

SPECIAL EDITION ON REVOLUTIONARY THEORY

SEIZE THE TIME

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RAIN
the revolutionary
anti-imperialist
movement

The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement

12 Point Program

The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement is a network of independent individuals and groups working in support of organized revolutionary struggle against capitalism-imperialism and for the creation of a society based on justice, egalitarianism, and ecological congruence.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

1 Under the current capitalist-imperialist system, a majority of humanity located primarily in the peripheral Third World is ground down and exploited under the weight of a minority of imperialist-led classes which are numerically dominant in core-zone First World economies. The contradiction between the masses exploited by imperialism and the minority of classes which benefit from imperialism is primary today.

2 The masses of the First World are typically net-exploiters whose incomes are above the value they create. This is accomplished primarily through imperialist exploitation of Third World peoples. Such 'wages of imperialism' have the economic function of saturating wealth in First World core-zone economies and an ideological function of transforming the masses in these economies into agents of global oppression and capitalist-imperialism.

3 Understanding class dynamics is essential to Marxism as a revolutionary science. The formation, relation, and reproduction of classes is not some passing question, but has far-reaching implications for those who want social revolution. Whether or not one has a correct view of modern classes is a key indicator of whether or not they are a genuine Communist.

4 Imperialism is decadent capitalism which both sustains itself through the ongoing exploitation of the Third World-centered proletariat and sets itself against the long-term interests of humanity. Opulence, security, and stability for a few exist against

a backdrop of endemic poverty, massive disruption of natural environmental metabolic processes, growing militarism, and increased waste. This contradiction can only lead to the increased formalized oppression of the world's masses or socialist revolution against capitalist-imperialism.

5 Revolution is not a straight line. Following socialist revolution, the potential exists for the emergence of a new bourgeoisie which will use positions of authority to seize power, halt class struggle, and reconcile with imperialism as a new local ruling class within the world-system. This trend must be checked by the continuation of class struggle under socialism until capitalist-imperialism has been defeated and communism is built.

6 Communism is the eradication of all forms of oppression and the development of a society without a state as an instrument of oppression, in which each person works according to their ability and receives according to their need. Under communism, the creative and productive spirit of individuals and society is unleashed, and people will no longer live or view themselves in direct contradiction to each other or the natural world.

WHAT WE WANT

7 We want revolution now not later. We want a qualitative change in social and economic relations on a world-scale that creates the potential for further revolutionary struggles. We support efforts at building a proletarian-led united

front against imperialism which culminates in global new democratic revolution and opens the door for continuing the revolution through socialism to communism.

8 We want national liberation. We want the dismemberment of imperialist countries through national liberation and self-determination of oppressed nations. We support efforts by oppressed nations to exert sovereignty against imperialist oppressor nations.

9 We want the emancipation of women. We want a stop to the use of women's bodies as commodities, as a holder of cheap labor-power, and by its refashioning for the purposes of economic circulation. We support the participation and leadership of women in proletarian struggles for anti-imperialist, socialist, and communist revolutions towards the end of eradicating patriarchy.

10 We want class traitors. We want individual members of exploiter classes to side with the world's exploited masses. We want class suicide: abandoning the comforts of the petty-bourgeois path laid before us, instead enthusiastically trekking down the arduous road of struggle alongside the proletariat. We want people who are willing to eschew norms to organize and work for revolution; who forsake their own class for a better future for humanity at large.

11 We want politics in command. We want to rectify Marxism on the solid grounds of the aforementioned understandings class dynamics of capitalist-imperialism. Without correct revolutionary theory there can be no correct revolutionary practice.

12 We want revolutionary organizations. Revolutionary forces must not remain scattered in their aims and activities. Rather, it is necessary to mobilize the proletariat and its allies within organizations with strategies to overthrow reactionaries and seize power.



What is Marxism

A PERSPECTIVE FROM 2013

Accusations against Barack Obama by the political right in the US, recent media coverage of protest movements like Occupy Wall Street, and increased exposure for pop-philosophers like Slavoj Žižek have all brought the topic of Marxism back in the spotlight of popular attention in the west. In the process, little explanation has been given as to what Marxism is.

