* Black communities (as well as other neighborhoods with ethnic minorities) were “redlined” and thus devalued and stigmatized regardless of class composition or housing conditions.¹² The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) adopted this practice when appraising neighborhoods with

The long-established public-private partnership of government, private lenders, and real estate have created a housing market that codifies the exclusion of black communities from housing-based accumulation—a core component of the American Dream.

federally backed mortgages. This federal agency also encouraged—and in some cases required—racially restrictive deeds for properties receiving the agency’s mortgage backing.¹³ These racial covenants prohibited the sale or occupation of properties to Black people and other minorities. Between mortgage lending practices and restrictive covenants, the government, private lenders, and real estate systematically devalued Black neighborhoods and prevented Black people from moving to areas with better access to credit and rates of value accumulation—thereby excluding those with the least from pursuing the American Dream. While many lenders avoided areas with minority populations, others offered subprime mortgages with higher interest rates, lower loan-to-value ratios, and shorter terms.¹⁴ Such strategies of exclusion likewise impeded the accumulation of value and housing-based wealth in minority communities.

Despite the hegemonic persistence of the assumption that homeownership is a means to both the American Dream and social mobility, the consideration of how housing and structures of ownership may perpetuate social inequality is not a particularly novel approach. In fact, Friedrich Engels¹⁵ took a similar position against the French socialist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Proudhon asserted that enabling every individual (or family) to own their home was adequate to address issues of housing disparities. Rejecting this thesis, Engels pointed out that equal access under a system built from capitalist class relations and the division of town and country only intensifies class inequality. Engels’ radical critique of housing has since been supported by several studies that have considered fundamental class and geographic disparities in U.S. housing-based wealth.¹⁶

In the U.S., race is a key factor in the patterns of wealth accumulation. Regarding housing val-

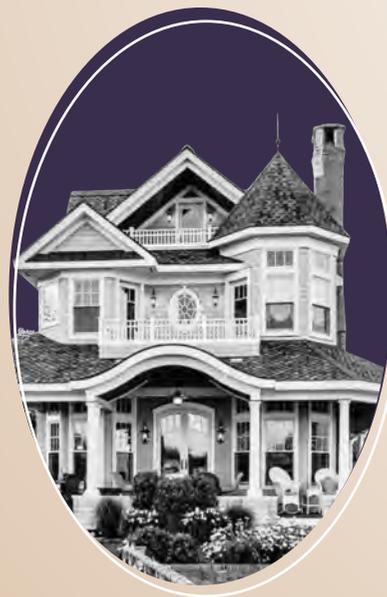
ue, there are two levels to consider: the effects of being a person of color and the effects of living in neighborhoods where the majority of residents are people of color. This distinction can be difficult in the U.S. due to the persistence of segregation in which Black people are far more likely than other minority groups to live in isolation from the rest of the population. Isolation and hypersegregation have facilitated predatory lending in predominantly Black communities¹⁷; and as segregation increases, the Black-white racial gap in housing values also widens.¹⁸ Segregation and neighborhood racial composition can also have a significant impact on the housing values of entire neighborhoods.¹⁹ Research suggests that current home value decreases for homes in neighborhoods when there is an increase in minority population—especially for Black populations. This trend applies to both whites and Blacks in both suburban and urban contexts.²⁰ However, what Rusk²¹ refers to

predatory

as the “segregation tax” appears to impact Black homeowners more than it does for others—with this tax being particularly steep in the Midwestern region of the U.S.

In addition to race, place is integral to patterns of housing value and wealth accumulation. Region of the U.S. (West, Midwest, Northeast, and South) can be particularly consequential for homeowners. Research shows a consistent pattern in which housing values are highest in the West and lowest in the South and Midwest.²² Living in the South has also been shown to have a significant negative impact on housing equity when compared with non-Southern property. While housing values appear to be significantly higher in the West, this region was also hit particularly hard by the housing crisis.²³ The region in which a property is located is key to both property values and the potential wealth generated from these values.

Given capital flow out of²⁴ and



into²⁵ urban centers, urbanicity can also have a large influence on housing-based wealth. Commute time to-and-from work has also been shown to be a strong indicator of negative equity.²⁶ One can therefore expect to see depreciation increase further away from major cities and industrial centers. This effect of urbanicity can also vary by region. City properties can have higher values or higher rates of accumulation in the West or Northeast than those in the Midwestern cities, like Detroit. Such variations could also make homeownership in urban centers either more or less economically beneficial when compared to surrounding suburban and rural areas.

Given the volatile nature of the speculative housing industry, crises are also a key component of understanding the processes of capital accumulation. The 2007-2009 housing crisis precipitated an international recession that has had serious political, social, and economic implications still felt to this day by many both within the U.S. and abroad. While it would eventually develop into a general financial crisis known as the Great Recession, its roots lie in the deregulated and highly speculative housing market, the growth of the high-risk subprime lending industry, and the practice of predatory lending.²⁷ By giving people loans with higher interest rates, fluctuating interest rates, and other negative terms of agreement, banks could guard against the loss of profits while making these mortgages harder to maintain, thereby caus-



ing widespread default, foreclosure, and devaluation.

Predatory lending refers to the practice of targeting communities of color, working class communities, and the elderly with subprime mortgages. Predatory lenders depleted housing equity and crushed many low-income homeowners. For example, \$6.7 trillion of housing equity was lost nationally between the years of 2006 and 2011.²⁸ Working-class neighborhoods saw a significant decline in housing values around foreclosed properties while there was little to no impact on surrounding housing values in more affluent neighborhoods.²⁹ With the depletion of housing value came the increased concentration of negative equity and foreclosures. Patterns of foreclosures were uneven and varied by market. Central cities saw a disproportionate amount of foreclosures in many areas that were experiencing growth in foreclosures prior to 2007 while stronger markets that experienced more volatility of the housing bubble tended to see foreclosures concentrated in suburban neighborhoods.³⁰ The impact was also uneven across regions. After the housing bubble popped, states in the West and South saw a collapse in the housing market while states in the Midwest were burdened by high unemployment during the Great Recession. States such as Florida, California, Michigan, and Georgia saw a disproportionate amount of foreclosures.³¹

The crisis subjected both renters and owners to a process of creative destruction—an inherent tendency of capitalism to increase capital to the point of overproduction, which then

The crisis subjected both renters and owners to a process of creative destruction—an inherent tendency of capitalism to increase capital to the point of overproduction, which then destroys markets in periods of depression or crises. By periodically destroying its old markets and spurring widespread social disruption through this process, capitalism creates the new markets necessary for the expansion of greater profits. Creative destruction is fundamental to the maintenance of capitalist economies.

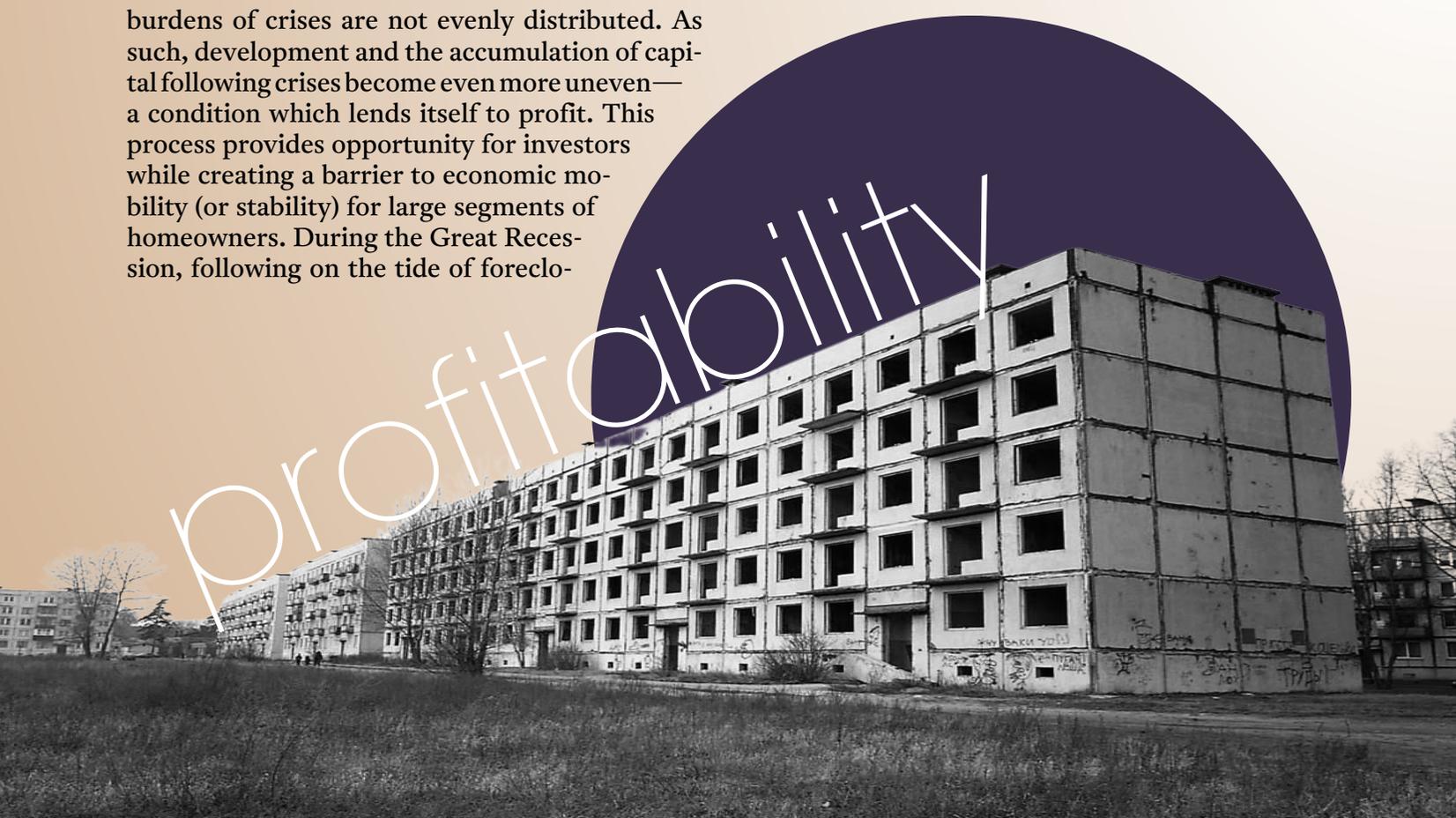
destroys markets in periods of depression or crises. By periodically destroying its old markets and spurring widespread social disruption through this process, capitalism creates the new markets necessary for the expansion of greater profits.³² Creative destruction is fundamental to the maintenance of capitalist economies. According to Marx³³:

[T]he highest development of productive power together with the greatest expansion of existing wealth will coincide with depreciation of capital... These contradictions lead to explosions, cataclysms, crises, in which... momentaneous suspension of labor and annihilation of a great portion of capital... violently lead it back to the point where it is enabled [to go on] fully employing its productive powers without committing suicide.³⁴

In other words, the capitalist tendency to increase profitability creates the conditions for devaluation which in turn renew the ability of increased profit through new markets and other investment opportunities. This contradictory characteristic in which crises serve as structural maintenance creates a “temporal and geographical ebb and flow of investment in the built environment.”³⁵ The burdens of crises are not evenly distributed. As such, development and the accumulation of capital following crises become even more uneven—a condition which lends itself to profit. This process provides opportunity for investors while creating a barrier to economic mobility (or stability) for large segments of homeowners. During the Great Recession, following on the tide of foreclo-

tures and the drop in housing values, real estate companies were able to buy properties at a significantly reduced price. In cities like Atlanta, investors responded to the foreclosure crisis by buying up property in distressed low-income communities where foreclosures were high and median housing values low.³⁶ In the social disruption and economic hardship of the recession came opportunity for speculation and investment as well as a boom in Real Estate Owned (REO) properties.³⁷

The functional role of crises lies in their tendency to increase inequality. Hendricks³⁸ considered the changing relationship between race, place, and property-based wealth within the context of the previous housing crisis. Using data from the 2001 and 2010 U.S. Census Bureau’s Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), they found that the housing crisis widened the racial gap in equity. Compared to identical models for homeowners in 2001, racial disparities became highly significant by 2010, and Black and Latino/a respondents saw a steep decline in home equity when compared to Whites—implying one’s race became more salient an indicator of equity after the housing crisis. They concluded that the impact of the housing



profitability

crisis was unevenly distributed, thereby causing a “multiplier effect” in which ethnic inequality in housing value and wealth was exacerbated. Thomas et al.³⁹ also observed an increase in the racial disparities in housing values after the crisis. Their findings suggested that Black homeowners considered to have higher socioeconomic status (SES) experienced growth of a larger gap to high-SES white owners than lower-SES Blacks to low-SES whites. The intensification of racial segregation following the crisis⁴⁰ likely played a key role in widening the racial wealth gap in housing values. Such findings are contrary to the often-implicit assumption that the opportunity to accumulate wealth is in itself a means of promoting equality. The intensification of racial disparities during cyclical crises repeats the damage of an inequitable housing system and systematically excludes people from “realizing the American Dream.”

Recovery has also been highly uneven. In the Southeast, Raymond⁴¹ found that rates of negative equity, post-crisis, were significantly higher in predominantly Black zip codes. This pattern persisted when subprime lending was controlled for, which suggests that structural inequality goes deeper than high-risk or predatory lending. While this practice no doubt seriously undermined people’s ability to reap any benefits from, and in many cases maintain, ownership—particularly in communities of color and in the

West⁴²—it is only part of the picture. The persistence of inequality penetrates down to the patterns of accumulated housing values upon which equity is built.

Research provides plenty of evidence to suggest that the economic benefits of homeownership are highly contingent on the characteristics of the owner and the neighborhood in which property is situated. However, more is needed to better understand patterns of housing-based wealth. Some studies have focused on particular areas,⁴³ thereby overlooking broader national trends and differences among regions. Other relevant studies are limited to either metropolitan⁴⁴ or suburban areas⁴⁵ or else they do not consider urbanicity at all.⁴⁶ Few consider how crises influence patterns of

accumulation.⁴⁷

This research contributes to the growing body of work around housing and inequality by considering national and regional trends during the housing crisis. In doing so, it becomes clear how “the post-crisis stage of accumulation inherits a geographical space that is highly differentiated by crisis.”⁴⁸ By grounding the analysis of the present paper in a critique of capitalist hegemony, this study addresses the contradictions between structural housing disparities and the ownership ideology at the heart of the American Dream. It also sheds light on more contemporary conditions of wealth inequality and uneven development which the crisis helped foster.

Hypothesis

H₁ There are significant racial disparities in patterns of housing values

H₂ There are significant spatial disparities in patterns of housing values

H₃ Spatial disparities are compounded by racial inequality

H₄ Spatial and racial disparities are compounded by crisis

race



disparity

Data and Methods

How do patterns of housing value vary by race and place? How has the recent housing crisis influenced such patterns of accumulation? My analysis uses 2007 and 2009 microdata from the American Housing Survey (AHS). The AHS is a national longitudinal survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau biennially. Its purpose is to collect information on housing and demographics that may then be used to capture housing trends and needs. Information was compiled

for a cross section of the nation's housing. Unlike surveys that follow households (people/families) from year to year, the AHS follows housing units (property), therefore making it ideal to track fluctuations in property values. The 2007 and 2009 data includes 31,565 and 35,119 homeowners respectively. The apparent increase in ownership is reflective of an increase in overall responses. Reported ownership rates actually fell from 32% in 2007 to 31% of respondents in 2009.

Construct Measurement

The primary analytical concept of interest is *wealth attributable to housing value*. This will allow us to consider how homeownership may affect economic opportunity, a central feature of both the American Dream and bourgeois conceptions of freedom more generally. To test the assumption that homeownership is an effective means of wealth accumulation, I consider how patterns of value are influenced by race and space. The former is limited to the three (3) racial categories with the highest frequencies of homeownership: White only ($N_{07}=25,650$, $N_{09}=27,884$), Black only ($N_{07}3,835$, $N_{09}=4,450$), and Asian only ($N_{07}=1,203$, $N_{09}=1,852$). Analysis is limited to these three categories due to the low response rates of other categories—many of which combined several categories (i.e. White and Black). While there is a separate variable for Hispanic respondents, this categorization is somewhat incoherent when comparing housing values for white homeowners to housing values for other races, as the Hispanic category does not distinguish between Spanish and Latin American. The latter also does not constitute a single race.

With regard to spatial disparities, the

present analysis addresses regional and urban variation in housing value. Using the U.S. census regions, I am able to assess the spatial distribution of the housing crisis burden. The regions are as follows: West, Midwest, Northeast and South. Whether or not a property is located in an urban or rural area, in a central city, or a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) may also impact the ability for owners to reap financial benefits. The AHS provides such a measure of urbanicity and population density. Respondents were categorized as living in (1) the central city of an MSA, (2) inside an urban section of an MSA but not in the central city, (3) inside a rural section of an MSA but not in the central city, (4) outside an MSA in an urban location, or (4) outside an MSA in a rural location. The AHS defines central cities as those with populations of at least 250,000 or at least 100,000 people working within its limits. Smaller cities were also included if they had at least a population of 25,000, jobs for three out of four residents, and no more

than 60% of its residents commuted out of the city for work. Areas were designated as suburbs if they were in a metropolitan area but not in any central city. Urban areas were those consisting of and surrounded by high-density neighborhoods that collectively had a population of at least 50,000 (see the 2007 AHS National Definitions for further details on the distinctions between cities and suburbs and urban and rural areas).

Given their potential influence on wealth, I will control for homeowner age and income. The latter variable is calculated by combining the respondent's wages and salaries. The mean age of homeowners remained constant at 37 years old while the mean income increased from \$23,448 to \$25,668 from 2007 to 2009. This is to be expected given the rise of foreclosures in low-income and working-class communities. See *Table 1* for further homeowner demographics in 2007 and 2009.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Homeowners

	%(N) 2007	%(N) 2009	<i>Mean</i> 2007	<i>Mean</i> 2009
Race				
White Only	81.3 (25,650)	79.4 (27,885)		
Black Only	12.1 (3,835)	12.7 (4,450)		
Asian Only	3.8 (1,203)	5.3 (1,852)		
Region				
Northeast	18.4 (5,827)	22.0 (7,710)		
Midwest	24.7 (7,808)	27.0 (9,484)		
West	20.2 (6,364)	17.8 (6,268)		
South	36.7 (11,572)	33.2 (11,652)		
Metropolitan Status				
Central City of MSA	21.8 (6,893)	22.5 (7,914)		
Inside MSA (Not in Central City, Urban)	33.3 (10,508)	40.0 (14,036)		
Inside MSA (Not in Central City, Rural)	16.0 (5,056)	16.3 (5,716)		
Outside MSA (Urban)	10.9 (3,430)	6.1 (2,154)		
Outside MSA (Rural)	18.0 (5,678)	15.1 (5,299)		
Age			37	37
Income (USD)			23,448	25,668

There are of course limitations with the present analysis. Due to limitations of the data, for example, I cannot consider the effects of neighborhood racial composition or segregation on housing values. Given the fact that the housing crisis peaked after 2009, I also likely underestimate the severity of the crisis. Likewise, limiting my analysis to owner-occupied property means this study excludes those who shouldered the heaviest burden—those who lost their homes. However, these limitations also mean that the specific findings of the present analysis can contribute to a greater understanding of the severity of minimum impact and, in so doing, reveal some of the pervasive contradictions between our current housing system and the American Dream.

Method

In this section, I will construct a repeated cross-sectional analysis to better compare housing situations at two points in time. Using Ordinary Least Squares regression, this research assesses the variability of change based on race, place, and other owner characteristics between time one (2007) and time two (2009). OLS regression estimates ac-

tual interval/ratio values by creating a line of best fit to minimize residual sum of squares (that is, the difference between estimated and observed values). Using this method, I can thus check for linear relationships between housing value and several predictor variables. Comparing regressions from 2007 and 2009 should also help capture the role the housing crisis played in driving wealth inequality in the U.S. Each year's samples of homeowners have been obtained through list-wise deletion.

Where dummy variables are used, homeowners categorized as “white only” serve as the reference group for Black and Asian homeowners. The Northeast serves as a reference group for other regions. For the urbanicity variable, I use suburban (inside MSA, not in central city) urban classification as a reference group to compare with property in the central city, rural suburbs, and outside of an MSA. I will control for the interval-ratio level variables of age and income. Due to its highly skewed distribution, the log of the latter is used to create a more even distribution in order to adhere to the assumption of normality. The following regression equations, listed below, will be used to predict housing value for homeowners in 2007 (\hat{Y}_1) and 2009 (\hat{Y}_2).

Equations

$$\text{Eq. 1: } \hat{Y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Black Only}) + \beta_2(\text{Asian Only}) + \beta_3(\text{Midwest}) + \beta_4(\text{South}) + \beta_5(\text{West}) + \beta_6(\text{Central City}) + \beta_7(\text{Rural Suburb}) + \beta_8(\text{Outside MSA Urban}) + \beta_9(\text{Outside MSA Rural}) + \beta_{10}(\text{Age}) + \beta_{11}(\text{Income})$$

$$\text{Eq. 2: } \hat{Y}[\text{Race}] = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Midwest}) + \beta_2(\text{South}) + \beta_3(\text{West}) + \beta_4(\text{Central City}) + \beta_5(\text{Rural Suburb}) + \beta_6(\text{Outside MSA Urban}) + \beta_7(\text{Outside MSA Rural}) + \beta_8(\text{Age}) + \beta_9(\text{Income})$$

$$\text{Eq. 3: } \hat{Y}[\text{region}] = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Black Only}) + \beta_2(\text{Asian Only}) + \beta_3(\text{Central City}) + \beta_4(\text{Rural Suburb}) + \beta_5(\text{Outside MSA Urban}) + \beta_6(\text{Outside MSA Rural}) + \beta_7(\text{Age}) + \beta_8(\text{Income})$$

To better understand racial and spatial disparities, I use three equations. The first regression (Eq. 1) will provide a broad view of housing value trends. The second regression (Eq. 2) is split by race to assess regional and urban disparities in isolation from the effects of racial inequality—it will also serve to distinguish how different races experience spatial disparities. The final regression (Eq. 3) is split by region to assess racial disparities within regions and to compare the intraregional patterns between regions.

Results

Standard OLS Regression

The crisis caused widespread devaluation. However, the severity of the crisis was highly uneven. Homeowners in the Northeast tended to have significantly higher housing values than homeowners in the South and Midwest in both 2007 and 2009, while they also tended to have lower housing values than owners in the West from the same

Table 2: 2007 Housing Values

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Race					
Black		-3,316.11			-5,802.97
Asian		7,704.60			-1,817.43
Region					
Midwest			-148,379.09***		-129,097.61***
South			-108,598.24***		-87,046.41***
West			139,254.50***		144,995.50***
Urbanicity					
Central City				-61,485.47***	-60,950.57***
Inside MSA (Rural)				-70,355.62***	-44,543.16***
Outside MSA (Urban)				-135,065.15***	-114,021.68***
Outside MSA (Rural)				-181,207.06***	-144,139.98***
Income (USD)	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.043	0.023
Age	-37.10	-37.28	-50.20	10.17	-13.92
Constant	279,601.26***	279,740.01***	331,089.53***	350,512.42***	375,928.40***
R²	0.000	0.000	0.109	0.043	0.136

*** *p*-value = < 0.001

time. Homeowners in urban MSAs likewise saw significantly higher housing values than owners in all other categories of urbanicity in both 2007 and 2009 (H₂). Overall disparities appear to decrease, however, the disparities between the Northeast and the South and between MSA urban and non-MSA urban increase by 2009.

There was a significant disparity between white and Black homeowners in 2009 (H₁). However, evidence of a persistent gap in housing values disappears when geographic variables are introduced. This implies that racial inequality is partially facilitated by geographic disparities. See *Table 2* and *Table 3* for patterns of housing values in 2007 and 2009 respectively.

OLS Regressions Split by Race

Owners in all three racial categories experienced large gains in the West relative to their Northeastern counterparts. By 2009, this gap shrank dramatically—implying that the West was hit harder than the Northeast. Asian homeowners saw the largest decline in Western housing values. Highly

significant regional disparities persisted from 2007 to 2009 for homeowners in each racial category. However, in 2007 Black homeowners in the Midwest and South experienced the largest disparities with their Northeastern counterparts. By 2009, Asian homeowners in the Midwest and South saw the largest disparities with Northeastern counterparts (see H₃).

The MSA urban-outside MSA urban disparity increased across all racial categories from 2007 to 2009. However, Black owners saw the sharpest increase in the gap between housing values in urban MSAs and urban property located outside of an MSA (followed by Asian owners). This suggests that racial inequality compounds geographic inequality (see H₃). Asian and white homeowners also saw significant widening of the Northeast-South gap during the crisis. In both 2007 and 2009, Asian homeowners experienced the largest disparities between MSA urban and all other categories. In contrast to the pervasive effects of geography, age, and income were non-significant for owners in all racial categories. See *Table 3* and *Table 4* a full breakdown of housing value disparities within each racial category.

spatial
disparity



Table 3: 2009 Housing Values

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Race					
Black		-117,71.12***			-7,913.84
Asian		-11,122.43			-12,651.98
Region					
Midwest			-153,823.17***		-120,431.65***
South			-115,460.05***		-95,359.65***
West			54,865.06***		64,042.39***
Urbanicity					
Central City				-41,045.55***	-39,478.36***
Inside MSA (Rural)				-51,926.45***	-34,870.97***
Outside MSA (Urban)				-147,446.21***	-126,475.63***
Outside MSA (Rural)				-128,272.98***	-101,402.25***
Income (USD)	-0.08	-0.08**	-0.06	-0.07	-0.05
Age	158.69	143.40	189.95	181.17	190.78*
Constant	240,262.73***	243,084.41***	304,807.40***	285,902.31***	331,987.86***
R²	0.000	0.001	0.077	0.035	0.100

*p-value = < 0.05, **p-value = < 0.01, ***p-value = < 0.001



decline

Table 4: 2007 Housing Values Split by Race

	White	Black	Asian
Region			
Midwest	-127,363.48***	-143,797.99***	-141,201.45***
South	-87,334.51***	-97,843.19***	-72,400.70*
West	149,588.39***	113,189.80***	151,007.20***
Urbanicity			
Central City	-63,720.45***	-45,623.28**	-85,525.19**
Inside MSA (Rural)	-44,285.60***	-44,013.44*	-45,042.70***
Outside MSA (Urban)	-113,199.58***	-112,931.93***	-133,954.44***
Outside MSA (Rural)	-141,726.37***	-144,677.77***	-208,913.14***
Income (USD)	0.03	-0.17	-0.06
Age	-72.43	-541.18	-640.30
Constant	377,965.52**	359,535.28***	417,510.96***
R²	0.136	0.132	0.167

*p-value = < 0.05, **p-value = < 0.01, *** p-value = < 0.001

OLS Regressions Split by Region

In the West, there was a significant disparity between white and Asian homeowners by 2009 (H₁). This might be explained, in part, by the prevalence of ethnic enclaves that segregate certain Asian nationalities throughout much of the region. The West had the largest MSA-outside MSA (both urban and rural) disparities. By 2009, it also saw the largest MSA urban disparities across all categories of urbanicity. This implies that patterns of accumulation in the West—the region typically associated with the highest property values—was it-

self characterized by stark disparities that became more widespread during the crisis (see H₄).

The Northeast also saw an increase and expansion in geographic disparities. What appeared to be mainly an urban-rural disparity in 2007 became a disparity between MSA urban and all other categories. This may be, in part, due to the fact that some white-owned properties in this region that were located in an urban MSA appear to have actually accumulated value between 2007 and 2009. Patterns of accumulation in the South appear to become more even by 2009. However, this is not necessarily a positive change given the fact that the

Table 5: 2009 Housing Values Split by Race

	White	Black	Asian
Region			
Midwest	-123,337.65***	-99,226.20***	-130,449.53***
South	-98,014.52***	-75,067.86***	-115,264.39***
West	67,713.68***	67,156.57***	13,770.41***
Urbanicity			
Central City	-39,197.84***	-33,773.42**	-48,037.57*
Inside MSA (Rural)	-33,870.33***	-33,553.32*	-67,105.54**
Outside MSA (Urban)	-125,532.37***	-128,654.86***	-148,519.92***
Outside MSA (Rural)	-101,894.20***	-89,329.29***	-116,934.09***
Income (USD)	-0.05	-0.01	-0.07
Age	254.19*	-91.66	-142.60
Constant	330,504.15***	318,542.85***	367,730.66***
R²	0.102	0.08	0.098

*p-value = < 0.05, **p-value = < 0.01, *** p-value = < 0.001

Northeast-South disparity is large in 2007 and becomes even larger by 2009. This suggests that the South was hit hard as a region. In 2007, age and income were non-significant in all regions. However, both of these variables became significant in the West by 2009.

foreclosure



Table 6: 2007 Housing Values Split by Region

	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Race				
Black	10,129.36	-8,918.28	-282.79	-28,449.33
Asian	-2,523.63	-17,990.90	8,360.65	-5,917.72
Urbanicity				
Central City	-21,522.15	-73,382.82***	-74,408.62***	-61,401.65***
Inside MSA (Rural)	-64,073.15***	-33,322.65***	-32,424.26***	-38,835.22
Outside MSA (Urban)	-48,295.50	-80,927.59***	-83,147.04***	-239,472.97***
Outside MSA (Rural)	-163,689.35***	-93,714.62***	-125,865.05***	-275,934.02***
Income (USD)	0.122	0.02	0.043	-0.50
Age	331.99	-160.09	-193.01	161.87
Constant	351,315.81***	240,417.85***	287,858.38***	457,052.87***
R²	0.028	0.043	0.033	0.052

*p-value = < 0.05, **p-value = < 0.01, *** p-value = < 0.001

Conclusion

As indicated in the above regression results for 2007, there were stark disparities in housing-based wealth prior to the crisis. These fundamental inequalities helped shape the crisis by concentrating the most severe losses in central cities and areas outside of MSAs. Homeowners in the Northeast and in urban MSAs tended to be better protected against the worst of the crisis. In contrast, owners in the South and West, as well as owners outside of MSAs, saw their housing values

plummet drastically. Black and Asian homeowners in particular felt the acute geographic disparities. In excluding foreclosures—i.e. the complete loss of ownership and housing-based wealth—these conservative results reveal highly significant and pervasive structural barriers that exclude many from “realizing the American Dream” through homeownership. Due to the uneven distribution of the effects of the crisis, areas with the most depressed values—and highest foreclosure rates—became highly attractive to developers and real estate companies. By investing in markets in the West and South companies have been able

Table 7: 2009 Housing Values Split by Region

	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
Race				
Black	-20,455.12	1,721.47	-549.56	-23,295.90
Asian	11,263.21	1,364.30	-11,499.60	-65,746.44*
Urbanicity				
Central City	-42,467.76***	-40,356.57***	-31,559.80***	-43,456.36**
Inside MSA (Rural)	-51,815.40***	-27,901.07***	-13,841.51***	-58,718.18**
Outside MSA (Urban)	-181,177.09***	-95,889.37***	-84,050.75***	-225,676.20***
Outside MSA (Rural)	-157,186.55***	-78,356.73***	-69,483.06***	-173,389.64***
Income (USD)	-0.033	-0.005	-0.013	-0.293*
Age	-63.08	88.04	76.54	868.84**
Constant	352,831.08***	205,795.06***	223,854.38***	394,141.96***
R²	0.030	0.035	0.019	0.038

*p-value = < 0.05, **p-value = < 0.01, *** p-value = < 0.001

to maximize their profits. Investors also converted many foreclosed properties into rentals thereby creating new rental markets out of the ruins of the crisis.

The modern American Dream asserts that the working class simply needs to invest in homeownership to experience economic mobility and, ultimately, happiness. As such, this national narrative serves to bolster the belief in American exceptionalism by veiling capitalist class relations in an ownership ideology which asserts the equality of opportunity. This paper empirically invalidates the material or economic benefits of homeownership

that have been assumed in the American Dream. Instead, I have argued that the primary function of the U.S. housing system is not to promote economic mobility and equal opportunity but rather to increase profitability. This is done through a cyclical process of crises and the creation of new markets which are then made profitable by the effects of the former. My analysis of the 2007-2009 period illustrates one particular instance of the crisis of capital accumulation in the built environment, and also how such crises serve to maintain structural inequalities essential to the U.S. housing system.

Given the fundamentally unequal nature of the distribution of housing based-wealth, homeownership as it currently stands is inadequate to address structural wealth inequality more generally. Until capitalist class relations are abolished, homeownership is bound to reproduce wealth disparities. Rather than being an inclusive avenue capable of promoting equality, homeownership in the U.S. reinforces wealth disparities. It is therefore essential to consider how the ideologically dominant conception of the American Dream as self-improvement through ownership obscures these structural inequalities for the benefit of a highly mobile upper class rather than the working class at whom this narrative is aimed.

Endnotes

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2. 2007
3. Vale 2007
4. Kimmage 2011: 27
5. Archer 2014
6. Lefebvre 1947: 194
7. Oliver and Shapiro 1990, 1995
8. Shapiro 2004
9. 2005
10. 2002
11. Jackson 1985, Freund 2007
12. Freund 2007
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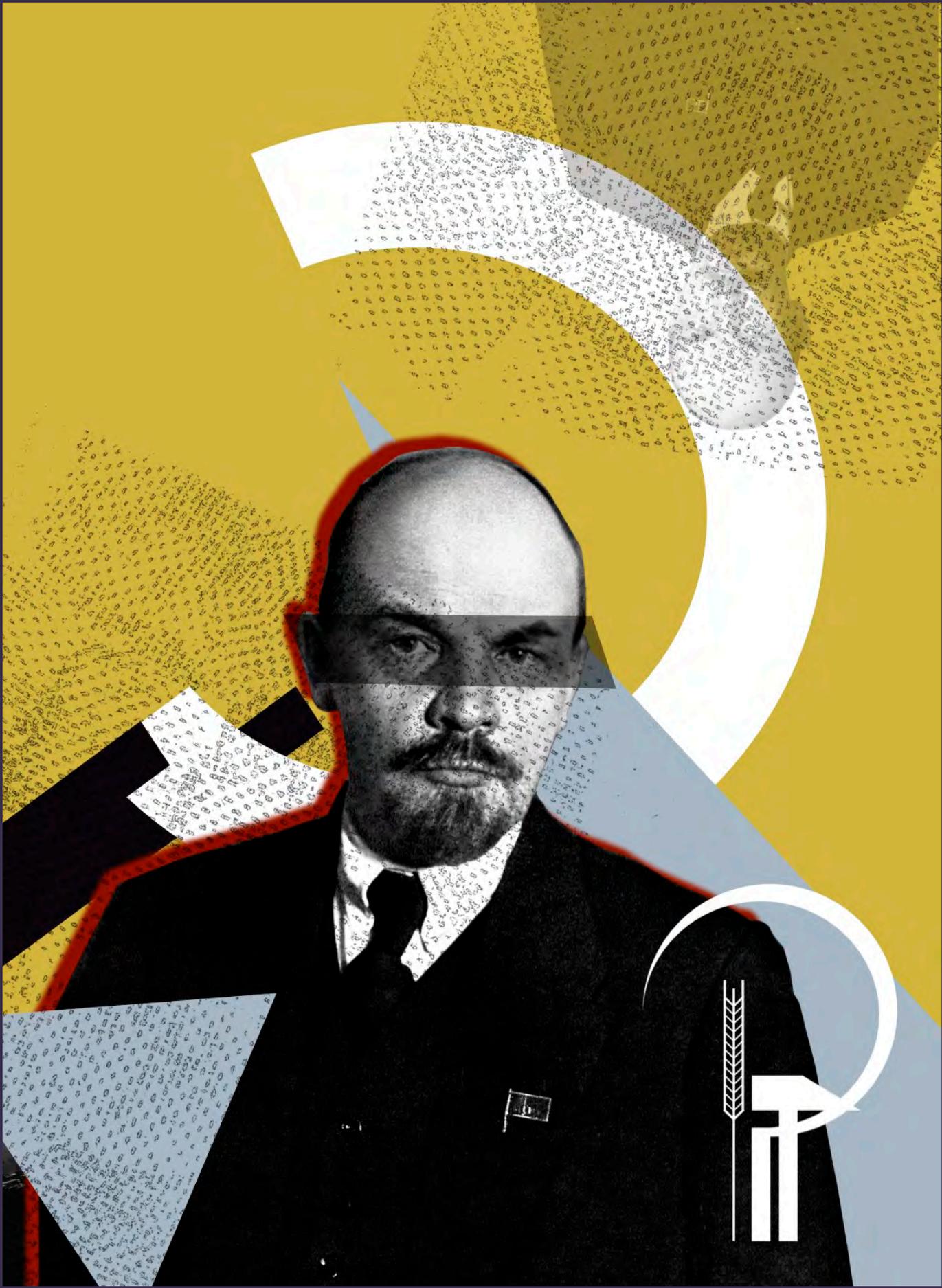
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JOEL WENDLAND-LIU

COMMODITIES ABSTRACT LABOR & INDIFFERENT



ANGELA DAVIS *on*

RACIAL CAPITAL

“Indifferent Commodities” and “Abstract Labor-Power”: Angela Davis’ Critique of White Supremacy and U.S. Racial Capitalism



In 1951, W.E.B. Du Bois, writing for the *National Guardian*, warned of the danger of U.S. fascism. “Either in some way or to some degree,” he cautioned, “we must socialize our economy, restore the New Deal and inaugurate the welfare state, or we descend into military fascism which will kill all the dreams of democracy.”¹ Today, Du Bois’s comments register as prophetic. Writing at the height of the McCarthyist repression of the Communist Party and its allies, during which the ascendant U.S. right-wing sought to end New Deal reforms and to protect Jim Crow Laws, Du Bois offered his dire warning of the choice between fascism and socialism. An insurgency of the Black freedom movement² forestalled the worst option in his pre-

diction and enabled the democratic reforms enacted subsequently during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. These radical, sometimes revolutionary movements gained so much traction that African American Communist Party leader Claude Lightfoot, one of many imprisoned for his political commitments, surmised confidently that “the [B]lack revolt [could] be complemented by a general social revolution.”³ In what appears to be a significant departure from Du Bois’s apparent pessimism, Lightfoot affirmed, “I believe that objective conditions are maturing that can in time produce a radical shift in white America.”⁴ Among the leading lights of the revolutionary movement lauded by Lightfoot stood Angela Davis, as a lightning rod figure in the Communist Party, and closely associated with the Black Panther Party.

Angela Davis argued that historically specific white supremacy in the U.S., like the development of capitalism, and like all social systems, was made and is remade by people and institutions developed within historically concrete conditions of existence.

Lightfoot's optimism would not endure as an atmosphere of state and police repression dented. Scholars regard this period surrounding Angela Davis's 1971 trial as the beginning of the *end* of the Black Power moment.⁵

Navid Farnia and Judson L. Jeffries highlight the "ruthlessness [of] the government repressive apparatus" in working to destroy radical Black organizations such as the Black Panther Party.⁶ This ruthlessness drove the hunt for Davis, her arrest, and subsequent trial, and combined with threats to her life and livelihood by some of the most powerful men in the country. The assault on her freedom, however, was not merely an arbitrary abuse of power or demagoguery enacted by angry white men, like Ronald Reagan or Richard Nixon. For Davis, the battle for personal freedom served as the opening of a career-long scholarly and activist struggle to make visible and counter the role of the criminal justice system as a pillar of intersecting systems of exploitative class processes, white supremacy, heteronormative patriarchy, and imperialism. Present-day scholars such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Elizabeth Hinton,

Marisol Lebron, and Michelle Alexander followed in Davis's footsteps by exploring these links with varied emphases.⁷ In addition to the closure of an era of Black revolt and working-class struggle, the wave of politically and racially motivated repression was an *opening* for the neoliberal project. The four-plus decades since that transition saw Du Bois's prediction of fascist domination threaten to manifest, and it opened new forms of resistance.⁸ The confluence of these momentous events in the early 1970s suggests that the foundation of neoliberalism—framed as a successful effort by the U.S. ruling class to restore white supremacy—achieved hegemony, in part, by gaining the willing consent of a multi-class formation of mostly white social actors. White supremacy, always foundational to U.S. capitalism, dovetailed with the emergence of neoliberalism, rearticulating the operations of capitalism and systemic racism anew. In this interactive process, exploitative class processes and oppressive social systems like racism, patriarchy, and imperialism recur as constitutive elements. This new moment affirms racism's role, as Nikhil Pal Singh has argued, as "an infrastructure" of U.S. capitalism, rather than merely a tool or an ideology of the latter, and its persistence in ongoing state-making projects.⁹ In this essay, I argue against the neoliberal elision of exploitative class processes in capitalist and imperialist formations, as well as its determined effort to obscure systemic white supremacy behind claims that racist actions are individual choices and that denying the systemic role of race renders it inoperative. Davis's 1971 prison writings indexed an antidote to these features of the neoliberal project, and they also, by asserting the dialectical interaction of these systems, provided a Marxist-Leninist antecedent to contemporary ideas such as "intersectionality" and "racial capitalism."¹⁰ Davis's work provided a corrective to the "retreat from race" that marks neoliberal colorblindness as well as some Marxist attempts to dismiss "identity politics"—a gesture that reads as dismissive of the concept of "race," the central organizing principle of U.S. historical development.

Class, Race, Neoliberalism, and White Supremacy

In *Class, Race, and Marxism*, historian David Roediger criticized Marxist and Marxism-influenced radical scholars who have in the past two or three decades led a “retreat from race” in ways that unfortunately parallel neoliberal racial logics. An impulse for universalism situated supposedly in class processes and what some theorists call an attempt to “stabilize sameness,” motivated this retreat.¹¹ Central to this debate about the role of race or class is the supposed Marxist separation of “identity politics” and anti-capitalism.¹² This divergence appeared in Ellen Meiksins Wood’s influential book *Democracy and Capitalism*. Her work, for the most part, successfully defended Marxist theoretical positions from anti-Communist, neoliberal erasures of capitalist class processes found in postmodern cultural theories. In *Democracy against Capitalism*, however, Meiksins Wood made a staggering claim about the relationality of “extra-economic” questions like racism with the more fundamental questions of economic class. She wrote that political struggles around “extra-economic goods” (like racial equality) “remain vitally important, but they have to be organized and conducted in the full recognition that capitalism has a remarkable capacity to distance democratic politics from the decisive centres of social power and to insulate the power of appropriation and exploitation from democratic accountability.”¹³ The structure of this argument opened a disciplinary (political and economic) space that elevated exploitative class processes above and beyond racism. She transformed racism into a separate problem that marginally impacts capitalism and its development, positioning racism and other forms of oppression that are said to center on identities as peripheral to the primary and universal problem of class exploitation. Thus, in this view, identity-oriented politics serve only as distracting particularisms that enable capitalist power.

To survive, U.S. capitalism

The political-economic policies of U.S. neoliberalism are inseparable from racial politics in the form of white supremacy and capitalist imperialism.



could not abandon its forms
of oppression

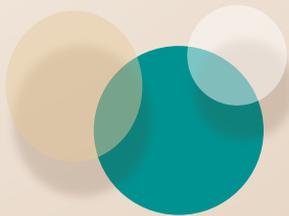


historically specific white supremacy in the U.S., like the development of capitalism, and like all social systems, was made and is *remade* by people and institutions developed within historically concrete conditions of existence.¹⁴ Specifically, white supremacy cannot be remade without the actions of white people to defend their particular relationship to it, framing Blackness as the object of their scorn, even as the cause of their own suffering. Yes, some white people are more powerful than others, but this power difference is obscured by a general relation to whiteness, delivering what Du Bois called the “psychological wage of whiteness.”¹⁵ The blueprints for those structures have been passed down like blue eyes, trust funds, and despair.¹⁶ Thus, Davis’s direct experience with the criminal justice system, registered a systemic significance for the development of a theory of racial capitalism in her prison writings. This theory helped to frame how we understand neoliberalism—from a Marxist-Leninist perspective—as a hegemonic, multidimensional strategy for maintaining white supremacy and capitalist class rule.

