

# THE WEAPON OF JOEHL THEORY

A MAOIST  
(THIRD  
WORLDIST)  
READER



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The Weapon of Theory:  
A Maoist (Third Worldist) Reader

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# Introduction

by Morton Esters

It is no secret that since the collapse of the left in the First World around four decades ago, revolutionary movements in the "west" have been largely stagnant. Today, there are promising trends, as the last economic crisis and its fallout have spurred some revitalization of left-wing activity in the developed countries. Yet, there is a danger of falling into the same traps that our forebears did if we do not unpack why the old movements failed. On this point, Mao Zedong had some insight:

*"Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution. The basic reason why all previous revolutionary struggles in China achieved so little was their failure to unite with real friends in order to attack real enemies... To ensure that we will definitely achieve success in our revolution and will not lead the masses astray, we must pay attention to uniting with our real friends in order to attack our real enemies. To distinguish real friends from real enemies, we must make a general analysis of the economic status of the various classes in Chinese society and of their respective attitudes towards the revolution."*

Though Mao was of course writing this in 1926, and in China, the basic problem facing revolutionaries in the First World today is not so different. The major organizations and movements of the past fell victim to opportunism and confusion. What was common between them is that they failed to make a concrete class analysis of their surroundings, and they failed to unite real friends against real enemies. We will repeat these mistakes if we do not ask and answer the questions: who are our enemies? who are our friends? We think Maoism (Third Worldism) is the remedy in this regard.

In its simplest terms, Third Worldism is a trend within Marxism which upholds that class analysis is as crucial as ever to the communist movement today. Third Worldists believe that without a clear understanding of who our real enemies and friends are, without uncovering the concrete relations to the forces of production that people really hold, then the communist movement in the First World will continue to stagnate. Namely, we believe that the vast majority of the world's people — the masses of workers in the Third World along with a minority of people in the First World — are exploited and/or ground down by capitalism and imperialism to the point of being unable to flourish. On the other hand, we also believe that the vast majority of workers in First World nations have been "bought off" by imperialist super-profits. Monopoly capitalists in imperialist states glean most of their profits from exploitation of Third World labor, and they make such a killing on Third World exploitation that they can afford to pay their "own" workers in the First World a value well above what those workers themselves produce, while still

maintaining average profit rates. In other words, high wages in the First World are supplemented with profit extracted from Third World workers. This means that class struggle has been largely deadened in the First World, because most workers in the imperialist core depend upon imperialism to sustain their current living standards. The contradiction between the working class in the imperialist nations and the bourgeoisie has become a non-antagonistic one. What this means for communist praxis in the First World is still somewhat of an open question.

However, Third Worldists stress that the main contradiction globally today is that between imperialism and the oppressed nations, and within the First World itself, the principal contradiction is that between oppressor nations — such as the euro-american nation — and the oppressed nations within the First World, e.g. the Captive Afrikan nation, Xican@ nation, and the Onkwehón:we nations within Occupied Turtle Island. Thus, we whole-heartedly support national liberation struggles in the oppressed nations, and we believe this is key for the First World communist movement, as we work “behind enemy lines” within the territories occupied by imperialist powers. Additionally, we seek to build a broad united front against imperialism where we live, and to engage in struggles which merge the long-term interests of First Worlders with the immediate, material interests of the proletariat at large.

Necessarily, because we stress the importance of class analysis, our arguments rest in good part upon political economy. That is to say, we need to make economic investigation because such an investigation is inherently tied to the question of class. Noting this, critics of Third Worldism frequently state that we put too much stock in empiricism, and that we must move “beyond” it. As a general principle, it is true that we have to move “beyond empiricism.” Empirical demonstration is certainly not enough for an analysis to be considered “Marxist,” and we definitely cannot use empiricism as a replacement for dialectical and historical materialism. Yet typically, when people respond to Third Worldist political economy by claiming that we must move “beyond empiricism,” this is really an excuse to outright ignore or at least downplay the implications of Marxian political economy when we apply it to the world today. The conclusions of Third Worldism fly in the face of much of what passes for “Marxism” in the First World, and dismissing our analyses as merely “vulgar empiricism” is an easy way to put uncomfortable conclusions out of mind without seriously considering them.

In reality though, rather than advocating that political economy and empiricism replace Marxist analysis, Third Worldists simply uphold the fact that political economy is an essential element of Marxism that cannot be ignored. Political economy, dialectical and historical materialism, and scientific socialism are in fact all intimately related. If at times we have erred on the side of over-stressing the importance of political economy, it has been in response to those who would ignore it. Nevertheless, we do have to qualitatively understand our evidence and understand how it fits into a historical materialist analysis of the world today.

First and foremost, Third Worldists place great emphasis on the question of who is or is not exploited in the First World. Why does this question matter? Let us remember what Marxists consider to be the proletariat in a capitalist world:

*"The proletariat is that class in society which lives entirely from the sale of its labor and does not draw profit from any kind of capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose sole existence depends on the demand for labor – hence, on the changing state of business, on the vagaries of unbridled competition."* - Frederick Engels, The Principles of Communism

Additionally Mao Zedong has a concise way of distinguishing who “workers” are, i.e. who constitutes the proletariat:

*"Workers make their living wholly or mainly by selling their labor power."* - Mao Zedong, How to Differentiate the Classes in the Rural Areas

We think these are fine definitions because they encapsulate why the proletariat is the most revolutionary class under capitalism. Those who live wholly or mainly on the sale of their own labor power are exploited in a capitalist economy. That is, they produce more value than they receive in return. This is fundamentally what makes the proletariat revolutionary in the final instance. Value is created by labor-time. The extraction of value from workers, essential for the operation of a capitalist economy, means the domination of workers' time. Because the proletariat is exploited, i.e. because the proletariat have value extracted from them, their time is also stolen, and their very flourishing as human beings is inhibited by capital. A large portion of the waking life of the proletariat must be devoted to producing profit for capitalists, and this leaves less time for personal growth and enjoyment. There is no way around this for the proletariat, short of doing away with capitalism altogether. In short, exploitation and revolutionary consciousness are intimately tied. This is the conclusion of historical materialism.

When it comes down to it, exploitation is a phenomenon that can be measured empirically. It involves measurable quantities: necessary labor and surplus labor. Necessary labor is the quantity of labor required to produce value equal to what workers consume. Surplus labor is the quantity of labor which produces value beyond what workers consume — that is, it's labor that goes uncompensated. Equivalently, we can also think in terms of variable capital, which amounts to the payment workers receive for their work, and surplus value, which is realized as profit and it is the value workers produce that goes beyond their payment. When workers perform surplus labor, there is exploitation. Another way of saying the same thing is that when there is surplus value being generated by workers, those workers are exploited. All of these quantities can be measured empirically. So the question of whether workers are exploited or not is an empirical question.



Empiricism is certainly not all there is. Yet because we know that exploitation and revolutionary consciousness are intimately tied, we must not be afraid to make empirical investigation into the question of exploitation. Political economy is, once again, an integral part of Marxism and its conclusions must be incorporated into revolutionary science based on dialectical and historical materialism. What follows is a series of articles which attempt to address the real-world situation today from the perspective of Marxist political economy, but also show how this analysis is tied to broader Marxist questions of revolutionary science. Ultimately, theory must guide practice, which in turn helps us make further developments on theory. We hope that this reader is a stepping stone which will help guide more effective practice in the First World, so that even further developments on revolutionary science can be made, and so that the communist movement in the First World might finally be able to move forward after years of stagnation.



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# What is Maoism (Third Worldism)

by the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement

Maoism (Third Worldism) is a theoretical culmination of historical revolutionary practice, a science of understanding the world so as to change it. It is the Marxism of today.

Maoism (Third Worldism) includes several historical and new paradigmatic shifts in understandings regarding class struggle. These include:

1. ***All hitherto history is the history of class struggle!*** Maoism (Third Worldism) reaffirms historical materialism, i.e. that the struggle between groups over their relationship to the means of producing and distributing wealth is the chief factor which shapes history.
2. ***Capital is dead labor that only lives by sucking living labor!*** All economic wealth is the product of labor. Under capitalism, wealth becomes concentrated in fewer and fewer hands to the detriment of producers. This contradiction between the proletariat, the class for which the struggle against capitalism represents 'nothing to lose but chains and a world to win,' on one hand and exploiters on the other is irresolvable under capitalism.
3. ***Socialism or barbarianism!*** All things, including the social world, are in a process of development. The question of what direction the world will develop depends on class struggle. The basic choice facing humanity today is between socialism and communism or widespread ruin.
4. ***The proletariat must organize to destroy the old structure of power and build the new!*** Substantive progressive change to the capitalist system can not come from political reforms. Rather, the proletariat must organize to seize the instruments of production and construct their own state-forms to suppress reactionaries and carry through the revolution.
5. ***Proletarian class consciousness comes from without day-to-day economic struggles!*** The struggle against capitalism and for socialism is representative of the immediate necessity of an entire class and exemplifies an even larger range of interests. Yet this is not always demonstrated in the direct struggles waged by particular groups of the proletariat. Proletariat political consciousness is that which recognizes and organizes around the long-term strategic and tactical interests of the proletariat as a class, is born from wider experiences of class struggle, and it is often brought to the proletarian masses by its most conscious elements or from without.
6. ***The doctrine of class dictatorship!*** Everything reflects in some manner extant social relations. The state, culture, art, and day-to-day interactions are field of struggle in which different lines of understanding based on either proletarian class consciousness or reactionary ideology play out. Maoism (Third Worldism) promotes the revolutionary

struggle to seize power both over the means of production and every aspect of the superstructure as well.

7. ***Socialism is the necessary prelude to communism!*** Socialism is transitional period between the formal overthrow of capitalism under the leadership of the proletariat to the restructuring of society based on the democratic and rational control over the production and allocation of use values, without oppression, classes, or a state.
8. ***Imperialism is a qualitative shift in capitalism!*** The growth of the productive forces combined with historically-enshrined and militarily-enforced monopoly/imperialist advantages renders the contradiction between the proletariat and capital as one between exploiter and exploited nations. Hence, the principal contradiction today is between the masses of peripheral and semi-peripheral countries on one hand and exploiter classes tied to capitalist-imperialism on the other. A revolution on the part of the world's Third World masses would in fact be a world revolution, as much of the value captured by the First World today is produced in the vast Third World.
9. ***Parasitism and the wages of imperialism!*** Imperialism renders entire local, national, and regional economies of the core as primarily parasitic and dependent on the exploitation of the wider peripheral and semi-peripheral zones; and this necessarily alters the terrain of class struggle. Specifically, imperialism pays a qualitatively higher wages to a minority of workers. This has both an economic function in maintaining capital accumulation in the core at the expense of the masses of the Third World and an ideological function by 'bribing' these workers into supporting imperialism. First World and 'middle class' workers who receive wages above the abstract value of labor, i.e. above the value of the goods and services exchanged throughout the world-economy in a given period divided by the quantity of labor through which it is produced, are not part of the proletariat because the magnitude of their wages are dependent on imperialist exploitation and could not be maintained without it. Hence, Maoism (Third Worldism) opposes all economism on behalf of workers in imperialist countries.
10. ***Global people's war and global new democracy!*** Protracted people's war complimented by the mass line, as demonstrated in the Chinese Revolution and creatively applied to particular situations is the best suited means of revolutionary struggle in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries. The notion of waging class struggle must be considered globally as well. Lin Biao noted that the imperialist First World represented the "cities of the world" and that the exploited Third World the "countryside of the world." Given the vast underdevelopment of the Third World at the hands of the First World, the struggle of the world's masses is not immediately one for socialism but for global new democracy: the hemming in and wide-ranging defeat of imperialism by an international proletariat-led coalition of progressive classes and the building of the requisite productive forces, class alliances, and consciousness to continue the struggle for socialism and communism.

11. ***Continuing class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat!*** Socialism is not a straight line towards communism. Rather, due to leftover attitudes and oppressions, privileges which accompany positions of authority, and the existence of capitalist blocs, the structural possibility remains for the generation of a 'new bourgeoisie' under socialism which will attempt to seize power, halt class struggle, and unite to make accommodations with remaining reactionaries. The only solution is the continuation of class struggle under socialism to the end of countering and routing these efforts at the restoration of capitalism. This is the only means to continue towards communism.
12. ***Women hold up half the sky!*** The participation of women is paramount for the success of the struggles for people's war, global new democracy, socialism, and communism. Women make up over half of the proletariat and form the backbone of our ability to reach and transform the day to day lives of the masses through struggle.
13. ***Ecological congruence!*** As a paradigmatic shift, the struggle for socialism and communism must take a totally different approach to humanity's relationship the natural environment. Under socialism and communism, the preservation and enhancement of natural abundance for the common good will take precedence over the profit-seeking interest of the few. Moreover, people's relationship with non-human life must more closely resemble the relationship that we strive to achieve between ourselves.
14. ***National liberation for oppressed nations!*** The struggle for proletarian revolution must support and find common cause with the struggle for liberation and self-determination of oppressed nations. Within imperialist cores, the struggle for national liberation should be promoted as a detachment of the wider struggle for global new democracy, socialism, and communism.

The semantic application of 'Maoism (Third Worldism)' and the above terminology are not so important. What is important is that the above lessons are internalized and put into practice by revolutionary movements today.

The struggle against capitalist-imperialism is a life or death matter for a large portion of the world's people.

The wider program of proletarian revolution touches on all aspects of life and carries which it the long-term interest of humanity itself.

For these reasons, it is important that Marxism today, revolutionary science, draws from the history of class struggle the best understandings available.

Capitalist-imperialism will not fall on its own, but it can be defeated. Enlightened by the lessons of previous class struggle and carried out in concert with a broad united front against

imperialism, proletarian-led revolutionary struggles can defeat capitalist-imperialism, lay the foundations of socialism, and embark on the road to communism.

# Surplus in Economic Systems

by Nikolai Brown

One of the most fundamental aspects of society is its economics system, i.e. the mode of production. At the basic level, a mode of production is the means (physical objects) and social relations with which societies produce the material necessities for their existence. All societies must be sustained with food, clean water, shelter, etc. Attaining these basic things is the chief task facing any society.

When confronted with the task of feeding, clothing, and housing itself, all societies face two fundamental problems. First, in order to produce the necessities of life, there must be tools and raw materials suitable for the job. Second, in order to utilize tools and material for production, divisions of labor must be developed and carried out. These two properties, the physical means of production and social division of labor, are what Marxists describe respectively as the economic base and structure of society.

Implied in the mode of production is another fundamental aspect of society: how it consumes its surplus. All societies either produce a surplus, i.e. products over and above of the necessities for life, or they collapse and degenerate. Yet, as part of the mode of production, societies utilize surplus in only a few ways.

These three aspects, the mode of production, the means of production, and the use of surplus, help us define all societies which have ever existed.

The first societies were communal. They utilized basic tools for hunting and cultivation. The division of labor was minimal and structured around age and sex. The little surplus which was produced was devoted to the care of the sick and elderly, rationed away for times of scarcity, or provided for periods of leisure.

The advent of permanent cultivation, i.e., agriculture, changed society considerably. A reliance on favorable growing patterns along with a growing level of surplus allowed for the development more complex divisions of labor, including leadership and religious classes which were divorced from actual production. Artisan classes divorced from basic food production could also develop, and settlement became permanent.

In this secondary period of human economic development, the state developed and took on its essential form. In this period of tributary economics, the state came to embody a class of rulers whose monopoly on violence enabled them to charge a rent on classes of productive, mostly agricultural workers. This rent, enforced to fund protection from outside aggression, was



violently placed on populations whether they freely desired it or not. Not surprisingly, communal societies were frequently and quickly incorporated by tributary societies through aggressive violence.

Tributary societies produced enough surplus to sustain large non-productive ruling, bureaucratic, and serving classes. Because tributary societies relied on taxing productive workers, surplus was also invested in new means of incorporating and maintaining ever-growing numbers of productive workers into the tributary system. Under tributary systems, there is no division between the state and the economic ruling classes, as they were one in the same.

Part of the problem with tributary systems is they can be remarkably stable. Independent tributary systems could be found throughout the world for thousands of years, beginning during what once called the 'bronze age' and lasting through the end of the 'middle ages.' During this period, rule was often hereditary and cast in religious terms (i.e., 'Divine right' in Europe; 'Mandate from Heaven' in Asia), and a single ruling family might reign for hundreds of years before being deposed by another similar dynasty. Individual workers (and all of those within the sovereign territory of the tributary state) were considered subjects of the rulers. Most of the productive workers' surplus went toward maintaining the ruling-state and its 'divinely sanctioned' elite.

Capitalism involves a third major economic development. Instead of financing the ruling-state and its means of rule, surplus begins being used to develop the means of production to the aim of increased productive efficiency, i.e. the more efficient production of surplus. Over the previous system of tributary feudalism, this was a progressive step in that it contributed to a sharp increase in the social product and began to unlock the potential to eradicate scarcity.

Along with capitalist development, the means of production became the central dynamic focus. Workers in tributary systems owned the means of production and were simply forced to part with the surplus portion of their product. Under capitalism, a separate class of people who owned the means of production, i.e. capitalists, paid workers a wage while claiming control over the product created through labor. In tributary systems, use-values were directly exchanged between economic actors. For the purpose of widespread market trading under capitalism, concrete labor congeals into commodities with exchange-values corresponding to the 'socially necessary labor' required for their creation.

Though elements of capitalism existed elsewhere during the period (notably in India and Italy), it first developed as a dominant mode of production in the British Isles during the 1500s.

The reason capitalism developed in England was because of its instability as a tributary system and its relative disadvantage during the period. Surrounded by large, fairly developed tributary

systems (e.g. Spain, Holland, Ottomans, China), the English were squeezed out of much of the initial 'New World' conquest and could not match the military strength of its rivals. In response to this unfavorable situation, and unlike Spain which used returns on slavery and conquest to fund large ruling-state institutions (i.e., the Monarchy and the Church), the British found it easier and more advantageous to invest surplus from conquest into domestic industries. As part of the transformation of the mode of production from tributary to capitalist in England, the Protestant reformation broke up Catholic estates, the nobility was weakened through 'absolute' monarchy, Ireland was maintained as a colonized territory of agricultural production, the English countryside was enclosed for sheep and livestock, and a growing urban population of ex-peasants was increasingly corralled by vagrancy laws into primitive factories. In short order, England became a dominant power because, through its utilization of a capitalist mode of production which devoted surplus towards raising productive efficiency, it came to produce much more than its rivals.

The development of capitalism also undermined the power of the state and altered its function. Because surplus was increasingly being devoted toward the development of the means of production and controlled by those who owned the same means of production, the state retained its functions as an expression of class rule but it ceased to embody the ruling class in its entirety. Whereas the state *is* the ruling class within tributary societies, the capitalist state is merely one instrument (though a major one) of rule by the owners of capital.

As a foundational economic system, capitalism has an internal logic which supersedes any conscious desire. Production is carried out for the sake of accumulating capital, i.e. the means of production. The means of production (which were just that under previous systems) become transformed into capital and become the central focus for the investments of surplus, i.e. increasingly embodying the portion surplus product wrestled from workers. Workers (of Europe), for their part, became freed of traditional tributary economic ties but also divorced from the means of production. Instead, labor-power, i.e. the ability to work during a given period, was transformed into a commodity which workers must sell to capitalists for a wage on which to survive. Just as the products of labor come to represent exchange-values, i.e. equivalent to the 'socially necessary [abstract] labor' required for their production, surplus comes to represent surplus-value. Surplus-value, now controlled by the owners of capital, represents a definitive amount of 'socially necessary labor' required for its production.

Production for the sake of an increased ability to produce, i.e. the accumulation of capital, unleashed innumerable innovations over the period and a rising rate of the production of surplus. The state was reinvented, so to speak. Whereas capitalism broke down the tributary functions of the state, the state itself became an instrument of class rule by capitalists. Through colonialism, the capitalist states of the developing imperialist core also preserved tributary

features within its colonies, where necessary raw materials and food stuffs were acquired for 'upstream' capitalist production.

Nascent capitalism was fairly competitive with different firms of capital holdings struggling against each other to secure higher rates of surplus-value than others. Those who failed to effectively utilize surplus for compounding returns of surplus inevitably got pushed down under the weight of competing capitalists, resulting in units of capital in growing size and scope. These larger firms used leverage and structured markets for ever greater rates of return, especially relative to smaller capitalist producers, resulting in the growth of ever larger monopolies of capital. The ability of such monopolies to both hold down competitors and funnel to themselves huge concentrations of surplus-value [through control over the structure of economies] altered the structure and dynamics of the world's economic system.

One change from capitalism to monopoly capitalism is the loss of the innovative dynamic. Through their power to structure the world economy, monopolies increasingly control, often indirectly, a majority proportion of capital and hence surplus. In turn, surplus is increasingly devoted to maintaining control over the world-economy by monopoly capital. Rather than innovation of the means of production, surplus becomes devoted to the suppression of the productive forces for the benefit of monopolies.

Monopolies are based in and wholly dominate a handful of countries. These few countries receive the benefit of monopoly rates of surplus realization.

One means which by which monopoly capital has maintained itself as such is to pay a small proportion of workers a price for labor-power above abstract labor's exchange-value. At the same time, monopolies used a portion of surplus to create and maintain large unproductive economic sectors and social-democratic welfare states in 'their' base-countries. In effect, surplus is 'invested' into the wages of 'its' minority of workers. By elevating and embourgeoisifying 'its' workers with surplus, monopoly capital has created both a petty-bourgeois mass-base of support and another means to realize surplus (created in the world-economy) as surplus-value.

Capitalist-imperialism involved some basic changes in society. The means of production have advanced to the point of constructing a single world-economy. Surplus generated through high rates of exploitation of productive workers in the 'Global South' becomes realized as surplus-value by monopolies in the First World. This results in a great degree of material and social separation between the embourgeoisified 'masses' of First World and proletarianized populations of the Third World. Finally, surplus is increasingly devoted to maintaining this structural inequality of the world-economy.

One primary result of the development of monopoly capitalism is increasing militarization of the state. Insofar as the chief problem of monopoly capital is maintaining its position as a monopoly, state-power is an effective tool against other classes. The U.S., for example, spends much more on its military than other countries by a huge margin. Imperialism also corrupts Third World states into becoming militarized proxies of monopoly capital. This increasing devotion of surplus to maintaining the social relations of imperialism amounts to a policy of “global apartheid.”

The high rate of exploitation and capital accumulation provide imperialism with an initial advantage over the global proletarian movement. For example, as part of the US policy known as the ‘Marshall Plan,’ a large portion of surplus was used following World War 2 to build up the economies of Western Europe and Japan as a social buffer against the USSR and PRC.

Most formerly-colonized regions have been trapped in imperialist maldevelopment, i.e., productive capacities and social relations designed to export surplus to imperialist countries. There are a few exceptions. In countries with large populations of productive workers, political and structural initiatives can be taken which result in a greater retention of surplus, eventually leading to a greater development of the means of production, and eventually new competing monopolies. This is obviously against the interests of existing monopoly capital, which often relies on its military apparatuses to blackmail Third World countries into adopting maldevelopment and economic dependency. Thus, this sort of independent development toward the end of establishing new national monopolies is only an option for fairly stable, large states, which are politically determined to defy established monopoly capital over a long period of time. This, for better or worse, is the path currently being adopted in China, Russia, and Brazil. The development of rival blocs of monopoly capital will assuredly awaken inter-imperialist rivalry.

The final aspect of this current imperialist mode of production is that it has effectively laid the groundwork for socialist revolutions. Whereas the colonialism of the capitalist mode of production relied upon productive abilities of the Third World for basic agriculture and raw materials, imperialism has increasingly spread out the means of production while incorporating Third World workers into important productive roles within a global division of labor. In most countries of the Third World, the means of production are more developed than in the countries which had successful proletarian and national liberation revolutions during the 20th century. Thus, Third World revolutions, occurring in the sites where the great proportion of surplus is generated, will be of much more significance today than they were 40 or 50 years ago. The more developed means of production and high level of surplus generated in Third World countries will also set any next round of successful revolutionary movements on a much more solid material footing.

Under the present world situation, the primary task is to break the monopoly power of imperialist countries while struggling for socialism. This requires a global united front against imperialism,

ideally led by those pursuing a socialist route of development. Capitalism and capitalist-imperialism have developed the means of production to the point where humanity could return to collectively producing use-values on a sustainable basis without deprivation and without permanent divisions of labor, unproductive classes, or states to enforce particular class interests. Poverty and environmental destruction could be abolished, but it will take a dedicated struggle of the world's exploited masses for a revolution against the dominant economic structures of capitalist-imperialism.

# The Materialist Analysis of Capital

by Klaas Velija

“Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks. The time during which the labourer works, is the time during which the capitalist consumes the labour-power he has purchased of him.” – Karl Marx, “Das Kapital, Volume I”

In the vulgar economics department, the word capital is lightly thrown around as a synonymous of the Maoist concept of the instruments of labor; that is, every factor utilized in a productive process that isn't labor. According to this tale, capital and labor, by being so simplistically defined, have a transhistorical character; they have always existed and they will always exist, the only factor that can change is the way in which they relate in production. From here originates the definition of capitalism as the economy characterized by a free market and private ownership, and socialism as the economy characterized by state ownership. Perhaps, in the realm of academic economics, this is the most evident manifestation of commodity fetishism.

Probing into the theory of commodity fetishism is hence in order. The concept encapsulates the ways in which the social relationships between people in a society built on a social division of labor, national and international, take the form of relationships between things, making the exchangeability of commodities in a market appear as a natural phenomenon, and not an historically specific one.