This essay will trace the philosophical foundations of Marxism and outline the most significant and relevant features of its historical development. My hope is to shed an incisive light on the topic of Marxism, specifically in a way that gets past its employment as a buzzword or slogan by either the political right or 'left.' Marxism, as we shall see, is a rich philosophical "guide to action" grounded in the long-standing struggle against capitalist-imperialism and for proletarian revolution.

Introduction

Marxism is named after its principal intellectual founder, Karl Marx. Marx, along with his close colleague Friedrich Engels, were part of a 19th century undercurrent of opposition to the consolidated hegemony of capitalism in Europe. In 1848, the same year of the European Spring Revolutions, Marx and Engels authored *The Communist Manifesto*, which to this day is one of the most widely distributed books in history.

Karl Marx particularly offered a systematic critique of capitalism: one which they relied on the basic premises laid out by its biggest proponents and conclusively demonstrated its destructive, exploitative nature. This systematic critique of capitalism was partially laid out in three volumes of *Capital* (1867; 1885; 1894).

Marx and Engels were also organizers and participants in the International Workingmen's Association, otherwise known as the First International, and contemporaries of the Paris Commune, a seventy-two day urban revolt in which the city was seized by its residents.

So What is Marxism?

Marxism is foremost an intellectual method grounded in the concrete struggle against extant class relations and for communism. This method can be broken down into a few parts.

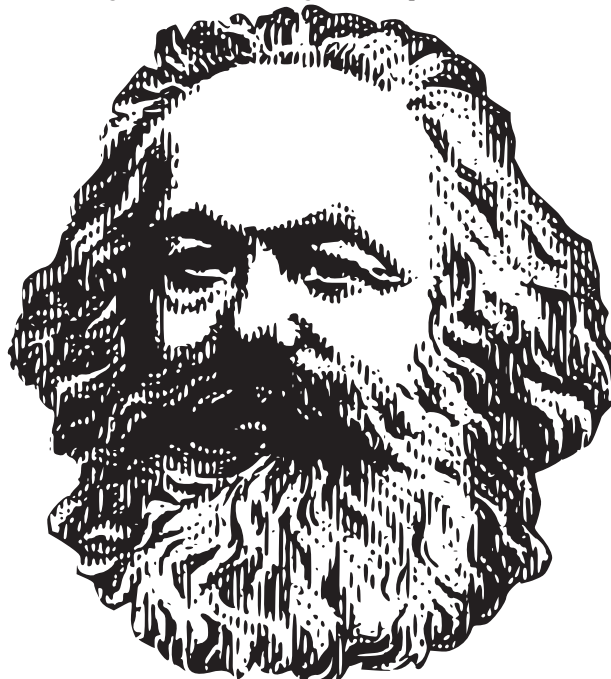
First is historical materialism: the outlook that social life is grounded in the means of producing and consuming sustenance and wealth. Marx and Engels' historical materialism further categorized society according to classes: different groups with different relationships to the means of production. Under emergent capitalism, the development of new productive forces enabled the creation of a proletarian class who worked together but did not own the means of production. Instead, the means of production were owned by the capitalist class which grew rich through the exploitation of the proletariat. Struggles between different classes contesting their relationship of the means of producing wealth (and hence their relationship to each other), Marx stated, is the principal driver of historical development. In the classical view, the contradiction between a growing proletariat working with increasingly productive technology for a shrinking bourgeoisie class was unique. Capitalism, thought Marx and Engels, was pro-

gressive insofar as it could lay the groundwork for communism: the democratic, egalitarian and rational sharing of work and reward.

In their own time, Marx and Engels divided classes into fairly homogeneous groups that they saw Europe developing to encompass. The bourgeoisie (or capitalists) owned the means of production and hence lived entirely off the exploited labor of other. By Marx and Engels' lifetimes, this class had largely usurped state power throughout Europe though often in accordance with monarchical political systems. The petty-bourgeoisie had some minor holding of capital and typically hired the labor of others while engaged in productive labor themselves. The proletariat owned nothing with which to sustain themselves and thus was forced to sell their labor power (i.e., the ability to work) to the bourgeoisie. The lumpen-proletariat, or underclass, was normally unemployed and driven into begging, criminality, etc. The peasantry was the majority class in pre-capitalist time who were engaged in mostly rural agricultural non-commodity production. Their gradual dispossession fed the ranks the emerging urban proletariat.