Davis described the “mutual interpenetration”¹⁷ of major social phenomena such as white supremacy, patriarchy, and exploitative class processes. This meant that systems of exploitation and oppression operate semi-autonomously and simultaneously in an overdetermined fashion.¹⁸ If one applies Davis’s theoretical framework to U.S. neoliberal capitalism in the late 20th and early 21st century, it should complicate how scholars deploy the term *neoliberalism* and characterize its origins and goals. Neoliberalism, within the specific context of the U.S., was the political-economic strategy developed in the latter third of the 20th century designed to restore white supremacy and the fullest power of the U.S. capitalist class. This restoration involved coordinated attacks on organized labor, the civil rights movements, and civil rights laws, in favor of the restructuring of economic activity to enhance precarious work, the implementation of massive funding cuts to public institutions, the operationalization of ideological attacks on the use of public institutions to deepen an array of social in-

equalities, the militarization of the economy and coercive apparatuses, and the systematic integration of local and regional markets into global commodity chains through instruments of free trade.¹⁹ Neoliberal policies, taken together, constitute a racial project²⁰: a white supremacist response to Black liberation, Brown liberation, Indigenous sovereignty movements, and global anti-colonial struggles.²¹ Davis's arrest and trial were egregious maneuvers in that project.

The urgency of restoring white supremacy during an upsurge in Black liberation struggles, similar to the post-Reconstruction restoration constituted neoliberalism. The latter was rooted in U.S. systems of white supremacy and capitalism but altered and reconfigured in new contexts. Racial slavery thus constituted the structure of U.S. capitalist primitive accumulation, but also the constant operation of racist dispossession that has operated in the U.S.: *Slavery* in the pre- and early industrial era, *Jim Crow* in the industrial era, and "the new nadir" or *Apartheid 2.0* in the neoliberal era of the "New Jim Crow."²² Struggles for liberation shaped each period and were framed by structural modes of dispossession legitimized in no small part by racist claims to white superiority.²³ The political-economic policies of U.S. neoliberalism are inseparable from racial politics in the form of white supremacy and capitalist imperialism. Instead, these systems should be regarded as semi-autonomous processes that are made to operate jointly in what Davis now, borrowing the term from Cedric Robinson, calls "racial capitalism." Thus, to render neoliberalism as only or primarily an economic project is to participate in the colorblind racial project that neoliberalism initiated in the first place.²⁴



A Theory of Racial Capitalism

In her essay, "Women and Capitalism: Dialectics of Oppression and Liberation," Davis deployed a Marxist analysis of Marxist theory itself to understand the intersection of systemic oppressions. Her essay touched on the racist dimensions of capitalist development, but it mainly focused on how a gendered division of labor helped to shape capitalism's development. Reading the logic and movement of Davis's argument unearths how she crafted useful theoretical and practical tools for understanding U.S. neoliberalism as a racist project and for imagining and enacting revolutionary struggle and liberation. Davis built that theory by making a case for understanding "the mutual interpenetration of ostensibly unrelated modes of oppression," such as heteronormative patriarchy, racism, imperialism, and class exploitation.²⁵

Following Marx, Davis asserted that in the early stages of capitalist development, i.e., primitive accumulation, people who had usually been organized in localized households or communities found themselves separated from the means of subsistence in favor of social production organized within a space controlled and owned by capitalists. To survive, workers sell their labor power for a wage based on the "socially necessary labor time" needed to produce the commodities they make. If this abstract process mirrored real-life precisely, capitalism *should have* produced an egalitarian effect on the working class. Davis writes:

[a]s a person, [the worker] would be superfluous to production; only his²⁶ abstract ability to work would be pertinent. Even in this contingency, he could also discover beneficial features, for, with the notable exception of racism, caste-like distinctions should not interfere when he sold his labor-power on the market. The capitalist commodity is totally indifferent to the origins of the labor which produces it; labor becomes

“abstract labor-power,” and each worker of similar skills should always be equal to the next.²⁷

This leveling of workers to units of abstract labor should have resulted in a process of “equalization” where distinctions of gender or racist discrimination associated with types and products of labor should have reduced to inconsequential.²⁸ Even in this formulation, Davis’s notable exception of racism (to the concept of abstract labor) highlighted her skepticism toward this theoretical concept and its worth for understanding how people experience capitalist processes in real life.

If exploitative class processes determined this process solely, why do we find racism and white supremacy prevalent in real life? Why do racist and gender-based discriminations (as well as citizenship-based discriminations) in labor markets, political centers of power, financial markets, policing systems, and educational institutions ensure that one subordinate group earns less income and accumulates less wealth than the next? Why are massive groups of people segmented into structurally determined subordinate workforce positions, and secure fewer public resources for socially necessary goods and benefits, if capitalist development supposedly produces abstract labor and cares nothing for the worker’s social identities? To answer questions such as these, Davis pointed to “a peculiarly society phenomenon” apart from capitalist development, which expresses itself as “an extra economic determinant” that had created the possibility and necessity of racism and sexism to condition and determine the value of labor. While “[t]he capitalist mode of production outstrips all previous modes in transcending virtually all extra-economic determinants,” in the cases of these two social systems, it could not do so for specific “socio-historical” reasons.²⁹ In contrast to Meiksins Wood’s complete separation of the “extra economic” from class processes, Davis theorized systems of oppression as technologies that condition the terrain of value, exploitation, and ac-

cumulation, not merely tools of U.S. capitalist class rule. They made it possible. The distinction here is one of theory and political strategy. For Wood, capitalism was an economic process of class exploitation, despite enduring non-economic processes like racism. The strategy for revolutionary transformation, then is an economic class struggle against capitalist class processes which will subsequently resolve non-economic inequalities. For Davis, political struggles against white supremacy constituted elemental features of U.S. class struggle and necessitated multifaceted revolutionary strategy that mirrored this reality.

To survive, U.S. capitalism *could not* abandon these forms of oppression.³⁰ Notably, women’s oppression defied the logic of abstract labor because “their oppression is indeed a result of critical social forces in whose absence the mode of production could not effectively be sustained.”³¹ In other words, the necessities of material relations outweighed the rigors of abstract logic. Because the family as a unit of production in pre-capitalist relations tended to divide labor by gender, Davis argued, that division was preserved in the industrial capitalist era to create a separate domain apart from social production, tying women to the domestic sphere in the new period as well (or, in the case of working women, to the dual worlds of publicly and privately exploited labor).³² All of this was justified by ideological proclamations of a natural order that considered gendered labor as part of the biological identity and role of particular human bodies, and primarily relegated to function as biologically extending from the male anatomy and masculine identity. This material and ideological system did not account for and, thus, systematically erased the reality of non-gender binary individuals or non-heteronormative familial relations. Thus, capitalism adapted gender to organize the labor and production process, as well as an ongoing ideological, cultural, and political project to link men in a chain of heteronormative patriarchal power over the bodies of women. That this project sublimated processes of capitalist exploitation should not cause theorists to dismiss it as simply illusory. Pa-

triarchal power is real, Davis argued. It functions for capitalist accumulation and the political realignment of social forces in reactionary forms.

The concept of *necessity* within capitalist relations, e.g., the necessity of capitalism to retain gender hierarchy to function, and the *simultaneity* of a materialist process and an ideological one seems eminently transferable from this argument to one about the nature of the relationship of racism to capitalism. How then does the supposed production of abstract units of labor explain racism? If commodities do not care who makes them, why would the racial identity (or citizenship status or religious affiliation) of the person making them matter so intensely? Thinking about Davis's essay in relation to the emergence of neoliberalism, we can apply a new focus on the relationship of racism (white supremacy) with capitalism.

Davis did not address the origins of the relation of racial slavery to capitalist development in the same way she explored the connection of gender oppression and capitalism's origins, but she did draw out how African-descended people were structured within capitalism as enslaved laborers and excluded from the idealized familial relations intended to serve the reproduction of the laborer and the system. Davis more carefully analyzed this aspect of the development of heteronormative patriarchy under capitalism in her essay (also written in jail) "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves." Her analysis of this process began by identifying an originating neoliberal logic: the definition of the African American family as a pathologically failed social institution, a thesis first published in the now infamous 1965 Moynihan Report. That study, with its veneer of academic scholarship, established the myth of the "black matriarch" as the source of that failure, driving subsequent stereotypes of African American women as domineering on the one hand and as welfare cheats on the other. Underlying this ideological appeal to African American cultural inferiority lay the white denial of agency to Black women and men who refused to accept the traditional heteronor-

White Americans perpetually feared victimization, believed criminal perpetrators arose inevitably from specific populations, and accepted the delusion of individualism. They, thus, were more likely to support policies that promoted militarized police presence, the expansion of the privatized prison-industrial complex, and the generalized criminalization of unemployment, houselessness, poverty, or diminished educational access.

mative patriarchal model of man-headed households echoed in what Davis calls the "varied, often heroic responses" of African American women to "the slave-holder's domination" and to the inherent inequality within the patriarchal model of family idealized under modern capitalism.³³

The managers of U.S. neoliberal policies targeted African Americans in concrete ways. African American responses in the 1970s and 1980s to de-industrialization, rising unemployment, an urban crisis fueled by "white flight," cuts in resources for public education, unevenly developed healthcare systems, massive influxes of drugs, diseases, and other public health crises

To produce new sources of accumulation, capitalist thinkers and philosophers created an ideology of the privatized Self yearning for mastery, a discourse of power rooted in the institution of slavery and systemic white supremacy. Capitalism—as the most advanced form of social pathology disrupting human identity and relations—creates conditions in which “the human being has been severed from nature and thus, from [their] own ‘inorganic body,’ ... giving rise to a non-identity between [humanity] and [its] essence.”

are nothing short of heroic. In an essay co-authored with her sister Fania Davis, they reference a study showing that in addition to the permanent loss of more than 11 million jobs in industrial production, which working-class Black households depended on in the period leading up to the mid-1980s, the militarization of the U.S. federal budget and the economy cost Black people “thirteen hundred jobs for each increase of \$1 billion in the military budget.”³⁴ The military budget exploded with the escalation of the war in Vietnam and subsequently with Reagan’s intensification of the Cold War. Meanwhile, rollbacks in welfare, education spending,

and healthcare funding along with massive tax cuts for the 1% and powerful corporations exploded the crisis suffered by millions of working-class people to restore the hegemonic power of the 1%.

In this crisis, the idealized family became an ideological tool of the powerful. Heteronormative, patriarchal familial forms under capitalism constituted an institutional myth to preserve the haven for the idealized working male.³⁵ This fantasy supported the adherence to patriarchal practice, which, as Davis later illustrated in *Women, Race, and Class*, has historically ensured cross-class solidarity among whites, aimed at the dehumanization of the entirety of African American people, worked to preserve slavery and its subsequent forms of anti-Blackness, not merely as a production system but as a system of white supremacy.³⁶ The cultural role of the family dovetailed well with neoliberalism, continuing the white supremacist practice of dehumanizing Black people while attacking public institutions that fought poverty. This role fostered contempt in the dominant culture for material kinship relations among African Americans and encouraged the elimination of public institutions that could be blamed as a cause of those relations (like welfare). Individuals and families of color, in the dominant political discourse, became the cause of economic and social crises, rather than their effect. Furthermore, “family values” concepts proved useful in sustaining the projection of a myth of African American cultural breakdown, a source of criminality and crisis generally, and to promote the expansion of mass incarceration facilities and the school-to-prison pipeline.

The white voting public’s response to the structural crisis of capitalism and the neoliberal agenda, in embracing the political figures and policies of the neoliberal agenda, has proven truly pathological. While the managers of the neoliberal policies and structures gained traction in power, a slate of democratic and working-class leaders and movements offered alternatives to that direction of political-economic development. As a leading Communist Party figure and political candidate,

Angela Davis supported and campaigned on behalf of many of these programs, laws, and policies. Whites—especially those who formed and still form the overwhelming majority of the right-wing voting bloc in the U.S.—responded by rejecting the social-democratic economic policies of Jesse Jackson in both of his 1980s presidential campaigns,³⁷ the fundamentally economically oriented Income and Jobs Action Act of 1985 sponsored by Reps. John Conyers and Charles Hayes, a 1989 proposed Constitutional Amendment guaranteeing jobs for every adult American authored by Rep. Major Owens, or similar proposals in 1994 by Rep. Ron Dellums, in 1995 by Rep. Matthew Martinez, and in 1999 by Rep. Barbara Lee.³⁸ Too often, majorities of white voters resisted those economic solutions to the crisis of capitalism in favor of aligning with heavily racialized appeals to “family values,” individualism, suburban life, segregation, middle-class culture, and law and order. In other words, broadly social-democratic—even socialist—economic solutions to neoliberalism did not win hegemony as a multi-class alliance of whites (and occasionally fractions of minoritized communities) re-forged white supremacy built around ideological configurations of racial hierarchy, colorblind racism, but deeply rooted in anti-Blackness.³⁹

“Insidious Individualism,” Intersections, and Revolutionary Praxis

At the heart of the neoliberal racial project lies the cancer of “insidious individualism.”⁴⁰ Nurtured on the capitalist mythology of the abstract unit of labor, the pathological “society composed of fragmented individualism lacking any organic or human connection” is held as ideal.⁴¹ As capitalist social relations of production ensnared workers, they became “transfigured into an isolated private individual—isolated from the means of production (hence from the means of subsistence) and equally isolated from the community of producers.” This individualistic alienation funda-

mentally altered how workers view themselves. According to Davis, “social relations as the nexus of exchange binding commodity to commodity” operated as the only way for one individual to associate with other community members.⁴² Identities appeared often as a consequence of commodity acquisition and conspicuous display: white middle-class nuclear families purchase houses in suburbs, cars, big TVs, furniture, and send their children to good schools all of which must be paid for with private resources, usually on credit. They worried about crime, bought security systems and assault rifles, demanded politicians lower their taxes, and expressed anxiety about the creeping dangers of the inner cities—mainly to contrast their own lives with urban others, codewords for Black, Latinx, or people of color communities. In this way, insidious individualism registered fundamentally as a constitutive component of white racial identity. Individualist mythology as whiteness renders collective solutions founded on inter-racial political alliances as marginal, expensive, or inefficient—or even as un-American and racially and culturally “other.”⁴³ State monopoly capitalism produced obvious social problems, but only the costs and risks socialized for the people were those that offered new avenues for capital accumulation.

Davis explored developments such as these, connecting international events with localized patterns of behavior, arguing that current structures and practices of oppression are made possible because they have their origins in slavery laws, institutional racism, and the U.S. Constitutional regime.⁴⁴ While the present is not identical to the past, there survived a continuity of structural and ideological racism in those institutions of oppression. Writing from the Marin County jail in 1972, Davis argued that the racist structure of law enforcement should be linked directly to the super-exploitation of Black people as workers. In other words, the descendants of slaveholders had produced a new reality in which “Blacks are imprisoned in a world where our labor and toil hardly allow us to

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eke out a decent existence.”⁴⁵ This function of law enforcement institutions mocks the hypocrisy of U.S. democracy as it “becomes the grotesque caricature of protecting and serving the interests of our oppressors and serving us nothing but injustice.”⁴⁶ Today, even though dominant social institutions present themselves as colorblind, they remain inextricably tied to the history of slavery and white supremacy. Indeed, a majority of U.S. whites can be called upon to act with appeals to racism, especially if coded in non-racist terms.

Within this web of connections and the historical recurrence of new articulations of white supremacy was the relation between profits and the popular cultural obsession with insecurity, fear, and terror. White Americans perpetually feared victimization, believed criminal perpetrators arose inevitably from specific populations, and accepted the delusion of individualism. They, thus, were more likely to support policies that promoted militarized police presence, the expansion of the privatized prison-industrial complex, and the generalized criminalization of unemployment, houselessness, poverty, or diminished educational access.⁴⁷ Though they rarely saw themselves as racists, they still blamed the victims of social problems as the cause of those problems. They accepted the profitability of private corporations and the logic of growing mass incarceration, because they consented to the notion that private corporations run prisons better than the government and that large swathes of racially “othered” people simply needed to be locked up. As some researchers found in a recent study of whiteness and the 2016 election, white Trump supporters voted for him precisely because he effectively communicated about the groups he despised, which groups he planned to punish on their behalf, and the normalization of intense intolerance for people deemed not a prototypical American (white, Christian, native-born, etc.).⁴⁸ In lending Trump their support, they followed a scripted white identity that linked them across social class with whites who dominate political and economic processes in the U.S. Such performances of white racial identity served as glue for the hegemonic coalition of forces that

undergirded the power of the U.S. ruling class.

To produce new sources of accumulation, capitalist thinkers and philosophers created an ideology of the privatized Self yearning for mastery, a discourse of power rooted in the institution of slavery and systemic white supremacy. Capitalism—as the most advanced form of social pathology disrupting human identity and relations—creates conditions in which “the human being has been severed from nature and thus, from [their] own ‘inorganic body,’...giving rise to a non-identity between [humanity] and [its] essence.”⁴⁹ The nature of capitalist production generally invited fragmentation and isolation and shifts the *natural* human “yearning for non-reified human relations” from the arenas of social production and civil society to privatized spheres and inner life.⁵⁰ Neoliberalism offered only a more intense version of this privatization: “the insularity is virtually complete.”⁵¹ Instead of solutions that redistribute power, empowering communities collectively, Davis wrote, “[n]eoliberal ideology drives us to focus on individuals, ourselves, individual victims, individual perpetrators.”⁵² Individualism encouraged a belief in the primacy of self-control over one’s life and destiny, that the context within which the free individual moves and operates—and their social status—derive from their singular efforts, moral uprightness, intelligence, and merit.⁵³ Abstract individuals, as such, believe in their power of choice and will, even to the point of self-delusion and the distortion of public policy that must address systems, populations, and collectivities. Within the racist logic of white supremacy and despite the abstract universalism implied within capitalist ideologies of the Self, however, only white individuals are masters of themselves.

Contrary to this racialized and punishing individualism, the practice of non-reified human relations, the pinnacle of human connection, bonding, community, solidarity—the presumed essence of the idealized familial life—can only exist in a rationed form in an isolated space. Here, Davis argued, capitalism provided this momentary, “distorted” respite to sustain the psychic



and material life of the individual worker. It tied white women to this privatized life, but still offered a means of understanding human needs for solidarity. The racial logic of neoliberalism denied access to this privatized fear of social autonomy to Black men and women, however. As discourses, exemplified by the Moynihan Report, on Black families and Black women showed, Black cultural practices served as the source of radical difference from whites that blocked their ability, for the most part, to participate consistently in hegemonic power system that sustains capitalist rule.

In a heteronormative patriarchal order, femininity and masculinity—the behavior patterns gendered as associated with women and men, or more precisely with people who possess particular genitals and body parts—are divided and assigned.⁵⁴ This process might be operationalized in the demand for individuals assigned as female to display femininity, submissiveness to male power, self-denial of public forms of power, and adherence to circumscribed and devalued participation in the labor regime. Femininity, Davis asserted, assumes the mantle of ideological naturalness assigning emotion, nature, communion, spirituality—to the exclusion of rationality—to people with specific body shapes and with certain organs. Masculinity—the individualized reification of domination, silence, modernity, emotionlessness, rationality—designates the supposedly binary opposite body shape. The former should be exhibited only in the private domestic sphere as a means of sustaining the private life of the masculinized body. Activists in the women’s liberation movement who argued for the erasure of the femininity principle in people with bodies assigned and experienced as female and feminine in favor of adopting masculinized behavior patterns did a disservice to the women’s movement as well as to people with male assigned bodies. Some feminists taught that women should seek “non-emotional, reality-affirming and dominating” behavior patterns to gain liberation. Davis resisted this urge, arguing, instead that they should break from the heteronormative patri-

archal relations demanded by capitalist development and be “liberated herself *as woman*.”⁵⁵ In other words, recognize the socially constructed and ideologically enforced nature of gender binary and adapt to a revolutionary, anti-racist working-class politics and culture.

Davis resisted delinking a radical critique of heteronormative patriarchy from anti-capitalist and anti-racist radicalism. Her 1981 book *Women, Race and Class* traces the evolution of white feminism, as a specific reaction against Black liberation in the closing decades of the 19th century through the present.⁵⁶ Many white feminists explicitly argued that white supremacy would be preserved through the extension of their voting rights. Davis’s historical account of this dimension of U.S. feminism mirrors the emergence of what scholar Eda Ulus calls “neoliberal feminism,” which denies the reality of systemic racial inequality and capitalist exploitation in favor of the individualist logic of representation. Ulus describes a feminist orientation that embraces white supremacy (in its colorblind neoliberal coding) and exploitative class process in exchange for “vicarious power” through a “psychic investment” in the presence of some women in powerful positions.⁵⁷ Neoliberal feminisms have produced a spate of advice books like Sheryl Sandberg’s *Lean-in* and Angela Duckworth’s *Grit*. Each emphasize individualist actions and morality in urging adherence rather than resistance to existing systems of inequality.⁵⁸

Davis calls for the revolutionary notion that people can resist the dominant constructs of U.S. capitalism. For example, working-class men can practice gender roles, behaviors, and affects associated with women and femininity. Because our actions are imbricated in the process of recreating oppressive systems, a revolutionary and collective transformation of our actions offered a mode of resistance to racialized individualism and the production of new forms of non-exploitative relationships with other workers. Workers, as a result, may come to expect and demand new forms of social relationships in general. Those behaviors elevated to conscious practice—commu-

nion, solidarity, unity, connection—too often are practiced as “the false, back-slapping type.”⁵⁹ Dominant cultural regimes embedded in the racist logic of capitalism created not only racially segregated public space, but also did so in ways that enforce isolation and deny the closeness and solidarity needed to help working-class people “surmount many insurmountable barriers before [they] can become aware that [they] and all other producers are the wellspring of society.” Davis added, “the achievement of solidarity, thus of a revolutionary class consciousness, has never been so difficult as during the present era.”⁶⁰ However, the constructed-as-feminine yearning for communion, solidarity, connection, and love allow working-class people to recreate a basis for that revolutionary consciousness. Working-class people of diverse national, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, especially when they have strong ties to the labor movement or radical movements, locate themselves, their identities, their personal histories in a collective identity and material history tied to practices of solidarity, unity, and community.⁶¹ In other words, the notion that working-class conditions of solidarity and community (invigorated by a non-racist and non-patriarchal ethos and practice) are necessarily constitutive of non-exploitative class processes such as socialism.

Working-class people should prioritize the creation and recreation of identities that in part foster behaviors culturally associated with those yearnings for identity, humanity, and its true essential nature undivided, unalienated by heteronormative patriarchy and capitalist social relations of production. As Davis puts it, “the positive qualities of femininity must be released from their sexual exclusiveness⁶² from their distorted and distorting forms.” This cultural-ideological struggle must be wedded to a “practical revolutionary process,” however, to avoid slipping into “impotent” utopianism. While “the personal relations which cluster around women contain in germ, albeit in a web of oppression and thus distortedly, the premise of the abolition of alienation, the dissolution of a compulsive performance principle, thus ultimately, the destruction

An unalienated revolutionary process that seeks the dismantling of the “nexus of commodity exchange” will not be automatic or inevitable but will emerge from struggle. Strategic aims by necessity must “transcend” the immediate goals implicated at the point of production.



of the whole nexus of commodity exchange,” current practices alone promise little in the way of the subversion of capitalism.⁶³ In this formulation of the kinship between cultural practices and relations of production, Davis argued that a revolutionary struggle for a fuller human existence (specifically over the nature of gender, gender identities, and racism) offer the working-class as a whole valuable guidance for structurally transforming class processes from exploitative to non-exploitative ones.

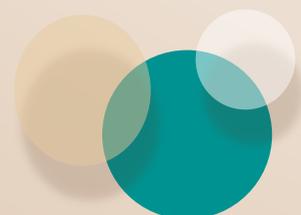
An unalienated revolutionary process that seeks the dismantling of the “nexus of commodity exchange” will not be automatic or inevitable but will emerge from struggle. Strategic aims by necessity must “transcend” the immediate goals implicated at the point of production. Thus, the class struggle in the U.S. itself includes and extends beyond this particular focus of traditional engagement by Marxists. At the center of the class struggle is the struggle against the oppression of women, against heteronormative patriarchy generally. A unified revolutionary working-class movement wages “the assault on institutional structures which perpetuate the socially enforced inferiority of women.” If heteronormative patriarchy is a necessary condition of capitalist development, the struggle against it—a broadly democratic, cultural, ideological, and civil society-based political movement—could produce a more fundamental social change than a struggle isolated to the spaces of production aimed at the inclusion of women. Further, a movement that centers the liberation of African American women workers from triple oppression that more deeply constituted the conditions for capitalist development suggests something possibly more dangerous to the present capitalist “nexus of commodity exchange.”⁶⁴

At the opening of the neoliberal project to reconfigure U.S. capitalism and imperialism, Davis’s “prison writings,” rooted in Marxist-Leninist theory, posited the interpenetration of overlapping and semi-autonomous systems of oppression—white supremacy and heteronor-

mative patriarchy—that constituted the exploitative class process of U.S. capitalism. At the same time, that class process needed those modes of oppression to function as both a system of accumulation and a technology of cultural, political, and ideological hegemony. Davis’s broader conceptualization of class struggle as foundational for anti-capitalist and revolutionary consciousness, thus, required a movement of movements (which could be best articulated in the form of a revolutionary party) to address the immediate and the long-term, the sufficient and the necessary, the ideological and the structural.

There are good reasons for Marxists, today, to compensate for decades of economic dismissal from the politics and strategic thinking of the anti-fascist popular alliance; this can occur by attending to the productive, site-specific dimensions of exploitative class process, and to the necessity of social progress in long, regressive periods which demand a strategic theoretical, and practical balance of civil society, ideology, economy, and space. Each of these terrains of struggle offers openings through which resistance to ruling-class hegemony and the dominance of its political bloc may be sustained. To take the working-class fight to white supremacy and heteronormative patriarchy is to create the conditions in which the ruling class is no longer able to rule in the old way. It is simultaneously an establishment of the possibility that the majority of people refuse to be ruled in the old way, opening space for transformation. Davis offered a revolutionary theory that advances a comprehensive struggle against the institutional and structural reproduction of capitalism and white supremacy, as well as the slipping, but still dangerous role of U.S. imperialism.

It is thus worth returning to Davis’s theoretical contributions in a sustained manner to recapture the full potential of Marxist critiques of neoliberalism and white supremacy.



Endnotes

1. Quoted in Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 16.
2. Soon followed by movements of workers, other communities of color, women, LGBTQ communities, and antiwar constituencies.
3. Claude M. Lightfoot, *Ghetto Rebellion to Black Liberation* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 60.
4. Lightfoot, *Ghetto Rebellion*, 60.
5. David Roediger, *Class, Race, and Marxism* (New York: Verso, 2017), 56. Roediger does not identify the “declining Black Power movement” with these exact events, but he does date it even a year or so before the trial took place. See also, Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006*, 3rd ed. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956-1974* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
6. Navid Farnia, “State Repression and the Black Panther Party: Analyzing Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin’s Black Against Empire,” *Journal of African American Studies* 21 (2017): 172-179; Judson L. Jeffries, “Black Radicalism and Political Repression in Baltimore: The Case of the Black Panther Party,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25, 1 (2002): 64-89. See also studies of repression of radical Chicano activists in Ian F. Haney Lopez, “Protest, Repression, and Race: Legal Violence and the Chicano Movement,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 150, 1 (November 2001): 205-244; Edward J. Escobar, “The Dialectics of Repression: The Los Angeles Police Department and the Chicano Movement, 1968-1971,” *The Journal of American History* 79, 4 (March 1993): 1483-1514.
7. Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); Marisol LeBrón, “Mano Dura Contra El Crimen and Premature Death in Puerto,” in *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter*, eds. Jordan T. Camp and Christina Heatherton (New York: Verso, 2016), 95-107; Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Era of Jim Crow* (New York: Free Press, 2010); Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (University of California Press, 2007).
8. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, “Back Story to the Neoliberal Moment,” *Souls* 14, 3-4 (2012): 185-206; See also, Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 211; Roediger, *Class, Race, and Marxism*, 33-46. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists: Colorblind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014).
9. Nikhil Pal Singh, “Race and America’s Long War: An Interview with Nikhil Pal Singh,” *Salvage*, 11 March 2020. Accessed 30 June 2020. <https://salvage.zone/articles/race-and-america-long-war-an-interview-with-nikhil-pal-singh>; See also, Grace Kyungwon Hong, “Speculative Surplus: Asian American Racialization and the Neoliberal Shift,” *Social Text* 36, 2 (June 2018): 107-121. Significantly, almost a decade after Davis’s acquittal, Cedric Robinson coined the term “racial capitalism” in an attempt to capture portions of the systemic critique Davis had already offered. See, Charisse Burden-Stelly, “Modern U.S. Racial Capitalism,” *Monthly Review*, 1 July 2020. <https://monthlyreview.org/2020/07/01/modern-u-s-racial-capitalism/>.
10. Leninist characteristics include his rejection of economism, or the elision of so-called non-economic structures from special consideration by the working-class leadership of the revolutionary movement. Additionally, a special interest in imperialism and the national liberation struggles as significant sites of global class struggle are special features of Marxist-Leninist thought. For discussion of the latter, see Timo-

thy V. Johnson, “Death to Negro Lynching: The Communist Party USA’s Position on the African American Question,” *American Communist History* 7, 2 (2008): 243-254.

11. Roediger, *Class, Race, and Marxism*, 33-46; Vivian M. May, *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 130. For some, a focus on “race” means to study an invented, non-scientific category, while class experiences are a matter of science. Others emphasize class as part of an honest critique of corporate multiculturalism. For an example of the former, see Adolph Reed Jr. and Merlin Chowkwanyun, “Race, Class, Crisis: The Discourse of Racial Disparity and its Analytical Discontents,” *Socialist Register* 48 (2012): 149-175; see also, Joe Feagin and Sean Elias, “Rethinking Racial Formation Theory: A Systemic Racism Critique,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, 6 (2012): 931-960. For her critique of corporate multiculturalism see Angela Y. Davis, “Gender, Class, and Multiculturalism: Rethinking ‘Race’ Politics,” in *Mapping Multiculturalism*, eds., Avery Gordon and Christopher Newfield (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 40-48.

12. See Teresa L. Ebert, “Rematerializing Feminism,” *Science and Society* 69, 1 (2005): 39; Ellen Meiksins Wood describes class as “the single most universal force capable of uniting diverse emancipatory struggles.” “Introduction: What is the Postmodern Agenda?” in *In Defense of History: Marxism and the Postmodern Agenda*, eds., Ellen Meiksins Wood and John Bellamy Foster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997), 13.

13. Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*. Kindle edition. (New York: Verso, 2002), Kindle Locations 5413-5415. Similar kinds of dismissals of “identity politics” can be detected in the work of Marxist thinkers such as Slavoj Žižek and Jodi Dean.

14. Moon-Kie Jung, *Beneath the Surface of White Supremacy: Denaturalizing U.S. Racisms Past and Present* (Stanford: Stanford University

Press, 2015), 29. Also, Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*; Joe Feagin, *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

15. W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Touchstone, 1992), 700-701.

16. See Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*, chapter 1 and 4; Eda Ulus, “White Fantasy, White Betrayals: On Neoliberal ‘Feminism’ in the U.S. Presidential Election Process,” *Ephemera*, 18, 1 (2016), 163-181.

17. Angela Davis, “Women and Capitalism: Dialectics of Oppression and Liberation,” in *The Angela Davis Reader*, ed., Joy James (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 162.

18. For a thoughtful definition of overdetermination, see Anjan Chakrabarti, “Historical Materialism,” in *Contemporary Readings in Marxism*, ed. Ravi Kumar (New Delhi: Aakar Books, 2016), 1-79.

19. Robert J. Antonio, “Plundering the Commons: The Growth Imperative in Neoliberal Times,” *The Sociological Review* 61, 2 (2013): 21-22; Ravi Kumar, *Education and the Reproduction of Capital: Neoliberal Knowledge and Counterstrategies* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 64-66; Gérard Duménil and Domonique Lévy, *The Crisis of Neoliberalism* (Boston: Harvard University Press), 7; David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1-5; Vijay Prashad, *Keeping Up with the Dow Joneses: Debt, Prison, Workfare* (Boston: South End Press, 2003), xvi-xxi.

20. Racial project in the sense that Omi and Winant use the term.

21. Taylor, “Back Story”; Hong, “Speculative Surplus,” 111; Also, Grace Kyungwon Hong, “Neoliberalism,” *Critical Ethnic Studies*, 1, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 56; John D. Marquez and Junaid Camp, “Black Radical Possibility and the Decolonial International,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, 3 (2017): 522; Chandra Talpade Mohanty,

“Transnational Feminist Crossings: On Neoliberalism and Radical Critique,” *Signs* 38, 4 (Summer 2013): 970; Jordan T. Camp, “‘We Know this Place’: Neoliberal Racial Regimes and the Katrina Circumstance,” *American Quarterly* 61, 3 (Sept. 2009): 701-702.

22. Sundiata Cha-Jua, “The New Nadir: The Contemporary Black Racial Formation,” *The Black Scholar*, 40, 1 (2010): 38-58; Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*; Koritha Mitchell, “No More Shame!: Defeating the New Jim Crow with Antilynching Activism’s Best Tools,” *American Quarterly*, 66, 1 (2014): 142-152.

23. Here I rely on Harvey’s deployment of the term “dispossession.” See, David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx’s Capital* (New York: Verso, 2010). Kindle e-book Loc., 5782-5793.

24. See Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*.

25. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 162. This essay affirmed an intersectional framework of analysis. This framework refused simplistic, individualist frameworks for exploring identity. It is a proposal for understanding the overdetermination of the social relations of production and practically designing radical alternatives to those relations. Occasionally scholars forget to associate this theoretical move with Davis. See, for example, Nikhil Pal Singh, “On Race, Violence, and So-Called Primitive Accumulation,” *Social Text* 34, 3 (September 2016): 27-50. By contrast, Grace Kyungwon Hong’s analysis of the intersections of capitalism and racism, heteronormative patriarchy, national identity, etc., leans on Davis’ work. Hong, *The Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and the Culture of Immigrant Labor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

26. The context suggests that Davis used the gendered pronoun to reference workers and abstract units of labor as a comment on the nature of economic theory generally and Marxism specifically as imbued with sexist preferences for language. Nowhere does she ever indicate that she thinks all workers are men. She was conscious of this contradiction and pointed to the ideological afflictions of

this theoretical work.

27. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 172.

28. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 173.

29. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 173. A cogent analysis that expresses a similar skepticism about the concept of abstract labor can be found in Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Universalism and Belonging in the Logic of Capital,” *Public Culture*, 12, 3 (2000), 653-678. He suggests that Marx’s account of abstract labor is a representation of “capital’s logic” rather than a description of reality. He does not cite Davis.

30. Davis’s argument is echoed in Hong, *Ruptures of American Capital*, 113.

31. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 173. Roediger cites the more recent work of economist Michael Lebowitz (rather than Davis) to argue that this “production of difference,” which Davis is describing here in terms of how social identities of workers (as opposed to a purely abstract form of labor), are needed and coopted in class processes and are essential to capitalist relations of production. Roediger, *Class, Race, and Marxism*, 121-122. In his discussion of the relationship of race to class in the U.S., sociologist Maurice Zeitlin argues that “[w]orkers everywhere in the capitalist world must decide how to deal with competition in the labor market” that is typically premised on differences of skill, location, and identity (such as race). Capitalism makes the issue of race (and closely related concepts like skin color and ethnicity) universally significant to the class process of exploitation and the extraction of maximum absolute or relative surplus-value. Zeitlin, “On the ‘Confluence of Race and Class’ in America,” *Political Power and Social Theory* 15 (January 2002): 287.

32. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 175.

33. Angela Davis, “Reflections on the Role of Black Women in the Community of Slaves,” in *The Angela Davis Reader*, ed., Joy James (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 112.

34. Angela Davis and Fania Davis, “Slaying the

Dream: The Black Family and the Crisis of Capitalism,” *Women, Culture, and Politics* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 86.

35. Susan Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992). Coontz explores and documents the contradictions between the historical mythology of family and gender in the neoliberal logic and the lived experiences of most Americans.

36. Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 121-122.

37. Abdulkadir N. Said, “The Challenge of a Black Presidential Candidacy (1984) An Assessment,” *New Directions* 12, no. 3 (1985): 27-28; John Zipp, “Did Jesse Jackson Cause a White Backlash Against the Democrats?: A Look at the 1984 Presidential Campaign,” in *Jesse Jackson’s 1984 Presidential Campaign*, eds. Lucius J. Barker and Ronald W. Walters (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 213.

38. Jack Stone (with Joe McGraw), *Unemployment’s Shocking Truth: Its Outrageous Causes and Consequences and its Solutions*, Tafford Publishing, 2008. Kindle e-book, Loc. 1295-1317. (Significantly, all of these bills and the ideological positioning of their authors foreshadow Bernie Sanders’ nearly successful campaign for the Democratic nomination in 2016 and somewhat less successful effort in 2020. This fact suggests the role that the embodiment of heteronormative whiteness plays in campaigns for social change, as much as suggests an emergent crisis of neoliberalism and white supremacy.

39. See a similar discussion of how non-elite whites “identify overwhelmingly...with the very social forces that maintain and benefit from these structures [of economic exploitation].” Samir Gandesha, “Identifying with the Aggressor”: From the Authoritarian to Neoliberal Personality,” *Constellations*, 25 (2018): 159.

40. Angela Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2015), 4.

41. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 172.

42. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 175.

43. Scholar Charisse Burden-Stelly has mapped this intertwining of antiradicalism with anti-Blackness in the post-World War 2 period. See, Charisse Burden-Stelly, “Constructing Deportable Subjectivity: Antiforeignness, Antiradicalism, and Antiblackness during the McCarthyist Structure of Feeling,” *Souls* 19, 3 (2017): 342-358.

44. Davis, *Women, Race, and Class*; “Women and Capitalism”; “Reflections on the Role of Black Women”; and Davis and Davis, “Slaying the Dream.”

45. Angela Y. Davis, “Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation,” in *If They Come in the Morning...Voices of Resistance*, ed. Angela Y. Davis (New York: Verso, 2016), 38.

46. Davis, “Political Prisoners,” 39.

47. These themes are explored in research on racialized policing and surveillance in contemporary settings by Natalie P. Byfield, “Race Science and Surveillance: Police as the New Race Scientists,” *Social Identities* 25, 1 (2019): 91-106; Brian Jordan Jefferson, “Predictable Policing: Predictive Crime Mapping and Geographies of Policing and Race,” *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 108, 1 (2018): 1-16.

48. David Norman Smith and Eric Hanley, “The Anger Games: Who Voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 Election, and Why?” *Critical Sociology* 44, 2 (2018): 197.

49. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 166.

50. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 177-178.

51. Davis, “Women and Capitalism,” 180.

52. Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, 137.

53. The relation of this individualized merit to the whiteness of the body of white people is explored in research by Claudine M. Pied, “The Problem People and the Hard Workers: Whiteness and Small-town Response to Economic Decline,” *Identities* 26, 1 (2019): 33-50.

54. For a discussion of clusters of behavior patterns associated with gendered bodies, see, Aaron H. Devor, *Gender Blending: Confronting the Limits of Duality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 43-65. Additional discussion of behaviors, traits, and affects linked in the dominant cultural, ideological, and material relations of production system to binary gender categories of feminine and masculine, see, Cecilia L. Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 32-55; Allan Johnson, *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), 73-91.

55. Davis, "Women and Capitalism," 166, emphasis in original.

56. See Davis, *Women, Race and Class*, 125, for example.

57. Ulus, "White Fantasy, White Betrayals," 166, 168.

58. Sandberg's and Duckworth's moralistic agenda are of a piece with business advice literature. See, for example, Kristin Munro and Chris O'Kane, "The Artisan Economy and the New Spirit of Capitalism." *Critical Sociology*, 47, 1 (2021), 1-17.

59. Davis, "Women and Capitalism, 181. The insistence on a "traditional" family as a nuclear family, of normative gender identities and roles, and patriarchal power had distorted relations between men and women, among the members of family such that "personal association" and expressions of solidarity amount to little more than a pat on the back. This feature of white-dominated social institutions and cultural practices have devalued the familial relations that, according to Davis, are dominant in the Black communities, but which may serve as a model for alternative kinship and human relations. For example, the "extended family" organization expresses a "more human quality" than the white supremacist ideal of the nuclear, patriarchal order as touted by the Moynihan Report.

60. Davis, "Women and Capitalism," 180-181.

61. Joel Wendland, *The Collectivity of Life: Spaces of Social Mobility and the Individualism Myth* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016).

62. This term should be read as meaning something closer to current uses of gender and gender identity.

63. Davis, "Women and Capitalism," 179-180.

64. Davis, "Women and Capitalism," 183-184.

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To take the working-class fight to white supremacy and heteronormative patriarchy is to create the conditions in which the ruling class is no longer able to rule in the old way.





ON

HOBBS,

LIBERALISM

AS THEORIES

LEVIATHAN,

&

OF

&

FASCISM

THE

BEHEMOTH:

STATE

Juan Manuel Ávila Conejo

Hobbes' work is often viewed as central to the development of liberalism and liberal theories of the state. In this essay, I examine the relation between fascism and liberalism as two aspects of the capitalist state, and particularly of fascism as a failed liberal state. I argue that the symbiotic relation between liberalism and fascism can be found in Hobbes' theory of the state and, therefore, in all subsequent versions of the liberal state. I go on to suggest that the perpetual threat of fascism is a contradiction produced by the liberal state to justify itself and that escaping the liberalism-fascism dichotomy is a crucial step towards the establishment of communism.

Hobbes uses a materialist theory of violence based around the problem of distribution of property, and then proceeds to build a state theory around the problem of this very violence, the violence of property.

The biblical myth of Leviathan and Behemoth¹ has had a special place in political theory since the publication of Thomas Hobbes'² *Leviathan* in 1651. Centuries later, Carl Schmitt's³ *Leviathan* (1938) embraced again the image of warring monsters to formulate his theory of the state. Since then, much has been written on the relation between these two interpretations of the myth and its consequences for political theory.⁴ This essay examines this myth through a Marxist lens that attempts to bring together Marxist historians of the English Civil War with more recent work on 20th Century fascism. To this end, I propose an analysis of the relation between liberalism and fascism as the political forms of the capitalist state—that is, to understand them as theories of the state corresponding to different historical phases of capitalism. The tension between these two state theories has been represented mythologically as the war of Leviathan and Behemoth. The liberal state corresponds in the myth to Leviathan, a form of authori-

tarian liberalism following from the model described by Thomas Hobbes in the eponymous book. The fascist state corresponds to Behemoth, which I describe following the state theory of Carl Schmitt in *Land and Sea* (1942) and Benito Mussolini in *The Doctrine of Fascism* (1932), as well as following the works of Franz Neuman, Michael Parenti, and others. I also take into account Hobbes' own *Behemoth* (1668) on the outcome of the English Civil War. Against the notion of Hobbes as a natural predecessor to Schmitt and of fascism, I propose that Hobbes recognizes the looming danger of a reactionary crisis of the 'Ancien Régime,' that is the feudal-theocratic politico-economic system, and, in opposition, proposes *Leviathan* as a foundation and defense of the nascent liberal state and capitalism. Additionally, I delve into the contradictory and dialectical relation between capitalism, as the primary engine of liberalism, and fascism, as a reaction against the very erosion of traditional authority caused by capitalism, while showing that this superficial opposition serves a very specific political purpose: to uphold the regime of private property—the back-



bone of capitalism—during times of crisis.

The methodology of this essay follows from a passage of T.S. Eliot's *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1919) that reads: "In any work the past should be altered by the present just as the present is directed by the past."⁵ Eliot creates this thesis as a formula for aesthetic interpretation, meaning that a work of art is in dialectical relation with the art that came before it—both as its result and as its reinterpretation. In historiographical terms, and for the purposes of this work, Eliot's thesis corresponds to a form of recursive history, which means we must consider history as a description of past events that retroactively affects our understanding of the present and modifies our understanding of the past. Specifically, this means considering how the origins of fascism might be found by examining the much older *Leviathan* in its historical context while also examining its history in the light of a modern understanding of fascism. Considering liberalism and fascism as phases of capitalist development, as opposed to specific moments in time, permits us to trace back from Schmitt and Mussolini to the proto-fascism of Hobbes' time,

propose a general definition of fascism, and reveal its permanent relation to the liberal state and capitalism.

The German playwright Bertolt Brecht wrote in 1935 that "Fascism is a historic phase of capitalism; in this sense *it is something new and at the same time old.*"⁶ In order to fully understand this definition, we must take into account that Brecht was writing at the historical dawn of what we now call capital-f Fascism: the right-wing authoritarian states of Germany and Italy in the 1930s and 1940s. However, Brecht rejected the narrow view that fascism was a new and unique phenomenon; he considered a "capitulation to Fascism" the notion that it "is a new, third power beside (and above) capitalism and socialism" because the notions of supremacy and a break with modernity are part of the mythos of fascism. Thus, in order to understand fascism in the broader context of the development of capitalism, we must engage in the seemingly anachronistic move proposed by Brecht: to consider fascism as something very new and very old at the same time, both as a reaction of ancient power structures and as a phase in the his-

The great beast that Hobbes posits is the result of the forces of nature and human artifice.

tory of capitalism.