In the capitalist mode of production, the allocation of human labor in the various sectors of the economy isn't organized by means of direct relationships between people, but rather by the process of circulation of commodities, which indirectly disciplines production by forcing enterprises to change prices, quality, and quantity of goods produced. The Angolan oil rig workers, the Burkinabé cotton pickers, the Chinese textile workers, the American retail stores; all these realities are coordinated by the international law of value. When a worker buys a t-shirt, they can't appraise the entire chain of concrete labors required to bring that commodity to their favorite store. We don't see the work that creates commodities, we just see that commodity standing in relation of value to others. That t-shirt was worth the same as another one, or worth two baseball caps, or maybe a pair of sneakers. The exchange-value of the object we look at appears to be a property of the object itself, and not a result of a particular social relationships between workers all over the world mediated by monetary exchanges. However, since 1971, the dollar is nothing more than pieces of paper. What makes these pieces of paper so valuable, if not gold?

*“Economic categories are only the theoretical expressions, the abstractions of the social relations of production, M. Proudhon, holding this upside down like a true philosopher, sees in actual relations nothing but the incarnation of the principles, of these categories,*

*which were slumbering – so M. Proudhon the philosopher tells us – in the bosom of the “impersonal reason of humanity.” M. Proudhon the economist understands very well that men make cloth, linen, or silk materials in definite relations of production. But what he has not understood is that these definite social relations are just as much produced by men as linen, flax, etc. Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill society with the industrial capitalist. The same men who establish their social relations in conformity with the material productivity, produce also principles, ideas, and categories, in conformity with their social relations. Thus the ideas, these categories, are as little eternal as the relations they express. They are historical and transitory products.” – Karl Marx, “The Poverty of Philosophy“*

Our point of departure must be the relationships existing between people as they produce for each other. Extending this analysis to the means of production means analyzing the social relations that seize upon objects utilized in our workplaces. Any instrument of labor, for example a book printer, can enter into various types of social relations. When we use a printer to print a book, the printer is part of the process creating the book. This is where it's important to remember the specific condition of capitalist production, i.e. a social division of labor: any single labor process in capitalist society can only be understood as part of a greater web of relations between independent producers. If we gifted the book we printed to a friend of ours, it would involve no monetary transaction and would only be for direct consumption. Using the same printer, we could be printing books in a capitalist printing factory; those books would in this context be sold in the market and become part of the capitalist division of labor, producing a profit for the factory owner. In this peculiar case, the most important characteristic of the book is not its use-value for our friend, but the customer's pocket, the profit that can be realized by selling the book as a commodity. Here the useful properties of the book and the printer are reduced to their ability to realize profits for a capitalist. In two exactly identical labor processes we can observe two entirely different social effects resulting from the set of relationships in which they are inserted. For the capitalist, the purpose of the printer, and indeed, of the factory itself, the paper and ink needed as inputs, the money used to buy these inputs, and the labor of his workers, are all means to the end of profit and become incarnations of capital. To make the conclusion explicit, capital as a category of political economy can't be understood as an object, but has to be understood as a particular social relationship between people that seizes upon an object; a printer is capital only when inserted in a labor process geared towards the production of surplus value in a context of social division of labor mediated by commodity exchange.

Etymologically, the vulgar economic description of capitalism as a society of voluntary exchange falls apart; according to the Collins English Dictionary – Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition, -

ism is a suffix forming nouns indicating a doctrine, system, or body of principles and practices. Capitalism can hence only be understood as the system of capital. If capitalism is a system of capital, and capital is an element of this system, we can probe into the contradiction between the totality and the element: capital is a social relation, capitalism is a mode of production in which capital becomes the dominant social relation.

Capital is concerned with profit, it is value in motion; we can capture its movement with the circuit of industrial capital, the most important and foundational circuit for the reproduction of capitalist society: M-C...P...C'-M'.

On this model, money (M) is advanced, input commodities (which include labor power, machinery, and raw materials) are purchased (C), direct (living) and indirect (dead) labor time is applied in production (P), creating commodities with higher value (C') which are then sold in order to realize an amount of money higher than the sum invested (M'). This circuit, where money becomes a means of making more money (that is, where money becomes capital), is entirely different from what is termed simple commodity exchange, captured by the circuit C-M-C, where a commodity is exchanged for money which is then used to acquire another commodity of an equivalent value.

*“The commodity is exchanged for money; money is exchanged for the commodity. In this way, commodity is exchanged for commodity, except that this exchange is a mediated one. The purchaser becomes a seller again and the seller becomes purchaser again. In this way, each is posited in the double and the antithetical aspect, and hence in the living unity of both aspects.” – Karl Marx, “Grundrisse”*

Following from the M-C...P...C'-M' circuit, we have two other circuits:

M-M', the circuit of bank-capital; here a loan is advanced and interest is paid on the loan;  
M-C-C-M', the circuit of arbitrage; here money is advanced to buy a commodity and that same commodity is resold for a higher amount of money in a market where it has a higher price.

Only the M-C...P...C'-M' circuit produces surplus value, i.e. unpaid labor performed by the working class which sells its labor power to the capitalist, who appropriates its products. While the laborer sells his labor power (ability to do work) to the capitalist, s/he also cedes his effective labor, which can't be disembodied from his. M-M' and M-C-C-M', on the other hand, appropriate value in exchange. This is easily proven by the fact that any society that limited itself to buying cheap and selling dear and loaning wouldn't survive for more than a week.

A society whose regulator of production is profit, i.e. unpaid labor, is bound to be a society of antagonism; there is no place on earth where this can't be observed. There is an antagonism



between worker and capitalist, between workers looking for jobs, between capitalists for sales, between oppressed nationalities and oppressor nationalities, between the patriarchal structure of society and women, between oppressed genders and heteronormativity, between imperialist and imperialized countries for markets and sovereignty, between transnational ruling classes for hegemony. This climate of antagonism is precisely what so-called general equilibrium, a fantasy of vulgar economics, tries to conceal.

If the capitalists' interest is to exploit labor as much as possible, what is the working class' direct interest? Their interest is to overthrow the bourgeois state and affirm themselves as a class by means of a dictatorship of the proletariat, a transitory period between capitalism and communism, a classless, stateless society of freely associated producers. The proletariat has to declare **“the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations”**.

# Historical Materialism and the Paradox of Revolution

by Nikolai Brown

According to the historical materialist methodology, the base and structure of society (i.e., the productive forces and the relations of production) determine the essential qualities of the super-structure: the state, ruling class ideologies, and the entirety of the subjective forces. That is to say that the physical qualities of the elements of production (the base – including the means of production, available natural resources and their evident uses, and physical condition of the labor force) along with the derivative the relations of production (the structure – the relationships by which use-values are produced and distributed in a ‘world-economy’) are expressed in the ideas, ruling institutions, and popular movements in different ‘locations’ (the super-structure).

Revolution, in one sense, implies a historical moment in which the base has ‘outgrown’ the limitations set forth by the old structure and (by default) super-structure, thus setting in motion the destruction and re-composition of society’s latter two aspects upon the new basis of the new limits set forth by the newly advanced productive forces. That is: the possibilities created by the productive forces are no longer conducive to previous productive relations and in fact increasingly come into conflict with them.

On the other hand, revolution implies a moment in which a portion of the super-structure, i.e., the subjective forces of revolutionary opposition, have matured in a manner toward the point of intervening and altering the fundamental nature of the structure, super-structure, and, over time, the base of a given society.

This latter criterion of revolution implies a kind of paradox. How can a portion of the super-structure act against the base and structure, the very aspects of society from which it springs?

Marx’s preliminary solution to this paradox was part of his view of capitalism’s developmental processes. Increasing proportions of society would be pushed into the working class, subjected to exploitation, and face a common immiseration in contrast to the ballooning wealth of an ever-shrinking bourgeoisie. This would create the preconditions of international working-class consciousness capable of informing victorious struggles by workers against the bourgeoisie and the relations of production set in motion by capitalism. Capitalism would create the element of its own demise: the revolutionary proletariat.

We now know the world is much more complex than the vision set forth in the Communist Manifesto (which was a popular agitational essay meant for German workers of the period) or the analysis contained in *Das Kapital* (which proceeded from the assumption that commodities are traded at value, which is rarely the case in the real world). Capitalism has not spawned a

uniform immiseration of workers. Instead, based on the growing concentration of capital in imperialist metropolises and the colonization and exploitation of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, capitalism has developed into capitalist-imperialism. Problematising Marx's basic solution to the historical materialist paradox of revolution, increasing parasitism and global wage-scaling under capitalist-imperialism have inhibited the revolutionary efficacy of the slogan, "workers of the world unite".

But this isn't the only possible answer to this paradox. To find a resolution to the dilemma presented by a historical materialist interpretation of revolution, it may be best to borrow and flesh-out ideas from Lenin and Mao, two Marxist theorists behind two historical revolutions.

Revolutionary class consciousness does not arise from the economic struggle between workers and capitalists. Rather, the struggle for the liberation of the proletariat from exploitation is the central focus of the struggle by whole people against the inevitable processes set in motion by capitalism. That is to say, at a certain points in history, the contradictions between the advancing base and lagging structure sharpen, creating a situation in which the extant productive relationships are no longer suitable for the developing forces of production. At this moment (which is better described as an era), the whole of society is thrown into increasing social conflict. For all classes, the old way of doing things become less tenable. The most reactionary and oppressive tendencies of capitalist-imperialism come to the fore, and capitalist-imperialism increasingly sets itself against the interests of the vast majority of humanity. This creates the ability to forge a wide coalition of class forces whose struggles are centrally focused on the liberation of the proletariat from capital, i.e. the destruction of capitalist-imperialism and the development of socialist productive relations.

This, of course, does not imply the creation of 'revolutionary' politics which amounts to chauvinistic universalisms or post-modernism. Rather, the development of revolutionary class consciousness necessitates the existence of 'occupational revolutionaries' who not only draw appropriate lessons from history and understand the significance of the proletariat, but who are also capable of imparting these into the struggles of exploited workers and the oppressed masses as part of the development of revolutionary offensives.

Historical materialism offers an accurate general lens by which to analyze of the development of society. At the same time, it offers an interesting conceptual paradox regarding revolutions, during which a portion of the super-structure alters the structure and base from which it is founded. Nonetheless, as revolutionaries like Marx, Lenin, and Mao have understood, it is the inherent contradictions of capitalism which inevitably create the conditions for its own demise. By advancing the interests of the masses via the liberation of the exploited proletariat, Communist forces can play a conscious role in building the movement for socialism amid an increasingly decadent capitalist-imperialism.

# Imperialism and the Concentration of Capital

by Klaas Velija

In his book, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin remarked: “The concentration of production; the monopolies arising therefrom; the merging or coalescence of the banks with industry – such is the history of the rise of finance capital and such is the content of that concept.”

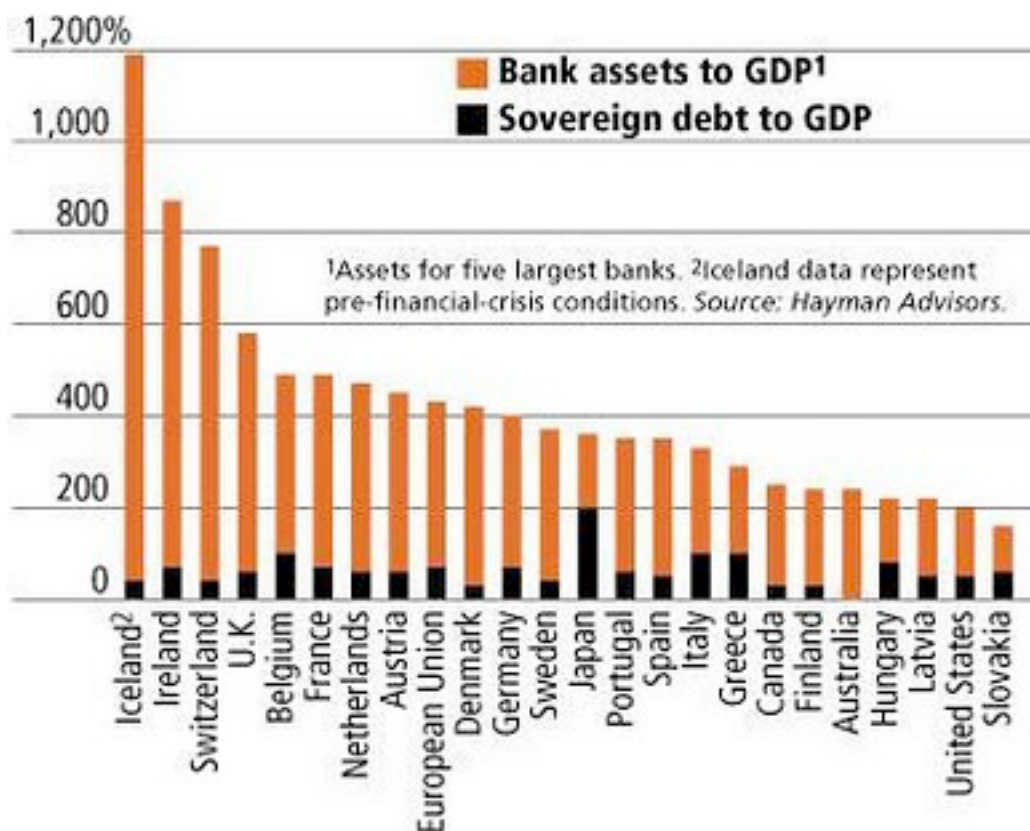
This quote encapsulates the dynamic of capitalism in the past century and is vindicated by modern research. Three systems theorists at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich have used a database listing 37 million companies and investors worldwide to extract information about all the 43,060 multinational corporations and the share ownerships connecting them to construct a model of the web of interlocking shareholding networks, coupled with each company's operating revenues, creating a representation of where economic power rests today. Of these 43,060, 1,318 companies stood at the heart of this network. Every one of the 1,318 had ties to two or more companies and on the average had ties with 20 companies. Although counting for 20% of global operating revenues, this core collectively owned through its shares the majority of the world's large blue chip and manufacturing firms, representing a further 60% of global revenues. At the center of this core they found a super-entity of 147 even more tightly knit companies (all of their ownership was held by other members of the super-entity) controlling 40% of the total wealth in the network. Most of them are financial institutions.[1].

The top 20 multinational corporations are Barclays PLC, Capital Group Companies Inc, FMR Corporation, AXA, State Street Corporation, JP Morgan Chase & Co, Legal & General Group PLC, Vanguard Group Inc, UBS AG, Merrill Lynch & Co Inc, Wellington Management Co LLP, Deutsche Bank AG, Franklin Resources Inc, Credit Suisse Group, Walton Enterprises LLC (holding company for Wal-Mart heirs), Bank of New York Mellon Corp, Natixis, Goldman Sachs Group Inc, T Rowe Price Group Inc, and Legg Mason Inc.

The romantic dream of the self-made, hard-working industrial capitalist is thus shattered by the hammer of reality. This heroic figure is exposed as no more than a shareholder in gargantuan corporations, the motor force of capitalist imperialism. The profits of large-scale production and international exploitation of the resources of oppressed nations guarantee that capital breaks out from the shell of individual property.

The investments required by large (and especially multinational) companies go beyond the accumulated capital of any single individual, and banks become necessary to mobilize the capital needed by productive enterprises. Capitalism is hence provided with a mobilization of credit which keeps the quantity of idle money to a minimum and mobilizes the largest amounts

for productive purposes. The increasing mass of credit leads to a change in its very nature, which goes from the provision of short-term finance, or circulating credit, to long-term investment projects, or investment credit, which provides banks with higher interest in enterprises' long-term prospects. This of course ends up cutting into entrepreneurial profits, and increases finance capital's share in the economy, as can be seen in the following graph:



On top of this, banks and their role as capital mobilizers reinforce the tendency towards growing concentration and centralization of capital. Banks come to dominate companies, increasing their stake in productive enterprise through the acquisition of share capital (it is no coincidence that the top companies in the global network of capital are banks or financial services corporations, like Barclays, Capital Group Companies, and FMR Corporation). As capital centralizes and banks push up the profit rate on their investments by sponsoring larger and monopolistic companies, free competition is thwarted. "Not real capitalism" is indeed the purest expression of the laws of motion of capitalist society and the product of the logic of this mode of production.

As financial capital is transferred from competitive enterprises to multinational oligopolies, the rate of profit is systematically pushed up for big businesses and the three primary contradictions of global imperialism, outlined by Joseph Stalin in *The Foundations of Imperialism*, are brought to their highest point under the existing conditions of social polarization, where capital, concentrated in the hands of few giant capitalist associations manifests itself in direct opposition to the world proletariat:

*“The first contradiction is the contradiction between labour and capital. Imperialism is the omnipotence of the monopolist trusts and syndicates, of the banks and the financial oligarchy, in the industrial countries. In the fight against this omnipotence, the customary methods of the working class-trade unions and cooperatives, parliamentary parties and the parliamentary struggle-have proved to be totally inadequate. Either place yourself at the mercy of capital, eke out a wretched existence as of old and sink lower and lower, or adopt a new weapon-this is the alternative imperialism puts before the vast masses of the proletariat. Imperialism brings the working class to revolution.*

*The second contradiction is the contradiction among the various financial groups and imperialist Powers in their struggle for sources of raw materials, for foreign territory. Imperialism is the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, the frenzied struggle for monopolist possession of these sources, the struggle for a re-division of the already divided world, a struggle waged with particular fury by new financial groups and Powers seeking a “place in the sun” against the old groups and Powers, which cling tenaciously to what they have seized. This frenzied struggle among the various groups of capitalists is notable in that it includes as an inevitable element imperialist wars, wars for the annexation of foreign territory. This circumstance, in its turn, is notable in that it leads to the mutual weakening of the imperialists, to the weakening of the position of capitalism in general, to the acceleration of the advent of the proletarian revolution and to the practical necessity of this revolution.*

*The third contradiction is the contradiction between the handful of ruling, “civilised” nations and the hundreds of millions of the colonial and dependent peoples of the world. Imperialism is the most barefaced exploitation and the most inhumane oppression of hundreds of millions of people inhabiting vast colonies and dependent countries. The purpose of this exploitation and of this oppression is to squeeze out super-profits. But in exploiting these countries imperialism is compelled to build these railways, factories and mills, industrial and commercial centers. The appearance of a class of proletarians, the emergence of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the growth of the liberation movement-such are the inevitable results of this “policy.” The growth of the revolutionary movement in all colonies and dependent countries without exception clearly testifies to this fact. This circumstance is of importance for the proletariat inasmuch as it saps radically the position of capitalism by converting the colonies and dependent countries from reserves of imperialism into reserves of the proletarian revolution.”*

Imperialism is then nothing else than the highest stage of capitalist development, where gargantuan concentrations of capital compete for dominance over the world, and especially over

the oppressed people. It is a capitalism that is forced to admit its own contradictions and its own desperation, as sweat-stained profits become blood-stained profits.

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# **Carbon in Atmosphere Hits 400ppm: Capitalism or Natural Environment Must Perish**

**By Nikolai Brown**

This past week, a milestone was reached in human impact on the environment. Carbon levels in the atmosphere exceeded the 400 parts per million level.

According to a report from National Geographic:

*“The last time the concentration of Earth’s main greenhouse gas reached this mark, horses and camels lived in the high Arctic. Seas were at least 30 feet higher—at a level that today would inundate major cities around the world.”*

*“The planet was about 2 to 3 degrees Celsius (3.6 to 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer. But the Earth then was in the final stage of a prolonged greenhouse epoch, and CO2 concentrations were on their way down. This time, 400 ppm is a milepost on a far more rapid uphill climb toward an uncertain climate future.”*

The sharp increase of carbon released into the atmosphere during the 20th century and our continued reliance on fossil fuels will have lasting compounding effects. For example, warming temperatures may release carbon from the ocean floor, in turn contributing to further climate change.

According to Scientific American magazine,

*“Some scientists argue we passed the safe level for greenhouse gas concentrations long ago, pointing to the accelerating impacts from extreme weather to the meltdown of Arctic sea ice. Others argue that we have yet more room to burn fossil fuels, clear forests and the like—but not much—before catastrophic climate change becomes inescapable.”*

Climate change is also contributing to run-away melting in the Arctic which will raise sea levels at an increasing pace. What once was thought to be a distant reality, the complete melting of Arctic sea ice, is now expected to occur in 2015.

Over the past few years, erratic weather has led to poor crop performance and even the US Department of Defense warns the effects of climate change may “act as accelerants of instability or conflict in parts of the world.”



Yet besides preparing counter-insurgency strategies, capitalist-imperialism offers few solutions.

Again, according Scientific American:

*“What can be done? In the short term, more potent but shorter-lasting greenhouse gas emissions could be curbed or a concerted effort to develop CO2 capture and storage technology could be undertaken.*

*“At present pace, the world could reach 450 ppm in a few short decades. The record notches up another 2 ppm per year at present pace. Human civilization developed and flourished in a geologic era that never saw CO2 concentrations above 300 ppm.”*

### **Capitalism or the environment, one will perish**

Beyond its addiction to burning fossil fuels, capitalism's predication on expansion is ruinous for the environment. Without the ability to expand, the internal logic of capitalism breaks down and structural disorder ensues. Unfortunately, the Earth holds finite resources. While capitalism could adapt over the long-term to only utilize renewable resources, this will occur only after global ecological and environmental calamity absolutely necessitates it. In the short-term, either capitalism or the natural environment must perish.

Capitalist-imperialism is a system which fails to serve the immediate needs of the global proletariat and the long-term interests of humanity. Its only motive is the accumulation of capital and the maintenance of global structural divides. Productive activity occurs not for the benefit of all. The destruction of Earth serves to enrich a small class of monopoly-capitalists and to maintain the decadent lifestyles of their hangers-on (including the vast First World petty-bourgeoisie). Instead of providing people with a humane minimal standard of living and promoting ecological health, resources are drained away into military expenditures, unnecessary packaging, and incessant marketing and advertising. While pets in the First World 'suffer' from obesity, children in the Third World starve, and environmental resources (such as oceanic fish stocks and rain forests) dwindle.

Imperialism's false 'solution' is yet another gadget, another commodity, and another marketing scheme. Meanwhile, behind the scenes it is preparing for increased 'instability' and modernizing its military to be less dependent on fossil fuels. Its real 'solution' is a wave of fascistic aggression against the rising global tide of predictable mass unrest.

## **Communist Alternative**

There is one way out of the ecological destruction and mass tyranny concocted by capitalism. That way out is communism: the long-term conscious struggle for the abolition of social oppression, class divisions, and the reactionary state; along with the development of an entirely new mode of production based on the democratic and egalitarian production and distribution of use-values.

It remains the task of communists to unite various struggles, both immediate and long-term, into a movement for revolution. From the destruction of the environment, to the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous lands, to the pauperization which threatens the masses of the Third World, to police terrorism against and the criminalization of oppressed nations within imperialist countries, and patriarchy in all mundane and depraved forms, communists must unite the struggles against these and many more problems into a single world-wide movement capable of seizing power away from the imperialists and reactionary parasites. Only through revolution can we lay the foundations for a world without oppression or rampant destruction of the natural environment.

Imperialism has 'distorted' class structures so that value produced by workers in the Third World is exported to the First World. First World workers, as a class, consume more of the social product than they produce. This both creates 'social peace' in the First World and is part of the structural dynamic of imperialism itself. An 'ecological unequal exchange' also exists whereby natural resources are exported from the Third to First World and pollution and waste is transferred back in return.

The structural realities of the modern world places before the communist movement specific tasks en route toward the communist mode of production (i.e., production 'by all, for all.'). Namely, we must: unite various struggles, including proletarian-led people's wars, into a global united front against imperialism; embark on a period of global new democracy in which the self determination and equality between nations is established; launch socialism, the vigorous 'epoch of struggle' in which communism is established and classes, oppression, and the state are abolished.

Communists recognize certain axiomatic truths. Among them are 'Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win,' or, 'Who Dares Wins.' Those who genuinely hope for a better world, one without extreme disparity and ecocidal prerequisites, must get active within the communist movement.

The communist call to action is this: get organized; educate yourself; learn through practice; join RAIM, another proletarian-oriented organization, or develop your own cell and political work. Together, through professional dedication, hard work, and a materialist and strategic outlook, we

can be part of a movement which ensures capitalism goes extinct instead of everything that we know as the natural environment.

# **Bangladesh Factory Collapse Shows Contrasts Between First and Third Worlds**

**by Antonio Moreno**

In Bangladesh another tragedy has befallen workers in the country's garment industry. On the morning of April 24th a factory building collapsed in Savar, just outside the capital city of Dhaka. The confirmed death toll as of this writing is over 600, and may approach 1,000, making it so far the most deadly factory incident in this country that has suffered similar disasters in only the past few years. This also shows in reality the many contrasts of the First World and the Third World.

The factory, like many factories in Bangladesh that have had accidents and others that continue to operate, was a multi-story building. While building regulations often take a back seat to the needs of its corporate suppliers, this factory was in blatant violation of the existing laws. The owner was licensed to build only five stories but illegally added on an additional three stories to make it eight. The day before there were visible cracks on the building, but the owner forced his workers, which numbered over 3,000, to enter the building to continue to work. Managers ordered workers on the upper floors to continue to work even after police ordered evacuations of lower floors and nearby businesses evacuated. Workers were crushed in the rubble, and rescuers continue to dig through the heavy concrete looking for survivors and removing bodies.

The owner of the building, Mohammed Sohel Rana, has been arrested and detained by authorities. Rana is also a prominent politician of the country's ruling party. Others have been arrested with him, while he faces a maximum of seven years for his crimes. The prime minister of Bangladesh called for a national day of mourning. Furthermore the Bengali masses have taken to the streets to express their anger. Several protests have happened in the aftermath of the disaster. Roads have been blocked, several incidents of vandalism have occurred, and buildings and vehicles have been attacked. During the May Day protests here people called for the death penalty for those responsible. The anger of the masses is visible and justified.