In economics, Marx popularized the notion of the labor theory of value. The labor theory of value states that all wealth is the accumulated product of human labor. Marx's various treatise on political economy demonstrated how exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie was a central feature of the capitalist system.

Philosophically, Marxism has tended to adhere to dialectical materialism. Dialectical materialism is a useful conceptual model for understanding social developments. It is not a hermetic philosophy, nor an accurate deductive representation of the physical world itself. In the context of Marx and Engels' life-



times, dialectical materialist was both a rebellion against the previous metaphysical dialectics of Hegel and an attempt to incorporate the latest natural scientific views, inspired by contemporaries such as Charles Darwin, to justify revolution in a deeper philosophical sense.

Conceptually, dialectical materialism stresses functionally related opposites. You can't have rich people without poor people, or *visa versa*; or in the modern context underdeveloped economies without overdeveloped ones. Next, it stresses the inherent motion of the all things. Nothing is static. There is no state of social relations, but rather a process through with social relations are reproduced at different levels or subsumed under different social relations (i.e. revolution).

Early Differences with Other Anti-Capitalist Trends

Marxism developed at a time when a number of radical left-wing political currents circulated in Europe. Most oppositional trends in Europe simply wanted to reform capitalism to make it more amenable to workers and the petty-bourgeoisie, offered utopian visions absent class struggle, or desired a return to an idyllic pre-capitalist past. Marxism differed from these trends by advocating for a forward-looking communism based on the tangible struggle of working people. Marxism contended that workers should to seize control over the means of production, place them under common ownership, and proceed to build a society without classes or a state but with material abundance.

In some regards Marxism was and is similar to Anarchism, insofar as the goal of communism (a stateless, classless society absent oppression) is regarded. While Anarchism as a radical anti-capitalist philosophy disavows utilizing any state form in the struggle for this end goal, Marx maintained this was idealistic. Rather, according to Marxism, the struggle over state power is an inevitable part of any class struggle. Thus the proletariat must at once seize the means of production and establish a new revolutionary state in order to defend against counter-revolutionary resistance.

Was Marx Euro-Centric?

Marx spent most of his time studying Europe, and he thought the European working class was the central revolutionary class of his day. Europe at the time was rapidly developing new productive technologies and most working people lived in conditions scarcely better or worse than what is faced by a majority of people globally today. The relatively new urban European proletariat was better educated than previous classes and was in direct contact with and yet themselves disempowered by the productive technologies which the capitalists of European countries (principally England, Germany, and France, along with the US) maintained monopolies on. In Marx's view, this proletariat was best situated to seize these productive technologies and change the course of history.

Marx acknowledged that profits from the slaves trade and colonial mercantilism provided the start-up capital for the development of industrial 'classical' capitalism, and he never denied the human cost associated with this development. Moreover, he firmly held that colonial emancipation (of Black slaves in the US, and of Ireland by the British) was a prerequisite to proletarian revolution. Despite this, he also at times held the contradictory view that colonialism as an agent of capitalist development was progressive.

Despite these ambiguities, it has ironically been outside of Europe in which Marxism has had to most distinct and durable effect.

Marxism after Marx

Following the deaths of Marx and Engels, Marxism lived on and had a tremendous impact during the 20th century. The Second International, or Socialist International, was founded in 1889. It was a continuation of the First International following the split between Marxists and Anarchists in 1872. The Second International is notable for declaring May 1st to be International Workers' Day and March 8th to be International Women's Day, two holidays which are still celebrated in many countries around the world. However, the unity of the Socialist International would be short-lived and it too disbanded in 1916.

Divisions within the Second International ran along two principal axes. The first was between reformism (attempting to seize power via elections and participating in existing states so as to gradually change their character, and pursuing workplace reforms as strategic ends) and revolutionary trends (attempting to build 'dual power' through independent, oppositional institutions and to seize power from the existing state by overthrowing it). The second division occurred between those who bowed to nationalist sentiments and supported their own government's war effort against others and internationalist sentiments which sought a 'revolutionary defeat' of their own country's capitalist ruling class.