This article examines the relation between the mythical war of Leviathan and Behemoth, and the effect it has had on western notions of the state since the publication of Hobbes' eponymous books in the 17th Century, focusing on how the myth has articulated the relation between the liberal and the fascist theories of the state. The myth of the warring beasts has roots in Ancient Near Eastern mythology, in which sea serpents feature prominently, under the name Lotan.⁷ The myth itself derives from Jewish and Christian genealogy in the books of the *Torah*, *Job*, *Psalms*, and *Isaiah*, which describe the sea monster by saying: "Behold, the hope of him is in vain; shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?"⁸ In modern political theory, the myth is most closely associated to the relation between Hobbes and Carl Schmitt, the principal intellectual of Nazi Germany. The myth relates the battle of the Leviathan and Behemoth with the history of the liberal state and fascist states, and it suggests a false genealogy between Hobbes' authoritarian liberalism and Schmitt's fascism. In this work, we track the relation between the myth and the corresponding theories of the state in order to explain how it both structures and relates the ideologies of liberalism and fascism in our current understanding of the state. The purpose of this analysis is to historicize the myth and the seemingly antagonistic relation between these theories of the state, thus demystifying the origins of fascism and the liberal state while showing the ideological content within the myth that continues to structure our politics around the allegedly inevitable confrontation.



Leviathan or Liberalism

What is Leviathan? Hobbes' theory of the state begins with a mythological image of a great chimera, a monster: part animal, part man, part machine, part god. "Nature," Hobbes writes,

is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal. For seeing life is but a motion of

limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within, why may we not say that all automata... have an artificial life?... Art goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, man. For by art is created that great *LEVIATHAN* called a *COMMONWEALTH*, or *STATE*.⁹

The great beast that Hobbes posits is the result of the forces of nature and human artifice; it is not supernatural nor a preordained form, like that of



Without a centralized monopoly of force, Hobbes thinks, individuals will be compelled to use force against each other.

absolute monarchy. Instead, it is a construct composed of human beings, structured by the combination of reason and what Hobbes claims to be natural or divine laws in what effectively constitutes a form of social contract. This construct of reason and natural creatures produces a political body “in which the sovereignty is an artificial soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body.” This image of the state breaks with the permanent and unchanging structure of the absolute monarchical power of the *Ancien Régime* by posing that power is immanent in power structures; that is, that the power of the state stems from its members. Hobbes’ theory of the state is a materialist theory inasmuch as it considers sovereignty a consequence of the social interactions between material creatures and not as the result of supernatural forces nor symbolic institutions. This view of political power, as historian Quentin Skinner points out, was strongly rejected by his religious compatriots but was received favorably by some in the continent, particularly in France.¹⁰

The immanence of power in Hobbes is incompatible with any tyrannical form of hierarchy—both the divine right of kings and the reactionary authoritarian leader. For Hobbes, sovereignty belongs to the social construct (or contract) that is Leviathan; power resides in one political body but not in any one person. In the article “Hobbes and Schmitt,” the historian Tim Stanton posits that Hobbes is “a proponent of absolute and unlimited sovereignty” while at the same time claiming “that it was the consent of subjects that constituted the

authority of the sovereign. [Hobbes’] position combined an authority whose commands could not be challenged with individual rights and freedom as the means of establishing and conditioning that authority.”¹¹ From this, we can say that Hobbes’ theory of the state is authoritarian, but not absolutist, because sovereignty is not presented as external to society but as immanent in the state itself. The immanence of power in Hobbes does not mean, however, that sovereignty is a necessary condition for society to exist; it means only that power is equivalent to the effective control of society and thus not bestowed by supernatural forces. This materialist turn in Hobbes’ analysis of power does not mean a limitation on the exercise of power, so even if the liberal state’s power is rooted in society, it is not necessarily limited by it nor by an individual’s rights. That is to say, individual rights are limited by the factual powers of the state because the rights of the state are absolute and they are, in fact, coeval with its power. That is, for the Hobbesian state, might is right. As such, Hobbes’ characterization of the liberal state as authoritarian is not a matter of the author’s political leanings but an early pragmatist, materialist understanding of politics. In this sense, the Hobbesian state is close to Schmitt inasmuch as it is in permanent antagonism with anything outside itself, and it is precisely this permanent antagonism that gives the liberal state its mythological justification.

Sovereignty, for Hobbes, first and foremost means the monopoly of violence. Beginning with the

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mythological image, Hobbes says that the *raison d'être* of Leviathan is the “protection and defence”¹² of individuals in order to assure peace. Peace here ought to be understood in the narrow sense of the absence of war and the stability of the state. In other words, for Hobbes, the sovereign is whomever controls the power to make war and declare peace. As he writes later in the book, “...because the end of this institution is the peace and defence of all, and whosoever has right to the end has right to the means, it belongeth of right to whatsoever man or assembly that hath the sovereignty to be judge both of the means of peace and defence, disturbances of the same, and to do whatsoever he shall think necessary to be done.”¹³ Hobbes continues: “it is annexed to the sovereignty the right of making war and peace with other nations and commonwealths, that is to say, of War, and Peace, as judging when it is for the public good, and how great forces are to be assembled, armed, and paid for that end, and to levy money upon the subjects to defray the expenses thereof.”¹⁴ It is clear that, for Hobbes, the first prerogative of the state is the monopoly of violence, or the power of war and peace, and also that from this first prerogative stems the second: in order to command military power, the sovereign must have the power of the purse; that is, the prerogative to impose and levy taxes on society. As such, the Leviathanic state is structured around the separation of internal and external space; that is, civil society and peace (and taxation) on the inside and the state and war on the outside. This separation of civil society and the state is a constitutive feature of the liberal

state, and it dissolves when the liberal state is in crisis, giving way to reactionary forces within society.

The structure of Leviathan is organized around the principle of war. Hobbes organizes the state as a rational response to what he calls the state of “nature,” a time when “men live without a common power to keep them all in awe.”¹⁵ Without a centralized monopoly of force, Hobbes thinks, individuals will be compelled to use force against each other. In a central passage of the book, Hobbes describes the state of war:

In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently, no culture of the earth, no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea, no commodious building, no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society, and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.¹⁶

A common reading of this passage, particularly of the well-known last sentence, proposes that Hobbes has an exceedingly pessimistic view of human nature in itself. As Curley and other historians have pointed out, this common misinterpretation of the state of nature takes it to mean the state of life of early humans, but it is clear that Hobbes is not referring to a specific time but to any political

The state of war begins when the state is no longer able to assure individual security and property.

moment in which the state has failed. As such, we must discard here the hypothesis that Hobbes considers humans to be predetermined to war or evil or that the state of war refers simply to anarchy in general.

If, instead of essentializing the human condition to any particular notion of human nature, we proceed with a materialist reading of Hobbes, we find that the state of nature refers to a particular historical moment in which the material conditions of society have become miserable. In the last sentence, Hobbes writes that life in the state of nature is *nasty, brutish, and short*—three conditions which refer to violence in the absence of personal security. However, he first says that life in this state is *solitary* and *poor*, two conditions which refer to changes in the political economy of society: the first, in which the relations of production have been interrupted; and the second one, in which production itself has stopped. In the first part of

the passage, Hobbes highlights the political economic consequence of war noting that in this state there can be no industry, no agriculture, and no commerce. Consequently, we can say that the state of nature is neither an idealist claim on human nature nor simply a consequence of a human proclivity to violence; on the contrary, it refers to a real crisis in the material conditions of existence of society. The state of nature is, thus, a politico-economic crisis which begets the most reactionary forces in society: gangsterism, and the degeneration of the rule of law into coercion by force.

From this crisis in the conditions of life, the “state of nature” also begets a crisis of faith in Leviathan’s social contract. The state of war begins when the state is no longer able to assure individual security and property. In the state of war, “Force and fraud are in war the two cardinal virtues,” and thus, “there be no propriety, no dominion, no mine and thine distinct, but only that to be every man’s that he can get, and for so long as he can keep it.”¹⁷ Fundamental to the Hobbesian state of war is not only the loss of personal security, but also the loss of property as a key factor in the crisis of faith in liberalism. Property, in the Hobbesian state of war, is reduced to force, and this makes it fundamentally incompatible with the liberal premise of property as a political right. But more important for this discussion is the fact that Hobbes finds in this crisis of property the origin of violence in the state of war and, as we have indicated, not in an essentialist notion of human nature.

In chapter XIII of *Leviathan*, writing on the conditions of “felicity and misery” of mankind, Hobbes notes the fundamental equality of human beings, saying “when all is reckoned together the difference between man and man is not so considerable as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit to which another may not pretend as well as he.”¹⁸ Hobbes was not a communist, but this quote suggests that he adheres to some form of economic equality, discarding the notion that economic inequality is a fact of life. From his historical framework, however, it is clear that here Hobbes is arguing for the bourgeois form of property, that is private property, and against monarchical forms

of property like nobility titles. Also, Hobbes here presents an early critique of the concept of property in general, arguing against property as a power hierarchy and for some fundamental equality of power over material wealth. Hobbes continues exploring the consequences of property, saying:

From this equality of ability ariseth equality of hope in the attaining of our ends. *And therefore if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and ...endeavour to destroy or subdue one another* [italics added].¹⁹

Hobbes' argument here comes full circle to mark the starting point of violence, and by doing so, it reveals a fundamental contradiction of Leviathan: property is both the consequence of the monopoly of violence by the state and the cause of the violence that destabilizes it. It is not just that life becomes *poor* in the state of war but that the immiseration of life itself might bring forth the state of war. By placing the condition for wellbeing (and peace) in the satisfaction of economic needs, Hobbes links the emergence of violence to the competition for the means to satisfy those needs. As such, the state of war is in no way a natural state; on the contrary, it is the result of the breakdown of the politico-economic system.

We must turn now to the historical framework in which Hobbes writes *Leviathan*, that is, the English Civil War (1642–1651). Now the question is: what were the politico-economic conditions at the historical roots of this war? As

Marxist historian Norah Carlin notes when discussing the complicated class struggles that took place before and during this period, “there is no doubt that the gentry did play the leading role in the preliminary crisis of 1640: they dominated the House of Commons, and the concessions they demanded of Charles I – the ‘constitutional revolution’ and the execution of his chief ministers – were major ones, resulting from the bitterness of the opposition to the King’s policies that had grown up during his eleven years’ rule without



The dual political structure of Leviathan and Behemoth, although first presented as antagonism, reveals itself in history as one of strategic alliances.

Parliament.”²⁰ The gentry—composed of the landed aristocracy and the landed bourgeoisie—became representative of the national interests of the bourgeoisie as it amassed political power. This accumulation of political power was in itself the result of what Marx calls the process of primitive accumulation, the historical phase of capitalism in which land is transformed into private property, which was well underway in England by this point in time.

On the period leading to the Civil War, Carlin notes: “There is also no doubt that the previous hundred years had seen a major redistribution of landed property, which had benefited the gentry at the expense of both the peasantry, and of the Crown and peerage, and that this had put the gentry in a very strong position to challenge Charles I’s ham-fisted attempts at establishing an absolute monarchy.” As a consequence, poverty and inequality rose in this period: “The number of propertyless was even greater than the number of actual wage-earners, for unemployment, underemployment and the destitution of small producers were widespread.” We see here how Hobbes’ political theory relates to his historical situation. The accumulation of land into fewer and fewer aristocrats led to both the emergence of a property-owning class strong enough to resist the monarchy and

a landless peasantry large enough to threaten the landholding class. This produced a new landless proletariat and a reactionary royalist aristocracy, both of which now posed a threat to the emergent liberal state from the left and the right, respectively. Thus, in the period preceding the war, the poverty of a growing sector of the population threatens to undermine the very model that the gentry seeks to impose; that is, the liberal capitalist state. And this is precisely what we see happen in the context of the war: initially, the landless sectors of the populations organized under proto-socialist organization seeking forms of communal ownership of land, specifically the Diggers and the Levellers. These left-wing movements were eliminated in 1649 as the gentry consolidated the power of the state under Oliver Cromwell. This finally permits us to examine the dialectical role of Oliver Cromwell in the revolution; as Carlin notes, “what the bourgeoisie needed in 1648–9 was an arbiter to save it *from royalist restoration on the one hand and revolution from below on the other.*” (italics added).

Under fascism, force is both the prime philosophical and ethical justification. Might is both truth and right.

Behemoth, or Fascism

The alliance between authoritarian liberalism and fascism and the dual political structure of revolution and reaction become clear when we examine the historical period of the English Civil War. The principal result was, in form, the triumph of liberalism over monarchism and the establishment of parliamentary rule over absolute rule: in a limited way, a democratic triumph. However, in practice, the result was much different. In order to establish hegemony, the Cromwellian regime made many alliances with the monarchical and ecclesiastic forces of reaction.²¹ Early in the war, the parliamentarian side had the support of the ethnonationalist English Puritans, which provided the pretext to persecute the Scottish, Irish, and royalist sides, on the charge of suspected Catholicism and ‘Popery.’ Cromwell was also responsible for the suppression of left-wing political formations centered around land redistribution and most prominently a large campaign of settler colonialism and subsequent genocide in Ireland which killed up to five-sixths of the island’s population.²² Through the Act for the Settlement of Ireland of 1652, Cromwell and the Parliament confiscated large amounts of land from Irish Catholics and gave it to English Protestant settlers, thus committing an

ethnic cleansing and transforming the politico-economic structure of the island into agrarian capitalism, completing the primitive accumulation of Irish soil and labor under British imperial capitalism.

The dual political structure of Leviathan and Behemoth, although first presented as antagonism, reveals itself in history as one of strategic alliances. In a time of crisis, the liberal state fails to uphold its end of the deal, the liberal social contract, and property and security are no longer assured. In spatial terms, this means the collapse of the distinction between the inside and the outside, public and private, and thus the lack of a clear demarcation between the space of peace, controlled by the state, and the space of war. In political terms, this alliance entails the fusion of the state into civil life. This does not entail the disappearance of the state, which would be the communist end goal; on the contrary, this constitutes the expansion of the state into every aspect of social life, not unlike the military structure of the army does unto its troops. The consequence of the crisis is the total mobilization of society itself, because as war permeates every aspect of internal life, the only security remaining is in gangsterism. If the giant Leviathan is the assurance of perpetual peace, Behemoth is of war. In this condition of crisis, the state becomes



brutish, that is, no longer based on reason and the social contract, but purely on gangsterism and opportunism. Under the Leviathanic state, only security and property are assured. Therefore, all the forms of illiberal political oppression (such as unequal voting rights, slavery, the subjugation of women and children as tools) are not only permissible but also legal. Consequently, Leviathanic capitalism, or minimally-regulated capitalism, is completely unimpeded by the most illiberal forms of government, and thus is promptly co-opted by these. Capitalism, as any economic system, produces political systems modeled after itself; thus it can be stripped of its own liberal political form by the forces of reaction and thrive under tyrannical forms of government, particularly during times of

crisis and civil war such as Hobbes' own state of nature. This is the historical function of fascism: to uphold capitalism during times when its liberal state form is in crisis.

In *Behemoth* (1681), the sequel to *Leviathan* which remained unpublished until after Hobbes' death, the author describes the period of the Civil Wars as a time where, if someone "as from the Devil's Mountain, should have looked upon the world and observed the actions of men, especially in England, might have had a prospect of all kinds of injustice, and of all kinds of folly, that the world could afford, and how they were produced by their hypocrisy and self-conceit, whereof the one is double iniquity, and the other double folly."²³ In this book, Hobbes' opposition to reaction (and



Capital will seek alliances with all the sedimentary leftovers of previous modes of production, in order to keep control of the state.

Leviathan's position as a defense of the liberal state) become clearer, as he rejects the political opportunism as well as the religious nationalism that characterizes the state that results from the war. For Hobbes, as the passage makes clear, this period of reaction is characterized by injustice, folly, hypocrisy, and self-conceit; in a word, gangsterism. Clearly, this is not a situation of war fought under romantic notions of 'honor' or 'duty,' with well-defined sides and aims, but a devolvement into a state of statelessness and of might as right. A similar political climate of gangsterism and chaos is noticeable in Franz Neumann's *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*. When analyzing the ideology of Nazism, the author writes: "National Socialist ideology is devoid of

any inner beauty. The style of its living writers is abominable, the constructions confused, the consistency nil. Every pronouncement springs from the immediate situation and is abandoned as soon as the situation changes."²⁴ Neumann makes it clear that fascism has a completely "immediate and opportunistic" relation to reality and therefore its ideology is purely reactionary and not based on any set of principles. This opportunism also points to the larger condition of failed judiciary, meaning that right again has devolved into might; this is when gangsterism takes the role of the social contract. Under fascism, force is both the prime philosophical and ethical justification. Might is both truth and right.

It is of no consequence to ponder on whether the

Cromwellian regime should be called fascist. The noteworthy fact here is that every crisis of the liberal state unleashes the forces of reaction present in the foundational antagonism within the liberal state itself which, as we have seen, is property. It is also around property that the forces of reaction agglomerate and form hegemonies. Under fascism, right ceases to be based on reason and instead is based on force, which under capitalism corresponds to property. Therefore, under fascism, which is always also capitalist, property becomes *causa sui*, its facticity becomes its own justification. As such, this state form provides the optimal politico-economic environment for primitive accumulation, which is always carried out by force. As we have seen, this was the case in Ireland in 1652; the case of the Third Reich's *Lebensraum*, Imperial Japan's conquest of China and Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere, the United States' Manifest Destiny and the conquest of the west, provide similar historical examples. The alliance between the ruling class of capitalism and the forces of reaction, as we have said, is one of strategy: absent the state to assure property and security, the capitalists must turn to the traditional power hierarchies to maintain control of property. In practice, this means that capital will seek alliances with fundamentalist religion, patriarchy, nationalism, and monarchism; that is, all the sedimentary leftovers of previous modes of production, in order to keep control of the state. Thus, as the foundation of sovereignty changes from reason (contract) to fact (force) the liberal state ceases to be and the fascist state rises.

In principle, but only in principle, fascism is opposed to capitalism, as the primary engine of liberalism. To understand the fundamental antagonism between fascism and liberalism we must consider the inner workings of capitalism. Marx explains this process in a well-known passage from the *Communist Manifesto*, which we quote at length:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of soci-

ety. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. *All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air...*²⁵

Capitalism constantly erodes at the basis of traditional power hierarchies because it constantly revolutionizes social relations of production. As Marx notes here and elsewhere, capitalism has an unmatched emancipatory power to dismantle ancient hierarchies of oppression: religious, political, sexual or of any symbolic kind, and refashion these social relations after its own image. In general, fascism struggles to uphold these symbolic structures of the past, but this is a tragic struggle, a lost cause in the fullest sense, because under capitalism *all that is solid melts into air*: capitalism is able to abstract any traditional symbolic structure into the general form of representation, namely capital. In other words, this means that there is no hallowed temple of Western Civilization that cannot be bought and sold, no sacred Indigenous ritual that cannot be made into a Broadway show. But capitalism, which constantly erodes the foundations of all traditional societies during times of peace, also provides the means for the forces of reaction to uphold traditional power structures, primarily property, during times of crisis.

What is fascism? In order to produce a general definition of fascism, we take several sources, referring to different historical manifestations. First, *fascism is idealism*: according to Mussolini & Gentile, in *The Doctrine of Fascism*, "The Fascist conception of life is a religious one," which rejects the "superficial, material" view of the world and instead proposes a worldview based around "common traditions and a mission which suppressing the instinct for life closed in a brief circle of pleasure, builds up a higher life, founded on duty, a life

Fascism rejects democracy and consequently rejects the liberal foundation of political equality as well as completely rejecting communism.



The liberal state comes here to a fatal contradiction: by ensuring peace and property, it assures the violence of property. Leviathan, thus, creates and recreates Behemoth as justification for its own existence.



free from the limitations of time and space, in which the individual, by self sacrifice, the renunciation of self-interest, by death itself, can achieve *that purely spiritual existence in which his value as a man consists.*"²⁶

Second, *fascism is war*: for fascism, war is the natural state of human society. "War alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those peoples who have the courage to face it. All other tests are substitutes which never place a man face to face with himself before the alternative of life or death. *Therefore all doctrines which postulate peace at all costs are incompatible with Fascism*"²⁷; a direct consequence of this is the *total militarization of society*, that is the expansion of the state's security apparatus until it becomes one with civil society: "For Fascism the State is absolute, individuals and groups relative. Individuals and groups are admissible in so far as they come within the State. Instead of directing the game and guiding the material and moral progress of the community, the liberal State restricts its activities to recording results. *The Fascist State is wide awake and has a will of its own.*"²⁸ The fascist state is here reacting against the Leviathanic state, and the relative, immanent power of a social contract; instead holding that for the state to be sovereign, it must also be absolute, or all-encompassing. As such, for fascism, those outside the state are acting against the will of the state and vice versa. Here, the state and the will of the state become one. This point is expanded by Schmitt in *The Concept of the Political* when he declares: "The *protego ergo obligo* is the *cogito ergo sum* of the state," meaning that the protection afforded by the state demands unconditional obedience from its subjects."²⁹

Third, *fascism is inequality*: fascism rejects democracy *tout court* and consequently rejects the liberal foundation of political equality as well as completely rejecting communism. "In rejecting democracy, Fascism rejects the absurd conventional lie of political egalitarianism, the habit of collective irresponsibility, the myth of felicity and indefinite progress."³⁰ The radical inequality of political subjects under fascism means that it is

fundamentally a rejection of democracy and a bid for elitism, which in practice under capitalism means oligarchy. The fascist political and economic state provides the conditions for what we could call in politico-economic terms War Capitalism, a system where economic inequality justifies political inequality. Under such an economic system, no social contract is possible, and thus fascism must rule by direct coercion of the majority. The oppression of a majority and the upkeep of strict vertical hierarchy is thus fundamental to fascism, and it is also this which necessarily leads fascist states to imperialism.

In Franz Neumann's *Behemoth*, the author makes clear that "...the fundamental goal of National Socialism [is] the resolution by imperialistic war of the discrepancy between the potentialities of Germany's industrial apparatus and the actuality that existed and continues to exist."³¹ According to Neumann's definition, fascism is the violent resolution to the economic tension between internal existing capital and external space, that is, the tendency of capitalism to expand, by any means necessary. In the German case, fascist economic policy included widespread use of slavery and settler colonialism abroad, as well as strategic alliances with the industrial and financial bourgeoisie, including the largest banks and corporations in Germany. In the English case, the Cromwellian regime was supported by the landed aristocracy at home, composed by the bourgeoisie and nobility, while imposing slavery and colonialism on Ireland. Genocide was common to both regimes, as was ethnonationalism and religious fundamentalism. The dialectical relation present between Cromwell's historical roles is that of authoritarian liberalism and fascism, mythologically corresponding to the war of Leviathan and Behemoth.

According to Schmitt, the myth of Leviathan comes from the *Book of Job*, as a "strongest and most tremendous sea monster" endlessly crossing the oceans.³² Schmitt in his 1942 *Land and Sea*, however, develops more fully the Jewish kabbalistic interpretation from the *Psalms*, in which "World history appears as a battle among heathens. The leviathan, symbolizing sea powers,

fighting the behemoth, representing land powers. The latter tries to tear the leviathan apart with his horns, while the leviathan covers the behemoth's mouth and nostrils with his fins and kills him in that way. This is, incidentally, a fine depiction of the mastery of a country by a blockade."³³ The mythological framework here poses the two theories of the state in antagonist relation, associated to different politico economic formations: land powers, which in Schmitt's formulation corresponds to Germany, and sea powers, which corresponds to England. This antagonism also refers to two contradictory economic forces: the imperative to accumulate agrarian economies and the imperative to expand commercial economies. It also refers to the cyclical nature of crises under capitalism and consequent bourgeois-fascist effort to return to a form of capitalism in which the social contract was intact. The Schmittian mythological framework of an endless war between monsters is, thus, a part of both the liberal and fascist state ideology inasmuch as it presents a dualistic political world trapped between the perpetual peace of Leviathan and the perpetual war of Behemoth. The Hobbesian mythological framework corresponds to liberal ideology in that it posits the final victory of Leviathan, and the possibility of a perpetual peace, which keeps the state of war forever on the outside.

The permanent outside of war is, thus, the justification of the liberal state, without which it has no purpose. For Hobbes, this condition is permanent because war is not a particular violent event, it is political condition in which the state has lost the monopoly of violence: "For WAR consisteth not in battle only, or the act of everyone, fighting, but in a tract of time wherein the will to contend by battle is sufficiently known. ...so the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting, but in the known disposition thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE."³⁴ The time of peace corresponds here to a situation in which the social contract, and thus the state, are firmly in place. Consequently, peace can exist only under the sovereignty of the state and the condition for the maintenance of peace becomes the perpetuation of the state.

Perpetual War and the Emancipation of Humanity

The article "Behemoth and Leviathan: The Fascist Bestiary of the Alt-Right" by Harrison Fluss and Landon Frim describes the mythological framework of Leviathan and Behemoth in the international wave of reactionary political movements that began the second decade of the 21st Century. The authors present a contemporary reading of the myth in the following terms: "These beasts are a pair of opposites: Behemoth is autochthonous, representing the stable order of earth-bound peoples. Leviathan is thalassocratic, embodying the fluid dynamism of seafaring peoples. Behemoth signifies terrestrial empires, while Leviathan suggests commercial trade and exploration. The former stands for traditional, divinely sanctioned state authority, the latter for the spirit of pirate-capitalist enterprise (what Schmitt calls 'corsair capitalism')." In the article, they proceed to associate the thalassocratic and autochthonous ideologies to neo-fascist writers Nick Land and Alexander Dugin, reiterating Schmitt's theory of land and sea powers, which these writers also rely on.

However, as we have proposed from the historical comparison with Hobbes, liberalism's expansive thalassocracy is fundamentally linked with the worldwide expansion of capitalism and the completion of what Marx calls the *world-market*, or the process of globalization, while Behemoth corresponds to the collective response of the forces of premodern reaction against this seemingly unstoppable advance. In late capitalism, this mythological war continues to fuel the ideology of an antagonistic relation between liberalism and fascism as superficially competing, yet in reality intertwined, theories of the state. In late capitalism, the ideological function of the myth is to perpetuate the idea that reactionary or fully fascist crises are inevitable, that the Hobbesian 'state of nature' is a fact of the world and not a logical consequence of the liberal capitalist state itself. It is a properly ide-

The ideological trick of myth has been in presenting the ideal antagonism as natural and inevitable, presenting the fall into fascism as a failure of human nature, instead of as alternating phases in the historical development of capitalism.

alist position that naturalizes the state of war as the world in-itself; and then naturalizes the liberal state as the only possibility of peace within this world. Instead, historicizing these moments of crisis permits us to see the structural causes that lead to the transformation of the liberal state into fascism, beyond particular considerations of each iteration, beyond the ideological formations of fatalism and pessimistic narratives about ‘human nature’.

Slavoj Žižek, paraphrasing Walter Benjamin, writes “that every rise of fascism bears witness to a failed revolution.”³⁵ Regardless if Benjamin actually said this, the statement remains true: every crisis of the liberal state is an opportunity for a left-wing revolution, that is to change the regime of property and other power hierarchies; which is followed by right-wing reaction to reinforce all traditional power hierarchies, primarily property because it is also the source of factual power under fascism in absence of the liberal social contract. Thus, the rise of fascism is always a sure indicator of the condition for revolution, or at the very least, for civil violence. But the triumph of fascism can only take place when it successfully crushes left-wing resistance and takes over the whole of the po-

litical apparatus. Marx noted in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Napoleon Bonaparte* comparing the weak French autocrat to the Lord Protector, that history repeats itself, “the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.” This statement also points to the failure of the proletarian revolution to take power in times of crisis and, at least in the cases that we have examined, and the subsequent triumph of reaction both over the left as well as over liberal capitalism. The tragedy of a failed revolution leads to the farce of an oligarchic takeover. Marx understood that the cyclical historical pattern of the forces of reaction is explained by the very cyclical nature of crises under capitalism and, thus, as capitalism continues suffering crises, the liberal state will continue falling into fascism.

Hobbes uses a materialist theory of violence based around the problem of distribution of property, and then proceeds to build a state theory around the problem of this very violence, the violence of property. Thus, it is clear that liberalism, from its very foundations, depends on the perpetuation of peace only in opposition to the threat of perpetual war. The liberal state comes here to a fatal contradiction: by ensuring peace and property, it assures both the violence of property and the freedom

from violence. Leviathan, thus, creates and recreates Behemoth as justification for its own existence. The ideological trick of myth has been, thus far, presenting this ideal antagonism as natural and inevitable, presenting the fall into fascism as a failure of human nature, instead of as alternating phases in the historical development of capitalism.

Endnotes

1. The myth describes two monstrous creatures perpetually at war with each other: Leviathan, a sea serpent; and Behemoth, a land animal sometimes depicted as a water ox or a hippopotamus. The mythical beasts have historically been used in political theory and other related fields to represent sea and land powers, respectively.
2. Thomas Hobbes (5 April 1588 – 4 December 1679) was an English philosopher, widely considered a founding figure of modern political philosophy and liberalism.
3. Carl Schmitt (11 July 1888 – 7 April 1985) was a German legal scholar and political theorist, as well as the most prominent intellectual figure of the Nazism.
4. See: Tralau “Thomas Hobbes and Carl Schmitt: The Politics of Order and Myth”; Tralau “Order, the ocean, and Satan: Schmitt’s Hobbes, National Socialism, and the enigmatic ambiguity of friend and foe.”; Weiler “From absolutism to totalitarianism: Carl Schmitt on Thomas Hobbes”; Ette “Carl Schmitt’s Radical Democracy: Schmitt, Hobbes and the Return to Political Identity”; Springborg “Hobbes’s Biblical Beasts: Leviathan and Behemoth”; Dean “A political mythology of world order: Carl Schmitt’s nomos”
5. Eliot, T. S. *Selected Essays*, 1917–1932. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014. 5
6. Brecht, Bertolt. *Writing the Truth: Five Difficulties*. Syracuse University Press, 1935. 2
7. Uehlinger. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999. 515.
8. *Psalms* 74
9. Hobbes, T. *Leviathan: With Selected Variants from the Latin Edition of 1668*. Hackett Publishing, 1994. 3.
10. Skinner, Quentin. “The Ideological Context of Hobbes’s Political Thought.” *The Historical Journal*, vol. 9, no. 3, 3, 1966. 288.
11. Stanton, Timothy. “Hobbes and Schmitt.” *Pact with the Devil: The Ethics, Politics and Economics of Anti-Machiavellian Machiavellism*, vol. 37, no. 2, June 2011. 163.
12. Hobbes 3.
13. *Ibid.* 113.
14. *Ibid.* 114.
15. *Ibid.* 76.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.* 78.
18. *Ibid.* 74.
19. *Ibid.* 75.
20. Carlin, Norah. “Marxism and the English Civil War.” *International Socialism*, vol. 10, 1980, pp. 106–28. <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/carlin/1980/xx/civilwar.html>
21. On the rationale for Puritan support of Cromwell, see Lamont 349.
22. Prendergast, J. P. *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*. P.M. Haverty, 1868. 177.
23. Hobbes. *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*. J. Bohn, 1839. 165.
24. Neumann, Franz. *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933-1944*. Oxford University Press, 1944. 37.
25. Marx, K., and F. Engels. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto*. Prometheus Books, 1988. 212.
26. Gentile, G., and Mussolini, B. “The Doctrine of Fascism” *Encyclopedia Italiana* vol. 14. 1932. <http://www.worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/Germany/mussolini.htm>
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. Schmitt, C. *The Concept of the Political: Expanded Edition*. University of Chicago Press, 2008. 52.
30. Gentile, G., and Mussolini, B.
31. Neumann, Franz. *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933-1944*. Oxford

University Press, 1944. 66.

32. Schmitt, C. *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*. University of Chicago Press, 2008. 6.

33. Schmitt, C. *Land and Sea: A World-Historical Meditation*. Telos Press Publishing, 2015. 8.

34. Hobbes. *Leviathan* 76.

35. Zizek, S. *Living in the End Times*. Verso, 2011. 152.

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ART AND THE

PHYSICISTS



REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT

PHYSICISTS

The Big Man of History

Joshua Hodges

Everyone knows the big man of history, smiling after overcoming massive odds.

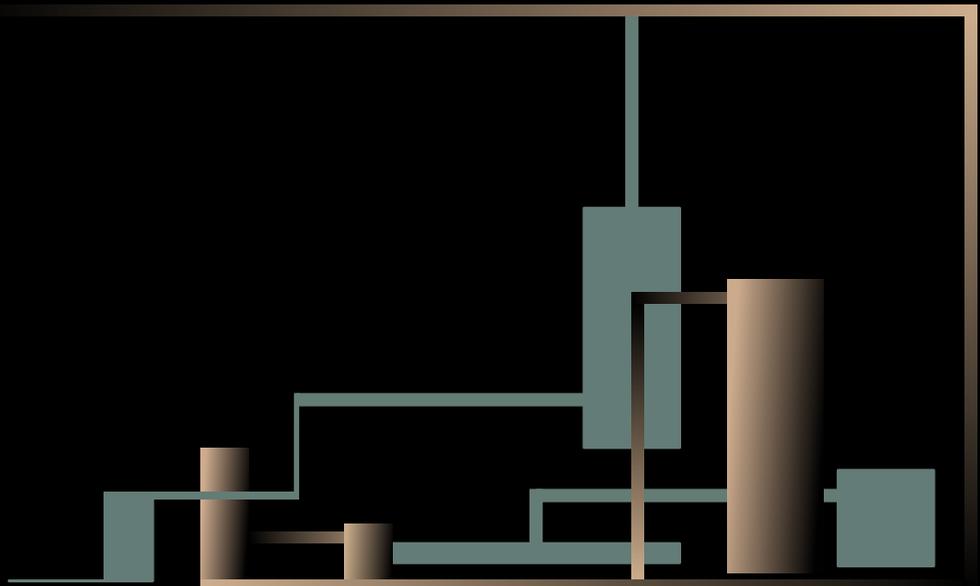
He has risen above poverty, drugs and circumstance—they cry.

He must be of the gods.

But no one knows the workers—fighting everyday to stay alive.

For them there is no grand ending, no mountain or tape to cross.

There is only the crushing weight of a system, that doesn't give a toss.



Ghosts

Joshua Hodges

The snowgums emerge from the fog like shadowy pillars—headstones for a people that now haunt the forest.

Long ago they were driven from this place—by a people that came in ships.

The white man used the land for profit, a land of sheep and steeds.

But this was not a place for sheep—this was a place of ice and smoke. But now heat and steeds have overcome this place—and the ice is all but gone.

The snowgums are greying corpses—but they are not grotesque.

They are a sign of what was once here—and what can be again.





Young Engels

POSSIBILITIES

Lydia Kurtz

Aching, aching for the feeling of freedom.
What is freedom but the chance to love with abandon?
To feel, deep within, the motions uninhibited, the seas balancing,
The sky preparing for none other than dawn.
Who are we but pinpoints, pinpoints of hope peering into
The abyss of the present?

Together, together with our strength, our hope, our conviction,
We might achieve the impossible.
The impossibility of possible love, of possible weights lifted,
Of the crushing waves to recede to mere laps.
Are we ready to be without the death, the horror, of the present?

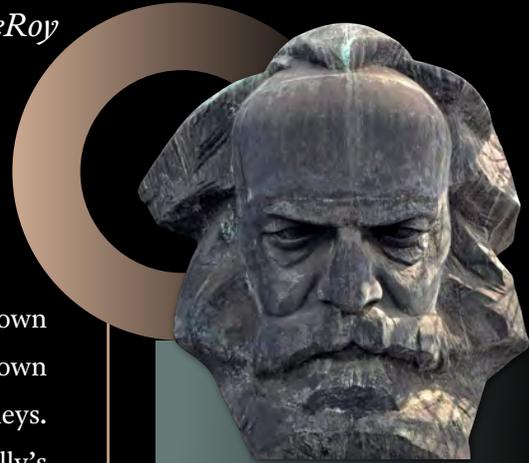
To feel, really feel, the depth of emotion, of the human experience,
Without contradictory externalities clouding the waking, the dreaming moments,
Who are we to believe in such a possibility?
We are human, a force only reeled in by ourselves, a constant evolution
Of Spirit.

Let us lighten the Spirit, lighten the day, the night, to the source.
The source of our love, our hope, our dream, is within us, the orb
Of light blackened by the few waiting to be uplifted by the many.
We are waiting, waiting for ourselves to realize the immense
Power of Us. Recognize this power, feel this power,
This communal reach for the impossible will not be faltered,
For we are many, and they are few. Believe in the
Possibility of impossibility.

CARLOS MARCOS

Antony LeRoy

I recall every bit of paper I had read up and down
From different books. Their covers in leather, red and brown
Feeling like continents, with their ridges and valleys.
Shuffling my feet from working my hours at Sally's
I turn back to the front, and see his name once more,
Carlos Marx, Obras Completas and then look at the door.
A proletarian panoply passes proudly by, holding banner
And sign. They chant and sing in a res'lute manner,
As the villainous ones come from the depths of hell.
Each wearing their POLICE vests, smooth as a bell.
A shot rings out and the masses march on
"We won't stop 'til the last devil is gone!"



little fatima meer

J. C. Govender

I looked at the European children in the pool
They splashed and played,
They smiled and laughed

I asked mommy why we weren't allowed in the pool?
She looked down at me
I saw in her face, her eyes
Pain, anger, sadness

She told me,
Europeans are candidates for hell.
Heaven is for non-Europeans
She reached for my hand, and squeezed it
As we walked past
the sign that read
'Europeans only'

j.c. govender

nineteen fifty-six

1956

It is 1956

The atmosphere is electric.

Fists strike the air, the government is frantic.

There congregated,

Our mothers and sisters

Refusing injustice,
demanding dignity and equality.

In thundering unison they shout

“You strike a woman,

You strike a rock”



PEACE, LAND, & BREAD









**YES,
WE READ
LENIN.**
AND WITHOUT
READING
**LENIN,
WE'D BE
IGNORANT.**

FIDEL AT THE
MONCADA TRIAL



The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism is derived from the fact that it relies upon an advanced theory which correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society, that it elevates theory to a proper level, and that it deems it its duty to utilize every ounce of the mobilizing, organizing and transforming power of this theory.

That is the answer historical materialism gives to the question of the relation between social being and social consciousness, between the conditions of development of material life and the development of the spiritual life of society.

Joseph Stalin

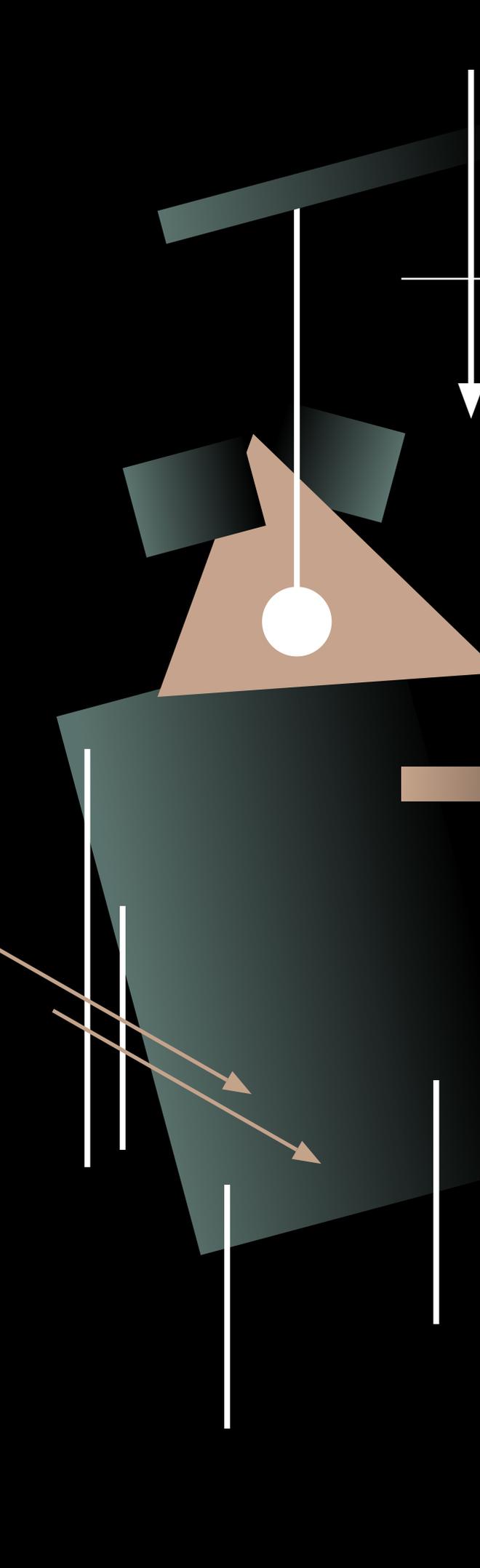




John Hoel

Ladybugs immolate
in the forest fire
frantic and ricocheted.
Devastated nature
almost empty, all awash
in death or panicked flight
to safety. Limbs of language
hard to define; nobody
had to write about so many
trees caught in so much flame
before now. Silkworm moths
bright coals to the air. The chaste
of the world before poisons
that defoliate and deforest.
Agent Orange comes to Brazil.
The cleansing smoke carried up
through the clouds to rest.
Now we are bereft from
the heat on the killing floor.

grolar bear

John Hoel


There is an animal approaching
 dragging her paws. She carries
 her emaciated frame like a child.
 Her movements never accidental,
 they heave in a breathless way,
 a way that I do not understand,
 (but I do want to understand.)
 She is fading into the woods now.
 Meanwhile I am lacquering mouseholes
 on the porch, it is five in the morning
 and the morning sun is not welcoming.
 Sprinklers spring to life and spray water
 on my sunk face. I wince at the sun
 and dry myself. When I close my eyes,
 I see the sun through the lids.
 It is so humid already,
 another hottest summer
 of hottest summers.
 This weather has me wanting
 to care more intentionally, like
 the animal teetering on the filament.
 Well, hold a fist to punch through
 the embers of light—that is what
 they say to do, isn't it? Direct action.
 I sink my teeth into the skin of the
 ripest fruit I have tasted all summer
 and its juices run down the corners
 of my mouth and chin, and down to
 the hot pavement below. I take my time
 walking to the bus stop. The routine
 is comforting and boring. At the end
 of the day, the bus home is the same,
 and I will always find myself there,
 on the bus, sipping lemonade from
 Styrofoam, unnoticed except when
 without bus fare. I find myself
 here again, inspecting the mouseholes.
 I see the recycling bin hurled and broken,
 bits of blue plastic and cardboard
 strewn. I don't pick anything up. I walk inside.

whaleteeth

John Hoel

Morning doesn't come
your form void of all
nutrients it will be here
shrunken and hard
to the touch
but with no life force
it yields nothing
in the shell
of the shell of what it means
to be human you are limp
moments of severe weakness
withdrawal from exterior life
the steady ground beneath it
be absent remain without
porous entry sedentary place
for the people in your life
with enough love to knife you.
how they remove your mouth fluids
to string you around their beady necks.

forest floor et
cetera

But, the *Fellowship of Men shall endure, however many tribulations it may have to wear through.*
So there you have it.

*

But now I wonder, Is Revolution just a habit? If not, what?

