# 1AC

## 1AC---DPS

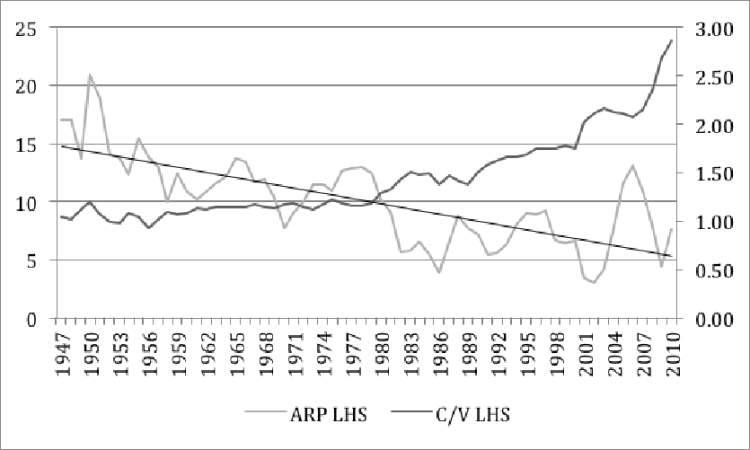
### 1AC---Socialism

#### The advantage is Socialism:

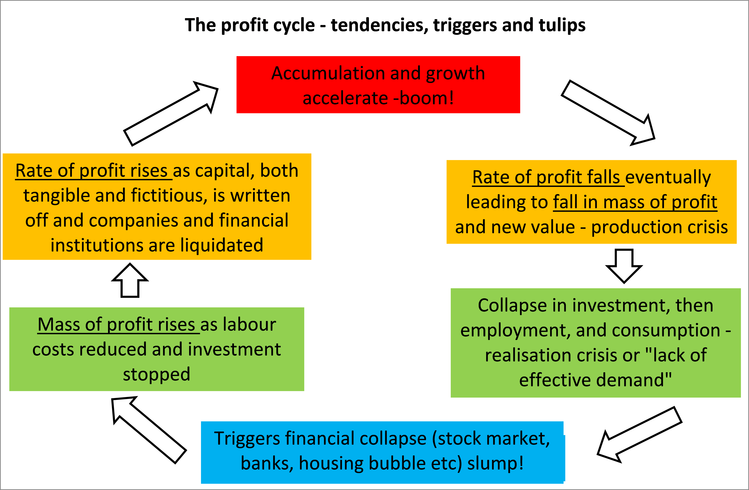
#### Marx’s law of profitability explains cyclical recessions and renders capitalism unsustainable

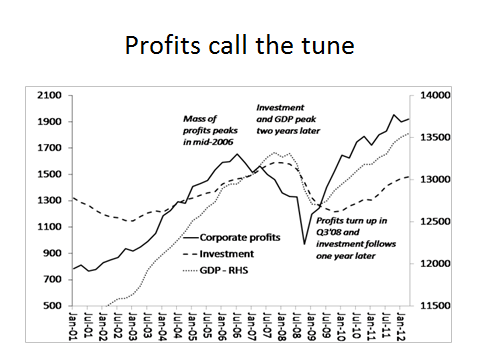
Roberts 15 - London economist (Michael, https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2015/12/29/the-marxist-theory-of-economic-crises-in-capitalism-part-two/, emuse)

Does Marx’s law fit the facts? Some Marxist critics of Marx’s law of profitability reckon that the law cannot be empirically proven or refuted because official statistics cannot be used to show Marx’s law in operation. But there are plenty of studies by Marxist economists that show otherwise. The key tests of the validity of the law in modern capitalist economies would be to show whether 1) the rate of profit falls over time as the organic composition of capital rises; 2) the rate of profit rises when the organic composition falls or when the rate of surplus value rises faster than the organic composition of capital; 3) the rate of profit rises, if there is sharp fall in the organic composition of capital as in a slump. These would be the empirical tests and there is plenty of empirical evidence for the US and world economy to show that the answer is yes to all these questions. For example, [Basu and Manolakos](http://gesd.free.fr/basumano.pdf) applied econometric analysis to the US economy between 1948 and 2007 and found that there was a secular tendency for the rate of profit to fall with a measurable decline of about 0.3 percent a year “after controlling for counter-tendencies.” In [my work on the US rate of profit,](http://gesd.free.fr/mr1213.pdf) I also found an average decline of 0.4 percent a year through 2009. And here is a figure by G Carchedi for the rise in the organic composition of capital (OCC) in the industrial sector of the US since 1947 versus the average rate of profit (ARP). It tells the same story. US ARP and OCC (i.e. C/V) versus the average rate of profit (ARP). It tells the same story. US ARP and OCC (i.e. C/V)

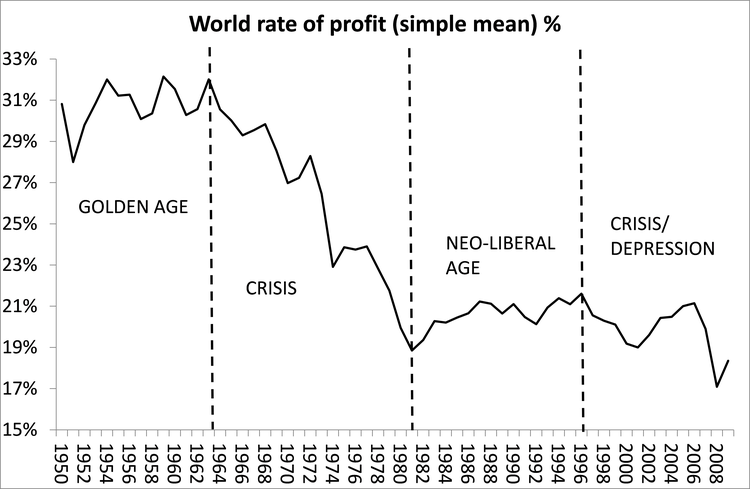
[](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/arp.png)

There is a clear inverse correlation between a rising organic composition of capital and a falling rate of profit. Can Marx’s law explain crises? How does Marx’s law of profitability work as an explanation and forecast of slumps in capitalist economies? The law leads to a clear causal connection to regular and recurrent crises (slumps). It runs from falling profitability to falling profits to falling investment to falling employment and incomes. A bottom is reached when there is sufficient destruction of capital values (the writing off technology, the bankruptcy of companies, a reduction in wage costs) to raise profits and then profitability. Then rising profitability leads to rising investment again. The cycle of boom recommences and the whole ‘crap’ starts again, to use Marx’s colourful phrase. [There is a cycle of profit alongside the long-term tendency for the rate of profit to fall.](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/cycles-in-capitalism.pdf)

[](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/profit-cycle.png) The evidence of this causality between profit and investment is available. Jose Tapia Granados, using regression analysis, finds that, over 251 quarters of US economic activity from 1947, profits started declining long before investment did and that pre-tax profits can explain 44% of all movement in investment, while there is no evidence that investment can explain any movement in profits. I find a higher ‘Granger causality’ of 60% from annual changes in profit and investment (unpublished) and a correlation of 0.67 for the period since 2000. And see this by G Carchedi ([Carchedi Presentation](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/carchedi-presentation.pptx)). In the period leading up to the Great Recession 2008-9, we can see the causality visually for US profits, investment and real GDP in the graphic below. The mass of US corporate profit peaks in mid-2006, investment and GDP follows two years later. Profits turn back up in late 2008 and investment follows one year later.

[](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/profits-lead.png)

There are two basic regularities shown by the data: that a change in profits tends to be followed next year by a change in investment in the same direction; and that a change in investment is usually followed in a few years by changes in profits in the opposite direction. Thus we have a cycle. From these results, the “regularity” of the business cycle, and the fact that profitability stagnated in 2013 and declined in 2014 (and now the mass of profits in 2015) after growing between 2008 and 2012, it can be concluded with some confidence that a recession of the US economy, which will be also part of a world economic crisis like the Great Recession, will occur again in the next few years. And Marx’s law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall makes an even more fundamental prediction: that the capitalist mode of production will not be eternal, that it is transitory in the history of human social organisation. The law of the tendency predicts that, over time, there will be a fall in the rate of profit globally, delivering more crises of a devastating character. Work has been done by modern Marxist analysis that confirms that the world rate of profit has fallen over the last 150 years. See the graph below ([data from Esteban Maito](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/maito-esteban-the-historical-transience-of-capital-the-downward-tren-in-the-rate-of-profit-since-xix-century.pdfhttp:/gesd.free.fr/mrwrate.pdf) and ‘doctored’ by me).

[](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/world-rate-of-profit-maito.png) Maito’s data for the 19th century have recently been questioned ([DUMENIL-LEVY on MAITO](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/dumenil-levy-on-maito.pdf)), but in a recent work using different sources and countries, I find a similar trend for the post-1945 period globally ([Revisiting a world rate of profit June 2015](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/revisiting-a-world-rate-of-profit-june-2015.pdf)). And earlier groundbreaking work by Minqi Li and colleagues, as well as by Dave Zachariah, show a similar trend. As Maito concludes: “The tendency of the rate of profit to fall and its empirical confirmation highlights the historically limited nature of capitalist production. If the rate of profit measures the vitality of the capitalist system, the logical conclusion is that it is getting closer to its endpoint. There are many ways that capital can attempt to overcome crises and regenerate constantly. Periodic crises are specific to the capitalist mode of production and allow, ultimately, a partial recovery of profitability. This is a characteristic aspect of capital and the cyclical nature of the capitalist economy. But the periodic nature of these crises has not stopped the downward trend of the rate of profit over the long term. So the arguments claiming that there is an inexhaustible capacity of capital to restore the rate of profit and its own vitality and which therefore considers the capitalist mode of production as a natural and a-historical phenomenon, are refuted by the empirical evidence.” So the law predicts that, as the organic composition of capital rises globally, the rate of profit will fall despite counteracting factors and despite successive crises (which temporarily help to restore profitability). This shows that capital as a mode of production and social relations is transient. Capitalism has not always been here and it has ultimate limits, namely capital itself. It has a ‘use-by-date’. That is the essence of the law of profitability for Marx. Alternative theories This is not to deny other factors in capitalist crises. The role of credit is an important part of Marxist crisis theory and indeed, as the tendency of the rate of profit to fall engenders countertendencies, one of increasing importance is the expansion of credit and the switching of surplus value into investment in fictitious capital rather than productive capital to raise profitability temporarily, but with eventually disastrous consequences, as The Great Recession shows ([The Great Recession](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/the-great-recession.pdf); [Debt matters](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/debt-matters.pdf)). Alternative theories of crisis like underconsumption, or the lack of effective demand, are taken from theories from the reactionary Thomas Malthus and the radical Sismondi in the early 19th century and then taken up by Keynes in the 1930s and by modern inequality theorists like Stiglitz and [post-Keynesian economists](http://bilbo.economicoutlook.net/blog/?p=15854). But lack of demand and rising inequality cannot explain the regularity of crises or predict the next one. These theories do not have strong empirical backing either ([Does inequality causes crises](https://thenextrecession.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/does-inequality-causes-crises.pdf)). Professor Heinrich, after concluding that Marx did not have a theory of crisis and dropped the law of profitability, [does offer a vague one of his own](https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2015/05/19/the-two-michaels-heinrich-and-roberts-in-berlin-dogmatism-versus-doubt/): namely capital accumulates and produces more means of production blindly. This gets out of line with consumption demand from workers. So a ‘gap’ develops that has to be filled by credit, but somehow this cannot hold up things indefinitely and production then collapses. Well, it is a sort of a theory, but pretty much the same as the underconsumption (overproduction) theory that Heinrich himself dismisses and [Marx dismissed 150 years ago.](http://www.mcg-j.org/swp_arc/english/etheory/economics/eprm29-2.htm) It seems way less convincing or empirically supported that Marx’s own theory of crisis based on the law of profitability. No other theory, whether from mainstream economics or from heterodox economics, can explain recurrent and regular crises and offer a clear objective foundation for the transience of the capitalist system.

#### Mounting dysfunction drives imperialism and inter-capitalist competition---risks nuclear war

Reese 20 - author of Socialism or Extinction and The End of Capitalism: The Thought of Henryk Grossman (Ted, <https://www.amazon.com/Socialism-Extinction-Automation-Capitalist-Breakdown-ebook/dp/B081FHF2ZQ>, emuse)

We have seen that the crisis is intensifying competition between the major imperialist and capitalist powers. The counter-tendencies have failed to prevent the onset of the next crisis. An even greater devaluation of capital and labour power is required. The death and destruction wrought by war is the ultimate source of devaluation and therefore the most important counter-tendency. If war wasn’t an inevitability under capitalism, militarism would be done away with since it is funded through taxation that could otherwise be put towards productive capital. Many Marxists have failed to grasp this. Luxemburg, for example, claimed that “from the purely economic point of view, militarism is a pre-eminent means for the realisation of surplus-value; it is in itself a sphere of accumulation”.[496] Again, her analysis was based on circulation, not production. Grossman counters that “this is how things may appear from the standpoint of individual capital as military supplies have always been the occasion for rapid enrichment. But from the standpoint of the total capital, militarism is a sphere of unproductive consumption. Instead of being saved, values are pulverised. Far from being a sphere of accumulation, militarism slows down accumulation. By means of indirect taxation a major share of the income of the working class which might have gone into the hands of the capitalists as surplus value is seized by the state and spent mainly for unproductive purposes.” On the other hand, though, apart from natural resources, the main resource the capitalists are fighting over in a war is human labour, enough of which is not available at home. What better way to decimate the wages of this new source of surplus value than through warfare? And as well as the destruction of capital value, innovation is accelerated by the arms race, leading to new use-values for the post- war civilian economy and furthering devaluation. Idealists claimed the fall of the Soviet Union would bring about a new era of world peace. The destruction of Yugoslavia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, Syria and Yemen since then shows both that they did not appreciate the nature of imperialism or the protection the Soviet Union afforded to countries threatened by imperialism. Who is next for daring to seek independence? Venezuela? Iran? Russia and China have been encircled by NATO in the biggest build- up of military forces since the Second World War. As the crisis of accumulation deepens, the size and frequency of wars tend to grow. In the wake of 9/11, the author Zoltan Grossman circulated a list, based on Congressional Records and The Library of Congress Congressional Research Service, of 133 US military interventions from 1890 to 2001. The average per year is 1.15 before, and 1.29 after, the Second World War. After the Cold War, from late 1989, the figure rises to 2.0. The Democrat Barack Obama replaced the gung-ho Republican warmonger George W Bush in 2008 promising ‘hope’ and ‘change’. But by the end of his second term in 2016, US special operators could be found in 70% – 138 – of the world’s nations, a huge jump of 130% since Bush left office. In 2016 alone, the Obama administration sanctioned the use of at least 26,171 bombs. “This means that every day last year, the US military blasted combatants or civilians overseas with 72 bombs; that’s three bombs every hour, 24 hours a day,” Medea Benjamin of the anti-war CodePink wrote in The Guardian.[500] In 2017, Trump – who in his April 2016 foreign policy speech said that “war and aggression will not be my first instinct” because he wanted to spend the money instead domestically to ‘make America great again’ – outstripped Obama’s 2016 figure by 9,000. Given that many of these wars are fought in an alliance of the imperialist powers, mainly through NATO, much analysis on the Left makes the mistake of thinking that inter-imperialist rivalry no longer exists. This follows on from Kautsky who, because he did not see war as arising from economic necessity, came up with a theory of “ultra- imperialism” whereby the imperialists would realise that it was not in their interests to continue the First World War and would therefore unite to “peaceably redivide the world". Something like this – to a limited extent – did temporarily emerge, but only after the Second World War, only in collective opposition to the Soviet Union, and during a period in which capitalism was recovering in the wake of the war’s devaluation of capital, meaning competition had temporarily diminished. But the barbaric aggression of the wars on the Middle East is symptomatic of deepening capitalist crisis and intensifying rivalry. Through their opposition to the 2003 war on Iraq, France and Germany showed that they are not subordinate to US interests. In the 1990s, TotalFinaElf, France’s huge oil firm, secured the contract to develop Iraq’s southern Majnoon and Nahr Umar oil fields, containing as much as 25% of the country's reserves. German firms were the market leaders in supplying sensitive dual-use technology to Iraq in the years before the 1991 Persian Gulf war, and they had been bidding for more civilian commercial contracts. Khidir Hamza, an Iraqi defector, called Germany “the hub of Iraq's military purchases in the 1980s”. France and Germany did not want new competition. Between the start of 2002 to March 2003 the dollar fell by 20% against the euro. The US had to respond to this: its international economic domination is bound up with the dollar’s strength as the world’s currency anchor. The dollar’s dominance as the main currency for foreign exchange enables it to blackmail countries that do not yield to its demands. Ultimately, the strength of a currency reflects the productivity and size of the economy behind it. Trump’s administration has claimed that Germany is using its currency to “exploit” both its neighbours and the US, sparking fears of a currency war. The US made the desperate accusation that Germany is “under-consuming” goods and services from other countries. At the 2010 G20 summit in Seoul, the US made an unsuccessful attempt to limit the size of current account surpluses to 4% of GDP. Germany’s surplus overtook China’s in absolute size in 2017 and as a share of GDP became much larger. The IMF put Germany’s 2017 surplus as 8.1% of GDP and China’s at 1.6%. The EU’s surplus as a whole in 2017 was $387.1bn. In contrast, the US current account deficit was $462bn in 2017, bigger only than Britain’s $91.4bn. The deficit was 2.5% of GDP in the first quarter, up from 2.4% in the fourth quarter. Bush warned that the US would “neither forgive nor forget” if France continued to oppose the war on Iraq. US Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld accused Austria of blocking US troop movements from Germany to Italy and said the US was considering bringing home 100,000 troops stationed in Europe (70,000 in Germany) or relocating them to Eastern Europe. He threatened sanctions for “one reason only: to harm the German economy”. At the time, the US controlled 31.5% of world output to the EU’s 26%. However in 2004 ten additional countries were scheduled to join the 15 EU member states, a combination that would match the size of the US’s economy and exceed its population. FRFI – one of the few left-wing publications in Britain to anticipate the potential for conflict between the US and EU – reported in 2003 that total EU FDI already amounted to 52.5% of the world total, nearly 2.5 times that of the US. Over the period 1980-2001, the US share of the global total has halved. The massive rise in the US’s military spending has been necessitated by the need to reverse the decline of its economic dominance – to reiterate, if it doesn’t reverse this it won’t be able to valorise its capital. The Department of Defense’s base budget grew by 31% between 2000 and 2014. An $82bn hike to $716bn in 2018 represented an increase that by itself was larger than the entire defence budget of every country on earth, save China. Trump called the Defense Department’s annual budget “crazy” and proposed a 5% cut, but then committed to a $750bn budget for 2019. Who is really in charge? US military spending is at least 10 times the size of Russia’s, and four times the size of China’s. This is the same Department of Defense with a serious existing accounting problem. In 2016, before Trump was elected, the department’s Inspector General said he could not properly track $6.5 trillion in defence spending. An academic study looking at the years 1998-2015 later put the figure at $21 trillion. Clearly this is unsustainable. As Engels says, “the triumph of force is based on the production of arms, and this in turn on production in general”. US manufacturing output in the 1960s, at the time of the Vietnam War, constituted 27% of the economy and provided 24% of employment. In 2003 manufacturing amounted to 13.8% of its GDP, falling to 12.5% in 2015, and 10.5% of employment, falling to 8.8% in 2013. The US industrial base is shrinking and with it the manufacturing and engineering capacity to achieve military domination of the world. In November 2004 Le Monde Diplomatique reported that, “Some new (EU) states are large arms producers and exporters. The EU is now home to more than 400 companies in 23 countries manufacturing small arms and light weapons – hardly less than the US.” China’s manufacturing sector is now almost as large as those of the US, Japan and Germany combined. When the US invaded Iraq in 2003 its military expenditure was almost $400bn; Iraq’s was $1.4bn, 0.35% of the US’s. In violation of the Iraqi constitution and international law the US-UK Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) “laid off hundreds of thousands of Iraqi workers, virtually eliminated trade tariffs and enacted laws that radically alter Iraq’s economy. Order 39, decreed by CPA head Paul Bremer on September 20 2003, abolished Iraq's ban on foreign investment, allowing foreigners to own up to 100% of all sectors except natural resources. Over 200 state-owned enterprises, including electricity, telecommunications and pharmaceuticals have been privatised. Iraq's highest tax rate has been lowered from 45% to a flat rate of 15%. Although foreign ownership of land remains illegal, companies or individuals will be allowed to lease properties for up to 40 years.” The extraction of Iraq’s oil was also illegal. In 2011 government documents leaked to The Independent revealed that in November 2002, five months before the invasion, the UK Foreign Office invited BP to talks about opportunities in Iraq “post regime change”. Labour’s Baroness Symons, the then Trade Minister, promised BP that she would lobby the Bush administration because the oil giant feared it was being “locked out” of deals that Washington was quietly negotiating with the French and Russian governments and their energy firms. Control over territory, oil and oil transhipment routes is of paramount importance. With around 60% of the world’s oil reserves, the Middle East has been the key battleground. But this rivalry is playing out all over the world, in South America, Asia, Africa and, since the fall of the USSR, central and eastern Europe, which was identified by the UNCTAD World Investment Report 2002 as “a stable and promising region for FDI”. China, whose contribution to global GDP was expected to eclipse that of the US in 2018, is a particular concern to the traditional powers because its strategy of offering low- or even interest-free loans in exchange for fixed-price sales of primary commodities makes it a more attractive business partner to underdeveloped countries who have been bled dry by high interest loans from the IMF. The US only has intimidation and force left to offer in response. In 2008, for example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) reached a deal with China for roads, railways, clinics, hospitals, schools and two new universities worth $6bn. In exchange, China was given the right to extract 12 million tonnes of copper and cobalt over 25 years. In 2004, when Angola was reluctant to accept the terms of an IMF loan, China stepped in with a no-strings-attached $2bn. An Angolan minister said relations with China “not only allowed us to obtain large loans, but most importantly it forced the West to treat us with more respect”. China has overtaken Britain, France and the US as a trading partner with Africa. In 2017, China’s trade with Africa was worth $170bn, four-times larger than US-Africa trade. China invested $125bn in Africa in the decade to 2016 and committed to $60bn more over the next three years. In 2017 China’s trade with Latin America reached $244bn, again exceeding that of the US. China’s dominance in manufacturing has forced Latin American countries to deindustrialise somewhat and focus on producing primary commodities; but China’s investments have also had the effect of strengthening their currencies relative to the dollar. In July 2016, the RAND Corporation think tank warned that, whereas the US would have been capable of achieving a quick and decisive victory with minimal losses in a war with China in 2015, China’s improving anti-access and area-denial (A2AD) capabilities meant that a war in 2025 would instead be “prolonged and destructive, yet inconclusive”. The earlier part of that prediction seemed optimistic, given that the US became bogged down in the face of resistance in Iraq and Afghanistan for years when it expected quick, decisive victories in both, against forces inferior to China’s. Indeed, in March 2019 a RAND analyst said that its war game simulations showed that “when we fight Russia and China, blue gets its ass handed to it”. He said it would cost an extra $24bn a year to turn things around. Chinese and Russian opposition to US deployments of anti-missile systems in Asia has resulted in their greater military cooperation. However, Russia is using its position in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to try and contain Chinese economic expansion in Central Asia, where it has regional ambitions of its own. As Trevor Rayne wrote in FRFI: “The US turns to alliances with Japan, India, the Philippines and Australia to confront China, but China offers them investments and better trade deals. If it has to the US ruling class will resort to military force to prevent China ejecting it from its dominant position in the world. Competition between the imperialist powers may be limited to geopolitical manoeuvring, ideological and cyber warfare and negotiation table diplomacy for now, but that cannot last forever. At some point the capitalist crisis will become so deep that the imperialist powers will be forced into direct confrontation with each other. The overaccumulation of capital will have become so great that the only way to sufficiently devalue capital and labour power will be through global conflagration. This tendency expresses itself in increasing competition between the imperialist powers as they vie to attain dominance – that is, to apportion losses to one another, to seize each other’s capital and resources by any means. This is what happened in the 20th century. Two world wars, the Great Depression and fascism were the counter-tendencies and crisis measures required over a span of 41 years to keep the accumulation process going and eventually revive it to a healthy enough level to restore political stability. Kautsky – because he believed accumulation was harmonious – claimed that absolute capitalist breakdown would be brought about inevitably by world war, which in his view would happen only because of uncivilised ruling classes.[513] On the other side of the same coin, Bukharin and Varga believed the Second World War would bring about the completion of the world revolution. This perhaps partly explains some of the controversial decisions taken by the Communist International after 1929, when it effectively ordered its national sections in Europe to take social democratic routes to socialism.[514] Grossman says: “It would be useless to search Bukharin for any other cause of the breakdown of capitalism than the ravages created by war.... If like Bukharin, we expect the breakdown of capitalism to flow from a second round of imperialist wars, then it is necessary to point out that wars are not peculiar to the imperialist stage of capitalism. They stem from the essence of capitalism as such, during all its stages, and have been a constant symptom of capital since its historical inception.... far from being a threat to capitalism, wars are a means of prolonging the existence of the capitalist system as a whole.” Grossman was at pains to show that Kautsky’s was a subjective analysis and that the opposite was true: that massive overaccumulation brought about a systemic breakdown and world war followed necessarily because it was the only way to sufficiently devalue capital, to “ward off imminent collapse” and “create a breathing space” for accumulation to restart. Grossman cites the figure from Wladimir Woytinsky’s 1925 book The World In Numbers that “around 35% of the wealth of mankind was destroyed and squandered in the four years” of the First World War, which had been preceded by a worldwide Long Depression – like the one we’re experiencing now – a series of economic ‘panics’ in the US, and intensifying inter-imperialist rivalries over trade routes and colonial territories. By the end of the war, says Grossman, the mass of living labour “confronted a reduced capital, and this created new scope for accumulation”. And yet it wasn’t enough – the 1929 Wall Street Crash followed, “a continuation of the unresolved economic crisis preceding World War One”, as Mattick says.[519] The New Deal attempted to resolve the crisis in the US and fascism attempted to resolve it in Germany (the equivalent of a New Deal in Germany through the SPD’s reforms having already failed before 1929). Neither worked. It would take an even more destructive global war to end the depression. This after Kautsky had claimed in 1927 that capitalism stood, “from a purely economic point of view, stronger than ever”.[520] The First World War – “legalised slaughter” in the apt words of Harry Patch, the last surviving combat soldier of that war from any country – killed 37 million people. The Second World War killed between 70 million and 85 million, 3% of the 1940 world population of an estimated 2.3 billion. The equivalent today from a world population of 7.53 billion would be 226 million. But given that today’s total accumulation and overaccumulation are considerably greater than before World War Two, it follows that it would take a considerably greater level of destruction to – again, temporarily – resolve the crisis. Given that and the fact that every major war following economic breakdown is decided only by total war (the US Civil War, the Peninsular War and the Crimean War being other prime examples), it could be argued that the amount of destruction required is so high now that today’s deepening crisis may at some point necessitate nothing short of a nuclear exchange between the imperialist powers. The Second World War ended with the US dropping the A-bomb on Japan, after all. If World War Three was not sufficiently destructive, then a bigger crisis would follow necessitating World War Four, just as World War Two followed World War One. And of course a Fourth World War would be necessitated at some point anyway. This is all assuming that the crisis that preceded a World War Three wasn’t the final breakdown, the absolute historical limit of capital accumulation. If it were then no amount of destruction could save capitalism. As we said earlier, this is surely now the case – there can be no 1945 productivity boom that breathes another century of life into the system, for automation has already all but abolished the law of value. The current arms race is in fact already accelerating the development of automation and therefore the rate of profit’s historical fall towards zero. We therefore assert that – aside from the fact that a world war today would end life on Earth and destroy the climate for good – even a world war cannot save capitalism this time. Rather than trying to destroy itself in order to renew itself this time, capitalism is now preparing to either destroy or wind itself up for good. Trade wars will continue to intensify. Protectionism becomes an increasingly inevitable reflex as nations attempt to defend domestic and overseas assets; combined with stagnant productivity, this tends to manifest politically in a parochial, ‘anti-globalisation’ nationalism, ie right-wing populism or proto-fascism, as capitalists which rely more on the domestic market – determining their conservatism – finally gain the upper-hand over the more liberal exporting sectors, only to deepen the overall economic crisis by making trade increasingly expensive and centralising capital into yet fewer hands. As Michael Pettis wrote in the FT in 2009, the fact that “nearly everyone agrees that a world that retreats into direct and indirect forms of trade protection is a world that is worse off... should not allay our worries. In the 1930s, it was also well understood that the crisis would be exacerbated by plunging international trade. This did not stop a descent into the protectionism which put the ‘Great’ into the Great Depression.” In February 2019, a senior European Commission economist warned that a Third World War is an increasingly “high probability” due to the “disintegration of global capitalism”.[523] Professor Hanappi, Jean Monnet Chair for Political Economy of European Integration , noted that the emerging trade wars, massive growth of military spending and return of ‘populism’ bear unnerving similarities with trends that beset the world before the outbreak of the first two world wars. Marx wrote that as soon as capital feels itself threatened it will “seek refuge in other forms”, which appear to perfect its rule as capital “through curbs on free competition”; although the curbs on competition “appear to complete the mastery of capital, they are at the same time, by curbing free competition, the heralds of its dissolution, and of the dissolution of the mode of production based on it”.[524] This applies to both the monopolistic stage of capitalism and the inevitability of protectionism. As mentioned, in 2015-16, the G20 economies introduced a record number of trade-restrictive measures. Globalisation was in retreat before Brexit and Trump, because its ability to expand capital is increasingly exhausted. Just as protectionism and trade wars were precursors of the first two world wars, Brexit and Trump’s trade wars threaten to be precursors of a Third World War. Just as the first two world wars were fought between the biggest imperialist rivals, so would a third. That would mean a conflict between the US and its strongest competitor, the German-led EU. On 6 November 2018 France President Emmanuel Macron called for the creation of a “true European army” so that the EU could defend itself from “China, Russia and even the United States of America”, adding: “When I see President Trump announcing that he’s quitting a major disarmament treaty[525] which was formed after the 1980s Euro-missile crisis that hit Europe, who is the main victim? Europe and its security.” Germany already provides the most troops for the UN’s so-called peacekeeping missions. Building on the Permanent Structured Cooperation on security and defense (PESCO) agreement – which allows co-operation on joint military projects for 25 EU member states, established through the Lisbon Treaty in December 2017 – the European Commission provisionally agreed the founding of a €13bn European Defence Fund (EDF) in February. This is to allow joint R&D projects for European companies. Though no formal agreement is to come into effect until November 2019, it is already known that the fund will exclude both post-Brexit Britain and the US. In response the US complained that the moves undermine the NATO alliance and threatened sanctions on EU firms if either project goes ahead. The EU told the the US not to concern itself with Europe's defence plans. In December 2019 Macron said NATO was already “brain dead”, because “you have no co-ordination of decision-making whatsoever between the US and its NATO allies”. In reality, Europe is still reliant upon the US in military matters, a point made clear by, for example, the dominance of US firms in international contracts or the US’s role in NATO. Accordingly, the EU is, to some degree, split upon the US’s INF withdrawal, with key US allies Britain and Poland offering their unwavering support for the move. While disagreement in Europe over the Treaty itself is small, this reflects broader splits within the EU imperialist bloc, more evident in regard to trade and inter-European political discussions. More significantly in military terms, the US’s dominance over Europe’s military capacity means that Europe requires both time and new alliances if it is to stand on its own feet. Europe is now waking up to this. In July, Macron announced that France would build “a large space command within the Air Force, which will eventually become the Air and Space Force... to better protect our satellites, including in an active way”. Analysts called the move a switch from a defensive to an offensive posture. Macron's proposal follows similar moves by the US, China and Russia in recent years. In 2018, Trump ordered the formation of a sixth branch of the US’s armed forces – a "space force”. Europe's imperialists may have once hoped that the end of Trump's Presidency could see a reconciliation with the US bourgeoisie on more advantageous terms, but such hopes seem to be nothing but a fantasy. On 13 November 2018, a bipartisan panel for the US Congress issued a report stating its approval of the Trump administration's pursuit of “great power competition”. In March 2019, Nicole Gibson, Deputy Director of the US State Department’s office for Europe, warned that European companies would “risk significant sanctions” if they resume laying pipe for the Nord Stream 2 (NS2) natural gas pipeline running from Russia to Germany. Construction work was suspended in the December because of winter weather. The deal has infuriated the US because it undermines the potential for its energy giants to export surplus shale gas to Europe as liquified natural gas (LNG). Furthermore, US clients in central Europe are also set to lose out. Snaking under the Baltic Sea, NS2 replaces an older pipeline, stripping Ukraine of gas transit fees worth $2.5bn a year, 4% of its GDP. Ukraine president Petro Poroshenko[526] fears NS2 would allow Russia to switch off gas to Ukraine and Central Europe to blackmail its nearer neighbours without disrupting supplies to Western Europe, enabling the Kremlin to exert greater political influence. Russia supplies more than one-third of the natural gas Europe uses, a figure that is expected to reach nearly 50% in the next decade. German businesses say NS2 will slash their energy costs. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said that “geostrategically, Europe cannot have an interest in cutting off all relations with Russia”. In 2017 she said that “the times in which we could completely depend on [the US and Britain] are, to a certain extent, over. We Europeans truly have to take our fate into our own hands.” With the relative decline of the US and Britain’s pending departure from the EU, Germany either sees an opportunity to become dominant or the need to find more reliable allies. It may see an alliance with Russia as an extension of European imperialism, and as a replacement for Britain, which itself has reportedly sought to spread misinformation in Europe in an attempt to weaken relations between Germany and Russia.[527] Turkey too, a long time client state of the US, appears to be forming a new alliance with Russia and Germany. In June 2019, the EU and Russia started talks on transitioning to using the rouble and euro in bilateral payments instead of the US dollar. China and Turkey are also investing heavily in the euro. The US is gradually being isolated and the grip on the world economy that the dollar as the world currency anchor gives the US is slipping. In the same week, it emerged that the US had been stepping up its ability to wage a cyberwar on Russia’s power grid, something it had deployed against Venezuela several times, depriving hospitals, factories and residential areas of electricity, earlier in the year. These cyber attacks are acts of war by the US’s own definition. A similar situation is developing with regards to Iran.[528] When Trump pulled the US out of the 2013 Iran nuclear deal, in which Iran agreed to roll back parts of its nuclear programme in exchange for relief from sanctions, Germany, France and even, to the chagrin of the US, Britain – all desperate for outlets for profitable investment – denounced the move and vowed to find ways to circumvent the US ban on trading with Iran, which applies to third parties. In July Russia expressed interest in the EU’s proposed Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) mechanism, backing Iran’s demand that it would have to include the oil trade. Significantly, this would see the EU violating US sanctions on two fronts. Trump claims he is trying to stop a nuclear arms race in the Middle East but he is really motivated by competition. In March 2019, Miguel Berger, the Director-General for Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development at Germany’s Federal Foreign Office, complained that, while everyone else was banned from trading with Iran, US trade with Iran in 2018 had in fact doubled. The US says it wants a new deal that curbs Iran’s ballistic missile programme and ends Iran’s supposed influence in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, the latter in which it is accused of backing the anti-imperialist Houthi movement. But it also wants to control Iran’s oil. The US’s increasingly belligerent client-states Israel and Saudi Arabia see Iran as a threat to their regional dominance and welcomed Trump’s move. [529] In May 2019 Trump warned Iran of “severe consequences” as the US, joined by Britain, began to build up naval and air power in the Persian Gulf. Fears of military conflict grew after Trump blamed Iran for Houthi attacks on tankers in the Gulf of Oman. While Britain – which, in a blatant act of piracy at the request of the US, later seized an Iranian oil tanker bound for Syria – sided with the US, the EU demanded an independent inquiry. Japan, which had a tanker involved in the controversy, also questioned the veracity of the US’s account. The same week, Iran shot down a US drone. Trump claimed that he called off a retaliatory airstrike at the last minute, instead imposing further suffocating sanctions and launching a cyberattack on Iran’s defence infrastructure. Sanctions have resulted in inflation in Iran of 40% and the IMF predicted a 6% contraction in its economy. Iran said it would have to develop its uranium enrichment levels if Europe did not do more shield Iran from sanctions.[530] Iran could be the spark that ignites conflict between the US and Europe.[531] Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia’s US-UK-backed war on Yemen has resulted, after four years, in what the UN called the world’s worst humanitarian crisis; and rising tensions between India and Pakistan at the beginning of 2019 threaten to spill over into a full-scale war, with the US generally backing the former and China the latter. Pakistan has taken out billions of dollars in loans from China in recent years as part of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), an ambitious trade and infrastructure network connecting China to Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia and other regions. China has pledged to provide economic assistance to Pakistan, which has been bailed out by high- interest IMF loans some 14 times since 1980. The task of communists As we have said, Leninists have long predicted that these deepening splits would emerge. They have been proven correct, and the defeatist pseudo-Marxist theories of ‘ultra-imperialism’ – that the imperialist powers in fact form an unshakeable alliance – have been proven wrong. Existing divisions in NATO have been widening since the election of Trump, who has been unsurprisingly delighted by Brexit and its destabilising effect on the EU. Denouncing the EU’s “treatment” of Britain in the negotiations, Trump said at the start of April 2019 that “the EU is likewise a brutal trading partner with the US, which will change”. On 9 April he said the US planned to impose tariffs of $11bn (£8.4bn) on EU goods, partly because “EU subsidies to Airbus have adversely impacted the US”.[532] He must have known what was coming: on 10 April the EU and China announced a very significant trade deal in which they vowed, in a thinly veiled rebuke to the US, “to fight against unilateralism and protectionism”. China and Germany are now engaged in concrete military co-operation, with China deploying armoured vehicles on German soil for joint drills on 11 July, something that has been unthinkable until now.[533] At the same time, the potential for realignment with the US is also contained within the German approach. For example, the nation is considering sending a warship through the Taiwan Strait, escalating tensions with China and easing them with the US. As Trump is so fond of saying, “all options are on the table”. France has vowed to retaliate tit-for-tat against US sanctions. In Tony Kennedy’s foreword to the abridged 1992 English reprint of Grossman’s book, he says: “For Grossman, re-presenting Marx’s theory was no mere academic exercise. Nor was he concerned merely with describing tendencies towards periodic economic crises, of a more or less restricted character, nor even with trends towards more systematic and global recessions. He aimed to show that the essence of Marx’s analysis of capitalist society was the identification of the inexorable tendency towards breakdown as the fundamental characteristic of the social system as a whole.... Grossman contended that the socialist movement’s commitment to the overthrow of capitalism required theoretical proof of the system’s tendency towards breakdown.” This is now the task facing communists today. The first appeal that the Communist International made in 1920 to the international working class was to “Remember the imperialist war!”, warning that the repetition of such destructive wars, when the workers of different countries are coerced by the ruling classes to “cut each other’s throats” is not only possible but inevitable if capitalism is not overthrown.[536] The First World War confirmed what was written in the statutes of the First International, that the emancipation of the working class is not a local, nor a national, but an international question. And given that national bourgeoisies are inevitably pitted against each other in a world war, it follows that the only class that is capable of solidarity internationally is the working class. Nation-states will either respond to the looming crash as it deepens by cutting military expenditure drastically or waging war in a bid to offset economic losses – or perhaps by doing both. We are being haunted by the failure to turn the breakdowns that precipitated the first two world wars into the world revolution that Lenin expected to follow on the heels of the one he led in Russia. Only world socialism can ensure humanity’s survival.