Brought to a head by the war, these differences led to the disbanding the Second International. One group, which included many of the reformist right-wing parties from western Europe, retained the term 'Social Democrats' to identify themselves. The revolutionary wing adopted the term 'Communist.'



Russia and the Third International

While Marxism developed in Europe during the 19th century, its application during the 1917 Russian Revolution heralded a new turn. The Bolshevik Revolution's success in the midst of WWI had a driving impact not only in Marxism's popularity but also in its intellectual development. Based on the successful experience of the Russian Revolution and the split with the Social Democrats, Marxism was both further refined and elaborated. Additionally, Marxism now had an official state spon-

sor, the Soviet Union which devoted part of its resources to disseminating its brand of Marxism and to supporting radical movements internationally.

Part of this task of spreading revolutionary Marxism was undertaken by the Third International, or Communist International, which was formed in 1919 at the impetus of Russian Communists such as Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. As part of the re-defined Marxist thought sponsored through the Third International, the necessity of organizing to seize power through revolution was substantiated. Changes in global class dynamics brought on by the development of imperialism forced the Russian Communists to reassess both the nature of the global working class and strategic potentials for further revolutionary advances across new territories. The term 'labor aristocracy' was coined to describe "a privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries [which] lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions" in colonized nations. This upper stratum of the proletariat was seen as bribed by 'their own' monopoly capitalist bourgeoisie. Thus, Russian Communists began directing much of their efforts to supporting democratic anti-colonial movements in the 'East.'

Marxism Moves East. Maoism is Born

Following the Russian Revolution, the central plain of struggle against capitalist shifted from the imperialist West to the areas which had fallen under their colonial dominance. Due to Russia's support of various national liberation movements in the periphery, many of these struggles were increasingly influenced by Marxism. Likewise, the question of organizing class warfare in colonized countries opened up questions which hadn't been addressed before under Marxism.

One of the largest and most significant revolutions occurred in China. It was a product of a decades long struggle beginning with the 1911 nationalist revolution. Following the formation of the Communist Party of China in 1921, the struggle advanced further and took on



the form of a large scale civil conflict: a protracted people's war which defeated an invading Japanese army and the US-supported Kuomintang Party in order to establish the People's Republic of China in October 1949.

The success of the Chinese Revolution was a qualitative leap in Marxist practice and theory. The Chinese Revolution was successful in great because the Chinese Communist Party adopted a Marxist outlook to actual conditions of struggle. It had adopted a strategy which relied on the peasantry as a mass base, built up independent liberated zones, created a People's Army and People's Militia under the Party command, developed a strategy of people's war and mass line, and sought political unity through a united front against imperialism. In many ways, the strategies applied by the Chinese Communist Party in seizing power are significant for all revolutionary movements in the Third World today.

One of the most significant extensions made to Marxist theory following the Chinese Revolution was the notion of continuing class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Following the founding the PRC, Chinese Communist Party had noticed two revisionist tendencies of ruling communist parties. One was to deviate away from supporting the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. The other was pursuing

policies which ossified their own positions of power within the structure of post-revolutionary societies. Following the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, parts of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party increasingly noted the manner in which the USSR was ran like a capitalist state domestically and concluded with the United States internationally. As well, struggles within China brought the questionable future of domestic social relations to the fore. Within China, on one side stood Mao Zedong, a principal leader of the Chinese Revolution, and various left-wing leading cadre, whom contended that pitched class struggles would occur until capitalist-imperialism was defeated internationally. On the other side stood much of the party bureaucracy, which sought to engender greater domestic and international stability for the sake of securing their own positions of privilege and authority. This struggle was officially known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). While it officially lasted from 1966 to 1976, its most important years actually spanned from 1964 to 1971 (the struggles and preparations leading up to the GPCR through the dismemberment of the left). Despite the firm victory of the 'capitalist road' over the 'socialist road' by the end of the GPCR, the lessons derived from its experience remain an inherent part of Marxism today.

Global Class Analysis

While Third World-centered, Marxist-influenced national liberation movements flourished in the latter half of the 20th century, a few Marxists began further examining the overall changes in global class dynamics which had led to this shifting of revolutionary struggles from Europe in the 19th century to Africa, Asia, and Latin America by the 20th. Often such work was carried out independently, but many reached similar conclusions. Expanding on both Marx and Lenin before them, later Marxists offered expanded critiques of capitalist-imperialism.