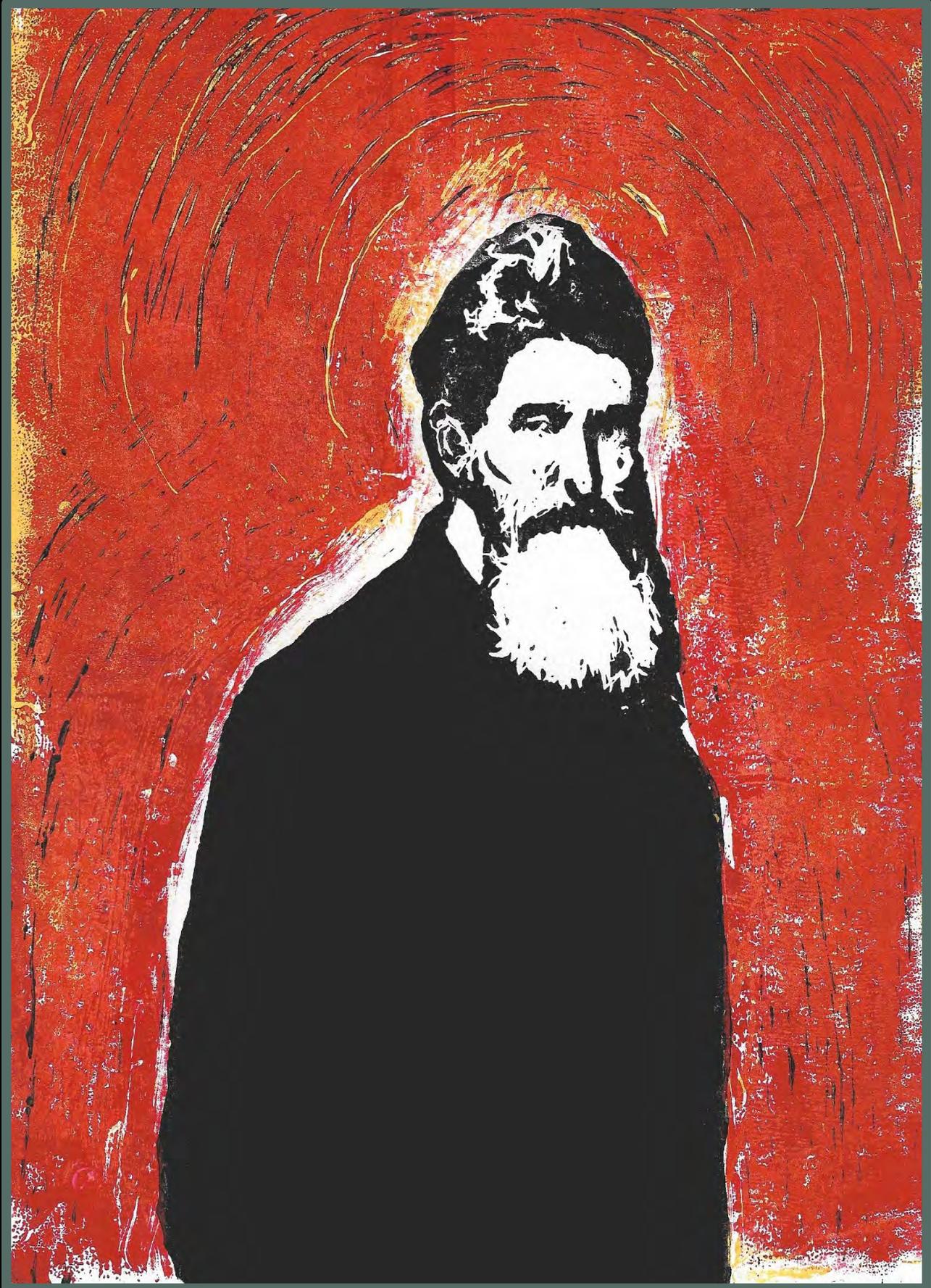
I've been reading a lot about habit lately (and also about revolution) and it seems we all agree: habits matter. And they are engrained. But also they can be changed. And some might make the observation that revolution is equal to breaking those bad habits, those habits of States which we find abhorrent, disrupting the
cuehabitreward
cycle which riddles them with occasional efficiency and constant offensivity. But now I wonder,
Is Revolution just a habit.
If not, what?

Injustice happens (everyday). People stand up to injustice (somedays). Things change (fewdays). *Le Terroir* has become revolution's *magnum opus*, that measuring stick against which all future proceedings would be viewed and would view themselves. But is this not the worst thing for what we call revolution? Would not it be better for acts of revolution to be derived purely from their own contexts than an over-Romanticized few years designed for a time and a place never repeated but oft sought. Because what I fear now is that revolution has itself become a habit, a process with a
cue
(oppression),
habit
(taking to the streets),
and a reward
(?).

We revolt because *we care*. We revolt because we *can*. We revolt because thousands are glued to their TV sets, watching the rich ridicule the poor as they beg on CNBC. We revolt because Black people are dying in the street alarmingly often.

But what do we *do*?

We fall into the same old habits, is what we do. It is somewhat frustrating, no? Don't get mad. Get eTrade, how about? But in all seriousness, it is sometimes hard to think. There is something to be done though, perhaps: Revolt against Revolution. Our holy worshipped mother.



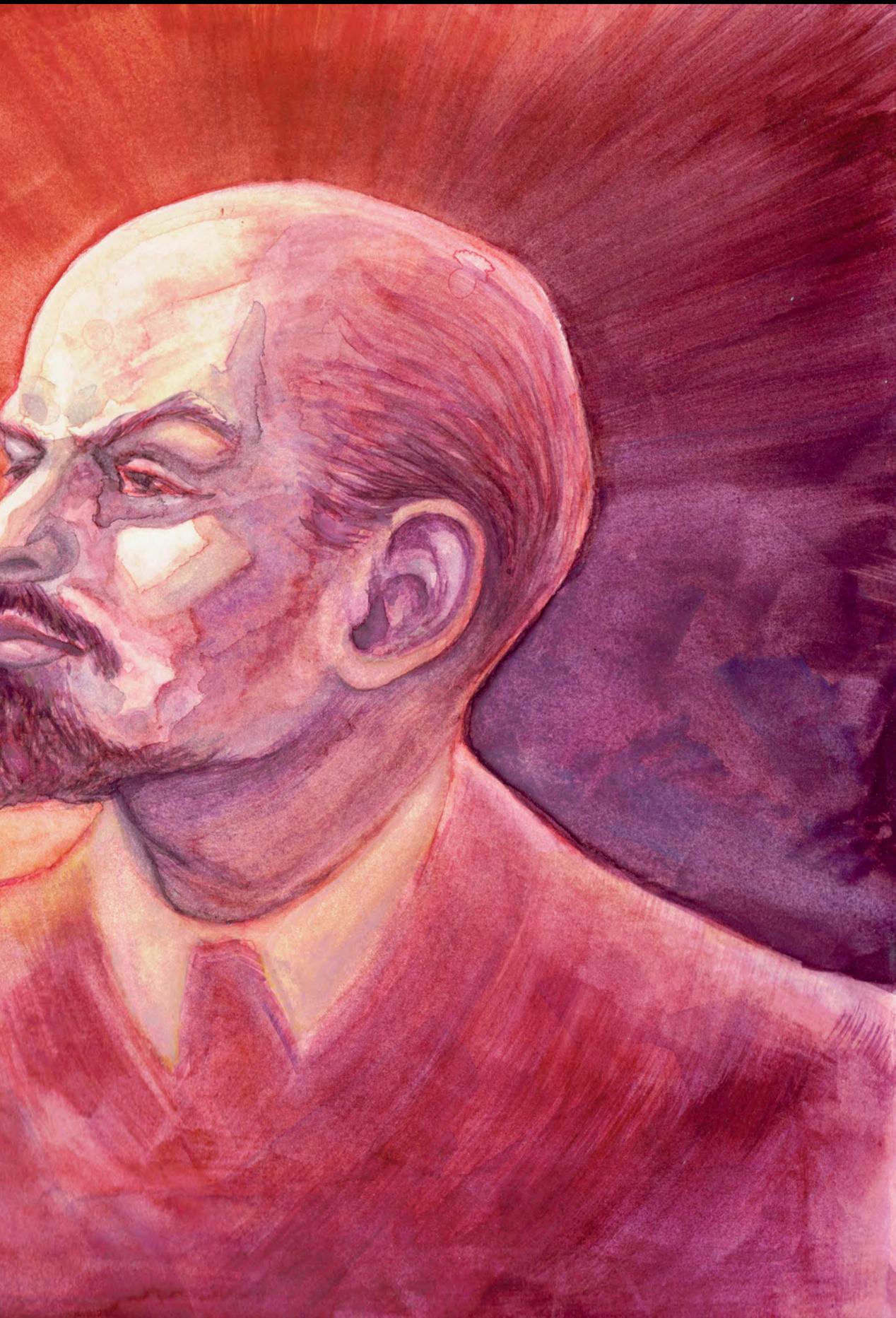




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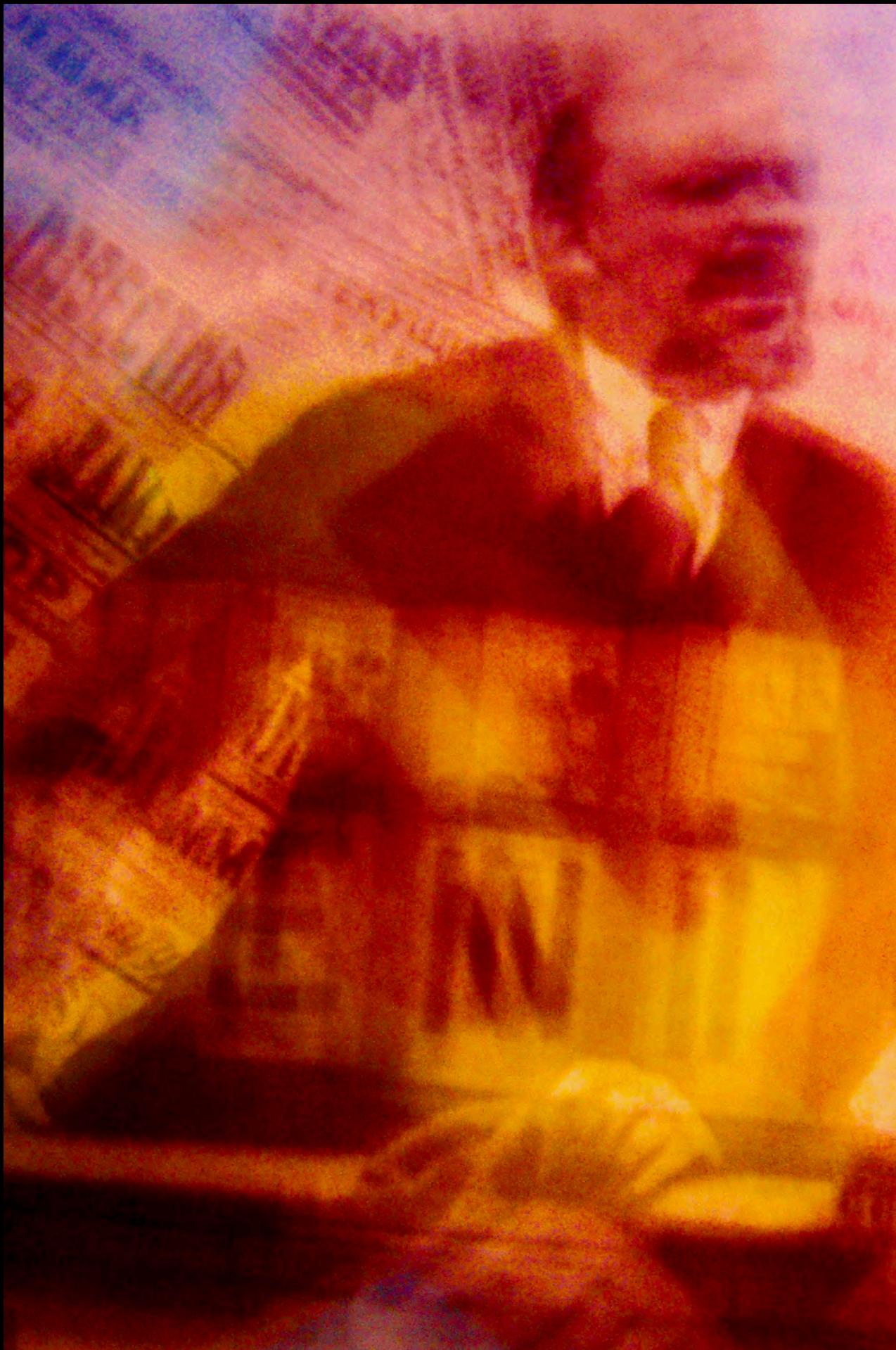
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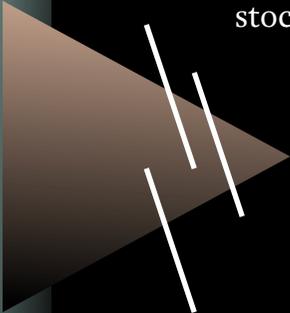




IRON LUNGS

Connor Blackburn

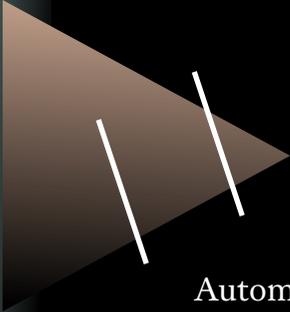
Scorched trees atop the scolded scalp of Mother Nature point to those with
red thumbs and green wallets
canaries in the coalmines and minors in cages
stockings filled with soot, complete wish lists of tycoons.



Inhale of the worker...

Exhale of the rich

Silence of the hammers, then the marching stops.
Tongues cut from struggles exacerbate the violence of laboured breath.



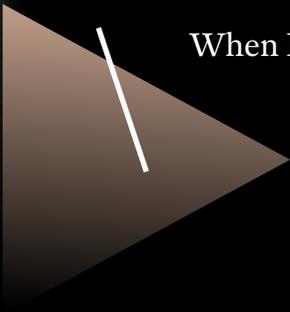
Inhale of the worker...

Exhale of the rich

Automation without autonomy and enforced private property
Chain our wrists to conformity, attempts to sink our comradery

Inhale of the worker...

Exhale of the rich



When Prometheus handed us fire, he lit the wick of doomsday.
Strike the match and hold your breath.

Inhale of the worker...

Fuck Joe Biden
By Red Starr

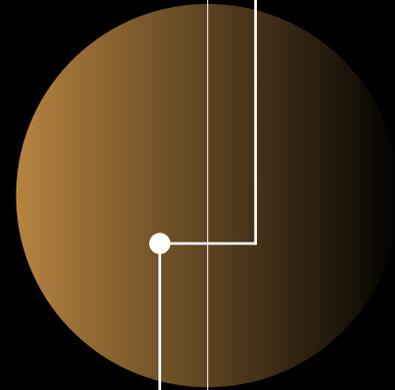
My only hope

The People
The Masses
The Workers
The Colonized
Throwing off
Their Chains

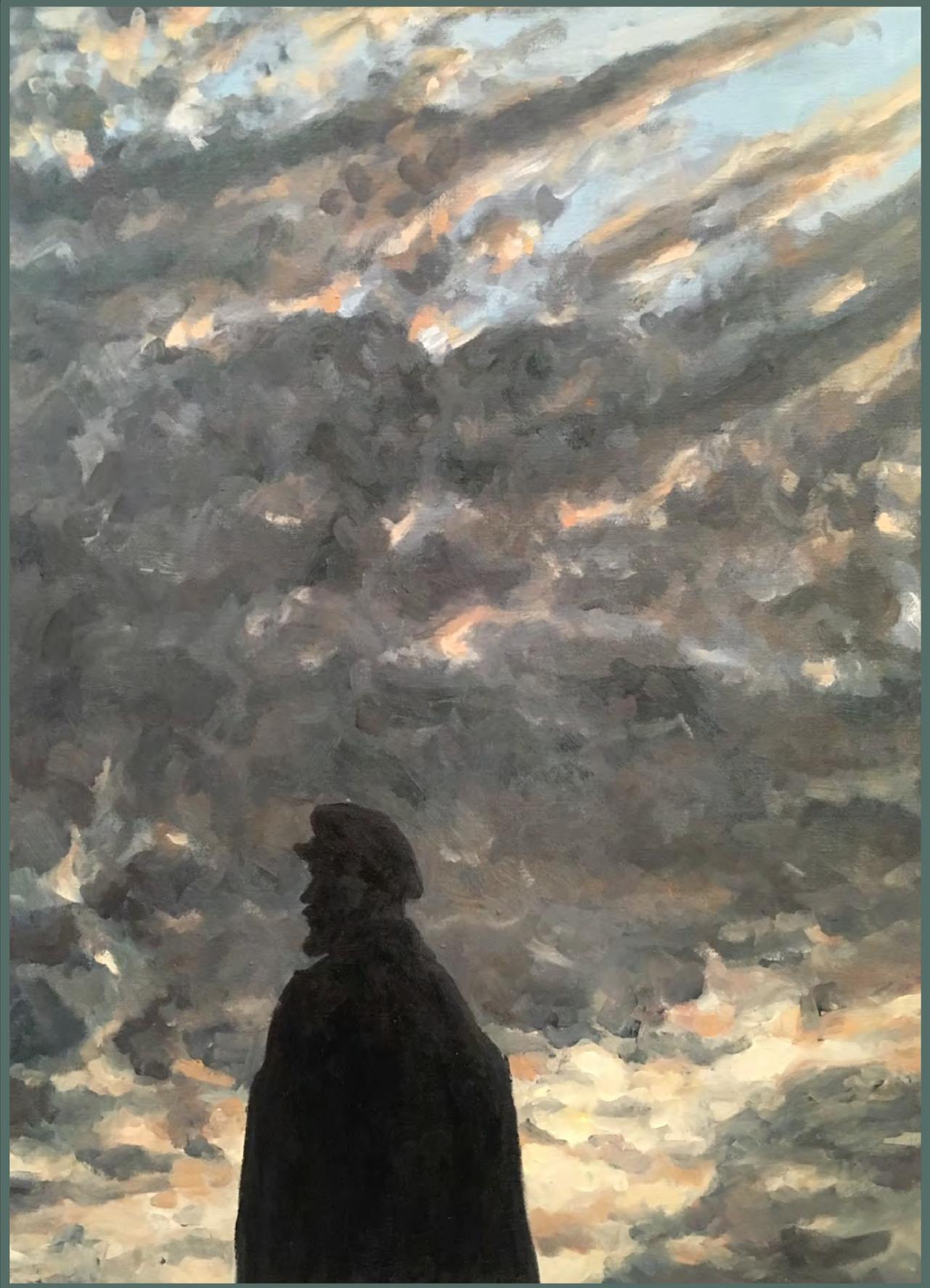
At their power
The Wealthy tremble
Assuring with lies
Placating Niceties

World Slaughter
Their Profit,
offered Empty Symbols
of false progress

We refuse to die
For their comfort
Rising in hope,
Demand Liberation







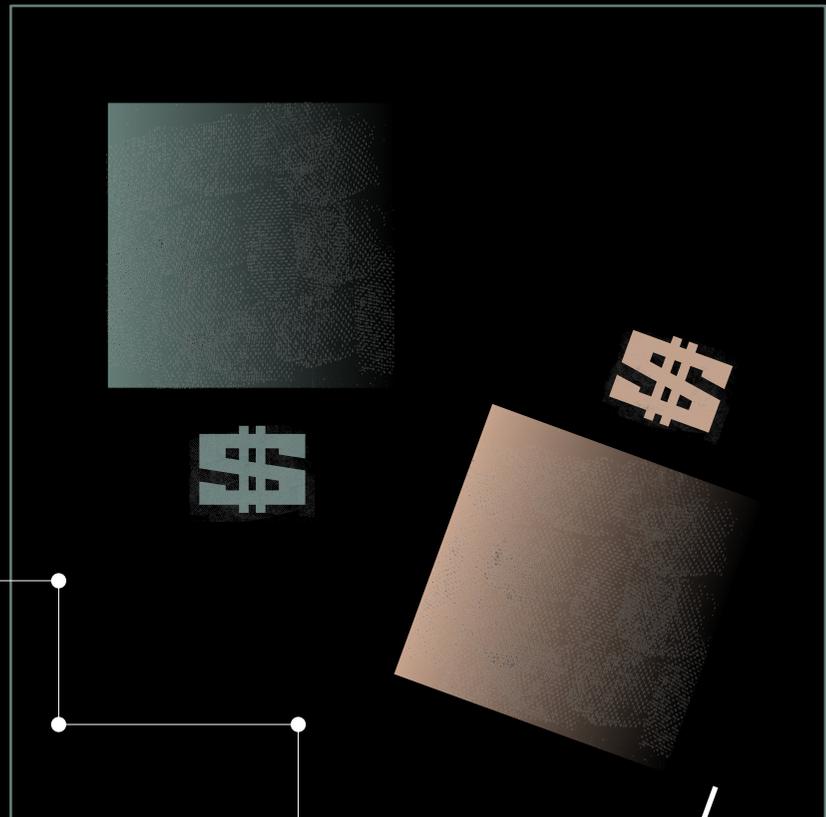
Visiting the Payday Loan Place

Zayne Chrysanthemum

Rage stings my nostrils
Like AA coffee acid reflux
The styrofoam cup suffocating in my grip

Landlord wants his pound of flesh
And the cash store is the great flesh monger
Know damn well i'll choke on this interest
Like my father on a five dollar whore

I am the *digambara*, the Catherine of Siena
Fasting on nothing but slices of bologna
Praying a rich old man comes and wraps a foreskin of gold
On this trembling finger.
A choir of heavenly angels
Pulling out the landlord's stinger.



SOL CLARKE

Weaponised Water

One day it occurred to me
The world is a murder scene
And I can't let inertia be
Another source of adversity

As death stalks the skylines
Vignettes soar through my mind
Impossible and awkward
As I try to fight a thought for
Every life caught up
In the web of lies brought up
For borders to divorce us
From thoughts of
Marauders and hoarders
Who've weaponised water
Against refugees fleeing
Mechanised slaughter

A high price on human rights
Incites a heist on the zeitgeist
Before we wither
Unite and consider
Dissolving the prisons
Resolving our schisms
Halting emissions

Exalting the billions
Ending Capitalism
Defending Socialism
Then bring Communism

Address the homeless
And bless the faithless
Embrace the hopeless
Land, bread, and no fuzz
Ignore the provokers
Jokers poking us
All to evoke in us
Inadequacy masquerading as apathy

Apathetic by design
Not apoplectic at the swine
Ushering suffering
Vast networks of those with net worth
Bury us in debt as they beget dearth
Worry us to death 'til we regret birth
Using any leverage they can get
So let's protect Earth

C-I-A-O, fuck them and NATO
Serial killers in the imperial quiver

Destroying entire cultures
For vampires and vultures
Breezing through slaughter
Seizing oil, food, and water
With such visible hands
Yet individual strands
Of the grasping institutions
Fear no lasting retribution
Any long-term repercussions
Aren't a feature of discussions
Every wilful decision
Awaits skilful revisions
Lies disseminated
And discourse degraded
Until it's hardly debated
How societies sustained on blood
Could ever be a force for good

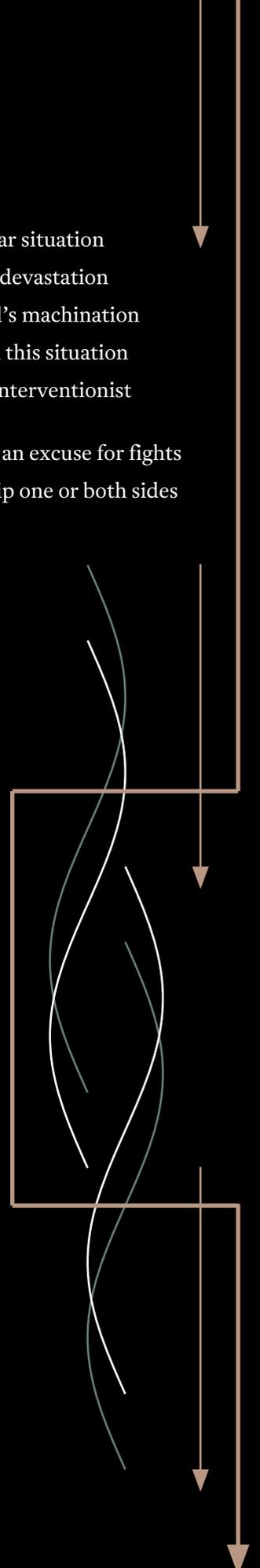
Killing with impunity
Granted immunity
By an international community
Cultivated through cruelty
A threat to reality
In its totality

We can't ignore the way they treat the poor
Or that protesting it is against the law
Nor the people in camps
Whether arid or damp
So many beautiful souls
Behind fences and walls
Torn from their families
And shorn of humanity
Subjected to every form of depravity

Awaiting deportation to a similar situation
Trapped in a cycle of unending devastation
At the festering heart of Capital's machination
Ask yourselves how we reached this situation
Plunders labelled blunders, or interventionist
salvation
Another use of human rights as an excuse for fights
Providing opportunities to equip one or both sides

It's THERE IN LIES the truth
To de-radicalize the youth
Make proof subjective
And fake truth reflexive
So fuck live and let live
Let's get collective
Avoid being defeatist
Or remiss
We need bliss
And heed this
We're gonna win
Create our haven
Negate the negation
Replace civilisation
In the fight of our lives
For our rights
Without patience

Cisterns are stalling
Crisp with a warning;
Capitalists have gone all in
Hard rain's a-falling
Don't hold your breath!
The waters will rise
As the number of deaths



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wake of coup
fall of bloc
belies
engorged with the fats and oils
of consumption and myth

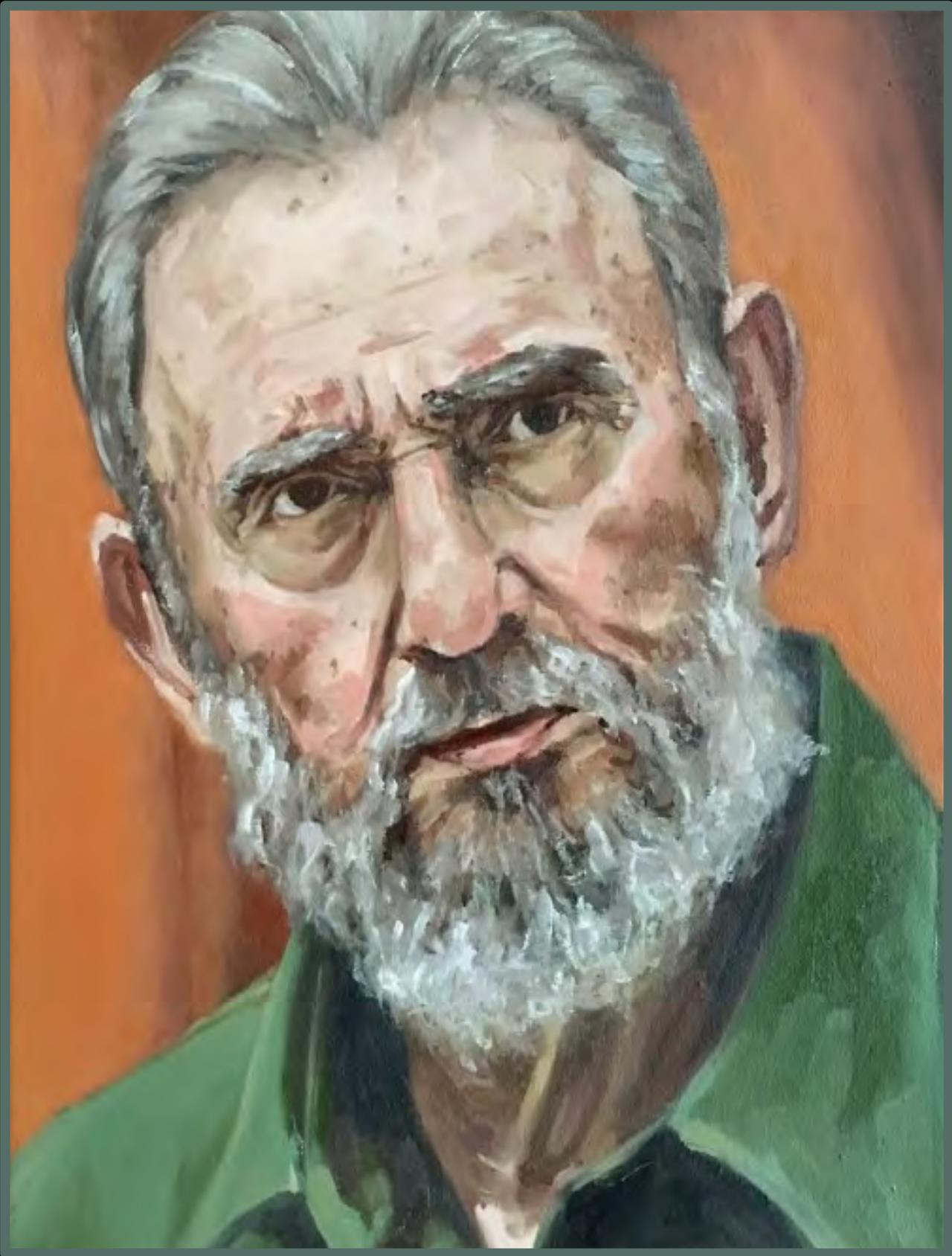
core of mouths
free to feast
trough
brimmed with labor and blood
all turned to mammon

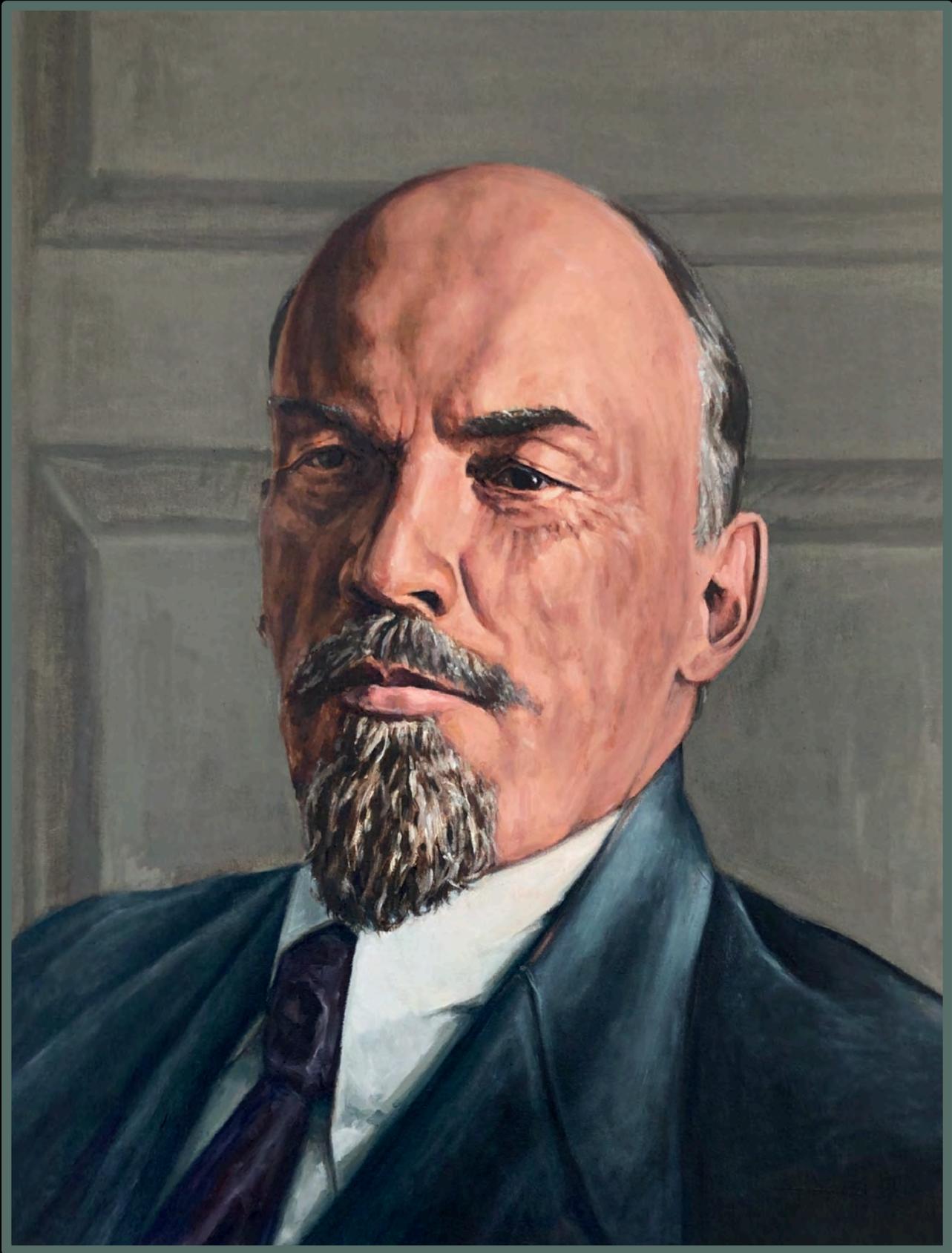
stately wind
monied zephyr
banks
wildfire hunger
dividing spoils of toil

imperial
capital
owner
unseen but surely felt
in every dry well, in every broken back

reckon
for we say
prevailing winds hold sway
so
each of us must sanction that gust
in mind, in hand, in hardened labor
for the doubt was in *me*, but never in *we*
to line a sight or clasp a hilt of saber
so that this gale will shift in our favor

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NIKOLAI GARCIA

marigolds

Nikolai Garcia

“He’s there in case I want it all”
—Nirvava

“Marigold is just a dirty shade/of yellow”
—Amaud Jamaul Johnson

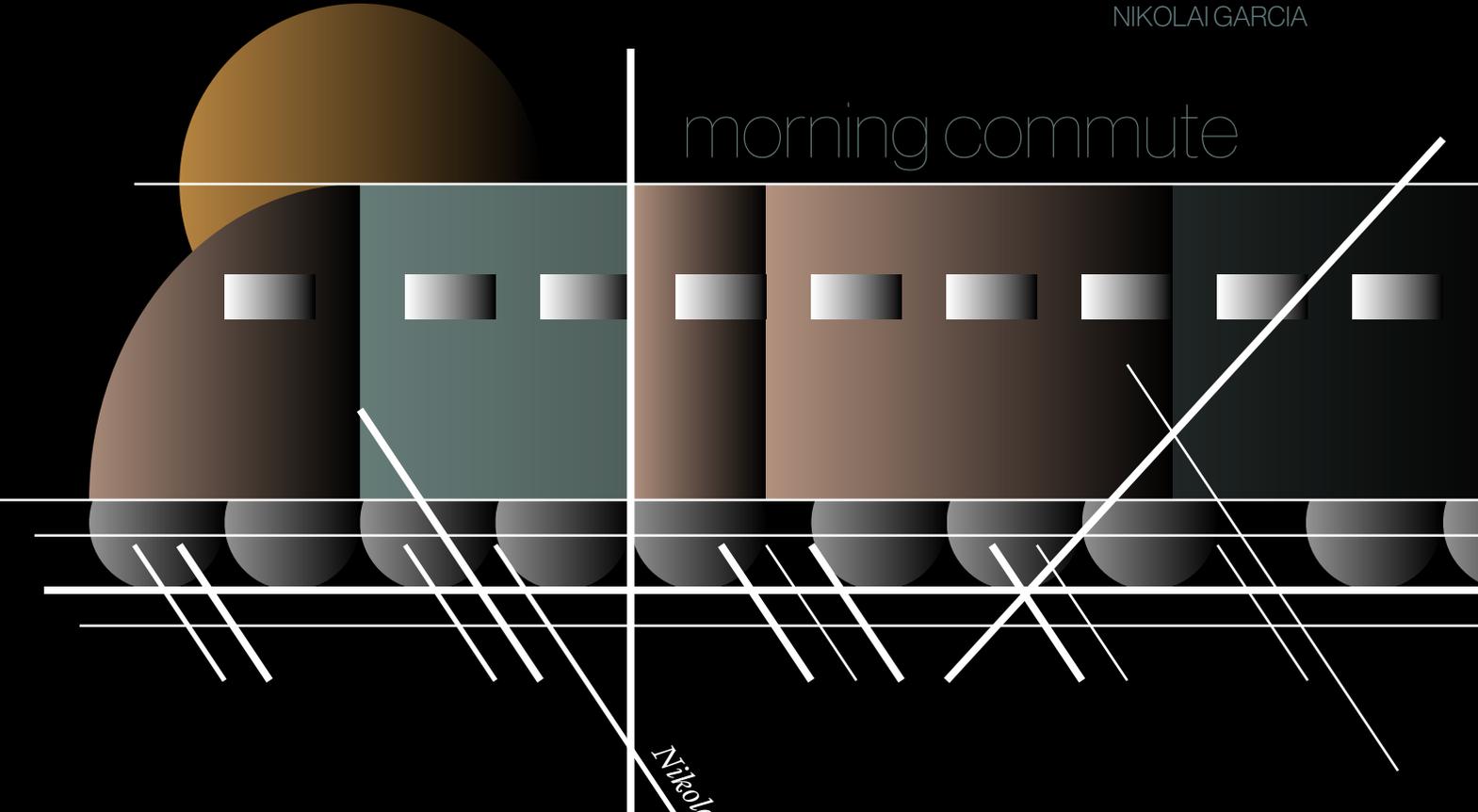
Mounds of marigolds lifted from the trunk of a car. We tiptoe around the dead, to my father’s gravestone. A sibling, who didn’t help pay for flowers, wants to leave right away. But, my sister—dad’s only daughter—takes her time. She places one flower on his gravestone for every year that she’s lived without a father.

Walking around the cemetery, I meet a man who tells me about his brother, how he hated this country. But, he visited once, got sick, died—and is buried here.

My father worked every day of his life; worked hard—the lives of five children depended on him. He saved money where he could; enough to build a house back in his birth town in Mexico. His intentions to go back, buried with him.

On the ride home, I look at all the flower shops along the way. I wonder if this is the life my father wanted for me. I wonder if all we have to look forward to are marigolds.

morning commute



Nikolai Garcia

I want to get off
the train, escape
its daily hums
and screeches. Being
stuck in a tunnel
is not ideal. I want
to join outside, where
earth and sky meet
to create hills, and
rivers, and
dogs that stay
at home and nap
all day. Inside
the subway there's

the sound of waiting
and the stink
of sweat from deadlines
and unpaid bills. Unhoused
people curl up to become
mounds of sleep and litter
while the rest of us
try to remember we are
not ghosts. I want
to breathe. I want
to wear a crown
of flowers, drink hibiscus
water and meet the bees
before they disappear.

Poetry is Subjective

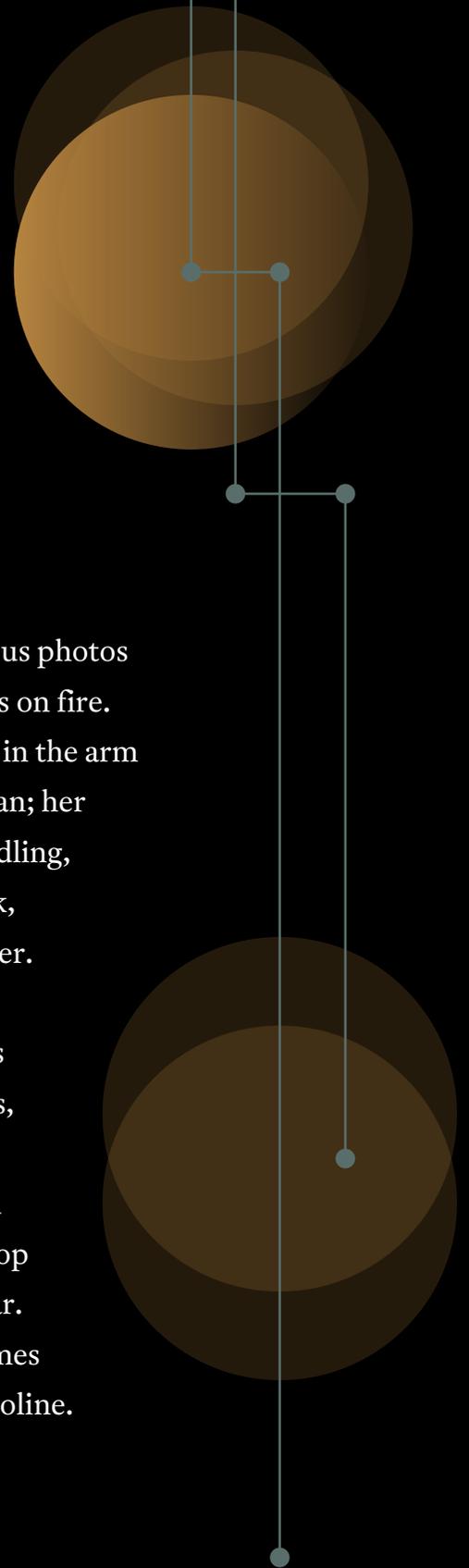
Nikolai Garcia

We don't plant
flowers on the page,
or whisper words
unto empty streets. We
discriminate. We
like the poems
where the landlords
collect their deaths.

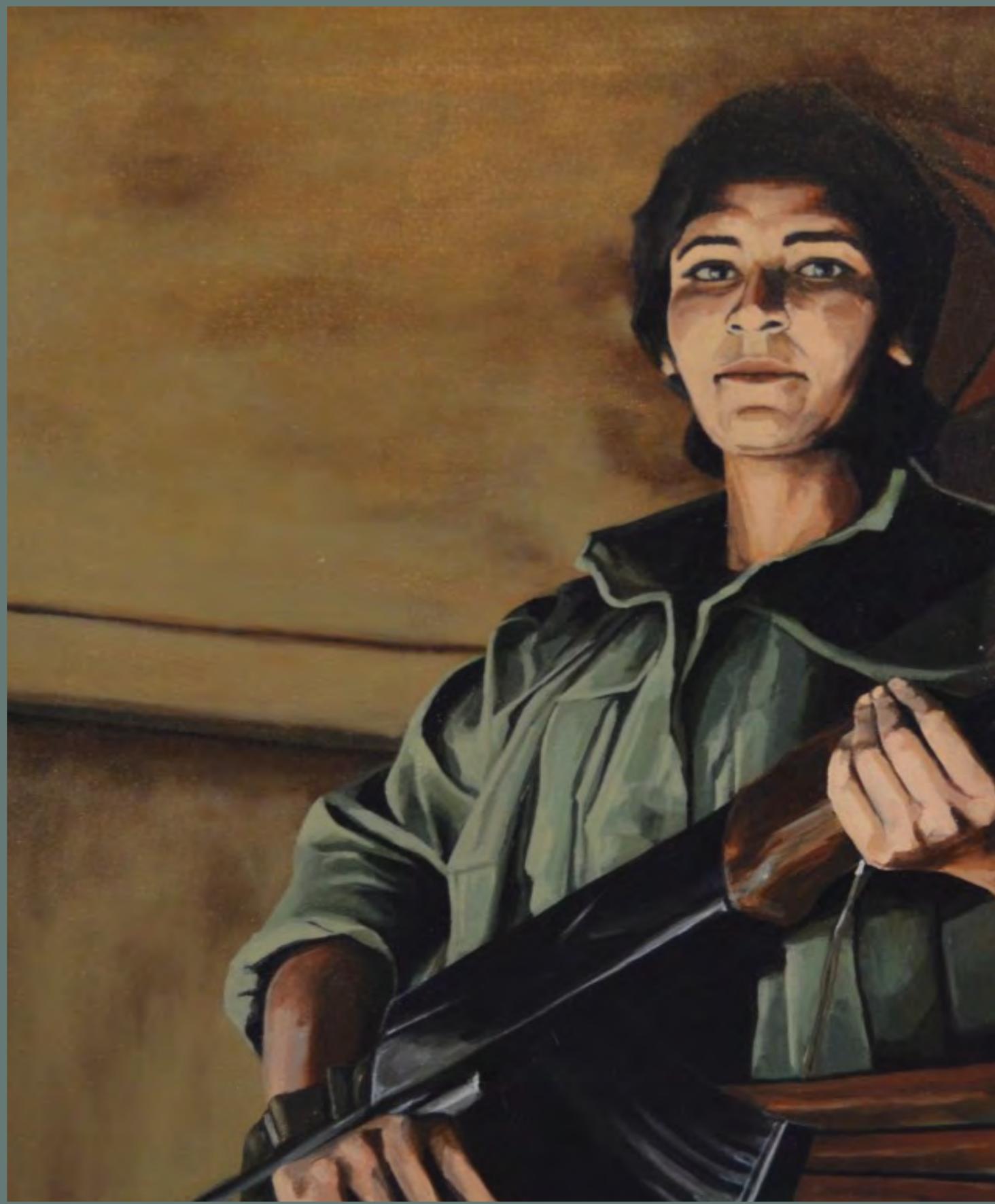
We don't hesitate
to hurl these poems
at bank windows. We
kick-in the door,
roll out the guillotine
to the writer's con-
ference as metaphor
and direct action.

We smile when
newspapers gift us photos
of police stations on fire.
We find poetics in the arm
of a young woman; her
gloved hand cradling,
and hurling back,
a tear-gas canister.

We write poems
at the barricades,
during lunch
breaks. We hold
the open-mic atop
a burning cop car.
We feed the flames
with ink and gasoline.









Song for Inherited Teeth

Nathaniel Ricketts

Our mythologies are in our mouths. In mine,
old-world famine, four walls for whole families,
stories nestled between cracked, crooked teeth.