The people of Bangladesh have suffered many incidents such as this. Only recently a factory fire in Dhaka in November 2012 claimed the lives of 112 people and injured hundreds more. Before this most recent incident it had the distinction of being the factory disaster with the largest death toll to date. The factory, owned by Tarzeen Fashions, was a multi-story building that was in the process of being expanded via building more floors atop what was already built. In this and many other factories in Bangladesh basic safety rules were ignored. Yarn and other flammable fabrics were placed near generators. There were no fire escapes. In fact when the fire alarms went off managers told the employees to dismiss them as false alarms. Employees

ignoring the managers and rushing to safety made the death toll ever lower than it could have been. Furthermore bars were put on windows and exits were locked, allegedly to prevent theft. The deeper part of this tragedy is that it and others before it were preventable.

Since 2005 over 600 Bengali workers have died in similar factory fires. Of the 4,500 garment factories in the country, one third have been cited for fire code violations.

Along with the dangers from fires, the numbers show clear exploitation of the workers. Bangladesh has become the 2nd largest exporter of garments, right behind China. The garment industry accounts for \$20 billion of the country's economy, 80 percent of its exports, and employs 40 percent of its industrial workforce. Yet the workers in these factories never see the benefits of this wealth. A worker can expect to make from the minimum wage of \$37 a month, with the average wage being \$45 a month. 3 million people work in the garment industry in Bangladesh, most of them young women. An average workday is 10 hours a day, six days a week. With the class struggle more intense in Bangladesh, one of the poorer nations in the world, there is more active organizing on a labor basis. Many more workers have been killed in labor struggles.

It is not just in Bangladesh. Earlier in September 2012 a fire engulfed a factory in Karachi, Pakistan, killing over 300 workers. Like the fires in Bangladesh the building was multi-story, windows were barred to prevent theft, and there were no usable or safe fire exits. That same night another fire blazed in a shoe factory in Lahore, killing 25. In Pakistan textiles account for 7.4 percent of the GDP, and employs up to 38 percent of the workforce. In 2011 the year before 151 Pakistani workers died in factory incidents, due to criminal neglect and regulations not enforced. Sweatshops supplying garments for Western consumers populate the countries of Bangladesh, Pakistan, China and Vietnam. Many other disasters happen frequently, even if the death toll is so low as to not stay in the global consciousness as these above have. In the poor countries of the Global South the state is subservient to the interests of foreign capital. It is used more to repress labor strikes than to enforce safety for the people.

The garment industry is increasing in the countries of South Asia. Many are leaving China where they are located now as the costs there are getting more expensive, as their economy grows and the country expands as a regional and global power. They are going to countries like Bangladesh with even more lax regulations to further the super-exploitation to gain more super-profits. And with it more deaths that are preventable will happen.

### **Meanwhile in the Global North**

The commonality in all this is the relationship to the Global North, the First World countries that consume the products that workers in Bangladesh and other places in the Global South produce

through their labor. Most manufacturing production has shifted away from the wealthy countries in the First World for the lower labor costs in the Third World. It has been widely reported about the corporations such as Wal-Mart who utilize this system of exploited labor to sell their goods to consumers in the First World. When comparisons are made to conditions in Bangladesh and other countries with sweatshops to that of people in the First World, one has to go back through history. One specific event known to activists is the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of 1911.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire was the incident that happened in New York City on March 25th of that year where 146 garment workers, mostly immigrant women, were killed in a fire. Safety exits were blocked on the 11 story building, preventing escape for the workers trapped inside, and many leaped to their deaths. This became a symbol of the exploitation that came to be known as sweatshops, and became a rallying symbol for labor activists in the U.S. In one recent protest in New York, an action to block a ship carrying Wal-Mart goods was invoked by the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition. The ironic thing is that atrocities like the Triangle fire happen too often in countries like Bangladesh, precisely because this exploitation shifted to the Global South, and on a greater scale.

RAIM has pointed out the composition of the majority in First World countries is that of a labor aristocracy, where imperialism has developed to a point to bring its populations in line with its system through economic benefits, making these majorities net exploiters who bring in more than the value of their labor. With even the left-wing parts of the First World not aware of these facts, it often brings them into the area of chauvinism. The reaction of the tragedies in Bangladesh further shows this.

Back in March 2011, the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, the news program Democracy Now, hosted by Amy Goodman, a favorite among the First World amerikan Left, devoted several shows to this event. This was also around the time another factory fire occurred in Bangladesh. On December 14th 2010 a fire broke out at the Hameen factory outside Dhaka, killing 29 workers. Also happening at the time were disputes over labor legislation in Wisconsin. The Democracy Now show was titled, "100 Years After Triangle Fire, Tragedy in Bangladesh and Anti-Union Bill in Wisconsin Highlight Workers' Enduring Struggles." So here they are trying to compare the situation with workers in the United States, specifically Wisconsin, with those of Bangladesh. Instead it revealed their own chauvinism.

One of the guests, Charles Kernaghan of the Institute for Global Labor and Human Rights, gets some things right when he describes the conditions of workers in Bangladesh as worse than they were for those at the Triangle factory:

*"This is going on, still, in the global economy today. Not one change. In fact, it gets worse. In Triangle they made 14 cents an hour. But when you adjust that for inflation, that*

*14 cents an hour in 1911 is worth \$3.18 today. The workers at the Hameem factory in Bangladesh on the outskirts of Dhaka, they're making, at the top wage, 28 cents an hour. That means that their earning, their wages in Bangladesh today, are one-tenth of what wages were in the United States 100 years ago. We are racing to the bottom."*

Kernaghan and co-host Juan Gonzalez further talk about the myth of post-industrial society, when in fact there are more manufacturing workers than anywhere, just all moved away from First World countries to countries like Bangladesh. Yet Kernaghan later slides into chauvinism in his attempt to appeal to his audience, those in the U.S.:

*"But if we don't take some control over the global economy, we're all going to be working for \$3.18 an hour, without a doubt, with no benefits. I mean, we're going downhill so fast, it's remarkable."*

Another guest on the same show, labor historian Steve Fraser, further shows the inherent chauvinism in the amerikan Left when he describes the potential results of anti-labor legislation in Wisconsin at the time:

*"So it's an extremely dangerous moment in the country's history right now, because what he [Wisconsin governor Scott Walker] is proposing we do — and what has already been going on here in America — is a kind of auto-cannibalism, a kind of eating away at the welfare of working people, that's gone on for the last generation, so that, soon enough, we, too, will be making exactly what those Bangladesh workers will be making. The safety net will be shredded and then — and eviscerated and be gone. And the general level of well-being in this country will be destroyed, if we don't now mobilize, as people in Madison and elsewhere have begun to do, against this assault."*

Both of these interviewees expressed views show common themes among the First World. They realize that the Third World exists but do not push to abolish the discrepancies between the oppressed and oppressor nations, just want the oppressor nation peoples not to fall into the state of the Third World. And these views are from the more leftist segments of amerikan society. The mainstream of amerika could not care less about the conditions of people in the world below them. And for the workers in Wisconsin, even those who professed some type of internationalism, their main concern is their own material well being. Far from producing revolutionary consciousness it came down to a dispute between Democrats and Republicans, a reformist campaign in essence. They inadvertently realize that their well-being is many times better than that of the great majority of the world. Their wages and benefits, while under attack, make them part of the richest 15 to 20 percent of the world. A more just economic distribution of the resources of the world would make them and others in the First World have to cut back.

The tragedy in Bangladesh, and many others before it, is caused by exploitation that is at the heart of this global system of capitalist-imperialism. The workers in Bangladesh were toiling in inhumane conditions to make products for privileged consumers in the First World, and faced dangerous conditions so that a minority class of the bourgeoisie and net-exploiters in the wealthy countries could profit and benefit. A system that so recklessly disregards human life is a system that needs to be abolished and replaced by one that is based on the needs of humans and the ecosystem it supports. This will come about by the actions of those it has used and abused, the revolutionary class, the proletariat. This class overwhelmingly resides in the masses of the Third World, the Global South, and they will take back the products of their labor and resources stolen from them for consumption by the imperialist countries. The allies of the international proletariat must strategize on how best to assist this global struggle. One thing that is key is to see the world not from wishful thinking but how it really is. To see global contrasts for what they really are.



# Fall From Grace: The Euro-Amerikan Struggle Against the Federal Government

by Prince Kapone

There is a widespread distrust, if not outright hostility, towards the federal government in the United States today. It can be seen in the increasing popularity of the Tea Party Movement, the rapid growth of armed patriot militias, and heard in the daily political discourse of ordinary Americans. It should come as no surprise that the Tea Party movement has adopted Ron Paul as its informal spokesman, reflecting the general political climate of anti-government hysteria that is flourishing throughout white America. According to a recent Gallup poll, fear of “big government” has reached a near-record level, with 64% of Americans viewing Big Brother as the largest threat to future of the nation [1]. In truth, there is nothing new about these sentiments. As we shall see, they can be traced far back into American history, at least to the time of the Civil War, and at their core, they are fundamentally a reaction to the gradual erosion of white privilege and white supremacy that has taken place over the last 100 years or so.

While the Gallup poll reveals that a majority of Americans distrust and resent the federal government, it also obscures the fact that these sentiments are deeply racialized. As another poll shows, while a majority of white Americans believe that the federal government is doing *too much* in ensuring equal opportunity in employment, education, housing, and healthcare, a majority of Blacks believe that the government is *not doing enough to secure* these ends [2]. This discrepancy reflects the different roles assigned to the federal government by whites and Blacks respectively. Historically, whites have looked to Uncle Sam to promote and protect white privilege and supremacy, and opposed any steps taken by federal government to integrate non-whites into the social structure on equal terms. Thus, whites have tended to view any legislation passed by the government that promotes racial equality as unjust, if not outright tyrannical. Blacks on the other hand, believing in the promises of opportunity and democracy espoused by America, have tended to look to the federal government to secure their civil rights and to promote equal opportunity. While Blacks have looked upon Uncle Sam as their reluctant protector, whites are more and more coming to see the federal government as an intrusive, corrupt and oppressive force, imposing its will upon a betrayed settler nation.

The promise of American democracy was never intended to extend beyond the bounds of white male property owners, which practically every white male could become. As John Jay wrote in the Federalist Papers at the dawn of independence, “those who own the country ought to govern it [3].” This premise was taken for granted by all of the founding fathers and built into the very structure of the U.S. government. The ever-exalted “separation of powers,” said to form the core of democracy, was in fact designed to protect the interests of the minority, that is, as Alexander Hamilton put it, “the propertied classes [4].” As Blacks at the time were not

considered human, but chattel, and could not own property, they were never included in America's democratic vision. As revolutionary historian J. Sakai wrote in his groundbreaking work *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, "we need to see the dialectical unity of democracy and oppression in developing settler Amerika [5]." From its very inception, America was conceived to be a settler democracy of, by, and for European settlers, with Blacks, Native Americans, and all other non-white people as colonial subjects. This is the key to understanding white America's historical relationship to, and its present resentment towards, the federal government.

Up until the mid-nineteenth century, the federal government allowed a great degree of autonomy and sovereignty to state governments, its role confined largely to exterminating Native Americans and conducting foreign affairs. However, beginning in the 1850's, some major contradictions began to emerge between the industrial capitalist states of the North and the agrarian slave states of the South, fracturing the Union into two irreconcilable halves. The conflict principally revolved around land, labor, and each side's desire to expand its mode of production westward across the newly conquered frontier. Renowned scholar W.E.B. Du Bois notes in his definitive study *Black Reconstruction in America* that the Civil War "was a war to determine how far industry in the United States should be carried on under a system where the capitalist owns not only the nation's raw materials, not only the land, but also the laborer himself; or whether the laborer was going to maintain personal freedom and enforce it by growing political and economic independence based on widespread ownership of land [6]." The morality of slavery was never seriously at issue; what was at stake was the future of the American empire itself and who would rule it – the Northern industrial capitalists or the Southern slave planters?

None of this is to say that slavery or Blacks were merely incidental to this conflict. On the contrary, "the heart of the matter was the slave system," and Blacks were at the very center of this system [7]. However, the Northerners were never genuinely concerned about the liberty of Blacks, nor were they motivated by anything other than unadulterated self-interest. Their intention at the beginning of the Civil War was not to abolish slavery, but merely to contain it within the South to prevent its expansion westward, and to preserve the Union at all costs. For the South, this curtailment of its liberty to expand to new frontiers spelled certain death. Thus, the slave states opted to secede from the Union in the hopes of forcing a compromise on "terms which would include national recognition of slavery, new slave territory, and new cheap slaves [8]." The Southern states were not going to blemish their honor or accept defeat by allowing the federal government, controlled by the North, to dictate the limitations to the slave system.

The issue of state sovereignty also played a major during the Civil War. Indeed, some members of the Confederacy argued that state sovereignty was the principal matter of contention during the Civil War, with slavery having nothing to do with it at all [9]. However, the appeal to "state

sovereignty” during the Civil War actually served to conceal the white supremacist agenda of the Confederacy. By using race-neutral political language, the Confederates were able to obscure the fact that what was at issue was the states’ alleged right to enslave, oppress, and exploit Blacks. Many Southerners felt that they should be free to practice slavery, and any measure adopted by the federal government to curtail or undo this practice was an act of absolute tyranny. It was at this time that many Americans, not just in the South, came to view the federal government as an alien and coercive instrument of tyranny.

The Civil War was extremely vicious and brutal, with casualties ranging in the hundreds of thousands. As the war intensified, for reasons of both expediency and necessity, the Union forces decided to begin enlisting runaway slaves as soldiers. Even before the Emancipation Proclamation, that is, before the federal government formally abolished slavery, the mere presence of Union troops in Southern territories elicited slaves in the area to emancipate themselves as they fled across Union lines in search of sanctuary [10]. The Union forces didn’t know what else to do with these fugitive slaves but employ them as laborers for the military or enlist them as soldiers. Abolition was the next logical step from there, so on January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation, instantaneously liberating all of the slaves in Confederate territory (but not outside of it).

To most Americans, North and South, this unilateral decree issued by the President was an act of treachery, an all-out assault on white supremacy. As Du Bois pointed out, “of all that most Americans wanted, this freeing of the slaves was the last [11].” For Southerners, this was an attack on property – the ultimate tyranny, the supreme act of betrayal. For Northerners, it was a grave injustice inflicted upon their white brothers, an unfortunate consequence of a tragic war. At the same time, Northern workers felt their own white privilege threatened because they feared that the freed slaves would now migrate to the North and compete with whites in the labor market, driving down wages [12].

With the defeat of the Confederacy, the federal government immediately set out to reconstruct the South upon a new basis. Union forces occupied the Confederate states and thus helped to usher in the only genuine democratic phase of American history until that point: Black Reconstruction. It was during this period that white Americans, mainly in the South, began to see the federal government as an enemy of the “white race.” The federal government forced the Confederate states, literally at gun-point, to adopt new state constitutions which “provided for equal civil rights, established universal suffrage and disenfranchised disloyal white citizens [13].” It is estimated that perhaps 200,000 whites were disenfranchised during Reconstruction, while 703,459 Africans were enfranchised following the passing of the 13th and 14th amendments. Thus in 1867, there were more Black registered voters than white registered voters in the South [14].

Even more than abolishing slavery, the radical measures passed during Reconstruction raised the hostility of whites towards the federal government to epic proportions. One can hardly imagine the shame and humiliation of these proud Southerners, under military occupation, forced to watch their former “property” roaming freely among them, even governing them! None of it of course would have been possible without the armed forces of Uncle Sam, which imposed Reconstruction on the South and sustained it for many years after the war. Scalawags were just as hated as the freedmen, with white mobs frequently castrating them if they were found alone [15].

It wasn't before long, however, that white Southerners began to mount a counter-revolution against Reconstruction in an attempt to restore white supremacy and reduce Blacks back down to their natural place. To achieve this, whites began to form secret para-military organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), the White Caps, the White Cross, and the White Legion. These terrorist groups sought to overthrow Reconstruction by inflicting sheer terror on the Black population. “During the 1868 elections in Louisiana, for example, some 2,000 Afrikans were thought to have been killed or wounded, with many more forced to flee. In Shreveport, a gang of Italian fishermen and market venders called ‘The Innocents’ roamed the streets for ten days before the elections, literally killing every Afrikan they could find. Some 297 Afrikans were killed in New Orleans [16].” This campaign of terror was carried on for ten years, until the last Reconstruction government fell in 1877 with the Hayes-Tilden deal.

The KKK is probably the most infamous white para-military group in American history. More than any other organization, it was responsible for terrorizing any Black person who participated in politics or otherwise supported Reconstruction. The Klan was very popular among the white masses and it was very effective at restoring white supremacy throughout the South. Back then, the KKK was extremely pro-American, but at the same time, it was an “extralegal counterrevolutionary force literally at war with the established government [17]”. It was largely fighting to reverse the policies imposed by the federal government on the South, which they believed threatened the integrity of their white, Christian nation. There is a revisionist tendency among historians to depict the Klan as some fringe group that did not engender popular support for its campaigns of terror, but nothing can be further from the truth. In reality, the Ku Klux Klan and their agenda of white supremacy were as American as apple pie.

As noted above, the terrorist tactics of the Klan and other vigilante organizations succeeded in overthrowing Reconstruction in the South. In the 1877 Hayes-Tilden deal “the South promised to accept the dominance of the Northern bourgeoisie over the entire Empire, and to permit the Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes to succeed Grant in the U.S. Presidency. In return, the Northern bourgeoisie agreed to let the planters have regional hegemony over the South, and to withdraw the last of the occupying Union troops so that the Klan could take care of Afrikans as they wished [18].” The defeat of Reconstruction gave birth to the era of Jim Crow,

which was a way for Southern states to reestablish white supremacy without federal intervention. The South was reintegrated back into the U.S. and granted a degree of autonomy over their own racial policies.

With Jim Crow, white supremacy was safe for the time being, but it couldn't last forever. Jim Crow was essentially a form of legal apartheid, of *de jure* segregation, enshrined in state law and enforced by the local police forces, if not the Klan. In the North, racial segregation was not legal, but there was actually *de facto* segregation, with Blacks mostly confined to urban ghettos and projects and consigned to the lowest rungs of society. Although Blacks were U.S. citizens on paper, they were denied their civil rights at any time and this created an intense climate of resentment on the part of Blacks. This contradiction culminated in the Civil Rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's.

As the Civil Right struggle got underway in the mid-1950's, white America had a relatively harmonious relationship with the federal government, in both the North and South. The New Deal had done a lot to boost working-class whites into the ranks of the middle class, alleviating some of their apprehensions toward Big Government. Whites in the South were content with the arrangement that had been in place since the end of Reconstruction and everything seemed to be tranquil. But beneath the surface a storm was brewing of magnanimous proportions. Blacks were sick and tired of the second-class status they were relegated to and they began a campaign to attain full civil rights and equality before the law.

The Civil Rights struggle originated as a direct challenge to Jim Crow in the South. Black students from Northern universities traveled into the deep South where racial prejudice was very intense. They staged sit-ins at segregated facilities, refusing to comply with Jim Crow laws. In almost all cases, the local police were called in to beat and arrest the demonstrators. Hordes of white masses would also band into mobs and attack protestors, even killing some. The violence unleashed by white Americans on peaceful Black protestors brought Jim Crow into the national spotlight, pressuring the federal government to do something about this blatant disregard for civil rights in the South. The government had its hands tied however because the overwhelming majority of white Americans did not support civil rights for Blacks. It was common to hear whites call for "respect of law and order," as they criticized Blacks for breaking segregation laws to attain their civil rights. The term "law and order" is in fact a race-neutral euphemism for "stay in your place" with a racial slur attached at the end. Because the injustice of Jim Crow could not be rectified by any other means but civil disobedience, whites were essentially telling Blacks to just be quiet and accept the status quo.

It is interesting to note that while Blacks looked to the federal government to protect them during these protests, whites looked to Big Brother to "restore order" and arrest the demonstrators. This once again reflects the different roles assigned to the government by Blacks and whites

respectively. On the one hand, you have Blacks expecting Uncle Sam to live up to his rhetoric of freedom and democracy, and to provide protection to those pursuing their legitimate civil rights. On the other hand, you have whites expecting the government to repress any challenge to white supremacy and to defend the status quo at all costs. The federal government, however, had its own agenda, and reluctantly decided to side with the civil rights movement. Even as it urged caution and patience to the Black civil rights leaders, the federal government was actually worried that the civil rights movement could get out of control and become radicalized. This is what impelled the Johnson administration to pass the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act. Predictably, Southern whites saw these pieces of legislation as violations of their state sovereignty, reviving long slumbering anti-federal government sentiments among them. Whites in the South felt betrayed by Big Brother yet again because the government had sided with non-whites against its own white American children, undermining the rule of white supremacy.

To address some of the racial inequalities that existed in the North, which were causing riots in major urban cities on the East and West coast, the federal government even adopted a policy of Affirmative Action. This policy was designed to create equal opportunity for minorities in all domains of social life. For many white Americans, this was the last straw. Ignoring the fact that white Americans are already levels above non-white Americans in virtually every social indicator, many whites viewed the Affirmative Action measures as unjust acts of tyranny intended to destroy the white man in his own country. It is even common to hear some whites claim today that “Blacks” or “Mexicans” have “taken over” in this country. Any little step taken by the government to reduce white privilege and redistribute wealth or resources to non-whites is viewed by Euro-Americans as attacks on America itself.

Our analysis has shown that the current climate of distrust and hostility by whites towards the federal government has deep historical roots. These sentiments originated first in the South during the Civil War, when the Union government conquered, occupied, and imposed its will on the former confederate states. A radical program of Reconstruction was implemented by the federal government, which disenfranchised a large number of white confederate loyalists and enfranchised the former colonial subjects, that is, the slaves at the same time. Whites responded to these government transgressions with a sustained campaign of terror directed against Blacks and whites who supported Reconstruction. These reactionary measures managed to bring about the collapse of the Reconstruction governments and a restoration of white supremacy in the South in the form of Jim Crow segregation.

Starting in the 1950's, Blacks embarked upon a campaign to attain their Civil Rights, calling on the government to apply the law equally to all citizens and demanding that it protect their rights. The government reluctantly passed legislation in the 1960's that granted Blacks full civil rights and undermined the rule of white supremacy. These steps caused whites in the South to again view the federal government as a tyrannical power intent on “destroying America.” Following the

Civil Rights struggle, the government then adopted Affirmative Action policies that further eroded the basis of white supremacy, triggering widespread white hostility towards Uncle Sam.

In all this we can see that when white Americans say that they are afraid of “Big Government,” what they really mean is that they are opposed to the government intervening in social or economic life on the behalf of non-whites. This is because whites instinctively know that in order for others to get more, then whites will have to get less, that is, will have to lose the privileges of being white.

Endnotes:

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11. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction, p. 101
12. Sakai, Settlers, p. 29
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14. Ibid
15. Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons. Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort, (New York: Guilford Press, 2000), p. 60
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5. Sakai, J., Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat, Chicago: Morning Star Press, 1989.

# Where Do High Wages In Imperialist Countries Come From?

by Morton Esters

Many Marxists make no serious attempt to answer this question. Marx himself hand-waved the question away by appealing to the idea that productivity in the centers of capitalism was higher. To be fair, this may have actually been true in Marx's day. But today we live in the age of imperialism. Capital is more mobile than ever and it is global. Pre-capitalist relations have been incorporated into the broader capitalist system, largely due to the development of imperialism. Many things have changed categorically. Still, the most common explanation self-proclaimed Marxists make for the high wages in the imperialist core compared to the periphery is that productivity is higher here in imperialist countries.

We can investigate this. The U.S. GDP in 2012 was \$15.7 trillion. There are about 150 million workers in the U.S. so if we divide the GDP by the number of workers, we get \$104,667 per worker. If we were to stop our analysis here, we might conclude that U.S. workers must be extremely productive, because they apparently produce \$104,667 on average. And this is where most people stop. They say, "Look at how much revenue is being generated! U.S. workers must be producing so much value!" But if we look a little deeper, we find there's something wrong.

When we apply the same methodology elsewhere, we uncover some problems. It appears, for example, that Macau must be the most productive region in the entire world, for its GDP per capita is enormous! But Macau hardly produces anything (especially compared to its neighbor China) and its economy is based almost entirely around tourism, hospitality, and service industries. We don't really have to look beyond our own borders either. It's very common in the United States to be able to walk into a superstore and find that quite literally everything in the store is made in a third world country. If you live in the U.S., an examination of the clothing you're wearing probably reveals that everything on your person was made in the peripheries. Where is this "domestic product" of \$15.7 trillion coming from then?

## GDP includes value captured

While global GDP is still a reasonable estimate of the value of all goods bought and sold in the world economy, in the age of imperialism, GDP on a *national* level cannot be used as a measure of the value a nation's workers produce, especially in imperialist countries. In the centers of imperialism, GDP is value *captured* more than it is value added. We can see this by looking at a couple of examples.

Take for instance the Apple iPod. In 2006, 30GB iPods were assembled overseas and sold to Apple for about \$150 each. They were subsequently sold by Apple on the market in the U.S. for



about \$300. The \$150 in gross profit on each iPod was accounted for as part of U.S. GDP. But the problem is that virtually no productive labor was performed on the iPods between when they were purchased by Apple and when they were sold in the U.S. In fact, just thirty people in the United States —**thirty U.S. workers**— did productive labor in the process of making and selling iPods in 2006. Unless you want to explain how thirty people produced all of Apple's profit on 30GB iPods that year, the only conclusion is that profit on iPods, despite being accounted for as “domestic” product, was essentially *all* value captured from the peripheries.