Authors such as Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, Samir Amin, Arghiri Emmanuel, Andre Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein, Walter Rodney, and those associated with the Maoist Internationalist Movement, all writing since the 1960s, have sought to better understand the development of global divisions of labor and class relations, the manner in which surplus value and 'economic surplus' is created and distributed throughout the global economy, and the implications this has had for likely systemic developments and anti-systemic (including Marxist) movements.

What has been uncovered is that a substantial portion of the working class receives a portion of surplus at the expense of members of the proletariat elsewhere. It is not only the imperialist and local bourgeoisie which appropriates surplus. Rather, as part of imperialism, this surplus is saturated among the First World working class as well. This helps explain the workings of modern 'post-industrial' capitalism; the extreme differences in wages and standards of living in different parts of the world; and the resultant differences in evident class consciousness.

Marxism's Recent Influence in the United States

Despite the 'wages of imperialism' which affect class alignments in the contemporary world, Marxism has been influential in radical movements in the US. During the late 1960s and early 1970s for example, during a worldwide upsurge of radical and revolutionary movements, Marxism was particularly influential in

revolutionary student and national liberation movements.

The radical wings of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), for example, were influenced by Marxism. A 1969 split in SDS led to the formation of several anti-imperialist organizations, including the Weather Underground. While the Weather Underground and other groups made significant errors in their practice, their strident internationalism was a positive influence on the whole. Also in the United States, organizations such as the Black Panther Party were influenced by the revolutionary Marxism of the time. The Black Panther Party was itself one of many revolutionary Black nationalist organizations, including the notable Revolutionary Action Movement, which were increasingly influenced by revolutionary Marxism. Following in the footsteps of the Black Marxists, nationalism and revolutionary Marxism was applied to the Chicano/Mexicano question in the 'southwest' as well, and Marxism was similarly embraced by Asian revolutionary groups on the West Coast.

Marxism Lives On

In countries such as India and the Philippines, nominal Marxist guerrillas are currently fighting people's wars against comprador (or neo-colonial) states. The Maoist Communist Party in Nepal led a ten-year people's war which in 2006 ousted a centuries old monarchy while failing to achieve its full objectives. Due to this, it recently split into revolutionary and bourgeois factions, the former which aims to push the struggle forward. And

in several other countries in South Asia, Marxist revolutionaries are attempting to regroup and rectify themselves to advance the struggle for communism.

The stamp of Marxism and 'spectre of communism' exists through the Third World. The number of popular bourgeois-nationalist governments in Latin America which are either influenced in some way or play lip service to Marxism is an indication of its influence and broad appeal.

Marxism was widely popular in Africa throughout the 20th century. Many incisive Marxists such as Walter Rodney, Kwame Nkrumah, and Samir Amin came from and wrote primarily through their experience on the subjugated continent. Unfortunately, various revisionisms emanating from the Soviet Union and China hindered the full development of class struggle in Africa. This class struggle continues today however as Africans continue to be pillaged for natural resources and labor. Some have noted a new 'scramble for Africa' between the US and Europe on one side and China and Russia on another. In response, various revolutionary organizing efforts, including those carried out by the African Socialist International, are underway throughout the African continent.

In the United States itself, there are many trends and organizations which describe themselves as informed by Marxism. These groups are few and far between and isolated from the population at large, and they are sometimes divided over various historical and political interpretations. In addition to their lack of effectiveness in mobilizing for their larger causes, many such nominal Marxist organizations have simplistically dogmatic and incorrect understandings on class relations, typically to the effect of disregarding the manner in which First World workers are invested with surplus via monopoly capital. In more recent years, the term First Worldist has been coined to negatively describe those who profess 'left-wing' or Marxist beliefs without assimilating a coherent view of global class. On the other hand, Third Worldists stress that the archetypal proletarian resides formally and socially outside of the First World and that any global socialist revolution will be accomplished against the material interests of



First World populations at large. Not surprisingly, the First Worldist viewpoint tends to be dominant in First World countries, and it is even prevalent in Third World ones.