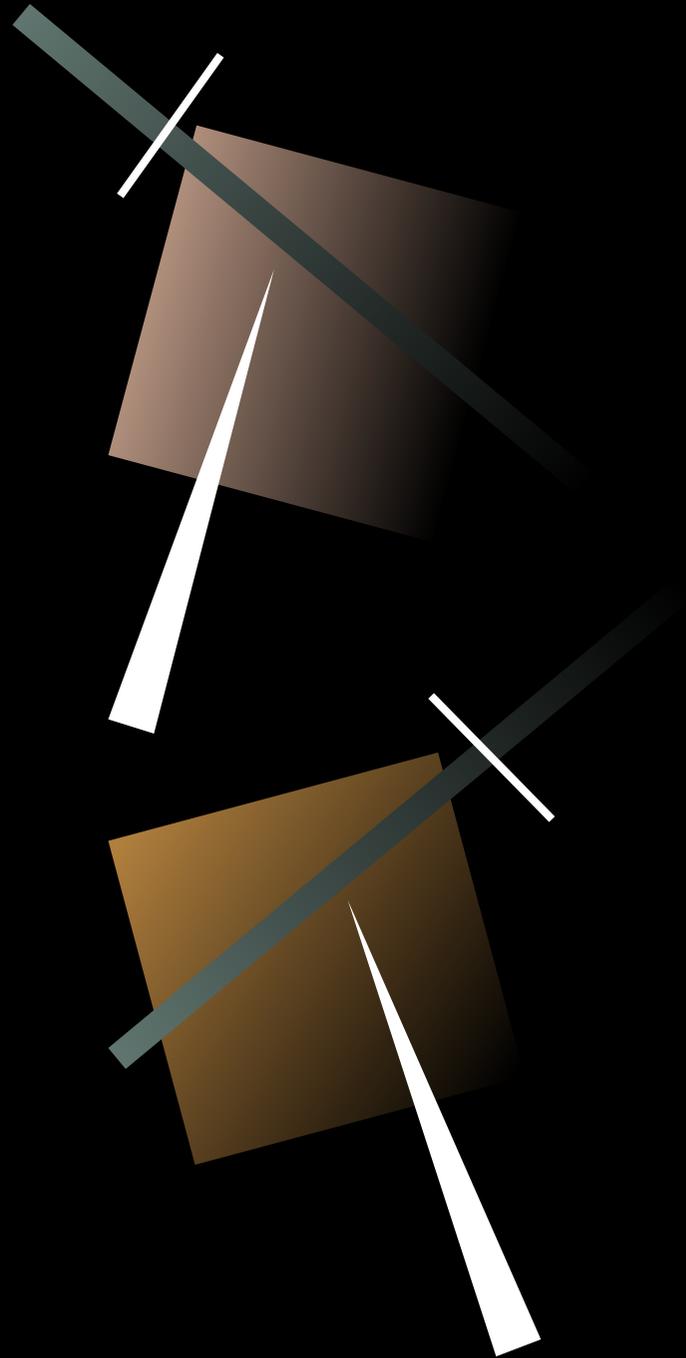
The dentist reads me through a microscope
and asks about flossing. Look, my teeth
aren't just mine. Whole histories hide in my mouth,

the one I inherited from my father and his mother
who testifies I'll never lose my sight but I'll pay
for my teeth, stained and crooked

like the family dentist who double-dipped
on our two union insurance plans,
history that rotted in my father's mouth

and died in his throat. Now I have my own plastic card,
courtesy of the university. I've quit the candy and Coke
to keep at least a few crooked teeth,

so when the new dentist asks about flossing again,
I'll tell him yes, then wonder if he can read
the stories between these crooked teeth,
the genealogies I own in my mouth.



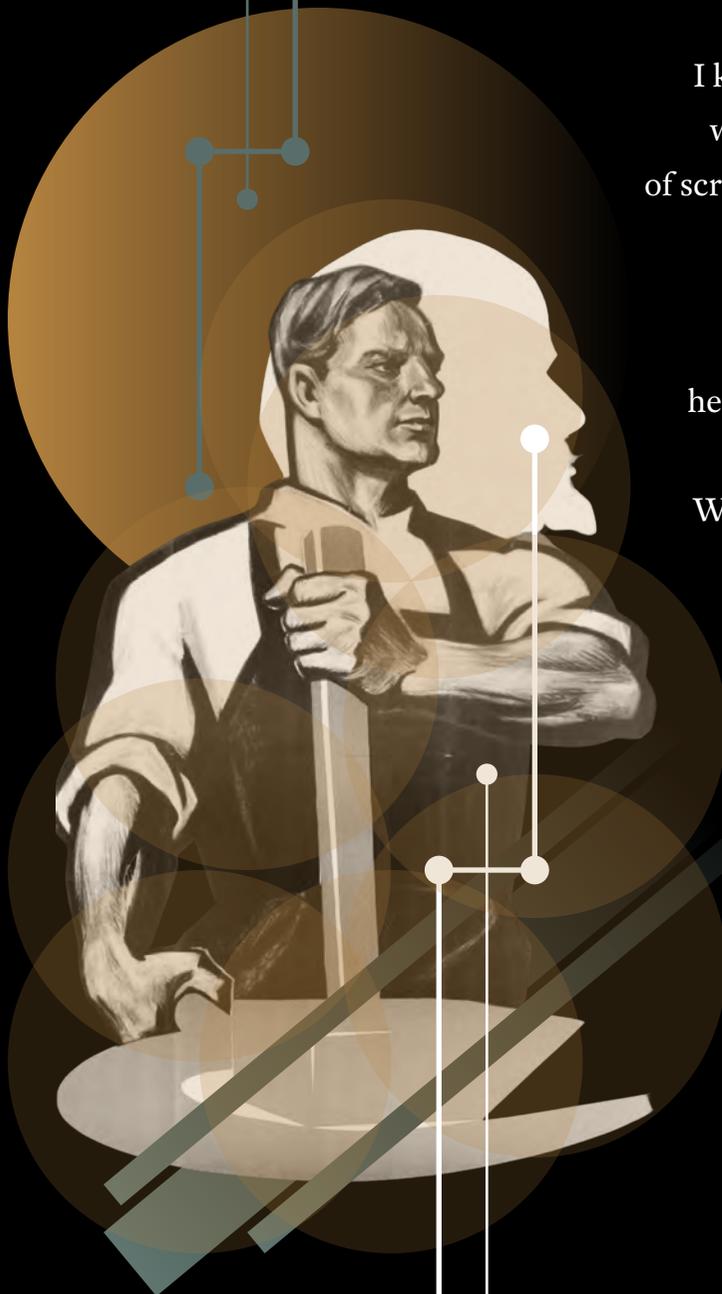
My Father the Foreman

Nathaniel Ricketts

I knew him first as the apprentice whose wage wasn't much, so he drove home with buckets of scrap from the jobsite in his rusted truck's bed.

It was the union way. The journeymen didn't forget. Something to supplement the new-truck fund. When I was at his hip he taught me to strip wire, to grip a razor tight and always cut away from the body.

We strip less wire now. He drives a hatchback to work, gives the copper to kids with kids at home. He says he orders more than the company needs, that it's easier to cut wire than to extend it. Plus, sons should learn to use a knife.







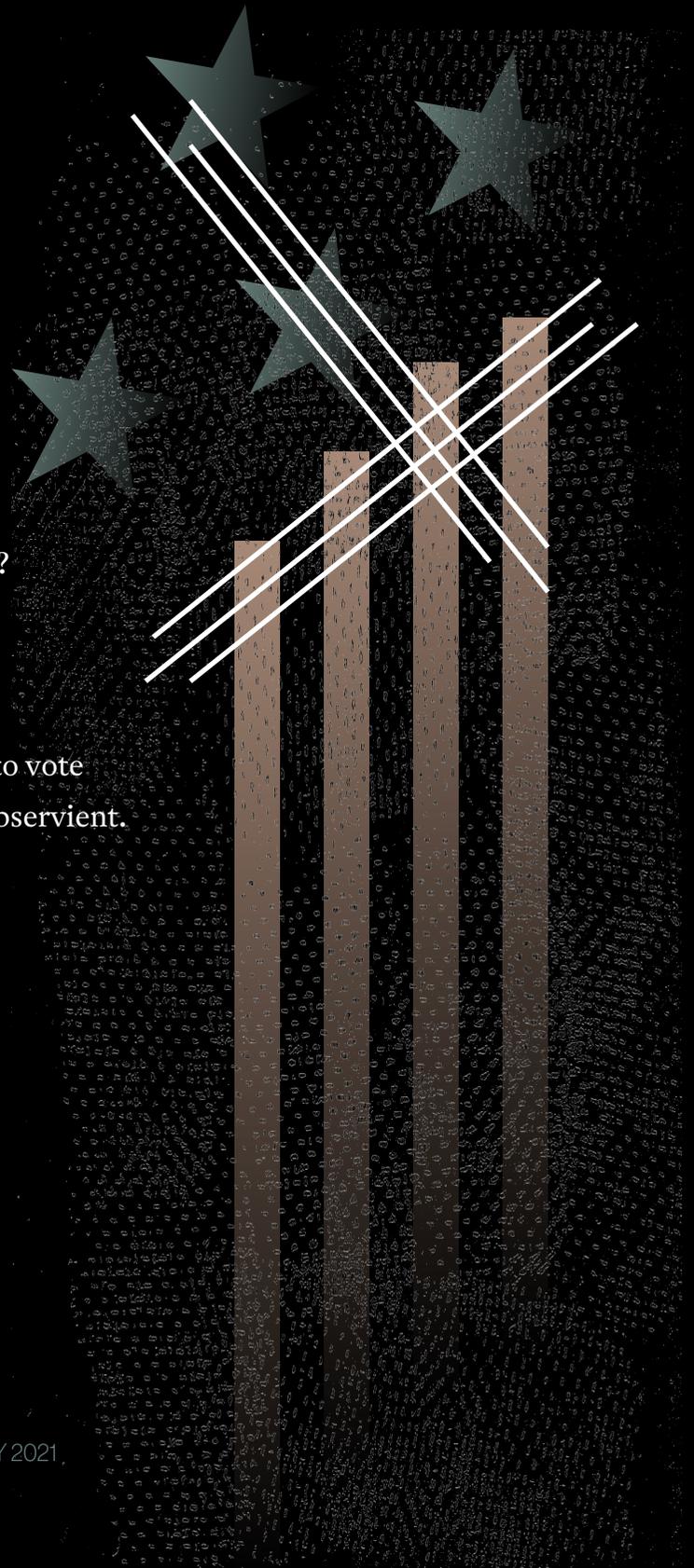
Lamentation of the American Dream

Michael Cullen

Watch your tv, eat carcinogenic fast food
Work in the office with aircon and coffee
Enjoy the illusion that they imbue
Into society that tells us we're free.
The 'comforts' provided to keep us docile
Afforded to us by circumstance of birth
Passive consumers keep up with the style
Who gives a fuck if we're destroying the earth?

Democracy keeps the façade afloat
But who do politicians really represent?
If it changed anything they wouldn't allow us to vote
The media promotes the agenda to keep us subservient.
Taught how to do but not how to think,
Whitewashed history drilled in to the youth
The past is the past there is no link
Lies have become a universal truth.

A generation enslaved but not in chains
Enslaved to a market, an insidious ideology.
Enslaved by a wage, always chasing gains,
Do we truly believe we're free?
Nature has been commodified,



Our dreams and hopes washed on the tide,
 Is it for the flag or the dollar that soldiers died?
 And all the while the suits lied and lied.

Opulent glistening palaces of gold adorned the city's landscape,
 Sky meeting towers of fluorescent glass windows watch the sheep race
 But from the pot pandlers and sleeping bags beneath there is no escape
 And the people pass by, head in the sky, rushing always, can't look them in the face.
 Judged on our clothes, cars, house, and our phone
 Always chasing that elusive fulfilment
 But with every new acquisition they begin to own
 A piece of us, and not just money, but more time spent.

Dreams sold out for comforts and immediate pleasures,
 A world of feigned smiles, soul destroyed forlorn 8am bus stop dwellers,
 All bought into the dream of chasing false treasures
 Beguiled and manipulated by TV fortune tellers.
 'Fake news' has become the new truth
 Information has never been more available yet never so ignored,
 Money is the branch and greed is the route
 And the earth's wealth and resources—the 1% hoard.

The disparity between rich and poor grows,
 Prejudices played on to keep us disconnected
 They don't care of the common man's woes
 Their apathy is an attitude to be expected.
 For if the system works for the few, the few who have the power,
 Why should we expect change to come from there?
 When the time comes we shall not cower
 The world can change but first to do, we must care.



Be Like Che

courageous, bold,
fair.

Take risks; follow your heart.
Be moved.

Let only the worthy
walk beside you.

*May you always have
good comrades.*

Believe in your purpose.
Take action.



M.S. EVANS



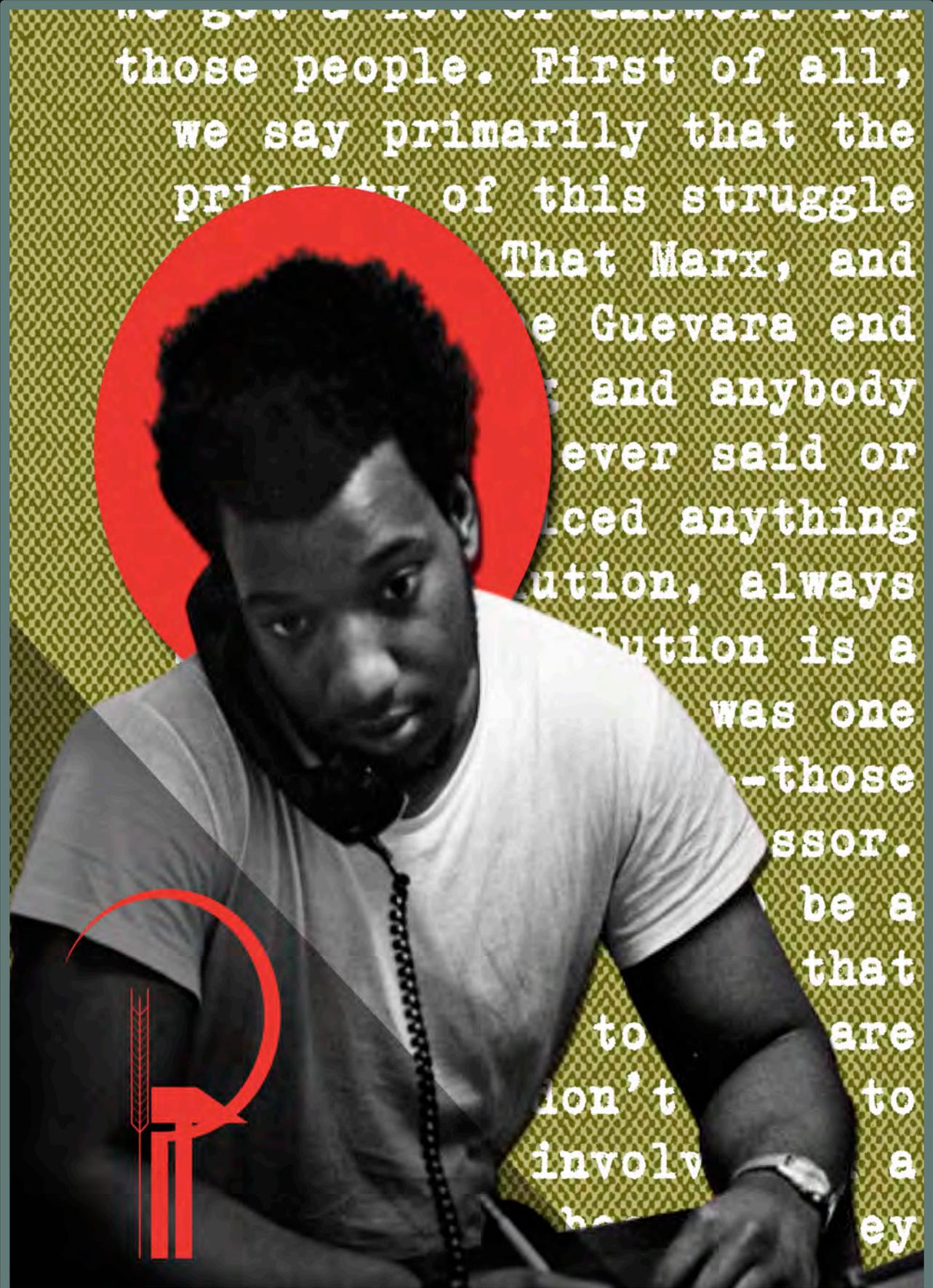
Marx in the Snow





Hannah Kass is a joint PhD student in the Department of Geography and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.







**INK, LETTERS,
AND CRITICAL
ANALYSIS**

LITTERATURA COMUNISTA

Jackson Albert Mann

Nationalism, Populism, and Internationalism in the Lyrics of the *Little Red Songbook* (1909-1917)¹

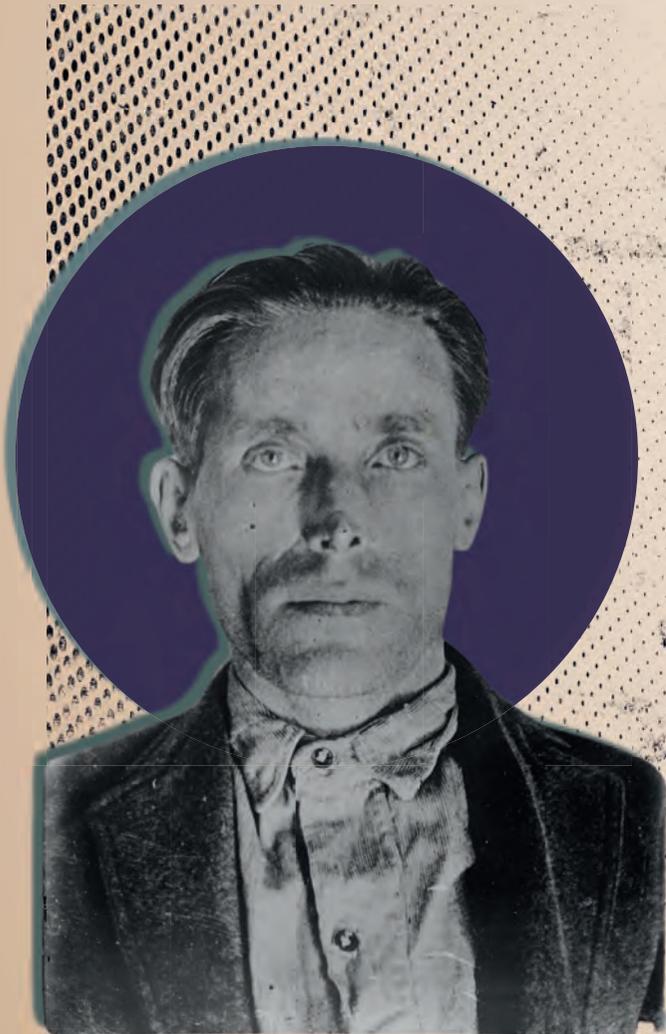
Joe Hill and the Defense of Song

On February 20th, 1913, a short article entitled “The People” appeared in the pages of the *Industrial Worker*, the main publication of the Spokane, WA, local of the U.S.-based international industrial labor union the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). In a few brief paragraphs, the author attacked the continued inclusion of James Connell’s British labor anthem “The Red Flag” within the pages of the *Little Red Songbook* (LRS), the IWW’s flagship cultural initiative. The author cited the song’s opening line, “the people’s flag is deepest red,” as grounds for its exclusion or possible rewriting.² “Who are the people?” the author asks before going on to demonstrate through a number of comical examples how populist gestures,

such as those invoked by Connell, had been used by U.S. politicians to deceive working class citizens.³ After moving on to a humorous anecdote meant to highlight how populist discourse in mainstream politics almost always refers to those of the middle class, the author ends the article by stating “it is about time that every rebel wakes up to the fact that ‘the people’ and the workingclass [sic] have nothing in common,” a play on the opening lines of the IWW’s famous preamble.^{4 5}

The author of this article was none other than Joe Hill, the most famous of whom labor organizer and historian Daniel Gross has called the IWW’s “worker-scholar-poets”—members of

Many of Hill's songs went a step further than his contemporaries, openly denouncing the particularities of religion, nationalism, and racism in the U.S.



the union who constantly switched between roles as rank-and-file workers, organizers, theorists, administrators, and artists.⁶ Hill, a Swedish immigrant, was born on October 7th, 1879 as Joel Emmanuel Hägglund in the coastal town of Gälve, Sweden. By all accounts, he was a talented musician from a young age. Both of his parents had some musical training, teaching him and his siblings to play organ “as soon as they could reach the keys.”⁷ According to Ester Dahl, his only surviving sibling by the time scholarly inquiry into his life began, Hill started composing what she called “teasing songs” as a child, as well as contrafacta of popular Swedish Salvation Army hymns.⁸ In an interview in 1956, Dahl recalled Hill beginning to compose his own original music in his late teens, around the mid-1890s.⁹ In 1902, he and his older brother Paul immigrated to the United States. They arrived in New York City, where Hill worked part-time as a professional pianist and janitor, before leaving to find better work elsewhere.¹⁰

Like much of the U.S. working class in the early 20th century, Hill became a full-time migrant laborer, taking whatever small jobs he could get before moving on. By late 1905, he had arrived on the West Coast.¹¹ A short article that he published in the *Industrial Worker* reveals that he joined the IWW sometime in 1910.¹² After moving to San Pedro, California, he quickly became a dedicated member of the local organization as a rank-and-file longshore worker. He also began to publish numerous articles, songs, poems, and cartoons in the union’s national multilingual press, mostly in the pages of the *Industrial Worker* and the LRS. By 1913, Hill had become the best known songwriter in the IWW, as well as moderately famous within the larger U.S. labor movement, as a result of his witty contrafacta. Many of these lyrics were written for specific organizing drives, labor actions, and strikes undertaken by the union. After a decade on the West Coast, in January of

1914, Hill began to make his way back East with the intention of settling in Chicago.¹³

Hill's 1913 article was not the last time he would become involved in debates regarding the role of music and song in the IWW. On November 19th, 1914, a few months after he was arrested and imprisoned in Utah as a suspect in a Salt Lake City murder, an article of Hill's was published in the IWW journal *Solidarity*, in which he defended the growing use of songs by the union as educational material. After mentioning a number of suggested corrections to the LRS, Hill argued that "a pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over."¹⁴ He continued, asserting that:

...if a person can put a few cold, common sense facts into a song, and dress them (the facts) up in a cloak of humor to take the dryness off of them, he will succeed in reaching a great number of workers who are too unintelligent or too indifferent to read a pamphlet or an editorial on economic science.¹⁵

Why did Hill feel the need to voice his opinions on the IWW's use of song around this time? Although he had been writing short articles for the IWW press for over three years, he had never felt the need to publicly defend his work before.

In many ways, Hill's songs were not particularly different from other anglophone labor music. The majority of his lyrics contained the typical invocations of working class power, as well as the classic critiques of capitalism, bad working conditions, low wages, and hypocritical employers. However, many of Hill's songs went a step further than his contemporaries, openly denouncing the particularities of religion, nationalism, and racism in the U.S.

Hill was not breaking with any official positions of the union in making such direct critiques. Although no union leaders ever described the IWW as a revolutionary syndicalist organiza-

tion, an "examination of the language used in newspapers, pamphlets, books and speeches of the IWW, reveals ideas, concepts and theories (although not all tactics) that are almost indistinguishable from those espoused by European union militants who described themselves as syndicalists."¹⁶ The union was also international, officially dedicated to the construction of "one big labor alliance the world over."¹⁷ Although its institutional backbone always remained in the United States, by 1911, the IWW had small national chapters in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia.¹⁸ It maintained global affiliations with other syndicalist labor unions, such as the Spanish *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT), and even briefly joined the Soviet Union-initiated Red International of Labor Unions (RILU) in the early 1920s.^{19 20} While the IWW was never officially anti-nationalist, the global revolutionary project the union was founded to support was, by default, opposed to U.S. nationalism. The

Revealing how these tensions played out within the cultural discourse of the IWW is important, not only because it is historically interesting, but because it holds lessons for communist organizers engaged in similar work today.

ideological orientation of Hill's songs was well-aligned with this project, and this may be why his lyrics were particularly popular with the membership. Yet, he still felt it necessary to defend what he was doing.

Despite the ideological positions of the IWW, I believe that the particularly explicit anti-nationalist, anti-religious, and anti-racist elements of Hill's lyrics were disturbing to a number of fellow members, especially those who had previous experience in earlier anglophone left-wing politico-cultural movements. Similarly to how Benedict Anderson contends that "official nationalism" over-determined the ways in which 20th century revolutionary anti-colonial leaderships could imagine the post-colonial future, I argue that earlier anglophone left-wing working class discourses may have over-determined the parameters of acceptable discourse within the cultural production of the IWW.²¹ Though I have found no evidence of direct attacks on Hill's lyrics, there is evidence that implicit critiques were made of his music by other IWW members in the union's press, as well as further possible proof that continuing inclusion of Hill's songs in the LRS initiated a struggle for editorial control of the Songbook.

The work of developing an international working class culture among a diverse population with a multiplicity of national, cultural, and ethnic loyalties is complex. In the early 20th century U.S., this complexity was made even more difficult by the presence of multiple insurgent anglophone discourses derived from the dominant national culture and which often carried over the implicit white supremacist and nationalist sentiments of that culture, impeding the work of building international, multi-racial solidarity. Revealing how these tensions played out within the cultural discourse of the IWW is important, not only because it is historically interesting, but because it holds lessons for communist organizers engaged in similar work today.

The Development of the *Little Red Songbook*

Although the IWW was founded in 1905, the union suffered a series of early setbacks which postponed the construction of a functioning administration. Between 1905 and 1906, political confrontations exploded between cliques jockeying for the power to affiliate the union with competing socialist political parties, specifically Daniel DeLeon's Socialist Labor Party (SLP) and Eugene V. Debs' Socialist Party of America (SPA). The "comic opera circumstances of the [1906] second convention," which included physical confrontations, political intrigue, and even the arrest of IWW leaders Bill Haywood and Charles Moyer, led the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), the union's original institutional spine, to slowly back out of the IWW between 1907 and 1908.²²

Following this debacle, another year-long political confrontation took place when DeLeon, who, having politically survived the previous convention, attempted to affiliate the IWW to his SLP in 1908. However, DeLeon was outmaneuvered. A delegation of West Coast members led by organizer J.H. Walsh formed a coalition with DeLeon's former political ally, Vincent St. John. This coalition voted to oust DeLeon from the union's leadership. With DeLeon gone, there was very little incentive to affiliate with any political party and one of the IWW's most famous principles, non-affiliation with political parties, was born as an accident of this political maneuvering.

By the end of the 1908 convention, the IWW had fought through most of the major political differences within its leadership and was ready to begin organizing. This included the rapid construction of an unprecedentedly large print-media infrastructure. The unparalleled size and scope of this project was not without purpose. Anticipating a later statement by Rus-

sian Revolutionary V.I. Lenin, Haywood argued in 1905 that the IWW's primary goal was to go "down into the gutter to get at the mass of workers," referring to the tens of millions of immigrant and Black working class citizens that had been ignored by the U.S. Government and the American Federation of Labor craft unions.^{23 24} A print-media infrastructure of extraordinary size would be necessary to reach and educate the multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial, and, most importantly, multilingual mass of U.S. workers. By the early 1910s, the union was publishing newspapers in at least twelve languages.²⁵

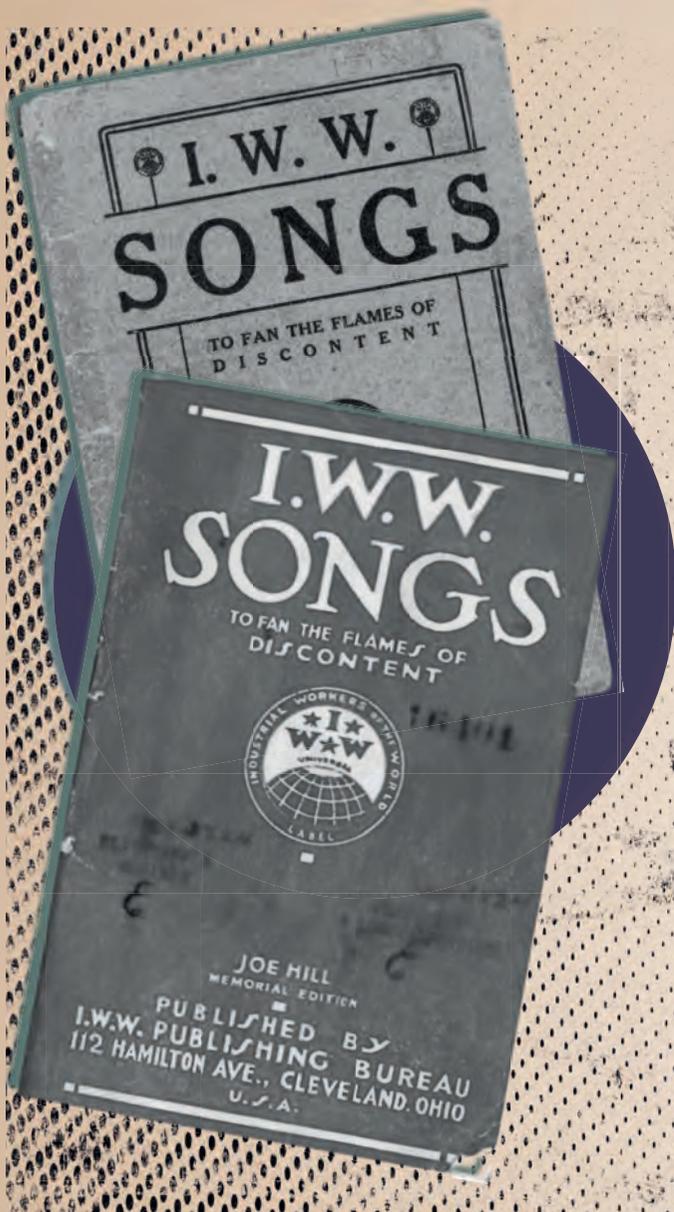
Saying that the IWW encouraged member participation in its publications is an understatement. Print-media was such an integral part of life in the union that when members were arrested for striking, as they often were, it was common for them to "set up their own circulating prison libraries [and] publish a handwritten I.W.W. prison newspaper."²⁶

The IWW began publishing lyrics in its print-media early on. Additionally, the practice of selling "song cards," small pocket-sized cards on which were printed witty IWW-themed contrafacta, had begun as early as 1908, when it was suggested by J.H. Walsh as a promotional and educational strategy.^{27 28} Walsh, who, during the first years of the union had been charged with establishing an IWW presence in Alaska, was relocated to the rapidly growing Spokane local as National Organizer. He arrived just after the end of the 1908 convention.²⁹

Spokane was "the job-buying center for thousands of migratory workers who labored in the agricultural, mining, and lumber industries" of the Pacific Northwest.³⁰ The critical mass of migrant workers attracted all sorts of shady operators, often called employment sharks, who would prey on workers' desperation by promising non-existent jobs for a fee. One of the primary goals of the IWW in Spokane was to warn

Joe Hill, born Joel Emmanuel Hägglund and also known as Joseph Hillström, was executed on November 19th, 1915, most likely as a result of his prominence in the IWW. Hill's execution propelled him to national, and later international, fame as the U.S. labor movement's most prominent martyr, musician, and songwriter.





“incoming workers of the treachery of the sharks.”³¹ Soon after arriving, Walsh “organized a red-uniformed I.W.W. band to [...] compete [with the Sharks] for the attention of the crowds.”³² Combining two good ideas, Walsh also began to sell song cards containing contrafacta that the band performed around the city.³³ It was these song cards that “blazed the trail for the larger songbook [the LRS] to come, a songbook of lasting fame, and one that would make the I.W.W. known in all corners of the earth.”³⁴

Inspired by Walsh’s project, the General Executive Board of the Spokane IWW voted to draft plans for the publication of an official union songbook, organizing a Songbook Committee in December of 1908. The Committee, headed by songwriter Richard Brazier, quickly compiled a set of songs with a focus on “local talent,” developed a distinctive red graphic design, and agreed on a print run of 10,000 copies.³⁵ The first edition of the LRS was published in January 1909 and “sold out in under a month.”³⁶ The LRS went on to become one of the best-selling pieces of IWW literature. For instance, by “the mid-1910s, the usual [yearly] print-run was 50,000 copies; by 1917 it was up to 100,000.”³⁷

**“Don’t sing ‘My Country, ’tis of thee,’
But sing this little chorus:
Should I ever be a soldier,
’Neath the Red Flag I would fight.”**

Populism, Nationalism, Internationalism, and the Struggle for the *Little Red Songbook*

While Hill's 1913 article focuses specifically on the first line of the first song included in the original LRS, he was most likely responding to the first edition as a whole, which was dominated by the songs of the aforementioned Richard Brazier. Out of twenty-four songs, fifteen were composed by Brazier. His lyrical style is typical of anglophone labor songs, imploring the workers to "unite, unite / in one union grand" in order to "overthrow their masters' might."^{38 39}

However, Brazier and his fellow committee members also included a number of anonymously composed lyrics, two of which invoke 'the people.' For example, "Walking on the Grass," a contrafacta of the Irish ballad "The Wearing of the Green," begins with these lines:

In this blessed land of freedom where King
Mammon wears the crown

There are many ways illegal now to hold the
people down⁴⁰

The second set of lyrics, titled "A Song for 1910" contains this verse-chorus set:

Long in their bondage the people have wait-
ed. Lulled to inaction by pulpit and press;

Hoping their wrongs would in time be abat-
ed, Trusting the ballot to give them redress,

Vainly they trusted; a high court's decision
Swept the last bulwark of freedom away;
The voice of the people is met with derision,
But a people in action no court will gainsay.

Chorus:

Then up with the masses and down with the
classes, Death to the traitor whom money
can buy. Co-operation's the hope of the na-

tion,

Strike for it now or your liberties die.⁴¹

In the first example, 'the people' invoked by the author are held down through illegal means, implying that authority over the definition of legality can be claimed by 'the people' as, in the words of historian Eric Hobsbawn, a "right by custom from time immemorial."⁴² As will be demonstrated, Hill interprets workers' notion of 'legality' as a progressive concept as naïveté. According to Hill, the concept of legality is a tool to be used by capitalists to dominate the working class.

While the second set of lyrics are less trustworthy of 'the people's' ability to claim any legal rights, it invokes another concept that is later ridiculed by Hill: the nation. The chorus argues that the nation, implicitly made up of the people and their liberties, is in danger, but can be saved through cooperative ownership. According to this conception, the nation is not a tool of the ruling class, but a living body of citizens that has been sickened by capitalist's corrupt behavior. It can be rejuvenated, however, if the people rid it of the traitor class.

A third song of interest in the first edition is another anonymously authored contrafactum, this one using the melody of "The Star Spangled Banner" and titled "The Banner of Labor." The song does not invoke 'the people.' However, it attempts to reclaim U.S. nationalism for 'the people' by mobilizing one of its most potent musical representations:

Oh say, can you hear, coming near and
more near

The call now resounding: "Come all ye
who labor?"

The Industrial Band, throughout all the
land

Bids toilers remember, each toiler's his
neighbor.

Come, workers, unite! 'tis Humanity's
fight;
We call, you come forth in your manhood
and might.

Chorus:

And the Banner of Labor will surely soon
wave

O'er the land that is free, from the master
and slave

The blood and the lives of children and
wives

Are ground into dollars for parasites'
pleasure;

The children now slave, till they sink in
their grave

That robbers may fatten and add to their
treasure.

Will you idly sit by, unheeding their cry?

Arise! Be ye men, see, the battle draws
nigh.

Long, long has the spoil of labor and toil
Been wrung from the workers by parasite
classes;

While Poverty, gaunt, Desolation and
Want

Have dwelt in the hovels of earth's toiling
masses.

Through bloodshed and tears, our day star
appears,

Industrial Union, the wage slave now
cheers.⁴³

In his notes to these lyrics in the IWW song anthology, *The Big Red Songbook*, folklorist Archie Green described "The Banner of Labor" as a "parody," going on to say that "most IWW songwriters freely used gospel, national, or patriotic numbers as sources for caricatures."⁴⁴

However, I agree with historian Kaitlyn Bylard, who asserts that the song is "less a parody of 'The Star Spangled Banner'" than "a continuation of the martial and unifying sentiments of the [original] song."⁴⁵ While "The Banner of Labor" lyrically beseeches workers to fight for themselves and excoriates the evils of the capitalist parasites, it also invokes the progressive revitalization of the nation musically by framing the laborers battle within a potent national musical expression.

Although all three of these songs were published anonymously, there is a distinct possibility that they were authored by the Songbook Committee collectively. Why did Brazier and his colleagues include such songs? The IWW, from the very beginning, was an explicitly internationalist working-class organization and its official positions were highly anti-populist. It refused membership to anyone who owned property and, in a conscious repudiation of common sense practice in early 20th century U.S. left-wing organizations, even denied tenant farmers entry.⁴⁶

The most likely explanation for the highly populist and progressive nationalist tone of the LRS' first edition is Brazier's own background. Born and raised in Birmingham, England, he was deeply influenced by the Chartist hymns still sung by workers' choirs and street musicians in the late-19th century.⁴⁷ Although he had immigrated to North America sometime in the 1910s, Brazier's lyrical style remained rooted in the "spiritualized nationalism" of English Chartism.⁴⁸

While Hill had already published a number of songs in the IWW press, his first song to be featured in the LRS was in the Songbook's fourth edition, published in July 1911. "The Preacher and the Slave," a contrafactum of the well-known gospel tune "Sweet Bye-and-Bye," is one of Hill's best known songs. Although earlier editions of the LRS had begun to feature some

"Don't mourn. Organize."

lyrics that tepidly critiqued Christian institutions, "The Preacher and the Slave" goes a step further, castigating the hypocrisy of the "starvation army."⁴⁹ In fact, one verse goes so far as to implicitly compare Jesus Christ with the notorious employment sharks:

Holy Rollers and jumpers come out, They
holler, they jump, and they shout Give your
money to Jesus they say, He will cure all dis-
eases today⁵⁰

Interestingly, in his 1969 monograph on Hill, Gibbs M. Smith discovered that this particular verse was deleted by subsequent LRS editors, though he was unable to ascertain why.⁵¹ May it have been that this comparison went a step too far for the Spokane Songbook Committee?

Within the next year, however, Hill's popularity as a songwriter exploded. Out of the seventeen songs added to the next two editions of the LRS, published in July 1912 and March 1913 respectively, thirteen were authored by Hill. These lyrics contained some of Hill's most scathing attacks on U.S. nationalism. In "Mr. Block," the title character's nationalism is sarcastically equated with ignorance and naïveté:

Please give me your attention, I'll intro-
duce to you

A man who is a credit to 'Our Red, White,
and Blue,'

His head is made of lumber, and solid as a
rock;

He is a common worker and his name is
Mr. Block.

And Block he thinks he may
Be President someday^{52 53}

Exasperated by Block's gullible nationalism, Hill implores him to:

Tie a rock on your block and then jump in
the lake,

Kindly do that for Liberty's sake⁵⁴

In "John Golden and the Lawrence Strike," a song written for the now-legendary 1912 IWW-led strike of textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Hill points out that the enemies of workers wear "stars and stripes" and are "sent by Uncle Sam."⁵⁵

Finally, in his anti-war ballad "Should I Ever Be a Soldier," Hill literally absolves IWW members of their loyalty to the United States, invoking a counter-loyalty to the red flag as a symbol of socialist internationalism:

Don't sing 'My Country, 'tis of thee,'

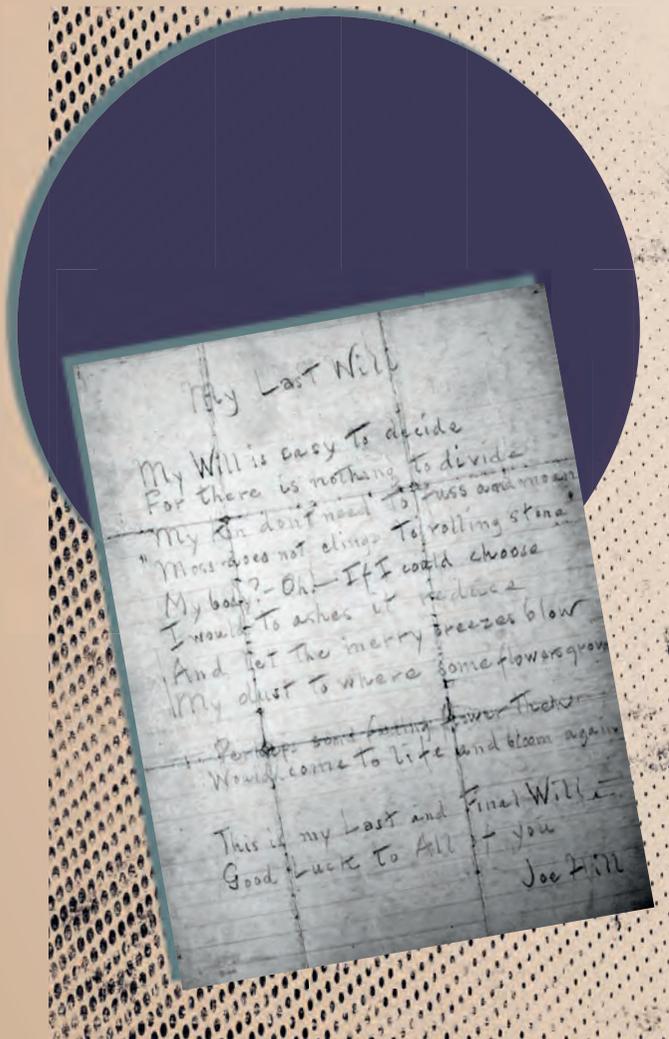
But sing this little chorus:

Should I ever be a soldier,

'Neath the Red Flag I would fight.⁵⁶

Importantly, it is within the period between 1911 and 1913, just after Hill's lyrics began to dominate the pages of what had become the IWW's most important cultural initiative, that concerns regarding the LRS began to emerge within the union's press. For instance, in January of 1912, an article written by F.W. Horn appeared in *Solidarity* "belittling the growing acceptance of songs in I.W.W. organizational

**"My body? Oh, if I could
choose
I would to ashes it reduce
And let the merry breezes
blow
My dust to where some
flowers grow."**



work,” to which another member, Fred Isler, replied in the following issue with a passionate defense of the promotional and educational function of the songs.^{57 58} Another article appeared in the same publication two years later defending the LRS from those who believed it to be “irreverent, coarse, and crude.”⁵⁹

Additionally, editorial control of the LRS itself became an issue of contention. At the 1913 General Convention, delegate Walker C. Smith, a ‘decentralizer’ in the growing political split around the level of executive power held by the Chicago headquarters, had forced a “referendum vote to take away [control of] those songbooks from the Spokane locals.”⁶⁰ Editorial control of the LRS was successfully removed from Spokane and given to the Cleveland, Ohio branch, which published three editions before the Chicago headquarters took control of the Songbook in 1917.

Were the power struggles around control of the LRS related to the recent debates on the value of the songs contained within? Another possibility is that it was merely an outgrowth of the general popularity of the Songbook, which led competing delegations to attempt to mobilize its wide appeal for their own particular political goals. However, it is interesting to note that in the first edition published by the Cleveland branch, which included ten new sets of lyrics, Hill’s songs are entirely absent.⁶¹ It was only after Hill was arrested and imprisoned on suspicion of murder in Salt Lake City that his songs reappeared in a Joe Hill Legal Defense Fund edition, and then after his conviction and execution on famously circumstantial evidence, in a Joe Hill Memorial Edition of March 1916.

Other IWW members who were active in the union’s print-media held very different views from both the union leadership and Hill. For instance, Covington Hall, a longtime IWW organizer who also wrote a wealth of original poetry and song for the union, was dedicated to a

particular “brand of [progressive] Southern nationalism” heavily influenced by the ideology and strategy of the U.S. Populist Party.⁶² Hall was the descendent of a minor Southern Plantation family of Mississippi. However, in the wake of the Civil War, the family fell on hard times and, by 1891, they had lost everything. Hall experienced rapid downward mobility and within a year was a fully proletarianized dock worker in New Orleans.