#### **Capitalist accumulation makes inequality and fascism a structural condition---rise of alt-right fascist nationalism makes warfare inevitable**

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In the broader picture, fascism, whether in its 20th- or 21st-century variant, is a particular, far right response to capitalist crisis, such as that of the 1930s and the one that began with the financial meltdown of 2008 and has now been greatly intensified by the pandemic. Trumpism in the United States; Brexit in the United Kingdom; the increasing influence of neo-fascist and authoritarian parties and movements throughout Europe (including Poland, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Belgium and Greece), and around the world (such as in Israel, Turkey, the Philippines, Brazil and India), represent just such a far-right response to the crisis. Trumpism and Fascism The telltale signs of the fascist threat in the United States are in plain sight. Fascist movements expanded rapidly since the turn of the century in civil society and in the political system through the right wing of the Republican Party. Trump proved to be a charismatic figure able to galvanize and embolden disparate neo-fascist forces, from white supremacists, white nationalists, militia, neo-Nazis and Klansmen, to the Oath Keepers, the Patriot Movement, Christian fundamentalists, and anti-immigrant vigilante groups. Since 2016, numerous other groups have emerged, from the Proud Boys and QAnon to the Boogaloo movement (whose explicit goal is to spark a civil war) and the terrorist Michigan group known as Wolverine Watchmen. They are heavily armed and mobilizing for confrontation in near-perfect consort with the extreme right wing of the Republican Party, which long since has captured that party and turned it into one of utter reaction. Encouraged by Trump’s imperial bravado, his populist and nationalist rhetoric, and his openly racist discourse, predicated in part on whipping up anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and anti-Black sentiment, they began to cross-pollinate to a degree not seen in decades as they gained a toehold in the Trump White House and in state and local governments around the country. Paramilitarism spread within many of these organizations and overlapped with state repressive agencies. Racist, far right and fascist militia, identified by the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security as the most lethal domestic terrorist threat, [operate inside law enforcement agencies](https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/hidden-plain-sight-racism-white-supremacy-and-far-right-militancy-law). As far back as 2006, a [government intelligence assessment](http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/402521/doc-26-white-supremacist-infiltration.pdf) had warned of “white supremacist infiltration of law enforcement by organized groups and by self-initiated infiltration by law enforcement personnel sympathetic to white supremacist causes.” The fascist insurgency reached a feverish pitch in the wake of the mass protests sparked by the police-perpetrated murder of George Floyd in May. Among recent incidents too numerous to list, fascist militia members have routinely showed up heavily armed at anti-racist rallies to threaten protesters, and in several instances, have carried out assassinations. Trump has refused to condemn the armed right-wing insurgency. To the contrary, he [defended a self-described vigilante and “Blue Lives Matter” enthusiast](https://www.npr.org/sections/live-updates-protests-for-racial-justice/2020/08/31/908137377/trump-defends-kenosha-shooting-suspect) who shot to death two unarmed protesters in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on August 25. On September 3, federal marshals carried out an extra-judicial execution of [Michael Reinoehl](https://truthout.org/articles/trump-appears-to-admit-extrajudicial-killing-of-michael-reinoehl-was-planned/), who admitted to shooting a few days earlier a member of the white supremacist group Patriot Prayer during a confrontation between Trump supporters and counterprotesters in Portland, Oregon. “There has to be [retribution](https://www.vox.com/2020/9/14/21436216/trump-michael-reinoehl-protests-portland-shooting),” declared Trump in a chilling interview in which he seemed to take credit for what amounted to a death squad execution. Particularly ominous was the plot by a domestic terrorist militia group, broken up on October 8, to storm the Michigan state capitol to kidnap and possibly kill the Democratic governor of Michigan and other officials, a conspiracy that the White House refused to condemn. While there are great differences between [20th- and 21st-century fascism](http://robinson.faculty.soc.ucsb.edu/Assets/pdf/FascismbeyondTrump.pdf) and any parallels should not be exaggerated, we would do well to recall the 1923 [“beer hall putsch”](https://www.britannica.com/event/Beer-Hall-Putsch/The-Munich-Putsch) in Bavaria, Germany, which marked a turning point in the Nazis’ rise to power. In that incident, Hitler and a heavily armed group of his followers hatched a plot to kidnap leaders of the Bavarian government. Loyal government officials put down the putsch and jailed Hitler but the fascist insurgency expanded in its aftermath. The fascist putsch now hinges on the November election. The rule of law is breaking down. Trump has claimed, without any credible evidence, that the vote will be fraudulent, has refused to commit to a peaceful transfer of power should he lose, and has all but called on his supporters to be prepared for an insurrection. Himself a [transnational capitalist](http://robinson.faculty.soc.ucsb.edu/Assets/pdf/TheTransnationalCapitalistClass.pdf), a racist and a fascist, Trump took advantage of the protests over the murder of George Floyd to bring the project to a new level, inciting from the White House itself the fascist mobilization in U.S. civil society, manipulating fear and a racist backlash with his “law and order” discourse, and threatening a qualitative escalation of the police state. Widespread and systematic voter suppression, especially of those from marginalized communities, has already [disenfranchised](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/aug/07/americans-voting-rights-disenfranchisement) millions. Donald Trump Jr. [called in September for](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-election/donald-trump-jr-video-2020-election-ballot-fraud-b605186.html) “every able-bodied man and woman to join an army for Trump’s election security operation.” Morphology of the Fascist Project The current crisis of global capitalism is both structural and political. Politically, capitalist states face spiraling crises of legitimacy after decades of hardship and social decay wrought by neoliberalism, aggravated now by these states’ inability to manage the health emergency and the economic collapse. The level of global social polarization and [inequality is unprecedented](https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/file_attachments/ib-wealth-having-all-wanting-more-190115-en.pdf). The richest 1 percent of humanity control more than half of the world’s wealth while the bottom 80 percent had to make do with just 5 percent of this wealth. Such extreme inequalities can only be sustained by extreme levels of state and private violence that lend themselves to fascist political projects. Structurally, the global economy is mired in a crisis of overaccumulation, or chronic stagnation, made much worse by the pandemic. As inequalities escalate, the system churns out more and more wealth that the mass of working people cannot actually consume. As a result, the global market cannot absorb the output of the global economy. The transnational capitalist class cannot find outlets to “unload” the trillions of dollars it has accumulated. In recent years, it has turned to mind-boggling levels of financial speculation, to the raiding and sacking of public budgets, and to militarized accumulation or accumulation by repression. This refers to how accumulation of capital comes increasingly to rely on transnational systems of social control, repression and warfare, as [the global police state](https://www.plutobooks.com/9780745341644/the-global-police-state/) expands to defend the global war economy from rebellions from below. Fascism seeks to rescue capitalism from this organic crisis; that is, to violently restore capital accumulation, establish new forms of state legitimacy and suppress threats from below unencumbered by democratic constraints. The project involves a fusion of repressive and reactionary state power with a fascist mobilization in civil society. Twenty-first-century fascism, like its 20th-century predecessor, is a violently toxic mix of reactionary nationalism and racism. Its discursive and ideological repertoire involves extreme nationalism and the promise of national regeneration, xenophobia, doctrines of race/culture supremacy alongside a violent racist mobilization, martial masculinity, militarization of civic and political life, and the normalization — even glorification — of war, social violence and domination. As with its 20th-century predecessor, the 21st-century fascist project hinges on the psychosocial mechanism of dispersing mass fear and anxiety at a time of acute capitalist crisis toward scapegoated communities, whether Jews in Nazi Germany, immigrants in the United States, or Muslims and lower castes in India, and also on to an external enemy, such as communism during the Cold War, or China and Russia currently. It seeks to organize a mass social base with the promise to restore stability and security to those destabilized by capitalist crises. Fascist organizers appeal to the same social base of those millions who have been devastated by neoliberal austerity, impoverishment, precarious employment and relegation to the ranks of surplus labor, all greatly aggravated by the pandemic. As popular discontent has spread, far right and neo-fascist mobilization play a critical role in the effort by dominant groups to channel this discontent away from a critique of global capitalism and toward support for the transnational capitalist class agenda dressed in populist rhetoric. The fascist appeal is directed in particular to historically privileged sectors of the global working class, such as white workers in the Global North and urban middle layers in the Global South, that are experiencing heightened insecurity and the specter of downward mobility and socioeconomic destabilization. The flip side of targeting certain disaffected sectors is the violent control and suppression of other sectors — which, in the United States, come disproportionately from the ranks of surplus labor, communities that face racial and ethnic oppression, or religious and other forms of persecution. The mechanisms of coercive exclusion include mass incarceration and the spread of prison-industrial complexes; anti-immigrant legislation and deportation regimes; the manipulation of space in new ways so that both gated communities and ghettos are controlled by armies of private security guards and technologically advanced surveillance systems; ubiquitous, often paramilitarized policing; “non-lethal” crowd control methods; and mobilization of the culture industries and state ideological apparatuses to dehumanize victims of global capitalism as dangerous, depraved and culturally degenerate. Racism and Competing Interpretations of the Crisis We cannot under-emphasize the role of racism for the fascist mobilization in the United States. But we need to deepen our analysis of it. The U.S. political system and the dominant groups face a crisis of hegemony and legitimacy. This has involved the breakdown of the white racist historic bloc that to one extent or another reigned supreme from the end of post-Civil War reconstruction to the late 20th century but has become destabilized through capitalist globalization. The far right and neo-fascists are attempting to reconstruct such a bloc, in which “national” identity becomes “white identity” as a stand-in (that is, a code) for a racist mobilization against perceived sources of anxiety and insecurity. Yet many white members of the working class have been experiencing social and economic destabilization, downward mobility, heightened insecurity, an uncertain future and accelerated precariatization — that is, ever more precarious work and life conditions. This sector has historically enjoyed the ethnic-racial privileges that come from white supremacy vis-à-vis other sectors of the working class, but it has been losing these privileges in the face of capitalist globalization. The escalation of veiled and also openly racist discourse from above is aimed at ushering the members of this white working-class sector into a racist and a neo-fascist understanding of their condition. Racism and the appeal to fascism offer workers from the dominant racial or ethnic group an imaginary solution to real contradictions; recognition of the existence of suffering and oppression, even though its solution is a false one. The parties and movements associated with such projects have put forth a racist discourse, less coded and less mediated than that of mainstream politicians, targeting the racially oppressed, ethnic or religious minorities, immigrants and refugees in particular as scapegoats. Yet in this age of globalized capitalism, there is little possibility in the United States or elsewhere of providing such benefits, so that the “wages of fascism” now appear to be entirely psychological. The ideology of 21st-century fascism rests on irrationality — a promise to deliver security and restore stability that is emotive, not rational. It is a project that does not and need not distinguish between the truth and the lie. The Trump regime’s public discourse of populism and nationalism, for example, bears no relation to its actual policies. Trumponomics involves a sweeping deregulation of capital, slashing social spending, dismantling what remains of the welfare state, privatization, tax breaks to corporations and the rich, anti-worker laws, and an expansion of state subsidies to capital — in short, radical neoliberalism. Trump’s populism has no policy substance. It is almost entirely symbolic — hence the significance of his fanatical “build the wall” and similar rhetoric, symbolically essential to sustain a social base for which the state can provide little or no material bribe. This also helps to explain the increasing desperation in Trump’s bravado as the election approaches. But here is the clincher: Deteriorating socioeconomic conditions and rising insecurity do not automatically lead to racist or fascist backlash. A racist/fascist interpretation of these conditions must be mediated by political agents and state agencies. Trumpism represents just such a mediation. To beat back the threat of fascism, popular resistance forces must put forward an alternative interpretation of the crisis, involving a social justice agenda founded on a working-class politics that can win over the would-be social base of fascism. This would-be base is made up of a majority of workers who are experiencing the same deleterious effects of global capitalism in crisis as the entire working class. We need a social justice and working-class agenda to respond to its increasingly immiserated condition, lest we leave it susceptible to a far right populist manipulation of this condition. Joe Biden may well win the election. Yet even if he does so and manages to take office, the crisis of global capitalism and the fascist project it is stoking will continue. A united front against fascism must be based on a social justice agenda that targets capitalism and its crisis.