Perhaps a more obvious example is the ubiquitous t-shirt. H&M, for instance, gets a large chunk of its clothing from factories in Bangladesh. It purchases t-shirts from the Bangladeshi enterprises and resells the shirts in Europe for roughly double the price. This profit is accounted for as GDP in the European countries, yet *no* European productive labor is involved in making these shirts. This “domestic” product is really value captured from Bangladesh (and elsewhere) [1].

These are only two examples, picked because they are familiar and easily appreciated. Yet these are hardly unique cases. There are nearly no industries in imperialist countries that do not take advantage of third world labor. And just judging from the *sheer volume* of products we consume that are made in periphery nations, it's more than reasonable to say that value capture is evident across almost the whole of imperialist economies. At this level of analysis, it is difficult to say precisely how much of GDP in imperialist countries is really value captured from the peripheries, but it is certainly must be substantial.

### **Value transfer accounts for nearly all imperialist profits**

Given that there is evidence that GDP in imperialist countries contains a great deal of value captured from the peripheries, we should broaden our investigation and inquire into the degree to which value is being transferred from the peripheries to the imperialist core through economic relations. An obvious place to look is in the realm of trade. What follows is a water-bugging of empirical inquiry that has been made into this question. It is necessarily heavily summarized for the purpose of being concise, but references and further readings are provided at the end of this article if readers wish to know more.

An anonymous author writing in 2007 for Maoist Information Web Site looked at real world data regarding trade between the United States and Latin American countries. Utilizing this data, applying the labor theory of value, and making a few necessary assumptions (all of which are actually biased the argument *against* the value transfer narrative if anything), MIWS derived an equation representing a conservative estimate of the ratio between the real value of goods exported from a country and the actual prices of the goods. In the case of exports from Latin

America to the United States, the ratio was found to be 1.56, meaning that the United States was effectively underpaying for goods imported from Latin America by about 35% [2].

In the book *Divided World Divided Class*, Zak Cope took the equation derived by MIWS and applied it to imperialist countries generally. Using real world data, Cope found that the ratio between the value of goods exported from periphery to core and their actual prices in 2009 was 1.4. Given Cope's accounting that imperialist countries spent about \$7 trillion on imports from third world countries that year, this means that roughly \$3 trillion of value was transferred from the peripheries to the imperialist countries in 2009 through the undervaluing of goods exported to the imperialist core by the third world.

This isn't the only form of unequal exchange in trade. The undervaluing of labor power in the third world also plays into it (the average ratio of wages between first and third world is roughly 11:1). By comparing the wage-share of exports from periphery to core to the wage-share of exports from core to periphery, we can get an idea of what the prices of exports would be under a hypothetical system of equal exchange and equal wages. By comparing this to the actual situation today, we come to another estimate of value transfer through unequal exchange in trade. Using 2009 data, Zak Cope found that this methodology revealed about \$5 trillion in value transfer between the third world and imperialist countries. We now have a low- and high-end estimate of unequal exchange in trade.

Of course, there is also good old fashioned capital export and debt peonage that contributes to value transfer from periphery to imperialist core. These factors have undergone a great deal of investigation by Marxist political economists. Lenin's theory of imperialism holds that in the age of monopoly capital, giant conglomerates in the centers of capitalism begin exporting capital to other countries in order to engage in super-exploitation of labor in what we today call the "periphery." Additionally, we know that imperialist countries engage in predatory lending practices with periphery nations from which the imperialist countries profit. Cope calculated that the value transferred from periphery to core in 2009 via capital export and debt peonage amounted to \$2.6 trillion.

All told, a conservative estimate of value transferred from the third world to the imperialist core in 2009 from unequal exchange in trade, capital export, and debt peonage is about \$6.5 trillion. **This is enough to account for more than 95% of all profits in the imperialist countries that year [3].** Indeed, the precision of this figure is not incredibly high. While we should remind ourselves that both MIWS and Zak Cope did take great care to ensure that whenever an assumption had to be made it biased the argument *against* the value transfer thesis if anything, the 95% number is still a rough estimate. Nevertheless, it corroborates well with material reality. Anyone can see that there is comparatively little productive labor occurring in imperialist countries. Should it surprise us that it seems nearly *all* of the profit gleaned by capitalist-

imperialists is being generated where most of the productive labor actually is: in the peripheries?

### **Where do high wages come from?**

Let's return to our original question. The explanation given by Marx and by many modern-day Marxists for the vast differential in wages between the centers of capitalism and the rest of the world is that productivity in the first world must be higher. But we investigated this. We found that "domestic product" in imperialist countries includes a great deal of value captured from the peripheries. When we looked at this value transfer in more detail, we found that nearly all profits gleaned by capitalists in imperialist countries are accounted for by exploitation of third world labor. At best, what we can say about this is that there is no evidence that first world workers are more productive than in the periphery. More realistically, the evidence actually points to the *exact opposite conclusion*.

Perhaps it is not productivity then, but cost of living that justifies higher wages in the first world, as many argue. High cost of living in imperialist countries is a near-universal assumption made by first world "Marxists." But when one looks at things from the perspective that labor is the source of value, things don't quite add up that way. A day's labor in the United States earns the (legal) worker at *minimum* an equivalent of about 40 loaves of local bread. A day's labor in Ghana earns the worker just 2 loaves of local bread. The worker in Ghana has to expend much more labor to be able to afford bread than the U.S. worker [4]. While there is of course a lot more to cost of living than bread, these facts cast serious doubt on the narrative that cost of living in the first world is in practice higher. Certainly, those advocating that perspective have not even come close to meeting their burden of proof.

There is also the (related) argument that a higher value of labor power in the first world justifies higher wages. This actually does not work in favor of the idea that most first world workers are exploited though. Recall:

Surplus value = total value - value of labor power - fixed capital costs

If the value of labor power is higher in the first world, it is actually *harder* to demonstrate that first world workers generally produce surplus value. One might then retreat to asserting that the difference can be found in capital costs. But the argument there would be that it is hugely cheaper (at least 11 times cheaper!) to make capital investment in the imperialist centers than it is in the peripheries. There really isn't any evidence for that.

In short, the clearest answer to the question of where high wages in imperialist countries come from is the fact that the vast majority of profits are sourced in third world labor means capitalist-

imperialism does not depend heavily on the exploitation of first world labor. This means that first world workers can share in the profits. The wages that first world workers earn simply cannot be accounted for by surplus value they produce (it seems they are producing very little). The typical objections made to this thesis, that first world workers are more productive, that the cost of living is higher in the first world, that the value of labor power or composition of capital somehow accounts for wage differences, are all either unsupported or outright refuted by evidence, or they don't actually work in favor of the "First Worldist" narrative.

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# Summary and Review: 'Global Wage Scaling and Left Ideology: A Critique of Charlie Post on the Labor Aristocracy', Zak Cope (2013)

by Nikolai Brown

Cope, Zak. *Global Wage Scaling and Left Ideology: A Critique of Charlie Post on the 'Labor Aristocracy.'* Research in Political Economy, Volume 28. (89-129). 2013

Not long ago, a PDF of Charlie Post's 2010 essay, *Exploring Working-Class Consciousness: A Critique of the Theory of the 'Labor Aristocracy,'* was circulated around the internet. Though I was aware of the essay, the contorted logic of the abstract stymied my inclination to read further. Post introduces his work as thus:

*"The notion of the labour-aristocracy is one of the oldest Marxian explanations of working-class conservatism and reformism. **Despite its continued appeal to scholars and activists on the Left, there is no single, coherent theory of the labour-aristocracy.** While all versions argue working class conservatism and reformism reflects the politics of a privileged layer of workers who share in 'monopoly' super-profits, they differ on the sources of those super-profits: national dominance of the world-market in the nineteenth century (Marx and Engels), imperialist investments in the 'colonial world'/ global South (Lenin and Zinoviev), or corporate monopoly in the twentieth century (Elbaum and Seltzer). **The existence of a privileged layer of workers who share monopoly super-profits with the capitalist class cannot be empirically verified.**" [bold mine]"*

For Post, the fact that there is "no single, coherent theory of the labour-aristocracy" weakens the case for its existence. This is plainly absurd. "No single, coherent theory" exists regarding capitalism, oppression, and class struggle, yet they no doubt exist (along with all sorts of social phenomenon for which there is no "single, coherent" explanation). Moreover, outside of 'Marxist' circles, the idea and existence of the 'labor aristocracy' is evident and commonly known, albeit regarding an area of social life not deeply investigated or discussed. Without reading past the abstract, I could only imagine the logical back-flips and national chauvinism Post would employ to build his case against the existence of a 'labor-aristocracy.'

The manner in which Post frames his argument is significant as well. Post's arguments are not directed against contemporary Third Worldists but against the 'theory of the labor-aristocracy' as outlined in the past.<sup>1</sup> By touting the fact that there are many interpretations of the labor-aristocracy throughout history, Post is able to avoid the most rigorous, far-reaching, and recent among them. While First Worldists (such as Post) may attempt to use such arguments against contemporary Third Worldists (such as Cope, myself, and others), they miss their mark, essentially building a straw-person argument against a bygone proto-Third Worldism which is no

longer sufficient at explaining global class structures. Significantly, Post ignores many arguments put forward by today's Third Worldists on the fundamental role of net-exploitation in the capitalist world-economy.

Zak Cope, author of *Divided World, Divided Class: Global Political Economy and the Stratification of Labor under Capitalism*, wrote a thorough and convincing critique of Post's miscalculated effort at disproving the existence of the labor aristocracy. Those who have already read *Divided Work, Divided Class* will be pleased to know this most recent polemical essay is not a mere rehash of the book. Instead, Cope's critique of Post is more theoretical and discusses Marxism and political economy with more depth.

Cope begins his essay by refuting Post's premise of critiquing a pre-Third Worldist view of the 'labor-aristocracy.' Cope argues,

*"Post is certainly correct that the position of the labour aristocracy was, and is, precarious and in flux. Indeed, as reflected in hidebound theory, it has been a recurrent weakness of the Marxian position on the labour aristocracy to assume that what Marx, Engels and Lenin sometimes suggested in their fragmentary and century-old analyses were its major characteristics, in particular, its being a thin upper stratum of highly skilled and organised male labour in any given nation, must remain unchanged. In fact, application of the Marxist method demonstrates how the evolution of the labour aristocracy is intrinsically bound up with the historical development of the class struggle as waged internationally, in particular, with the increasing incorporation of super-exploitation into the circuit of capital. (93-94)"*

Drawing from a materialist perspective, Cope highlights via a quote from kanadian historian Leften Stavrianos the very real, historical link between the base, structure, and super-structure of capitalist-imperialism:

*"[S]oap, margarine, chocolate, cocoa and rubber tires for bicycles. All of these commodities required large-scale imports from tropical regions, which in turn necessitated local infrastructures of harbours, railways, steamers, trucks, warehouses, machinery and telegraph and postal systems. Such infrastructures required order and security to ensure adequate dividends to shareholders. Hence the clamour for annexation if local conflicts disrupted the flow of trade, or if a neighbouring colonial power threatened to expand. (98)"*

Cope's most significant contribution in *Global Wage Scaling and Left Ideology* is in the realm of Marxist analysis of political economy, in particular by fleshing out and adding academic weight to Third Worldist understanding of imperialist economics. Though Cope is specifically

addressing Post, his critique touches at the heart of what it means to have a revolutionary internationalist interpretation of modern capitalist-imperialism, including the necessity of analyzing political economy as a process which is global in scale:

*Whilst most left theorists have for a long time fallen into the habit of gauging exploitation on a national(ist) basis, commonly examining wages in relation to profits in the rich countries (and thereby 'proving' that the most exploited workers in the world are those of the developed nations), in the context of global imperialism, value creation and distribution must be examined as an international process. (100)*

To expand upon this idea, Cope quotes John Smith's 2010 *The GDP Illusion: Value-Added versus Value Captured*, "GDP, which claims to be a measure of the wealth produced in a nation, is in reality, a measure of the wealth captured by a nation." (100) *Global Wage Scaling and Left Ideology* also includes an interesting quote from Smith, drawn from correspondence between the two authors: "...workers are paid not for what they produce, but for what they consume." (119)

With regards to the purchasing power of First World workers, Cope challenges Post's mainstream assertion that the real wages of amerikans have been in steady decline:

*Post (p. 24) observes that '[i]n the United States today, real wages for both union and non-union workers have fallen, and are about 11% below their 1973 level, despite strong growth beginning in the mid 1980s'. By measuring wages against GDP figures and reported profits, Post intends to convince his readership that the living standards of the US working class have been declining and that a renewed offensive against capital would entitle them to a greater share of the wealth they ostensibly create.*

*However, there are at least two problems with the idea that US wages have fallen. Firstly, whilst wages in the United States have indeed fallen since 1973 as a proportionate share of GDP, in real terms the poor in that country were better off in 1999 than they were in 1975. For example, Cox and Alm (1999) show that whereas in 1971 31.8% of all US households had air-conditioners, in 1994 49.6% of households below the poverty line had air-conditioners. These authors also demonstrate that the United States poor in 1999 had more refrigerators, dishwashers, clothes dryers, microwaves, televisions, college educations and personal computers than they did in 1971. Wages decidedly did not shrink, then, relative to the purchasing power necessary to consume these items. US economists Meyer and Sullivan (2011) have constructed a measure of consumption which challenges mainstream assessments of declining US living standards. They note that most income-based analyses of economic well-being in the United States do not*

*reflect the full range of available household consumption resources such as, for example, food stamps, or lessened marginal tax rates....*

*Nor, indeed, did US incomes decline relative to the costs of those items necessary to the reproduction of the worker as such (the 'value of labour power', in Marxist terms). Thus, between 1970 and 1997, the real price of a food basket containing one pound of ground beef, one dozen eggs, three pounds of tomatoes, one dozen oranges, one pound of coffee, one pound of beans, half a gallon of milk, five pounds of sugar, one pound of bacon, one pound of lettuce, one pound of onions and one pound of bread fell so that it took 26% less of the workers' time to buy it (ibid, pp. 40–41). (100-101)*

Before constructing a broader picture of the world-economy to challenge Post's own narrow nationalist view, Cope illustrates the basic yet fundamental Marxist economic analyses upon which Third Worldism partially rests:

*"According to Marx, during the time they are employed, production workers spend part of their day reproducing the value of the goods necessary to their own reproduction, that is, the cost of their own labour power (or variable capital). Marx calls this necessary labour. For the rest of the working day, these workers produce value exceeding that of their labour power, what Marx called surplus value (the combined value of gross domestic investment, the non-productive or service sector and profits). The rate of surplus value (or of exploitation) is the ratio of surplus labour to necessary labour or of surplus value to the value of variable capital. Fundamentally, however, capitalists are not interested in creating surplus value, but in generating profit. Profit, as the unpaid labour time of the worker appropriated by the capitalist as measured against total capital invested, must be properly distinguished from surplus value. In bourgeois accounting terms, profit is simply the excess of sales revenue over the cost of producing the goods sold.*

*Thus, the price of production of a commodity does not directly correspond to its value within a single industry or group of industries (Marx, 1977b, pp. 758–759). Rather, as capital is withdrawn from industries with low rates of profit and invested in those with higher rates, output and supply in the former declines and its prices rise above the actual sums of value and surplus value the industry produces, and conversely. As a result, competing capitals using different magnitudes of value-creating labour ultimately sell commodities at average prices. As a result, surplus value is distributed more or less uniformly across the branches of production. An average rate of profit is formed by competing capitals' continuous search for higher rates of profit and the flight of capital to and from those industrial sectors producing commodities in high or low demand. Overall, where one commodity sells for less than its value, there is a corresponding sale of another commodity for more than its value.(105)"*



The transfer of value from the Third to First World helps explain the widespread incorporation of unproductive and parasitical labor into local imperialist economies and provides the basis for the ability of First World firms to pay wages far above full labor value while still securing profit at normal rates. From the vulgar First Worldist Marxist position, this merely seems impossible.

Like many First Worldist critiques of Third Worldist anti-imperialism, Post cites high rates of investment between trilateral and OECD countries relative to the Global South to somehow 'disprove' imperialism. This position ignores the functionally intertwined nature of imperialism. Economically speaking, there is little difference between western Europe, the U.S. and Canada, and Japan, as they are so highly invested and involved in each others local and international economies. However, as Cope rightly notes, "Post's citation of the low level of global fixed capital formation that takes place in the global South, moreover, suggests a misunderstanding of the purpose of imperialism, namely, to siphon and extort surplus value from foreign territories." (109)

Likewise, Post's claims about foreign direct investment ignore the quality of such investments, as Cope aptly notes:

*"FDI flows are purely quantitative and say nothing about the type of economic activity they are connected to. As such, mergers and acquisitions, merely representing a change in ownership, should be distinguished from 'greenfield' FDI in new plant and machinery. Whilst intra-OECD FDI is dominated by mergers and acquisitions activity, between 2000 and 2006, 51% of all Greenfield FDI was North-South.(110)"*

Of course, this is significant because,

*"Post's acceptance of capitalist accounting figures at face value, that is, without critiquing their real world significance in terms of average socially necessary labour and surplus labour (Cope, 2012), can only lead him to the absurd positions that (a) the world's largest capitals have practically no interest in the Third World and (b) that the most exploited workers in the world (i.e. those whose higher productivity supposedly generates the biggest profits) are also the world's richest. Thus, in an article for the Trotskyist Fourth International, Post writes that 'global wage differentials are the result of the greater capital intensity (organic composition of capital) and higher productivity of labour (rate of surplus value) in the advanced capitalist social formations, not some sharing of "super profits" between capital and labour in the industrialized countries. Put simply, the better paid workers of the "north" are more exploited than the poorly paid workers of the "south"'. Post shows complete disregard for the massive infusions of capital which result from global surplus value transfer and the all-too obvious facts of Northern working*

*consumption goods being the product of super-exploited Third World labour. For Post, the North's purportedly greater 'capital intensity' and its workers higher 'productivity' may as well have dropped from the sky. (111-112)"*

This last sentence is important. If one were to believe the snake-oil of First Worldism, one would have to believe that different organic compositions of capital between the First and Third World are simply incidental and have no relation to the history of imperialist exploitation. In reality, advanced productive forces are a form of capital derived from exploitation. That is to say, as is often the case, highly developed productive forces are accumulated and concentrated in the First World as a result of the super-exploitation of the Third World. Moreover, it takes a certain amount of chauvinism to ignore the social role of various forms of physical capital. As Post would have us believe, a cobalt mine in central Afrika, an export manufacturer in Goangzhou, an electronics retailer in Cleveland, and a recycling depot like Guiyu are all one in the same.

It is fairly easy to dismiss Post's absurd denial of the effects of global wage scaling as part and parcel of the chauvinist legacy of Trotskyism. However, Post's essay encapsulates arguments also put forward by a wide variety of nominal leftists, including so-called Maoists. During its 23 year existence, the Maoist International Movement coined the term crypto-Trotskyism to reflect a prototypical slavish and chauvinist regard for the labor aristocracy and First World mass petty-bourgeoisie. Today, those who reject the sense of entitlement among globally-privileged workers refer to this revisionism as First Worldism. Today's Maoist (Third Worldist) movements reject and oppose not just opportunism and reformism on the part of Trotskyist groups like the ISO, but also the First Worldism promulgated under the banners of 'Marxism-Leninism' and 'Maoism.'

Cope accurately describes how First Worldism, despite its claims to the contrary, does not advance revolutionary movements in First World countries but does serve to obfuscate the materially-derived limitations to and potentials for their development:

*"The failure on the part of the left to rigorously examine the structuration of the international class structure by imperialism, as evidenced by the global contradiction between production and consumption highlighted above, has in no small measure added to the serious difficulties facing the socialist movement, both historically and today. Socialist movements in the metropolitan countries have tacitly accepted the global division between imperialist and exploited nations by obfuscating and divaricating from the issue of international surplus value transfer. Working class internationalism and the struggle against racism and colonialism within the imperialist countries are both sacrificed at the altar of narrow appeals to material self-interest on the part of the wealthiest sections of the ineluctably global workforce. Historically, such economism has its corollary in a deeply conservative reformism and chauvinist acceptance of the status quo ante, such that imperialist governments have been and are permitted to carry out*

*virtually any act of aggression and penal repression against foreign countries and minority communities without fear of widespread national opposition. Metropolitan labour's dependence upon imperialism for its existence as such – that is as labour whose affluence is predicated upon the maintenance of the core-periphery divide – clearly precludes the possibility that its conservatism is based purely on intellectual myopia.”*

One could go further in this regard. Certainly, it is the structure of classes which inhibits the natural development of revolutionary working-class movements in the First World. On the other hand, First Worldism, i.e., ‘left-wing’ obfuscations and apologies for structural divisions of the working class, does actively set back the proletarian movement world-wide. One must only ask the question of why amerikan workers, whom Post believes are among the world’s most exploited, are so much better off than workers in Cuba, who are ostensibly liberated under a socialistic society. By falsely claiming that First World workers are among the world’s most exploited (and not simply the world’s most historically privileged), Post’s First Worldism creates an image where ‘First World-style’ capitalism is better than socialism, or at least offers a far higher material standard of living. By seeking to understand political economy internationally, including an honest appraisal of global class structures, Communists develop more realistic and creative strategies for global socialist struggle along with more egalitarian visions of Communism itself.

Taken as a whole, Cope’s critical response to Post is another nail in the coffin of First Worldism. Not only does Cope tackle many of Post’s ‘arguments,’ he effectively underlines the importance of Third Worldist critique of global political economy. Within the anti-imperialist movement, the struggle against First Worldism goes hand and hand with the struggle against reformism, narrow nationalism, social chauvinism, and dogmatism. *Global Wage Scaling and Left Ideology* further fleshes out the Third Worldist repudiation of First Worldism, offering a potent theoretical attack against one of today’s most prevalent forms of revisionism. Alongside *Divided World, Divided Class*, this latest entry by Zak Cope is part of a growing chorus for rectification of radical and revolutionary movements.

1 “Despite its diverse forms, all of the variants of the labour-aristocracy thesis agree on two key-points. First, working-class conservatism is the result of material differences – relative privileges – enjoyed by some workers. Workers who embrace racism, nativism, sexism, homophobia and pro-imperialist patriotism tend to be those who earn higher wages, experience more secure employment, and have access to health-care, pensions and other forms of the social wage.<sup>8</sup> Second, the source of this relative privilege (‘the bribe’) is a sharing of higher-than-average profits between capitalists and a privileged labour-aristocracy.” (Post 6)

# Immigration and Capitalist-Imperialism: Analysis from John Smith's Dissertation

by Zak Drabczyk

**\*\*A very sincere thank you to Professor John Smith. Without his diligent research and exhaustive analysis none of this would be possible. The original text has been made available via download and all are encouraged to study Dr. Smith's work.**

In his PhD thesis, *Imperialism and the Globalization of Production*, Professor John Smith from the University of Sheffield approaches the topic of immigration; an issue that remains as controversial in the political sphere as it has mystified. In the chapter *Southern Labor in Chains*, Smith seeks to explain how the phenomena of international immigration in the epoch of globalization can be understood as a parallel process to imperialism and all the trappings of the Global Apartheid.

First, Smith highlights the different ways in which immigration developed through the separate periods of 'economic construction'. In the core regions, from the 1850s onto the 1920s there were few immigration controls in place [1]. The multitude of landless laborers and farmers made mobile by the explosive market forces during the Industrial Revolution were able to move freely between core nations and unto the recently established settler-states in the 'New World'. In fact, nearly 1/6th or 17% of the European population at the time immigrated to "the Americas" or other regions to what we today describe as part of the periphery [2]. This process helped displace much of the surplus labor which would only otherwise be poorly constituted into the sprawling urban centers of the time; minimizing the long-term detriments that rapid urbanization had.

Over the past several decades much of the Global South has experienced a wave of market expansion unprecedented in human history. Nearly every corner of the Earth is being or has already been incorporated into the global domain of capital commonly termed the world market. In contrast to the period of industrial development experienced in the core region, the neoliberal doctrine of "freely moving commodities" has met a wall, quite literally, in the bondage of Southern labor manifested by the immigration policies of the same core nations [3]. This contradiction between neoliberal rhetoric and reality can only be understood as a reflection of the imperialist desire to 'have their cake' and eat it too. The vast expansion of market relations has facilitated the super-exploitation of the periphery, building the conditions upon which the core sits. While endeavoring to maintain (and expand) this relationship the imperialist powers must necessarily limit the inflow of displaced labor. So far they have been very effective in doing so with only .8% of the developing world's population able to immigrate into the developed world since the late 1970s. If the developing world displaced the same proportion of its uprooted

workforce onto the developed world, as had happened conversely in the previous epoch, some 800 million would have poured into the core regions [4].

Instead of allowing labor to fluctuate and ease the 'shock' of the neoliberal policies, the Global North has effectively tied Southern labor to its origin; preserving the Global Apartheid and intensifying the antagonisms found in the principal contradiction. A material expression of this intensification can be observed in the near exponential growth of slums where the increasingly stratified workforce of the Global South makes it home. This 'slumification' of urban centers in the Global South has dealt untold suffering to the already impoverished masses of the periphery multiplying the damage done by rapid urbanization and a general lack of vital infrastructure [5]. Even former World Bank economist Dani Rodrik stated that "relaxing restrictions in the international movement of workers" would "bring maximum benefit to poor countries" [6]. Equally so we must realize the aforementioned process has little to do with poor urban planning (although this has definitely exacerbated the impact); such is an undialectical analysis of the situation. The 'slumification' of hundreds upon millions within the periphery is a distinct phenomena from the same internal processes by which the global monopolists have apportioned the globe. The monopolists and their lackeys are constantly trying to shift the burden of this structural violence onto the poor and starved governments of the semi-periphery and periphery. The clear contradiction here being between this shift and the relationship between these governments which can often be described as neocolonial; thus building upon the antagonisms found between the oppressed and oppressor nations. The fault can only be found with the imperialists and their subsequent processes by which they have left the Global South in bondage.