As an active supporter of the Populist Party in the 1890s, he witnessed the rise and collapse of radical left-wing populist leader William Lamb’s struggle to build a multi-racial coalition between Southern farmers and “the organized workers of the Knights of Labor.”⁶³ Despite the implosion of the Populist Party in 1896, Hall continued to cling to the notion that a multi-racial farmer-labor coalition was necessary for the success of any radical left-wing political project in the U.S. To no avail, he continued to implore the IWW to organize Southern “small farmers as well as tenant cultivators” until his death in 1951.⁶⁴

Interestingly, the first edition of the LRS published by the Cleveland branch included a contrafacta of the Confederate anthem “Dixie,” entreating Southern workers to “live and die for Dixie” by organizing against “the boss.”⁶⁵ While there is no explicit attempt to invoke multi-racial unity, the lyrics do imply that white and Black Southerners share a common existence in which both “work away, day by day, nary pay” in “Dixie land.”⁶⁶ Rather than repudiating Dixie itself, the song states that the Southern nation can be restored along more egalitarian lines if “the boss” is forced out from the community.⁶⁷ Just as Brazier’s lyrical style had been deeply shaped, and even possibly confined, by the nationalist discourse of English Chartism, so was the style of Hall and others constricted by the discourses of earlier left-wing nationalist political projects in the United States.

A Premature Conclusion

Despite interventions by President Woodrow Wilson and the Swedish embassy in Washington, D.C., Joe Hill was executed for the murder of Salt Lake City grocer and former police officer John G. Morrison on November 19th, 1915. Because his conviction was based entirely on circumstantial evidence, many believed that Hill, whether innocent or guilty, was probably executed as a result of his prominence in the IWW. Hill’s execution propelled him to national, and later international, fame as the U.S. labor movement’s most prominent martyr, musician, and songwriter. However, it most likely ended a developing debate between IWW members involved in the union’s print-media on the use of song in union activities and how these songs represented union ideology. Importantly, this debate may have been a proxy for a larger dispute regarding IWW ideology itself, specifically with regard to issues of U.S. nationalism, populism, and working-class internationalism.

However, it was not only Hill’s execution that ended these intra-organizational debates. An intense campaign of repression aimed at labor organizing within both urban immigrant communities and migrant worker circles was initiated by the U.S. Government in 1917. At the center of these attacks was the IWW, which was forced into virtual non-existence. On September 5th, 1917, the Department of Justice “staged simultaneous raids on forty-eight IWW local halls across the entire nation, seizing five tons of... documents” and destroying most of the union’s records in the process.^{68 69} Over one-hundred IWW leaders, including Bill Haywood, Vincent St. John, Ben Fletcher, and Ralph Chaplin, were charged and convicted of “sabotage and conspiracy to obstruct [U.S. involvement in] the [First World] War.”⁷⁰ Although the union was able to survive this period, rebuilding in the early-1920s, the repres-

sion broke the continuity of its print-media and, as a result, the development of these debates.

The IWW was a revolutionary organization officially committed to building an international working-class alliance. However, in its day-to-day organizing the union confronted the messy multiplicity of cultural, ethnic, and national loyalties of the United States' diverse working population. As we have seen, these tensions emerged within the debates around the LRS and the widespread use of songs in the union's educational work. In fact, it was the anglophone left-wing discourses of Populism and Chartism that seemingly determined the cultural parameters that were being both contested and defended within the context of the union's music. Developing a clearer picture of how the IWW confronted these cultural parameters is not only important from a purely historical perspective, but as an example for communist organizers confronting similar situations today.

Endnotes

1. The following article is not meant as an attack on the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), but rather an explication of the difficulties in constructing an international working class culture. As the only historical example of a "genuinely proletarian... mass labor organization" in the United States, the IWW is one of the best examples of the struggle to develop international working class consciousness for U.S. communists. Additionally, the author hopes that in the coming years archival research will lead to a more developed argument built on the initial evidence presented herein. See: J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat From Mayflower to Modern* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2014), 154.

2. Archie Green, *The Big Red Songbook*, ed. By Archie Green, David Roediger, Franklin Rosemont, and Salvatore Salerno (Chicago, IL: Charles H. Kerr Publishing, 2007), 38.

3. Joe Hill, *The Letters of Joe Hill*, ed. By Philip S. Foner (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2015), 80.

4. *Ibid.*

5. The preamble, first promulgated in 1905, states that "the working class and the employing class have nothing in common." The preamble was amended and updated in 1908 but the opening line remained the same. Both versions can be found in: Joyce Kornbluh, *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2011), 12-13.

6. Daniel Gross, "Preface," *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology*, ed. by Joyce Kornbluh (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2011), x.

7. Franklin Rosemont, *Joe Hill: The IWW & The Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture*, (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2015), 50.

8. *Ibid.*, 50-51.

9. *Ibid.*, 48.

10. *Ibid.*, 45.

11. Hill, *The Letters of Joe Hill*, 73-75.

12. Rosemont, 46.

13. Rosemont, 103.

14. Hill, 11.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Ralph Darlington, *Syndicalism and the Transition to Communism: An International Comparative Analysis* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 6.

17. Thomas Hagerty, "Father Hagerty's 'Wheel of Fortune': The Structure of the Industrial System," in *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology*

- gy, ed. by Joyce Kornbluh (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2011), 11.
18. Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of the IWW and Syndicalism in the United States* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 1999), 222-232.
 19. Rosemont, 26.
 20. Renshaw, 199.
 21. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London, UK: Verso Books, 2006), 155-162.
 22. Renshaw, 61.
 23. The 1916 statement by Lenin is “and therefore it is our duty, if we wish to remain socialists, to go down lower and deeper, to the real masses.” From: V.I. Lenin, “Imperialism and the Split in Socialism,” in *Lenin’s Collected Works* (Moscow, RS: Progress Press, 1964), 105-120.
 24. Rosemont, 7.
 25. Gibbs M. Smith, *Joe Hill*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Peregrine Smith Books, 1984), 8-9.
 26. *Ibid.*, 9.
 27. *Ibid.*, 19.
 28. Walsh claimed that his delegation had sold 4,000 Spokane IWW-produced song cards to interested workers during their trip to the delegation, making a profit of \$200. From: Smith, 19.
 29. Richard Brazier, “The Story of the I.W.W.’s ‘Little Red Songbook,’” *Labor History* 9, no. 1 (1968), 92.
 30. Smith, 16.
 31. Smith, 17.
 32. *Ibid.*
 33. *Ibid.*
 34. Brazier, 92.
 35. *Ibid.*, 100.
 36. *Ibid.*
 37. Rosemont, 481.
 38. Brazier, “If You Workers Would Only Unite,” *The Big Red Songbook*, ed. by Archie Green, David Roediger, Franklin Rosemont, and Salvatore Salerno (Chicago, IL: Charles H. Kerr Publishing, 2007), 40.
 39. Brazier, “Workingmen, Do You Hear?,” *The Big Red Songbook*, 43.
 40. *The Big Red Songbook*, 41.
 41. *The Big Red Songbook*, 46-47.
 42. Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2.
 43. *The Big Red Songbook*, 49.
 44. *The Big Red Songbook*, 48.
 45. Kaitlyn Bylard, “‘We Will Sing One Song’: American Fears, Revolution, and Solidarity in the Music of the Industrial Workers of the World,” *ExPostFacto* 24 (2015), 89-90.
 46. Rosemont, 219.
 47. Rosemont, 63.
 48. Peter J. Gurney, “The Democratic Idiom: Languages of Democracy in the Chartist Movement,” *The Journal of Modern History* 86, no. 3 (September, 2014), 593.
 49. The Salvation Army was often ridiculed by IWW members. However, this was the first time an attack was made on that organization within the pages of the LRS.
 50. *The Big Red Songbook*, 99.
 51. Smith, 21.
 52. *The Big Red Songbook*, 116.

53. The Mr. Block character was based on a well-known IWW comic of the same name, penned by IWW member Ernst Riebe, which detailed the adventures of a naively nationalistic migrant worker. Riebe's cartoon debuted in early 1912 and ran continuously until 1917, when the union was the subject of intense repression by the U.S. government, leading to a temporary pause for most of the IWW's operations. The cartoon reappeared in the late-1910s and continued sporadically throughout the 1920s. Though it is unlikely that the two met in person, Riebe and Hill often took influence from one another. For instance, Riebe published a comic in the January 1913 issue of the *Industrial Worker* based on Hill's song "Everybody's Joining It." See: Rosemont, 185-187.

54. *The Big Red Songbook*, 117.

55. *The Big Red Songbook*, 110.

56. *The Big Red Songbook*, 111.

57. Smith, 18.

58. "F.W." is probably short for "Fellow Worker." Members of the contemporary IWW continue to address one another in this manner.

59. Smith, 18-19.

60. *The Big Red Songbook*, 16.

61. Although no songs of Hill's were included, a short poem by Hill titled "Liberty Forever" was. See: *The Big Red Songbook*, 148.

62. David R. Roediger, "Covington Hall: The Poetry and Politics of Southern Nationalism and Labour Radicalism," *History Workshop* 19 (Spring, 1985), 162.

63. Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1978), 39.

64. Roediger, 163.

65. *The Big Red Songbook*, 151-152.

66. *Ibid.*, 151.

67. *Ibid.*, 152.

68. Renshaw, 174.

69. Rosemont, 46.

70. Renshaw, 177.

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"Perhaps some fading
flower then
Would come to life and
bloom again.
This is my Last and final
Will.
Good Luck to All of you."
Joe Hill



IN RECENT YEARS A LARGE BODY OF LITERATURE RELATING TO THE SPREAD OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS A **LINGUA FRANCA** HAS EMERGED FROM LANGUAGE PROFESSIONALS THE WORLD OVER.

CAPITALIST RE

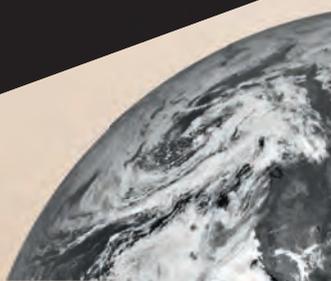
IN ACADEMIA:

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ALISM

MUCH OF THIS LITERATURE CONSIDERS THE TOPIC OF SPEAKER IDENTITY AND THE PROSPECT OF SEPARATING ENGLISH FROM ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE BY LEGITIMIZING VARIANTS OF ENGLISH ('WORLD ENGLISHES' OR 'GLOBAL ENGLISHES').

ANALYSIS OF

Y OF ENGLISH

GLOSPPHERE

WHILE THE INITIAL SENTIMENT BEHIND SUCH A PROSPECT SEEMS TO BE REDUCING THE STIGMA TOWARDS SPEAKERS OF VARIANTS OF ENGLISH THAT ARE NOT REGARDED AS PRESTIGIOUS, SUCH AN IDEOLOGY SIMULTANEOUSLY LEGITIMIZES THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH, AND TO A LESSER DEGREE, GLOBAL AMERICAN HEGEMONY.



CAPITALIST REALISM IN ACADEMIA

THE SCHOLARLY ACCEPTANCE OF 'WORLD ENGLISHES' WITHIN THE ANGLOSPHERE IS A BYPRODUCT OF CAPITALIST-REALIST IDEOLOGY WHICH WORKS TO OPPRESS THE PEOPLES AND NATIONS OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH.

The age of globalisation has given rise to an unprecedented "reinvigoration of Western imperialism,"¹ proving it to be one of the most trying times for the development of nations in the Global South which have been subject to a relentless "creative destruction" of their home cultures through ruthless economic and political repression spearheaded by the American war machine and its unremorseful capitalist agenda.² Moreover, the prevalence of neoliberal ideology in academia presents perspectives that often lead to "loss of control and political agency"³ for those outside of the realm of political or intel-

lectual influence and have proven to shape a warped view of 'progress' that discludes the most exploited peoples from discussions concerning issues that warrant sociological inquiry. These sociological inquiries can only be "correctly solved by the application of a scientific theory of the working class,"⁴ that is, Karl Marx's theory of historical-materialism. It should be said that the broader history of English's spread and propagation is extremely complex and multifaceted with some instances that could be considered less evasive, but here there will be a primary focus on modern contexts where it can almost un-

questionably considered a form of imperialism.

While much of the work on the subject of neoliberalism's complacency with capitalism's seemingly never-ending reach focuses on environmental and economic repercussions, the social and cultural implications are often overlooked; moreover, "scholars in cultural globalization generally show a relatively modest interest in language-related issues," thus there exists very little literature specifically focussing on the link between second language adoption and its impact on individual societies.⁵ In an act of resistance and preservation, many peo-

IMPERIALISM CAPITALISM

THE RHETORIC BEHIND MUCH OF THE PUSH BEHIND THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH SEEMS TO STEM FROM THIS IMAGINED REALITY WHERE ENGLISH IS 'GIVEN' TO THE PEOPLE OF A CERTAIN REGION FOR THEIR OWN BETTERMENT, SIMILARLY TO HOW EUROPEAN POWERS JUSTIFIED COLONIALISM IN THE 20TH CENTURY BY CLAIMING TO BRING CIVILISATION AND AMERICANS HAVE JUSTIFIED NON-LINGUISTIC IMPERIALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST BY CLAIMING TO BRING DEMOCRACY WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY GENOCIDING ENTIRE POPULATIONS FOR CAPITAL GAIN.

ple the world over now" seek to protect national cultures, ethnic identities, indigenous peoples, and local knowledge"⁶ from the expanding sphere of western (American) influence. Language spread that has been a result of this Western expansionism is of particular interest in the field of applied linguistics where a new term, *World Englishes*, has sought to normalize the spread of the cultural influence of western nations by normalizing and promoting it. This neoliberal rationalisation of western imperialism can only be described as a side effect of capitalist realist ideology which has limited the general "capacity to imagine alternative futures" after "more than two decades of neoliberal hegemony."⁷

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Marxist perspective on issues regarding socio-historical development, such as language spread and the development of history, primarily concerns itself with the material conditions from which they arise. The perspective of 'World Englishes' is thus first problematic because it attempts to divorce the English language from the material circumstances which led to its spread and in so doing attempts to claim that it is 'neutral.'⁸ This approach has proven problematic as it spreads the "hegemonic and ideological influence" of English while simultaneously claiming that English is divorced from cultural practices and can be adapted to

express any identity.⁹ The same linguists who have once claimed that culture and language are intrinsically tied are now claiming that this same rule doesn't apply to English, or that English has spread so far beyond its home continent (s) by way of colonisation and the adoption of capitalism that it no longer matters because Western culture now constitutes world culture.¹⁰

The spread of English and English media are "both vehicles of [Anglo-American] culture, and contribut[ors] to the anglicization of global culture"¹¹ and thus it is irresponsible to separate English from its origins because it plays a pivotal role in forming (inter)national character. The departure from the classical understanding of relations between language and culture posits the idea that our current understanding of circumstances in how world languages interact is particularly hermetic. Globalists who take this perspective are actively aiding in the destruction of cultural diversity, a natural goal of capitalism, by justifying it through subversion and deflecting to seemingly altruistic intentions.¹²

Although all evidence points to the fact that "globalization is, essentially, western [...] cultural imperialism,"¹³ the influence of capitalist realism refers to this as a norm and promotes it as progress; the

degree to which a nation has adopted globalisation has in fact been frequently used as an indicator of 'societal progress,'¹⁴ pointing to the implied role it has in the late-capitalist nation-state from the perspective of the globalist. So then, it only follows that, from this standpoint, the homogeneity of a population's proficiency in world languages would also be a measure of this progress. "Four percent of the world's languages are spoken by 96% of the population,"¹⁵ thus the adoption of these second languages in the 4% is a natural goal of the capitalist-globalist movement. If this is true, and we're treating all languages as equals, then why is it that English has become the most sought after second tongue of so many people?

The fact remains that the rate at which a language is spread as a second language is primarily driven by "the economic strength of its speakers." In the case of Spanish for example, though being more widely spoken, Spanish speakers amount to "a fourth of what English amounts to" in GDP and thus Marx's theory of historical-materialism once again proves to be the driving factor in socio-historical change.¹⁶ In the minds of the perpetrators and some recipients of its spread, "English provides access to power, influence and wealth" or in other

ANGLOSHERE

CAPITALOSPHERE

words, provides an ideological access to a similarly imagined international community.¹⁷ This should naturally bring the question of 'why?' to the forefront of discussions on the adoption of English as a *lingua franca* but the hegemonic influence of Western culture seems so innate to our present condition that often it isn't even considered.

"[T]he use of English as a commodity, exported particularly by the [nations of the Anglosphere]"¹⁸ has also taken on a capacity for meta-economic criticism as the use of English has been propagated heavily, especially directly following in the post-colonial period by the state-sponsored British Council and United States Information Service.¹⁹ Despite this, within liberal literature there is a "near total neglect of the political economy of English(es) under conditions of neoliberal global capitalism" due to the inability of these liberal thinkers to be self-reflective in their theoretical analysis of how English has spread.²⁰ The commodification of the English language directly relates to the concept of these 'World Englishes' as it demonstrates another capital gain that the nations who propagate English are a benefactor of. In addition, due to the current state of late capitalism, with an increasingly high demand for informational com-

modities the "*extension and intensification* [of markets] involve[s] the expansion of new markets and products" constantly in such a way that language learning has also become a commodity to be sold, thus it can be reasoned that English itself is a product and the concept of 'World Englishes' can be considered a marketing strategy.²¹

The rhetoric behind much of the push behind the spread of English seems to stem from this imagined reality where English is 'given' to the people of a certain region for their own betterment, similarly to how European powers justified colonialism in the 20th century by claiming to bring civilisation²² and Americans have justified non-linguistic imperialism in the Middle East by claiming to bring democracy²³ while simultaneously genociding entire populations for capital gain. The globalist essentially manufactures consent for non-native English speaking populations by claiming to be missionaries of the English language and thus disarming arguments against the spread of English, stripping them of agency. The spread of English functions as "a bridgehead for Western interests, permitting the continuation of marginalization and exploitation" through justification that aids "U.S. corporate and military dominance

PLAINLY, THE FUTURE OF MINORITY LANGUAGES LOOKS BLEAK WITH SOME SOURCES REPORTING THAT THE NUMBER OF LANGUAGES SPOKEN ON EARTH WILL HALVE BY 2050 AS IDEOLOGIES BY APPLIED LINGUISTS HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT.

worldwide and the neoliberal economy [that] constitute[s] a new form of empire that consolidates a single imperial language."²⁴ This is not even mentioning economic factors that are beneficial to the private capitalist, as the spread of English opens up smaller markets to the anglosphere and can drive down the cost of international production. The altruistic motives behind EFL instruction seem to be a thinly veiled guise for pushing the increased influence of the Anglo-American world into the perceived non-political space of education.

In discussing the similarities in neoliberal and colonial ideologies on the topic of language, it becomes important to also examine the agency and consent of populations affected by the spread of English in the context of the ideologies. Many influential texts exist that aim to train the reader in fostering a friendly attitude towards the English language among other people, particularly students.^{25 26 27} This very fact indicates that communities have shown a resistance to adopt English as a second language or have only taken up English for what Elyildirim

describes as "extrinsic" motivation.²⁸ This extrinsic motivation is characterized as instrumental, where English is only seen as a tool to accomplish a goal, which in most cases can be linked to the previously mentioned imagined communities, and research on L2 English speakers attitudes reflect that.^{29 30} In some cases this is overwhelmingly so, with almost 90% of English learners claiming to be learning English primarily for its practical (capital) benefits.³¹ This extrinsic motivation to learn English with the combined lack of intrinsic motivation links back to the pervasiveness of American capitalism due to cultural imperialism and the perceived notion that English is needed to compete in international terms. By regarding English as a 'world language' it is implied to stratify the speakers' first language by reducing its status to only carrying local functionality and relegating it to only personal spheres of life.

"The more widely this 'global English' spreads, the more likely it is to drive other languages to extinction"³² and with that knowledge in mind, the continued propagation of English becomes a moral dilemma. There have been attempts from proponents of 'World Englishes' to integrate speaker identity into ESL pedagogy by ESL instructors in order to promote a sense of 'ownership' of the language,^{33 34} but this method, in terms of broader sociological change, is cosmetic and does not address the stratification of the speakers' native language which is taking place. Moreover, in societies

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where the native tongue holds little value to its respective society, "language learning and use is often *subtractive*: proficiency in the imperial language and in learning it in education involves its consolidation at the expense of other languages."³⁵ Despite the claim that language learning is typically additive, empirical evidence concerning the constant death of languages every day, at the hand of English in particular, points to the exact opposite conclusion.³⁶

The idea that English can be 'owned' by anyone only serves as an argument to spread it further in this case, and while the general premise is permissible when it is isolated in a language classroom, it cannot be used to mitigate the historical context in which the classroom itself exists—a context in which English is the dominant language of power and prestige. This underlying side effect of accepting English as a (or more often 'the') world language and its variants can be attributed to the tendencies of ideologies being "largely covert, so that their nature and function and the injustice they entail are often unnoticed and uncontested."³⁷ The mindset of capitalist realism can make sense of the English language hierarchy by positing that the adoption of English into the identity of second language learners will eliminate the existing disparity in power; but, in fact, it only normalizes stratification and ensures that it will keep hap-

pening by forming an argument around speaker identity for its continued spread. The aversion towards adoption of a critical Marxist viewpoint on this topic may very well be that within the capitalist-realist neoliberal framework, "unwelcome theoretical ideas may be discounted simply on account of being an unwelcome theoretical ideas."³⁸

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Plainly, the future of minority languages looks bleak with some sources reporting that the number of languages spoken on Earth will half by 2050 as of 2017³⁹ and the adoption of critical language ideologies by applied linguists has never been more important. Unfortunately, as we have seen, the broader academic community is not immune to the detrimental effects of capitalist ideology which have blurred the vision of many scholars who see no end to the capital-motivated tyranny of western powers. The capitalist system creates and recreates systems of oppression and exploitation in every facet of the societies that it plagues, even academia.⁴⁰ Liberal ideology, which has had a monopoly on all realms of higher thought post-Cold War, has dominated in order to justify systems of oppression while simultaneously claiming to fight against them.^{41 42} It doesn't help that the influence of English has become "so strong that [academics] could not exercise their creativity in their mother tongues" and be taken as serious theorists that use English as their medium of ex-

pression⁴³ Moreover, the liberal ideology of the West actively discourages self-critical analysis so that it can continue subverting its self-contradicting narratives on democracy.⁴⁴ The development of 'World Englishes' has become a prime example of this subversion; it is a poor excuse to continue propagating English as a tool to further expand Anglo-American capital and allow Western culture to permeate further into the norms of other peoples.

While self-critical and scientific approaches to the spread of language such as the Marxist method of analysis are not popular in the West due to the reactionary tendency of liberals to self-justify their own exploitation, we can only hope that the material conditions will present themselves in such a way that the existing paradigms regarding human rights, linguistic or otherwise, will shift towards actual non-cosmetic progress. There should be no doubt that "the spread of the English language and English language teaching (ELT) serves the interests of Anglo-American hegemony."⁴⁵ There is currently a dire need to develop a system of education that considers "the importance of critique of ideology and situating analysis of a topic like education within the dominant social relations and system of political economy"⁴⁶ that is aimed around raising the class consciousness of the masses in order to develop non-reactionary scientific theories and solutions beyond the capitalist mode of production.

Current theories, including 'critical pedagogy,' allow the capitalist system to reproduce itself because rather than embracing the Marxist theories of class-conflict and historical materialism on which critical pedagogy was founded,⁴⁷ modern liberal educators have reduced the concept into performative activism^{48 49} or in some cases have "varied definitions of critical pedagogy which are both overlapping and contradictory" due to liberalism's tendency towards holistic praxis that aren't grounded in any form of theory.⁵⁰ Antonio Gramsci, a linguist and

Marxist theorist often credited as one of the original critical pedagogues, rightly said that "every relationship of hegemony is necessarily a pedagogical relationship."⁵¹ Thus, the best thing we can do in order to work past capitalist-realist ideology is to better educate ourselves so that we might accurately raise our own consciousness for the betterment of those suffering due to the current paradigms in place. Better education that enables "more complex dialectical perspectives [which] reject and neglect oppressive or false features of a position"⁵² is clearly the solution to dispelling problematic notions such as 'World Englishes.'

CONCLUSION

While the world continues to become increasingly small, the ever expanding influence of the English world seems to only grow as missionaries of capitalism and bourgeois democracy attempt to infiltrate every world market. Meanwhile, the normalization of capitalist imperialism has made the task of imagining a world without it difficult to the point where this ideology of never-ending neoliberal exploitation has seeped into academic theories. Even those paradigms that claim altruistic and mutually beneficial intentions, such as 'World Englishes,' have the subverted intention to spread or maintain the current hierarchy where the Anglo-American world dominates global affairs.

'World Englishes' are a cosmetic rebranding of linguistic imperialism and actively contribute to this system of Western domination, as the language carries culture and influence with it. The agency of non-native English speakers is actively stripped away and their linguistic human rights are violated in the framework of this paradigm because it generates an argument against resistance to adopting English. The only solution to combating harmful theories in our current neoliberal society is to educate our-

selves in critical theory in order to better see the subverted intentions of linguistic ideologies. Let it be clear that although "it has become customary in defences of 'English as a *Lingua Franca*' that its detractors are accused of misinterpreting and misunderstanding 'English as a *Lingua Franca*'"⁵³ there is no misunderstanding here, only logical conclusions that anyone could make with a truly critical analysis based on the enduring science of Marxism-Leninism.

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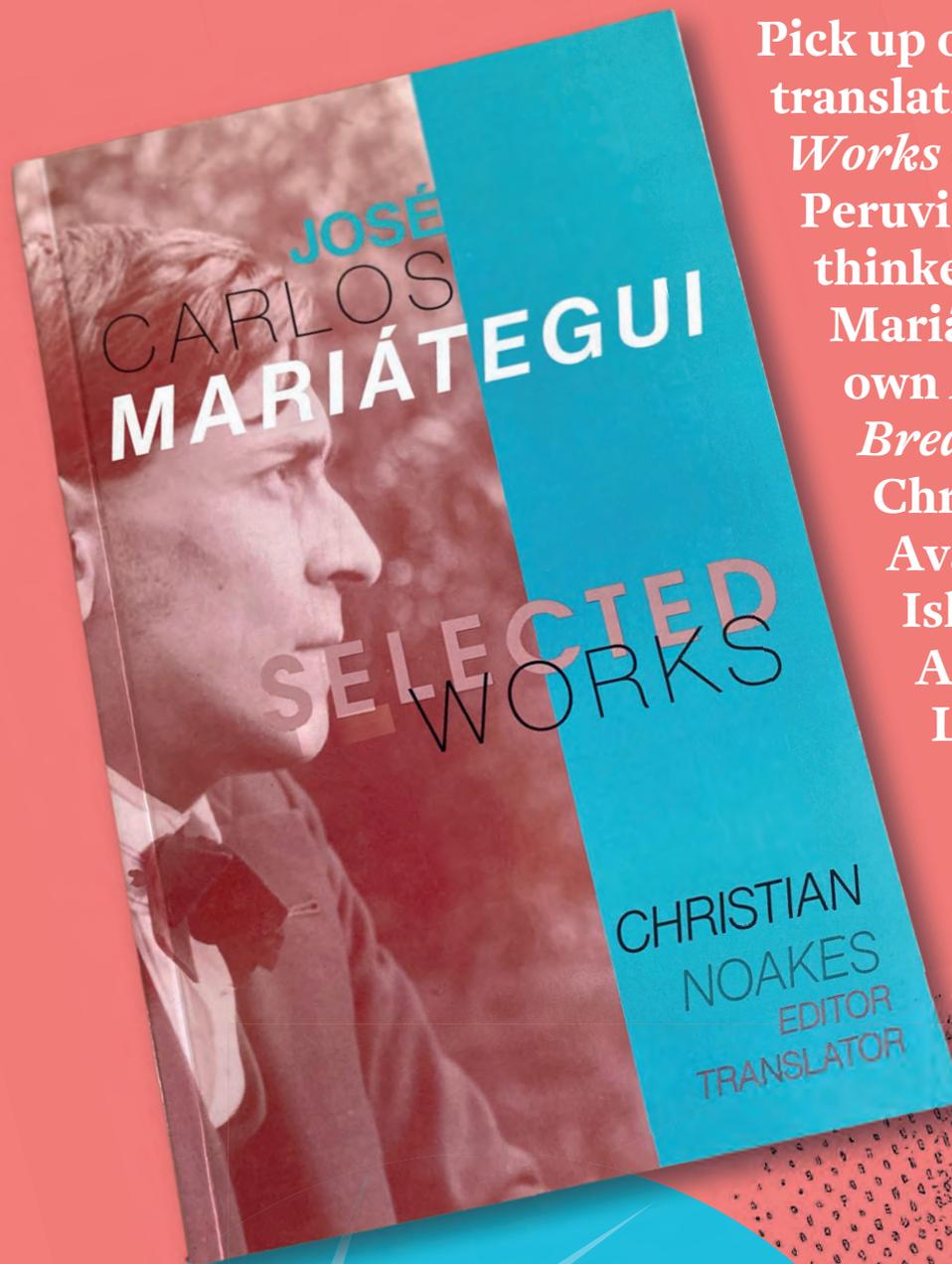
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"THE MORE WIDELY THIS 'GLOBAL ENGLISH' SPREADS, THE MORE LIKELY IT IS TO DRIVE OTHER LANGUAGES TO EXTINCTION," AND WITH THAT KNOWLEDGE IN MIND, THE CONTINUED PROPAGATION OF ENGLISH BECOMES A MORAL DILEMMA.



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THINGS BEFORE

HISTORY & MATERIALISM



THE HISTORY OF THE SOVIET UNION'S

Коммунистический университет трудящихся Востока
KUTV

BY TALIALUX

COMRADES ARMED

WITH

THE MIGHTY WEAPON OF

LENINISM

The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to make them into real revolutionaries, [...] capable of carrying out the immediate tasks of the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries with all their heart and soul.

READING THE late American communist Harry Haywood's book, *Black Bolshevik*, readers are given a glimpse into Haywood's time at the Soviet Union's Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV). What exactly was taught at the KUTV? Who were its students? What was the Communist International (Comintern) hoping to achieve by creating this university? This paper provides a brief overview of the history of the KUTV. In this piece, I will outline the history of the KUTV and its lasting impacts on the communist world.

In 1921, the Comintern, created the KUTV. In Stalin's speech to the KUTV class of 1925, he laid out exactly what he wanted colonized peoples to gain from the education, "The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to make them into real revolutionaries, armed with the theory of Leninism, equipped with practical experience of Leninism, and capable of carrying out the immediate tasks of the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries with all their heart and soul."¹ Two years later, Stalin made another speech to the uni-



versity's students. He reiterated the importance of Leninism, stating that students should be "armed with the mighty weapon of Leninism" and, when graduated, would "devote all their energies and knowledge to the cause of emancipating the toiling people of the East from imperialist oppression."²

Ranging from China to the US, and as far abroad as Palestine, the university accepted oppressed peoples from all over the world.³ Stalin spoke to what the definition of "East" was and who the KUTV accepted: "The first group consists of people who have come here from the Soviet East, from countries where the rule of the bourgeoisie no longer exists, where imperialist oppression has been overthrown, and where the workers are in power. The second group of students consists of people who have come here from colonial and dependent countries, from countries where capitalism still reigns, where imperialist oppression is still in full force, and where independence has still to be won by driving out the imperialists."⁴

Further expanding on the importance of separating the KUTV's students into two groups, Stalin stated that, "one line having the

The Soviet East

aim of creating cadres capable of serving the needs of the Soviet republics of the East, and the other line having the aim of creating cadres capable of serving the revolutionary requirements of the toiling masses in the colonial and dependent countries of the East."⁵

Stalin went on to explain the specific goals for each cadre, speaking directly to the unique conditions of demography and geography. For the KUTV's Soviet East cadre, Stalin listed five overarching goals. He wanted students to:

1. "Create industrial centers in the Soviet republics of the East to serve as bases for rallying the peasants around the working class.
2. Raise the level of agriculture.
3. Start and further promote the organization of co-operatives.
4. Bring the Soviets closer to the



masses.

5. Develop national culture."⁶

For the KUTV's colonized cadre, Stalin's five goals for them were:

1. "To win the best elements of the working class to the side of communism and to create independent Communist Parties.
2. To form a national-revolutionary bloc of the workers, peasants and revolutionary intelligentsia against the bloc of the compromising national bourgeoisie and imperialism.
3. To ensure the hegemony of the proletariat in that bloc.
4. To fight to free the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie from the influence of the compromising national bourgeoisie.
5. To ensure that the liberation movement is linked with the proletarian movement in the advanced countries."⁷

Ultimately, the overall goal of bringing these student groups together was to create a "proletarian culture" that informed each group's "national culture" and, ultimately, to foster international solidarity.⁸

The KUTV's first-year class represented over 60 different ethnic groups, and included both male and female party members.⁹ To be admitted, students were required to be between the ages of 18 and 32 and to have organized with a communist party for at least 2 years.¹⁰ Throughout the years, some of the admission standards would change, but involvement with a party remained a key priority. For example, a 1932 letter to the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) laid out even stricter guidelines for those members coming from imperialist nations: "Candidates must be selected from the most valuable, staunch and mature elements of the party and the working class [...] All selected comrades must be of good health such as would enable them to sustain a lengthy period of intellectual study in the climatic conditions of Moscow [...] Candidates must be fully literate either in their native or in one of the European languages and should know arithmetic at the level of whole numbers."¹¹

In 1924, while at the KUTV, Ho Chi Minh wrote that, "the Russian Revolution is not satisfied with making fine platonic speeches and drafting 'humanitarian' resolutions in favor of oppressed peoples, but it teaches them to struggle, and helps them materially and morally, as proclaimed by Lenin in his theses on the colonial question."



Throughout its short existence, the KUTV included many famous alums, such as Vietnamese leader, Ho Chi Minh; Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping; American communist and author of *Black Bolshevik*, Harry Haywood; leader of the Mau Mau uprising and first President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta; and founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Crisanto Evangelista. If the purpose of the KUTV was the training of future communist leaders, it can, in retrospect, be generally regarded as a success.

KUTV left a lasting impact on its students. Not only were they able

to meet international comrades, but they also learned practical aspects of communist theory. In *Black Bolshevik*, Harry Haywood described his time at KUTV in great detail. Haywood wrote, "We students studied the classic works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. But unlike the past schooling we had known, this whole body of theory was related to practice. Theory was not regarded as dogma, but as a guide to action."¹² Haywood illustrated this by noting that, "We used to attend workers' cultural clubs and do volunteer work, like working Saturdays to help build the Moscow subways. Education for us was not an ivory tower, but a true integration into the Soviet society, where we received first-hand knowledge from our experiences."¹³ Echoing Haywood's sentiments, Ho Chi Minh wrote in 1924, while at the KUTV, that, "the Russian Revolution is not satisfied with making fine platonic

Examples of courses that were offered by the KUTV included: Political Economy, Leninism, Work among Women, Underground Work, Party Construction, and Historical Materialism.

speeches and drafting 'humanitarian' resolutions in favor of oppressed peoples, but it teaches them to struggle, and helps them materially and morally, as proclaimed by Lenin in his theses on the colonial question."¹⁴

The KUTV effectively helped its students learn how to take the theory they were learning and put it into practice by going out into the local communities and talking with the workers. One could argue this was a precursor to the *popular education* pedagogy; that is, according to Walter Rodney, a "method of teaching that is overtly political and rooted in the struggles of ordinary people intent on bringing about social change."¹⁵

The KUTV's educational courses were highly structured and the students' itineraries were thoroughly planned out for the year. Ideally,

if students could attend the entirety of the university's program, the full course of study would be about three years. The students' time would include learning languages, discussing theory, military work, and interning in factories, in addition to free time to explore the country.¹⁶ Examples of courses that were offered by the KUTV included: Political Economy, Leninism, Work among Women, Underground Work, Party Construction, and Historical Materialism.¹⁷ Additionally, while attending these classes, students could participate and work in its research department and write for their own research journal entitled, *Revolutionary East*.¹⁸ While *Revolutionary East* has not yet been translated into English, some important articles published in its pages were: "Land Reform in Central Asia," by E. Zel'kina,¹⁹ "From the Experience of the Syrian Up-



rising," by Palestine Communist Party member, Elie Teper,²⁰ and "The Development of National Scripts Among the Eastern Peoples of the Soviet Union and the Origin of Their National Alphabets," by N. F. Yakovlev.²¹

Due to an eventual restructuring of the Comintern's multiple universities, which included the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West, the International Lenin School, and the Sun Yat-sen Communist University of the Toilers of China, the Comintern voted to dissolve the university, and it was subsequently closed in 1938.²² Although they might not have known it at the time, the Soviet Union's KUTV had a meaningful and lasting impact on its alums. Notably, Ho Chi Minh led Vietnam's successful revolution, defending the country against French, Japanese, and US imperialism. Ho Chi Minh fulfilled every goal that Stalin laid out for the colonized cadre, and the

KUTV's legacy lives on in Vietnam today.

With this brief historical overview of the KUTV, it is the concluding hope of this article that, as communists, we might continue this discussion of the importance of both the KUTV and communist education more generally. There exists, to date, no study or book released in the English language about the students of the KUTV, the general impacts of the university, or the changes KUTV students made in the world after attending the university.

There exist, however, millions of untranslated documents in the Soviet Archives concerning the KUTV and the other schools of the Comintern—documents sorely in need of translation.

The KUTV, in its brief span of existence, fulfilled its potential to unite indigenous and colonized peoples, to build a truly international socialist movement, and to assist in the fight against fascism, colonization, and imperialism.

The KUTV also reminds us that an organized educational and pedagogical approach to communist political practice is essential in the struggle to create a better and more just world.

Sample Courses from the KUTV

1. Political Economy - 200 hours
2. History of the All-Union Comintern 230 - 240 hours
3. Leninism - 280 hours
4. Historical Materialism - 120 hours
5. Party Construction - 330 hours
6. Military Science - 120 hours
7. Current Politics - 80 hours
8. English Language - 160 hours



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Towards an Anti-Imperial Political Ecology of the Imperial Border

The Roman Limits in Britannia

An analogy might be drawn between the geographical limits of the imperialist state and the lifespan of a pathogen. In both cases there is, at first, a period of nascency and immediate local consolidation, followed by a period of rapid growth, consumption, and geographical expansion, a period of eventual ossification and delimitation, and then, finally, a period of withdrawal and collapse. Imperialism, we might imagine, is a virus; and one which subsists by devouring cultures, resources, and land. In the modern era, imperialism presents itself as the highest stage of capitalism—a period in which the interests of finance capital dominate the geopolitical interests of the state. On this, Lenin wrote that:

Imperialism is capitalism at the stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.¹

Yet imperialism is not simply the annexation of land, resource, and labor. Lenin warned us against clinging to this over-simplistic understanding of the phenomenon by noting that while imperialism indeed entails annexation, violence, and reaction,² the most important characteristic feature of the phenomenon itself is the question of finance capital—that is, the question of retained earnings and monies generated by *investment* from the capital of the financial (and thus social) élite. Simply put, the defining feature of imperialism is the wielding of state power in the service of *finance* capital for the accumulation of *real* capital.

The geographical borders of the imperial state must, by extension, represent this impetus; they must exist in service of this logic—to control the flow of material goods, resources, and people for the purposes of finance capital. In the modern era, national imperial borders, such as those of the United States, function as consummate and sophisticated manifestations of this logic. In the ancient world, while the technologies of border control were more simplistic, the logic of the imperial border itself remained the same. If an ancient state is said to be imperial, its border must then reflect the economic motivations of imperialism. That is, the border must be a signifier of economic control, of violence and reaction, and exist in ser-

By Ben Stahnke

"The study of border walls as representations of waning imperial state sovereignties is particularly important in the modern

The Border Walls of Empire

vice of finance capital for the purpose of generating real capital for the imperial state's social and ruling élite. A political ecology of the imperial border, if it is to remain both historically sound and centered upon the real-world circulation of resources in the service of class society, must take into account not only the intersection of politics and environment more generally, but also the interplay of class, finance, and the social metabolism of the state itself.

In the north of England, near the present-day border of Scotland, the ruins of Hadrian's Wall persist along the Tyne-Solway firth—a reminder of imperial Rome's geographical limits on the isle. These ancient borderlands are home to the stony and earthen vestiges of an explicitly imperialist strategy of border management from a time long before ours; a once-fortified space of *occupied* land where the Roman state utilized a continuous, militarized wall to control the flow of goods and people across the limits of its northern-most jurisdictional region in Britannia. Often thought to act in a strictly defensive capacity, the wall—on close investigation—reveals itself as a tool of Roman economic control: an imperialistic device in service of capital.

In this paper, I work to construct an explicitly anti-imperial political ecology of the fortified Roman frontiers in Britannia as they relate, specifically, to the social metabolism of the imperial

state—that is, I work to better understand the ways in which the Roman state controlled its metabolic circulation of capital, goods, and people in relationship to both geography and social class. And, further, I seek to understand what the construction of a fortified and militarized border wall *means* for the imperial state—that is, what the wall says about the past, the present, and the future of the state itself. To achieve this, I lean into the material dimensions of the environmental and political histories of Rome, as well as the ways in which the class society endemic to the Roman state manifested itself in imperial Roman border management. In short, I hope to uncover the ways in which the reactionary and violent Roman slavery, in service of Roman financial capital and class society, fed Rome's border management strategy in Britannia. My rationale for doing so is to better understand imperial border strategies more generally—especially where the implementation of border walls is concerned.

My argument in this paper will follow along the lines that imperial border walls do not arise amidst the ascendancy, growth, and expansion periods of the empire; but that they emerge during a period of imperial ossification and delimitation—at the end of what I will call a *metabolic amalgamation*, where all the spheres of nature, production, society, and political heterogeneity are swept up into a great and imperial homogenization—a great and uniform dominion under

neoliberalized and globalized era, where national and local border walls are being constructed at an increasing rate."

The Pretense of Power

an imperial financial singularity—and that, by necessity, border walls not only foreshadow the eventual withdrawal, decline, and collapse of the empires in which they emerge, but that their use is also tied tightly to environmental and climatological change as well. In specific, border walls seem, by their own implication, to permanently problematize what we might imagine to be *unwinnable* imperial frontiers. As Wendy Brown observed:

Rather than emanating from the sovereignty of the nation-state, then, [walls] signal the loss of nation-state sovereignty's *a priori* status and easy link with legal authority, unity, and settled jurisdiction. This condition is evident in the fact that the new walls codify the conflicts to which they respond as permanent and unwinnable.³

The study of border walls as representations of waning imperial state sovereignties is particularly important in the modern neoliberalized and globalized era, where national and local border walls are being constructed at an increasing rate.⁴ In the last 220 years 62 unique border walls have been constructed, with 28 of those instances occurring since the year 2000 alone.⁵ Yet, as Wendy Brown noted, "Walls are consummately functional, and walls are potent organizers of human psychic landscapes generative of cultural and political identities. [...] A wall as such has no intrinsic or persistent meaning or signification."⁶

Thus the *meaning* of fortified borders themselves must entail the features and characteristics of the societies in which they emerge. This is the ontological essence of a material conception of the border: matter itself is imbued with import by and through the social formations we inhabit.

"Borderlands," Hastings Donnan and Thomas Wilson observed, "are sites and symbols of power. Guard towers and barbed wire may be extreme examples of the markers of sovereignty which inscribe the territorial limits of state, but they are neither uncommon nor in danger of disappearing from the world scene."⁷ Where the modes of resource extraction, production, distribution, and consumption of present-day empire find themselves in a world increasingly no longer able to sustain them, the upswing of border wall constructions at such an auspicious time in history have much to tell us about the future of modern day empire.

However, to speculate on—and better understand—the future, we must also look to the past.

ROMAN LIMITS AND IMPERIALISM

As a—if not *the*—precursor to the modern western imperial state, the Roman state has much to tell us regarding the western imperial conception of the border, the frontier, and the limit—as well as the border walls which often grow upon them.

Imperialism and Finance Capital

Following Rome's political and economic expansion—first across the Italic peninsula, and later over the larger Mediterranean region—it was the *Roman* conception of the border, the limit, and the frontier which defined not only Rome's enforcement of its own jurisdictional sovereignty, but the local sovereignties of the states and peoples neighboring Rome.

The Roman state, both in the economic and the geopolitical sense, is an historical example of a rabid imperialism—that is, the Roman state existed metabolically by way of conquest, annexation, and a great gathering-up of all surrounding lands, resources, and peoples for the purposes of Roman finance capital: an existential phenomenon which seems to be shared by all imperial polities. On this, Lenin wrote that:

If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial poli-

cy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up.¹³

While we must be careful not to engage in a reductive historical analysis in which we conflate the imperialism of the Roman era to the imperialism of the modern era, similarities indeed abound where imperialism is the *de facto*—and driving—political theory *and* metabolic function of the state. A uniting theme for imperialism in *all* eras is the great gathering up of the varying methods and forces of production, rabid geographical expansion and conquest, and the unique relationship of capital to the state itself. Lenin wrote that imperialism—specifically in the capitalist era, but which may also be applied to the Roman era—must entail the following five points:

1. the singular concentration of production and capital, leading to a series of monopolizations which in turn impact the economic life of the state;
2. the coalescence of bank and industrial capital as *finance capital*, which in turn supports a powerful financial oligarchy;

"Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established."