#### Only socialism achieves the absolute decoupling required to stave off environmental collapse

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Socialism or extinction is not just a slogan, though; it is a statement of scientific fact. If XR does not stand for socialism, then it must necessarily stand for extinction, rendering its own alleged purpose redundant. In short: capitalism is a profit-dependent system, and must therefore continue to expand production in order to keep investment flowing and profits rising (in absolute terms). And since profit arises from capital’s exploitation of commodity-producing labour, the intensity of the production based on fossil fuel and toxic, fuel-intensive metal mining is (increasingly) necessary. To flesh this out a bit more: capital’s exploitation of commodity-producing labour is the [sole source of profit](http://gesd.free.fr/kliman99.pdf) — the capitalist appropriates surplus value (surplus labour time) from the worker, i.e the worker keeps less value than they create, covering their living costs (necessary labour time), and surplus value is then realised through commodity sales. This social relation is obscured by the money-wage relation. Therefore, capital’s evermore demanding need to accumulate is based on the continual expansion of intensive production, i.e. the extraction of fossil fuel and metals, deforestation, intensive farming, etc., that is releasing carbon and other ‘greenhouse’ emissions — not to mention that they are fuel-intensive practices in the first place and toxic to the local environment — trapped in nature into the atmosphere, making the planet warmer and threatening runaway global heating that, according to numerous scientific studies, will make the planet uninhabitable for humans, probably before the end of the present century. (Capital’s exploitation of labour is therefore also the root cause of [alleged plummeting sperm counts](https://grossmanite.medium.com/declining-sperm-counts-polluted-breast-milk-autoimmune-disorders-the-diabolical-legacy-of-53462aa1245d) (down a reported 59% from 1973 to 2011), further threatening extinction. The microplastics, nanoparticles and toxic chemicals sourced from fossil fuels and metal mines and consumed in everyday products penetrate and damage human cells.) Although extractive industries are usually now very capital-intensive — the source of capitalism’s ([now existential) economic crisis](https://grossmanite.medium.com/with-hyperinflation-looming-and-capitalism-dying-socialism-is-becoming-an-economic-necessity-a031f9a746e0) — the rate of exploitation of the remaining workers is very high. It is not capitalism’s need for ‘infinite growth on a planet of finite resources’, as most leftists seem to put it, that is the central or immediate problem; rather, it is the pace of production and its expansion — determined by the size of an ever-larger total capital and its need to expand yet further by feeding off labour — relative to nature’s ability to replenish itself (something capitalism’s dependence on intensive extraction obviously hinders). Just as surplus value is converted into capital faster than it is produced — resulting in (on average) decennial recessions and, eventually, a historical limit to capital accumulation — so nature is converted into capital faster than it can be replenished. Compound accumulation Fossil fuels (petroleum, coal, natural gas and orimulsion) would shrink to roughly half of total primary energy supply in 2050, from about 77% in 2020 — [down from 81% in 2010](https://www.iea.org/data-and-statistics/charts/share-of-total-primary-energy-demand-by-fuel-2010-2019) — if the world meets the ‘minimum’ internationally agreed target of 2 degrees Celsius warming, [according to S&P Global Platts Analytics](https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/oil/062320-fossil-fuels-energy-mix-infographic-interactive). (Even 1C has already seen a reported [400,000 people (and counting) a year dying from climate-related causes](https://www.inquirer.com/philly/blogs/public_health/Death-toll-from-climate-change-estimated-at-400000-In-2010.html); while the Arctic permafrost — containing 1.8 trillion tonnes of carbon, more than twice as much as is currently suspended in Earth’s atmosphere — is, we are told,[2] melting [70 years sooner than previously expected](https://bigthink.com/surprising-science/canada-permafrost). While fossil fuel may fall to 50% of the mix of energy production, its absolute production may rise, since economic output under capitalism tends to double every 20 years.[3] As Jason Hickel writes in his book Less Is More, there was “a steady rise of material use in the first half of the 1900s, doubling from 7 billion tons per year to 14 billion tons per year. But then, in the decades after 1945, something truly bewildering happens… material use explodes: it reaches 35 billion tons by 1980, hits 50 billion tons by 2000, and then screams up to an eye-watering 92 billion tons by 2017… This increase in material use tracks more or less exactly with the rise of global GDP. The two have grown together in lockstep. Every additional unit of GDP means roughly an additional unit of material extraction. “There has been a radical acceleration of fossil fuel use since 1945, rising along with the explosion in both GDP and material use. And carbon emissions have gone up right along with it. Annual emissions more than doubled from 2 billion tons per year to 5 billion tons per year during the first half of the 1900s. During the second half of the century they rose fivefold, reaching 25 billion tons by the year 2000. And they have continued to rise since then, despite a string of international climate summits, reaching 37 billion tons in 2019. Of course, there is no intrinsic relationship between energy use and CO2 emissions. It all depends on what energy source we’re using. Coal is by far the most carbon-intensive of the fossil fuels. Oil — which has grown much more quickly than coal since 1945 — emits less CO2 per unit of energy. And natural gas is less intensive still. As the global economy has come to rely more on these less polluting fuels, one might think that emissions would begin to decline.… [But] because GDP growth is driving total energy demand up at such a rapid pace … these new fuels aren’t replacing the older ones, they are being added on top of them. The shift to oil and gas hasn’t been an energy transition, but an energy addition. “The same thing is happening right now with renewable energy… To keep energy flowing when the sun isn’t shining and the wind isn’t blowing will require enormous batteries at the grid level. This means 40 million tons of lithium — an eye-watering 2,700% increase over current levels of extraction… It takes 500,000 gallons of water to produce a single ton of lithium. Even at present levels of extraction this is causing real problems. In the Andes, where most of the world’s lithium is located, mining companies are burning through the water tables and leaving farmers with nothing to irrigate their crops. Many have had no choice but to abandon their land altogether. Meanwhile, chemical leaks from lithium mines have poisoned rivers from Chile to Argentina, Nevada to Tibet, killing off whole freshwater ecosystems. The lithium boom has barely started, and it’s already a catastrophe… “Today the world is producing 8 billion more megawatt hours of clean energy each year than in 2000. That’s a lot — enough to power all of Russia. But over exactly the same period, economic growth has caused energy demand to increase by 48 billion megawatt hours. “There’s also something else going on. With every year that goes by, it becomes more and more difficult to extract the same amount of materials from the earth. Today, three times more material has to be extracted per unit of metal than a century ago.”[4] There is no such thing as ‘green capitalism’. The ‘Green New Deal’ proposed by social democrats — which actually involves privatising the last areas of common land — is species suicide. Socialism and non-intensive production Under capitalism, commodities are only produced if they are profitable, i.e. if labour is exploitable enough to expand capital. They are use-values/utilities and exchange-values. Under socialism, goods (having been decommodified) are produced if we deem them to be useful, via democratic regulation and demand. They are just use-values and socially owned, so no exchange of ownership takes place, i.e. exchange value and profit are abolished. If we deem that a good is not useful since it is damaging the environment or contributing to climate change too much, we can decide not to make it. Or we can find a way of making it that does not damage or exhaust nature. Rather than fossil fuel (which disappears into thin air and so has to be extracted anew by exploited labour, making it perfect for the needs of capital) or metals (which are finite), we could use non-labour-intensive renewables — sunlight, wind and especially (for physical products) fibrous plants ([especially hemp](https://medium.com/@Grossmanite/the-green-new-deal-is-species-suicide-only-a-hemp-based-industrial-revolution-can-save-earths-f9c3dc29c4e3), which can replace steel, concrete, graphene, lithium and fossil fuel) and [mycelium](https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/the-mycelium-revolution-is-upon-us/) (from which we can even make [computers](https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsfs.2018.0029)). And because socialism can plan and co-ordinate production as a whole on a break-even basis, instead of having to bow to the demands of capital accumulation and anarchic competition between private producers, we can grow economic output at the rate nature replenishes (or slower) — something that socialism could help instead of hinder. Achieving the abundant material wealth for all promised by communism (as it develops into its higher stage, when production becomes fully automated and, eventually, free) is part of the solution. Fibrous plants like hemp [quickly draw down and sequester CO2](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/hemp-and-lots-of-it-could_b_328275?guccounter=1) while reviving the soil, reversing desertification; and the products made from them (including bioplastic that is 10 times stronger than steel; batteries that [outperform lithium and graphene](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-28770876); and highly-insulating [carbon-negative hempcrete](https://www.ukhempcrete.com/services/better-than-zero-carbon-buildings/)) keep that carbon sequestered indefinitely. Abundant material wealth for all includes abundant vegetation, permaculture, afforestation, etc. There is also the potential for micro-organisms to supply a near-infinite source of energy. In 2018, scientists in the US confirmed a theory first proposed by Soviet geologists when they found [huge populations of bacteria living in the extreme temperatures of Earth’s crust](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/deep-life-microbes-underground-bacteria-earth-surface-carbon-observatory-science-study-a8677521.html), despite the lack of photosynthesis and nutrients, living solely from chemical reactions fuelled by geothermal energy. They estimated that up to 23 billion tonnes of micro-organisms live in this “deep biosphere”, making it the largest ecosystem on the planet and accounting for nearly 400 times the amount of carbon found in all living humans. Here lies a potential source of abundant energy (although we will have to assess whether the benefits outweigh the impacts of drilling). Other scientists have even found that the Geobacter bacteria found in human waste can convert sewage into fresh water and [produce electricity in the process](https://www.nasa.gov/vision/earth/technologies/18may_wastenot.html). It is now thought that one day [microbial fuel cells](https://www.nasa.gov/feature/ames/could-electricity-producing-bacteria-help-power-future-space-missions/) could power our phones, household appliances — and even spaceships. Investment in microbial fuel cells will remain seriously limited, however, until value-creation is based solely on utility instead of exploitation and profit, since capital cannot exploit the labour time of microbes! Modern science — which is looking more and more ‘presocialist’, i.e. systematic, holistic and dialectial-materialist (the Marxist method of assessing history as moving forward through material and social interactions)— has proven that humans depend on plants and bacteria for everyday life, [smashing the myth of The Individual](https://aeon.co/essays/science-and-metaphysics-must-work-together-to-answer-lifes-deepest-questions) — the world is powered by collectivism. Indeed, trees, plants and bacteria are our relatives. The world is one interconnected whole. The socialisation of the means of production, whereby the means of production are owned by humanity instead of capital, will thus be a ‘naturalising’ humanisation, plantification and microbiolisation of production. Other forms of existing carbon-negative production that could be scaled up include ‘sky mining’ for diamonds that are chemically identical to earth diamonds, another industry that only exists on a small scale under capitalism because of the lack of labour exploitation involved. Emissions-free, energy-dense nuclear power, is also an option. The initial impact of mining uranium on the environment must be re-assessed by an independent socialist state, but to prove our earlier point, nuclear has not been abandoned because of safety fears, but because its capital-intensity has become unprofitable as ever-growing total capital becomes harder and harder to expand by the relatively diminishing pool of human labour. In terms of worker safety, nuclear is [the safest form of energy production](https://amp.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2015/nov/04/why-eco-austerity-wont-save-us-from-climate-change). There is also the prospect of space-based solar power and associated wireless transmission, without the intermittency of night time or winter suffered by solar panels and wind turbines on Earth. This, too, however, has proven too expensive for investors who won’t invest without the prospect of a higher return. Reverting to overly local, small-scale production—which would make everything more expensive — is not an option. Sea levels are rising and we probably need to build incredibly vast dikes on every continent. Rising temperatures will also massively increase the demand for air conditioning, which will have to be powered by something abundant and emissions-free, like nuclear. But socialism never works? Clearly, we need world socialism. Countries that are arguably ‘semi-socialist’ or that are supposedly ‘working towards’ socialism, like China and Venezuela, still work to some extent on the basis of commodity-production. But even ‘fully’ socialist countries still have to trade with capitalist countries, and that means having to make concessions to capital, working within a world capitalist system and having to maintain military defences at the expense of the civilian economy. Nor can they fully plan their economies due to fluctuating, unpredictable foreign prices. The need to build up foreign currency also incentivises black markets. Again, because socialist production is based on utility, socialism will also be able to invest in things like mineralising CO2 (turning it permanently into basalt rock). This is not a silver bullet since it is water-intensive, but it could certainly be scaled up significantly where water scarcity is not an issue (or if [water can be ‘artificially’ produced](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/10/071031125457.htm)). That we are not doing this is a travesty — but where it would be a productive industry under socialism, it is an unproductive industry under capitalism, since it does not offer a commodity that can be sold for profit (unless it is sold to the state using public debt, thereby creating no new value and contributing to money devaluation that [will eventually (imminently) cause hyperinflation](https://grossmanite.medium.com/with-hyperinflation-looming-and-capitalism-dying-socialism-is-becoming-an-economic-necessity-a031f9a746e0)). It would therefore have to be funded by taxes that eat into already thinning profit margins, and so these taxes are resisted by capitalists, who anyway run the capitalist state. They are incapable of changing the system, even as it threatens to produce an ecocidal holocaust. Capitalism is now effectively an extinction cult and can only continue to steer Earth into the sun. Socialism — which is anyway [becoming an economic necessity](https://fleetworld.co.uk/road-test-hyundai-i30/) for the first time — gives humanity the chance of steering Earth to safety, in the nick of time.

### 1AC---Plan

#### The United States federal government should substantially increase prohibitions on anticompetitive business practices by the private sector in accordance with socialism.

### 1AC---Solvency

#### The plan utilizes antitrust law to prohibit all private sector activity---full nationalization is the only way to enable socialist transition

Foster ’13 [John Bellamy Foster, “Marx, Kalecki, and Socialist Strategy,” April 1, 2013, Monthly Review]

The principal strategic aim of the new Labour government would need to be directed at “changing the power relations in society, by capturing the key centres of the economic, social, and political power of the strongest capitalist groups.” Kalecki argued for “full central public control of banking, and finance, investment and foreign trade, and possibly the allocation of basic raw materials and commodities.” This required “direct social control” of key industrial sectors, either through “full nationalization” or the establishment of “some kind of public corporation.” The most important requirements here were “that those who direct and manage the [public] corporation have no financial interest other than their salaries,” and that if there were any private investors they be allowed “no control over policy or management.”38

All of this, Kalecki recognized, would be strongly resisted by capital, which would use all of its means, including sabotage, to block any changes that threatened its class position. Nevertheless, he argued that if the Labour Party were to exert its full strength at the end of war it would be able to generate a full-employment economy, turning this into a means of further ratcheting up working-class power. “This period, which may be short, will be the one of maximum opportunity for Labour, when full employment has generated a self-confident feeling among workers. Then will be the time to use Labour’s political power to the full; to strike boldly and strike hard. This will be the moment to the lay the basis for that continuing social revolution without which democratic socialist planning will remain a sterile dream.”39

Kalecki’s political-economic strategy for social change was aimed at fatally undermining what Marx had called capital’s main “lever” for the disciplining the working class: the existence of a relative surplus population or industrial reserve army. By removing this lever from capital, it would be possible to alter the rules of the game.40 The maximum response of capital in this class struggle, meanwhile, would be to attempt to generate what Steindl later called “stagnation as policy,” opposing all state policies to check unemployment and even stagnation, and increasing the reserve army of labor in order to preserve the social power of the capitalist class—even at the expense of total profits.41

As it turned out in Britain in the 1940s and thereafter, Labour came to power but did not—even during its maximum influence—exert its full power in a project of class transition in line with the course that Kalecki had proposed.42 With the rise of Thatcherism in Britain and Reaganism in the United States in the 1970s and ‘80s, capital itself, as Steindl observed, sought to break with the political business cycle, putting in its place the regressive “political trend,” now known as neoliberalism. This was an attempt to turn back the clock to a pre-Keynesian-style economic regime aimed at increasing unemployment, in order to squeeze wages and impose greater class discipline on workers. At the same time a financially driven casino economy was opened up for the benefit of capital.43 Full employment and wage inflation were depicted once again as threats to prosperity, in what Steindl referred to as “the return of the Bourbons” in economic theory.44

The economic effects of this restoration of pre-Keynesian economics are evident in the trends in the United State over the last four decades or so. The percentage of production and nonsupervisory workers in total private-sector employment has remained constant at about 83 percent of all workers in both 1965 and 2011. Nevertheless the share of such workers in total private-sector payroll dropped from 76 percent in 1965 to 56 percent in 2011, while their share of GDP fell over the same period from over 30 percent to about 20 percent.45 Under these conditions even a mainstream economist such as Paul Krugman was compelled to declare in 2012, that we are “back to talking about capital versus labor…[an] almost Marxist sort of discussion.”46 Moreover, in trying to discern why full-employment policy is off limits at the top of U.S. society even in the context of deep stagnation and growing inequality, Krugman in his 2012 book End This Depression Now! could find no other rational explanation than the one offered by Kalecki—namely that capital saw full employment as a threat to its total social power.47

In Kalecki’s view, the capitalist class’ entrenched opposition to long-run full employment through government intervention meant that workers had no recourse but to push forward on their own in the struggle for higher wages and full employment and to seek on that basis a full transition to socialism. “Labour,” he warned in 1942,must have no illusions about the great fight that will have to be waged against these [capitalist interest] groups. They will resist fiercely because what is at stake is not so much their profits as their personal and social power, which takes two forms: power in society as a whole, and power over workers’ industry. As long as the first form of power remains, all the efforts of the workers in the factories and through the trade unions to diminish the second form of power can only have limited success. The fight for workers’ rights in industry and for more effective workers’ representation through such things as works’ councils and production committees is, of course, of very great importance and…it has a vital part to play in the total struggle against the capitalists. But it can never be a substitute for the necessary political fight to destroy the power wielded over society as a whole by the great capitalist interest-groups….

Their power is in fact a class power and, as long as this class power remains unbroken, the ability of the leading capitalist groups to run things in their way—and, at worst, to sabotage—is enormous….It can only be broken by destroying not merely their political influence, but what is its real basis, their economic power in the great productive forces over which they exercise practically unchallenged control….

The important thing, however, is that Labour should not be afraid of the consequences of the social revolution within industry, but should make itself master of the situation, not by trying to damp down the mood of the workers, as did the leaders of the Popular Front in France, but by directing it against the opponents of democratic planning.48

Kalecki’s political-economic analysis here was based, as he explained, on an “isolated” capitalist economy.49 As historical events unfolded, not only did the Labour Party fail to act decisively in the working-class interest, but also the increased militarism and imperialism during the Cold War, as he was later to observe, altered the picture considerably. Increased armaments spending produced a higher level of employment than in the pre-war years, while at the same time incorporating a considerable part of the working class within a regressive nationalist-imperialist and chauvinistic project—thereby undermining labor’s capacity to unite to promote its genuine interests in the class struggle.50 In the highly globalized monopoly-finance capitalism of today the contradictions facing the working-class movement are even more complex. Capital in the form of multinational corporations is increasingly mobile globally and able to divide and conquer labor internationally, holding down wages and unit labor costs worldwide as workers of different nationalities are pitted against each other.51

Nevertheless, Kalecki’s arguments on not accepting the economic rationale of the system and insisting on the need to wrest social power from the capitalist class remain crucial today. The danger of the profit-squeeze theory of economic crisis under capitalism has always been that it suggested to workers that the pursuit of their own democratic, egalitarian aspirations led directly to economic slowdown, worsening their situation. As Kalecki put it, “There are certain ‘workers’ friends’ who try to persuade the working class to abandon the fight for wages in its own interest, of course. The usual argument used for this purpose is that the increase of wages causes unemployment, and thus is detrimental to the working class as a whole.”52 This position is visible in the United States today with the debate over whether to introduce a paltry increase in the minimum-wage.53

The arguments that Marx and Kalecki leveled against the profit-squeeze theory of crisis have proven correct not only in their day but ours as well. Decade after decade we have seen a declining share of wages (and total compensation) in U.S. GDP—with the share of the bottom 80 percent of private-sector workers plummeting. At the same time the share of GDP represented by management, supervisory, and other nonproduction employees in the private sector has been rising dramatically.54 Meanwhile, capital’s overall share of income has grown by leaps and bounds. Rather than a stable framework of accumulation, this has led to stagnation, financial instability, and deteriorating conditions for workers.

Kalecki’s political-economic conclusions were in line with those of Marx, who declared, in his opposition to the profit-squeeze argument, that the struggle of workers at every point along the way was a rational one, reflecting the superiority of the political economy of the working class over the political economy of capital. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of the working-class struggle was not to strive for this or that gain within the system, but rather to replace the capitalist system with a socialist one controlled by the direct producers. As Marx stated in the closing sentence of Value, Price and Profit: “Instead of the conservative motto: ‘A fair day’s wages for a fair day’s work!’ they [the working class] ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword: ‘Abolition of the wages system!’”55

#### Limited antitrust scope entrenches the control of capital---the plan radically departs from historical antitrust policies in favor of the abolition of capitalism

Fuchs '12 [Christian; 7/1/12; professor and chair in media and communication studies at Uppsala University's Department of Informatics and Media; "With or Without Marx? With or Without Capitalism? A Rejoinder to Adam Arvidsson and Eleanor Colleoni," https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v10i2.434/]

Do Arvidsson and Colleoni suggest alternatives? Do they have a vision of a life beyond capitalism? Open access, data portability, antitrust policies against capital concentration, building alternative platforms are mentioned in their article. They imagine “more ’democratic’“ social media (Arvidsson and Colleoni 2012, 147), do not question capitalism as such, but rather suggest a stronger regulation of the corporate Internet shall according to this conception exist in parallel with some alternative Internet platforms. The answer to the question asked in the title of this contribution is that to choose to be without Marx means to be in favour of capitalism and to support ideology, as Adam Arvidsson and Eleanor Colleoni’s approach shows very clearly. They advance an approach that is not only directed against Marx, but as a consequence also supportive of capitalism.

Arvidsson (2010) argues for building a peer-review system that is used for the evaluation of products by consumers and producers as an important element of an “ethical economy”. Social media, mobile phones and RFID could help to bring about a global and universal quantitative rating system for the economy (Arvidsson 2009). Arvidsson (2008) says that in such a system, the power of consumers and workers would increase, that companies as a result would mainly make money in the financial markets, and that capitalism would “become ethical in new and radical ways“ (Arvidsson 2008, 336). This would mean a “reform of capitalism“, the emergence of blended values and of a “global New Deal organised around sustainability and social responsibility“ (Arvidsson 2009, 27).

Arvidsson and Colleoni (2012, 147) say that their approach is “very un-Marxist in its conclusions”. Its political implications show indeed that the motivation for the authors’ criticism of Marxist theory is that they want to improve and not abolish capitalism. They imagine a more just, sustainable, and responsible capitalism. This terminology not only fits perfectly into contemporary neoliberal ideology, but is also naïve and idealistic: It ignores that all forms of capitalism are based on inequality and are crisis-prone. And crisis always means misery, precariousness, and more inequality. Capitalism is never responsible, sustainable, or ethical. The suggestion to entrepreneurs that they should support the ethical economy concept because such a transformed economy would enable them to make profits in the financial markets is furthermore arguing for an advancement of financialization and thereby ignores the high crisis-proneness of financial capitalism that has been proofed once more recently in the new world economic crisis. Arvidsson imagines that capitalism and a non-capitalistic economy can friendly co-exist in the form of an ethical capitalism. He thereby ignores the imperialistic and colonialist character of capitalism: imperialism creates milieus of accumulation, i.e. it commodifies spheres of non-capitalist existence in processes that David Harvey (2003) has termed accumulation by dispossession in order to guarantee its further existence. Capitalism is an inherently violent and expansive system that, as history has shown, does not accept any friendly co-existence with non-capitalist systems, but aims at their destruction. The contemporary crisis of capitalism and the existence of global inequality and precariousness have shown that we need alternatives to capitalism in order to create a humane society. My conclusion and approach is therefore in contrast to Arvidsson Marxist in character: it aims at the struggle for a humane, non-capitalist world. In terms of the Internet this means the ethical need of struggles for a non-capitalist Internet and the advancement of non-capitalist Internet platforms that contradict and struggle against the capitalist Internet and aim at the establishment of a communist Internet.

#### DPS is the optimal implementation of socialism---avoids the challenges that accompanied the Soviet model

Kotz 8 - economics professor at Amherst (David, https://people.umass.edu/dmkotz/What\_Ec\_Struc\_Soc\_08\_03.pdf, emuse)

The economic problems of actually existing socialism were not inherent in socialism, or in economic planning. They were structural problems of the particular form of planning that first arose in the Soviet Union and later appeared in other Communist Party ruled states. All of the economic problems listed in section 2 above were due to a key feature of that form of socialism: an absence of popular participation in decision-making in the economy and the state. There were various problematic policies, but the foregoing structural feature was the underlying source of the economic problems.5 Economic activity in any system will serve the needs of those who have power within that system. In a market economy ordinary consumers have a limited power -- they can decide not to purchase something. Hence, producers have be concerned with what ordinary consumers want to buy, since that is something they cannot fully control, try though they may. In Soviet-type planning, those actors with power were able to get high quality goods produced for them. No one ever claimed that Soviet weapons were of low quality, yet they were produced via the system of central planning. Soviet military leaders, and the ministers in charge of production of military equipment, were powerful and could demand high quality products. Similarly, some of the industrial ministers in civilian sectors had the power to demand high quality products, and some Soviet industrial products were world class.6 Special enterprises produced housing for high officials, and the quality of such housing was excellent.7 Powerful Soviet officials exercised their power by their ability to discipline or demote top enterprise officials if product quality was deemed unsatisfactory. It was an effective incentive. By contrast, ordinary households had almost no power in the Soviet planning system. Enterprise managers were not rewarded and punished based on how well they satisfied household consumers. The environmental damage from Soviet-type central planning resulted from an unaccountable leadership's focus on economic growth. The absence of democratic rights for the population prevented the emergence of a strong environmental movement that could have insisted on changed priorities. For economic planning to work effectively, power must be dispersed among all of the relevant groups in the economy, not monopolized by unaccountable high officials. Models of participatory planning have been elaborated by a number of authors (Devine, 1988, 2002; Albert and Hahnel, 1991). They involve democratic participation both in the economy and the state, which must be closely intertwined in a socialist system. These models share the following five principles: 1) wide participation in decision-making by those affected by a decision; 2) representation of the population as workers, community members, and consumers on decision-making bodies; 3) a decision-making process based on negotiation and compromise, to handle the inevitable existence of opposing interests among different groups; and 4) an equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of economic and political life. If consumer representatives sat on enterprise boards and on regional and national level planning bodies, they could insist that enterprises produce high quality consumer goods that people would like to purchase, with the power to set rewards and penalties to back up their demands. If the top political leaders are dependent on popular support for staying in office, they would be under pressure to make the system work to meet the needs of ordinary people. Democratic institutions, which in a capitalist system are always limited by the enormous political power of the rich, would work far better in a socialist system that has no class of wealthy property owners. The promise of getting rich is not necessary to build an efficient, innovative economy. "Innovation Institutes" could fund the testing out of new ideas, new products, and new services. Someone with a proposal for a new restaurant or service establishment could apply for funds and leasing rights to carry out their proposal, without departing from the principle of public ownership of productive property. Modest material rewards should be sufficient to encourage innovation and new and varied services, given the presence in any population of many individuals who are personally inclined to launch new projects. By providing representation for all constituencies in the making of allocation decisions, participatory planning would provide channels for all groups to see that their needs are addressed. It also recognizes the existence of conflicting interests even in a socialist society and provides institutions in which groups can negotiate and reach compromises. For example, enterprise boards having representatives of workers, consumers, and the community could strike a reasonable balance among workers' interest in not being overworked, consumers' interest in affordable and well-made products, and the community's interest in avoiding pollution of air and water. In a country having a relatively low living standard, a system of participatory planning would allow the population to demand a high rate of economic growth though democratic decisions about the resources to be devoted to investment and improved technologies. For participatory planning to work effectively, economic decisions should be as decentralized as possible to facilitate maximum participation by affected parties. Old-style central planning was overly centralized. Some economic decisions must be made at the center, but many can be made at a regional or local level. The claim that a system based on free markets is superior to any other in efficiency, innovation, and growth has no foundation. While a capitalist market economy can develop the forces of production and bring a rising level of material consumption for part of the population, history shows that it has been unable to build a society that meets the needs of the entire population. Only socialism can assure everyone material comfort, security, and a guaranteed opportunity to participate in productive labor, without some exploiting others. Only socialism can build a society based upon the better aspects of human nature, rather than its baser aspects, and finally enable people to become the real masters of their fate. But socialism can carry out this historic mission only if it embraces democracy and popular participation as the basis of its institutions.

#### American DPS goes global

PSL 8 (Party for Socialism and Liberation, [https://liberationschool.org/the-goal-of-socialism-peace-and-equality-amid-plenty/#](https://liberationschool.org/the-goal-of-socialism-peace-and-equality-amid-plenty/), emuse)

Experiences in socialist construction Thanks in great part to the practical experience of Lenin in making revolution, 21st-century socialists have a wealth of experience on which to base further conclusions. Marxists have been able to use accumulated theory and practice in order to lead revolutions in Russia, China, Korea, Yugoslavia, Cuba and many other countries. While there have been vast differences in the experiences of those socialist revolutions, they share one common feature: The socialist revolutions of the 20th century took place in countries where the level of productive forces was very low compared to the imperialist countries. Every successful revolution faced the primary task of developing their economies—while under constant military threat by world imperialism. For that reason, Lenin described the challenges of building communism in 1920 in very practical terms: “Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country.” There was no hope in building socialism if the economy remained underdeveloped. Because of the combined challenges of developing the productive forces under the gun of world imperialism, no socialist revolution has yet reached a stage where the “withering away of the state” could be imagined. Imperialism has seized on any weakness in the revolutionary states in order to foment counterrevolution. Nevertheless, the working classes in the countries that have set out to build socialism have made tremendous gains. Russia’s working class in 1917 was 4 percent of the population. Within 50 years, it was the second-most powerful economy in the world. China had never been able to feed its entire population prior to the revolution. Millions died during famines in China prior to 1949. Yet after the 1949 revolution, for the first time the economy was able to feed the largest population in the world. Despite immense pressure from imperialism, Cuba has been able to achieve tremendous gains—despite the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Cuban workers enjoy among the highest living standards of any of their counterparts in Latin America or much of the oppressed world. The continued military and economic dominance by world imperialism—first and foremost by U.S. imperialism—has made the transition to socialism that Marx and Lenin described so far impossible. The workers’ states have needed to devote a considerable part of their social development toward the strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship—the army and police—in order to defend against invasion or counterrevolution. Taking that next step will require a society based on the dictatorship of the proletariat in the United States. Toppling the world’s dominant capitalist power would not only lift a tremendous burden from the workers around the world who are trying to engage in socialist construction. It would put at the disposal of the world working class the tremendous wealth produced by the U.S. working class. All the social wealth extracted from the oppressed world by U.S. corporations and mines could be used to reverse the effects of centuries of colonial and imperialist exploitation. A revolution in the United States would undercut the economic basis for divisions among the working class that promote racism, sexism and homophobia. Socialism is a system of peace, justice and equality. The road to socialism begins with revolution in the United States.