This assessment follows a correct understanding regarding the conditioning of structural mechanisms by capitalist social relations. The qualitative advancement from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism and all the parallel developments of imperialism have necessarily conditioned functions of state power including immigration policy accordingly. This understanding is pivotal to correct theory and correct application. Without understanding the dialectical nature of immigration policy and its function within the realm of capitalist-imperialism we have failed to correctly apply the Marxist method. The importance of effectually applying said method cannot be stressed in so short of words and should not be delineated in a single paragraph. Regardless, it is our investigation (or rather that of Prof. John Smith) into contemporary developments which constantly conditions our line; it is for this reason we hold our line as a reassertion of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in all spheres.

In accordance to the previously mentioned conditioning, the ideological backwardness of the core 'masses' regarding the issue can be seen as a reflection thereof. The growth of far-right anti-immigration groups in the so-called united states and europe is no doubt an expression of these internal processes. While these groups claim to represent 'working class' interests nothing

could be farther from the truth. Paraphrasing Comrade Mao, all thought comes stamped with a class character [7]. These reactionaries are actively reproducing the subjective conditions for the super-exploitation and systemic oppression of the broader masses; effectively their thought is of a bourgeois and ultimately reactionary character. Rhetoric about 'securing the border' is as deceptive as it is ridiculous. Secure the border from what and whom? The oppressed and displaced laborers desperately seeking a better life? The incredible violence created by the stratification dividing Global Apartheid? A recent poll in the u.s. showed only 18% of likely voters favored granting amnesty to 'illegal aliens' with 80% supporting "stricter border control to reduce illegal immigration" [8]. Similarly in western europe, a poll showed some 65% agreed that there were "too many immigrants" in their respective nations [9]. This anti-immigrant sentiment highlights the way in which bourgeois ideology is consistently estranging the wretched of the Earth in accordance with the increasingly materializing Global Apartheid. All of which makes perfect dialectical sense when considering the interplay between the global value transfer and the growth of a 'labor aristocracy' which no doubt reproduces itself ideologically among all privileged classes in amerika and elsewhere.

Thus, our greatest failure would be to not make this crucial criticism. The bourgeoisie will continually seek to bury the antagonisms within their settler-states but in doing so will intensify the antagonisms in the contradiction between the core and semi-periphery/periphery. We must use this opportunity to criticize reactionaries and their thought but more importantly to draw the progressive elements within the core under the helm of a global united front. In this way we can strengthen our standing against the global monopolists, their imperialist lackeys, and all reactionary elements.

Now clearly, immigration as well as its controls will continue on into the epoch of socialism. However, only bourgeois conceptions of metaphysics would have us describe some concrete and objective understanding for immigration in every context. Our duty is to investigate the characteristics of imperialism and its internal developments and contradictions. Therefore an attempt to describe that which has not even formed the subjective conditions for its existence would be at least partially unscientific. Instead, we will assert that immigration and borders after the establishment of the people's dictatorship, of socialism, will serve the needs of the broader masses. They will not divide, stratify, and alienate the people in the way the the borders of capitalist-imperialism have. These borders, as stated earlier, are concrete expressions of the Global Apartheid, a constant reminder of a world being shaped by the struggle between the Global North and South; the oppressors and the oppressed; the exploiters and the exploited.

In the words of Comrade Fidel Castro: "The proclaimed free movement of capital and commodities must also be applied to that which must be above all else: human beings. No more blood-stained walls like the one being constructed along the American-Mexican border, which costs hundreds of lives each year. The persecution of immigrants must cease! Xenophobia must end, not solidarity!" [10].

The development of a distinctly alienated and exploited strata of the global proletariat, economic migrants, offers a ripe opportunity for anti-imperialists and revolutionary socialists. Within america in particular, our goal should be to join these peoples in their struggle and to create the subjective conditions for a revolutionary movement. The migrant struggle may act as a lightening rod for other struggles of oppressed and exploited peoples in the core to rally all potential allies against capitalist-imperialism. This may be perhaps the most approachable and scientific method by which to develop a model of anti-imperialist resistance especially within the core. Now that we have analyzed conditions the next step is to put this analysis and our logic into practice. Only through successful practice can we verify this truth-value. Unlike philosophers of the past our goal is not to interpret the world and its material conditions, but to change it. Change real material relationships through real material struggle. Only real material struggle will ever bestow the masses a real material victory; destroying the old and building anew.

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## **Toward a Concrete Class Analysis of the US**

**By Morton Esters**

As Samir Amin aptly notes in his critique of Hardt and Negri's Empire, in periods of unrest and confusion following the defeat of revolutionary movements, there is a tendency for theories to emerge which lend legitimacy to that unrest and confusion, and which actually portray the resulting opportunism as a viable form of struggle [1]. Amin speaks of course of the autonomist movement and its conception of "multitude," which ultimately rejects class analysis and frames the vast majority of people in the centers of imperialism (including the petty-bourgeoisie and perhaps even some among the bourgeoisie outright) as being potentially capable of building "counter-Empire." This view downplays or ignores the fact that most of the "multitude" materially benefits from "Empire." Among other things, autonomist thinking underlies the vacuous "1% vs. 99%" rhetoric of the Occupy movement. Now it is fair to say that most communists, even in the imperialist core, reject autonomism. Yet a similar opportunism underlies the analysis of most self-proclaimed Marxists in the first world and particularly in the United States.

The endless refrain of the typical communist in the u.s., either explicit or implied, is that we need to redefine the concept of the proletariat. Marx's conception was too narrow, it is said. After all, what Marx considered to be the proletariat — the most revolutionary class under capitalism — hardly makes up a majority of the population in the u.s. (!). This is certainly true. The hard question we need to ask, however, is why? Why "redefine" what constitutes a proletariat? Do we have any concrete reason, any evidence upon which we should make this redefinition?

Certainly, we cannot in principle be opposed to expanding our conceptions of who is revolutionary in a capitalist world. There were many "Marxists" in the lead-up to the Chinese revolution who felt that the peasantry in China could not help lead a revolution, and that the Communist Party should only organize among the industrial workers. Mao Zedong saw through this "left" opportunism as an attitude which ultimately held back revolution. Mao correctly identified that in semi-feudal, semi-colonial countries such as China, the peasants were the greatest potential ally to the proletariat. This was not an arbitrary belief. The early 20th century in China was a time of peasant revolts, and Mao observed spontaneous peasant uprisings where land was seized from landlords and redistributed. Clearly, the peasants had revolutionary energy, an energy that was eventually tapped by the Chinese Communist Party with Mao's leadership, leading to a successful revolution and the establishment of socialism in China.

Additionally, an idea which was perhaps implied in Marx yet has only been fully elaborated more recently is the notion of the gender division of labor between productive and reproductive work in capitalism. There is a whole host of work which needs to be done to reproduce the worker, i.e. to keep the workers showing up to work each day. Examples include cooking meals, doing



laundry, taking care of children, etc. These are costs that might otherwise have to be incurred by capitalists, yet in the drive for greater profit they have been shifted primarily onto (poor) women. There are thus billions of women around the globe who, regardless of whether or not they are directly involved in the production of surplus value, are nevertheless doing a great deal of necessary reproductive labor, and they do so generally without any pay. These women are potentially revolutionary. We may even note that there are members of the servant class worldwide, whose labor is wholly unproductive, but who nonetheless live in proletarian or proletarian-like conditions because of their subjection to various forms of oppression which are definitely tied to the capitalist mode of production (e.g. sex workers). These strata among the servant class may also be revolutionary.

But in every one of these cases where we might expand our conceptions of who is revolutionary from those of Marx and early Marxists, we do so as a result of concrete analysis of concrete conditions, by using the Marxist method. We come to the conclusions we do because we make real investigation into people's relationships to the means of production, into the conditions in which people live and work, and into the sentiments that people generally have. This is not what most u.s. communists typically mean when they insist that the conception of the "proletariat" must be redefined. What is meant is that the "proletariat" should be defined in such a way as to include most or all u.s. workers regardless of concrete relationships to the means of production. No justification is given for this, other than an appeal to the abstract principle that the majority of people in a capitalist country must be revolutionary.

What this reflects is an unwillingness to answer the fundamental questions. Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? Seeking real answers to these questions, based on materialist analysis of imperialism today, may lead us to some difficult conclusions. But it is our duty to answer them, because the answers to these fundamental questions are what will guide effective practice. Ultimately we must break from the opportunism and confusion that dominates "left" discourse today in the u.s., which seeks in large part to legitimate the status-quo, and instead move toward a concrete class analysis of the united states.

### **Who are Our Enemies?**

Undoubtedly one of Mao Zedong's most valuable contributions is Oppose Book Worship. The overarching theme of this text is that the study of books, while it can be important, is no replacement for concrete investigation. Rather than mindlessly regurgitate words and phrases from our favorite authors, we must oppose book worship and instead "inquire into everything" to determine what is really going on in the world. What Mao reminds us when he insists, "No investigation, no right to speak!" is that Marxism is a method rather than a particular set of conclusions. If one begins at the outset proclaiming things to be the case merely because some book said so, before making a real investigation, one is bound to come to wrong conclusions.

Today, it is clear that there are some specific conclusions drawn in Marx's texts that must be scrapped if we apply the Marxist method to our contemporary world. We can all agree that the world bourgeoisie are still of course our primary enemy. However, an idea contained in the works of Marx that no longer bears fruit in the modern era is that workers in a capitalist world are necessarily exploited. Certainly, the vast majority of the world's workers must be exploited in order to facilitate the profits of capitalists. But is it possible that some workers' wages have risen to the point where those workers are not only not exploited, but are in fact net-exploiters themselves? A Marxist analysis of today's world reveals that this is indeed the case. Moreover, in the centers of capitalist-imperialism (e.g. the united states), the proportion of workers who are net-exploiters is very large.

We live in the age of imperialism. Capital is mobile, and it is global; capital moves wherever it will generate the most profit. What this means is that capitalist-imperialist countries such as the united states export capital to the global peripheries (commonly referred to as the "Third World") in order to take advantage of the cheap labor there and expand profit margins. The low standard of living in the peripheries that enables these higher profit rates is continually reinforced through economic relations between the imperialist core and the periphery, and often through force.

As a result of this capital export, there is a global transfer of wealth occurring between the peripheries and the imperialist core. This is a product both of unequal exchange in trade, and also of the vast differences in wages between imperialist countries and the third world (the ratio is around 11 to 1). As Zak Cope demonstrates in his book *Divided World Divided Class*, when one analyzes the relations between the core and periphery using Marxist political economy, one finds that there is trillions of dollars worth of value being extracted from the peripheries and appropriated by imperialist countries each year. At the end of the day, greater than 95% of the profits gleaned by imperialist countries can be accounted for by exploitation of third world labor [2]. This is of course an estimate, and an estimate made at the level of all imperialist countries together rather than individual countries. We must also remember to oppose book worship ourselves and not substitute appeals to Cope's book for real investigation. Nonetheless, the conclusions reached in *Divided World Divided Class* must certainly inform our investigation of class in the United States.

The united states is hardly an atypical imperialist country; in fact it is the dominant imperialist country. It is fair to say therefore that the vast majority of profits gleaned by u.s. capitalists are accounted for by exploitation of labor in the peripheries. Given that this is the case, is it possible that the high wages in the United States are supplemented by the exorbitant profits extracted from third world workers? This is precisely the case. In order to believe that the high wages in the u.s. are sourced anywhere other than surplus value generated in the peripheries, one would have to believe that u.s. workers are producing many times more surplus value than third world

workers. There is absolutely no evidence for this; in fact, as already mentioned, the evidence points to the exact opposite conclusion. In reality, the high wages and standard of living of u.s. workers cannot be accounted for by the value that u.s. workers produce, and thus can only be predicated upon value produced somewhere else, i.e. in the global peripheries.

To unpack this in more detail, we can invoke the concept of “net exploitation.” Net exploitation occurs when the payment a worker receives for an hour of work is greater than what an hour of socially average (abstract) labor produces. For instance, if I am a net-exploiter, I can go to the marketplace with my one hour’s worth of wages, and purchase something that perhaps took three hours of abstract labor to produce. On the other hand, if I was exploited, i.e. if surplus value was being extracted from me by capitalists, it might for example take me six hours of work to be able to afford something that took three hours of abstract labor to produce. The specific numbers are not important here; what matters is that the net-exploiter is paid more in a given time than what socially average labor produces in that time, while exploited workers are paid less. Thus the net-exploiter can afford privileges that are simply not accessible to exploited workers.

The existence of the net-exploiter fundamentally depends upon imperialism. The only way for a population to be paid more than the abstract value of labor is if the wages of workers are supplemented by exploitation of the peripheries. We can also see this when we approach from a different perspective. The conception that many first world Marxists have of “socialism” is basically the extension of middle-class living standards to the whole population, indeed to the whole world’s population. This is, however, impossible. If the whole world consumed at the level that the average amerikan does, we would need several Earths’ worth of resources to sustain the current population. In other words, the way of life of the net-exploiters would be impossible without the subjugation and exploitation of laborers in the peripheries. This is not to say that net-exploiters cannot experience oppression. Indeed, there are many forms of oppression tied to the capitalist mode of production which even net-exploiters do experience. However, in the final instance, socialism is not in the interest of the net-exploiters, because if a socialist revolution happened today in the u.s., the material living standards of the net-exploiters would decrease.

What portion of the u.s. population is made up of net-exploiters? To answer this question, we need to know the abstract value of labor, i.e. how much value socially average labor produces in a given amount of time. Nikolai Brown has calculated that the abstract value of labor is roughly \$20,000 per worker per year [3]. This gives us a first-approximation of the size of the exploiting population in the United States: anyone who makes more than \$20,000 a year is a net-exploiter, accounting for the vast majority of u.s. workers. That is to say, humanity produces about \$20,000 of value for each worker every year. The only way for a portion of workers to make more than this value in wages is if workers somewhere else are making less. In other words, the

living standards of those in the u.s. making more than \$20,000 a year are dependent upon low wages in the peripheries. And this wage differential is continually reinforced through economic relations between the imperialist world and the peripheries, and through force. To be plain: the living standard of most u.s. workers depends upon imperialism. Once again, we cannot expect these net-exploiters to be in favor of socialist revolution, because no more than a relative handful of people will rise up, fight, and potentially die for the institution of a society which would defeat imperialism and thus materially decrease their living standards.

Thus we can begin to formulate an answer to the question: who are our enemies? In the united states, it is not only the bourgeoisie and what is traditionally considered the petty-bourgeoisie who are enemies of the proletariat. In truth, the majority of the u.s. population fundamentally benefits from imperialism and thus they are on the whole enemies of the proletariat at large.

### **Who are Our Friends?**

Readers may note that our conception of net exploitation still admits of the possibility that there are millions of people within the u.s. who are proletarian or at least are potential allies of the world proletariat. This is true. For example, a case study of undocumented migrant workers in Los Angeles published in Monthly Review found that men among undocumented workers were making an average of \$13,308 a year, and women were making an average of just \$6,869 a year. Moreover, most of these workers were involved in productive labor (e.g. working in textile and fabric mills) [4]. Further still, since these workers are undocumented, they do not receive additional benefits from the government, so it is unlikely that they receive much in value beyond their wages. By the standards we have already articulated, these workers are proletarian, especially the women among the undocumented workers. Additionally, in 2011 the percentage of Black workers making below the abstract value of labor was at least double that of white workers, indicating that there may still be a sizable Captive Afrikan proletariat in the united States [5].

We must also remember that, as Mao Zedong articulated, in oppressed nations, even those who are not exploited can still be allies of the proletariat. The u.s. is a multi-national state, with a number of oppressed nations existing within its borders. The Xican@ nation, the Captive Afrikan nation, and the Indian nations are the primary of these. Millions of people in u.s. experience national oppression, and by and large they count among the potential allies of the proletariat.

In general, we can see that the following groups in the u.s. are friends of the world proletariat:

A small but not insignificant stratum of workers in the u.s. who make less than the abstract value of labor, primarily located in the oppressed nations (e.g. the Xican@ nation, the Captive Afrikan nation, and the Indian nations) [6];

Those within the u.s. who may not be exploited but experience national oppression generally.

Additionally, we may be able to count on a small stratum of class traitors from the exploiting classes in the u.s. to ally themselves with the exploited masses of the world. However, the primary base of the allies of the proletariat will be found in the above mentioned groups.

It is important to know who and where our friends are, even if the number of friends in the u.s. is not large enough to potentiate revolution in the near future. This is because, even in imperialist countries such as the united states, we need a mass base to be effective in carrying out important tasks. As Nikolai Brown has noted on [anti-imperialism.com], the primary tasks for us in the first world include organizing a mass movement to undermine imperialism where we live and thus help support revolutionary movements around the world. Additionally, we must work to start building subjective conditions that will be conducive to future domestic revolutionary struggles [7]. We should add to this that we must build a mass movement to oppose the fascist tendencies which are likely to emerge in the u.s.

As Andrew Kliman demonstrates in his book *The Failure of Capitalist Production*, the overall rate of profit in the united states has been falling since the 1950's and has never recovered. This falling rate of profit was the ultimate source of the last economic crisis, and certainly now in this economic "malaise," profit rates show little sign of going up. What can be expected as a result is widespread austerity in an attempt to salvage profit margins, some of which we are already seeing. This has potential to re-proletarianize segments of the u.s. population, but it also has a very frightening potential. Members of the euro-american nation, with its long settler-colonial history, are unlikely to turn to communism as response to being removed from their position as net-exploiters. When a population that has essentially never known anything but prosperity at the expense of others faces dethronement from that position of privilege, extremely reactionary movements tend to emerge. It is likely that many euro-americans will turn to fascism in the coming years, just as a significant stratum of workers did in Germany and Italy after WWI, and just as some workers are today in parts of Europe. To prepare for this, we will need a strong communist movement in the united states, and we simply will not be able to build this movement if we do not know who and where our friends and enemies are.

## **Conclusion**

While more thorough investigation is needed to come to a truly concrete class analysis of the u.s., hopefully this article provides insight about where to look and what to look for. In general, the number of enemies within the united states is much larger than most First World Marxists are willing to admit. Nevertheless, there are friends of the world proletariat to be found in the u.s., largely in the oppressed nations such as the Xican@ nation, the Captive Afrikan nation, and the Indian nations. Although they are not the majority of the population, our task is to

organize among the oppressed in the united states to undermine amerikan imperialism and support proletarian struggles around the world, to build subjective conditions conducive to future revolutionary movements, and to counter a rising fascist movement which is likely to emerge in the united states in the coming years.

## Notes

1. Samir Amin, Empire and Multitude. <http://monthlyreview.org/2005/10/01/empire-and-multitude>
2. See Zak Drabczyk's summary of Cope's work, Evidence For Global Value Transfer, <http://anti-imperialism.com/2013/08/12/evidence-for-global-value-transfer/>
3. Nikolai Brown, Calculating the Value of Labor. <http://anti-imperialism.com/2013/02/19/calculating-the-value-of-labor/>
4. Richard D. Vogel, Harder Times: Undocumented Workers and the U.S. Informal Economy. <http://monthlyreview.org/2006/07/01/harder-times-undocumented-workers-and-the-u-s-informal-economy>
5. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011. <http://www.census.gov>
6. Readers may note that I did not include white workers in this list. While I recognize that there are white workers who may be exploited or live in proletarian-like conditions, they are very few in number. Moreover, even poor white workers, given the euro-amerikan nation's long history of settler-colonialism, tend to be very reactionary. The fact that some poor whites that could be radicalized probably exist does not mean that they are a primary base for building communist mass organization in the U.S.
7. Nikolai Brown, Dear RAIM, What to Do in the First World? <http://anti-imperialism.com/2013/07/01/dear-raim-what-to-do-in-the-first-world/>

## **An Open Letter Against First Worldism in the International Communism Movement**

[The letter has been co-sign by cosigned by the Turkish group, İştirakî, the pan-Indigenous web-project, Onkwehón:we Rising, and the Brown Berets Prison Chapter. This statement has also been republished with a qualified introduction by the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons.

A Letter to Maoist and Revolutionary Organizations:

Recently the Communist Party of Italy (Maoist) called for the convening of an international meeting of Maoist organizations. This call comes some years after the RIM collapsed following the development of evident revisionism within two of its leading organizations, the RCP-USA and the UCPN.

Comrades! Let us carry out and celebrate the firm break with the revisionism emanating from the leadership of the RCP-USA and the UCPN. In doing so, let us reaffirm our defining points of unity based on the experience of class struggle and distilled into Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

These include:

- All of history is the result of the development of the means of production and the struggle between classes over their ownership and use.
- Under capitalism, labor is utilized for the sake of profit. Capital is accumulated surplus labor turned against the masses of workers.
- That capitalist-imperialism entails the indirect and direct exploitation of the majority of people by dominant monopoly capital and reveals widening contradictions inherent in capitalism.
- The only alternative to the continued barbarism of imperialism is the struggle for socialism and communism. Broadly speaking, people's wars and united fronts are the most immediate, reliable means to struggle for communism.
- Socialism entails the forceful seizure of power by the proletariat. However, socialism is not the end of the struggle. Under socialism, the conditions exist for the development of a 'new bourgeoisie' which will seek to establish itself as a new ruling class. In order to counter this tendency, class struggle must be waged relentlessly under socialism through the development of communism.

These are points all Maoists can agree on. Yet these do not capture all significant features of today's world.

Comrades! A discourse and struggle over the nature of class under imperialism is sorely needed.

The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement puts forward a line that includes the understanding that a majority section of the populations of imperialist countries are embourgeoisified.

This embourgeoisification often contours around national oppression cast in the history of colonialism and settler-colonialism. It is most wholly construed, however, as an ongoing global distinction between parasitic workers in imperialist core economies and exploited workers in the vast Third World periphery.

Though understandings of this split in the working class was popularized as the 'labor-aristocracy' by Lenin, the phenomenon itself was first noted by Friedrich Engels in a letter to Karl Marx:

*"[T]he English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that the ultimate aim of this most bourgeois of all nations would appear to be the possession, alongside the bourgeoisie, of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat. In the case of a nation which exploits the entire world this is, of course, justified to some extent."*

With some exceptions, Marxists have focused and debated primarily on the ideological effects of the controversial 'theory of the labor aristocracy.' Unfortunately, less attention has been paid to the economic dimensions of the 'labor aristocracy.'

Within the imperialist world-economy, First World workers (a minority of workers in the world) receive compensation which exceeds the monetary rate of the full value of labor. In effect, First World workers are a section of the petty-bourgeoisie due to the fact that they consume a greater portion of social labor than they concretely expend. This difference is made up with the super-exploitation of Third World workers. Because prices (including those of labor power) deviate from values, this allows First World firms to obtain profits at equivalent rates while still paying 'their' workers a wage above the full monetary rate of labor value. The First World workers' compensation above the monetary rate of the full labor value is also an investment, i.e., a structural means of by which surplus value is saturated and concentrated in the core at the expense of the periphery.



The structural elevation of First World workers also has strong implications for the struggle for communism.

One of the most dangerous and devastatingly popular misconceptions is that social and political reforms can raise the material standard of living for Third World workers up to the level enjoyed by First World workers.

The illusion that Third World peoples can 'catch up' with imperialist countries through various reforms is objectively aided by the common yet false First Worldist belief that First World workers are exploited as a class.

If, as the First Worldist line states, First World workers have attained high wages through reformist class struggle and advanced technology, then Third World workers should be able to follow a similar route towards a capitalism modeled after 'advanced capitalist countries.' By claiming that a majority of First Worlders are exploited proletarians, First Worldism creates the illusion that all workers could create a similar deal for themselves without overturning capitalism. By obscuring the fundamental relationship between imperialist exploitation of Third World workers and embourgeoisification of First World workers, First Worldism actually serves to hinder the tide of proletarian revolution internationally.

Another long-term implication of the global division of workers is the ecological consequences of the inflated petty-bourgeois lifestyles enjoyed by the world's richest 15-20%. First World workers currently consume and generate waste at a far greater rate than is ecologically sustainable. The First Worldist line, which effectively states First World workers should have even greater capacity to consume under a future socialism (that is, First Worldists believe First Worlders are entitled to an even greater share of social product than they currently receive), has obvious utopian qualities which can only misguide the proletariat over the long term.

It is safe to say that First Worldism is the root cause of the problems associated with the Revolutionary Communist Party-USA (RCP-USA) and the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN).

The RCP-USA, desiring some positive significance to offset its terminal failure to organize what it sees as a U.S. proletariat, chose to intervene in various international issues. This typically occurred to the disservice of the proletarian struggle. Now the RCP-USA heavily promotes Bob Avakian and his 'New Synthesis.' This 'New Synthesis' is better described as an old bag of revisionisms. Today, the RCP-USA, Bob Avakian, and his revisionist 'New Synthesis' is a distraction from many of the important issues facing the international proletariat.

The UCPN has given up the path of global socialism and communism. It has instead sought to conciliate and collude with imperialism in hopes of achieving conditions for class-neutral development. It foolishly assumes monopoly capital will allow it to be anything but 'red' compradors or that Nepal will become anything other than a source of super-exploited labor. The UCPN has abrogated the task of constructing an independent economic base and socialist foreign policy. It has instead embarked hand-in-hand with monopoly capital on a path they wrongly believe will lead to progressive capitalist development.

Through the examples set forth by both the RCP-USA and the UCPN, it is evident how First Worldism corrupts even nominal Maoists into becoming promulgators of the most backwards revisionisms. The RCP-USA is deceptive and wrong in its claim that it is organizing a U.S. proletariat. In reality it wrecks the international communist movement for the sake of the U.S. petty-bourgeois masses. The UCPN, whose leadership falsely believes capitalist development will bring positive material effects for the masses of Nepal, has abandoned the struggle for socialism and communism. The RCP-USA claims to represent what it wrongly describes as an exploited U.S. proletariat. The UCPN takes great inspiration in the level of material wealth attained by what it wrongly assumes to be an exploited First World proletariat.