3. the export of *capital*—as distinguished from the export of commodities—acquires, for the state, an exceptional importance;

4. “the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves,”¹⁴ and

5. the rabid territorial division of the known world among competing powers

Lenin went on to note that, “Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.”¹⁵ Interestingly, and for our purposes here, what we can extract from Lenin’s analysis is the unique process in which the concentration of production and resources feeds the state’s financial oligarchs, who then come to dominate the state’s geopolitical processes of expansion and continued consumption. We need not conflate the imperialism of the modern capitalist era with the peculiarities of Roman capital to come to understand that imperialism itself emblemizes a specific formation of the social metabolism, driven by the greed and rabidity of the state’s financial elite, and entailing a geopolitical—and thematic—movement of expansion, consolidation, conquest, amalgamation, and, ultimately, collapse.

ROMAN EXPANSION

“By the time Augustus came to power,” the historian Stephen Dyson observed, “the Romans had been dealing with frontier problems in Italy and the west for nearly four hundred years.”¹⁶ These four hundred years saw the growth of the nascent Roman Republic from “a mosaic of cities organized into the provinces which made up the [eventual] Empire”¹⁷ to a complex series of administrative jurisdictions, divided into interior and frontier provinces for—ultimately—the sake of Roman senatorial control. The first Roman provincial acquisition—Sicily (*Sicilia*)—came as

a result of the First Punic War (264–41 BCE), and demonstrated two methods of direct Roman provincial control: “direct rule by a Roman magistrate, and indirect administration by using an existing king,”¹⁸ where, at this stage in Roman history, Rome had demonstrated “little inclination to rule directly.”¹⁹ As Rome’s political, social, and economic influence spread outward from the Italic peninsula and into the surrounding lands of the Mediterranean, and as new political and economic opportunities for exploitation began to open up in Spain, Macedonia, Asia Minor, Syria, Gaul, Africa, and the Balkans, Rome’s reluctance for direct rule began to wane. The Roman reliance on native home-rule by kings—kings who often held the ceremonial title of *socius et amicus Romani populi*—also began to wane as the use of direct, Roman-appointed administration began to rise.²⁰

Yet the borderlands were, for Rome, always an overdetermined phenomenon, driven by the exigencies and necessities of imperialism itself. The limit was not simply—in the case of early Republican, later Imperial—a line, an easily-defined space, or a demarcation reducible to a single quality. Rather, the Roman *limites* represented both ideological and material factors: factors which were determined directly by the individuals who enacted them—and also by those who contested them. The historian Hugh Elton noted that:

In the Roman World there were a number of overlapping frontier zones. These frontier zones might be defined by four groups of people: Roman soldiers, Roman civilians, local natives, and barbarians. Each group had their own boundaries of different types: political, social, ethnic, religious, linguistic, economic and military. These could, but did not have to, coincide with those of other groups. It was this mixture of boundaries which together made the frontier.²¹

For Rome, the British frontier was one which emerged only after Rome’s own immediate Mediterranean growth; a growth which quickly spread to western, and finally northwestern Europe. The attempt at British conquest, at a Roman Britain, was one which, for the Romans, reached toward that far, quasi-mythic, Thulean north: a region on the cusp of the known world, *qua ultima*

Thule—a land which was, as Pliny the Elder imagined, “The farthest of all [...] in which there be no nights at all, as we have declared, about mid-summer, namely when the Sun passes through the sign Cancer; and contrariwise no days in mid-winter: and each of these times they suppose, do last six months, all day, or all night.”

For the Romans, however, the British Isles—more so than the Orkneys, the Shetlands, and other less accessible spaces—were far from mythical and were, in fact, quite well-known. The Romans held surprisingly sophisticated geographical information about the world in which they dwelt, and the British Isles were no exception. Yet, for the Romans, an air of mystique still hung upon the British Isles and their peoples—upon the forest and hill-dwelling peoples whom the Romans knew as the *Brigantes*, the *Durotriges*, the *Catuvellauni*, the *Iceni*, the *Silures*, the *Atrebates*, the *Cantii*, the *Trinovantes*, the *Cornovii*, the *Parisi*, and the *Ordovices*.²² North of the narrow British median, in modern day Scotland, the Romans knew only those tribes whom they collectively called the Caledonians.

In his *Natural History* (IV), Pliny the Elder noted that the region of what would later come to be known as Britannia, “was itself called Albion, while all the islands [...] are called the British Isles.”²³ Pliny also went on to note that:

The historian Timaeus says that six days’ sail up-Channel from Britain is the island of Micus (Wight) in which tin is produced. Here he says the Britons sail in boats of wickerwork covered in sewn leather. There are those who record other islands: the Scandiae, Dumna, the Bergi, and Bernice, the largest of them all, from which the crossing to Thyle (Thule) is made. One day’s sail from Thyle is the frozen sea called by some the Cronian Sea.²⁴

In the mid-first century BCE *Gallic War* (V), Julius Caesar (*Gaius Iulius Caesar*) wrote that the largest of the British Isles was:

triangular in shape, with one side opposite Gaul. [...] The length of this side is about 500 miles. Another side faces Spain and the west. In this direction lies Hibernia (Ireland), half the size of Britain, so it is thought, and as dis-

tant from it as Britain is from Gaul. [...] in addition it is thought a number of smaller islands are close by, in which, according to some writers, there are thirty days of continuous darkness around midwinter. [...] Thus the whole [British] island is 2,000 miles in circumference.²⁵

Thus was Britannia known to the Romans, to their cartographers and geographers, and to their historians, yet it was not until Caesar’s 55-54 BCE military excursions onto the British Isles that Roman political and economic interest in—and its exploitation of—Britannia began in earnest.

THE ROMAN CONQUEST

Rome’s involvement with the British Isles—Britannia specifically—spanned, following Caesar, a period of nearly five centuries.²⁶ Britannia, as the historian Adrian Goldsworthy noted:

was a late addition to the Roman Empire, conquered at a time when expansion was becoming rare, but the actual conquest in AD 43 was not the first military contact between the empire and the Britons. Almost a century before, Julius Caesar, then proconsul (or governor) of Gaul, landed in the south-east [of Britain] in 55 BC and again in 54 BC. He beat down the fierce resistance of the local tribes and accepted their submission, but did not choose to stay over the winter and never returned.²⁷

The historian David Breeze noted that, for the Romans, “Britain lay on the very edge of the Roman empire. It would have taken a traveller two to three months to journey from Rome to Hadrian’s Wall.”²⁸ Following the Octavian pacification during the Roman civil wars of the first century, and as Roman imperial administration began to move towards direct governorship—by either imperial or senatorial appointment—Octavian (*Gaius Octavius Thurinus*), the Emperor Augustus after 27 BCE, began a series of excursions and acquisitions to gain more territory in Europe along the Danube—acquisitions which led to the creation of new frontier provinces such as Illyricum, Pannonia, and Moesia.

Augustus, the historian Hugh Elton noted, “re-

"Not unlike the Americans, the Romans had a particular worldview: the gods had given them the right to rule the world."

Invasion, Occupation, and Withdrawal

garded the advance of the border with pride,"²⁹ and the rapid expansion of Rome's territorial control in Europe, along the imperial nature of Roman politics, were buried deeply not only in the political psyche of the Julio-Claudian dynasty—Rome's earliest imperial family—but in the political economic mode of Roman acquisition as well. "The Romans," commented historian David Breeze:

had a particular worldview: the gods had given them the right to rule the world. The continual success of Roman arms demonstrated the validity of this assertion. As the empire would continue to expand, there was no need for frontiers. This was the situation in Britain during the decades after the conquest.³⁰

It was this political *Weltanschauung*, along with the military, political, and economic logics endemic to imperialism, that led the emperor Claudius (*Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus*) to land an army on the shores of Britannia in 43 CE to "win [himself] a triumph"³¹ and to secure such rich British resources as tin, lead, and lumber. Historian Peter Salway noted that, "When Emperor Claudius landed a Roman army on the [British] south coast in A.D. 43 a process was begun which was to transform the face of Britain and give a new direction to its history."³²

Environmentally, Britain in the first century CE, as Rob Collins observed, could best be described as:

upland, with the low-lying areas of the east and west coastal plains separated by the broad spine of the low-lying Pennine mountains and Cheviot hills. The mountains, along with the passes, crags, dales, and valleys between them, were probably difficult to pacify, and the long-term occupation of forts throughout the Roman period across the north of England may suggest a situation in which the local population was never completely subjugated. Alternatively, the distribution may suggest a desire to control strategic points in the landscape for purposes of supply and communication, including natural resources such as lead. One does not preclude the other.³³

The driving historical and political themes of the Roman excursions into Britannia were, as David Breeze observed in *Roman Scotland*, invasion, conquest, occupation, withdrawal, and external relations.³⁴ We might shorten this thematic analysis by noting that Rome's interest in Britain followed its own financial oligarchs' interests in the resources of Rome—a signifier of Roman imperialism itself.

Where the previous century's incursions of Julius Caesar had less to do "with a long-term strategy for Britain than with the security situation in Gaul and with Caesar's own political position in Rome itself,"³⁵ the invasion of the Claudian army was indeed meant to establish permanent occupation. While such an invasion might have been fore-

1. Internal devel.
2. Social stratif
3. Wealth dispar
4. External int
5. Conquest
6. Division
7. Ossificati



The **WALL** divides communities, fractures landscapes, creates choke-points of economic and migratory control, and signifies an end to imperial expansion



Roman Limits and Imperialism

shadowed by those in Rome’s imperial circle of political élites during the reign of Octavian,³⁶ the British conquest in fact went against the firm advice of Octavian to his successor Tiberius (*Tiberius Caesar Divi Augusti filius Augustus*), who exclaimed that the Empire “should be kept within its current boundaries.”³⁷

Historian Stephen Dyson noted that, “Rome was often drawn to a frontier because the local cultural and political dynamics affected their interests [and] [...] once the decision to intervene had been made, Roman success depended on a shrewd analysis of the nature of local conditions and of those forces that might favor Rome, as well as those that would oppose it.”³⁸ And in the period between Tiberius’ succession (14-37 CE) and the succession of his nephew Claudius in 41 CE, Roman foreign relations with the vague British frontier became increasingly strained due to a growing cross-Channel economy between Britain and Gaul which saw many of the southern British inhabitants seek to become “Romanized”—a move which became increasingly frictive for many northern British inhabitants—and a growing political hostility emblemized by the 40 CE death

of Cunobelinus (“strong dog”), a southern Briton king allied with Rome as *socius et amicus Romani populi*, or “king and friend of the Roman people.” The ensuing power struggle between Cunobelinus’ sons—Adminius, Caratacus, and Togodumnus—and their driving out of the chief Roman ally in Britain, King Verica of the Atrebates, all exacerbated what became an increasingly fractious political atmosphere. After the assassination of the emperor Caligula (*Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus*) in 41 CE, the new emperor, Claudius, “had to give Britain considerable thought.”³⁹ Claudius, to reassert control of the Roman tributes on southern Britain, and to gain further control of land and resources in the north of Britain, organized an invasion force to reinstate the exiled King Verica of the Atrebates.

As David Shotter recorded, “The invasion force of 43 CE consisted of four legions—II *Augusta*, IX *Hispania*, XIV *Gemina Martia Victrix*, and XX *Valeria Victrix*, with detachments at least from others, including VIII *Augusta*.”⁴⁰ Cunobelinus’ old capital city at Camulodunum (modern-day Colchester) was quickly captured within the first warring season, and Claudius himself visited the



Imperialism and Finance Capital

city to revel in the triumphal entry. From Colchester, Roman invasions were launched northwards towards present-day Lincoln, north-westwards towards Wroxeter, westwards towards Gloucester, and south-westwards towards Exeter. On the Isle of Wight, the future emperor Vespasian (*Titus Flavius Vespasianus*) waged war against Cunobelinus' son Caratacus—a chief opponent of the Roman occupation until he was handed over in 51 CE by Queen Cartimunda of the Brigantes.⁴¹ The Roman historian Cassius Dio recorded that the native Britons were unfortunately ill-prepared for the initial invasion:

For the Britons as a result of their inquiries had not expected that they would come, and had therefore not assembled beforehand. And even when they did assemble, they would not come to close quarters with the Romans, but took refuge in the swamps and the forests, hoping to wear out the invaders in fruitless effort, so that, just as in the days of Julius Caesar, they should sail back with nothing accomplished.⁴²

The ensuing century of occupation, however, was not to be a simple wash, and the Romans dug in for what was to be an occupation of continued—and oppressive—military and political maneuvering.

The historian Richard Hingley noted that during the British conquest, “A large Roman army crossed the Channel from Gaul and Lowland Britain was gradually subdued during the middle and late first century AD. This conquest occurred through the use of diplomacy and armed violence directed against some of the people of Britain.”⁴³ During the middle and late first century CE, the Romans engaged in the logistics of military occupation by way of road-building, fort-building, and continued campaigns against the indigenous populations in efforts of subjugation and forced submission.

During the reign of the emperor Vespasian from 69 to 79 CE, the military exploits of Agricola (*Gnaeus Julius Agricola*)—a Gallo-Roman general who would, in 77 CE, be appointed as consul and governor of Britannia—were largely responsible for the pacification⁴⁴ of southern and central Britannia, as well as many of the unsuccessful excursions into the British-Scottish (then-Caledonian) north. Having participated in the quelling of the Boudiccan uprising in 61 CE where he served as a junior officer (*tribunus militum*),⁴⁵ Agricola went on, under his governorship, to pacify the Brigantes where he “swept right through Brigantian territory—and beyond”⁴⁶ without a great deal of fighting, being able to:

"Native Britons were forcibly relocated, and the indigenous social, cultural, and linguistic groups were split down the middle by the feature that would come to be known as Hadrian's Wall."

play groups off of one another—perhaps groups such as the Carvetii and Setantii in the northwest, and others such as the Tecoverdii, Lopocares, and Corionototae who have tentatively been assigned the territory in the northeast—indicating that the major military blows had already been struck [by the Romans] in this area.⁴⁷

Following Agricola's campaigns, continued military efforts at both pacification and control, and a growing emigration of Roman citizens to the British frontier, the military infrastructure of the Roman army in Britain had, from the initial landing of 43 CE until the onset of the second century, grown unabated; and by the time Hadrian (*Publius Aelius Hadrianus Augustus*) succeeded Trajan (*Marcus Ulpius Traianus*) as Emperor of Rome in 117 CE, the logistical infrastructure for what would soon become Hadrian's Wall was largely already in place.

THE WALL(S)

Rob Collins noted that, "By AD 88, the Roman troops were withdrawn from northern Scotland to the Forth-Clyde isthmus, and by the early 2nd century, troops had been withdrawn from lower Scotland to the Tyne-Solway isthmus."⁴⁸ Roman military presence began to coalesce around the fortified region of the Tyne-Solway isthmus, and, as Collins went on to note, "Upon withdrawing from Scotland, the northernmost concentration of garrisons was along the road connecting Corbridge to Carlisle, known since the Middle Ages as the Stanegate Road." The Stanegate road, a road that ran more or less parallel to the current location of Hadrian's Wall, was, as Richard Hingsley noted, a "fortified military road [which] was constructed just to the south of the line on which the Wall was later to be built."⁴⁹ In the narrow region from what is now Browness to South Shields, England, where the present day A69 and B6318 highways run from Newcastle upon Tyne to Carlisle, much of the Roman army in Britain was garrisoned in a series of forts—forts which were supported by a heavy infrastructure of roads and towns which, coupled with the Caledonian withdrawals, created a de facto militarized fron-

tier region along the Tyne-Solway narrows. Historians William Hanson and Gordon Maxwell noted that:

Shortly after the beginning of the second century AD the Roman frontier in Britain seems to have rested on the Tyne-Solway isthmus, the most convenient east-west route south of the Forth-Clyde line. [...] The primary elements of the Trajanic frontier were the Flavian forts Carlisle and Corbridge, situated astride the two main routes into Scotland, together with the east-west road which connects them, known to us as the Stanegate.⁵⁰

As the land around the burgeoning wall began to be cleared for construction, surveyed and readied, the native Britons were forcibly relocated, and the indigenous social, cultural, and linguistic groups were split down the middle by the feature that would come to be known as Hadrian's Wall. Hanson and Maxwell noted that the significance of the political apartheid enforced by the newly-constructed Wall would not have been lost on the local tribesman, where "the newly-built barrier seems to have cut across tribal territory belonging to the Brigantes, isolating a considerable portion of the tribe's lands lying in the lower dales of the Rivers Esk and Annan."⁵¹ Further, the historian Richard Hingsley also observed that:

The homes and settlements of the local people have been recognized and excavated in some numbers [...] but the relationship between these people and the Roman army and administration remains unclear. Substantial areas of land will have to be confiscated during the construction of the Roman military infrastructure. Roman roads, camps, and forts were enforced without discussion or negotiation [and the] [...] Roman army did very much whatever it wanted across this landscape, prior to, during, and after the construction of [Hadrian's] Wall.⁵²

The Roman frontier zone that was to become Hadrian's Wall was, however, and as is the course with most things, an overdetermined phenomenon—and one which, at different periods of time, could be located in different regions of Britannia. Stephen Dyson recorded that:

Though Hadrian's Wall is a conspicuous linear feature, it did not mark the course of the frontier. Generally speaking, the Roman frontier occupied the middle of the island of Britain, with the Roman province (and later diocese) of *Britannia* only occupying the southern half of the island. Throughout the Roman occupation, then, the territory north of the Wall and Ireland to the west should be considered barbaricum."⁵³

Yet, as the historian Stephen L. Dyson observed, in *The Creation of the Roman Frontier*, for most of us:

Hadrian's Wall symbolizes the Roman frontier. Massive and permanent, it separates the world of Rome from that of the barbarian [...] Yet walls and forts were only part of a larger diplomatic, military, political, social, and economic system that embraced both sides of the frontier and created a gradual transition from Roman to non-Roman society.⁵⁴

The decision during the reign of Hadrian to construct a large scale wall just north, and parallel to, the Stanegate Road followed closely with the extant garrison in the region, the series of supportive forts across the isthmus, and Hadrian's own efforts at imperial consolidation, rather than expansion. "When Hadrian came to power," Rob Collins noted, "his apparent desire to stabilize imperial holdings led him to consolidate existing frontiers rather than initiate further conquest. The emperor visited Britain in AD 122, and the construction of Hadrian's Wall commenced, quite possibly following a plan designed by the emperor himself."⁵⁵ Richard Hingsley also noted that, "The Wall formed part of Hadrian's policy of bringing the expansion of the Roman empire to an end; fortifications were also being built along the German frontier at this time."⁵⁶ The Wall's construction took eight to ten years to complete,⁵⁷ and might not have been fully finished until the reign of Antoninus Pius (*Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius*) in 138 CE. Indeed, the Wall is thought to still have been under construction at the time of Hadrian's passing. The historian Adrian Goldsworthy noted that, "Hadrian's personal involvement in the decision to construct the Wall and in its design is clear. It is generally

assumed that he gave the order after visiting the area, so that the surveying and construction began no earlier than 122."⁵⁸ Goldsworthy offered the caveat that since we know so little about the imperial planning processes surrounding large-scale works like the Wall, that construction may have started earlier than 122, and Hadrian's trip to the frontier that year was simply to inspect the Wall's construction.

The anatomy of the Wall itself was such that the stone curtain wall was not the primary feature—although arguably the most visible—but part of a larger wall complex which included a wall ditch, a military road, and a sub-complex known as the *vallum* which contained a series of mounds and ditches. While the original height of the stone curtain wall is unknown—as no section survives today at its original height—recent estimates suggest an approximate 3.6 meter height.⁵⁹ Given that the upper portion of the stone curtain wall is also unpreserved, it is, as Hingsley observed, "unclear whether there was a walkway along the top or crenellations to defend those Roman soldiers who may have patrolled its line."⁶⁰ The Wall, and the complexes that surrounded it, were built by three Roman legions: the II *Augusta*, the VI *Victrix*, and the XX *Valeria Victrix*. Help was likely levied from the local populations—from the towns (*vici*) which grew up along the Wall region to support the soldiers and their families—and from the Romanized indigenous populations. The stone curtain wall, while initially begun at a width of 2.9 meters was, in places, reduced to 2.4 meters in width. The overall length of the wall was, from Segedunum to the shores of the Solway Firth, 80 Roman miles—117.5 km, or 73 standard miles. Adrian Goldsworthy noted that:

The western section for thirty-one Roman miles (c. forty-six km) from Bowness-on-Solway was built of turf, timber, and earth, with a rampart some twenty feet wide (six m) at its base. The line was then continued by a stone wall for forty-nine Roman miles (c. seventy-three km) to the east, eventually ending at Wallsend on the Tyne.⁶¹

Forts also punctuated the stone curtain wall, although this decision had not been planned from the wall's beginning. On this, Hingsley recorded

"The border *limites* of the Roman frontiers in Britain were not the historical limits of the Roman people themselves, but an

Stone and Earth

that:

It was not originally intended to place the forts on the line of the Wall but to maintain the pre-existing forts along the Stanegate in the hinterland as the main bases for the troops. However, prior to AD 126 it appears that a decision was made to construct forts at regular intervals along the Wall's course and to transfer the garrisons onto the Wall.⁶²

This decision, Hingsley observed, is known today amongst Wall scholars as "the fort decision." Regular gateways and through-ways occurred on the line of the wall, primarily at the mile-castles and forts, but as Hingsley noted, "at least two additional gateways at Port Gate and the Maiden Way are known."⁶³ Cross-boundary trade, immigration, travel occurred through these ports. The wall forts, or mile castles, and, by extension, the gates, were often associated with civilian extensive settlements known as *vici*. William Hanson and Gordon Maxwell noted that:

The channels of movement open to the military were, of course, also applicable to the control of civilian traffic, and we must remember that the close supervision of this was probably the main day-to-day function of the running barrier. Passage across Hadrian's Wall was possible for all persons going peacefully about their lawful business, but only with the permission of the troops occupying

the milecastles.⁶⁴

Hadrian's Wall, known in its day as the *Vallum Aelium*, was, functionally, a tool of Roman border management. While defense was of course implied by the very nature of the wall itself, its primary goal was not defensive in nature, but rather to control the flow of people and goods in and out of Roman territory. It was, at root, a territorial demarcation and was used in many of the same ways that modern states today utilize their border fortifications. John Collingwood Bruce, an early pioneer of Wall scholarship, and author of the seminal text *The Roman Wall*, made the argument, early on, that "the curtain Wall was designed at first to indicate where Roman territory ended, but this was supplemented by the 'secondary function [...] of being an obstacle to smugglers, or robbers, or other undesirables."⁶⁵ And further, in his influential text *Roman Britain*, Collingwood also argued that:

In spite of the impressive appearance of this huge fortification [...] it was not in the ordinary sense a military work. It was not intended to stop invading armies of Caledonians, while Roman soldiers lined the parapet and repelled attempts at escalade [...] The Wall was an obstacle, but an obstacle not so much to armies as to smugglers [...] If we want an analogy in modern times, we shall find one not in the continuous lines of trench warfare but

artificial extension of the imperialist state predicated upon warfare, resource extraction, and a social subjugation of the native Britons."

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in the Indian ‘customs-hedge’ built by the English in 1843 for prevention of smuggling in salt.⁶⁶

Hadrian’s Wall, like the imperial border walls of the twenty-first century, was a tool of border management—a tool intended to create easily-regulated choke points in cross-territorial trade and immigration where the army could enforce Roman border policy. The primary historical themes of Hadrian’s Wall were thus bound up with Roman finance capital, economy, immigration, regulation, management, and—secondarily—defense. As with its early 4th century BCE Servian Wall (*Murus Servii Tullii*), Rome’s far-flung border wall in northern Britannia represented three similar motivations:

1. to demarcate Roman territory,
2. to preserve territorial integrity, and
3. to exercise military, political, and economic control over cross-border traffic⁶⁷

Hadrian’s Wall was not only a fortified demarcation—a limit set in stone and earth—but it represented, also, the Roman *imperial* conception of the border as one which required consummate economic control, regulation, delimitation, and soldiering. Hadrian’s Wall thus represents a model for border studies in the twenty-first century, especially where the border fortifications of imperial polities are concerned, precisely due to

its economic characteristics. In Hadrian’s Wall we see glimpses of the U.S.-Mexico border wall, with not only a similarity in management strategy, impetus, and purpose; but in meaning, signification, and implication as well—hints of an imperialism in ossification, written in stone and earth and metal.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

“The *right of landownership*,” a young Karl Marx once rightly observed, “has its source in robbery.”⁶⁸ The same could be said for the ways in which Rome engaged in its own methods of land acquisition and legal notions of land ownership. The border *limites* of the Roman frontiers in Britain were not the historical limits of the Roman people themselves, but an artificial extension of the imperialist state predicated upon warfare, resource extraction, and a social subjugation of the native Britons. On this, the political scientist Emmanuel Bruent-Jailly noted that:

[T]he history of the Roman Empire is testimony to the fact that conquest was central to the differentiation between barbarism and civilization. Boundaries organised the Roman Empire according to a hierarchy of spaces—territories of varied dimensions and functions, which included settlements, cities, provinces and regions.⁶⁹



"As an early template for the western imperialist state, Rome's notion of the border offers political ecology insights into present-day, imperial border regimes."

Imposition and Foreign Rule

The Stanegate region of the Tyne-Solway isthmus—the location of the *Vallum Aelium*—was, as referenced by Claudius Ptolemy's 150 CE map of the region, the territory of such tribes as the *Brigantes*, the *Votadini*, and the *Selgovae*; and the short-lived Antonine Wall seventy miles to the north on the Forth-Clyde isthmus was, as noted on the same map, peopled by the *Damnonii*. When empires such as Rome engaged in expansion, they did so not into uninhabited, depopulated lands, but lands which were rich in both resource and indigenous populations; lands which had to be robbed and taken over from their prior inhabitants on the order of finance capital, in the quest for the development—and robbery—of real capital. Thomas Nail observed that, "In particular, the border is defined by two intertwined social motions: expansion and expulsion."⁷⁰ Hadrian's Wall was similarly defined by such motions. Where border fortifications such as the military and economic installations of the Antonine and Hadrian's Walls are concerned, the Romans engaged both in the forced displacements of the native inhabitants as well as direct political and economic control by governorship and military occupation. The primary historical themes of the Roman dominion over the southern half of Britain then could thus be labeled as displacement, artificiality, and militaristic imposition.

As an imperialist polity, Rome's engagement with the border was one which lay upon a material foundation of economic and political exploitation of lands which did not, *a priori*, belong to Rome. The heretofore autonomy of Roman Britannia was thus a subjugation to foreign rule, and the Roman notion of the border can be derived from the ways in which the Romans engaged in border management and territorial occupation. As an early template for the western imperialist state, an analysis of Rome's material maintenance of their border limits offers the political ecologist much in the way of evidence for analysis; an analysis of Rome's border regime, for example, directly feeds an analysis of the present day border regime of the United States. Imperialism, and the logic of finance capital, emerge from the worst aspects of human greed—imperialism, in essence, is greed and rapaciousness made manifest in the repressive state apparatus.

In "Hadrian's Wall: Embodied Archaeologies of the Linear Monument," the archaeologists Claire Nesbit and Divya Tolia-Kelly observed that:

The Romans' barrier could be seen as an ideological division, which may have become entrenched in the psyche of the people on either side of the Wall, creating an invasive/defensive mindset. As Ahmed [...] asserts: "the politics of fear as well as hate is narrated as a bor-

der anxiety: fear speaks the language of ‘floods’ and ‘swamps,’ of being invaded by inappropriate others, against whom the nation must defend itself.”⁷¹

Similar themes of invasion, floods, and swamps, for example, are ubiquitous—and not-shockingly familiar—in the contemporary right-wing discourse around border security in the United States in 2021. For example, the reactionary, disgraced demagogue Donald Trump “repeatedly warned that America was under attack by immigrants heading for the border. ‘You look at what is marching up, that is an invasion!’ he declared at one rally. ‘That is an invasion!’”⁷²

A political ecology of the imperial border, however, must turn this idealism on its head. While the rhetoric of civilization/barbarism or of “migrant caravans” is often used to sell the militarization of the border to the public, the real reason remains, in every case, the imperial machinations of finance capital which require—at the stage of imperial development where delimitation and ossification occur—that economic controls exist on the border to not only annex territory and exert militaristic dominance, but to control the flows of goods and people, and to secure real and working capital for the imperial society’s financial élite. The romanticism of imperialism stands to be deconstructed by those who not only seek to understand it, but by those who also seek to dismantle its oppressive logics.

In the Marxist tradition, when we seek to both dethrone and subvert this problematic idealism used by the state to legitimize imperialism’s material efforts, we often return to the great Hegel. On the Romans, Hegel once remarked that, within the bounds of the empire, “individuals were perfectly equal (slavery made only a trifling distinction), and without any political right. [...] Private Right developed and perfected this equality.”⁷³ Hegel went on to contend that the individual private rights enjoyed by every Roman citizen in some way represented a logical extension of burgeoning Roman property rights—along with the resultant political individualization of the citizen—and that such a collection of individuals in fact operated as a sort of decentralized political organism,⁷⁴ where the:

Emperor *domineered* only, and could not be said to *rule*; for the equitable and moral medium between the sovereign and the subjects was wanting—the bond of a constitution and organization of the state, in which a gradation of circles of social life, enjoying independent recognition, exists in communities and provinces, which, devoting their energies to the general interest, exert an influence on the central government.⁷⁵

Hegel’s fabulously romanticized vision of the Romans, however, could not be further from the truth. As an exploitative imperial polity, Rome engaged in a foreign strategy of conquest and expansion, subjugation and domination, and rampant economic imperialism—a material centralization which led to the construction of border walls on Rome’s far-flung borders, imperial ossification, and, eventually, to the decline and dismemberment of the state itself.

Thus, it is important to demystify Rome to understand it. Michael Parenti, in *The Assassination of Julius Caesar: A People’s History of Rome*, noted that:

Rome’s social pyramid rested upon the backs of slaves (*servi*) who composed approximately one-third the population of Italy, with probably a smaller proportion within Rome proper. Their numbers were maintained by conquests, piratical kidnappings, and procreation by the slaves themselves. Slavery also was the final destination for individuals convicted of capital crimes, for destitute persons unable to repay debts, and for children sold off by destitute families. War captives were worked to death in the mines and quarries and on plantations (*latifundia*) at such a rate that their ranks were constantly on the wane.⁷⁶

Rome was not an egalitarian society, where private citizens enjoyed unequalled sovereignty and political freedom; rather, it *exemplified* an oppressive social stratification which we may take as the *sine qua non* of imperialist society, where a moneyed and dominant social élite exercise their own social and political freedoms at the expense of a predominant class of working poor (*proletarii*) and slaves (*servi*). And, further, where this domi-

nant social élite—the financial élite—direct the foreign policy of the state towards bloodshed, conquest, and rabid consumption.

The class injustice, social oppression, and slavery endemic to Roman society were all harsh realities suffered by not only the Roman *servi* and *proletarii*, but by the bullied and subjugated peoples along Rome's frontiers as well. The romantic view that the *Pax Romana* offered a material peace (*pax*) to its subjects or its neighbors is, simply, “the self-serving illusions that any imperialistic system has of itself.”⁷⁷ The foreign policy that emerged from the imperial state of Rome was a policy which emerged from a stratified, oppressive, and not-unfamiliar social organization where:

as in any plutocracy, it was a disgrace to be poor and an honor to be rich. The rich, who lived parasitically off the labor of others, were hailed as men of quality and worth; while the impecunious, who struggled along on the paltry earnings of their own hard labor, were considered vulgar and deficient.⁷⁸

Such a society—emblematic of all imperialist societies—could only develop a border strategy laden with themes of expansion, exclusion, hierarchy, and economic servitude. As an imperialist slave society, Rome relied upon the influx of foreign *servi* for the bulk of its internal labor force; for the rest it required only that the *proletarii* remain immiserated and in a precarious economic position in rank service to the financial and social élite. Such a society represented not only Rome's economic strategy, but also provided a model for later imperial states. The racism endemic to Rome's socioeconomic policy could only manifest itself in not only the social-hierarchical segregation, but in the physical, geographical segregation of Rome and the external *Other* as well. Thus did the Roman notions of separation—emblemized by the Roman notion of the border—both emerge from and represent such a social structure. Michael Parenti observed that:

All slavocracies develop a racist ideology to justify their dehumanized social relationships.

In Rome, male slaves of any age were habitu-

ally addressed as *puer* or “boy.” A similar degrading appellation was applied to slaves in ancient Greece and in the slavocracy of the United States, persisting into the postbellum segregationist South of the twentieth century. The slave as a low-grade being or subhuman is a theme found in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. In the minds of Roman slaveholders, the *servi*—including the foreigners who composed the larger portion of the slave population—were substandard in moral and mental capacity, a notch or two above animals. Cicero assures us that Jews, Syrians, and all other Asian barbarians are “born to slavery.”⁷⁹

Where an imperialist state seeks to engage in such firm social distinctions—the social superstructure of its oppressive economic organization—there, too, does it relate to land, to economy, and to the foreign *Other* in an analogous fashion. Rome's utilization of the militarized and fortified borderline in northern Britannia is a key demonstration of this social-geographical relationship. And thus, from this, we can also contend that Rome's border regime—its strategy of border management—entailed a firm relationship to the Roman economy; i.e., the ways in which Rome regulated its workforce and organized the state in service of finance and real capital. The politics of the cross-border movement of Roman labor forces are thus reflected both in Rome's socio-political organization as well as its economic and labor structures. On this, Etienne Balibar contended that:

Borderlines which allow a clear distinction between the national (domestic) and the foreigner express sovereignty as a power to attach populations to territories in a stable or regulated manner, to “administrate” the territory through the control of the population, and, conversely, to govern the population through the division and the survey of the territory.⁸⁰

And as Claire Nesbit and Divya Tolia-Kelly observed, “[Hadrian's Wall scholars] Breeze and Dobson [...] argue that the number of gateways through the monument indicate that the Wall was designed to control movement across the border

"Parasitism, Lenin noted, is characteristic of imperialism. The parasitism emblemized by the imperialist border wall is reflected in the fact that the imperial border wall is one

Stone and Earth

rather than to prevent it."⁸¹ Simply put, every empire requires both mobile and cheap labor forces where its reproduction and expansion is concerned. Economies of imperial expansion and annexation, predicated on themes of both exploitation and expulsion, commodification, growth, and domination, thus *require* border regimes which control the flow of goods, capital, and forces of labor.

The Roman imperial model is the template for present-day border regimes in the imperialist-capitalist era. On this, Balibar commented that:

And perhaps this should be no complete surprise if we remember that the idea of a capitalist world system (beginning with the discussions on *Weltwirtschaft* and world economy) was first elaborated as a "determinate negation" (as Hegelians would say) of the idea of a world empire (i.e., an empire which claims to represent the sovereign source of power, peace, civilization, amid less civilized populations, whose prototype, in the West, was the Roman Empire).⁸²

The story of Hadrian's Wall tells us several distinct things about the ways in which the Roman state utilized its border walls. Hadrian's Wall—along with the early republican Servian Walls (*Murus Servii Tullii*), the Antonine Wall (*Vallum Antonini*), and the various wall fortifications along the *Limes Germanicus* (within the Roman

provinces of *Germania Inferior*, *Germania Superior*, and *Raetia*)—fulfilled the following functions: 1. Rome's border walls not only demarcated Roman territory and preserved Rome's alleged territorial integrity, but they 2. provided a material base of operations for the Romans to exercise military, political, and financial control over their provinces which abutted non-Roman territory. To these, we add the important third point that Rome's border regime also allowed the Roman state to create a series of economic and migratory choke-points through which the Romans could then monitor and control the cross-border flow of goods and labor forces. As Collingwood argued,⁸³ the wall itself was not, as commonly believed, a defensive structure; its primary purposes, as covered in the previous section, were both economic and migratory in nature. And Nail, too, observed that:

The primary function of Hadrian's Wall was not to defend against barbarian invasion but to regulate the ports of entry into the empire and collect taxes from those who wanted to pass across its numerous gates built at each milecastle. [...] This had at least three intended effects: (1) to retain skilled or educated colonial subjects from defecting to the other side, (2) to make new colonial subjects "enjoy" being Roman by restricting their movement, and (3) to restrict the flow of information across the wall to the barbarians so that they

which is constructed on occupied and conquered land: land which is not only exploited and oppressed, but demographically and environmentally shattered by the wall."

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did not learn the location of camps or supply lines.⁸⁴

Where capital, class, and exploitation come together in the key apparatuses of the imperialist state, there too must the bordering strategies follow suit. The Roman state, and its economic and militaristic border regimes, provide an enduring model for the modern imperialist state—to better understand Rome is to better understand imperialism in the modern era, especially where the oppressive implementation of border walls are concerned.

TOWARDS A POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF THE IMPERIAL BORDER

“Sovereign power,” observed Wendy Brown in *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*:

carries the fantasy of an absolute and enforceable distinction between inside and outside. This distinction in turn depends upon sovereignty’s defiance of spatial or boundary porousness and of temporal interruption or multivalence. Political sovereignty, like that of God, entails absolute jurisdictional control and endurance over time. The sovereign can be attacked, but not penetrated without being undone, challenged, but not interrupted without being toppled. In this respect, sovereignty appears as a supremely mascu-

line political fantasy (or fallacy) of mastery: Penetration, pluralization, or interruption are its literal undoing.⁸⁵

When an imperial polity is unable to accept a fluid geographical border, and the indigenous populations who dwell within and upon those geographies, there must it erect a fortification to stem such fluidity and indigeneity. And when a state must erect an extremely expensive, large-scale border wall—expensive both in terms of manpower, military and police presence, surveillance, and physical materials—there too does the state seem to *implicitly* admit that its eventual decline is nigh; that it has reached its material limit; and that it can expand no more. It admits by implication that it can no longer tolerate the free travel of goods and people across its limits, but that these limits must in fact become highly regulated via a series of forced choke points. All of this, the state does in the service of capital—for the state is a weapon wielded by its ruling élite. The ruling financial élite of the imperialist state wield the state for the purposes of imperial capital.

The real expression of imperialist power—its apex reached in the imperial state—thus requires, at root, absolute jurisdictional and economic control over its frontiers. It can accept no less.

“Ruined walls,” the historian David Frye noted in *Walls: A History of Civilization in Blood and Brick*,

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“appear all over the world. The materials—sometimes brick, sometimes stone, sometimes simply tamped earth—vary with the locale, but everywhere we find the same pattern: obscure barriers, adorned only by their colorful nicknames, nearly always facing desolate wastes.”⁸⁶ Frye went on to note, wrongly, that “Civilized folk had erected barriers to exclude them [barbarians] in an astonishing array of countries [...] Not a single textbook observed the nearly universal correlation between civilization and walls.”⁸⁷ Yet recent scholarship by political scientists Ron Hassner and Jason Wittenberg has easily solved this riddle:

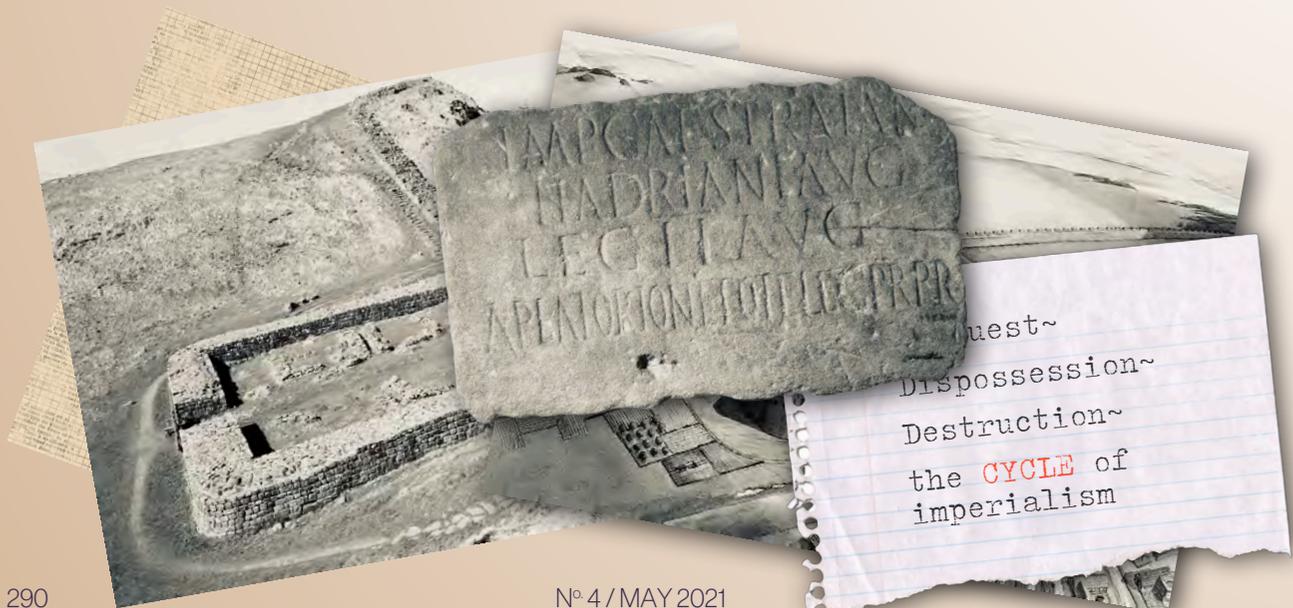
Why do states erect fortified boundaries? We conclude that most are built by wealthy states to keep out unwanted migrants, particularly those originating from Muslim-majority states. Contrary to conventional wisdom, states that construct such barriers do not tend to suffer disproportionately from terrorism, nor do they tend to be involved in a significant number of territorial disputes. The primary motivation for constructing fortified barriers is not territory or security but *economics*.⁸⁸

It is no great mystery then why the great border walls of history—Hadrian’s Wall notwithstanding—have faced so-called “wastes,” and have

similarly encircled so-called “civilized” lands. The answer, simply, is that those with the resources to produce and reproduce their material existences seek to not only retain these resources for themselves but to also prevent the pervasive “Other” from access to those resources. Border walls were, and are, built by the wealthy as a bulwark against the poor and as a strategy of wealth extraction from abutting poorer nations—a strategy of economic control by which cross-border migration, capital, and economy is regulated in such a way as to benefit the rich at the expense of the poor.

The fortified Roman limits of the Hadrian and Antonine Walls were no different. Rather than viewing the historical world through a lens of “civilized man” and “barbarian”—as the Romans did—we must, *contra* Frye, salvage what Hegel called a *philosophical* approach to history, as opposed to a *narrative* one; a philosophical approach in which:

Thought must be subordinate to what is given, to the realities of fact; that this is its basis and guide: while Philosophy dwells in the region of self-produced ideas, without reference to actuality. [...] [I]t is the business of history simply to adopt into its records what is



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and has been, actual occurrences and transactions; [...] as it strictly adheres to its data [...]”⁸⁹

Our analysis of the past must rely upon the material reality of what was, coupled with the nuance of present-day data analysis where material reality is concerned. Thus, when we *do* the history of border walls, we must admit that their history will by necessity entail economic entanglements; and we must avoid the idealistic notion that walls emerged to separate “civilization from barbarism,” as such a notion will always ever entail classist and racist connotations.

Border walls as a focus of political ecological study are thus implicitly entangled with the impetus of their construction. Economically, border walls are, and have been, primarily erected by those wealthy and “civilized” *few* to exclude those subaltern, “barbarian,” and poor *many*. And those very same walls exist to control the cross-border flow of goods and people in an effort to maintain control over the internal and external economy of the walled state. Political scientists David Carter and Paul Poast further emphasized this fact by noting that:

Wall construction is explained by cross-border economic disparities. Significant economic disparities between states create in-

centives to illegally transport people or move goods readily available in the poorer country but highly regulated and relatively expensive in the richer country. We find that economic disparities have a substantial and significant effect on the presence of a physical wall that is independent of formal border disputes and concerns over instability from civil wars in neighbors.⁹⁰

Even the disgraced ex-President of the United States, failed reality show star and exploitative real estate mogul Donald Trump, hinted at this fact by noting that, in relationship to the U.S.- Mexico border wall:

Some have suggested a barrier is immoral. Then why do wealthy politicians build walls, fences, and gates around their homes? They don’t build walls because they hate the people on the outside, but because they love the people on the inside. The only thing that is immoral is the politicians to do nothing and continue to allow more innocent people to be so horribly victimized.⁹¹

As border walls in the current imperial American era entail this timeless imperialist and economic quality—a reflection of the Roman strategy—and, where border walls also reflect not only a

"The physical division of labor forces by way of a great walling-off—while side-stepping the national question—not only divides demographic cohesion but devalues labor itself outside of the wall."

waning sovereignty but a potential future collapse and withdrawal from the border region altogether, it serves political ecology well to examine the ways in which the imperial Roman state utilized its border fortifications in Britannia.