#### Proletarianization makes class struggle inevitable - the aff accelerates and properly directs movements

Reese 20 - author of Socialism or Extinction and The End of Capitalism: The Thought of Henryk Grossman (Ted, <https://www.amazon.com/Socialism-Extinction-Automation-Capitalist-Breakdown-ebook/dp/B081FHF2ZQ>, emuse)

Those who are lucky enough to find or remain in work as the capitalist crisis deepens will see their pay and conditions savagely forced down. In April 2018, the World Bank recommended yet more deregulation in a report that said “high minimum wages, undue restrictions on hiring and firing and strict contract forms all make workers more expensive vis-à-vis technology”.[437] International capital is preparing a major assault on international labour in order to accelerate moves towards automation. Even if the next crash is not a final breakdown, significant sections of the middle classes would be proletarianised and impoverished and the reserve army of labour would swell. Class struggle would explode. Capitalists could be forced to slow down or stop the introduction of new automation by, say, a strong and militant neo-Luddite or trade union movement and – the usual driver for concessions – the desire for social peace. But the contradiction persists: capital accumulation, and staying ahead of or keeping up with competitors, requires higher productivity and therefore labour-saving innovation. The deeper capitalism sinks into crisis the more necessary it becomes to raise productivity. That is, the more workers are replaced by robots, the greater the underproduction of surplus value becomes, and yet the system will need to respond by replacing more workers with robots. If it cannot do this then capital goes unvalorised and the economy crashes. From the perspective of the bourgeoisie, a strong neo-Luddite or trade union movement would sooner or later have to be crushed. In an article in January 2018 headlined “When the next recession hits, the robots will be ready”, the Washington Post pointed out that innovations happen quickest “when employers slash payrolls going into a downturn and, out of necessity, turn to software or machinery to take over the tasks once performed by their laid-off workers”.[438] Pointing to growing expectations by economists of a financial crisis in 2020, the paper adds that the “next wave of automation won’t just be sleek robotic arms on factory floors. It will be ordering kiosks, self- service apps and software smart enough to perfect schedules and cut down on the workers needed to cover a shift. Employers are already testing these systems. A recession will force them into the mainstream.” Striking statistics from an upcoming paper by economists Nir Jaimovich and Henry Siu “found that 88% of job loss in routine occupations occurs within 12 months of a recession. In the 1990- 1991, 2001 and 2008-2009 recessions, routine jobs accounted for ‘essentially all’ of the jobs lost. They regained almost no ground during the subsequent recoveries.”[439] Automation under capitalism is therefore accelerating the trend towards proletarianisation, higher levels of poverty and the underproduction of surplus value. It is the sharpest of sharpening contradictions, a vicious circle from which capitalism cannot escape. It is a trend which increasingly threatens a final breakdown. The ‘Leninist’ road to socialism[440] – whereby working class organisations (soviets (workers’ councils), communes etc) effectively form an independent state and then, when strong enough, destroy what is left of the capitalist state – of course seems to be dismissed now more than ever – by liberals who claim that the demise of the Soviet Union signalled the end of history;[441] by the anarchists and autonomists who believe a leap into ‘full communism’ can be achieved without the socialist stage; and by ‘democratic socialists’ who claim socialism can be built via bourgeois democracy by voting through ‘socialist policies’. Then there is the notion that Marx and Lenin are redundant because the supposed protagonist of their revolutionary strategy – the industrial proletariat – is dead or irrelevant. There are several problems surrounding this. The accusation about the industrial proletariat is made, in slightly different ways, not just by liberals but by some anarchists, who do not claim that the industrial proletariat is dead but persist with the myth that it is the protagonist of the Leninist revolution. The Bolsheviks focused on agitating among the urban or industrial proletariat because that was the most efficient use of scarce resources, with the intention that the message would then spread outwards to the wider proletariat as a whole. This accusation that Leninists ignore the wider proletariat is often a projection of valid criticisms of some ‘Trotskyists’, who, while posing as Leninists, or at least distorting Leninism, do overemphasise the importance of the industrial worker. This is because Trotskyists – who for the same reason tend to be de facto pro-imperialist (by giving critical support to the Labour Party, for example) – tend to derive from labour aristocratic positions in trade unions and universities. Lenin though is renowned for criticising socialists who limited their agitation to “trade union consciousness” or “economism” – ie, simply supporting, or tailing, working class demands, without advocating an independent (non-social democratic) working class party or proletarian dictatorship (or, before that, the overthrow of tsarism) – and for his ruthless criticism of a labour aristocratic minority which misled the masses with solely reformist demands. Hence why he said revolutionaries had to “dig deeper into the real masses” of the poorest workers, who had the least to lose and the most to gain. This meant that, in Russia, he saw the need for an alliance between workers and poor peasants, an alliance that Leon Trotsky initially rejected. Today, real Leninists still see the poorest and most oppressed workers as the main protagonists of revolution. The claim that the industrial proletariat is dead is either dishonest or smacks of ‘first world’ myopia. The industrial proletariat may have shrunk in the imperialist nations over the past 40 years but internationally it has grown spectacularly. In 2010, 79%, or 541 million, of the world’s industrial workers lived in ‘less developed regions’, up from 34% in 1950 and 53% in 1980, compared to the 145 million industrial workers, or 21% of the total, who in 2010 lived in the imperialist countries.[442] This shift is even greater in the manufacturing industry, since in emerging nations manufacturing forms a much higher proportion of total industrial employment than in imperialist countries, and therefore, as John Bellamy Foster et al point out, “the broad category of ‘industrial employment’ systematically understates the extent to which the world share of manufacturing has grown in developing countries”, citing figures for the US and China showing these ratios to be 58.1% and 75.2% respectively.[443] “Extrapolating these two ratios to ‘more developed’ and ‘less developed’ countries as a whole, 83% of the world’s manufacturing workforce lives and works in the nations of the Global South,” says John Smith in Imperialism in the Twenty First Century.[444] Based on the integration of ‘Southern’ workers into the global economy, the IMF has also attempted to take into account qualitative as well as quantitative changes, calculating an “export-weighted global workforce” by multiplying the numerical growth of the workforce by the increasing degree to which they produce for the global market rather than the domestic market. Since Southern-manufactured exports grew more than twice as fast as GDP during the quarter-century leading up to the global crisis in 2007, the IMF estimates that the effective global workforce quadrupled in size between 1980 and 2003. But even within the imperialist nations, where the industrial working class has declined both absolutely and relatively, Smith points to “deepening proletarianisation”, saying that “the proletarians have increased their already overwhelming predominance within the economically active population [EAP].... Between 1980 and 2005 the proportion of waged and salaried workers in total EAP in ... the developed nations steadily rose, from 83% to 88% (in 2005, around 500 million people), indicating deepening proletarianisation in these countries.”[445] In the US, it is even higher, with waged workers as a proportion of the EAP increasing from 90.6% in 1980 to 93.2% in 2011.[446] Because of distortions made by the ILO’s methods, this undoubtedly underestimates or obscures the size of the labour aristocracy, something we will come back to further on, but the trend is nevertheless clear, with more and more workers being forced into low-paid services work. Obviously with China, India and the former Soviet bloc being integrated into the global economy, 1.47 billion workers joined the global capitalist workforce very suddenly. But this does not distort the overall trend. With their supposed bias for the industrial proletariat, Leninists are accused of failing to recognise the multiple sections of the working class or its fragmentation. But far from ignoring the heterogeneous make-up of the working class, this is one of the factors that contribute to the Leninist conclusion that a vanguard party is necessary – to unite the disparate and sectional struggles of the working class into one unstoppable force. Likewise, the fact recognised across the left that technological advances have fragmented the working class, that they have increased unemployment and underemployment and therefore reduced workers’ leverage in their struggles against their bosses, reflected in the imperialist countries by the low number of strikes since the 1980s, must mean that the state is the primary battleground. We are already seeing this in the re-emergence of social democratic movements (see the previous chapter), whereby downwardly mobile labour aristocracies are becoming slightly more antagonistic towards the ruling class, and are attempting to harness the power of the working class as a whole, in what is essentially a fight with the middle and ruling classes over allocations of surplus value. These strawman accusations against Lenin misrepresent or misinterpret his definition of the proletariat, which followed Marx’s. The main feature of the proletariat as a class is not its direct link with the means of production but rather its separation from them. In other words, the proletariat is first and foremost characterised as a class by the fact that it does not own the means of production and has to work for wages. The salient feature is not what differentiates them, but what unites them. The more a worker is dependant on selling their labour power for survival the deeper their proletarianisation. Indeed, it is the fact that the industrial proletariat is shrinking relative to the working class as a whole, relegating a significant proportion of previously privileged workers into the poorer sections of the working class, that sees the mass of the latter grow numerically in strength. As the mass of exploited manual workers decreases due to scientific and technological progress, particularly automation, the mass of exploited intellectual workers, ie white collar employees, engineers and scientists (who increasingly contribute to commodity production) also increases in reverse proportion. The casualisation of university employment in the past few years is a case in point. In the US, although union membership stood at a lowly 10.7% of the workforce at the start of 2019, the unionisation of traditionally non- unionised white collar labour almost doubled between 2010 and 2017.[447] According to the Pew Research Center, the median wealth (assets minus debts) of the US middle class fell by 28% from 2001 to 2013.[448] People on middle incomes[449] accounted for 50% of the US adult population in 2015, down from 61% in 1971, while the poorest tier of the working class comprised 20% of the population in 2015 compared to 16% in 1975. The number of people receiving supplemental nutritional assistance, or food stamps, exploded from 26 million in 2007 to 46 million in 2012.[450] And 63% of the population say they have less than $500 in personal savings.[451] At the same time private and household debt has gone through the roof. In the 1970s, personal and credit card debts shot up by 238% relative to the 1960s. In the 1980s it shot up on the previous decade by another 318% and by another 180% in the 1990s.[452] According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, household debt rose to a record $13.5 trillion in the fourth quarter of 2018, nearly 7% higher than in the third quarter of 2008. Even more troublingly, a record number of US Americans were three months or more behind on repayments for car loans (more than 7 million). As New York Times journalist Amy Chozick noted in May 2015, “the once ubiquitous term ‘middle class’ has gone conspicuously missing from the 2016 [presidential] campaign trail, as candidates and their strategists grasp for new terms for an unsettled economic era [in which] the middle class has for millions of families become a precarious place to be”.[453] Capitalism in the age of automation increasingly turns the majority of the population into proletarians and, in doing so, creates all economic, social and political prerequisites for the system’s downfall. The deeper the system sinks into crisis, the more proletarians are created, through unemployment, wage cuts and so on, and the more radical they are likely to become. This is borne out by the real development of the international proletariat. While we have already seen that the industrial proletariat has grown enormously, according to the ILO, the world’s “economically active population” (EAP) grew from 1.9 billion in 1980 to 3.1 billion in 2006.[454] Almost all of this numerical growth took place in the ‘emerging nations’, now home to 84% of the global workforce, 1.6 billion of whom worked for wages. The other one billion were small farmers and a multitude of people working in the ‘informal economy’,[455] which is, according to Mike Davis “the fastest growing social class on earth”.[456] While the industrial proletariat in the ‘Global South’ has grown enormously since 1980, its share of the South’s total workforce has been much more modest, rising from 14.5% in 1980, to 16.1% in 1990, to 19.1% in 2000, to 23.1% in 2010[457] – because the absolute growth of the non-industrial proletariat is even greater. Meanwhile, agricultural employment in the Global South has declined to 48% of its EAP, down from 73% in 1960, and from “approximately one-third” to just 4% of EAP in developed countries. However, the ILO reports: “Despite the declining share of agricultural workers in total employment, the absolute numbers of those engaged in agriculture are still rising, most notably in south Asia, east Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa.”[458] The other significant component of the growing proletariat? The unemployed. Smith reports that, apart from China, “no economy has grown fast enough to provide jobs to the legions of young people entering the labour market and the rural exodus to swollen cities in search of work. Even at the zenith of export-oriented industrialisation the ILO reported that ‘in the late 20th century, manufacturing ceased being a major sector of employment growth, except in east and southeast Asia’.” Senior ILO economist Nomaan Majid said the commerce sector, not manufacturing, “is the main employment growth sector in both low- and middle-income groups”.[459] This links back to what we saw in chapter four – that even in the developing nations, the trend towards automation is accompanied by growing unproductive work and unemployment. The numerical growth of the working class has been coupled with a massive attack on its wages, further deepening proletarianisation. In a striking example of how constant capital rises relative to variable capital, John Lanchester writes in the London Review of Books that in the US: “In 1960, the most profitable company in the world’s biggest economy was General Motors (GM). In today’s money, GM made $7.6bn that year. It also employed 600,000 people. Today’s most profitable company employs 92,600. So where 600,000 workers would once generate $7.6bn in profit, now 92,600 generate $89.9bn, an improvement in profitability per worker of 76.65 times. Remember, this is pure profit for the company’s owners, after all workers have been paid. Capital isn’t just winning against labour: there’s no contest. If it were a boxing match, the referee would stop the fight.”[460] Whereas wages in the US rose by 350% between 1927 and 1977, real terms growth has since been in decline. In Britain, wages grew at an annual average of 2.9% in the 1960s and 70s, 1.5% in the 90s and 1.2% in the 2000s. Between 2007 and 2015 that trend accelerated at an unprecedented rate, with real household wages falling by 10.4%.[461] The Resolution Foundation said the 2010s would be the worst decade for UK wage growth since the late 18th century. But as bad as the attack on wages in imperialist countries has been, it has been even worse in the countries imperialism plunders, where workers are of course already paid much less. According to the ILO’s World of Work Report 2011, since the early 1990s the “share of domestic income that goes to labour ... declined in nearly three-quarters of the 69 countries with available information”. While “the wage share among advanced economies has been trending downward since 1975”, it “occurred at a much more moderate pace than among emerging and developing economies – falling roughly nine percentage points since 1980”.[462] In contrast, the fall in Asia between 1994 and 2010 was around 20%. The imperialist countries have also seen a decline in full-time self- employment and self-employed income. This has included a continuing shrinkage in the number of small family farmers, indicating the proletarianisation of portions of the lower middle classes. Michael Elsby’s study The Decline of US Labor Share reports that the “rise in inequality is even more striking for proprietors’ income than it is for payroll income. In 1948 the bottom 90% of employees earned 75% of payroll compensation. By 2010 this had declined to 54%. For entrepreneurial income, however, this fraction plummeted from 42% in 1948 to 14% in 2010.”[463] A separate study of 2014 data by the US Small Business Administration suggests the same pattern regarding millennials (generally defined as people born between 1985 and 2004). “Fewer than 4% of 30 year-olds reported they were in full-time self-employment – a proxy for entrepreneurship – compared with 5.4% of Generation X-ers [1965 and 1984] and 6.7% of Baby Boomers [1945 and 1964] at the same age,” the FT reported.[464] Furthermore, the pace of decline in wages has accelerated in recent years, “with the wage share falling more than 11 percentage points between 2002 and 2006. In China, the wage share declined by close to 10 percentage points since 2000.”[465] Africa’s workers saw their share of national income reduced by 15% in the two decades since 1990, again “with most of this decline – 10 percentage points – taking place since 2000. The decline is even more spectacular in north Africa, where the wage share fell by more than 30 percentage points after 2000.”[466] Latin America saw the lowest decline, of 10% since 1993, and most of it before 2000, undoubtedly due to strong workers’ organisation and resistance, represented by the left-wing ‘Pink Tide’ in Venezuela,[467] Bolivia, Brazil and Argentina. As mentioned, mainstream economic accounting methods underepresent the size of the middle classes and labour aristocracy – which are bound to be proportionately bigger in imperialist nations – and do not take account of sharply increasing inequality between skilled/professional and unskilled workers or of income to capital that has been classified as income to labour, such as bonuses paid to bankers and wages and sponsorship of sports professionals etc, meaning the real extent of the fall in labour’s share is even higher, and considerably so. Elsby attempts to challenge these distortions, writing that in the US, the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ (BLS) calculation of a decline of 3.9% in the share of national income for labour over 1987-2013 becomes a 10% decline when the highest paid 1% of employees are excluded, and a 14% decline when the highest paid 10% are excluded. Based on this more honest method, the lowest 90% of wage earners (84% of the US’s total economically active population) actually earned 42% of the total payroll in 1980 and just 28% in 2011. Elsby also found that the fall for labour has accelerated as time has progressed, declining by twice as much between 2000 and 2011 as in the previous two decades.[468] Again, the trend towards deepening proletarianisation is clear. The material basis for a position of relative privilege among the lower middle classes and labour aristocracy is disappearing. The proletariat is numerically stronger than ever, especially as an international class. ‘Neoliberal globalisation’, which promised to produce prosperous nations of entrepreneurs and homeowners, has instead produced capitalism’s grave-diggers. All this is confirmed by the fact that inequality has hit record levels. In 2018 and 2019, Oxfam found that the 26 richest billionaires owned as much in assets as the 3.8 billion people who make up the poorest half of the planet’s population. The number had been 61 in 2016 and 43 in 2017, showing again that capital continues to centralise. Marx wrote that the concentration of wealth at one pole depended on the concentration of poverty at the other. And lo: the wealth of more than 2,200 billionaires across the globe increased by $900bn in 2018, a 12% increase against a fall of 11% in the wealth of the poorest half of the world’s population. Between 1980 and 2015, the global economy grew by 380%, yet the number of people living in poverty on less than $5 (£3.20) a day increased by more than 1.1 billion. In 1980, $2.20 of every $100 went to the world’s poorest 20%, but in 2003 that figure had fallen to 60 cents.[469] Inequality is most acute between rich and poor countries but it is growing within rich countries as well. In the US, for example, according to the Federal Reserve, the richest 1% owned a record-high 38.6% of the country’s wealth in 2016, nearly twice as much as the bottom 90%. Anti-socialists will still ignore all this or proclaim that the proletariat is no longer a revolutionary class because living standards are generally much higher than 100 years ago, claiming that really “we are all middle class now” or making shallow observations such as “capitalism works because workers have mobile phones!” as if cracking some kind of insightful gotcha that disproves Marxism. This ignores how as the rate of exploitation increases, the value of necessary labour falls, making the commodities workers need to buy to live cheaper. It ignores how the needs of the working class change as capitalism develops: workers need smartphones and laptops in this day and age of 24-hour connectivity if they are even to be considered employable, and so the cost of a smartphone is included in the value of labour power. It also ignores that workers in some countries may have access to better infrastructure than in others (indeed, although no technology has ever scaled as quickly as the mobile phone, while five billion people now have mobile phones, only around 2.5 billion of world’s population presently have a smartphone). But most of all, it is ignorant of the fact that capitalism is breaking down, which will impoverish and radicalise the working class. The revolutionary power of the working class is latent.

**“No alternative” is an elite fallacy---political mobilization towards DPS is happening now---convincing people it’s a viable alternative is key**

**Grubačić et al. '20** [Andrej; 9/24/20; Professor and Department Chair of Social and Cultural Anthropology at California Institute of Integral Studies; Brett Wilkins, Bridget Meehan, Cynthia Peters, Don Rojas, Elena Herrada, Mark Evans, Medea Benjamin, Michael Albert, Noam Chomsky, Oscar Chacon, Paul Ortiz, Peter Bohmer, Savvina Chowdhury and Vincent Emanuel; "Greenwashing Capitalism Won’t Heal the Planet," https://truthout.org/articles/greenwashing-capitalism-wont-heal-the-planet/]

Our Future Must Be One Without Economic Growth

So focused on serving the needs of the wealthy elites, most governments, political leaders and policy-makers are stuck in the certainty that “**there is no alternative**” and their plans lie at the core of that belief. The proposals support “**business as usual**” with a coat of **greenwash** and a nip and tuck here and there. They **fail** to recognize that economic **growth** is in **direct conflict** with **decarbonization**, slowing down **global warming** or **redistributing wealth**, and that we must eliminate or vastly reduce certain activities altogether.

It is time to **expose** the **extreme fallacy** behind mainstream policy positions regarding the climate crisis. Decarbonization that will slow global warming is going to require **more than a few tweaks to the system** and nods to green investment. It will demand that we **jettison our current economic paradigm** altogether and replace it with a more **socialist**, **participatory** and **democratic** paradigm that puts social and environmental needs at its center and massively redistributes wealth. We are only kidding ourselves if we think it can happen any other way.

Many millions of us have already come to this realization. Recent polls conducted in Britain, for example, showed that just 6 percent wanted to go back to the economy as it was before the COVID-19 pandemic and 82 percent wanted to prioritize health and well-being over economic growth. Grassroots **activists** and **movements** are busy creating and implementing the **alternatives** to the status quo. “Ordinary” people are light-years ahead of the governments and political leaders in taking these courageous steps.

Despite the heroic efforts of everyday people working at localized levels, there are three hard truths we must face. The first is that our governments and political leaders are a major barrier. They may be pathetic but they hold the levers of power, albeit on behalf of the elites. The second hard truth is that efforts at localized levels are insufficient. Solving the climate crisis will necessitate the **end of capitalism** and that necessitates **action on a global scale** through global **coordination**, **planning** and **regulation**. Both of these truths, therefore, make it critical for our governments and leaders to catch up and start working for and with us.

#### Accelerating capitalist dysfunction lowers the bar---threshold for a successful transition is low

Monbiot 19 (George Monbiot, citing Erica Chenoweth - the Berthold Beitz Professor in Human Rights and International Affairs at Harvard Kennedy School, Foreign Policy magazine ranked her among the Top 100 Global Thinkers in 2013 for her efforts to promote the empirical study of civil resistance, she received the Karl Deutsch Award, which the International Studies Association gives annually to the scholar under the age of 40 who has made the greatest impact on the field of international politics or peace research. And together with Maria J. Stephan, she won the 2013 Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order, which is presented annually in recognition of outstanding proposals for creating a more just and peaceful world order. Their book, Why Civil Resistance Works, also won the 2012 Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award, given annually by the American Political Science Association in recognition of the best book on government, politics, or international affairs published in the U.S. in the previous calendar year. 4-1-2019, "Only rebellion will prevent an ecological apocalypse," Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/15/rebellion-prevent-ecological-apocalypse-civil-disobedience> accessed: 8-29-2019) //bp

As the environmental crisis accelerates, and as protest movements like YouthStrike4Climate and Extinction Rebellion make it harder not to see what we face, people discover more inventive means of shutting their eyes and shedding responsibility. Underlying these excuses is a deep-rooted belief that if we really are in trouble, someone somewhere will come to our rescue: “they” won’t let it happen. But there is no they, just us. The political class, as anyone who has followed its progress over the past three years can surely now see, is chaotic, unwilling and, in isolation, strategically incapable of addressing even short-term crises, let alone a vast existential predicament. Yet a widespread and wilful naivety prevails: the belief that voting is the only political action required to change a system. Unless it is accompanied by the concentrated power of protest – articulating precise demands and creating space in which new political factions can grow – voting, while essential, remains a blunt and feeble instrument. The media, with a few exceptions, is actively hostile. Even when broadcasters cover these issues, they carefully avoid any mention of power, talking about environmental collapse as if it is driven by mysterious, passive forces, and proposing microscopic fixes for vast structural problems. The BBC’s Blue Planet Live series exemplified this tendency. Those who govern the nation and shape public discourse cannot be trusted with the preservation of life on Earth. There is no benign authority preserving us from harm. No one is coming to save us. None of us can justifiably avoid the call to come together to save ourselves. I see despair as another variety of disavowal. By throwing up our hands about the calamities that could one day afflict us, we disguise and distance them, converting concrete choices into indecipherable dread. We might relieve ourselves of moral agency by claiming that it’s already too late to act, but in doing so we condemn others to destitution or death. Catastrophe afflicts people now and, unlike those in the rich world who can still afford to wallow in despair, they are forced to respond in practical ways. In Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, devastated by Cyclone Idai, in Syria, Libya and Yemen, where climate chaos has contributed to civil war, in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador,, where crop failure, drought and the collapse of fisheries have driven people from their homes, despair is not an option. Our inaction has forced them into action, as they respond to terrifying circumstances caused primarily by the rich world’s consumption. The Christians are right: despair is a sin. As the author Jeremy Lent points out in a recent essay, it is almost certainly too late to save some of the world’s great living wonders, such as coral reefs and monarch butterflies. It might also be too late to prevent many of the world’s most vulnerable people from losing their homes. But, he argues, with every increment of global heating, with every rise in material resource consumption, we will have to accept still greater losses, many of which can still be prevented through radical transformation. Every nonlinear transformation in history has taken people by surprise. As Alexei Yurchak explains in his book about the collapse of the Soviet Union – Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More – systems look immutable until they suddenly disintegrate. As soon as they do, the disintegration retrospectively looks inevitable. Our system – characterised by perpetual economic growth on a planet that is not growing – will inevitably implode. The only question is whether the transformation is planned or unplanned. Our task is to ensure it is planned, and fast. We need to conceive and build a new system based on the principle that every generation, everywhere has an equal right to enjoy natural wealth. This is less daunting than we might imagine. As Erica Chenoweth’s historical research reveals, for a peaceful mass movement to succeed, a maximum of 3.5% of the population needs to mobilise. Humans are ultra-social mammals, constantly if subliminally aware of shifting social currents. Once we perceive that the status quo has changed, we flip suddenly from support for one state of being to support for another. When a committed and vocal 3.5% unites behind the demand for a new system, the social avalanche that follows becomes irresistible. Giving up before we have reached this threshold is worse than despair: it is defeatism. Today, Extinction Rebellion takes to streets around the world in defence of our life-support systems. Through daring, disruptive, nonviolent action, it forces our environmental predicament on to the political agenda. Who are these people? Another “they”, who might rescue us from our follies? The success of this mobilisation depends on us. It will reach the critical threshold only if enough of us cast aside denial and despair, and join this exuberant, proliferating movement. The time for excuses is over. The struggle to overthrow our life-denying system has begun.

#### Merging theory with praxis is crucial---ideology is important, but can’t reverse causally mitigate the harms of capitalism without the plan

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Theorists, therefore, need to think beyond the logic of Capitalism and consider other alternatives for a future based on equity, solidarity and dignity for all human and non-human beings as utopian as this might appear in the short-run. Nonetheless, as Frankel (2018) postulates, “without new comprehensive socio-economic and environmental state roles to redefine socio-economic activity (Frankel, 2018: 285)”, the possibility of a post-growth or postcapitalist equitable society is barely inexistent. Here, it is of paramount importance to engage with the vague idea of “Climate X” (Wainwright & Mann, 2017). Although the concept still remains undertheorized, Climate X defines a world “that has defeated the emergent Climate Leviathan and its compulsion toward planetary sovereignty, while also transcending Capitalism” (Wainwright & Mann, 2017). As an X in an equation, Climate X calls for radical alternatives that no longer attach themselves to the fallacies of green Keynesianism, green extractivism, the owning of the Earth or elite politics of adaptation, leaving aside the less-wealthy. Climate X is, therefore, based on solidarity, equity and dignity for all human and non-human beings, tearing apart the logic of the Law of Cheap Nature that has enslaved most of the living entities and ecosystems of the planet for centuries.

Fighting the Necrocene implies solving the X. This would not only mean a good theoretical start to palliate its effects, but also a liberating and emancipating reality for areas that are victims of neoliberal hegemony, such as the Maldives. Nevertheless, any attempt to commit to strong egalitarianism, quality of work and work justice, radical democracy, solidarity and dignity for all needs to have the transgression of Capitalism as a necessary condition because Capitalism systematically contradicts the realization of such goals and the consequent real utopia of a sociopolitical system based on egalitarian-democratic values. Thus, the Necrocene needs to be perceived from an ecological rationality perspective that allows us to overcome the individualistic neoliberal self-centered logic which has colonized, destroyed and ideologically hegemonized social, cultural and scientific spheres. This ideological hegemony has, in turn, created the uncanny paradox between a hyper-rational system that is in fact profoundly irrational without giving space to alternatives that might allow us to get rid of it. Yet, what is crucial is that the Environmental Humanities and Political Ecology thinkers embrace the debate from a constructive, ecological rationality that understands the different knots of life, and beyond-green complexion of the needs of this multifocal crisis. Although the Necrocene is catastrophist to the core, it allows theorists to bring to the center of the discussion both the deathly nature of Capitalism, and the urgent necessity of a radical alternative to the most likely futures that will perpetuate business-as-usual with a greener image, dooming the less-wealthy.

The Maldives will be critically affected in a short time by the dramatic repercussions of the transgression of the Planetary Boundaries and the consequent disruption of knots of life and TimeSpaces that made the area thrive in cultural, financial and ecological terms. The Necrocene and the transgression of the Planetary Boundaries will detrimentally affect the less-wealthy first and, as a consequence, the ones that have collaborated the least with the transgression of such boundaries. Green Capitalism is, therefore, a fallacy that would sustain the business-as-usual logic and its inequalities. Thus, the Necrocene needs to be fought back from a theory and action perspective that fleshes out the contemporary in an inclusive way. It might help us secularize the sociopolitical sphere from the religious-like and unquestionable Capitalist hegemonic ideology through theory, activism, solidarity and hope, acknowledging the real threat of a psychopolitical, necrotic, capitalist realism. None of us knows what the world will look like in the near future. Nonetheless, in order to confront the Necrocene, we need to solve the X, and we need to solve it together.