Comrades! Our analysis must start with the questions, "Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?" These questions must be answered foremost in the structural sense (i.e., how do groups fundamentally relate to the process of capital accumulation), secondly in the historical sense (i.e. what can history tell us about such class divisions and their implications for today), and lastly in a political sense, (i.e., given what we know about the complex nature of class structures of modern imperialism, how can we best organize class alliances so as to advance the revolutionary interests of the proletariat at large).

First Worldism is a fatal flaw. It is both a hegemonic narrative within the 'left' and a trademark of reformism, revisionism, and chauvinism. Unfortunately, First Worldism is all-too-common within international Maoism.

Comrades! The consistent struggle against First Worldism is an extension of the communist struggle against both social chauvinism and the theory of the productive forces. As such, it is the duty of all genuine Communists to struggle against First Worldism.

Comrades! First Worldism has already done enough damage to our forces internationally. Now is the time to struggle against First Worldism and decisively break with the errors of the past.

The importance of knowing "who are our enemies?" and "who are our friends?" never goes away. Instead, those who fail in these understandings are prone to wider deviations. Gone unchecked, First Worldism sets back the struggle for communism.

Comrades! We hope the topics of class under imperialism and the necessity of the struggle against First Worldism come up as specific points of future discussion within and between Maoist organizations. The raising of these questions and the firm refutation of First Worldism will mark a qualitative advance for international communism.

Death to imperialism!

Long live the victories of people's wars!

Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement

# How Would Marx Organize First Worlders For Revolution?

by Nikolai Brown

It has been demonstrated at Anti-Imperialism.com and elsewhere how a majority workers in the First World are not simply an upper stratum of proletarians, i.e. a classically defined 'labor aristocracy.' Instead, a majority of First World workers receive wages (or other compensation) that include surplus value necessarily originating in the super-exploited labor of others in the world-economy. Insofar as the incomes of the First World workers include both the full monetary rate of labor value plus surplus drawn from others' labor, it is entirely appropriate to describe such workers as petty-bourgeois in a literal sense.

Given this understanding, the question then becomes, how should communists in the First World approach organizing the First World petty-bourgeois masses in service to proletarian revolution?

In a rarely quoted portion of the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels offer some elemental hints:

*"They [the petty bourgeois "middle class"- NB] are... not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance, they are revolutionary, they are only so in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat."*

Marx and Engels believed the petty-bourgeoisie was gradually dissolving into the proletariat. Thus, in their view, members of the petty-bourgeoisie were only revolutionary insofar as they developed a consciousness in line with their future proletarian class interests.

Consider this another way.

Capitalism is a mode of production based on the exploitation of labor by capital. Yet capitalism creates many other derivative contradictions.

Some contradictions are obvious and woven into the historical development of capitalism, such as the primary contradiction between monopoly capital and super-exploited Third World labor. Other contradictions inherent to capitalism are broader and of longer-term consequence. Examples of lesser yet real long-term contradictions of capitalism (in addition to national oppression and patriarchy) include rabid militarism, the anarchy of production (which becomes

accentuated to a qualitatively higher level under imperialism), and the inherent contradiction between the drive for unlimited accumulation and the Earth's finite natural resources.

All of these contradictions (like patriarchy and national oppression) pose problems for a wider scope of people than only members of the proletariat. In this manner these contradictions are wedge issues with which to approach organizing and agitating the First World petty-bourgeoisie within a revolutionary class alliance for proletarian revolution.

For each of its contradictions, capitalist-imperialism offers false solutions (often in the form of sub-reformism and organizing via imperialist-sponsored NGOs). Yet, these false solutions represent imperialism's attempt to assuage and divert concern over these long-term contradictions.

In contrast to imperialism's false promises regarding peace, equity, and sustainability, an important task of revolutionaries in the First World is to develop a program of proletarian humanism which appeals above the class interest of the petty-bourgeoisie. The distinguishing feature of proletarian humanism is that it aims to programmatically unite the long-term interests of a large proportion of humanity with the immediate interest of the proletariat. Proletarian humanism serves to unite legitimate long-term concerns with the immediate necessities of a broad united front against imperialism, people's wars, global new democratic revolution, socialism, and communism.

Imperialism tells 'its' workers that the best way to stave off its contradictions is to, for example, reuse their shopping bags and plant a garden. Proletarian humanism tells First Worlders that their best bet against environmental disaster is to organize in support of things like people's wars, a broad united front against imperialism, national liberation for oppressed nations, and global new democracy on route to socialism and communism.

Proletarian humanism programmatically points out the necessity of class suicide for the First World petty-bourgeoisie. Such a petty-bourgeois class suicide can come about through actual revolutionary struggle against extant class relations.

Revolutionary struggle is not waged in the same ways in all times and places.

The organization of people's wars against imperialist-sponsored states may be the preliminary task of proletarian revolution throughout much of the Third World.

If this is the case, the defining task in the First World may be one of dividing unity and disrupting social peace within the First World. This should be accomplished to the effect of impeding

imperialism's ability to effectively intervene against Third World-centered revolution. These divisor strategies should also be implemented with a variety of tactical orientations.

Regardless of how we choose to strategically and tactically handle the fact that a majority of First World workers are net-exploiters, we cannot deny the basic significance of class structures.

A clear and coherent understanding of class structure is not simply an academic knowledge of modern political economy. Rather, the questions "who are our enemies?" and "who are our friends?" have long-term importance in the struggle for socialism and communism.

Communism is the total eradication of contradictions inherent in capitalism. Thus, the eradication of the contradiction between the imperialist First World and exploited Third World is a necessary condition for the development of communism.

The present system, capitalist-imperialism, is a far distance from communism. Additionally, the development of communism is not assured. Revolutionaries need conscious strategies, including the development of revolutionary class alliances, to carry out revolutions and to resolve various contradictions en route to communism.

The need to develop strategies based on revolutionary coalitions between exploited and non-exploited classes does not excuse or justify obscuring the actuality of global class structures under the cover of 'Marxism.' First World revolutionaries must be clear on the basic distinctions between classes while nonetheless seeking to win over progressive sections of the First World petty-bourgeoisie.

World revolution foremost hinges on the development of a broad united front against imperialism and the victory of global new democracy. This arc of revolutionary struggle is focused primarily on the struggle of oppressed nations for self determination as a prerequisite for the struggle of workers for a democratic mode of production. Within this revolutionary struggle lies the potential to undermine a variety of contradictions bound into the capitalist system. From this perspective, it is possible and important to develop praxes to "unite all those who can be united" (without obscuring actual class relations!) so as to defeat imperialism and secure the initial victories for socialism and communism.

# The Prison-Industrial Complex and the Class Struggle

By Zak Drabczyk

The state, as we understand it, functions as a tool of class suppression: the instrument by which the ruling class suppresses other classes. As Marx described the state:

*“The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.” – Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party”*

Despite liberal slogans about the ‘objective’ nature of government and the ‘rule of law’ we know that the bourgeois state functions as a tool for the capitalist class. This relationship between the capitalist class and their state functionaries helps shape all things within the realm of the state ideology and administration of the law. One clear manifestation of this relationship is the development of the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) and its subsequent processes within american society.

First, let us outline what exactly the Prison Industrial Complex is. The PIC is a term used to describe the socio-political interests and beneficiaries surrounding private prisons, the use of prison labor, and rising incarceration within the United States. So when speaking of the PIC it is important to understand it is not just one “thing” but an embodiment of “things” including economic processes, social realities, and political interests related to the modern american penal system.

While exploited labor and various forms of slavery have never been alien to the american experience, the PIC has been a rather recent development. Prior to the early 1980s most prisons were state-run and not leased for any for-profit nature. While oppressive mechanisms most obviously existed (including the leasing of convict-labor to local businesses as early as the Reconstruction Era) the explicitly exploitative function of the PIC had not fully matured [1]. This changed during the War on Drugs when ‘fiscal conservatives’ introduced the idea of leasing prison administration to private institutions causing the number of prisoners in these for-profit prisons to jump 1600% [2]. The idea was genius. Politicians were able to collect points with the majority White electorate by shifting the ‘burden’ of the majority non-White prison population (effected hugely by the parallel War on Drugs) on private stockholders. These private investors were elated to find a marginalized prison population whom they could pay far below minimum wage (if anything) with no benefits and no weekends; effectively extracting the most surplus-value possible. The PIC thus expanded to where it is today with the United States having the highest incarceration rates in the entire world.

Some ask what role does prison labor even have? Contrary to pop culture, prison labor is more than license plate production. In fact, scores of US companies take advantage of this lucrative labor supply including Proctor and Gamble, Motorola, Johnson and Johnson, Amway Corporation, Wal-Mart, Keystone Automotive Industries, International Paper etc. The list goes on and on indicating that prison labor is far more than imprinting some steel to stick on a car bumper. One interesting usage of prison labor is for the production of military supplies. Military contractor UNICOR leases prison labor to fulfill a multi-million dollar contract with the Pentagon which involves producing everything from helmets and dog tags to electrical components for surface-to-air missiles [3]. All at the bargain wage rate of USD 0.23/hr [4].

On top of being able to pay workers next to nothing for their labor, many businesses actually receive a state reimbursement on wages paid, sometimes as much as 40% [5].

However, the industries leasing labor are not the only entities profiting off the PIC. There are hundreds of smaller companies who have been contracted to provide basic services to inmates, often making a substantial profit for themselves.

None of this includes nearly the greatest beneficiary of the PIC being the parasitic labor unions which represent the officials working inside the system. One example would be the California Correction Peace Officer's Association, or the CCPOA. Guards working inside this union usually make around USD 72,400/yr (40% above national average for the same profession) presiding over prisoners laboring at somewhere between USD 1.00-5.00/day. Now if a guard were to work overtime he could rake in as much as USD 100,000/yr. It then becomes clear why the CCPOA spends USD 8mil annually lobbying against measures to reduce sentencing for non-violent crimes [6].

Now clearly prisons are a subsequent institution of any class society but something must be said about the clear profiteering of these 'labor' groups off the systematic oppression and exploitation of prisoners. This sort of exploitation highlights the processes within the capitalist mode of production which align swaths of laborers with the capitalist class; observed in the broader labor aristocracy.

Back onto the original point. We know that the PIC has become extremely profitable for many entities. What does this mean to the class struggle as a whole?

Well, the PIC does more for the capitalist class than function as a highly profitable labor process. The PIC has effectively created colonies within the Empire. Meaning these prisons have become functioning colonies of cheap labor, effectively isolated from the whole of the working class.



This allows amerikan companies to produce many products 'domestically' while still maintaining a healthy rate of profit.

In addition, the isolated nature of prison labor ensures a degree of spatial apathy from the working class as a whole. This subliminal yet deeply cultural apathy is similar to what can be observed from 'labor' organizations in amerika in regard to super-exploitation in the periphery. The bourgeois have created an 'out-group' within the core 'working class' in the same way core-centric 'labor' has posited the periphery. Parallel with 'crime' on one hand and 'maldevelopment' on the other, we see bourgeois ideology rationalize this super-exploitation as both deserved and inevitable.

In this way the bourgeois can continue on with their consumer society, physically abstracting the contradictions of capital accumulation from the core.

This is why I use the term 'colony' to describe the way in which the PIC contributes to the imperialist system at large. The vast majority of the core remains socially if not spatially 'distant' from the exploitative processes of monopoly capitalism. It then becomes easier for the core 'working class' to be embourgeoisified to the point it has.

All of this should lead us to a few conclusions regarding the PIC and the class struggle as a whole.

First, the PIC has a dual nature in how it relates to monopoly capitalism, especially within the core; not only to provide colonial-esque exploitation within the Empire but abstract 'mainstream labor' from concrete exploitation.

Second, prisoners within this system constitute one of the most systematically oppressed and exploited groups within the core.

Third, the exploited of the PIC must be considered an ally of the global working class and a base for revolutionary potential within amerika alongside all other marginalized, exploited, and oppressed peoples.

Thus it is important to analyze the PIC not as a corrupt institution but as a functioning mechanism of imperialist-capitalism; understanding not only how it moves within the mode of production but how it shapes the class struggle as a whole. With this knowledge we can better hope to apply correct theory, organize effectively, consolidate our victories, and advance the global people's struggle; ultimately to break the old and build anew.

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# **Settler-Colonialism in Disguise: An Indigenist Critique of québécois Nationalism**

**by Enaemaehkiw Túpac Keshena**

The Québec Sovereigntist Movement (QSM) and québécois nationalism in general have always stuck in my mind as odd during my years of interactions with so-called revolutionary forces in kanada, though until relatively recently i was unable to put my thoughts together on the issue in a coherent fashion. For my readers outside of kanada, or those who are at least very unfamiliar with internal settler politics in kanada, the Québec Sovereigntist Movement is exactly what it sounds like: it is a movement that seeks to establish a separate Republic of Québec on all or most of the current territory of the kanadian province of québec. It is rooted in the contradictions between the two dominant groups of settlers in kanada, the Francophones, concentrated mostly in québec, and Anglophones, who are dominant in the rest of kanada.

While i have in the past attempted to put my thoughts on the QSM down on paper, two things have recently put it back at the forefront of my thoughts.

The first was when a representative of a group called Réseau de Résistance du Québécois (a left-wing québécois nationalist organization) popped up on another site i'm involved in, asking for Onkwehón:we support for the Québec Sovereigntist Movement. The second event was the near total obliteration of the Bloc Québécois in the 2011 federal kanadian elections.

Both of these events have lead me into recent discussions with other revolutionary minded anti-colonialists about the nature of the québec question in kanada. Now i find myself trying to coalesce my thoughts into one place. To that end i have broken my thoughts down into the three main areas that follow.

## **Québécois Nationalism & the Kanadian White “Left”**

When i initially arrived on the scene in kanada, one of the first things that struck me was how widely accepted it is by forces claiming to be revolutionary that québécois settlers form an oppressed nation in the same way that nominal amerikan communists tend to think of the captive Afrikan, Xikano and Borincano colonies\*. For myself as an Onkwehón:we revolutionary, this immediately hit as bizarre. To me it seemed obvious that québécois nationalism was a settler-colonial ideology. In my analysis québec was functionally – historically and currently – little different than Anglo-Canada, however acceptance of the idea of québec as an oppressed nation has the complete support of almost all of the alphabet soup of organizations that make up Canada's White “left.”

The Trotskyite organization I first (and very briefly) was a member of, the New Democratic Party Socialist Caucus, is one such example, as is the next organization at the time I became a part of – the New Socialist Group. Both of them take up this line without question. The rest of the Trotskyite “left” follows suit; one only has to look at the programs or manifestos of the International Marxist Tendency’s Canadian-section (Fightback), the Socialist Project, Socialist Voice, the International Socialists, etc. to see this fact quite clearly. In fact, during my involvement in Trotskyite organization my views on québec and wider-Kanada as settler-colonies almost saw me as something of an internal exile. In fact, i was denounced more than once as a “Pabloist” for my “anti-colonial deviations”.

However, while Trotskyites are often the most bold faced White “leftists” and First Worldists, the situation isn’t much better among those organizations claiming some variant of Marxism-Leninism. The ancient, long-time settleristic Communist Party of Canada promotes this idea. The ex-Hoxhaist-come-Castroist Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), better known by its electorally enforced name the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada, is no better. Both recognize an oppressed québécois nation with the right to self-determination.

It goes without saying that most of the nominal “left” unique to québec itself (such as Réseau de Résistance du Québécois or the defunct Front de libération du Québec) see the québécois nation as oppressed and in need of a national liberation struggle.

While i certainly had kanadian settler leftist comrades who for this or that reason on an individual level did not buy into the whole québec-as-oppressed-nation complex, including at least one Trotskyite, they were few and far between and definitely exceptions to the general trend. It was not until i began interacting with kanadian Maoists that i encountered a settler left-wing movement that took as its line that québec is not an oppressed nation.

However, it quickly became apparent that while we might come to similar conclusions about the Québec Sovereigntist Movement as it exists today, the Maoists and i have sharply different reasons for reaching them. For these kanadian Maoists, the québécois national-settler project is not supported because it is a dead one. The Revolutionary Communist Party, the largest settler Maoist organization, says on québec that “as a nation, québec is no longer subjected to any form of oppression that would prevent its own development and would then justify—as some people still want us to believe—a national liberation struggle,” and that québec “is not on the side of the dominated countries, but on the side of the dominating countries.”

So for the Maoists it’s a question of québec only relatively recently becoming integrated within kanadian and general quadrilateral imperialism. This is a process that they would most likely say began with the so-called “Quiet Revolution,” which saw the increase of québécois control

over the province's economy, which had previously been dominated by anglo-kanada. Prior to this the Maoists are willing to accept that québec was historically an oppressed nation.

Disagreeing on this point may seem banal to some, as we reach the same conclusion about the place of québec today, but for myself it is a matter of a correct materialist understanding of history. I disagree with their analysis of québécois history in particular because i take issue with the idea that québec was historically an oppressed nation. As materialists we must understand québec, like the rest of kanada, in relation to imperialism, White power, settler colonialism and development of the parasitic capitalist world economy. We must dissect the clearly parasitic, oppressive relations that the québécois nation has with Onkwehón:we. Only then can we come to a true understanding of the origin and meaning of the Québec Sovereignist Movement.

### **Québécois Nationalism is not the Revolutionary Nationalism of an Oppressed Nation, It is the White Nationalism of Losing Colonizers**

As I've said many times before, the principal contradiction within north amerika is the contradiction between oppressor and oppressed nations. Specifically this contradiction is between the north amerikan settler nations (amerika, kanada and québec) and the various Onkwehón:we nations, as well as Aztlán, Borikén and the captive Afrikan nation.

This of course means that the principal struggle on the continent is the revolutionary anti-colonial struggles of colonized peoples against the colonial power. This is also a struggle that should be understood as a detachment of the wider global struggle against the current parasitic capitalist world system which is rooted in the contradictions between the exploiter core nations and the exploited peripheral and semi-peripheral nations.

On the contrary though, the majority of the nominal settler "left" in kanada, as discussed above, would have you believe that québec is in fact part of the colonized, if not the prime colonized nation within the boundaries of so-called "Canada." This is primarily demonstrated through the recognition of Onkwehón:we as nationally oppressed, but not possessing a right to self-determination up to and including separation, a right that is then granted to the québécois settler nation.

As was also mentioned already, i don't think this is the case.

This is not to say that contradictions do not exist between anglo-kanadian and québécois settler populations, because contradictions do in fact exist between the two of them. However, the contradictions between anglo-kanada and the québécois are not the same as the ones that exist between colonizer and colonized. The contradictions are also not antagonistic, try as the FLQ might have done in the '70s to make them antagonistic. In fact, as the native québécois bourgeoisie has grown significantly since the 1970s, the contradictions between the two sectors

of the White nation in Kanada have become less and less apparent as the anglo-kanadian bourgeoisie has made significant concessions to québec.

These contradictions that do exist are born of historic Anglophone chauvinism that dominated kanada for much of its history. This particular chauvinism is itself rooted in the victory of the english settlers over their french counter-parts in the mid-1700s. However, Anglophone chauvinism does not make the québécois an oppressed nation in the same way that Onkwehón:we, Xikanos, Borincanos or Afrikans are. The québécois settler population is, and always was, a junior partner in the project of building settler-colonialism in north amerika and the development of the parasitic capitalist world-system.

Québécois nationalism is not revolutionary nationalism then, but reactionary White nationalism. It is a White nationalism that attempts to mask itself in the revolutionary rhetoric of the oppressed nations. The particular White nationalism of the Québec Sovereigntist Movement can best be understood as the *ideology of a losing colonialism*. The québécois did not arrive on this continent kidnapped and enslaved like Afrikans, nor were their lands stolen and people exterminated like what Onkwehón:we, Xikanos and Borincanos experienced. The québécois, just like their hated rival, anglo-kanada, came to Anówarakowa Kawennote with one goal in mind: to settle the land in the name of france, and expropriate the resources of the indigenous people in the pursuit of the french colonialist-imperialist project. The québécois settler project was established on this continent as parasitic and at the expense of the indigenous people.

The contradictions that exist between anglo-kanada and the québécois are essentially same contradiction that exists between all competing imperialist and colonial powers, though in this case they are located within the border of a single imperialist-colonialist state rather than between separate ones. All imperialist core nations compete amongst themselves to divide up the resources, both humyn and natural, and land of the oppressed among themselves. The struggle between anglo-kanada and the québécois is precisely a struggle for control of land and resources that do not belong to either, and never will, because they were stolen from Onkwehón:we, who, despite the best efforts of both groups of settlers, are still here.

The truth is that the real revolutionary anti-colonial struggle in kanada is the struggle waged by Onkwehón:we against imperialism, settler-colonialism and parasitic capitalism as well as the very existence of the anglo-kanadian and québécois states. Again, québécois nationalism is White nationalism, the product of a losing colonial ideology. Returning to the earlier mentioned position of the majority of the nominal kanadian settler “left,” the fact that the settler “left” in kanada cannot, or refuses, to see this point shows where they truly lay in the alignment of forces on this occupied continent.

## **The Need to Dismantle The Myth of a Historically Oppressed Québec**

Finally, i would like to briefly discuss the need to refute the historical myth of québec as an oppressed nation, which is something i have already alluded to above. While i think it is quite easy to demonstrate that modern québec is an imperialist partner, in my experience, the idea that québec is an oppressed nation is not only a pugnacious one, but one that is based on a mythological reading of kanadian and québécois history. The struggle against it is a key ideological struggle between those who are genuine anti-colonial revolutionaries and those who would propose settler-colonialism under another guise.

An example of this actually occurred quite recently. On another site edited by myself, someone left a comment on the first article i had ever posted there, which was about the Oka Revolt. They were from the group Réseau de Résistance du Québécois, a “radical” and militant spin-off of the pro-québécois sovereignty magazine *Le Québécois*.

While i admit that my french is pretty poor i was able to understand that they were asking if “we” (Onkwehón:we) would support the québécois national-settler project, or at least their vision of it. They said they respected our “warrior spirit” and that we would make a great addition to *their* cause.

In order to try and convince “us” of their case for an alliance between Onkwehón:we and the québécois national-settler project, they posted part of their program, specifically the part titled “Aboriginal Affairs.” To say the very least it painted a very rosy image of onkwehón:we-québécois relations, especially vis-à-vis the anglo settlers. If you were to believe the version of kanadian and québécois history put forth by groups like Réseau de Résistance du Québécois, then you would think that the québécois settlers and Onkwehón:we lived in complete harmony – a french and Indian utopia broken up only by the machinations of anglo-kanada.

I told this person pretty bluntly that their version of history of was based on a lot of bullshit. It was made all the more interesting by the fact that they posted it on my 20th anniversary article about Oka, which spends its first portion outlining the fact that the québécois and Onkwehón:we did not live in peace and harmony, and that the project of the québécois was only to displace and replace and Onkwehón:we.

The fact is that groups like Réseau de Résistance du Québécois invent this fanciful version of history because it is propaganda for their cause. To recognize the real history of the québécois settler project with regards to Onkwehón:we would be highly inconvenient for their efforts to portray themselves as an oppressed nation.

To me this demonstrated that while it is important and possible to demonstrate that québec in the world TODAY is fully integrated into kanadian and quadrilateral imperialism, the myth of québec-the-oppressed-nation is rooted in a mythologized reading of history that must also be

drug out into the light. It becomes harder for a contemporary myth to be supported when the pedestal on which it is based is kicked out from underneath it.

Just as J. Sakai did for the amerikan working class in his underground classic *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, or Zak Cope did more recently for the general relations between core nation workers and imperialism in his magnificent *Divided World, Divided Class*, i believe it is necessary to expose the actual history and present trajectory of the québécois settler nation and the mythology-as-history that the québécois national-settler project and many sections of the anglo-kanadian settler “left” push. Unfortunately i am no historian and so i would leave it up to other comrades to take up this torch.

\*It goes without saying that Onkwehón:we rarely actually enter the minds of either nominal amerikan or kanadian communists, even if they may provide lip service to our struggles.



# On Global People's War and Global New Democratic Revolution

by Nikolai Brown

Under capitalist-imperialism, in which the exploitation of the proletariat by monopoly capital is mediated by the oppression of nations, the path to socialism and communism is through global people's war and global new democratic revolution. The struggle to sever the structural ties of capitalist-imperialism and build the subjective forces of proletarian revolution are one in the same. The movement for international socialism and communism can only successfully emerge through the movement against the international rule of a few 'great' imperialist powers.

However, before proceeding further into a discussion on revolution (much less a 'global new democratic revolution'), it is worth asking a few questions.

First and foremost, what is a revolution?

Mao Zedong described revolution as “an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.” For Marxists, revolutions serves to overthrow the rule of representatives of capital, establishing socialism: a period in which, according to Nikolai Bukharin:

*“Even after it has been 'thrown on its back on the ground,' the bourgeoisie still uses what resources remain to it, to go on fighting against the workers; and that, ultimately, it relies on international reaction in such a way that the final victory of the workers will be possible only when the proletariat has freed the whole world of the capitalist rabble and completely suffocated the bourgeoisie.”*

Making an explicit connection to the struggle of colonized, exploited peoples against imperialism, Lenin also noted that socialist revolution is “not one single act, not one single battle on a single front; but a whole epoch of intensified class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., battles around all the problems of economics and politics, which can culminate only in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.” Thus, for Marxists, socialist revolutions in particular countries are significant only insofar as they aid in the development of a global socialist epoch of victorious struggle against capitalism.