CONCLUSIONS

“Parasitism,” Lenin noted, “is characteristic of imperialism.”⁹² The parasitism embodied by the imperialist implementation of the border wall is one which is reflected in the fact that the imperial border wall is one which is constructed on *occupied* land; a land which is not only exploited but also demographically and environmentally shattered by the wall itself. The imperial border wall reflects imperialism in this way—it exists as a tool in service of capital extraction and control. The imperial border wall is not a wall of defense or of ideological protection; it is not a wall in the way the *Antifaschistischer Schutzwall* of the German Democratic Republic was a wall. The imperial border wall is a wall which serves exploitation, extraction, and the control of goods and labor forces—it serves these, in every case, for the benefit of the financial élite and for financial capital more generally. In short, the border walls of imperialism serve the state, which itself serves the state’s ruling class.

Lenin wrote that the deepest economic foundation of imperialism is monopoly. In the capitalist era, “[t]his is capitalist monopoly, i.e., monopoly which has grown out of capitalism and which exists in the general environment of capitalism, commodity production and competition, in permanent and insoluble contradiction to this general environment. Nevertheless, like all monopoly, it inevitably engenders a tendency of stagnation and decay.”⁹³ The border walls of the imperialist state—Hadrian’s Wall, the Antonine Wall, and now the US-Mexico Border Wall, similarly engender a tendency of stagnation and decay—they emblemize and foreshadow these in the same way that the imperialist state emblemizes and foreshadows its own decay. Imperialism, Lenin contended, “means the partitioning of the world, and the exploitation of other countries [...] which means high monopoly profits for a handful of very

rich countries, [making] it economically possible to bribe the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives shape to, and strengthens opportunism.”⁹⁴ Imperialism requires a great carving-up of heretofore autonomous and indigenous lands; it entails, by its very nature, their partitioning and exploitation. The great border walls of the imperialist state not only act as material partitions, they “create privileged sections also among the workers, and to detach them from the broad masses of the proletariat,”⁹⁵ as Lenin observed of imperialism more generally. The physical division of labor forces by way of a great walling-off—while side-stepping the national question—divides the international proletariat in ways which both create and devalue labor forces outside of the wall; it creates a siphoning effect where labor forces are compelled by economic inequalities and devaluations to seek employment inside the wall at a wage far lower than the labor forces *inside* the walled territory. The border walls of imperialism contribute to the extraction of super-profits for the financial élite and for the state—one and the same—and contribute more widely to environmental destruction, habitat fragmentation, and biodiversity loss.

An explicitly anti-imperial political ecology of the imperial border—the goal to which this paper humbly contributes—is one which does not seek a reform of the imperial border, but a destruction thereof. The reform of such a system is, as Lenin noted, “a deception, [and] a ‘pious wish,’”⁹⁶ divorced from all material reality and from the actual oppression of those peoples and lands imperialism claims as its own. “Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system, the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and an extreme intensification of antagonisms in this field.”⁹⁷ It is a system which, in the efforts of a great global partitioning, oppression, and exploitation, must not be allowed to flourish—its walls and its partitions must in every case be opposed. For while the walls of imperialism both imply and foretell their own breaking-apart, they often need a push.

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The Nina Andreeva Affair

Part Two: The Ensuing Political Struggle

*Concluded from the Third Issue of *Peace, Land, and Bread**

Donald
Courter

On July 24th, 2020, a little known yet profoundly important hero of the global socialist movement, Nina Aleksandrovna Andreeva, passed away at the age of 81. Andreeva was a chemistry professor in Leningrad, who became a leading voice of scientific socialism at a time of widespread ideological confusion, liberal subversion of the media, and historical self-flagellation in the Soviet Union.

Immediately following the publication of the Andreeva letter, planning-oriented reform regained popularity with the Soviet citizenry and a number of significant media outlets. Although ominously labeled the "three weeks of stagnation" in liberal periodicals, this brief moment encompassed a revival of party dedication to Andropovian-style reform and a media campaign against the slandering of Soviet history.¹ Interviews with Andreeva were broadcast on television, and her criticism of contemporary Soviet historical discourse inspired a renewed defense of socialist principles.

As Andreeva's popularity grew, Yegor Ligachev, who supported Andreeva's letter and had himself consistently criticized the anarchic handling of information, was also invited for several interviews in prominent media outlets. These interviews mostly encompassed topics and policy Ligachev had discussed and agitated for since 1986 and little overt relevance to the specific content of the Andreeva letter. Ligachev often spoke of "the question [he] had raised in *Elektrostal* and in the report at the Central Committee plenum"—namely, the necessity of a balanced analysis of historical figures regardless of the taboos that had come to surround them.² Considering that Gorbachev and his supporters took little initiative to attack Ligachev's politics prior to the publication of the Andreeva letter, the interviews should not have been seen as politically threatening.



Nevertheless, Yakovlev quickly accused Ligachev and Andreeva of causing "perplexity and confusion in the face of the complex and acute questions that life poses."³ Compelled to defend the market reformers against allegations of ideological revisionism, Yakovlev anonymously published the *Pravda* article "Pravda Rebuts Antirestructuring Manifesto." In it, he argued against claims that the market reformers were "subjecting the principles of Marxism-Leninism to revision" and blamed such accusations on the ideological "confusion and perplexity" aroused in "some people" by Andreeva and her supporters.⁴ It appears that the market reformers took direct action only after the opposition was platformed and legitimated in the wider media. Ligachev and Andreeva's open criticism of the defamation of Soviet history emboldened those who had previously feared challenging the liberalization of the state media, and thus formed a capable threat to the hegemonic control the market reformers held over the highest levels of the Soviet government.

The Soviet people's support for Ligachev's politics and the Andreeva letter manifested itself in the hundreds of supportive letters written by average citizens but left unpublished during Yakovlev and Gorbachev's swift purge of anti-market elements in the party. Although these letters are generally omitted from western narra-

tives of the affair, Ligachev, who was in charge of allocating letters to ideological screeners, mentions the numerous letters responding to Andreeva's polemic in his memoirs. According to an official investigation referenced by Ligachev, out of the "380 responses [that] were received," there were "only 80 condemning Andreeva while 300 supported her."⁵ The fact that all of the responses were written by independent citizens demonstrates that the Andreeva letter did not cause a fracture within Soviet society as Yakovlev claimed, but was consistent with the supposed spirit of *glasnost*.

But for the market reformers, Andreeva's insistence that the official attacks on the achievements of Soviet history were antithetical to *glasnost* itself posed a serious problem. The highly selective reporting by liberal elements in the official media undercut the kind of openness seemingly preached by the market reformers. Such practices did not promote fair and civil exchange between the proponents of different ideas; rather, they served to secure the ruling faction's political objectives.

Although the market reformers accused Ligachev of conspiring to reprint the Andreeva letter during his meeting with media officials on March 14, outright support for the letter came only from a

few media representatives and manifested itself without a unified directive. Valentin Chikin, Chief Editor of *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and original publisher of the Andreeva letter, was the first media representative to publicly challenge liberal tendencies in the larger media. Immediately after the March 14 meeting, Chikin defended Andreeva and the storm of sympathetic letters that followed "as a reaction to the turbid stream of anti-historical, anti-Soviet materials in [their] press."⁶ Victor Afanasyev, Chief Editor of *Pravda*, supported Chikin's appraisal of the Andreeva letter, publishing letters from ordinary Soviet citizens in the party's main periodical. When Yakovlev attempted to publish his rebuttal in *Pravda*, Afanasyev opposed its publication until Gorbachev threatened him with removal from the editorial board, once more revealing Gorbachev's opportunistic notion of a "free press."⁷ Other periodicals such as *Kommunist* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published letters with similar themes as those advanced in the Andreeva letter, but were spared by Gorbachev and Yakovlev during the later Politburo purges. In the cases of Afanasyev, Chikin, and many others, support for the planning-oriented tendency resulted in purging during the final campaign to permanently solidify the liberal takeover of the Soviet state.

While supporters of a planning-oriented recalibration of *perestroika* gained support in the initial weeks following the publication of the Andreeva letter, these successes were cut short by the backlash following Gorbachev's return to Moscow. The campaign began with two Politburo meetings chaired by Gorbachev and organized by Yakovlev in late March and early April. Gorbachev's sudden change from situational moderate to market reformist manifested during a preparatory meeting with Yakovlev upon his return. Yakovlev framed the situation surrounding the Andreeva letter as if Ligachev was prepared to orchestrate a coup d'état, claiming they should "strike back from the highest level."⁸ Yakovlev's calls for authoritative action indicate the market reformers lacked confidence that they could rely on citizens at "a lower level" to defend Gorbachev's style of *perestroika*.⁹

Gorbachev and Yakovlev forced a Politburo

meeting on March 25 that excluded Ligachev, who was unable to attend due to the pressing nature of his immediate party duties. Gorbachev immediately issued a test of loyalty, firmly stating, "I am asking all of you to declare yourselves" in regard to participation in a conspiracy against *perestroika* and support for the Andreeva letter.¹⁰ Threatening the Politburo with his resignation and an investigation into each Politburo member's activities, Gorbachev eventually turned everyone present at the meeting against Ligachev. The coercion of the Politburo at the March 30 meeting resulted in the authorization of an official response to the Andreeva letter to be written by Yakovlev and prepared the market reformers for the April 14 & 15 Politburo meeting in which they would eliminate all official party support for the political line advanced by Ligachev and Andreeva.

Yakovlev's anonymously published letter to *Pravda*, "*Pravda* Rebuts Antirestructuring Manifesto," condemned the Andreeva letter and its supporters, reflecting the tactics utilized the market reformers against the planning-oriented faction at the April 15 & 16 Politburo meeting. After criticizing Andreeva's polemic for impersonating the party line and confusing the masses, Yakovlev wrote the anonymous rebuttal without ever clearly establishing that the letter represented the concrete party line. Western historians who labeled the Andreeva polemic an "authoritarian document" fell silent on Yakovlev's ambiguous pronouncement.¹¹ Moreover, Yakovlev and the market reformers followed the exact course of action which they wrongly claimed characterized the alleged conspiracy between Ligachev and Andreeva: attempting, as a minority faction, to hijack party mechanisms with the intent of manipulating mass opinion.

In order to achieve a political victory and carry out Yakovlev's "strike from above," the market reformers had to intimidate or purge the majority of the Politburo and publish an authoritative denunciation of Andreeva in the mass media. Ironically, western historian Archie Brown notes "how little reliance could be placed at this time on democratic pressure from below to combat attempts by party conservatives to launch a counter-reforma-

tion."¹² Yakovlev stood against the mass support for the strengthening of socialism and the end of self-flagellation the market reformers had brought upon the country.

The political maneuvering of the market reformers came to a climax with the commencement of the Politburo's final meeting regarding the Nina Andreeva affair. The April 14 & 15 Politburo meeting of 1988 was a landmark moment in the collapse of socialism in the USSR and throughout the Eastern Bloc—marking the triumph of the market reformers against the defenders of socialism within the CPSU. The meeting was preceded by a Central Committee commission under Yakovlev's direction "raid[ing] the offices of *Sovetskaya Rossiya* looking for evidence of a conspiracy" which, unsurprisingly, yielded nothing aside from an abundance of unpublished letters supporting Andreeva.¹³ Even without the evidence he hoped to procure in the raid, Gorbachev began the Politburo meeting by voicing his frustration with the unverifiable rumor that "several comrades called for the reprinting of the article in different periodical organs" and that the article itself contained "information about which [only] a tight circle of people" knew.¹⁴ After hearing that



many Politburo members supported the content of the Andreeva letter, Gorbachev and Yakovlev intimidated all dissenting members into submission by calling for the defense of unity. One by one, Politburo members who sympathized with Andreeva ceded their arguments under the threat of purging. For Yakovlev and Gorbachev, this meeting successfully silenced support for planning-oriented reform in the media, permanently marginalized Ligachev for his history of opposition to market reform, and did away with all politicians who continued to oppose the pro-market orientation of *perestroika*. Furthermore, the liquidation of the planning-oriented reformers from the CPSU consolidated the market reformers' control over the Soviet media, ending the short period in which both planning and market-based perspectives circulated throughout Soviet publications.

As a result of the campaign against planning-oriented party members, Soviet media outlets were pressured to cease publishing letters in support of the Andreeva letter and instead publish letters of dubious origins opposing the so-called "three weeks of stagnation." Hardline Marxist-Leninist publications, such as *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, *Pravda*, and *Kommunist*, were "categorically forbidden to publish letters in support of Andreeva and ordered to print only condemnatory letters."¹⁵ Out of 380 letters received from citizens concerning the Andreeva letter, all 300 supportive letters were confiscated from Ligachev's office. In fact, all supportive letters received by other periodicals "were taken from the editorial offices" in order to impose artificial "unanimous condemnation of the article."¹⁶ Government agents seized the letters as evidence for a supposed political conspiracy against Gorbachev's *perestroika*, although none of the letters or any other "suspicious materials" provided the liberals with sufficient evidence to suggest an anti-*perestroika* conspiracy existed in the first place. While *perestroika* and *glasnost* had stemmed, in part, from public demand for the curbing of the arbitrary use of state power, reforms instead depended upon and reinforced the intensification of official attacks on the historical legacy of the Soviet project as a whole, the very practice that Andreeva and many



other citizens spoke out against in the spirit of *glasnost* itself.

In the end, the USSR would come to appear vastly different from the promised changes that *perestroika* would supposedly bring. First and foremost, Yakovlev's unsigned article, published on the front page of *Pravda*, artificially redirected public opinion towards an undemocratically-established party line, in the exact manner that Ligachev and Andreeva stood accused. Gorbachev and Yakovlev had to force a resistant Victor Afanasev, editor in chief of *Pravda*, to publish Yakovlev's article, which Afanasev saw as an affront to Marxist-Leninist principles. Ligachev recalls Afanasev claiming, "They twisted my arm and forced me to put the article into the paper. I will never in my life forgive myself for that."¹⁷ *Sovetskaya Rossiya* was also forced to print "a retraction of the original [Andreeva] letter and self-criticism" on April 15 against the will of the editorial board and chief editor Chikin.¹⁸ The Politburo publicly condemned Chikin for publishing the Andreeva letter and nearly forced his resignation from *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. As if the intimidation of major publications did not suffice in the crusade against the political opposition, Gorbachev and Yakovlev carried out a purge of the Politburo de-

spite its members having bowed to their authority. By the 19th Party Conference, "Gorbachev [had] removed all the Politburo leaders who supported the Andreeva letter, except Anatoly Lukyanov, Gorbachev's friend from student days."¹⁹ And of course, Gorbachev demoted Ligachev to Secretary of Agriculture, while promoting Medvedev, one of Yakovlev's closest allies, to Secretary of Ideology. This exertion of power startled even the most supportive western historians, prompting one, Joseph Gibbs, to observe that "the only acceptable use of *glasnost* was in promoting *perestroika* as Gorbachev directed it."²⁰ Finally, with the arrival of the 19th Party Conference, Gorbachev, Yakovlev, and the market reformers could celebrate their consolidation of party unity, achieved through the ruthless suppression of the general political tendency that had dominated since 1917.

The 19th Party Conference of 1988 marked the final political defeat of the opposition forces and a turning point in the path towards the complete overthrow of socialism in the USSR. Gorbachev recalls in his memoirs that "the forthcoming conference" was "a test of strength between the reform and conservative wings of the party" following the planning reformers' near destruction in

mid-June.²¹ Notwithstanding the idealistic righteousness Gorbachev conceived around his struggle, the 19th Party Conference more closely resembled a victory rally than a political battleground. In his opening speech, Gorbachev, assisted by Yakovlev beforehand, announced the current necessity for "implementation of radical economic reform, activation of the spiritual potential of society, reform of the political system, [and] democratization of international relations," which all amounted to the restoration of market forces, dismemberment of Soviet democracy, and unconditional surrender to the West's demands.²² While circumstance forced the only remaining supporters of the Andreeva letter, Ligachev and Lukyanov, to be virtually silent, Gorbachev humorously recalls: "The party had not known such an open and lively debate since its first post-revolutionary congresses."²³ Many of the "issues" at the conference consisted of topics such as purging "anyone who in former times actively carried out the policy of stagnation."²⁴ For the market reformers, any discussion outside of opposition to planning and the liberalization of the economy represented a desire to revive so-called Stalinist tendencies within the party. The victors concluded that "direct sabotage by a significant number of the party secretaries of the party apparatus," although realistically quite imaginary, had been overcome and wished to use the 19th Party Conference as "the springboard for

all our reforms."²⁵ The 19th Party Conference brought peaceful dissent against market reform to a close, leading to the unfettered liberalization of Soviet society and the restoration of capitalism, interrupted only momentarily by a later KGB attempt to overthrow Gorbachev.

Two Faces of Soviet Liberalism

Throughout the implementation of *perestroika* in the late 1980s, Gorbachev consistently reiterated the necessity for an indiscriminate democratic political framework when publicly confronted by demands for the liquidation of dissenting politicians. Chernyayev, who viewed most of Gorbachev's policies as too moderate, often voiced support for arbitrary political measures in dealing with the political enemies of market reform. During the Politburo purge of June 1988, Gorbachev responded to Chernyayev's demand to dismiss the entire editorial board of *Sovetskaya Rossiya* for publishing Andreeva's polemic, stating that reformers must operate "within the framework of a democratic process."²⁶

Although Gorbachev granted amnesty to Chikin for implementing *glasnost* in a disagreeable manner, his arbitrary



demotion and/or purging of political opponents who could actually divert *perestroika* down a planning-oriented path, i.e., Ligachev and sympathetic Politburo members, illustrates how Gorbachev relied on democratic processes as a tool to improve the reputation of his reforms. Many examples of Gorbachev touting democratic language to improve the image of market reform took place at his mass meetings with workers of different regions across the USSR. In Norilsk, near the Arctic Circle, Gorbachev publicly asserted that "everything must be done democratically" when charged by a market-oriented local party member to purge comrades who "were holding back reform."²⁷ Gorbachev's democratic terminology deeply resonated both with the West and Soviet citizens who genuinely wished to improve Soviet socialism, but this language served only to disguise the imposition of capitalist reform.

Despite Gorbachev's promise to work within a democratic framework for all affairs carried out by the liberalized Soviet state, many genuine socialists, who initially supported Gorbachev's ascension to power, fell prey to a contradictory campaign against neo-Stalinism which used so-called Stalinist political tactics. Ironically, it was the market reformers who first described their authoritarian tactics as part of an "Iron Hand" strategy in dealing with the perceived threat of "neo-Stalinism."²⁸ Fantasies about a social crusade against the final remnants of the Stalinist system, therefore, took a form not unlike the Great Purges of the 1930s. Throughout the Great Purges, the state sought to liquidate kulaks, supporters of Leon Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin, and others labeled "enemies of the people" from the party and positions of state power. Likewise, market reformers of the late 1980s directed their own campaign against "enemies of *perestroika*" who allegedly wanted to go back to the times of Josef Stalin; the difference here was that no "enemy of *perestroika*" supported the vague concept of "Stalinism" or even opposed *perestroika*.²⁹ *Perestroika* simply means *restructuring*—its so-called "enemies" opposed Gorbachev's market deviations and instead sought to modernize economic planning, as well as further democratize party rule. In reality, Gorbachev and his market re-



formist allies opposed the original framework of *perestroika* as presented by Andropov and used the concept as a means to marginalize their opposition when it was convenient. Yet another example of such political opportunism emerged when "the same radicals who later left the party and proceeded to attack communists", i.e., market reformers who trumpeted *perestroika* and socialism throughout the late 20th century, began to attack "those who continued to defend the ideas of the 27th Congress" into the 1990s.³⁰ The authoritarian measures of the market reformers in response to reformists of a different tendency directly contradicted their stated democratic principles, which were nothing more than an opportunistic political tool.

Nina Andreeva understood that the policies of the market reformers and media slander had "to do not so much with [Stalin's] historical personality itself" as it did with political opportunism.³¹ In 1949, Ligachev, one of the most infamous "Stalinists" of the Nina Andreeva affair, was persecuted under "suspicion of being a Trotskyist 'enemy of the people' and fired as chief of the Novosibirsk

Komsomol organization."³² Moreover, Ligachev has always echoed Gorbachev in defending one of Stalin's primary political enemies, Nikolai Bukharin, as "a wrongfully persecuted, honest person" who deserved to be posthumously acquitted of the crimes of which he was accused.³³ Nina Andreeva's relatives, too, were repressed, and both her father and sister died in World War II. Nevertheless, despite the repression Andreeva's family and Ligachev himself faced during the 1930s and 40s, the market reformers labeled planning-oriented reformers as the notorious leaders of a Stalinist conspiracy and attempted to form a false historical narrative to support their political objectives.

Market-oriented politicians and media representatives did not simply take advantage of the events that were transpiring to disenfranchise their political opponents; they were actively manipulating events to produce conditions favorable to the purging of the opposition. Market reformers like Yasovlev and Chernyaev had decided it was necessary to purge anti-market forces from the party long before the Nina Andreeva Affair. In the spirit of market reformism, Chernyaev recalls that their brand of reform required "avalanche of anti-Stalinism" to compensate for its lack of popularity within the party, concluding that "if there had been no Nina Andreyeva, [they] would have had to invent her."³⁴ While radical market-oriented reformers like Chernyaev touted overtly machiavellian sentiments of political deception, Gorbachev more naively mentions how vital the Nina Andreeva affair was to the conviction that their political opposition was planning a coup and to the reinforcement of market reformer power. Gorbachev's belief that "without knowing it, Nina Andreeva helped us," when cross-analyzed against Chernyaev's statements regarding the affair, suggest that the market reform bloc had a generally uniform plan for the political future of the USSR before the publication of Nina Andreeva's letter and that Gorbachev was to be their vehicle of political power.³⁵ The conflicting post-Soviet memoirs of different market-oriented CPSU members further indicate that Gorbachev conceived of a distinct Soviet future that differed from the vision of the politicians who ultimately

seized power. Although it is unlikely that a thoroughly developed plan for 1986 onwards existed, Gorbachev describes his ultimate intent as "the establishment of a fully operative socialist market" and the removal of CPSU jurisdiction over the state.³⁶ Gorbachev's later criticisms of unmasked liberals who denounced the 27th Party Congress after defending it throughout the 1980s illustrates the significance of the divide between these two tendencies of market reformism. It is true market reformers were eventually divided into their own hostile camps, but the outcome of both factions' plans was clear: the removal of the CPSU's political hegemony, the liberalization of economic planning to the benefit of capitalist elements, and, as a consequence, the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The consistent conflict between Gorbachev's reiteration of the necessity for party unity and the ease with which he divided and conquered his own comrades throughout the Nina Andreeva affair offers a stark example of opportunism in practice. Throughout the affair, denunciations of party members who breached "party unity" had impaired the political activities of reformers who genuinely sought to improve socialism through the established means of democratic centralism. Gorbachev continued to reiterate that "[we] had unity in the past...new unity was born out of the development of a new political course, which we now call—*perestroika*," causing dedication to party unity to overshadow suspicion that Gorbachev's *perestroika* was contributing to the overthrow of the Soviet Union.³⁷

Gorbachev may not have acted with the same malicious intent as the market reformers who supported him prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, but his inability to stop events from spiraling out of control only played into their hands.

Amidst the political chaos of the Nina Andreeva affair and the economic catastrophe that developed as a result of market reforms, Gorbachev continued to defend *perestroika* and its policies as necessary for the maintenance and improvement of Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union. The Andreeva letter's title, "I Cannot Forgo My Principles," even took inspiration from Gorbachev's



public statement at a February plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee, at which he claimed, "We must be guided by our Marxist-Leninist principles. Comrades, we must not forgo these principles under any pretexts."³⁸ And yet, Gorbachev's actions and principles were in obvious contradiction. However, Gorbachev was not likely consciously betraying his Marxist-Leninist principles, instead falling victim to the influences of hardline market reformers like Chernyaev and Yakovlev. These reformers frankly recall how Gorbachev's policies never satisfied them, as "the system would have remained the same" if they had not eventually bypassed him to break up the Soviet Union.³⁹ Unlike his former advisors, Gorbachev still asserts that the market reformers made an error in breaking up the Soviet Union and that "with every passing day, it becomes more and more obvious that what the country needs is a new balance of political forces."⁴⁰ Although Gorbachev may not have intended to precipitate the collapse like his more extreme comrades, his policies undercutting party power and economic planning effectively destroyed the social and economic infrastructure of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev's capitulation to the liberal demand for the weakening of party control over the state and economy demonstrates that the radical market reformers were ultimately interested in overthrowing Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet

Union. The state, under the leadership of the party, had owned nearly all capital and productive property across the multinational country. The party's guidance of economic forces attempted to encourage socialist development while party and state mechanisms provided a degree of political representation at every level of society. But this system of Soviet democracy refused the establishment of private property necessary for the realization of market reform. For this reason, Chernyaev ominously told Gorbachev that "[maybe] an operation to clean out the Politburo could have been undertaken [...] but what then? [...] the system would have remained the same" and property relations would remain socialized.⁴¹ "The party-state monolith was still in place" and would have been strengthened under planning-oriented reform policies, leading market reformers like Chernyaev and Yakovlev to attack it as the only means to dismantle socialism.⁴² These market reformers convinced Gorbachev to dismantle party power over the state on the grounds that all encompassing state power was inherently undemocratic, soon bringing him into the effort of "drawing a line between the functions of the party and the state."⁴³ Because these elections allowed campaigning and private funding, candidates fell under the influence of wealthy black marketeers and liberal politicians who had been snatching up state property since the Brezhnev era. Gorbachev's democracy, therefore, did not work in

favor of working class people; on the contrary, it dismantled the party political structure that once assured capital could not overpower the worker's vote. The overthrow of party power in the Soviet Union disarmed the socialist system and opened it to attacks on its economic framework—planning.

Gorbachev's liberalization of the economy caused near-hyperinflation, chronic shortages of basic necessities, an end to working class participation in economic planning, and reinforced forces that would ultimately overthrow socialism. For Gorbachev, defending a "movement towards market reforms" unconditionally meant "defending *perestroika* and confirming [their] plans" for a reversal of nearly a century of socialist construction.⁴⁴ His vision of a "market socialist" Soviet Union, although purportedly different from the liberal attempts to mass privatise the means of production, served as a halfway house for liberals to take advantage of a weakened state and overturn its socialist property relations.⁴⁵ The movement towards these market reforms meant the disenfranchisement of working people from a formerly democratic economic process and the scattering of organized state resources into the anarchy of private ownership. Surprisingly, it seems as though Gorbachev's move towards market liberalization resulted more from a failure to understand the significance of economic planning on the development of socialism rather than an opportunistic attempt to claim state property. In his memoirs, Gorbachev claims that he saw no contradiction between socialist development and "the establishment of a fully operative socialist market"; on the contrary, he viewed it as the necessary conclusion of his reformation of Marxism-Leninism.⁴⁶ Gorbachev's incorrect projection of the effects market policies would have on socialist development directly contrast the more predatory claims of reformers like Chernyaev and Yakovlev, who, in their memoirs, blatantly admit their early wishes to restore the prevalence of private property. The naivety of Gorbachev, eradication of political opposition, and economically predatory aspirations of market reformers culminated into a perfect formula for a reintroduction of markets and the ultimate destruction of the Soviet Union.

Liberal Ramifications, the Destruction of Socialism, and the Dissolution of the USSR

The political struggle that ensued from the publication of the Andreeva letter conclusively ended opposition to market reformism within the Politburo of the CPSU and marked a turning point in the trajectory of *perestroika* towards economic and political liberalization.



Through the purges in May 1988, market reformers successfully eliminated opposition from nearly all state apparatuses, with just enough time to announce thorough liberalization at the 19th Party Conference. Ligachev, the only planning-oriented reformer given ample time to speak, mourned the death of democratic centralism within the party while criticizing Gorbachev's idealistic and optimistic projections for *perestroika* at the 19th Party Conference. He also stated that the course of *perestroika* had been determined through backdoor Politburo battles and

that "history [could have] taken a different course" if the Marxist principle of open discussion was truly upheld within the party.⁴⁷ *Glasnost* and freedom of discussion were weaponized by the market reformers, leaving purges and suppression within the bounds of legality. Gorbachev recalls having "succeeded in defending *perestroika* and confirming our plans" immediately following the 19th Party Conference, "including the movement towards market reforms" against which no party member dared to oppose.⁴⁸ As a result of the defeat of the political opposition, *perestroika* became an unobstructed process of liberalization beginning in

July
1988.

The hunt for neo-Stalinists among the ranks of the party served as a justification for the attacks on the political opposition, as the campaign continued without exposing a single "neo-Stalinist" in a position of party leadership. Nonetheless, Gorbachev began removing Politburo members and other national leaders who supported the Andreeva letter, replacing them with his own hand-picked underlings until official debate about the course of *perestroika* ceased. Gorbachev recalls that "no significant political force spoke out openly" against the

imposition of market reforms after the 19th Party Conference.⁴⁹ Interestingly enough, no high profile party members were dismissed or reprimanded directly under the pretense of being a neo-Stalinist; their crimes were of breaking party unity or lacking party discipline, only vaguely correlating to the fabricated neo-Stalinist tendency described by the liberal press. Ligachev accurately criticises these occurrences as "a phenomenon of the manipulation of mass consciousness: people do not know the essence of the matter but they have been inculcated with a firm stereotype, with the help of which opponents can be labeled without any explanations, elucidations, or arguments."⁵⁰ In essence, calls for a balanced historical appraisal of the successes and failures of Soviet history created too great a possibility for the public to reject Gorbachev's market-oriented and politically pluralistic reforms. Although history provided the Nina Andreeva the market reformers needed, their victory against Andreeva, Ligachev, and their supporters would have been impossible without their fabrication of the neo-Stalinist boogeyman.

Despite the original claim that the purpose of *perestroika* served to perfect socialism in the 20th century, the progressively right-wing political trend driving *perestroika* aimed to restore capitalism in the Eastern Bloc. The clearest indication of their opportunistic intent surfaced with the official dissolution of the Soviet Union—the near unanimous rejection of the 27th Party Congress as too conservative. Immediately before his resignation as President of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev recalls that, "[T]here were no farewells. None of the leaders of the states of the CIS telephoned me, neither on the day of my departure nor since" and that his former comrades were "thrown into a rage" by his critical farewell speech.⁵¹ The market reformers who once acted in the name of "democratic socialism" and struggled in favor of Gorbachev's policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* had, in an instant, rejected the political principles of class struggle and workers' democracy upon which their homeland was founded. Without a strong planning-oriented faction within the party, the political shift of the market reformers came as a surprise to many who believed

liberal politicians at their word. However, the later writings of many market reformers reveal the inner thoughts which guided them through the late 1980s. Chernyaev's various descriptions of Ligachev as "a slave to the old ways" and someone who "personalizes the gross output, slave-driving, shock work approach" embody the contempt with which Chernyaev viewed Ligachev's defense of the positive aspects of socialist society.⁵² Chernyaev, in several instances, revealed his desire to overthrow the system as a whole, claiming that the planning-oriented reformers "demonstrated a complete bankruptcy in misunderstanding the essence of *perestroika*" as a means to reform socialism. Chernyaev saw a political course in which "the system would have remained the same" as inherently backwards and Stalinist.⁵³ Al-

though market reformers initially defended *perestroika* as an improvement upon socialist construction, their actions following the fall of the Soviet Union revealed their interest in complete system change since before the 27th Party Conference.

The most significant conundrum of *perestroika* emerges from the fact that market reform policies made the Soviet, and eventually Russian, political system far more undemocratic than even during the Brezhnev years. The first western-style parliamentary elections took place in the Spring of 1990 and retained a relatively unchanging political character until electoral modifications of the early 2000s, but for Gorbachev these elections varied in their authenticity. In reflecting upon the liberalized elections of 1990, Gorbachev recalls

that "this time the communists indeed held genuine elections, under the eye of a watchful press"—a press that at this point was completely predisposed against opponents of the party's liberal policies.⁵⁴ These elections brought the formerly-defeated Boris Yeltsin back into politics as Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet and initially as Gorbachev's political ally. Although Gorbachev believed the 1990 election to be genuine, he rejected future elections as one among many factors that have prompted the necessity for "a new balance of political forces and a new policy" after Yeltsin betrayed him and he was rendered powerless as the president of a country that no longer existed.⁵⁵ Gorbachev's conception of a genuine election, therefore, does not provide an accurate measure for authenticity, as it only describes elections in which candidates favorable to his policies are elected. No Russian presidential election from 1990 onwards would be considered genuine and fair, even by western standards, if the parties involved were not concerned with destroying socialism at any cost. The supposedly first genuine election of 1990, as Gorbachev recalls in his memoirs, took place under the supervision of the radically anti-communist press and in a completely homogenous political atmosphere that resulted from the purges leading up to the 19th Party Conference of 1988—an election that essentially amounted to thoroughly liberal appointment. Later elections became more blatantly corrupt starting with the 1993 parliamentary elections in which "extensive ballot rigging probably took place" and a communist rebellion, known as "Black October," projected the voices of those who had been betrayed by the triumph of liberalism back into the political discussion.⁵⁶ The degree to which corruption and election-rigging was widespread in the post-Soviet Russian political system is incomparable with the politics typical of the Soviet period. Western criticisms of the Soviet political system mostly amounted to denunciations of the one party system and internal elections of party functionaries—neither of which are objectively undemocratic practices as they were practiced within the limits of established Soviet legality. Ultimately, *perestroika* encouraged politicians to navigate the political system through illegal methods and justify their ac-

tions as combating the resurgence of communism, spawning an unstable political atmosphere not seen since the October Revolution of 1917.

Similar to the devastating political consequences of removing the party from political authority in the Soviet Union, the restoration of markets in the Eastern Bloc sowed ruinous outcomes for millions of workers and outlandish fortunes for a select few. Economic planning in the 1980s, although it required reform and was plagued by inefficiencies, continued to provide the Soviet people with guaranteed employment, healthcare, education, and housing among other socialist programs and privileges. Not only did the Soviet state continue to provide these invaluable services to the populace amidst increasingly worrisome economic stagnation, but Soviet industry even maintained an impressive 3.2% annual growth rate throughout the early 1980s—a large figure even for the United States at the time.⁵⁷ Soviet citizens actually enjoyed the highest living standards ever experienced in the history of the multinational federation, leading many polls to suggest that satisfaction with the quality of Soviet life was comparable to that of the United States in 1985.⁵⁸ However, the ruinous mass privatization campaigns of the 1990s quickly converted complaints about party corruption and faltering labor productivity into fears regarding losing one's home and the inability to afford food.

Throughout the latter years of *perestroika* (1989-1991), market reforms had already caused significant monetary inflation and actually hampered labor productivity in the state economy by purposely weakening the government's attempts to control private economic interests, measures Gorbachev defended in his final "Address to the Soviet Citizens" as "historically justified" because "society has acquired freedom; it has been freed politically and spiritually."⁵⁹ For the average Russian worker, this "freedom" did not end the rampant inflation which made the previously affordable prices of food and other commodities skyrocket; in fact, it served only to expedite mass privatization under Boris Yeltsin and other liberals who ultimately betrayed Gorbachev for his "far left" approach to market economics. Gorbachev described Yeltsin's disastrous and predatory eco-

nomic policies, often called "shock therapy," as "a 'cavalry attack' on our economy [which] brought enormous hardships for the people of Russia. Power was in the hands of irresponsible, incompetent people, who were both ambitious and ruthless."⁶⁰ While the responsibility for this "cavalry attack" lies with the market reformers, Gorbachev is correct in emphasizing the outlandish consequences these policies wrought for the Russian people. According to the World Bank, Russian's GDP fell by nearly 1 trillion dollars between 1990-1998 with some yearly growth rates falling as low as -14%.⁶¹ With the combined effect of hyperinflation and economic collapse, Russia struggled through the greatest national economic hardship since post-WWII reconstruction—and many soon realized which economic policies were truly responsible for the nation's utter collapse.

The dismantling of the socialist planned economy and the liberalization of the one-party state apparatus wrought a dramatic decrease in standards of human development.

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ment in the Soviet Union primarily stemmed from the immense privileges the workers' state offered its people relative to western liberal democracies. By disenfranchising workers from the political process and inviting the new oligarchical class into the highest organs of government, Russian liberals converted the previously socially-minded workers' state into a vehicle for capitalist megaprofits. According to Stephen F. Cohen, media correspondent for *The Nation*, corruption within the new Russian state was "so extensive that capital flight exceeds all foreign loans and investment"—a result of Soviet productive property ownership passing from common property of its workers to the new class of capitalists who hyper-profited from capital's sale overseas.⁶² Pillaging Russia of productive capital, while producing riches for a few, yielded destructive consequences for the livelihoods of the vast majority of Russian people. By 1992, 75% of Russians lived at or below the poverty line when only three years earlier, even with the disastrous effects of *perestroika* on working class people, Soviet citizens continued to enjoy paid vacations, union wages, guaranteed employment, and socialised education and healthcare.⁶³ Yeltsin's dissolution of the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions, a trade union incorporating all Soviet citizens, and crackdown on post-Soviet unions brought these programs to a close, ending decades of high working class living standards and causing life expectancies to plummet as low as 59.⁶⁴ The destruction of socialism in Eastern Europe failed to produce the democracy, freedom, and end to cor-



ruption that market reformers and Western liberals had promised since the early days of *perestroika*. Privatisation instead dismantled the many positive qualities of the Soviet socialist system and most workers in extreme poverty.

The Nina Andreeva affair, its place in the historical process that ended with the dismantling of the Soviet Union, and the West's interpretation of the events which preceded and followed its collapse, provide a number of lessons regarding the machiavellian nature of politics, how socialist countries should conduct and reform themselves in the 21st century, and how ideological influence can be as formidable of a weapon as the military industrial complex. The ease with which liberalism entered mainstream Soviet media by means of top-down party appointments should remind historians how significant a role control over information plays in modern geopolitics as well as prompt scholars to reanalyse the political repercussions of Gorbachev's *perestroika*. While the fact that liberal party members were able to create radical systemic changes without working through Soviet democratic channels revealed inherent problems with the system of political appointments, their opportunistic usage of these flaws in Soviet democracy and later authoritarian measures against Marxist-Leninists indicate that the political struggle leading to disintegration of the Soviet Union was not between the forces of democracy and autocracy; instead, the disintegration of the Soviet Union was the final struggle between Western capitalist values and Eastern socialist values of the 20th Century. Both sides of the conflict attempted to defend their own concepts of freedom and democracy, rooted in private property ownership against social property ownership, respectively. At its conclusion, private property triumphed in Eastern Europe through political deception and wreaked such havoc in the ex-Soviet countries that most economies have only recently recovered from its effects. But even now, the benefits afforded to the working class during Soviet times are almost entirely absent. In comparing these systems and considering the immense poverty and devastation Eastern Europe has faced through much of its history, the Soviet period undoubtedly marked

the most rapid economic development and highest living standards in the region's history. On the other hand, the triumph of liberalism in the region has brought economic devastation to Eastern Europe's working classes. Even as many in the West continue to superficially and mistakenly view the Soviet Union as a totalitarian state, the 21st century will bring to fruition a generation distanced from the 20th century's anticommunist ideological conditioning as well as new historians who will once more reassess the legacy of the Soviet project.

Endnotes

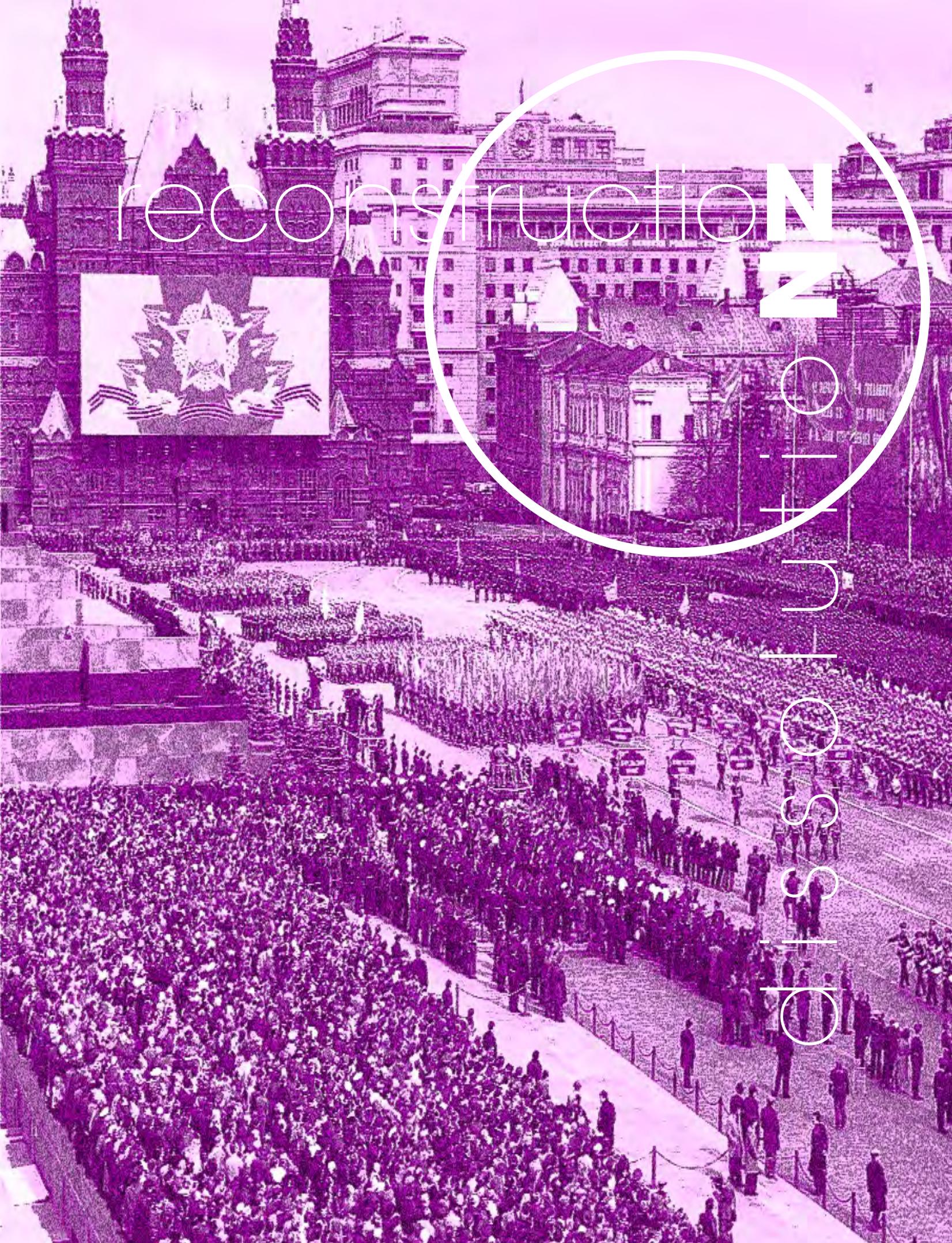
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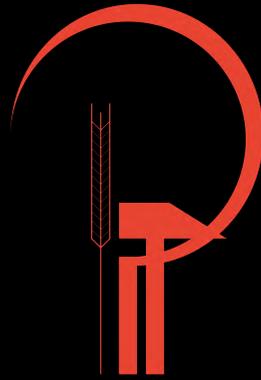


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"We are accustomed to holding a gross and narrow anti-philosophical view on life as a result of random play of only Earth-bound forces. This is, most certainly, wrong. Life as we see now is, to a far greater extent, a cosmic phenomenon, rather than only Earth-based. It was created by the influence of creative dynamics of cosmos onto inert material of Earth. It lives through the dynamics of those forces, and each and every beat of this organic pulsation is aligned with the pulse of the Cosmic Heart—this grandiose totality of nebulae, stars, the Sun, and the planets."

—Alexander Chizhevsky

Les Epidemies et les Perturbations Electro-Magnetiques du Milieu Exterieur

1938