#### Absent a specific mechanism to constrain nefarious corporate behavior, alternatives collapse into rule of the strongest

**Condit 15** [Celeste, Distinguished Research Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Georgia, “Multi-Layered Trajectories for Academic Contributions to Social Change,” Feb 4, 2015, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Volume 101, Issue 1, 2015]

The theories of social change that dominated American Communication Studies at the close of the twentieth century echoed those of the Western humanities. These theories spurred extensive thought about the performances of individual identity and the relationship of identity to mass media and culture, and they probably had some laudable influence on the broader culture. They are, however, inadequate to the evolving contexts I have described. One can sum up the most widely circulating theories of social change among “critical social theorists” of the twentieth century in the following, admittedly simplified, statement: There is an (evil) Totality (fill in the blank with one or more: patriarchy, whites, the West, the U.S., neo-liberalism, global capitalism) that must be overturned by a Radical Revolution. We don't know the shape of what will come after the Revolution, but The Evil is a construction of the Totality, so anything that comes after will be better. All you need is … (fill in the blank: Love, Courage, Violence, etc.). For an example, read Slavoj Žižek's attack on the evil Totality (“capitalism,”5 pp. 41/49), which requires the “excess” of violence named as “courage”6 (pp. 75, 78, 79), via “a leap”7 (p. 81), to eliminate “democracy” for a yet-to-be-imagined “new collectivity” (p. 85).8 The resilience of this social theory identifies it as a rhetorical attractor; a predispositional symbolic set that readily transmits emotive potency. To appropriate Kenneth Burke's terms, the bio-symbolics of human political relationships readily create a “grammar” and “rhetoric” in the form of a unified enemy that can be imagined as defeated in a singular battle, after which, things in “our” tribe may be harmonious. To identify this fantasy theme in this way is to suggest that it may not merely be the product of “Western” or “capitalist” imaginations, but rather that it arises from an intersection of the structural characteristics of language systems and the nature of human biologies (which readily adopt both tribal social cooperation and inter-tribal competition). Because neither biology nor symbolics are deterministic systems, this fantasy theme is avoidable, even if it is powerfully attractive. Because both biology and symbolics are material, however, specific kinds of work are necessary in order to avoid the lure of that predisposition. This point is crucial, because it invalidates the twentieth century (idealist) approaches to social change, which envisioned a single (violent) leap away from the social as sufficient to create and maintain better worlds. Thus, when Žižek and others urge us to “Act” with violence to destroy the current Reality, without a vision of an alternative, on the grounds that the links between actions and consequences are never certain, we can call his appeal both a failure of imagination and a failure of reality. As for reality, we have dozens of revolutions as models, and the historical record indicates quite clearly that they generally lead not to harmonious cooperation (what I call “AnarchoNiceness” to gently mock the romanticism of Hardt and Negri) but instead to the production of totalitarian states and/or violent factional strife. A materialist constructivist epistemology accounts for this by predicting that it is not possible for symbol-using animals to exist in a symbolic void. All symbolic movement has a trajectory, and if you have not imagined a potentially realizable alternative for that trajectory to take, then what people will leap into is biological predispositions—the first iteration of which is the rule of the strongest primate. Indeed, this is what experience with revolutions has shown to be the most probable outcome of a revolution that is merely against an Evil. The failure of imagination in such rhetorics thereby reveals itself to be critical, so it is worth pondering sources of that failure. The rhetoric of “the kill” in social theory in the past half century has repeatedly reduced to the leap into a void because the symbolized alternative that the context of the twentieth century otherwise predispositionally offers is to the binary opposite of capitalism, i.e., communism. That rhetorical option, however, has been foreclosed by the historical discrediting of the readily imagined forms of communism (e.g., Žižek9). The hard work to invent better alternatives is not as dramatically enticing as the story of the kill: such labor is piecemeal, intellectually difficult, requires multi-disciplinary understandings, and perhaps requires more creativity than the typical academic theorist can muster. In the absence of a viable alternative, the appeals to Radical Revolution seem to have been sustained by the emotional zing of the kill, in many cases amped up by the appeal of autonomy and manliness (Žižek uses the former term and deploys the ethos of the latter). But if one does not provide a viable vision that offers a reasonable chance of leaving most people better off than they are now, then Fox News has a better offering (you'll be free and you'll get rich!). A revolution posited as a void cannot succeed as a horizon of history, other than as constant local scale violent actions, perhaps connected by shifting networks we call “terrorists.” This analysis of the geo-political situation, of the onto-epistemological character of language, and of the limitations of the dominant horizon of social change indicates that the focal project for progressive Left Academics should now include the hard labor to produce alternative visions that appear materially feasible.

#### Raising the threat level is important---key to spur individual and institutional action

Veldman 12 – PhD Candidate Religion and Nature at U of Florida (Robin- National Foundation Fellow at the Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship, Spring, “Narrating the Environmental Apocalypse: How Imagining the End Facilitates Moral Reasoning Among Environmental Activists” Ethics and the Environment, Vol 17 No 1, ProjectMuse)

Environmental Apocalypticism and Activism As we saw in the introduction, critics often argue that apocalyptic rhetoric induces feelings of hopelessness or fatalism. While it certainly does for some people, in this section I will present evidence that apocalypticism also often goes hand in hand with activism. Some of the strongest evidence of a connection between environmental apocalypticism and activism comes from a national survey that examined whether Americans perceived climate change to be dangerous. As part of his analysis, Anthony Leiserowitz identified several “interpretive communities,” which had consistent demographic characteristics but varied in their levels of risk perception. The group who perceived the risk to be the greatest, which he labeled “alarmists,” described climate change [End Page 5] using apocalyptic language, such as “Bad…bad…bad…like after nuclear war…no vegetation,” “Heat waves, it’s gonna kill the world,” and “Death of the planet” (2005, 1440). Given such language, this would seem to be a reasonable way to operationalize environmental apocalypticism. If such apocalypticism encouraged fatalism, we would expect alarmists to be less likely to have engaged in environmental behavior compared to groups with moderate or low levels of concern. To the contrary, however, Leiserowitz found that alarmists “were significantly more likely to have taken personal action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions” (ibid.) than respondents who perceived climate change to pose less of a threat. Interestingly, while one might expect such radical views to appeal only to a tiny minority, Leiserowitz found that a respectable eleven percent of Americans fell into this group (ibid). Further supporting Leiserowitz’s findings, in a separate national survey conducted in 2008, Maibach, Roser-Renouf, and Leiserowitz found that a group they labeled “the Alarmed” (again, due to their high levels of concern about climate change) “are the segment most engaged in the issue of global warming. They are very convinced it is happening, human-caused, and a serious and urgent threat. The Alarmed are already making changes in their own lives and support an aggressive national response” (2009, 3, emphasis added). This group was far more likely than people with lower levels of concern over climate change to have engaged in consumer activism (by rewarding companies that support action to reduce global warming with their business, for example) or to have contacted elected officials to express their concern. Additionally, the authors found that “[w]hen asked which reason for action was most important to them personally, the Alarmed were most likely to select preventing the destruction of most life on the planet (31%)” (2009, 31)—a finding suggesting that for many in this group it is specifically the desire to avert catastrophe, rather than some other motivation, that encourages pro-environmental behavior. Taken together, these and other studies (cf. Semenza et al. 2008 and DerKarabetia, Stephenson, and Poggi 1996) provide important evidence that many of those who think environmental problems pose a severe threat practice some form of activism, rather than giving way to fatalistic resignation. National surveys give a good overview of the association between apocalypticism and activism among the general public, but they do not [End Page 6] provide sufficient ethnographic detail. To complement this broader picture I now turn to case studies, which provide greater insight into how adherents themselves understand what motivates their environmental behavior. When seeking a subset of environmentalists with apocalyptic beliefs, the radical wing is an obvious place to look. For example, many Earth First!ers believe that the collapse of industrial society is inevitable (Taylor 1994). At the same time, the majority are actively committed to preventing ecological disaster. As Earth First! co-founder Howie Wolke acknowledged, the two are directly connected: “As ecological calamity unravels the living fabric of the Earth, environmental radicalism has become both common and necessary” (1989, 29).3 This logic underlies efforts to preserve wilderness areas, which many radical environmentalists believe will serve as reservoirs of genetic diversity, helping to restore the planet after industrial society collapses (Taylor 1994). In addition to encouraging activism to preserve wilderness, apocalyptic beliefs also motivate practices such as “monkeywrenching,” or ecological sabotage, civil disobedience, and the more conventional “paper monkeywrenching” (lobbying, engaging in public information campaigns to shift legislative priorities, or using lawsuits when these tactics fail). Ultimately, while there are disagreements over what strategies will best achieve their desired goals, for most radical environmentalists, apocalypticism and activism are bound closely together. The connection between belief in impending disaster and environmental activism holds true for Wiccans as well. During fieldwork in the southeastern United States, for example, Shawn Arthur reported meeting “dozens of Wiccans who professed their apocalyptic millenarian beliefs to anyone who expressed interest, yet many others only quietly agreed with them without any further elaboration” (2008, 201). For this group, the coming disaster was understood as divine retribution, the result of an angry Earth Goddess preparing to punish humans for squandering her ecological gifts (Arthur 2008, 203). In light of Gaia’s impending revenge, Arthur found that Wiccans advocated both spiritual and material forms of activism. For example, practices such as Goddess worship, the use of herbal remedies for healing, and awareness of the body and its energies were considered important for initiating a more harmonious relationship with the earth (Arthur 2008, 207). As for material activism, Arthur notes [End Page 7] that the notion of environmental apocalypse played a key role in encouraging pro-environmental behavior: images of immanent [sic] ecological crisis and apocalyptic change often were utilized as motivating factors for developing an environmentally and ecologically conscious worldview; for stressing the importance of working for the Earth through a variety of practices, including environmental activism, garbage collecting, recycling, composting, and religious rituals; for learning sustainable living skills; and for developing a special relationship with the world as a divine entity. (2008, 212) What these studies and my own experiences in the environmentalist milieu4 suggest is that people who make a serious commitment to engaging in environmentally friendly behavior, people who move beyond making superficial changes to making substantial and permanent ones, are quite likely to subscribe to some form of the apocalyptic narrative. All this is not to say that apocalypticism directly or inevitably causes activism, or that believing catastrophe is imminent is the only reason people become activists. However, it is to say that activism and apocalypticism are associated for some people, and that this association is not arbitrary, for there is something uniquely powerful and compelling about the apocalyptic narrative. Plenty of people will hear it and ignore it, or find it implausible, or simply decide that if the situation really is so dire there is nothing they can do to prevent it from continuing to deteriorate. Yet to focus only on the ability of apocalyptic rhetoric to induce apathy, indifference or reactance is to ignore the evidence that it also fuels quite the opposite—grave concern, activism, and sometimes even outrage. It is also to ignore the movement’s history. From Silent Spring (Carson [1962] 2002) to The Limits to Growth (Meadows et al 1972) to The End of Nature (McKibben 1989), apocalyptic arguments have held a prominent place within environmental literature, topping best-seller lists and spreading the message far and wide that protecting the environment should be a societal priority. Thus, while it is not a style of argument that will be effective in convincing everyone to commit to the environmental cause (see Feinberg and Willer 2011), there does appear to be a close relationship between apocalyptic belief and activism among a certain minority. The next section explores the implications of that relationship further. [End Page 8] The Apocalyptic Narrative as a Framework for Moral Deliberation In discussing how apocalypticism functions within the environmental community, it will be helpful to analyze it as a type of narrative. I do so because the domain of narrative includes both the stories that people read and write, as well as those they tell and live by. By using narratives as data, scholars can analyze experiential and textual sources simultaneously (Polkinghorne 1988; Riessman 2000). To analyze environmental apocalypticism as a type of narrative is not to suggest that apocalyptics’ claims about the future are fictional. Rather, it is to highlight that the facts to which environmentalists appeal have been organized with particular goals in mind, goals which have necessarily shaped the selection and presentation of those facts. Compelling environmental writers do not simply list every known fact pertaining to the natural world, but instead select certain findings and place them within a larger interpretive framework. Alone, each fact has little meaning, but when woven into a larger narrative, a message emerges. This process of narrativization is essential if a message is to be persuasive (Killingsworth and Palmer 2000, 197), and has occurred not only in the rapidly expanding genre of environmental nonfiction, but in much scientific writing about the environment as well (Harré, Brockmeier, and Mühlhäusler 1999, 69). What defines narratives as such is their beginning-middle-end structure, their ability to “describe an action that begins, continues over a well-defined period of time, and finally draws to a definite close” (Cronon 1992, 1367). Here I will focus on the last of these elements, the ending, because anything we can learn about how endings function within narratives in general will be applicable to the apocalypse, the most final ending of all. An ending is essential in order for a story to be complete, but there is more to it than this. Endings are also key because they establish a story’s moral, the lesson it is supposed to impart upon the reader. In other words, to know the moral of the story, auditors must know the consequences of the actions depicted therein, so there can be no moral without an ending. To take a simple example, when we hear the story of the shepherd boy who falsely claims that a wolf is attacking his flock of sheep in order to entertain himself at his community’s expense, what makes the lesson clear is that when a wolf does attack his flock, the disenchanted town members refuse to come to his aid. By clearly illustrating how telling lies can have [End Page 9] unpleasant consequences for the perpetrator, the ending reveals the moral that lying is wrong. As Cronon explains, it is “[t]he difference between beginning and end [that] gives us our chance to extract a moral from the rhetorical landscape” (1992, 1370). Endings play a similar role in environmental stories. In Al Gore’s book Earth in the Balance (1992), for example, he devotes over a third of the book’s pages to presenting scientific evidence that disaster is imminent.5 As he sums it up, “Modern industrial civilization…is colliding violently with our planet’s ecological system. The ferocity of its assault on the earth is breathtaking, and the horrific consequences are occurring so quickly as to defy our capacity to recognize them” (1992, 269). He builds this argument so carefully precisely because if the ending does not seem credible, the moral he wants readers to draw from the story will not be compelling. If his readers are not convinced that the ending to this story of ecological misbehavior will be a debacle of colossal proportions, they will not become convinced that they need to dramatically alter their ecological behavior. Thus the vision of future catastrophe that Gore presents provides a crucial vantage point from which the present environmental situation can be understood as the result of a grand moral failure, and Gore’s readers are made aware of their obligations in light of it. Gore himself appreciates the importance of this recognition, arguing that “whether we realize it or not, we are now engaged in an epic battle to right the balance of our earth, and the tide of this battle will turn only when the majority of people in the world become sufficiently aroused by a shared sense of urgent danger to join an all-out effort” (1992, 269, emphasis added). Here, as in so many other stories, the ending must be in place for the moral to become clear. To say that endings are essential in order for stories to have morals is already to hint that stories alter behavior, that they can encourage action in the real world even as they invoke an imaginary one. This much is clear from Earth in the Balance (1992): Gore does not just want people to grasp a moral, to perceive some ethic in the abstract—he wants them change their behavior in the here and now. In constructing a narrative with this goal in mind, he is banking on the ability of powerful stories to motivate social change, to be, as Cronon puts it, “our chief moral compass in the world” (1992, 1375). Mark Johnson’s insightful synthesis of cognitive science and philosophy helps explain further how this process of moral guidance occurs. For [End Page 10] Johnson, narrative is fundamental to our experience of reality, “the most comprehensive means we have for constructing temporal syntheses that bind together and unify our past, present, and future into more or less meaningful patterns” (1993, 174). Narratives are also critical to our ability to reason morally, an activity which Johnson asserts is fundamentally imaginative. In this view, we use stories to imagine ourselves in different scenarios, exploring and evaluating the consequences of different possible actions in order to determine the right one. Moral deliberation is thus …an imaginative exploration of the possibilities for constructive action within a present situation. We have a problem to solve here and now (e.g., ‘What am I to do?’…. ‘How should I treat others?’), and we must try out various possible continuations of our narrative in search of the one that seems best to resolve the indeterminacy of our present situation. (1993, 180) Put another way, what cognitive science has revealed is that from an empirical perspective the process of moral deliberation entails constructing narratives rooted in our unique history and circumstances, rather than applying universal principles (such as Kant’s categorical imperative) to particular cases. That we use narratives to reason morally is not a result of conscious choice but of how human cognition works. That is, insofar as we experience ourselves as temporal beings, a narrative framework is necessary to organize, explain, and ultimately justify the many individual decisions that over time become a life. Formal principles may be useful in unambiguous textbook cases, but in real life “we can almost never decide (reflectively) how to act without considering the ways in which we can continue our narrative construction of our situation” (Johnson 1993, 160). Empirically speaking, “our moral reasoning is situated within our narrative understanding” (Johnson 1993, 180, italics in original). The observation that people use narratives to reason morally may help explain the association between environmental apocalypticism and activism. The function of the apocalyptic narrative may be that it helps adherents determine how to act by **providing a storyline** from which they can imaginatively sample, enabling them to assess the consequences of their actions. In order to answer the question, “Should I drive or walk to the store?” for example, they can reason, “If I walk, that will reduce my carbon footprint, which will help keep the ice caps from melting, saving humans and other species.” It is their access to this narrative of impending [End Page 11] disaster that makes such reasoning possible, for it provides a simple framework within which people can consider and eventually arrive at some conclusion about their moral obligations.6 More broadly, it can guide entire lives by providing a narrative frame of reference that imbues the individual’s experiences with meaning. For example, it is the context of looming anthropogenic apocalypse which suggests that dedicating one’s life to achieving a healthier relationship with the natural world is a worthwhile endeavor. Absent the apocalypse, choices such as limiting one’s travel to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, becoming vegetarian, working in the environmental sector (often for less compensation), or growing one’s own food could seem to be meaningless sacrifices. Within this context, on the other hand, such choices become essential features of the quest to live a moral life. The apocalyptic narrative is but one of many ways to tell the environmental story, yet it is one that seems particularly well-suited to encouraging pro-environmental behavior. First, the apocalyptic ending discloses certain everyday decisions as moral decisions. Without the narrative context of impending disaster, decisions such as whether to drive or walk to the store would be merely matters of convenience or preference. In the context of potentially disastrous consequences for valued places, people, and organisms, by contrast, such decisions become matters of right and wrong. Second, putting information about the environment into narrative form enables apocalyptics to link complex global environmental processes to their own lives, a perceptual technique Thomashow describes as “bringing the biosphere home” (2002). Developing this skill is essential because without that felt sense of connection to their own lived experience, people are much less likely to become convinced that it is incumbent upon them to act (2002, 2). Finally, the sheer magnitude of the impending disaster increases the feeling of responsibility to make good on one’s moral intuitions. By locating individuals within a drama of ultimate concern, the narrative frames their choices as cosmically important, and this feeling of urgency then helps to convert moral deliberation into action. With this conceptual overview in place, we can now examine more closely what the relationship between apocalypticism and moral reasoning looks like in practice. [End Page 12]

#### Securitization of the climate causes cooperation, not militarism---reps are shaped by context

Keating 13 Joshua E. Keating, associate editor at Foreign Policy, “Terror Management,” Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/04/terror-management/>, March 4 2013

REFLECTING ON U.S.-Soviet relations late in his presidency, Ronald Reagan once mused about one thing that could unite humanity: a threat from a "power from outer space." At the time, the sci-fi reference seemed a little out of place in a discussion about international relations, but the Gipper had a point: Bitter rivals don't tend to unite unless they face a common threat from a third party. Think of the U.S.-Soviet alliance against Nazi Germany, the period of bipartisan consensus that followed the 9/11 attacks on the United States—or, more to Reagan's point, the now clichéd scene of mortal enemies putting aside their differences in alien-invasion movies. (Remember the Arab and Israeli pilots who join forces near the end of Independence Day}) Some psychologists, however, now suggest we may not have to wait for flying saucers in our search for a global threat that can bring humanity together —we may already have created one ourselves in the form of hotter temperatures, rising sea levels, and increasingly unpredictable weather. According to a recent article in Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, just hearing about the dangers posed by global warming can turn you into a pacifist. The study was led by University of Colorado professor Tom Pyszczynski, one of the leading proponents of an emerging school of social psychology known as "terror management theory," which holds that a wide array of human behavior and thought is motivated by fear of death. In this case, a common fear of the dangers of climate change, he argues, can lead to global cooperation. "When you think of yourself as facing a shared enemy and a shared threat, it brings people together," Pyszczynski says. Ironically, defense strategists have been warning for years of exactly the opposite scenario when it comes to global warming: that a new world of extreme weather and rising seas could usher in a new age of confrontation as countries compete for increasingly scarce resources and habitable land. More recently, a 2012 report by the U.S. National Intelligence Council forecast that, by 2030, climate change could spawn this kind of conflict in developing and fragile states. Still, Pyszczynski is no starry-eyed optimist. "My guess is that as things get worse, people will come together and a consensus will emerge, but by then it may be too late," he says. Then again, in disaster movies enemies always unite just in time to fight off the bad guys.

# 2AC

## Adv---Socialism

### 2AC---AT: Social Death

#### First, materially---a confluence of statistical factors prove racial progress is possible and occurring.

Hochschild 17 (Jennifer L. Hochschild , Professor of Government, African and African American Studies, and the Chair of the Department of Government (Harvard University), Chair in American Law and Governance at the Library of Congress, President of the American Political Science Association, “Left Pessimism and Political Science,” Perspectives on Politics, Volume 15, Issue 1, March 15th, p. 6-19, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716004102> \*\*modified to allow for more humanizing frames)

Is Pessimism the Only Sensible or Empirically Warranted Response in these Two Arenas? It is easy to find evidence to support pessimism about American racial dynamics or the societal deployment of genomic science. The United States is notorious for its racially- and ethnically-inflected poverty and excessive levels of incarceration; undocumented migrants live in legal limbo; new genomics techniques such as CRISPR-Cas9 tempt humankind into hubristic manipulation of nature, and scientists’ promises to cure cancer through genetics knowledge ring hollow to many. The question for this article is whether there are also strong grounds for optimism in my two illustrative realms, such that one could plausibly and persuasively choose to be “centered on advancement concerns” rather than “centered on security concerns.” The answer is yes. Again I can point only to illustrative, suggestive evidence. First, the gap between ~~blacks’~~ [black people’s] and whites’ life expectancy declined from seven years in 1990 to 3.4 years in 2014. That is an astonishing, perhaps unprecedented, rate of change given the usual slow pace of demographic transformation. It is important in itself, of course, and also as a summary statement about an array of other social phenomena in which racial disparities are declining. ~~Blacks~~ [Black people] are living longer mainly because of declining rates of homicides, HIV mortality, infant mortality, cancer and heart disease, and suicide among black men.19 A lot of things have to go right for a group’s life expectancy to rise rapidly. Second, applications for U.S. citizenship rose from the previous year in ten of the fifteen years from 2000 to 2015, while declining in four (and remaining stable in one). That is an important indicator of immigrant incorporation, and especially relevant to political scientists because “Hispanics and Asians who are naturalized citizens tend to have higher voter turnout rates than their U.S.-born counterparts.” 20 Third, non-white Americans themselves tend to feel pretty good about their lives. Gallup Poll asked in 2016, “Where do you expect your life satisfaction to be in five years?” If whites’ response is standardized at 1, then ~~blacks~~ [black people’s] are at 2.97, and Hispanics at 1.29. Only Asian Americans, at 0.97, were less optimistic than whites. Gallup also asked about one’s level of stress in the previous day. If whites are again standardized at 1, then ~~blacks~~ [black people] are at 0.48; Hispanics at 0.53; and Asian Americans at 0.75. Middle-class ~~blacks~~ [black people] were half as likely as middle class whites to report stress during the previous day.21 In the arena of genomics also, one can point to grounds for optimism rather than pessimism. The Innocence Project, “dedicated to exonerating wrongfully convicted individuals through DNA testing and reforming the criminal justice system to prevent future injustice,” has enabled about 350 people to be released from prison. (Not so parenthetically, seven out of ten are African American or Latino, mostly poor men.) More extensive DNA testing might lead to many more exonerations; one careful analysis of serious crime convictions found that “in five percent of homicide and sexual assault cases DNA testing eliminated the convicted offender as the source of incriminating physical evidence.” Previous estimates had pegged the share of wrongful convictions at no more than one to two percent.22 More generally, “DNA profiling [of convicted felons] reduces the probability of future convictions by 17% for serious violent offenders and by 6% for serious property offenders .... These are likely underestimates of the true deterrent effect of DNA profiling.” 23 Genomic scientists can point to impressive successes with regard to Mendelian (single-gene) diseases, and they focus even more on diagnoses and cures yet to come. Eric Lander, director of the Broad Institute, likens the trajectory of genomic medicine to the development of medicine based on the germ theory of disease, which “took about 75 years. With genomics, we’re maybe halfway through that cycle.” In his view, “the rate of progress is just stunning. As costs continue to come down, we are entering a period where we are going to be able to get the complete catalogue of disease genes.” Cancer is a prime target, almost in sight:“If you understand that this is a game of probability, and there is only a finite number of cancer cells and each has only a certain chance of mutating, and if we can put together two or three independent attacks on the cancer cell, we win. If we invest vigorously in this and we attract the best young people into this field, we get it done in a generation. If we don’t, it takes two generations.” Lander is “not Pollyanna .... [I]t’s not for next year. We play for the long game. I don’t want to overpromise in the short term, but it is incredibly exciting if you take the 25-year view.” 24 This is a classic statement of optimism, or being centered on advancement concerns. It begins with expertise and perspective, sees dangers and weaknesses, and nonetheless asserts empirical grounds for faith. President Obama’s insistence that “if you had to choose a moment in human history to live ... you’d choose now” has the same quality. My point is not that left pessimism is wrong—only that there are grounds, perhaps equally strong, for left optimism. One can choose either, and then find good evidence for that choice. Why Is Left Pessimism Problematic? That wily politician, Barney Frank, offers the best answer from the vantage point of the public arena: “When you tell your supporters that nothing has gotten better, and that any concessions you’ve received are mere tokenism, you take away their incentive to stay mobilized. As for those you’re negotiating with, if you denigrate anything they concede as worthless, they will soon realize they can obtain the same response by giving nothing at all.” 25 One can offer the same type of answer from the vantage point of a teacher. Many of us have had the experience of teaching a course—about civil war, inequality and politics, environmental policy, or the meaning of liberty—only to have our students politely request on the last day of class some idea or piece of information about which they can feel good or which they can use in their public engagement. We need to offer answers. Optimism may also be associated with academic success; one careful study found that“although achievement in mathematics was most strongly related to prior achievement and grade level, optimism and pessimism were significant factors. In particular, students with a more generally pessimistic outlook on life had a lower level of achievement in mathematics over time.” 26A study of college students similarly found that “dispositional and academic optimism were associated with less chance of dropping out of college, as well as better motivation and adjustment. Academic optimism was also associated with higher grade point average.” 27 And for those of us of a certain age, it is heartening to discover that “after adjusting for covariates, the results suggested that greater optimism [among middle-aged, predominantly white Americans] was associated with greater high-density lipoprotein cholesterol and lower triglycerides .... In conclusion, ... optimism is associated with a healthy lipid profile; moreover, these associations can be explained, in part, by the presence of healthier behaviors and a lower body mass index.” 28

#### Second, theoretically---their theory is overly deterministic, has no basis, and provides an alibi for disengagement

Birge 19 (Charles, MA in Comparative Studies, “The Addiction of Transparency: Observations on the Emotional Neurophysiology of Whiteness.” Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University. <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=osu1554891264402108&disposition=inline> //shree)

This deeper structure of race is more fully elucidated by the theoretical perspective of Afro-Pessimism, which has also greatly influenced my thinking on whiteness. Afro-Pessimism arose out of the innovations of black scholars Orlando Patterson (1982), Hortense Spillers (1987), and Saidiya Hartman (1997), and has been elaborated by Frank Wilderson (2010), Jared Sexton (2008), Christina Sharpe (2010, 2016), and Fred Moten (2003), among many others. While “Afro-Pessimism” is not a monolithic term, and not all of these scholars identify with it, all of them explore similar territory: they theorize blackness--both past and present--as a condition of absolute (or nearly absolute) captivity in which the expectations, norms, and laws of human relationality (e.g., gender, kinship, personhood) do not apply--the black slave is, again, “socially dead.” This means that blackness is beyond the purview of Human ethical institutions such as the state, the law, civil society, and politics writ large (even revolutionary politics). Moreover, this condition of social death is the ground against which the modern notion of Humanity indexes itself; that is, in the modern world, Humanity only knows itself in all of its capacities (the ability to reason, to have emotions, to enter into intimate and civil relationships) against the absolute incapacity of black slaves. Thus, AfroPessimism argues that black enslavement is not merely a tool of economic exploitation; it serves as a symbolic position against which the existential and psychological security of Humanity is obtained--a condition which persists in the present day. In psychoanalytic terms, then, it functions unconsciously to sustain the psychic health of the Human. While the positions of Human Mastery can be occupied by various non-black peoples depending on the needs of the structure, it is most closely correlated with whiteness. So, for AfroPessimism whiteness is not merely a social construction that secures the hegemony; whiteness is an existential structure, instantiated in the unconscious, the very nature of which is to parasitically prevent racial others--blackness in particular--from accessing the agency needed to participate in the struggle for hegemony. The Afro-Pessimist analysis resonated with me. Given how easily white supremacy seems to resist conscious denunciation, it seemed sensible to argue that the nature of whiteness was to parasitically suck dry the agency of people of color, blackness in particular. However, Afro-Pessimism also has a problem: it is, by definition, abstract and essentialist, leading to difficulties and confusion when discussing how it functions phenomenologically in everyday life. Challenging questions abound: if blackness is theorized as so totalizing that formations such as gender and class lose their significance, can it provide an alibi for black patriarchy and class elitism? And if whiteness is so totalizing, does it mean that white people can simply dismiss the possibility of political engagement and responsibility as out of their control? How would one theorize the diverging interests of a wealthy black man and a poor indigenous woman--is she still privileged in her contingent Humanity over his absolute enslavement? In a quasitheological fashion, Afro-Pessimism risks outsourcing the demands, nuances, and agency of everyday life to an abstraction that seems transcendent. Some Afro-Pessimist scholars attempt to address this problem. Sexton (“Peopleof-Color Blindness, 35-36), for example, analyzes ontology politically, rather than philosophically or theologically; he argues that the ontology of race is not actually a transcendent principle, but it is so deeply entrenched that it takes on the appearance of one. Wilderson (following Sexton) theorizes that race functions as a “libidinal economy” of unconscious psychic identification (with the mastery/capacity of whiteness) and abjection (of enslaved blackness) that structures “the whole of psychic life.” (Wilderson, 9) But both of these political and libidinal explanations still rely heavily on a near transcendent structural analysis, theorized as absolutely unconscious and always already present; they do not suggest how they might be accessed by conscious awareness, and there is no specific moment or condition in which they begin, other than the Middle Passage. But didn’t the Middle Passage arise out of certain conditions? And couldn’t undoing those conditions also undo the existential structure of whiteness? And what about the unconscious--is it really impossible to access? Sexton and Wilderson do not offer much practical guidance here, other than their unwavering commitment to stare down the structural antagonism of race.1