Beyond abstractions, revolutions typically share causal features: they take place in countries racked by imperialist exploitation and maldevelopment; usually follow or accompany structural-economic downturns; occur in periods of conflict among forces of international reaction during which the effective and immediate mobilization of counter-revolutionary maneuvers is inhibited; and involve heterogeneous coalitions, leading organizations and institutions, and the development of an oppositional political culture. (Foran) While these causal features have

historically pertained to individual countries, it is necessary to perceive of their existence globally.

We can synthesize this to say: revolutions are the violent overthrow of one class by another, both particularly in the case of single countries and as part of a larger global process; proceeding from neo-colonial and colonial areas; usually as part of the context of a structural-economic downturn; during which international sections of reactionary classes are too divided among themselves to intervene on an immediate or effective basis; and involve the growing oppositional political cultures of diverse coalitions and leading, naturally ascendant, revolutionary forces.

The next question to arise is, what is the class character of such a revolution? Which class or classes overthrow which others?

Drawing partially from authors such as Immanuel Wallerstein and Samir Amin, I would argue we are heading for (and are now beginning to witness) a period of intense polarization and conflict along with the development of increased inter- and intra-imperialist rivalries. This period, which is unfolding now due in part to the inherent contradictions of capitalism and in part to world-historic circumstance [which I hope to outline in fuller detail in the future] could be described 'a coming a global civil war.' It marks a world-historic point of bifurcation. Depending on subjective factors, i.e., the respective mobilization of different class forces, history may lean toward socialism. Or, another much worse future could evolve from the conflict, perhaps Marx's notion of the 'common ruin of all contending classes'; or, more likely, a sort of neo-tributary system made possible through the advancement of the productive forces along with the 'freezing' of social hierarchies and classes via the increasing devotion of surplus social product toward ruling-class political violence and the maintenance of an ideologically conditioned technocratic elite and labor aristocracy. Needless to say, we are entering a period of extreme opportunities and dangers, during which the best bet for the proletariat is to play full-court with the best possible strategies available.

Despite these brief descriptions of possible significance of future conflicts, it is more important to firmly understand the past and present. The current state of the world involves a series of relationships which provide avenues for the transfer of value originating in the (super-) exploitation of a global formal and semi-formal workforce. As part of the structure of imperialism necessarily maintained through global reactionary violence, surplus value is typically produced in the Third World or otherwise by a proletarianized labor force, transferred via various mechanisms (including the pricing of commodities such as labor power above their value), and realized in the First World by monopolistic and parasitic tertiary sectors capital.

Thus, instead of the dualistic, faux-Marxist conception of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and working classes, there are instead a wide array of classes conforming to various economic roles. Included among them are:

- Direct representatives and holders of finance capital
- The comprador bourgeoisie of the Third World
- Bourgeois-nationalist forces of the Third World
- A section of embourgeoisified, largely non-productive and hence wholly parasitic workers: i.e. the working petty-bourgeoisie or 'labor aristocracy'; those who derive material privilege from the accumulation of capital (from which we might subtract a progressive petty-bourgeoisie as a strategic social variable).
- Those nationally oppressed within the First World, including migrants, or those otherwise forced into especially oppressive productive relations
- Those layers of people who form the modern proletariat, i.e., those who receive few of the benefits of modern society; their labor used to further perpetuate their own economic disenfranchisement and while forming the basis of the capitalist-imperialist economy.

Generally speaking, we can summarize the revolutionary struggle as one waged by the modern proletariat and its allies (the progressive national bourgeoisie, the progressive petty-bourgeoisie, those living under national oppression within the First World) against imperialists and their hanger-ons (compradors, the parasitic working petty-bourgeoisie). Though other contradictions may certainly come into play (and thus be acted upon by these opposing sides of class struggle) this forms the basic outline of class forces for the purpose of conceiving of revolutionary strategy.

Following from such an understanding global class dynamics, we can firmly state that revolution in the general sense includes the movement to:

- First, develop revolutionary coalitions which overthrow imperialism, thus resolving the structural and super-structural contradictions (which give rise to vast inequalities) between the productive, exploited Global South - the prison of the global proletariat - and the parasitic Global North - the house of finance capital..

-Second, eliminate inherent contradictions which arise from the existence the capitalist mode of production, substituting systems of socialism, i.e., the temporary political and economic rule of the proletariat.

-Lastly, destroy every vestige associated with capitalism, including alienation, along with the very existence classes, nations, and the state.

It should be pointed out in all clarity: these tasks flow follow from one another and are made possible by the completion of the previous.

During the supremacy of the proletarian line during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the line of global people's war and global new democratic revolution as a first stage of socialism and communism was partially articulated by Lin Biao in the essay, Long Live the Victory of People's War! In the chapter on the international significance of Mao's theory on people's war, Lin first informs the reader about the historical significance of the October and Chinese revolutions, the latter carried through by a decades-long people's war against the Japanese imperialists and Kuomintang 'nationalists':

*"The Chinese revolution is a continuation of the great October Revolution. The road of the October Revolution is the common road for all people's revolutions. The Chinese revolution and the October Revolution have in common the following basic characteristics: (1) Both were led by the working class with a Marxist-Leninist party as its nucleus. (2) Both were based on the worker-peasant alliance. (3) In both cases state power was seized through violent revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat was established. (4) In both cases the socialist system was built after victory in the revolution. (5) Both were component parts of the proletarian world revolution."*

Going on, Lin outlines the global applicability of people's war, and thus its world-historic significance:

*"Many countries and peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America are now being subjected to aggression and enslavement on a serious scale by the imperialists headed by the United States and their lackeys. The basic political and economic conditions in many of these countries have many similarities to those that prevailed in old China. As in China, the peasant question is extremely important in these regions. The peasants constitute the main force of the national-democratic revolution against the imperialists and their lackeys. In committing aggression against these countries, the imperialists usually begin by seizing the big cities and the main lines of communication, but they are unable to bring the vast countryside completely under their control. The countryside, and the countryside alone, can provide the broad areas in which the revolutionaries can*

*maneuver freely. The countryside, and the countryside alone, can provide the revolutionary bases from which the revolutionaries can go forward to final victory. Precisely for this reason, Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory of establishing revolutionary base areas in the rural districts and encircling the cities from the countryside is attracting more and more attention among the people in these regions."*

*"Taking the entire globe, if North America and Western Europe can be called 'the cities of the world,' then Asia, Africa and Latin America constitute 'the rural areas of the world.' Since World War II, the proletarian revolutionary movement has for various reasons been temporarily held back in the North American and West European capitalist countries, while the people's revolutionary movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America has been growing vigorously. In a sense, the contemporary world revolution also presents a picture of the encirclement of cities by the rural areas. In the final analysis, the whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority of the world's population. The socialist countries should regard it as their internationalist duty to support the people's revolutionary struggles in Asia, Africa and Latin America."*

Reaffirming the Maoist line, Lin explains global people's war has both a socialist character and operates to develop global new democratic revolution:

*"Comrade Mao Tse-tung made a correct distinction between the two revolutionary stages, i.e., the national-democratic and the socialist revolutions; at the same time he correctly and closely linked the two. The national-democratic revolution is the necessary preparation for the socialist revolution, and the socialist revolution is the inevitable sequel to the national-democratic revolution. There is no Great Wall between the two revolutionary stages. But the socialist revolution is only possible after the completion of the national-democratic revolution. The more thorough the national-democratic revolution, the better the conditions for the socialist revolution."*

*"The experience of the Chinese revolution shows that the tasks of the national-democratic revolution can be fulfilled only through long and tortuous struggles. In this stage of revolution, imperialism and its lackeys are the principal enemy. In the struggle against imperialism and its lackeys, it is necessary to rally all anti-imperialist patriotic forces, including the national bourgeoisie and all patriotic personages. All those patriotic personages from among the bourgeoisie and other [Third World] exploiting classes who join the anti-imperialist struggle play a progressive historical role; they are not tolerated by imperialism but welcomed by the proletariat."*

*"It is very harmful to confuse the two stages, that is, the national-democratic and the socialist revolutions. Comrade Mao Tse-tung criticized the wrong idea of 'accomplishing both at one stroke,' and pointed out that this utopian idea could only weaken the struggle against imperialism and its lackeys, the most urgent task at that time."*

Of course, this idea about the importance of the struggles of exploited countries is not new. In 1869, Karl Marx remarked:

*"For a long time I believed that it would be possible to overthrow the Irish regime by English working class ascendancy...Deeper study has now convinced me of the opposite. The English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is so important for the social movement in general."*

Some who falsely claim the mantle of Marxism also deride the above viewpoints as 'stage-ist.' Ironically, this is correct: revolutionary Marxists are separated from idealists and anarchists by the former's fundamental understanding that history develops in stages according the dialectical relationship between the base and superstructure of society. In the same vein, modern Marxists understand it is only global people's war and global new democratic revolution which can effectively lay the material and socio-historic foundations for socialism and communism.

In order to gain a better grasp on global people's war, it is necessary to make an analogy to the development of people's war in China. China was a large country with a 'backwards' (i.e. maldeveloped) economy. There was a vast division between the agrarian countryside and the cities, the de facto base for foreign- and domestic-reactionary power. Mao's forces were able to rally the forces of the countryside, notably the peasants which suffered from deep oppression, into building armed and civil dual power institutions, which were eventually able to dominate and militarily overcome the reactionary forces of the cities while gaining the support of a powerful new democratic revolutionary coalition which included members of the national bourgeoisie and progressive petty-bourgeoisie.

A certain parallel exists in regards to the global prospects for revolution. In order to overcome international reaction centered in the Global North, it is necessary to organize the global countryside, notably those most exploited and oppressed under imperialism, into armed oppositional movements and revolutionary states, in tangent with a global new democratic revolutionary coalition – a broad united front against imperialism – which includes progressive sections of the national bourgeoisie of exploited countries, progressive members of the mass petty-bourgeoisie of the First World, and captive oppressed people in the First World.

The global new democratic revolution is foremost anti-imperialist yet fundamentally proletarian. It is a “transitional stage between the termination of a colonial, semi colonial, and semi-feudal society and the establishment of a socialist society” (Mao) which is only possible “because of the leadership of the proletariat,” i.e., the leadership of parties which represents the interest of the proletariat. (Chen)

Of course, a global people's war and global new democratic revolution is only the sum of its parts. It necessitates a number of aspects: successful people's wars and proletarian revolutions in individual countries; the development and partial ascendancy of bourgeois nationalist ruling-power in individual countries in association with the leadership of the international proletariat; the weakening of imperialism through the loss of the labor power of the newly liberated global proletariat; and the development of oppositional coalitions of progressive sections of the Global North (oppressed nations, youth, intellectuals, etc) under the leadership of the international proletariat.

Finally, insofar as revolution represents the violent overthrow of one class by another, global new democratic revolution represents the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and oppressed nations over the former imperialists and their social and financial lackeys. As part of a transition to socialism, global new democratic revolution is a period of 'settling accounts' between the First and Third World, of redistributing productive capacity and ownership, and severing the ties which enable and necessitate massive value transfers from the latter to the former. In some cases, unproductive sectors of the economy will be wiped away. Formerly parasitical workers will be retrained and conditioned for productive labor. Economic space in both the First and Third World will be retrofitted. Trade patterns, though centralized to some degree, will cease to offer undervalued imports to the First World, resulting the need to further reintegrate productive activities into First World economies. No longer able to import undervalued commodities as part of a relationship of unequal exchange, production, though centralized, would also become more localized, especially for basic items like food. Moreover, some of the basic means of production which serve privileged consumption will need to be re-distributed and relocated to the Third World to serve the masses. (I.e., one could imagine unnecessary and superfluous restaurant equipment being sent to and serving the larger interests of the Third World proletariat; or passenger vehicles being recycled into planned intercontinental public transportation.)

Within the First World, revolutionary coalitions (of the nationally oppressed, other progressive local forces, and the international proletariat) would come to political power. In conjunction with the international proletariat, oppressed nations in particular would gain political administration over the current sovereign territories of settler-imperialist powers. The political institutions which currently serve white power would be dissolved and replaced by those which suite the strategic interests of the international proletariat. Global people's war and global new democratic

revolution demands the national liberation and self-determination of captive oppressed nations, particular on lands drawn from what is currently the sovereign territory of settler-imperialist regimes.

The process of re-proletarianizing the First World naturally comes into question. The process of reforming the consciousness of a billion parasites will no doubt be a protracted, arduous process. Certainly the international proletariat needs a revolutionary strata to administer over territories currently under the sovereign control of finance capital. Along with the further development of revolutionary consciousness among oppressed nations, there will exist the need for trained political cadre guided under the leadership of the international proletariat. These cadres will in great part, especially at the beginning, be drawn from the progressive forces sympathetic and actively supportive of the global new democratic revolution. The training of the First World cadres should be conducted among the basic masses (i.e., the Third World masses) as part of the beginning of widespread 'to the countryside' re-education programs aimed at eradicating bourgeois culture under the full weight of proletarian power.

While global new democratic revolution will break down the rule of monopoly capital along with the privileged position of compradors and the working petty-bourgeoisie, it will facilitate an end to capitalist productive relations and create the material basis for production with serves to effectively and rationally meeting the needs of humanity. Once the social fetters of unequal exchange, wage scaling, and the market mechanisms are eradicated, along with parasitic and outmoded sectors of the capitalist-imperialist economy (i.e., finance, advertising, media, policing, security, military, bureaucratic, retail, etc), the productive energies of the masses can act in an uninterrupted fashion toward fully meeting the requirements for its material reproduction and cultural and psychological fulfillment. Without the dead weight of parasitic imperialism, including its hanger-ons, the masses can push history forward in a positive manner: through socialism and toward communism. In this manner, global new democratic revolution carried out by global people's war is the one and only path to global socialism and communism. Thus, the immediate aim of the global proletariat is the development of global people's war and the victory of global new democratic revolution, setting the stage for the immediate development of socialism.

Though some may bemoan in infantile self-interest about the pessimistic outlook this sets for the First World, the denial of the significance of global class structures indicates both an unimaginative dogmatism based on a superficial understanding of Marxism and a tired idealism which substitutes voluntarism for historical materialism. Beyond challenging and correcting First Worldist errors within the International Communist Movement, it is the job of revolutionary Marxists in the First World to work as representatives of the global proletariat in order to develop the sort of heterogeneous oppositional coalitions which are both part of the global people's war and new democratic revolution and which can tactically and strategically intervene to preempt



effective cohesion of the forces of international reaction. The main thing which Third Worldism changes for practice in the First World is to provide a more accurate and strategic conceptual framework for internationalism in localized work. It does not ask First World Communists to do less; it asks them to do more and with a more advanced understanding the necessity for global people's war and global new democratic revolution.

Drawing from Lin:

*"In the last analysis, whether one dares to wage a tit-for-tat struggle against armed aggression and suppression by the imperialists and their lackeys, whether one dares to fight a people's war against them, means whether one dares to embark on revolution. This is the most effective touchstone for distinguishing genuine from fake revolutionaries."*

This holds true today. Whether one works to support the aims of the proletariat, whether one supports the broad united front against imperialism, global people's war, and global new democratic revolution, indicates the character of one's politics. These are the hallmarks distinguishing modern revisionism from modern revolutionary Marxism.

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## Glossary

The following terms are drawn from a long line of revolutionary, anti-imperialist, and communist thinkers and directly out of liberation movements past and present. Hardly comprehensive in any sense, the goal of this collection is to offer a set of working definitions through which to better understand current social and economic conditions from a Maoist (Third Worldist) perspective.

### **Revolutionary Science & Practice:**

**Anti-Imperialism:** n: A broad radical trend rejecting the direct influence of Western and other imperialisms. Anti-imperialism is the basic political thrust of the popular classes of the so-called “Third World” (the proletariat, peasantry and petty bourgeoisie), and it is out of this struggle that widespread radical change can develop.

**Continuing Class Struggle After the Revolutionary Seizure of Power:** The idea that after the seizure of state power through revolution, struggle must continue against remaining and emergent social divisions domestically and against capital and imperialism internationally. See also: Dictatorship of the Proletariat; New Democracy.

**Communism:** n: An abstract concept or regulative ideal encompassing a society in which class distinctions and hence classes cease to exist, whereby the state has also ceased to exist as a medium of power by some classes over others and has assumed merely the features of administrative power for the broad interest of the whole of human society; the mode of production associated with classless society:

“In bourgeois society, living labour is but a means to increase accumulated labour. In communist society, accumulated labour is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the labourer ” (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto). “To each according to his needs, from each according to his ability.” (Marx, Critique of the Gotha Program) See also: Capitalism; Mode of Production; Proletariat.

n: The social, cultural, intellectual and practical movement which intends on being an agent in leading society towards a communist mode of production. See also: Marxism; Proletariat; Maoism, Socialism

**Democratic Centralism:** n: The unity between freedom and discipline. Within any organization or society you cannot do without democracy nor without centralism. Every member of society is afforded the freedom to speak his/her opinion, make suggestions and criticize any errors on all levels, as long as the unity and discipline of the whole is maintained. Any organized society must have rules, principles and guidelines which all members of society are expected to

observe and respect. The principles are determined and governed by the needs, health and will of the people themselves.

**Dialectics:** n: The study of contradictions within the very essence of things. The scientific analytical approach to studying contradictions within nature taking into account the historical development and interaction of related things. Dialectics holds that nothing exists independently, isolated or unconnected from each other, but that all phenomena are connected and part of the whole. They are dependent upon and determined by each other. Dialectics also holds that all things are in a constant state of motion and change. These changes move from a quantitative level with constant small changes to a qualitative level with their very essence or character and make a leap to a new existence. These changes follow a definite pattern determined by the external and internal contradictions within themselves. This being that all phenomena are made up of opposite forces, i.e. internal contradictions, which are the basis for change and that all external force, i.e. external contradictions, interact and become the conditions or impetus to change. See also: Historical Materialism; Materialism.

**Dialectical Materialism:** n: Simply stated, this is a methodology that comes about through a combination of Dialectics and Materialism. The materialist dialectic is the theoretical foundation of the modern communist movement. While the formulation of Dialectical Materialism is often credited to German economists, philosophers and revolutionaries Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, the term itself was coined by the early 20th century European socialist Karl Kautsky. Since Marx and Engels, many others have made contributions to Dialectical Materialism, but the most important important extensions originating with Vladimir Lenin and Mao Zedong. See also: Dialectics; Historical Materialism, Materialism; Metaphysics.

**Dictatorship of the Proletariat:** n: Concept in reference to rule by the proletariat in the long term interest of the broad masses of people. The Dictatorship of the Proletarian is the term given to the power relations after the revolutionary seizure of power by the proletariat, when suppression of domestic counter-revolutionaries and struggle against imperialism remains highly necessary and under which the preconditions for further struggles for social equality are created. When contradictions in society are resolved and eliminated, the state naturally withers away and transitions from being an instrument for the governing of people to one for the administration of things. See also: New Democracy; Socialism.

**Guerilla Warfare:** n: A mode of combat focusing on smaller, mobile units able to carry out quick tactical strikes and retreats, often operating in familiar territory against nominally stronger opponents. Often (such as places like China, Cuba and Vietnam), the military aspects of proletarian class struggles have taken on the form of guerilla warfare. See also: People's War.

**Historical Materialism:** n: The dialectical and materialist approach to understanding the history and development of society, understanding the source and origins of ideas, social theories, political philosophies and institutions, i.e. the defining cultural aspects of society. These cultural aspects of society are determined by the condition of the material aspects of society. Historical Materialism is a method of conceiving history that views human society as being shaped primarily by the means of production and the social relations that control them. Society is primarily driven forward by class struggle. It is counterposed to bourgeois and idealist conceptions of history that posit history is moved by ideas or the characteristics of “great” individuals. See also: Dialectics; Dialectical Materialism; Materialism.

**Idealism:** n: The concept that states the mind is primary and matter is secondary; and that all things originate from ideas and that matter is only a reflection of what exists in the mind, as one perceives it. The physical world can only be conceived as relative to, or dependent on the mind, spirit or experience. See also: Dialectics; Materialism; Metaphysics

**Leninism:** n: The practical and ideological ideas of Russian communist theorist and revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin. Key theoretical advancements made by Lenin include the role of the state and the importance of the vanguard in revolutionary struggle. See also: Marxism; Maoism.

**Maosim:** n: Also called Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. The practical and ideological ideas of Mao Zedong. Mao made key theoretical advancements in many areas including philosophy, revolutionary warfare and the development of revolutionary society. Today, Maoism is upheld by a number of important revolutionary organizations movements, particularly the Communist Party of India (Maoist), Communist Party of Peru, the Communist Party of the Philippines and others. See also: Maoism (Third Worldism).

**Maoism (Third Worldism):** n: A name given to a set of politics which upholds the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism plus a further theoretical summary of historical practice and an integrated modern, global class analysis. See also: Imperialism; Leninism; Marxism, Maoism; Third World; Third Worldism.

**Marxism:** n: Term used to refer to the myriad of political trends which claim to uphold the thought of Karl Marx. See also: Leninism; Maoism; Maoism (Third Worldism), Materialism.

**Marxism-Leninism:** n: The term that emphasizes the stream of thought between Marxism and Leninism. In general, the use of this term is taken up by those who uphold the leadership of Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union and reject the ideas and leadership of Leon Trotsky.

**Mass-Line:** n: A process of revolutionary leadership in which leaders in constant contact with the masses collect their diverse opinions and grievances, analyze outstanding problems in light of the long-term interests of the masses at large, concentrate their ideas into plans of radical social action and return with the concentrated ideas and plans for approval to the masses in the form of the cooperative implementation.

**Materialism:** n: A method of philosophic inquiry which sees material and social circumstance as paramount in shaping individual and social consciousness. Materialism developed in opposition to philosophical Idealism, which saw consciousness and ideas as the force giving order to the physical world. Materialist philosophy tends to look at how the social relations of production in a society give shape and form to the society and its members, i.e. how production and economic activity tend to determine laws, values, ideology, forms of government, etc. See also: Dialectics; Dialectical Materialism; Historical Materialism; Idealism; Metaphysics.

**Metaphysics:** n: Term referring to the idea that which exists outside of reality and cannot be perceived by the five senses. This concept states that the idea is the only true and permanent reality. Additionally, knowledge derived from acceptance of pre-existence ideas is the only genuine and valid wisdom, i.e. religion, which is based on belief in a Divine World. See also: Dialectics; Idealism; Materialism

**Method:** n: In philosophy, how information and knowledge is gained; in activity, how a process or action is conducted; in political activism and social struggles, how an organizations relates to and conducts itself internally and externally.

**Proletarian Internationalism:** n: Highest form of consciousness, representing the broad masses of proletarians, committed to the cause and struggle to abolishing the capitalist mode of production; revolutionary anti-imperialism.

**Socialism:** n: Transitional period in which the proletarian has seized control of the state to suppress reactionary forces, struggle against international capital and develop the productive forces and social relations to accomplish communism.

**Third Worldism:** n: The intellectual, political and social movement which stresses the primary importance of national liberation as part of proletarian revolution and the construction of socialism and communism.

## **Class & Political Economy**

**Abstract Labor:** n: Socially necessary (i.e. under specifically social-historic circumstances) labor embodied in a commodity. See also: Capital; Capitalism; Surplus Value.

**Alienation:** n: The process by or condition in which workers become divorced from the products of their labor, the means of production, other laborers and the natural environment. See also: Capitalism.

**Base:** n: Means of production and other physical components of production, from which capabilities in social organization and social conception are determined; the productive forces. See also: Means of Production.

**Bourgeoisie:** n: The class unto which the ownership and control of Capital is concentrated; imperialists; those whose income is solely derived through the exploitation of others. See also: Capital; Capitalism; Class; Exploitation

**Capital:** n: The physical (money, commodities, machines, land, mines, roads, buildings, all the products of past or 'dead' labour) or social embodiment (the classes which of have monopoly of control over such) of the means of production directed in such as way to produce surplus value or profit. For example, a given landowner may use start-up money to purchase tools and machines, hire workers and produce food, yet this relationship (the landowner towards those s/he's hired) and its physical aspects (the land, money, machines, buildings, food produced) does not represent Capital unless such is directed (usually through trade on the market) in a way to acquire more land, machines, workers, etc and expand the dimensions of the relationship embodied in Capital itself. See also: Bourgeoisie; Capitalism.

**Capitalism:** n: A mode of production in which the means of production and distribution are increasingly concentrated into the hands of the few, Capitalists, leaving the vast majority of people with no means of survival beyond selling their labour power for wages. Typically under capitalism, workers received a wage to provide for their day to day subsistence, whereas the remainder of the value created through their work is appropriated by the Capitalist classes as surplus value, or profit, which is then utilized to expand this relationship. Modern capitalism has its origins in 17th century England, though features of it existed elsewhere at the same time, though capitalism in its modern form originated with the parasitic expansion of European (White) power throughout the world; a process generally referred to as colonialism or imperialism. Since this early period, parasitism has been the central defining feature of capitalism. Today in practical terms, it is contextually correct to speak of capitalism indelibly stamped with Western-led imperialism. However, Capitalism as a fundamental description of a mode of production, that

which functions towards the end of producing surplus value or profit, has further reaching consequences as demonstrated by the history and failures of socialist lead experiments primarily in the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China. See also: Bourgeoisie; Capital; Capitalist-Imperialism; Communism; Exploitation; Feudalism; Imperialism; Labour Power; Proletariat; Socialism; Surplus Value; Value.

**Class:** n: A particular social group defined by its economic relationship with other classes within a mode of production; the economic relation of a social group to others. See also: Bourgeoisie; Capitalism; Proletariat.

**Class Consciousness:** n: The understanding by members of particular classes that they represent a certain class, that their class interests may intersect or oppose those of others classes, and of their agency when collectively organized for class struggle. Typically, Class Consciousness is used to describe the most broad, clearest perspective of either the Proletariat, the Bourgeoisie or their sub-classes. See also: Bourgeois; Ideology; Labour Aristocracy; Petty-Bourgeoisie; Proletarian; Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism.