#### Third, historically---anti-black racism is not static, but shaped by socialization and specific policies

Harari 15 [Yuval Noah Harari, Israeli historian and a tenured professor in the Department of History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, specializing in World History, Doctorate in Philosophy from Oxford University, and an acclaimed author whose first book, Sapiens, was an international bestseller that received lavish praise by figures ranging from Barack Obama to Bill Gates, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind,* tr. by Yuval Harari with help from John Purcell and Haim Watzman, HarperCollins: Broadway, NY, 2015, p. 133-144]

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN HISTORY IN THE millennia following the Agricultural Revolution boils down to a single question: how did humans organise themselves in mass-cooperation networks, when they lacked the biological instincts necessary to sustain such networks? The short answer is that humans created imagined orders and devised scripts. These two inventions filled the gaps left by our biological inheritance. However, the appearance of these networks was, for many, a dubious blessing. The imagined orders sustaining these networks were neither neutral nor fair. They divided people into make-believe groups, arranged in a hierarchy. The upper levels enjoyed privileges and power, while the lower ones suffered from discrimination and oppression. Hammurabi’s Code, for example, established a pecking order of superiors, commoners and slaves. Superiors got all the good things in life. Commoners got what was left. Slaves got a beating if they complained. Despite its proclamation of the equality of all men, the imagined order established by the Americans in 1776 also established a hierarchy. It created a hierarchy between men, who benefited from it, and women, whom it left disempowered. It created a hierarchy between whites, who enjoyed liberty, and blacks and American Indians, who were considered humans of a lesser type and therefore did not share in the equal rights of men. Many of those who signed the Declaration of Independence were slaveholders. They did not release their slaves upon signing the Declaration, nor did they consider themselves hypocrites. In their view, the rights of men had little to do with Negroes. The American order also consecrated the hierarchy between rich and poor. Most Americans at that time had little problem with the inequality caused by wealthy parents passing their money and businesses on to their children. In their view, equality meant simply that the same laws applied to rich and poor. It had nothing to do with unemployment benefits, integrated education or health insurance. Liberty, too, carried very different connotations than it does today. In 1776, it did not mean that the disempowered (certainly not blacks or Indians or, God forbid, women) could gain and exercise power. It meant simply that the state could not, except in unusual circumstances, confiscate a citizen’s private property or tell him what to do with it. The American order thereby upheld the hierarchy of wealth, which some thought was mandated by God and others viewed as representing the immutable laws of nature. Nature, it was claimed, rewarded merit with wealth while penalising indolence. All the above-mentioned distinctions – between free persons and slaves, between whites and blacks, between rich and poor – are rooted in fictions. (The hierarchy of men and women will be discussed later.) Yet it is an iron rule of history that every imagined hierarchy disavows its fictional origins and claims to be natural and inevitable. For instance, many people who have viewed the hierarchy of free persons and slaves as natural and correct have argued that slavery is not a human invention. Hammurabi saw it as ordained by the gods. Aristotle argued that slaves have a ‘slavish nature’ whereas free people have a ‘free nature’. Their status in society is merely a reflection of their innate nature. Ask white supremacists about the racial hierarchy, and you are in for a pseudoscientific lecture concerning the biological differences between the races. You are likely to be told that there is something in Caucasian blood or genes that makes whites naturally more intelligent, moral and hardworking. Ask a diehard capitalist about the hierarchy of wealth, and you are likely to hear that it is the inevitable outcome of objective differences in abilities. The rich have more money, in this view, because they are more capable and diligent. No one should be bothered, then, if the wealthy get better health care, better education and better nutrition. The rich richly deserve every perk they enjoy. People with lighter skin colour are typically more in danger of sunburn than people with darker skin. Yet there was no biological logic behind the division of South African beaches. Beaches reserved for people with lighter skin were not characterised by lower levels of ultraviolet radiation. Hindus who adhere to the caste system believe that cosmic forces have made one caste superior to another. According to a famous Hindu creation myth, the gods fashioned the world out of the body of a primeval being, the Purusa. The sun was created from the Purusa’s eye, the moon from the Purusa’s brain, the Brahmins (priests) from its mouth, the Kshatriyas (warriors) from its arms, the Vaishyas (peasants and merchants) from its thighs, and the Shudras (servants) from its legs. Accept this explanation and the sociopolitical differences between Brahmins and Shudras are as natural and eternal as the differences between the sun and the moon.1 The ancient Chinese believed that when the goddess Nü Wa created humans from earth, she kneaded aristocrats from fine yellow soil, whereas commoners were formed from brown mud.2 Yet, to the best of our understanding, these hierarchies are all the product of human imagination. Brahmins and Shudras were not really created by the gods from different body parts of a primeval being. Instead, the distinction between the two castes was created by laws and norms invented by humans in northern India about 3,000 years ago. Contrary to Aristotle, there is no known biological difference between slaves and free people. Human laws and norms have turned some people into slaves and others into masters. Between blacks and whites there are some objective biological differences, such as skin colour and hair type, but there is no evidence that the differences extend to intelligence or morality. Most people claim that their social hierarchy is natural and just, while those of other societies are based on false and ridiculous criteria. Modern Westerners are taught to scoff at the idea of racial hierarchy. They are shocked by laws prohibiting blacks to live in white neighbourhoods, or to study in white schools, or to be treated in white hospitals. But the hierarchy of rich and poor – which mandates that rich people live in separate and more luxurious neighbourhoods, study in separate and more prestigious schools, and receive medical treatment in separate and better-equipped facilities – seems perfectly sensible to many Americans and Europeans. Yet it’s a proven fact that most rich people are rich for the simple reason that they were born into a rich family, while most poor people will remain poor throughout their lives simply because they were born into a poor family. Unfortunately, complex human societies seem to require imagined hierarchies and unjust discrimination. Of course not all hierarchies are morally identical, and some societies suffered from more extreme types of discrimination than others, yet scholars know of no large society that has been able to dispense with discrimination altogether. Time and again people have created order in their societies by classifying the population into imagined categories, such as superiors, commoners and slaves; whites and blacks; patricians and plebeians; Brahmins and Shudras; or rich and poor. These categories have regulated relations between millions of humans by making some people legally, politically or socially superior to others. Hierarchies serve an important function. They enable complete strangers to know how to treat one another without wasting the time and energy needed to become personally acquainted. In George Bernard Shaw’s Pygmalion, Henry Higgins doesn’t need to establish an intimate acquaintance with Eliza Doolittle in order to understand how he should relate to her. Just hearing her talk tells him that she is a member of the underclass with whom he can do as he wishes – for example, using her as a pawn in his bet to pass off a jower girl as a duchess. A modern Eliza working at a jorist’s needs to know how much effort to put into selling roses and gladioli to the dozens of people who enter the shop each day. She can’t make a detailed enquiry into the tastes and wallets of each individual. Instead, she uses social cues – the way the person is dressed, his or her age, and if she’s not politically correct his skin colour. That is how she immediately distinguishes between the accounting-firm partner who’s likely to place a large order for expensive roses, and a messenger boy who can only afford a bunch of daisies. Of course, differences in natural abilities also play a role in the formation of social distinctions. But such diversities of aptitudes and character are usually mediated through imagined hierarchies. This happens in two important ways. First and foremost, most abilities have to be nurtured and developed. Even if somebody is born with a particular talent, that talent will usually remain latent if it is not fostered, honed and exercised. Not all people get the same chance to cultivate and refine their abilities. Whether or not they have such an opportunity will usually depend on their place within their society’s imagined hierarchy. Harry Potter is a good example. Removed from his distinguished wizard family and brought up by ignorant muggles, he arrives at Hogwarts without any experience in magic. It takes him seven books to gain a firm command of his powers and knowledge of his unique abilities. Second, even if people belonging to different classes develop exactly the same abilities, they are unlikely to enjoy equal success because they will have to play the game by different rules. If, in British-ruled India, an Untouchable, a Brahmin, a Catholic Irishman and a Protestant Englishman had somehow developed exactly the same business acumen, they still would not have had the same chance of becoming rich. The economic game was rigged by legal restrictions and unoɽcial glass ceilings. The Vicious Circle All societies are based on imagined hierarchies, but not necessarily on the same hierarchies. What accounts for the differences? Why did traditional Indian society classify people according to caste, Ottoman society according to religion, and American society according to race? In most cases the hierarchy originated as the result of a set of accidental historical circumstances and was then perpetuated and refined over many generations as different groups developed vested interests in it. For instance, many scholars surmise that the Hindu caste system took shape when Indo-Aryan people invaded the Indian subcontinent about 3,000 years ago, subjugating the local population. The invaders established a stratified society, in which they – of course – occupied the leading positions (priests and warriors), leaving the natives to live as servants and slaves. The invaders, who were few in number, feared losing their privileged status and unique identity. To forestall this danger, they divided the population into castes, each of which was required to pursue a specific occupation or perform a specific role in society. Each had different legal status, privileges and duties. Mixing of castes – social interaction, marriage, even the sharing of meals – was prohibited. And the distinctions were not just legal – they became an inherent part of religious mythology and practice. The rulers argued that the caste system rejected an eternal cosmic reality rather than a chance historical development. Concepts of purity and impurity were essential elements in Hindu religion, and they were harnessed to buttress the social pyramid. Pious Hindus were taught that contact with members of a different caste could pollute not only them personally, but society as a whole, and should therefore be abhorred. Such ideas are hardly unique to Hindus. Throughout history, and in almost all societies, concepts of pollution and purity have played a leading role in enforcing social and political divisions and have been exploited by numerous ruling classes to maintain their privileges. The fear of pollution is not a complete fabrication of priests and princes, however. It probably has its roots in biological survival mechanisms that make humans feel an instinctive revulsion towards potential disease carriers, such as sick persons and dead bodies. If you want to keep any human group isolated – women, Jews, Roma, gays, blacks – the best way to do it is convince everyone that these people are a source of pollution. The Hindu caste system and its attendant laws of purity became deeply embedded in Indian culture. Long after the Indo-Aryan invasion was forgotten, Indians continued to believe in the caste system and to abhor the pollution caused by caste mixing. Castes were not immune to change. In fact, as time went by, large castes were divided into sub-castes. Eventually the original four castes turned into 3,000 different groupings called jati (literally ‘birth’). But this proliferation of castes did not change the basic principle of the system, according to which every person is born into a particular rank, and any infringement of its rules pollutes the person and society as a whole. A persons jati determines her profession, the food she can eat, her place of residence and her eligible marriage partners. Usually a person can marry only within his or her caste, and the resulting children inherit that status. Whenever a new profession developed or a new group of people appeared on the scene, they had to be recognised as a caste in order to receive a legitimate place within Hindu society. Groups that failed to win recognition as a caste were, literally, outcasts – in this stratified society, they did not even occupy the lowest rung. They became known as Untouchables. They had to live apart from all other people and scrape together a living in humiliating and disgusting ways, such as sifting through garbage dumps for scrap material. Even members of the lowest caste avoided mingling with them, eating with them, touching them and certainly marrying them. In modern India, matters of marriage and work are still heavily influenced by the caste system, despite all attempts by the democratic government of India to break down such distinctions and convince Hindus that there is nothing polluting in caste mixing.3 Purity in America A similar vicious circle perpetuated the racial hierarchy in modern America. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, the European conquerors imported millions of African slaves to work the mines and plantations of America. They chose to import slaves from Africa rather than from Europe or East Asia due to three circumstantial factors. Firstly, Africa was closer, so it was cheaper to import slaves from Senegal than from Vietnam. Secondly, in Africa there already existed a well-developed slave trade (exporting slaves mainly to the Middle East), whereas in Europe slavery was very rare. It was obviously far easier to buy slaves in an existing market than to create a new one from scratch. Thirdly, and most importantly, American plantations in places such as Virginia, Haiti and Brazil were plagued by malaria and yellow fever, which had originated in Africa. Africans had acquired over the generations a partial genetic immunity to these diseases, whereas Europeans were totally defenceless and died in droves. It was consequently wiser for a plantation owner to invest his money in an African slave than in a European slave or indentured labourer. Paradoxically, genetic superiority (in terms of immunity) translated into social inferiority: precisely because Africans were fitter in tropical climates than Europeans, they ended up as the slaves of European masters! Due to these circumstantial factors, the burgeoning new societies of America were to be divided into a ruling caste of white Europeans and a subjugated caste of black Africans. But people don’t like to say that they keep slaves of a certain race or origin simply because it’s economically expedient. Like the Aryan conquerors of India, white Europeans in the Americas wanted to be seen not only as economically successful but also as pious, just and objective. Religious and scientific myths were pressed into service to justify this division. Theologians argued that Africans descend from Ham, son of Noah, saddled by his father with a curse that his offspring would be slaves. Biologists argued that blacks are less intelligent than whites and their moral sense less developed. Doctors alleged that blacks live in filth and spread diseases – in other words, they are a source of pollution. These myths struck a chord in American culture, and in Western culture generally. They continued to exert their influence long after the conditions that created slavery had disappeared. In the early nineteenth century imperial Britain outlawed slavery and stopped the Atlantic slave trade, and in the decades that followed slavery was gradually outlawed throughout the American continent. Notably, this was the first and only time in history that slaveholding societies voluntarily abolished slavery. But, even though the slaves were freed, the racist myths that justified slavery persisted. Separation of the races was maintained by racist legislation and social custom. The result was a self-reinforcing cycle of cause and effect, a vicious circle. Consider, for example, the southern United States immediately after the Civil War. In 1865 the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution outlawed slavery and the Fourteenth Amendment mandated that citizenship and the equal protection of the law could not be denied on the basis of race. However, two centuries of slavery meant that most black families were far poorer and far less educated than most white families. A black person born in Alabama in 1865 thus had much less chance of getting a good education and a well-paid job than did his white neighbours. His children, born in the 1880S and 1890s, started life with the same disadvantage – they, too, were born to an uneducated, poor family. But economic disadvantage was not the whole story. Alabama was also home to many poor whites who lacked the opportunities available to their better-off racial brothers and sisters. In addition, the Industrial Revolution and the waves of immigration made the United States an extremely fluid society, where rags could quickly turn into riches. If money was all that mattered, the sharp divide between the races should soon have blurred, not least through intermarriage. But that did not happen. By 1865 whites, as well as many blacks, took it to be a simple matter of fact that blacks were less intelligent, more violent and sexually dissolute, lazier and less concerned about personal cleanliness than whites. They were thus the agents of violence, theft, rape and disease – in other words, pollution. If a black Alabaman in 1895 miraculously managed to get a good education and then applied for a respectable job such as a bank teller, his odds of being accepted were far worse than those of an equally qualified white candidate. The stigma that labelled blacks as, by nature, unreliable, lazy and less intelligent conspired against him. You might think that people would gradually understand that these stigmas were myth rather than fact and that blacks would be able, over time, to prove themselves just as competent, law-abiding and clean as whites. In fact, the opposite happened – these prejudices became more and more entrenched as time went by. Since all the best jobs were held by whites, it became easier to believe that blacks really are inferior. ‘Look,’ said the average white citizen, ‘blacks have been free for generations, yet there are almost no black professors, lawyers, doctors or even bank tellers. Isn’t that proof that blacks are simply less intelligent and hard-working?’ Trapped in this vicious circle, blacks were not hired for whitecollar jobs because they were deemed unintelligent, and the proof of their inferiority was the paucity of blacks in white-collar jobs. The vicious circle did not stop there. As anti-black stigmas grew stronger, they were translated into a system of ‘Jim Crow’ laws and norms that were meant to safeguard the racial order. Blacks were forbidden to vote in elections, to study in white schools, to buy in white stores, to eat in white restaurants, to sleep in white hotels. The justification for all of this was that blacks were foul, slothful and vicious, so whites had to be protected from them. Whites did not want to sleep in the same hotel as blacks or to eat in the same restaurant, for fear of diseases. They did not want their children learning in the same school as black children, for fear of brutality and bad influences. They did not want blacks voting in elections, since blacks were ignorant and immoral. These fears were substantiated by scientific studies that ‘proved’ that blacks were indeed less educated, that various diseases were more common among them, and that their crime rate was far higher (the studies ignored the fact that these ‘facts’ resulted from discrimination against blacks). By the mid-twentieth century, segregation in the former Confederate states was probably worse than in the late nineteenth century. Clennon King, a black student who applied to the University of Mississippi in 1958, was forcefully committed to a mental asylum. The presiding judge ruled that a black person must surely be insane to think that he could be admitted to the University of Mississippi. The vicious circle: a chance historical situation is translated into a rigid social system. Nothing was as revolting to American southerners (and many northerners) as sexual relations and marriage between black men and white women. Sex between the races became the greatest taboo and any violation, or suspected violation, was viewed as deserving immediate and summary punishment in the form of lynching. The Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist secret society, perpetrated many such killings. They could have taught the Hindu Brahmins a thing or two about purity laws. With time, the racism spread to more and more cultural arenas. American aesthetic culture was built around white standards of beauty. The physical attributes of the white race – for example light skin, fair and straight hair, a small upturned nose – came to be identified as beautiful. Typical black features – dark skin, dark and bushy hair, a flattened nose – were deemed ugly. These preconceptions ingrained the imagined hierarchy at an even deeper level of human consciousness. Such vicious circles can go on for centuries and even millennia, perpetuating an imagined hierarchy that sprang from a chance historical occurrence. Unjust discrimination often gets worse, not better, with time. Money comes to money, and poverty to poverty. Education comes to education, and ignorance to ignorance. Those once victimised by history are likely to be victimised yet again. And those whom history has privileged are more likely to be privileged again. Most sociopolitical hierarchies lack a logical or biological basis – they are nothing but the perpetuation of chance events supported by myths. That is one good reason to study history. If the division into blacks and whites or Brahmins and Shudras was grounded in biological realities – that is, if Brahmins really had better brains than Shudras – biology would be sufficient for understanding human society. Since the biological distinctions between different groups of Homo sapiens are, in fact, negligible, biology can’t explain the intricacies of Indian society or American racial dynamics. We can only understand those phenomena by studying the events, circumstances, and power relations that transformed figments of imagination into cruel – and very real – social structures.

#### Wilderson safeguards middle-class academia---neoliberal commodification’s especially likely when the ALT is performed within academic spaces and positioned as exclusive with ending business firms.

Kevin Ochieng-Okoth 20, M.Phil. in Political Theory from the University of Oxford, 1/16/2020, “The Flatness of Blackness: Afro-Pessimism and the Erasure of Anti-Colonial Thought,” https://salvage.zone/issue-seven/the-flatness-of-blackness-afro-pessimism-and-the-erasure-of-anti-colonial-thought/

II. The Flatness of Blackness

Afro-pessimism in this original sense has reflected a disastrous approach to, and had disastrous consequences for Africa and its inhabitants. So how can we understand the bizarre use of this historically loaded term (complete with its own history of colonial and imperialist exploitation) by numerous African-American intellectuals and activists? The use of the term ‘Afro-pessimism’ is symptomatic of the historical ignorance of the Afro-pessimist™ (or what Greg Thomas has recently called Afro-pessimism 2.0), whose grasp of African history is about as solid as that of Hegel. In its initial iteration, Afro-pessimism 2.0 (from now on AP™) is a product of middle-class academia; a framework either consciously or subconsciously created to allow relatively well-off academics to view themselves as the most discriminated and oppressed people in the world. Characterised by misinterpretations and clever appropriations of Black radicals like Frantz Fanon and Silvia Wynter, the theories of the AP™ have spilled over into activist circles, contaminating the global political discourse on race.

The central premise of the AP™ is that anti-Black violence is the structuring regime of the modern world. Drawing on Orlando Patterson’s concept of ‘social death’, Frank Wilderson, arguably the most prominent and controversial AP™ intellectual, asserts that the Black condition is not characterised by oppression or exploitation, like that of the Marxist proletariat or the (neo)colonial subject, but rather by the distinction between the Human and the Slave. For Wilderson, the Black is a priori a slave and therefore we cannot speak of Blackness without reference to the Slaveness that constitutes it on an ontological level. In his essay ‘Ante-Anti-Blackness: Afterthoughts’, fellow University of California professor Jared Sexton argues that the condition of the Black/Slave is a state of total powerlessness, natal alienation (‘the loss of ties of birth in both ascending and descending generations’) and generalised dishonour. In short, Black existence is an ontological absence of sorts, and the Black/Slave is a living dead (non-entity) in the modern world.

In ‘The Black Liberation Army and the Paradox of Political Engagement’, Wilderson offers some further meditations on the concept of ‘social death’, explaining that ‘the point of social death is a condition, void, not of land, but of a capacity to secure relational status through transindividual objects – be those objects elaborated by land, labour or love’. Unlike colonial racisms perpetuated by the rational systems of white supremacy, neo-colonialism or imperialism, or women’s oppression and exploitation driven by patriarchy and capitalism’s need for reproductive labour, anti-Black violence is humanity’s irrational desire for violence against Black people. As Wilderson declares in an interview with C. S. Soong, ‘violence against Black people is a mechanism for the usurpation of subjectivity, of life of being’. What settlers wanted from Indians is land, so they killed Indians ‘in the main’ to get it, whereas what non-Blacks want from Blacks is not land but ‘being’. Anti-Blackness is thus qualitatively different from the regimes of violence that affect the Marxist proletariat; or the non-Black person of colour; or the non-Black woman; or the non-Black woman of colour; or (as Wilderson has famously claimed) Palestinians. Black suffering is incomparable and unique: to speak of any experience of oppression without reference to the ontological disparities between Black/non-Black people is ultimately an act of ‘anti-Blackness’.

But what exactly is it about the makeup of modern society that displaces the Black/Slave from the realm of politics and precludes the articulation of concrete political demands? For Wilderson and Sexton, the very foundations of political discourse are inherently anti-Black. Or, to put it in terms of Giorgio Agamben’s political ontology (of which the AP™ are rather fond), the political – i.e. the ontological character of a political situation that separates it from other social actions – or what he calls ‘the Symbolic Order’, is skewed against the Black/Slave. The Symbolic Order is based on the recognition of the ‘other’s’ humanity, which then enables this ‘other’ to challenge the order on the grounds of, for instance, political economy. Since the Black is a priori a Slave, and Blackness and Slaveness are coterminous, the Black/Slave cannot participate in the Symbolic Order as her status is not that of the Human. And because the category of humanity is founded and relies on the existence of the slave, there is no way the Black/Slave can ever gain the recognition required to assert political demands and identities in the realm of the Symbolic Order. It is for this reason that, as Sexton points out in his essay ‘The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism’, we must posit a ‘political ontology dividing the Slave from the world of the Human in a constitutive way’ and take this as our analytical starting point.

Wilderson’s and Sexton’s work contributes to a wider debate on the nature of Black studies in the United States, which is frequently tied into discussions on Black performance art, evidenced by the titles of Wilderson’s Red, White and Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms, Kara Keeling’s The Witch’s Flight: The Cinematic, the Black Femme, and the Image of Common Sense or Fred Moten’s essays on Black Operations/Black Optimism in musical performance. Despite various disagreements and differences among these scholars, they are united by the common interest in ‘the afterlife of slavery’ – first described by Saidiya Hartman in her 2006 memoir Lose Your Mother. For Hartman – whose project is not that of AP™ and should not be mistaken for this essay’s target – official abolition in the United States did not engender a decisive break with the racialised violence of slavery; in contemporary society, we can see traces of such violence in the ‘skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment’ of African-Americans. The ‘afterlife of slavery’ she describes constitutes Black studies’ object, and loosely ties a range of scholars together into a coherent discourse.

It is worth briefly considering Fred Moten’s work to understand the AP™’s ability to co-opt or usurp other approaches to Black Studies and activism. Moten attempted to counter the AP™ conception of social death by foregrounding Black agency and asserting that it is ontologically prior to the all-encompassing anti-Blackness of the modern world. In the unpublished paper ‘Black Optimism/Black Operation’, Moten attempts to counter the ‘anti-essentialism’ of radical discourses that disavow Black studies’ own object i.e. Blackness. For Moten, this Blackness exists in what he (along with his frequent collaborator Stefano Harney) has famously called ‘the undercommons’ – a space outside of official social structures, where Black people can assert their ‘right to refuse’.

But as Annie Olaloku-Teriba points out in her excellent critique ‘Afro-Pessimism and the (Un)Logic of Anti-Blackness’, the AP™ finds a ‘comfortable antagonist’ in Moten, whose Black Ops can be neatly reintegrated into the concept of social death. It is also telling that Sexton, in ‘Ante-Anti-Blackness’, rather successfully merges the AP™ conception of social death with Moten’s Black Ops by arguing that:

A living death is as much a death as it is living. Nothing in Afro-pessimism suggests that there is no black (social) life, only that black life is not social life in the universe formed by the codes of state and civil society, of citizen and subject, of nation and culture, of people and place, of history and heritage, of all the things that colonial society has in common with the colonised, of all the things that capital has in common with labour – the modern world system.

Sexton shows that Moten’s Black Ops is nothing other than what he instead calls ‘the social life of social death’. There is no either/or distinction between social life and social death: we can think both together by positing that Black life is lived in the underground. Moten even acknowledges, in ‘Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)’, that the AP™ and Black Ops are engaged in the same theoretical project:

In the end, though life and optimism are the terms under which I speak, I agree with Sexton – by way of the slightest most immeasurable reversal of emphasis – that Afro-pessimism and black optimism are not but nothing other than one another. I will continue to prefer the black optimism of his work just as, I am sure, he will continue to prefer the Afro-pessimism of mine.

For both Afro-pessimists and Black Optimists, the afterlife of slavery is characterised by the social death of the Black/Slave and a heavily distorted version of Fanon’s concept of the ‘fact of blackness’. This assumption, however, precludes the participation of Black Ops in radical politics and confines resistance to spaces of Black performance art.

By confining Black resistance to spaces outside of the anti-Black structures of civil society, and by undercutting the possibility for anti-imperialist solidarity between racialised people across the world, the AP™ theories have opened up a space for the corporate capture of Blackness. We need only recall last year’s Nike campaign, prominently featuring the face of former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who has been blackballed by the league for kneeling during the national anthem. Since the incident, he has taken on the role of radical Black activist, complete with Panther-esque leather jackets, an afro and Afrocentric jewellery. While Kaepernick’s struggle against the racist and exploitative NFL owners and executives is, of course, legitimate and necessary, the co-optation of his struggle by a large corporation is certainly a cause for concern. Nike is notorious for its use of sweatshop labour (including both forced and child labour), and its history of exploitative labour practices has been well-documented throughout the years. By detaching the struggles of African-Americans from those of racialised workers in the Global South, Nike can present itself as a progressive vehicle for Black emancipatory politics, while completely sidelining the plight of non-white workers outside of the US. Here we might recall a powerful statement by Fred Hampton to illustrate just how far from revolutionary Black politics we find ourselves:

We don’t think you fight fire with fire best; we think you fight fire with water best. We’re going to fight racism not with racism, but we’re going to fight with solidarity. We say we’re not going to fight capitalism with black capitalism, but we’re going to fight it with socialism […] We’re going to fight […] with all of us people getting together and having an international proletarian revolution.

Wilderson and Sexton have been captured by corporate interests in much the same way. In their case, however, it is not a large corporation that co-opts Blackness, but rather the neoliberal university. Is it at all surprising that two professors working within the prestigious University of California system promote a theoretical framework that requires no political action from Black writers and activists other than simply being Black? Not only is AP™ a product of the neoliberal university, it also promotes its authors survival and flourishing within the corporate structures of higher education. When asked about his framework for psychological and physical resistance by the hosts of iMiXWHATiLiKE, Wilderson neatly dodges any commitment to radical politics with the excuse that it could cost him his academic job.

This is so much a part of what it means to be a professor. I feel like cussing people out all the time. But if I do, I violate University of California’s civility laws, tenure or not I’m out the door, right? And that tempers my speech. So, I think that what I have to offer is not a way out. What I have to offer is an analysis of the problem. And I don’t trust me as much as I trust Black people on the ground.

Wilderson is aware that the AP™ rely on their activist supporters and social media following to maintain their privileged position within the university – without the activists and organisers on the ground, the AP™ could not prove the market value of its work to the neoliberal institution. By creating a framework for the analysis of race that lends itself to co-optation by corporate interests, the AP™ has certainly demonstrated that it can convert Blackness into profit. All the while, these theorists delude themselves that they are spearheading a truly radical Black movement. In the introduction to a collection of essays on AP™, the editors (who presumably include Sexton and Wilderson) even have the audacity to claim that they are ‘motivated by a desire to contribute to […] bringing these writings out of the ivory towers of the academy’ and that they wish to ‘remove the materials from this sitting place and see them proliferate among those in the streets and prisons’. True, they have succeeded in disseminating a watered-down version of their musings to activists and organisers; but what they have passed on is nothing short of anti-Black, in the sense that it works against the true liberation of Black people of all classes.

Today, such Blackness (and the pseudo-politics that is attached to it) is more useful for academic promotions, Instagram hashtags, and Nike adverts than for any revolutionary or emancipatory politics worthy of the name. The people who truly benefit – or rather profit – from the AP™ brand are the academics and the various university presses and journals who jump at every opportunity to unleash a plethora of AP™ books and articles onto the academic book market. While the AP™ may seem like a niche theoretical discourse, its influence extends far beyond the university: as Olaloku-Teriba argues, the AP™’s theoretical framework provides ‘the structuring logic of various political formations in the era of #BlackLivesMatter’. What is at stake in the debate, therefore, is nothing less than the possibility of a revolutionary Black politics. Maybe African-Americans on the streets or in prison would do well to reach for George Jackson’s Soledad Brother and steer clear of the AP™ and Black Ops.

### 2AC---AT: Psychological Drives

#### Every neg arg about a psychic drive compelling racism is warrantless and believing it ensures fatalistic attitudes that turn self-hate and any other impact to the K

Hook, 21—Associate Professor of Psychology at Duquesne University (Derek, “Pilfered pleasure: on racism as “the theft of enjoyment”,” *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity, and Psychoanalytic Theory*, Chapter 2, pg 36-39, dml)

What is immediately striking in these extracts is the role played by affect, or more accurately yet, by the “pained stimulation” of the aroused passions of enjoyment. What both authors highlight—and this speaks to the analytical value of the concept—is that forms of excess stimulation (the “negative pleasure” of jouissance) underlie and propel Symbolic and political constructions of otherness. Different cultural modes of enjoyment are, furthermore, fundamentally discordant. We have then not so much a “Clash of Civilizations”—to reference the Samuel Huntington’s (1997) much cited thesis—as a clash of enjoyments.

Moreover, the difficulty that we have in realizing “full” enjoyment—something that is impossible in Lacanian theory for “castrated” speaking beings—is dealt with by imagining the supposedly unimpaired and inevitably disturbing enjoyment possessed by cultural/racial/sexual others. In short, the fact that we cannot attain the jouissance we feel we deserve results in perceptions of an unhindered, illegitimate, and undeserved enjoyment on the part of others. As Sheldon George notes: “the other’s jouissance, or enjoyment, [is] … the very core around which … otherness articulates itself” (2016: 3). Political jealousy, as Žižek calls it, is thus (at least in part) the result of incompatibilities and more importantly yet, perceived sacrifices of jouissance.

Jouissance: unserviceable tool of political analysis?

Despite having offered only a brief introduction to the above Lacanian ideas, we should pause here for a moment to voice a number of prospective methodological and conceptual problems implied by the racism as (theft of) enjoyment thesis. Doing so will help us focus the expository comments to follow, and indeed, to highlight the potential analytical advantages the thesis may have to offer.

The first critique, which applies to a wide historical range of psychoanalytic theories of racism (see Cohen, 2002; Frosh 1989; Stavrakis 1999), is that of psychological reductionism. Simply put: the complexity of the various historical, discursive, and socioeconomic causes of racism are invariably deprioritized and accorded a peripheral explanatory role once the domain of the psychological is privileged. Accounts of the psychological factors underlying various instances of racism are thus not only de-historicizing and hopelessly generalizing; they are also invariably depoliticizing.

A second critique: is jouissance not a hopelessly open-ended concept? Virtually any cultural behaviour, bodily intensity or libidinal activity can, it seems, be considered to be an instance of jouissance. In view of racism, for example, the other’s enjoyment can refer to everything from their incomprehensible cultural customs and/or religious beliefs (epitomized, for example, in odd food and dress restrictions), to perceived aspects of their distinctive physicality/sensuality (their food, the way they dance, the sound of their music), to attributions of superabundant vitality (they are excessively promiscuous, religious, lazy, etc.)? The concept of jouissance seems thus to be both underdifferentiated and overly inclusive, applying to a potentially endless array of behaviors and experiences. Without a clearer sense of how to differentiate what qualifies as enjoyment and what does not, the concept loses analytical value.

A third line of critique: different modes of enjoyment are implied within the literature, without being properly distinguished. In Žižek’s descriptions of racism and jouissance, for example, jouissance is used broadly to refer to: visceral or passionate modes of experience (the “thrill of hate”); an array of enviable possessions (our “libidinal treasures”) perceived as under threat by cultural others; and a type of noxious “surplus vitality” possessed by such others. So, whose enjoyment are we most fundamentally concerned with in these notions of racism as jouissance, the other’s, or our own? What is the relationship between these two types of jouissance? And how are they related to a third mode, namely the “negative pleasure” of making—experiencing—such troubling attributions in the first place?

Fourth, there is ever-present problem of de-contextualization in “shorthand” applications of the term. This leads to a situation in which enjoyment itself is treated as a causative force beyond adequate consideration of a series of accompanying concepts (the frame of fantasy, the operation of the signifier, the role of the law, the “object a” as cause of desire) that necessarily accompany its proper psychoanalytic application. What auxiliary terms must thus be utilized alongside the concept if it is to serve us as a viable analytical tool?

Critique 1: the notion of enjoyment as psychologically reductionist

There is a crucial passage that is repeated in a number of Žižek’s earlier books (1992, 1993, 2005) and that serves as perhaps his most direct exposition of racism as the theft of enjoyment:

What is at stake in ethnic tensions is always [a kind of ] possession: the “other” wants to steal our enjoyment (by ruining our “way of life”) and/ or he has access to some secret, perverse enjoyment. In short, what gets on our nerves, what really bothers us about the “other” is the peculiar way he organizes his enjoyment (the smell of his food, his “noisy” songs and dances, his strange manners, his attitudes to work—in the racist perspective, the “other” is either a workaholic stealing our jobs or an idler living on our labour)” (1992: 165).

While this seems, in many ways, a gripping account, from a sociologist or historian’s perspective, the degree of reductionism is staggering. The multiple complex sociological, economic, and socio-historical variables underlying distinctive historical forms of racism are brushed aside in favor of a generalizing psychoanalytic formula. Racism = reaction to perception that the (perversely enjoying) other has stolen our enjoyment. This reduction of racism to an affective equation is evident also in Žižek’s precursor in this conceptual domain, Jacques-Alain Miller:

Why does the Other remain Other? What is the cause for our hatred of him, for our hatred of him in his very being? It is hatred of the enjoyment in the Other. This would be the most general formula for the modern racism we are witnessing today: a hatred of a particular way the Other enjoys … The question of tolerance or intolerance is … located on the level of tolerance or intolerance toward the enjoyment of the Other, the Other who essentially steals my own enjoyment (Miller, cited in Žižek 1993: 203).

The depoliticization (indeed, the implicit psychologization) inherent in such a conceptual move is surprising inasmuch it is something that Žižek has proved critical of elsewhere. In a 1998 text, for example, Žižek outlines the charge of psychological reductionism against standard psychoanalytic explanations of racism, which offer

a way of explaining racism that ignore … not only racism’s socioeconomic conditions but the sociosymbolic context of cultural values and identifications that generate reactions to the experience of ethnic otherness (1988: 154).

Surely this also applies to the racism as theft of enjoyment formula outlined above? Explanations of racism as jouissance are surely prone to psychological reductionism inasmuch as they often appear to privilege a series of psychoanalytic assumptions (drive, fantasy, libido, projection, etc.) as existing prior to—or independently of—considerations of economic, historical, political, and socio-symbolic context?

### 2AC---Hope Good

#### Hope is good for mental health

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Discussion The current study investigated the relationships between hope, suicidal ideation, and the interpersonal risk factors of suicidal desire (Joiner, 2005) in a sample of African American college students. Consistent with previous literature, hope was negatively correlated to symptoms of depression, thwarted belongingness, and perceived burdensomeness. Hope was not significantly correlated to suicidal ideation in this sample. However, the agency subscale of hope was negatively correlated to suicidal ideation. To expand on the simple associations between hope and suicidal ideation previously established in the literature, the current study took a contextualist approach. More specifically, through the use of moderation analyses this study sought to better understand the circumstances of the established relationship between hope and suicidal ideation in an African American sample. It was hypothesized that levels of hope would moderate the relationship between feelings of perceived burdensomeness and thoughts of suicide. As hypothesized, the relationship between perceived burdensomeness and suicidal ideation was moderated by hope. High levels of hope weakened the relationship between perceived burdensomeness when statistically controlling for symptoms of depression. In other words, at high levels of hope, the relationship between perceived burdensomeness and suicidal ideation was no longer strong and positive as seen with low levels of hope. These results suggest that those who are naturally more hopeful are buffered against deleterious effects (i.e., suicidal ideation) when experiencing feelings of perceived burdensomeness. Individuals who feel comfortable setting goals and are motivated to achieve them may be better equipped to cope with feelings of perceived burdensomeness. Those who are more hopeful but feel as though they are a burden on others may be better equipped to cope with these feelings, as they may be able to naturally identify ways they can contribute to the well-being of others and are motivated to achieve these goals. This, in turn, may protect against thoughts of suicide when experiencing feelings of perceived burdensomeness. Also consistent with hypotheses, high levels of hope weakened the relationship between thwarted belongingness and suicidal ideation after controlling for symptoms of depression. Simple slope analyses indicated that the relationship between thwarted belongingness and suicidal ideation was strong and positive at low levels of hope but unrelated at high levels of hope. This result suggests that even though extreme feelings of social disconnection and unreciprocated caring are strongly associated with suicidal thinking, this relationship may only exist in those who are low in hope. Individuals who naturally engage in goal-directed thinking and are motivated to identify and use pathways to obtain their goals may feel as though they are more equipped to find solutions to feeling disconnected from others. Thus, when a hopeful individual feels thwarted in their belonging, they may be less likely to experience the negative effects of this feeling because they are better able to work toward connecting with others. Generally, the results of the current study indicate that African Americans who exhibit higher levels of hope (i.e., engage in goal-directed thinking, can identify pathways to achieve goals, and are naturally motivated to achieve their goals) may be buffered against suicidal ideation even in the presence of prominent interpersonal predictors of suicidal desire (i.e., thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness). This investigation is timely, as the ITS has received empirical support as a strong model of understanding suicide in the general population (i.e., Joiner et al., 2009), African Americans (Davidson et al., 2010), American Indian/Alaska Natives (O’Keefe et al., 2013), elderly populations (Jahn & Cukrowicz, 2011), and veterans (Anestis, Bryan, Cornette, & Joiner, 2009). Although feelings of thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness have been linked to thoughts of suicide in African Americans in both the current investigation and previous work (Davidson et al., 2010; Hollar, 2010; Lamis & Lester, 2012), the current study indicates that this relationship may only detrimentally affect those African Americans who are less hopeful. Specifically, for less hopeful participants, as their perceptions of being a burden and not belonging increased, so did their thoughts of suicide.

#### Activism combats race-related stress

Caroline Reid 18, “Activism as a Source of Strength for Black College Students at Predominately White Institutions,” https://encompass.eku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1588&context=honors\_theses

Racism is deeply ingrained in American society, and white supremacy and the oppression of people of color has greatly contributed to the establishment of the very institutions that continue to perpetuate its existence today. Racism manifests itself in a variety of ways, and its most constant and daily appearance is in instances of microaggressions. These experiences contribute to feelings of invisibility, frustration, and anger, an experience known as racism- related stress, which research has shown to severely and negatively impact mental health. In order to combat the insidious effects of racism, Black Americans have utilized coping mechanisms for generations. This resiliency is astoundingly powerful, however, dealing with the omnipresence of racism is a constant and significant internal labor. For Black college students at predominately white institutions, microaggresions and systemic racism create a difficult environment to navigate. Unique opportunities in activism manifest themselves as tools to combat discrimination and racism-related stress. However, some argue that caution is needed in viewing activism as panacea for improving the lives of people of color, particularly Black people. Indeed, some research has suggested that activism is harmful to mental health, as it increases the intensity and frequency of experiences of perceived racism among some populations. This thesis includes a meta-analysis that examines the findings on the effects of activism on mental health. As a result of this analysis, a counter argument argues the potential of the utilization of activism as a source of strength that may combat the harms of racism, supporting the earlier claim that certain factors involved in activism may be protective in nature.

## K---Cap

### 2AC---FW

#### Overwhelming consilience of research confirms policy debate spills up at both the community and governmental level---even if the plan itself doesn’t literally happen, given that debaters will inevitably have an outsized influence over policy, we should use debate to figure out which policies are good and which are bad

O’Donnell ’10 [Timothy; Professor of Communication at University of Mary Washington, with a Ph.D. in communication, a M.A in communication and a B.A. in philosophy; October 14; “A Rationale for Intercollegiate Debate in the Twenty-first Century,” <https://www.americanforensicsassoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Navigating-Opportunity-Book.pdf>; JM]

Debate is a cross-disciplinary method of collaborative inquiry and intentional learning, focused on the controversial public policy issues of the day, emphasizing the fundamentals of argument—reasoning, research, communication, and practical judgment—through the clash of competing ideas and the habits of mind that come from understanding others’ arguments as well as one’s own. Although intercollegiate debate is a highly competitive activity, it is profitably viewed from a pedagogical perspective as a leadership laboratory designed to prepare the next generation for entry into the public sphere and the process of lifelong learning. From public administration to community activism, from personal decision making to government policy, and across a wide variety of fields from business to education, intercollegiate debate provides a liberal education that is the foundation of civic engagement.

How does contemporary intercollegiate debate embody the values and goals of liberal education for a democratic society? At its core and from its earliest appearance in the American academy in the once wildly popular literary societies to its contemporary manifestation in national championship tournament competition, intercollegiate debate is a well-established and highly successful educational practice with substantial educational benefits for all students (O’Donnell 2008a). It is, in every sense, what George Kuh (2008) refers to as a “high-impact educational practice.” The literature review that follows seeks to ground this claim in a body of research. In so doing, it identifies the essential skills, virtues, and modes of inquiry that participation in debate fosters: critical thinking, leadership training, academic achievement, and ethics of advocacy, community building, active, intentional and cooperative learning, and empowerment.1 The literature selected for review focuses predominantly on research concerning intercollegiate debate. The body of work concerning classroom debating and other forms of noncompetitive debate have been intentionally excluded, although they are equally robust and provide additional testimony to the enduring value of debate education. Much of that literature has been collected in an annotated bibliography compiled by Sarah Spring, Joseph Packer, and Timothy O’Donnell (see Appendix 1).

1. Critical Thinking

Developing critical-thinking skills is one of the primary goals of American education. A survey by the Higher Education Research Institute (2009) of 22,562 full-time college and university faculty members reported that 99.6% of them viewed critical-thinking skills as paramount to undergraduate education. Several national reports (Association of American Colleges and Universities 1985; National Educational Goals Panel 1991; National Institute of Education Study Group 1984) have identified critical thinking as a major goal of higher education.

Many have written about the importance of critical thinking to achieving a free, safe, and prosperous society. Richard Franke, a fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, observes: “the value of critical thinking is incalculable. From assessing markets to identifying the salient features of a policy to decisions about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, critical thinking clears a path for rational judgment” (2009, 22). Argumentation professors Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede recognize that in the nuclear age, it is imperative for society to develop leaders with strong critical-thinking skills: “in an age when a single bomb can wipe out a great city, critical thinking is not a luxury but a necessity” (1978, 3). Edward Panetta and Dale Herbeck argue that critical-thinking skills developed by policy-debate training “will help resolve impending geo-political crises” (1993, 25).

John Dewey considered critical-thinking skills to be an essential characteristic of good citizenship, and subsequent work has demonstrated this connection. Critical-thinking skills are a precondition for citizenship engagement and deliberation about public affairs (Owen 2004). For example, Jack Rogers (2005) shows that debaters are more likely than nondebaters to vote in elections and to participate in social and political campaigns.

Debate scholars claim that the teaching of critical-thinking skills is one of debate’s greatest educational achievements. Enhancing critical thinking is “the most frequently cited educational merit of debate” (Omelicheva 2007, 163). Glenn Capp and Thelma Capp (1965) list critical thinking as one of the seven educational benefits to debate training. James McBath argues that debate provides an educational laboratory for training students in “critical thinking skills through the discovery of lines of argument and their probative value” (1984, 10). Edward Inch, Barbara Warnick, and Danielle Endres state “that intercollegiate debate provides students with an intensive and exciting method for developing their debating skills and critical thinking abilities” (2006, 354). Austin Freeley and David Steinberg contend, “since classical times, debate has been one of the best methods of learning and applying the principles of critical thinking” (2005, 2).

Lived experience is reflected in the opinion of former debaters’ assessment of acquiring critical-thinking skills. Several demographic surveys (Katsulas and Bauschard 2000; Matlon and Keele 1984; Williams, McGee, and Worth 2001) reveal overwhelming support from former debaters that the activity sharpened their critical-thinking skills. In response to the survey by John Katsulas and Stefan Bauschard, Daniel Sutherland, the National Debate Tournament (NDT) winner in 1982, replied, “debate significantly enhanced my development as a lawyer. I think the major area is in critical thinking—understanding my own arguments, coming to grips with my opponents’ arguments and forecasting how the judge might evaluate both positions” (Katsulas and Bauschard 2000, 7). Cynthia Leiferman, an NDT finalist in 1984, agreed, writing that debate training taught her how “to think ‘outside the box.’ Creative critical thinking is the lifeblood for a successful litigator” (ibid.).

Additionally, empirical research demonstrates that debate training increases critical-thinking skills. Several studies comparing debaters to nondebaters substantiate this link. Kent Colbert’s (1987) study of NDT and Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) debaters found that they scored substantially higher than nondebaters on the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA). This research tool measures critical-thinking ability in five areas: “inference, recognition of assumptions, deduction, interpretation, and evaluation of arguments” (Colbert 1987, 199). Colbert’s study validated the results of prior studies (Cross 1971; Howell 1943; Jackson 1961; Williams 1951) showing a link between debate participation and critical thinking.

Using a different measuring technique, studies by Kenny Barfield (1989) and Kip McKee (2003) also demonstrate a positive link between debate and critical thinking. Barfield and McKee found that high school debaters scored substantially higher than nondebaters in reading comprehension and thinking skills on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT). Because research proves that higher reading comprehension scores on the SAT correlate well with higher criticalthinking skills on the WGCTA, Barfield and McKee’s findings prove that debate participation enhances critical thinking.

The most definitive evidence comes from a meta analysis by Mike Allen et al. (1999), which examined data from 22 studies over 50 years that had explored the link between communication skills and critical thinking. Most of these studies used the WGCTA as their measurement instrument. The cumulative evidence indicated that communication skill instruction increased criticalthinking ability by 44%. However, “participation in forensics demonstrated the largest improvement in critical thinking whether considering longitudinal or cross-sectional designs” (Allen et al. 1999, 27). Allen et al. conclude that competitive debate enhances critical thinking more effectively than argumentation classes and public speaking. This study provides powerful support for the value of competitive debate to improve critical thinking.

Given all of the above evidence, Colbert’s assessment that “the preponderance of defendable evidence suggests competitive debate experience can indeed improve critical thinking skills” is a valid conclusion (1995, 60). He also correctly points out that the few studies (e.g., Whalen 1991) not demonstrating a link suffer from flaws in “design limitations, instrument ceiling, sampling, teaching methods, or statistical procedures” (Colbert 1995, 60).

How does debate teach effective critical-thinking skills? There are numerous ways. Debate teaches analytical skills, whereby students practice identifying errors in reasoning and proof, recognizing inconsistencies in arguments, assessing the credibility of sources, challenging assumptions, and prioritizing the salience of points (Murphy and Samosky 1993). Critical thinking requires that decision makers arrive at conclusions based on a careful examination of the facts and reasons, which is the heart of the methodology taught by debate. Jeffrey Parcher (1998) argues that the devil’s advocacy approach to debating, whereby students argue both sides of a controversy, improves critical thinking. Research also shows that critical-thinking skills are developed through consistent practice, which debate tournament competitions afford to students (McKee 2003)

2. Leadership Training and Career Advancement

Debate is a “premier training ground for the future leaders of this country” (O’Donnell 2008b, A38). The former debaters who occupy prestigious leadership positions in law, education, government, politics, and business have long constituted an illustrious club. Brilliant lawyers who were former debaters include Alan Dershowitz, famous criminal appellate attorney and Harvard law professor; Thomas Goldstein, cofounder of SCOTUSBLOG and a litigator who has argued over 20 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court; Laurence Tribe, preeminent constitutional law professor of Harvard; Erwin Chemerinsky, founding dean of the University of California, Irvine School of Law; and Neal Katyal, the deputy solicitor general of the United States. Prominent educators include three former college presidents: Alexander Meiklejohn of Amherst College, Lawrence Summers of Harvard, and David B. Henry of the University of Illinois. At least two active college presidents, David Boren of the University of Oklahoma and John Sexton of New York University, were debaters. Politicians include six U.S. presidents who served during the twentieth century, including John F. Kennedy Jr., and numerous U.S. senators and representatives. Titans from the world of business include Lee Iacocca, former CEO of Chrysler, Ted Turner, the media and entertainment mogul, and Ross Perot, billionaire businessman and former presidential candidate.

A plethora of evidence exists to support the claim that participation in debate facilitates the professional careers of students. Numerous surveys of former debaters have overwhelmingly found that debate participation was a positive influence in advancing their careers. Ronald Matlon and Lucy Keele’s survey of 703 debaters who participated in the NDT found that “successful attorneys, educators, legislators, businesspersons, and consultants” stated unequivocally “that debate was as important as the total of the rest of their education, or more so” (1984, 205). A survey of former debaters by Jeffrey Hobbs and Robert Chandler (1991) arrived at similar findings, with 86% of the respondents recommending debate as beneficial training, including 75% of lawyers, 85% of managers, 97% of ministers, and 84% of teachers. David Zarefsky, a past president of the National Communication Association, a distinguished professor of communication at Northwestern, and an immensely successful debater and coach, says, “It’s hard for me to imagine a profession for which debate is not a valuable kind of preparation” (Wade 2006).

Evidence from two longitudinal studies comparing the employment success of debaters and nondebaters provides empirical support for the claim that debate participation enhances career skills (Rogers 2002, 2005). In the first longitudinal study, Jack Rogers (2002) tracked the performance of 100 freshmen who were debaters versus 100 nondebaters over four years. The results showed that upon graduation, the debaters received job offers superior to those of the control group. Rogers concluded there is “a strong correlation between debate experience and involvement in professional internships,” which resulted in the debaters receiving a higher rate of job offers upon graduation as compared with the nondebaters (2002, 16). In a follow-up study, Rogers (2005) examined the performance of this same group of students over four additional years. Once again, the results showed the debate group with superior career advancement. The study found that debaters received more job offers in their field, more positive evaluations from their supervisors, and slightly higher pay increments.

Especially in the field of law, debate training is overwhelmingly beneficial. A survey of 98 law school deans found that 70% of them recommended that students should participate in intercollegiate debate (Freeley and Steinberg 2005). Most prelaw academic counselors also advise undergraduates to take courses in argumentation and debate (Pfau, Thomas, and Ulrich 1987). A survey directed to 82 prominent lawyers who were former debaters asking about the benefits of collegiate debating revealed strong support for the belief that debate taught them skills in oral advocacy, critical thinking, brief writing, research, and listening (Katsulas and Bauschard 2000). Law school dean Erwin Chemerinsky credits his debate training for teaching him skills in analysis, research, and public speaking and he claims that “not a day goes by that I do not use the skills and lessons I learned in debate in my teaching, my writing, and my advocacy in courts” (2008, A11).

While the law remains the preferred career choice for many debaters, the skills taught by debate are just as necessary and useful for debaters who want to succeed in the world of business. Employers recognize this and perceive debating experience as a valuable asset. Bill Lawhorn, an economist with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, speaks about the value of debate training for employers: “Debaters must have strong research skills, be able to think quickly, and be able to communicate well. In addition, debaters must be comfortable performing in front of an audience—and having the confidence to do so is a valuable workplace skill, especially when it comes to making presentations to coworkers or superiors” (Lawhorn 2008, 19). Several large companies have been established and are being operated by for-mer debaters. For instance, Michael Beckley, a former Emory debater, and Marc Wilson, a former Dartmouth debater, cofounded Appian, a fast-growing software company. Beckley and Wilson credit their debate training for affording them the presentation skills to persuade clients such as Home Depot to use Appian’s software instead of that of larger companies such as Oracle and IBM (D. Jones 2004). Beckley and Wilson go so far as to say that their company, which has grown to 190 employees, would never have existed without their debate background (D. Jones 2004). Other former debaters who are CEOs of successful companies include Lance Rosenzweig of PeopleSupport, Chuck Berger of Nuance Communications, Mark Astone of Panagraph, Tod Loofbourrow of Authoria, and Cynthia McKay of Le Gourmet Gift Basket (ibid.).

Management consulting firms also recognize the value of hiring debaters. A.T. Kearney, a global management firm with offices in 34 countries, has actively sought to hire former debaters after being highly impressed with the job skills brought by Leslie Mueller, a former Northwestern debater (Ross 2002). Mueller now attends debate tournaments to recruit prospective employees because she says debaters have superior analytic and communication skills (ibid.).

3. Academic Achievement in the Classroom

College educators overwhelmingly believe that participation in debate increases students’ academic achievement. Melissa Wade, the director of forensics at Emory University, who has coached thousands of high school and college debaters over two decades, says that the value of debate training is well documented: “the effect on academic achievement has been measured and confirmed to improve critical thinking, research and communication and organization skills” (2006, 1). Kent Colbert and Thompson Biggers share this view: “the educational benefits of debate seem to be well documented: improved communication skills; exposure to important social issues of our time; improvement of critical thinking ability” (1985, 238).

In fact, there is considerable empirical evidence to prove that academic debate boosts academic achievement. Several studies show that debaters achieve higher average grade point averages than nondebaters (Barfield 1989; Collier 2004; Hunt, Garard, and Simerly 1997; K. Jones 1994). It is also the case that almost three-quarters of debaters believe that involvement in debate benefits them academically (Hunt, Garard, and Simerly 1997). Jack Rogers (2002) found that debaters maintained higher grade point averages than nondebaters, matriculated at the same rate as nondebaters, and enjoyed a higher acceptance rate into graduate school programs. In another study, Rogers (2005) determined that debaters were more successful than nondebaters in completing their graduate studies and achieving higher scores on their LSATs and GREs. Debate participation improves academic performance because it promotes numerous skills that are essential to realizing a high level of educational proficiency. The educational benefits of debate include teaching research skills, acquiring cross-disciplinary knowledge about the world, learning how to organize and construct arguments, improving writing skills, enhancing listening and note-taking skills, increasing student self-confidence, and improving timemanagement skills.

a. Research

One of the obvious benefits of policy debate is that it teaches research skills in a manner “unparalleled in the world of academics” (Fritch 1993/1994, 7). No undergraduate college class assignment requires as much research as debate does. Robert Rowland argues that “debate, more than perhaps any other educational activity at the university level, teaches students about both the importance of research and the wealth of material that is available” (1995, 101). The research effort undertaken by debaters over the course of a single year’s topic is often greater than the work to obtain a law degree or dissertation (Parcher 1998). Many debaters spend as many as 20 to 30 hours per week doing research (ibid.). A typical debate team gathers enough evidence to write thousands of pages of argument briefs. This emphasis on research is due to several factors. Because debaters are required to debate both sides of a topic, they must collect evidence to support a myriad of arguments. Debate judges also reward evidence more than oratory. There is an expectation that debaters are required to support every point with evidence (Panetta 1990). Therefore, everyone has a competitive incentive to collect as much evidence as possible. In many cases, the best researchers are the most successful debaters (Cheshire 2002).

Because doing research is so integral to competitive success, debaters have a strong incentive to acquire excellent research skills. Unlike most undergraduates who specialize in doing research in their own area of academic study, debaters require expansive research skills. Even when a debate topic is confined to a particular subject area, for example, reducing U.S. agricultural subsidies, debate arguments will emerge requiring research in the fields of economics, political science, law, international relations, the environment, and philosophy. This means debaters must learn to use all available library databases as well as locate evidence from books, government documents, newspapers, and the Internet.