**Commodity:** n: A product of labour produced to satisfy a human want and sold on the market. A dominant feature of Capitalism is the production of goods as commodities. Within capitalism, commodities represent in material form the exchange of labour.

**Communism:** n: An abstract concept or regulative ideal encompassing a society in which class distinctions and hence classes cease to exist, whereby the state has also ceased to exist as a medium of power by some classes over others and has assumed merely the features of administrative power for the broad interest of the whole of human society; the mode of production associated with classless society:

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See also: Capitalism; Mode of Production; Proletariat; Structure. Further Reading: Political Economy; Theory.

n: The social, cultural, intellectual and practical movement which intends on being an agent in leading society towards a communist mode of production. See also: Marxism; Proletariat; Revolution.

**Division of Labour:** n: In reference to society at large, the condition of specializing and differentiation of labour in production and distribution.

**Economics:** n: The process or ideas concerning how societies organize themselves to produce and distribute wealth and resources.

**Expansionism:** n: Tendency of Capital to increase size and numbers of markets, manifested in political and economic domination of neighbors or those outside normal political jurisdiction.

**Exploitation:** n: The process, act or phenomena of rendering of surplus value from labour. See also, Capital; Capitalism; Labour, Surplus Value, Value.

**Fascism:** n: A terroristic form of the rule of the bourgeoisie and labour aristocracy in relative unity.

**First World:** n: A term used by some to describe the social and geographical section of the world in which the majority of the population absorbs surplus value created through imperialist exploitation. In general the peoples of the First World are not part of the proletariat, however, particularly in north america and australasia, the First World does contain a number of significantly sized internal colonies who suffer under conditions of colonialism and national oppression. These nationally oppressed peoples in the First World are the natural allies of the exploited and oppressed people of the majority of the Earth. See also: Capitalism; Exploitation; First Worldism; Imperialism; Imperialist Core; Surplus Value; Third World.

**First Worldism:** n: A 'leftist' ideology marked by chauvinism or adulation of the working class of the imperialist nations which obscures the class nature of the imperialist countries by minimizing the role of imperialist exploitation for the development and maintenance of material and social conditions therein.

**Feudalism:** n: A mode of production characterized by rule by a landlord system, found in agrarian societies. Under feudalism, land is the primary means of production and landless or semi-landless peasants are the primary producers. Social relations under feudalism are usually based on tradition. In Europe, feudalism was the immediate precursor to capitalism. See also: Semi-feudalism.

**Imperialism:** n: The social system in which the bourgeoisie of one or a handful of nations oppresses and exploits the proletariat of various nations. Imperialism implies that wealth in one portion of the world is due to apparent poverty in others. See also: Anti-Imperialism; Capitalism; National Oppression.

**Labour:** n: Work done as part of the basis of economic process of a society.



**Labour Aristocracy:** n: A term used by some revolutionaries to refer to the portion of the working class which, owing to their physical and social proximity to the centres of capital accumulation, receive benefits drawn from the labour of the proletariat of oppressed and exploited nations. While many hold that the labour aristocracy did not fully develop until the period of modern imperialism as theorized by Lenin, the labour aristocracy in fact goes all the way back to the parasitic origins of capitalism in the expansion of European (White) Power across the globe. The very socio-economic process that resulted in the transformation of European peasants into waged workers rested on the enslavement and genocide of millions of people in the colonies and the theft of their land and resources. See also: Imperialism; Proletariat; Settlerism

**Labour Power:** n: The abstract ability to work, objectified as a commodity within capitalist-imperialism.

**Means of Production:** n: The physical instruments and technical capacities (tools, machines), infrastructure (buildings, roads) and commodities (raw materials) employed in the economic activity, which represent a certain level of collective scientific and technical achievement accrued over time and play a determinate role in shaping the relations of production, social relations at large, social consciousness and political institutions. The means of production are commodities (in that they themselves are produced and traded) and Capital (commodities used by capitalists to extract surplus value from labor). Land and space represent an exception to this in that they are said to embody a certain value based on potential for the application of future labor.

**Mode of Production:** n: The method or circumstance of production in a society, involving the wedding of the means of production with the social relations of production. Today, the whole world operates along the lines of a capitalist-imperialism, in which the geography of the world is increasingly interconnected economically and in which most production of value occurs in and at direct expense of the Third World and the realization of value and surplus occurs in the First World. The mode of production is the definitive and determinate feature of a given society, and social struggles around the mode of production in large part propel history forward.

**Money:** n: A special commodity, i.e. the embodiment of past labor and hence value, whose sole function is to act as a medium of exchange and measure for labor and value.

**Parasitism:** n: The process or state of exploitation.

**Petty Bourgeoisie:** n: Generally speaking, the class which receives part of its income through rents, profit and interest (i.e., the exploited labor of others) and another through their own labor.

**Political Economy:** n: The study of the intersection and influence between economics and politics.

**Primitive Accumulation:** n: The process by which large swathes of people are violently disposed of their traditional means of production in service to capital. Though primitive accumulation did occur within European borders through the violent concentration of capital through domestic policies of dispossession and concentration of formerly feudal land, the vast bulk of primitive accumulation took place outside of European borders with the genocide and conquest of Turtle Island and the development of the African slave trade. This initial concentration of wealth was invested into factories and new technologies, increasing the productivity and hence profitability of the latter mode of production. Today, primitive accumulation still occurs, whereas people are physically or socially dispossessed to make way for the further expansion of capital. See also: Capital; Capitalism; Colonialism; Feudalism; Imperialism

**Primitive Communism:** n: An ancient mode of production characterized by rudimentary technology and in which the land is the direct supplier and subsistence, with no class, outstanding class divisions or exploitation.

**Profit:** n: The portion of selling price of a commodity above capital expenditures for rent, the means of production, raw materials and labor forwarded for its production.

**Productive forces:** n: The constituent parts (laborers and their inherited physical and social condition, the means of production such as machines and buildings, and the subject of production such as the raw materials) of the production process; also known as the 'base' (in relation to the 'structure' and 'super-structure' of society); the productive forces determine the relations of production (i.e., how groups are organized for production) and hence the cultural, social, political and economic institutions which regulate and reflect these relations.

"The [productive forces] of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." Karl Marx

**Proletariat:** n: The class of people who, as Marx said, have nothing to loose but their chains, and consequently are the primary revolutionary agent in whose interest it is to overthrow capitalism to establish socialism and then communism. Most conflate this term with the working class, the class of people who do not own the means of production and consequently sell their labour power, particularly the industrial working class, but this is in fact class reductionism. Simply being a member of the working class does not confer proletarian status as many workers, principally in the Imperialist core countries, benefit from imperialist exploitation and

make up the labour aristocracy – an embourgeoisified layer of workers with a petty bourgeois consciousness opposed to being inclined towards revolution and socialism/communism. Consequently the proletariat is concentrated within the oppressed nations and exploited countries of the world. See also: Working Class; Labour Aristocracy; Bourgeoisie; Petty-bourgeoisie

**Relations of Production:** n: The relations formed between people, irrespective of their consciousness or will, as part of production and exchange in a given society. See also: Capitalism, Class, Communism, Socialism.

**State:** n: Social institution through which one class or classes legitimize and maintain their rule over others. See also: Dialectical Materialism; Dictatorship of the Proletariat; Historical Materialism.

**Structure:** n: The social relations of production; the fundamental relational elements of a given mode of production; the relations between classes in a given mode of production; class structure.

**Super-Exploitation:** n: The rate or process of exploitation over and above its normal rate due to imperialist or monopolistic factors.

**Super Structure:** n: The cultural, ideological and institutional reflections of the social relations and means of production (structure and base) in a given society.

**Surplus Value:** n: The portion of exchange value above fixed capital inputs (the means production, materials and labor) of a commodity; profit.

**Third World:** n: Term used by some to refer to the portion of the geographic-social world subjected to exploitation by imperialism.

**Triad:** n: The post-World War II imperialist bloc consisting of the United States, Japan and Western Europe.

**Unequal Exchange:** The process or condition in which dead-labor in the form of value is transferred from the Third World to the First through the manipulation of wages, prices and currency values.

**Value:** n: Labour materialized in commodities.

## Imperialism, Colonialism & National Liberation

**Afrikan Nation:** n: A globally dispersed national grouping of people in Afrika and those descended from the experience of the Afrikan slave trade and continuing national oppression within the borders of amerika, europe, Latin Amerika and the Caribbean. See also: Afrikan National Liberation; Captive Afrikan Nation & New Afrikan Nation.

**Afrikan National Liberation:** n: Philosophy which seeks to achieve for the Afrikan Nation control over their lives, including a control over territory on which to sustain themselves. Radical, socialist variants of this movement (such as the African Socialist International) call for the creation of a unified, socialist Afrika under the Garveyite slogan of “Afrika for Afrikans, those at Home and those Abroad!”

**amerika:** n: Refers to the globe-spanning settler empire established by european settlers within the borders of Occupied Turtle Island popularly and officially referred to the United States of America. A sub-territory of north amerika.

Regarding the “de-caping” of the a in amerika, comrade Sanyika Shakur of the New Afrikan Independence Movement says:

*We, by and large, de-cap the “A” in amerika for several reasons. Principal among these, however, is the fact that the colonial state is an illegal settler government/empire fastened, by dint of genocide and colonialism (colonial violence), onto the backs of indigenous nations/land and other internal colonies. We understand the u.s. as a virtual — nay, as an actual — prison house of nations which are culturally and economically held in check by a complicit garrison population of citizens who believe in amerikan exceptionalism, manifest destiny and the inherent inferiority of everyone but themselves. These amerikans are fortified ideological shocktroops holding the genocidal guilt of u.s. imperialism together with boundless acts of blind-ass patriotism and loyalty. We reject that and refuse to give this (or any) empire any acknowledgment as a place of peace, liberty and democracy. Amerika is not so much a place, deserving a capital letter at its helm, as it is an experience, like a wild and horrifying ride at an amusement park — only this ride is more lethal, a thousand times more harmful and totally mind-warping. “The ride of a lifetime,” where whole nations are strapped in for the violent twists and turns of Empire. The more we try to get off, the faster it goes, the higher it climbs, the deeper it plunges — Welcome to the Terror Dome!!! We are not in the habit of giving respect to those who don’t respect us. Decap the “A”.*

Additionally, regarding the use of the letter “K” in spelling amerika comrade Shakur again says:

*We use a “K” (or three “K”s) in amerika — as We do in the word “kountry” when referring to amerika and its capitalist allies — to emphasize Our awareness that it is the prototype, the archetype, of the Ku Klux Klan. Its overall reactionary, racist, and theological schematic is Klannish! And just because the state employs functionaries from its colonies means nothing. The ruling class is a seething cauldron of alabaster menace. Sitting, as it does, atop the planet, in a predator’s pose, ready to pounce on the next crime to make a profit; the pathological bourgeoisie is the brain trust of every two-bit supremacist on the planet. The Klan foremost among them. We think it was the Amazon Butch Lee who said “amerika is what nazi germany wanted to be.” We agree and would go on to add that the ruling class is who the Klan aspires to be like and keep in power. So, We necessarily associate the two in our writings because it keeps Us focused on the fundamental contradiction in Our way. Would you want to integrate into a Klan society?*

Also spelled amerikkka. See also: ameriakan; kanada; north amerika

**amerikan:** adj: Term referring to the settler citizens of the empire of amerika. Also spelled amerikkkan. See also: amerika; kanadian; north amerikan

**Assimilation:** n: Members of oppressed nations adopting the culture, custom, identity and outlook popular amongst oppressor nations. Assimilation occurs at the expense of national liberation and revolutionary internationalism. See also: National Oppression.

**Bourgeois Nationalism:** n: Ideological expression of the upper and middle classes of oppressed nations, often implicitly identified with the generalities of a capitalist-imperialist system yet dissatisfied with the current order and their place within. Bourgeois-nationalism can play both a progressive role, insofar as it can be incorporated in the Broad United Front Against Imperialism, or a reactionary role based in its tendency to capitulate to imperialism and impose its own system of oppression. See also: Comprador, Broad United Front Against Imperialism; National Bourgeoisie.

**Broad United Front Against Imperialism:** n: A conceptual framework for a proletarian-led international coalition of oppressed nations and exploited people’s against the parasitic capitalist world system and its chief offenders. The BUFAL is based on the concept championed by Mao Zedong of uniting all those who can be united to isolate and annihilate the enemy. The Broad United Front Against Imperialism is part of the proletarian strategy for New Democracy, Socialism and Communism. Its central uniting features are its anti-imperialism and general leadership of the proletariat. See also: United Front Against Imperialism.

**Chauvinism:** The practice of members in a dominant portion of society exerting control or dominance over those in less powerful positions. e.g. male chauvinism, national chauvinism. See also: Nationalism.

**Colonialism:** n: In history, the practice of seizing additional territory to be held sovereign by an often-distant colonial power for the use of economic and social development. Colonialism is an inherently parasitic relationship. Europe during the 17th-19th centuries colonized most of the world. Colonialism had a profound impact on both the colonized and colonizer and is the relationship upon which the modern capitalist world system is built. See also: Imperialism; Neo-Colonialism.

**Comprador:** n: A social, administrative and economic class which serves as a intermediary for the exploitation of the proletariat in exploited countries and oppressed nations by Imperialism. See also: Imperialism; Neo-Colonialism; Poverty Pimp.

**euro-pean:** adv: of or related to people in europe and/or its now separate settler-colonies who have a shared, significant historical experience of oppressing others through colonization, slavery and land theft. Commonly referred to as “white”, an incorrect term that draws on bourgeois racist ideology and symbolism. See also: National Oppression; north amerikan; Settlerism.

**euro-amerikan:** adj: See: amerikan.

**First Nations:** n: Peoples indigenous to Turtle Island prior the the invasion by European settlers during colonization. See also: Indigenous; north amerika

**Globalized Democracy:** n: A term used by Maoist (Third Worldists) to describe the global extension of rights and liberties to oppressed nations and exploited people under the leadership of the proletariat and as part of the struggle against imperialism and capitalism. See also: Global New Democracy; Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Exploited Nations; New Democracy

**Indigenous:** adj: Of or pertaining to populations descended from peoples displaced or oppressed by European colonialism and settlerism. See also: First Nations

**Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Exploited Nations:** n: A post-revolutionary institutional power proposed by Maoism (Third Worldism) which aims at suppressing reactionaries and consolidating the gains of the proletariat. See also: Dictatorship of the Proletariat; Global New Democracy; Socialism.

**kanada:** n: Refers to the confederation established by European settlers within the borders of Occupied Turtle Island popularly referred to as Canada. A sub-territory of north amerika. While predominantly English-speaking, Kanada also includes the descendants of French-speaking settlers who are to a greater or lesser degree fully assimilated in kanadian society, though this was not always the case. The most significant of these franco-settler enclaves is the province of québec. When referring specifically to the english-speaking portion of kanada which shares much in common historically, culturally, socially and economically with the united states to the south, the term anglo-kanada is used. Kanada is de-capped and spelled with a “k” for the same reasons as amerika. Also spelled kkkanada. See also: amerika; kanadian; north amerika; québec

**kanadian:** adj: Term referring to the settler citizens of the confederacy of kanada. See also: amerikan; québécois; north amerikan

**Lackey:** n: An individual or group which acts in service of a imperialism or other authority. See also: Comprador.

**Nation:** n: A large body of people bound together by a common culture and history who are distinct in their relation to other nations. Nations are social constructs created through the struggle between classes. In Europe the nation was consolidated during the rise of capitalism and is dialectically linked to the colonial exploitation of much of the rest of the world. Later, nations were constructed from the common oppression of various peoples by colonization. Today, nations still relate to each-other on a playing field of uneven power, with imperialist nations exploiting oppressed nations and singling out national minorities for oppression inside their own state borders. See also: Imperialism; National Liberation.

**National Oppression:** n: Oppression of one national group by whole or part of another.

**Nationalism:** n: Ideas which give preference to members of specific nations. In the case of oppressed nations, nationalism can be progressive insofar as it is aligned with proletarian internationalism against imperialism. See also: Black National Liberation; Chauvinism; Imperialism; National Liberation.

**National Liberation:** n: The intellectual, political, social and military movement of oppressed nations to gain autonomy from their oppressors.

**Neo-colonialism:** n: The continuation of colonial and imperialist rule whereby nominally independent national political institutions and classes facilitate the further exploitation of their country. See also: Comprador; Colonialism; Imperialism; Lackey; National Oppression.

**New Afrika, Republic of:** n: A proposed territory comprising the modern day u.s.amerikan sates of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina, part of the larger “Black Belt” in the so-called united states, a series of contiguous counties running from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Coast. Claimed by the New Afrikan Independence Movement as the national territory of the Republic of New Afrika. See also: New Afrikan Nation, New Afrikan Independence Movement, Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika.

**Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika:** n: Government in exile of the Republic of New Afrika, often referred to as the PG-RNA. New Afrikan independence and the formation of the PG-RNA was announced at the Black Government Conference held in Detroit, Occupied Michigan March 31, 1968.

**New Afrikan Independence Movement:** n: a multi-factional national liberation movement of New Afrikan people, often referred as NAIM. While all factions of the NAIM support the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika as the official government in exile of the Republic of New Afrika, other factions within the NAIM include the New Afrikan People’s Organization (NAPO) and its mass organization the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM), the New Afrikan People’s Liberation Army, the New Afrikan Prisoners Organization and the New Afrikan Maoist Party. See also: New Afrika, New Afrikan Nation; Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika.

**New Afrikan Nation:** n: A national grouping descended from the experience of the Afrikan slave trade and continuing national oppression within the borders of the united states of amerika of Afrikan people. The advocates of the New Afrikan Nation thesis (also called the Black Belt Nation or Negro Nation in decades past) hold that the experience of being held in bondage to work the land of the south eastern u.s.amerikan colonies was special form of settler colonialism. While it has roots in earlier Afrikan self-determination positions, such as that of Harry Haywood, the New Afrikan national identity as such was formulated by the New Afrikan Independence Movement in the 1970s. The New Afrikan national identity is defined not only against the White/ settler nation, but also against racial, colonial and integrationist identities such as Black, Negro and African-American. The concept of the New Afrikan nation also often, but not always, stands in opposition to the concept of the Global Afrikan Nation, which holds that all Afrikan people everywhere form part of a single, developmentally stunted and dispersed nation. See also: Afrikan Nation, New Afrika and New Afrikan Independence Movement.

**New Democracy:** n: A post revolutionary government which is led by the proletariat and unites the popular classes of oppressed and exploited nations with the aim of achieving national unity and autonomy against imperialist exploitation and building the prerequisites for socialism and



communism. See also: Communism; Global New Democracy; Imperialism; Maoism; National Liberation; Proletariat; Revolution; Socialism.

**Global New Democracy:** n: A general anti-imperialist strategy for the proletariat proposed by Maoism (Third Worldism). Its goal is to lead a broad international coalition between the progressive national bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeoisie and working classes of exploited and oppressed nations to the end of resisting and defeating international imperialism and set the stage for international socialist revolution. See also: Joint Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Exploited Nations; New Democracy; Socialism.

**New Democratic Revolution:** n: The movement or process led by the proletariat of oppressed nations to unite the masses of their countries to the end of achieving liberation from imperialism and establish the prerequisite conditions to build socialism and communism. See also: Global New Democracy; National Liberation; New Democracy.

**Non-White:** adj: Describing people or groups born out of the historical experience of oppression under colonization, settlerism and slavery. See also: People of Color.

**north amerika:** n: Political term referring to the euopean settler-descended society that resulted from the colonial conquest of Northern Turtle Island; specifically speaking the united states and anglo-kanada. The distinction between the united states and anglo-kanada is for the most part rather superficial, and in fact the english-speaking oppressor nation population of the two territories constitutes a single White (settler) nation. Sometimes referred as the “White nation”, an incorrect term that draws on racist ideology and imagery though pedagogically useful because of the widespread understanding of “Whiteness”. There is a question around whether the french-speaking territory of québec - which while politically part of the kanadian confederation also has long standing contradictions with anglo-kanada – constitutes of separate, but not oppressed, settler nation or after 250 years of political and economic unity with anglo-kanada it is a distinct part of north amerika. See also: amerika; kanada; north amerikan; québec.

n: Geographical term widely used to describe the portion of the Western Hemisphere containing the united states, anglo-kanada, québec and other territories on the supra-continent of Turtle Island under direct political rule of settler-descended imperialist states

**north amerikan:** adj: Term referring to the dominant social group of north amerika bound together by a common historical experience of oppressing others through colonization, slavery and land theft. Also called euro-amerikan. Sometimes referred as the “White nation” though this usage is incorrect. See also: amerikan; kanadian; québécois.

**Occupied Amerika:** n: See North Amerika.

**Occupied Mexico:** n: The territory politically and socially occupied by the United States following its 1848 war of conquest against Mexico, representing a third of Mexico's original landmass and a significant portion of its original natural wealth. Includes all areas of Northern Mexico seized by the United States in the Mexican-American War and the Gadsden Purchase, namely the entirety of the territories of the modern US states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, and portions of Wyoming, Oklahoma, Colorado and Kansas. Also called: Aztlan.

**Onkwehón:we: (Kanien'kéha):** "the original people" (oon-gway-hoon-way). refers to First Nations people.

**People of Color:** n: A problematic term to refer to a community or communities living under conditions of national oppression or historically colonized.

**Poverty Pimp:** n: A person or institution which gains income by providing services which address the effects of poverty, themselves having no direct interest in eradicating poverty but rather perpetuating it (lest they be out of income).

**québec:** n: A territory within Canada. Founded by French settlers who in turn were conquered by English settlers. A number of contradictions exist between English-speaking settlers and French-speaking ones, largely as a result of Anglo-chauvinism in Canada. There is a question around whether the French-speaking territory of Québec – which while politically part of the Canadian confederation also has long standing contradictions with Anglo-Canada, including the emergence of a Québec "national liberation movement" in the 1960s – constitutes of separate, but not oppressed, settler nation or after 250 years of political and economic unity with Anglo-Canada it is a distinct part of North America. Regardless, it is undeniable today that Québec is a fully integrated junior partner in Canadian imperialism and settler-colonialism. Québec is "de-capped" for the same reason as is America and Canada. See also: America; Canada; North America; Québécois

**Québécois:** adj: Term referring to the French-speaking settler citizens of the confederacy of Canada who primarily reside in the sub-territory of Québec. See also: Canadian; Québécois; North American

**Race:** n: A social construction around a group's shared, visible physical attribute (phenotypes), which are used to set it apart from other groups; more accurately described as Nation. The idea of 'race' was created with significance to justify the colonization of Africa, Abya Yala and Asia by European powers. See also: Colonialism; Nation.

**Racialism:** n: Ideologies which express innate qualities embodied in race, or otherwise exaggerate the significance of 'race,' especially in juxtaposition to nation. See also: Nation; Nationalism.

**Racism:** n: A system of privilege or oppression between 'racial' groups; national oppression; ideas, actions, words and policies which perpetuate systems of privilege or oppression between 'racial' groups.

**Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism:** n: The intellectual, political and social movement against imperialism and for socialism and communism.

**Revolutionary Nationalism:** n: Nationalism of oppressed nations, under proletarian leadership or otherwise directed against capitalist-imperialism. See also: Nation; National Oppression; Nationalism; New Democracy.

**Self-Determination:** n: In reference to oppressed nations and people, the principle of or ability to choose course of future development free of reactionary, outside interference.

**Settler:** adj: societies in which conquest and settlement of another nation or ethnic group's traditional land base is or historically was a major feature of social and productive life.  
n: A person involved in the conquest and settlement of another nation or ethnic group's traditional land base.

**Settlerism:** n: Acts or policies part of the conquest or settlement of another nation or ethnic group's traditional land base.

n: Ideology in service to and in support of acts or policies part of the conquest or settlement of another nation or ethnic group's traditional land base.

**Turtle Island:** n: see north amerika; occupied amerika.

**United Front:** The strategy of unifying and mobilizing the popular classes of exploited countries for the struggle against imperialism.

**United Front Against Imperialism:** n: This concept is best elucidated in Long Live the Victory of the People's War by Lin Biao. The Broad United Front is a strategy to defeat imperialism by uniting with other oppressed nations. The united front is not restricted to socialist parties or movements, but is an alliance of anti-imperialist forces.

**White:** See: european.

**White Nation:** n: A social group of people of European descent in Europe and the settler societies formed from European colonialism – australasia, north amerika, israel, south africa and (formerly) rhodesia. The White nation is bound together by a common historical experience of oppressing others through colonization, slavery and land theft. The branch of White Nation in Turtle Island is referred to as north amerika. See also: north amerika

## Resources

This reader was compiled from articles featured on the following websites:

[Anti-Imperialism.com](http://Anti-Imperialism.com)

Anti-Imperialism.com is a website that provides news, analysis, and culture from a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist perspective, featuring content that is relevant to the struggle against capitalism-imperialism and for a revolutionary transformation of society. Anti-Imperialism.com functions as a popular website with news, commentary, essays, and other media for the growing tide of support for revolutionary global democracy.

[OnkwehonweRising.wordpress.com](http://OnkwehonweRising.wordpress.com)

Onkwehón:we Rising is a revolutionary pan-Onkwehón:we (indigenous “north amerikan”) nationalist project. It’s primary focus is building support for and popularizing the existence of pan-Onkwehón:we struggles against ongoing colonization, genocide and ecocide in Occupied Turtle Island (the so-called “united states” and “kanada”) with an eye towards the development of a genuine broad-based Onkwehón:we national liberation movement.

For updates regarding Maoist (Third Worldist) activity, organization, theory, and media, visit the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement webpage at [RevolutionaryAIM.org](http://RevolutionaryAIM.org).

Dare to Struggle! Dare to Win!