The process of doing debate research is also making debaters more proficient in using computers and a wide variety of new and emerging technologies. On a regular basis, debaters utilize computerized research databases to conduct research (Freeley and Steinberg 2005). While no studies have been done on this point, observational evidence suggests that debaters are more skilled than nondebaters in using sophisticated searching techniques. Because debaters need to locate evidence that supports very precise claims, they become skilled at conducting Boolean searches where words such as OR, AND, AND NOT, and NEAR are inserted to create relationships among keywords in a search query. Debate also teaches techniques in using scanners. Many debate squads now require students to produce their research in digital form. This requires debaters to scan evidence that cannot be downloaded electronically from books and periodicals.

Debate alumni strongly support the belief that debate participation improves research skills. In surveys that ask former debaters how their participation in debate has benefited them, developing research skills is always mentioned as a valued benefit (Hobbs and Chandler 1991; Matlon and Keele 1984). In the most recent studies, the value of research skills has increased in importance. In a survey of lawyers who debated during the 1990s, Katsulas and Bauschard (2000) found that acquiring research skills was ranked as the second greatest benefit of debate participation. A survey by Doyle Srader (2006) of former debaters who are now college educators (but not debate coaches) cited the acquisition of research skills as the most important educational benefit of debate. In a survey of former NDT and CEDA debaters, David Williams, Brian McGee, and David Worth report that a high percentage of these debaters viewed the acquisition of research skills “to be a valued element of debate participation” (2001, 201).

b. Student Knowledge About the World

The knowledge gained by students competing in debate is wide-ranging and substantial. As soon as the college topic area is announced in mid-May, students begin background reading on the topic. When the actual topic wording is announced in July, the intensity of the research effort accelerates to a vigorous pace, as debaters scramble to find as many research materials as possible before the first tournament in September. From this point forward until the last tournament in early April, arguments are revised and created on a continuous basis.

During the course of one debate season, a debate team will produce thousands of pages of argument briefs. Individually, every debater will be responsible for reading and carefully filing them.

The range of cumulative knowledge accrued from compounding several years of debate, is even more astounding. For example, 2009 graduates who debated in each of the past four years, have learned a great deal about four public policy topics: (1) increasing U.S. economic and diplomatic pressure on China; (2) overruling U.S. Supreme court cases involving federalism, school racial segregation, abortion, and military commissions; (3) promoting U.S. constructive engagement with Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Authority; and (4) reducing U.S. agricultural subsidies.

Any student who debated over these four years would have learned an incredible amount about some of the great issues and controversies of the twenty-first century. Should the United States engage or confront China? Can U.S. economic pressure force China to respect human rights and intellectual property rights? Should the Supreme Court allow the federal government to have greater control over state governments? Do U.S. military commission trials for enemy combatants violate international law? Can U.S. diplomacy with Syria promote peace in the Middle East? Will constructive engagement prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons? Will increasing U.S. troops to Afghanistan promote peace? Do industrial farming practices threaten the environment? Do government subsidies for biofuels reduce U.S. energy dependency and global warming? In fact, over a four-year academic debate career, “students grapple with virtually every contemporary issue of American public policy” (O’Donnell 2008b).

However, debaters learn much more than topic knowledge. They also learn a great deal about political institutions and practice. The policy-systems approach essential to intercollegiate debate teaches students about the intricacies of how the three branches of the U.S. government operate. Debaters also learn about current events because they are forced to imagine the passage of controversial policies derived from the yearlong intercollegiate debate topic in a contemporaneous political climate that involves political costs and trade-offs with other agenda items under consideration. This means that in any given year, the top agenda items being pursued in Washington will be hotly debated in the form of politics disadvantages. For example, if the topic requires the affirmative team to advocate reductions in the U.S. nuclear arsenal, a negative team might argue that doing so at this time would trade off with ongoing health care reform efforts.

#### Consequences matter---given the pervasiveness of racism, every action will be in some way related to antiblackness---identifying the choices that cause the least harm is important

Bracey 6 [Christopher; September; Associate Professor of Law, Associate Professor of African & African American Studies, Washington University in St. Louis; Southern California Law Review, 79 S. Cal. L. Rev. 1231, p. 1318]

Second, reducing conversation on race matters to an ideological contest allows opponents to elide inquiry into whether the results of a particular preference policy are desirable. Policy positions masquerading as principled ideological stances create the impression that a racial policy is not simply a choice among available alternatives, but the embodiment of some higher moral principle. Thus, the "principle" becomes an end in itself, without reference to outcomes. Consider the prevailing view of colorblindness in constitutional discourse. Colorblindness has come to be understood as the embodiment of what is morally just, independent of its actual effect upon the lives of racial minorities. This explains Justice Thomas's belief in the "moral and constitutional equivalence" between Jim Crow laws and race preferences, and his tragic assertion that "Government cannot make us equal [but] can only recognize, respect, and protect us as equal before the law." [281](http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/document?_m=cd9713b340d60abd42c2b34c36d8ef95&_docnum=9&wchp=dGLbVzz-zSkVA&_md5=9645fa92f5740655bdc1c9ae7c82b328#n281) For Thomas, there is no meaningful difference between laws designed to entrench racial subordination and those designed to alleviate conditions of oppression. Critics may point out that colorblindness in practice has the effect of entrenching existing racial disparities in health, wealth, and society. But in framing the debate in purely ideological terms, opponents are able to avoid the contentious issue of outcomes and make viability determinations based exclusively on whether racially progressive measures exude fidelity to the ideological principle of colorblindness. Meaningful policy debate is replaced by ideological exchange, which further exacerbates hostilities and deepens the cycle of resentment.

### 2AC---Perm

#### Perm do both---the neg must prove the alternative is functionally competitive---anything else amplifies capitalist splintering tactics and dooms inter-movement cooperation necessary to displace capitalism

Parr ’13 (Adrian, Assoc. Prof. of Philosophy and Environmental Studies @ U. of Cincinnati, *THE WRATH OF CAPITAL: Neoliberalism and Climate Change Politics*, pp. 5-6)

The contradiction of capitalism is that it is an uncompromising structure of negotiation. It ruthlessly absorbs sociohistorical limits and the challenges these limits pose to capital, placing them in the service of further capital accumulation. Neoliberalism is an exclusive system premised upon the logic of property rights and the expansion of these rights, all the while maintaining that the free market is self-regulating, sufficiently and efficiently working to establish individual and collective well-being. In reality, however, socioeconomic disparities have become more acute the world over, and the world's "common wealth,” as David Bollier and later Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri note, has been increasingly privatized.12 In 2010, the financial wealth of the world's high-net-worth individuals (with investable assets of $1 to $50 million or more [all money amounts are in U.S. dollars] ) surpassed the 2007 pre-financial crisis peak, growing 9.7 percent and reaching $42.7 trillion. Also in 2010 the global population of high-net­ worth individuals grew 8.3 percent to 10.9 million.13 In 2010, the global population was 6.9 billion, of whom there were 1,000 billionaires; 80,000 ultra-high-net-worth individuals with average wealth exceeding $50 mil­ lion; 3 billion with an average wealth of $10,000, of which 1.1 billion owned less than $1,000; and 2.5 billion who were reportedly "unbanked'' (without a bank account and thus living on the margins of the formal financial system) .14 In a world where financial advantage brings with it political benefits, these figures attest to the weak position the majority of the world occupies in the arena of environmental and climate change politics. Neoliberal capitalism ameliorates the threat posed by environmental change by taking control of the collective call it issues forth, splintering the collective into a disparate and confusing array of individual choices competing with one another over how best to solve the crisis. Through this process of competition, the collective nature of the crisis is restructured and privatized, then put to work for the production and circulation of capital as the average wealth of the world's high-net-worth individuals grows at the expense of the majority of the world living in abject poverty. Advocating that the free market can solve debilitating environmental changes and the climate crisis is not a political response to these problems; it is merely a political ghost emptied of its collective aspirations.

### 2AC---AT: Only Black Revolution Solves

#### The requirement to build energy as a prerequisite to political change endlessly defers action---prefer a content-focus that generates energy as a byproduct through solidarity

**Reed 18** [Adolph Reed Jr., professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, “Which Side Are You On?,” December 23, 2018, <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2018/12/23/which-side-are-you>]

Naschek's observation regarding contemporary left public intellectuals’ elevation of the will to pursue political change over the capacity to do so is especially important in this regard. Haider and others who tout the Combahee River Collective as a model for our time do so because its members were black lesbians who espoused a generic commitment to "liberation," not because of their approach to or record of movement-building. In the race-reductionist, identitarian world, being displaces doing; what one supposedly is, that is, can mean more than what one does or advocates concretely. We saw enough of that during the 2018 mid-term elections when we were exhorted to celebrate candidacies of various nonwhite, female, gay or lesbian, and gender-nonconforming aspirants because of the identity categories they embodied rather than the programs they advanced. To be sure, some of them embraced left agendas; some decidedly did not, even though they may nonetheless have been better options than their Republican opponents. Tensions around that identitarian approach erupted in what apparently has become a notorious conflict within DSA regarding endorsement of Cat Brooks, a black, female candidate in the 2018 Oakland, Califorinia mayor's race. Salazar adduces that controversy in his brief against the organization's socialist left majority, whom their identitarian opponents accused of racial insensitivity for denying Brooks the chapter's endorsement. I don't intend to assess that particular debate; I don't have adequate local knowledge. I do know that those opposing endorsement were circumspect – see, for example, this dispatch on the East Bay DSA's website about the recency of Brooks's reversal of stance on the charter school issue, after several years of prominent association with the charter movement. Salazar invokes a person he describes as "Oakland's loudest anti-charter activist," who backed her candidacy and who characterized his relationship with the candidate as "complicated," to support a claim that, in effect, she and others hadn't understood charterization's destructive force because charters "were sold to residents as a way to give them agency over their own schools." Charterization, his informant said, "'was tied to the self empowerment theme that goes back to the Black Panthers.'" But that justification seems uncomfortably akin to "I didn't know where I was or what I was doing" or "I was young and needed the money." Whether or not Brooks's conversion is genuine, wouldn't the earlier error—particularly considering the depth and duration of her commitment to it—justify skepticism with regard to how she might respond to other shiny new neoliberal interventions? Recourse to the charge that those who opposed Brooks' endorsement were driven by bad racial motives, rather than principled political concerns, underscores the dangers of race-reductionist politics. (Salazar is in general too willing to retail DSA identitarians' charges of racial insensitivity. In concluding the essay he quotes a tweet from Shanti Singh, a San Francisco DSA identitarian, implying that Naschek and her Philadelphia chapter co-chair Scott Jenkins were insensitive to the need to counter "right-wing antisemitism" when they proposed not canceling a scheduled chapter meeting in order to attend a counter protest of a pathetic demonstration by two-dozen equally pathetic wannabe fascist Proud Boys. It's unlikely, however, that Naschek, who is Jewish, would need sensitivity training about the evils of antisemitism.) This politics is open to the worst forms of opportunism, and it promises to be a major front on which neoliberal Democrats will attack the left, directly and indirectly, and these lines of attack stand out in combining red-baiting and race-baiting into a new, ostensibly progressive form of invective. Hillary Clinton's infamous 2016 campaign swipe at Sanders that his call for breaking up big banks wouldn't end racism was only one harbinger of things to come. Indeed, we should recall that it was followed hard upon by even more blunt attacks from prominent members of the black political class. When the campaign turned to South Carolina, with its large bloc of black Democratic voters, the state's black Congressman James Clyburn joined Georgia Congressman and icon of the civil rights movement, John Lewis, and Louisiana Congressman Cedric Richmond in denouncing Sanders as "irresponsible" in calling for non-commodified public goods in education, healthcare and other areas. Lewis sneered: "It's the wrong message to send any group. There's not anything free in America. We all have to pay for something. Education is not free. Health care is not free. Food is not free. Water is not free. I think it's very misleading to say to the American people we're going to give you something free." As I pointed out in The Baffler, "Richmond's rebuke was especially telling in that he couched it in terms of his role as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and the group's 'responsibility to make sure that young people know that' a social-democratic agenda is 'too good to be true.'" This points to precisely what is limited, and in the context of the current debate over ways forward for the broader left, dangerous about the simplistic race-reductionism that Salazar, Haider, and others advocate as a necessary accompaniment of, and in practical terms precursor, or even alternative to a pursuit of a socialist, or social-democratic political agenda. The juxtaposition they assert between "race" or identity and class is bogus. It presumes both the fiction that "(working) class" means "white" and that blacks or other nonwhites and the like are somehow outside the capitalist class dynamics that shape American life and, most important in this context, politics. As the ideological and programmatic commitments of Clyburn, Lewis, Richmond and others in the black political elite and chattering classes illustrate, that is hardly the case. Moreover, most black people, like other Americans, are concerned with finding or keeping decent jobs, housing, health care, education, etc.—the stuff of a social-democratic agenda. Hence Bernie Sanders's approval ratings remain higher among black Americans than any other group. Simply put, one either supports such an agenda, or one does not. For the first time in most of our lifetimes, we have an opportunity to make commitment to that sort of agenda the definitive fault-line in American politics for 2020 and beyond. There have been signs since before the 2016 election that both many Wall Street Democrats and nominally progressive identitarians would rather lose than embrace the social-democratic left. As we approached the 2018 mid-term elections and since, it has become ever clearer that a major struggle between now and 2020 will be over how we define the "progressive" electoral agenda, whether it should be weighted toward advancing candidates who are nonwhite, female, and gender-nonconforming or those who support such policy initiatives as Medicare For All. Of course, those goals are not necessarily in conflict. The question, though, is which should take priority when they are. We must be clear that they are not interchangeable. That is also a critical point to keep in mind, as we have been and increasingly will be confronted with "don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good" liberals, who want, in the name of electability or bringing the party together, or whatever else, to water down Medicare For All or other components of a social-democratic agenda before we've ever had a serious effort to organize a popular base in support of them. It has been and will be all too easy for the occasion to elect "the first" black/Native American/woman/lesbian to substitute for the need to advance an agenda that can appeal broadly to working people of all races, genders and sexual orientations. Our side's failure to struggle for that sort of agenda is one reason Trump is in the White House. We can't afford to repeat the mistakes that helped bring about that result. The question of the moment is, in the spirit of Florence Reece and her brother and sister coalminers in the 1931 Harlan County War, Which Side Are You On?

#### Even full racial inequality would fail to ameliorate the faults of capitalism.

Adolph Reed 13 {Professor of Political Science at Penn. “Marx, Race, and Neoliberalism.” https://libcom.org/files/Marx,%20Race%20and%20Neoliberalism%20-%20Adolph%20Reed.pdf}//Comrade-JM

A second essentialist sleight-of-hand advances claims for the primacy of race/racism as an explanation of inequalities in the present by invoking analogies to regimes of explicitly racial subordination in the past. In these arguments, analogy stands in for evidence and explanation of the contemporary centrality of racism. Michelle Alexander’s widely read and cited book, The New Jim Crow, is only the most prominent expression of this tendency; even she has to acknowledge that the analogy fails because the historical circumstances are so radically different.12 Rigorous pursuit of equality of opportunity exclusively within the terms of capitalist class relations has been fully legitimized under the rubric of “diversity.” From the historical materialist standpoint, the view of racial inequality as a sui generis injustice and dichotomous formulations of the relation of race and class as systems of hierarchy in the United States are not only miscast but also fundamentally counterproductive. It is particularly important at this moment to recognize that familiar taxonomy of racial difference is but one historically specific instance of a genus of ideologies of ascriptive hierarchy that stabilize capitalist social reproduction. I have argued previously that entirely new race-like taxonomies could come to displace the familiar ones. For instance, the “underclass” could become even more race-like as a distinctive, essentialized population, by our current folk norms, multiracial in composition, albeit most likely including in perceptibly greater frequencies people who would be classified as black and Latino “racially,” though as small enough pluralities to preclude assimilating the group ideologically as a simple proxy for nonwhite inferiors.13 This possibility looms larger now. Struggles for racial and gender equality have largely divested race and gender of their common sense verisimilitude as bases for essential difference. Moreover, versions of racial and gender equality are now also incorporated into the normative and programmatic structure of “left” neoliberalism. Rigorous pursuit of equality of opportunity exclusively within the terms of given patterns of capitalist class relations—which is after all the ideal of racial liberalism—has been fully legitimized within the rubric of “diversity.” That ideal is realized through gaining rough parity in distribution of social goods and bads among designated population categories. As Walter Benn Michaels has argued powerfully, according to that ideal, the society would be just if 1 percent of the population controlled 90 percent of the resources, provided that blacks and other nonwhites, women, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people were represented among the 1 percent in roughly similar proportion as their incidence in the general population.14

#### Claims of metaphysical ontology are inherently depoliticizing, locking in politics rather than opening up the possibility of a pragmatics of becoming acting directly upon the contingencies of power relations that make up the status quo.

Buck-Morss 13. Susan Buck-Morss, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the CUNY Graduate Center, NYC, “A Commonist Ethics, ” in The Idea of Communism, 2013, http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/

The First Point: Politics is not an ontology. The claim that the political is always ontological needs to be challenged.[1](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:1) It is not merely that the negative the case — that the political is never ontological[2](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:2) (as Badiou points out, a simple negation leaves everything in place[3](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:3)). Instead, what is called for is a reversal of the negation: The ontological is never political. It follows that the move from la politique (everyday politics) to le politique (the very meaning of the political) is a one-way street. With all due respect to Marcel Gauchet, Chantal Mouffe, Giorgio Agamben, and a whole slew of others, the attempt to discover within empirical political life (la politique) the ontological essence of the political (le politique) leads theory into a dead end from which there is no return to actual, political practice. There is nothing gained by this move from the feminine to the masculine form. The post-metaphysical project of discovering ontological truth within lived existence fails politically. It fails in the socially disengaged Husserlian-Heidegerian mode of bracketing the existenziell to discover the essential nature of what “the political” is. And it fails in the socially critical, post-Foucauldian mode of historicized ontology, disclosing the multiple ways of political being-in-the-world within particular, cultural and temporal configurations. This is not news. From the mid-1930s on, it was Adorno’s obsessive concern, in the context of the rise of fascism, to demonstrate the failure of the ontological attempt to ground a philosophy of Being by starting from the given world, or, in Heideggerian language, to move from the ontic, that is, being [seiend] in the sense of that which is empirically given, to the ontological, that which is essentially true of existence (Dasein as the “a priori structure” of “existentially”[4](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:4)). Adorno argued that any ontology derived (or reduced5) from the ontic, turns the philosophical project into one big tautology.[6](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:6) He has a point, and the political implications are serious. Ontology identifies. Identity was anathema to Adorno, and nowhere more so than in its political implications, the identity between ruler and ruled that fascism affirmed. Indeed, even parliamentary rule can be seen to presuppose a striving for identity, whereby consensus becomes an end in itself, regardless of the truth content of that consensus.[7](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:7) It is not that Heidegger’s philosophy (or any existential ontology) is in-itself fascist (that would be an ontological claim). Rather, by resolving the question of Being before subsequent political analyses, the latter have no philosophical traction. They are subsumed under the ontological a prioris that themselves must remain indifferent to their content.[8](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:8) Existential ontology is mistaken in assuming that, once “the character of being” (Heidegger) is conceptually grasped, it will return us to the material, empirical world and allow us to gather its diversities and multiplicities under philosophy’s own pre-understandings in ways adequate to the exigencies of collective action, the demands of actual political life. In fact, the ontological is never political. A commonist (or communist) ontology is a contradiction in terms. But, you may ask, did not Marx himself outline in his early writings a full ontology based on the classical, Aristotelian claim that man is by nature a social animal? Are not the 1844 manuscripts an elaboration of that claim, mediated by a historically specific critique, hence an extended, socialontology of man’s alienation from nature (including his own) and from his fellow man? Yes, but in actual, political life, this ontological “man” does not exist. Instead, we existing creatures are men and women, black and brown, capitalists and workers, gay and straight, and the meaning of these categories of being is in no way stable. Moreover, these differences matter less that whether we are unemployed, have prison records, or are in danger of being exported. And no matter what we are in these ontic ways, our beings do not fit neatly into our politics as conservatives, anarchists, evangelicals, Teaparty-supporters, Zionists, Islamists, and (a few) Communists. We are social animals, yes, but we are also anti-social, and 0 are thoroughly mediated by society’s contingent forms. Yes, the early Marx developed a philosophical ontology. Nothing follows from this politically. Philosopher-king-styled party leaders are not thereby legitimated, and the whole thorny issue of false consciousness (empirical vs. imputed/ascribed [zugerechnectes] consciousness) cannot force a political resolution. At the same time, philosophical thought has every right – and obligation — to intervene actively into political life. Here is Marx on the subject of intellectual practice, including philosophizing: But again when I am active scientifically, etc, — when I am engaged in activity which I can seldom perform in direct community with others –- then I am social, because I am active as a man [human being[9](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:9)]. Not only is the material of my activity given to me as a social product (as is even the language in which the thinker is active): my own existence is social activity, and therefore that which I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness ofmyself as a social being. [10](http://susanbuckmorss.info/text/commonist-ethics/#fn:10) Again, no matter how deeply one thinks one’s way into this ontological generalization, no specific political orientation follows as a consequence. It describes the intellectual work of Heidegger and Schmitt every bit as much as it does that of Marx or of us ourselves.

### 2AC---Alt

#### Alt fails

Day 9 (Christopher, The Historical Failure of Anarchism: Implications for the Future of the Revolutionary Project, ttp://mikeely.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/historical\_failure\_of\_aanarchism\_chris\_day\_kasama.pdf)

The strength of anarchism is its moral insistence on the primacy of human freedom over political expediency. But human freedom exists in a political context. It is not sufficient, however, to simply take the most uncompromising position in defense of freedom. It is neccesary to actually win freedom. Anti-capitalism doesn’t do the victims of capitalism any good if you don’t actually destroy capitalism. Anti-statism doesn’t do the victims of the state any good if you don’t actually smash the state. Anarchism has been very good at putting forth visions of a free society and that is for the good. But it is worthless if we don’t develop an actual strategy for realizing those visions. It is not enough to be right, we must also win. Continues… Finally, revolutionaries have a responsibility to have a plausible plan for making revolution. Obviously, there are not enough revolutionaries to make a revolution at this moment. We can reasonably anticipate that the future will bring upsurges in popular opposition to the existing system. Without being any more specific about where those upsurges might occur it seems clear that it is from the ranks of such upsurges that the numbers of the revolutionary movement will be increased, eventually leading to a revolutionary situation (which is distinguished from the normal crises of the current order only by the existence of a revolutionary movement ready to push things further). People who are fed up with the existing system and who are willing to commit themselves to its overthrow will look around for likeminded people who have an idea of what to do. If we don’t have a plausible plan for making revolution we can be sure that there will be somebody else there who will. There is no guarantee that revolutionary-minded people will be spontaneously drawn to anti-authoritarian politics. The plan doesn’t have to be an exact blueprint. It shouldn’t be treated as something sacred. It should be subject to constant revision in light of experience and debate. But at the very least it needs to be able to answer questions that have been posed concretely in the past. We know that we will never confront the exact same circumstances as previous revolutions. But we should also know that certain problems are persistent ones and that if we can’t say what we would have done in the past we should not expect people to think much of our ability to face the future

#### Corporations fund radical activism which coops the alt---history proves

Inderjeet Parmar 20 Professor in International Politics, University of London, and Imran Choudhury PhD Candidate, University of London, “Black Lives Matter must avoid being co-opted by American corporate philanthropy”, July 15, https://theconversation.com/black-lives-matter-must-avoid-being-co-opted-by-american-corporate-philanthropy-141927

US corporations including Walmart, Nike and Sony Music pledged up to US$450 million for social and racial justice causes in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

The sudden outbreak of brand activism among major corporations in recent months is likely to be related to surveys which suggest consumers shift spending according to the political and social stands that businesses take. But this raises significant concerns in the wake of a longer pattern of philanthropy through foundations attached to American corporate wealth that has focused on racial equality and civil rights causes.

Black Lives Matter emerged in 2013 but gained national attention from 2016 as the effective face of the Movement for Black Lives. It has expanded to local chapters across the US, Canada and the UK. It has become the leading radical organisation for structural change to eradicate racial injustice and police brutality, reform criminal justice and protect voting rights. It has also led calls to defund the police, which have grown stronger since Floyd’s killing in May.

Among the Black Lives Matter movement’s earliest and most generous benefactors in 2016 was the Ford Foundation, one of America’s largest corporate foundations and the legacy of the industrial titan Henry Ford. Alongside the Ford Foundation – which is a separate entity to the Ford Motor Company – the Black Lives Matter movement received major grants from Borealis Philanthropy and the Open Society Foundations.

But as the historian Karen Ferguson argued in the wake of Ford’s donation, the foundation’s understanding of the roots of police violence differed strikingly from that of Black Lives Matter. She argues that Ford’s communication about its support actually sent a problematic “all lives matter” message.

Civil rights and identity politics

Such grants from foundations established by large corporates fit into a longer history in which radical social movements have been co-opted and channelled into directions more acceptable to the political and economic status quo.

Research has shown that fear among corporate elites of radical organisations during the civil rights and black power movements of the 1960s led to an increase in corporate donations and foundation grants to more moderate black organisations, as well as federal spending on diversity programmes.

Some have argued that these elite-funded programmes actually tend to strengthen the US establishment and dampen radicalism. This happens through a shift from demands for structural reform to more incremental change within the existing political and economic framework. This is a way to bring the outsider into the system, and it limits the extent of change. Such programmes, it’s argued, co-opt some leaders by promoting them in the media, or among established political parties, or provide them with a perch in non-profit organisations. Key minority leaders become institutionalised and so operate from within establishment political structures – rather than from beyond them.

Research has shown how minority groups that integrate and assimilate into dominant, mainstream institutions lose more and more of their minority cultural characteristics and imbibe dominant cultural values and behaviours, limiting their reformist ambitions. This leaves the deeper sources of oppression within American society largely untouched. The reinterpretation of black power into policies backing black capitalism is an excellent example of this process.

Creating a new elite

Philanthropic foundations took an early interest in the “race question” in the years after the second world war. This was mainly due to the imperatives of cold war competition, and the anti-racist and anti-colonial appeal the the Soviet Union and China had for newly independent states in Asia and Africa.

But it was during the 1960s when the Ford Foundation, under the leadership of McGeorge Bundy, former national security adviser to presidents Kennedy and Johnson, addressed key issues affecting the African-American community. The foundation created programmes and donated money to civil rights and black power groups. However, these were seen by scholars and critics to be part of the liberal-elite plan to domesticate the more radical elements or marginalise the radicals by promoting and funding “moderates”.

Ford and other foundations, such as the Rockefeller Foundation, envisioned racial inequality as resolvable through the creation of a new African American and Latino elite. The plan was that this new elite would assimilate the values and align with the mainstream politics of dominant American liberal and conservative elites. They would then advocate change within the boundaries of a capitalist political economy and mainstream party politics. President Richard Nixon, therefore, promoted black capitalism as part of that broader strategy.

The fatal flaw, however, was that such a strategy would go on to improve the lives of only a small percentage of African Americans, leaving the majority behind. It also helped fuel a politics around blaming poorer African Americans as a way to explain their “failures”.

Shallow foundations

Yet, the assimilationist strategy’s greatest success was the presidency of Barack Obama, a mere half-century after the assassination of Martin Luther King. In a grim reminder of the myth of a “post-racial America”, the Black Lives Matter movement began life during Obama’s second term. This demonstrated both the successes of the assimilationst strategy and its shallow foundations. It has produced a black elite incorporated into the dominant political order. Yet, it has failed to eliminate the stigma of race, or to break down the political and class structures that still perpetuate racial inequality.

Ford’s backing for Black Lives Matter has drawn flak from the political right, who claim the foundation is funding what they argue is a radical leftist group. Yet, the liberal-capitalist credentials of the current president of the Ford Foundation, Darren Walker, an African-American, could hardly be more stark.

In a 2015 interview with Bloomberg, Walker upheld the need for solving inequality by improving capitalism, rather than challenging corporate power itself with an alternative system of government ownership or regulation. He was recently appointed to the board of a New York-listed payments company and on June 19, rang the bell at the New York Stock Exchange to mark the end of slavery in 1865. This indicates an attachment to the type of corporate capitalism that has been the driver of racial and class inequality in America.

The Black Lives Matter movement has certainly caught the public imagination. But history urges us to be cautious about the prospects of deep-seated radical change via movements whose finances are so closely tied up with America’s influential corporate foundations.