Marxist-inspired national liberation groups in the United States have had a better track record on the issue of global class. However, they suffer from many of the same problems as First Worldist organizations in that their effectiveness and influence is limited. Nonetheless, recent projects such as the Jackson-Kush Plan for National Liberation (put forward by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and the New African People's Organization) may indicate Marxist-inspired revolutionary nationalism is again on the rise.

Marxism From Here

Marxism is as complicated as it is rich. Many valuable lessons can be derived from its practical and methodology history, yet many nominal Marxists have failed to draw appropriate conclusions. Besides First Worldism, many modern Marxist proponents deviate from revolutionary practice by means of reformism (the tendency to address specific issues facing various populations without changing the definitive social relations of society); tailism (the tendency to simply regurgitate what people are already say-

ing in an amplified way without adding any specific radical insights); idealism (the tendency to believe ideas have transformative force unto themselves outside of class struggle); dogmatism (the tendency to uncritically uphold a set of interpretations without regard to newer counter-demonstrative practice and ideas); sectarianism (the tendency to put oneself or one's organization above the necessary exigencies of the revolutionary struggle); and cultism (an extreme form of the latter deviations, whereby internal group dynamics promote an uncritical self-aggrandizing view of themselves, their organization, or leaders, thereby promoting a sectarian view in the process).

Despite these problems within 'Marxisms,' Marxism itself, as an incisive philosophy geared towards the emancipation of the proletariat (and thus, humanity broadly), is still extremely relevant for the struggles facing people today. This will be so as long as class struggle continues to be the primary engine of historical change; so long as people are faced with oppressive conditions for which they are impelled to rebel against.

By offering an incisive exposition of the capitalist-imperialist system and the history of radical struggles, revolutionary Marxism, when refined for the immedi-

ate struggle, is an indispensable weapon in the arsenal of the exploited and oppressed. Marxism is understanding not only the power of the proletariat when organized for revolution but also how to tap that power. As such, it is the best tool the masses have for smashing capitalist-imperialism and laying the foundations for socialism and communism.

Far from offering all the answers, Marxism is a 'guide to action': a call to scientifically investigate various problems for the purpose of organizing to overthrow the current system.

The world will certainly be much different in 50 or 60 years. The question of if it be better or worse is still undecided. With this in mind, it might just be a broader and deeper interest in revolutionary Marxism, with its rich philosophical and practical history, which offers the best or even only hope for the former outcome.



What is Net-Exploitation

The term "net-exploitation" refers to the manner in which high-wage workers benefit through exchange with low wage workers.

At minimum, net-exploitation happens when a given wage exceeds the value of labor, i.e., when the wage derived from a given hour's worth of labor can purchase on the market more than the socially average product of an hour's labor.

To illustrate this, I want to offer first a hypothetical anecdote and then a further construction.

Earlier this week, I went into H&M, a popular urban retail clothing store in the heart of empire, and purchased a plain t-shirt for around \$6 and a pair of plain shoes for around \$24. If my wage is about \$10 an hour, and if everything was being paid at its full value (what I pur-

chased, and the labor from which I drew a wage), I would expect the t-shirt and shoes to embody three hours of labor. From spinning the threads, to drawing together the shirt and shoes, shipping them to the US, displaying them at the retail outlet, the few seconds the cashier spent interacting with me, and the managing aspects of all of this. That might be the case. But if so, I am not exploited because the wages from three hours of my labor can purchase three hours of labor on the market. I'm breaking even. If there is exploitation happening in this system, it is not occurring directly at my expense. A more likely scenario is that the t-shirt and shoes represent more than three hours of labor, part of which is conducted by Third World workers under slave-like conditions for near subsistence wages. If, for example, the t-shirt and shoes embody four hours of labor, then I am a net-exploiter because my

wages enable me to get more labor on the market for less than I expend myself.

Let's look at it another way.

Let's say I get paid ten dollars an hour and a Third World worker gets paid five dollars. After an hour of us each working (assuming no other intervention of exploitation), the product of both of our labor is valued at \$15, or stated abstractly as \$7.50 an hour. When I work three hours in this situation, I receive \$30 in wages or the equivalent of four hours of abstract labor. However, for the Third World worker to purchase a set of commodities whose value is also four hours of abstract labor, they would need to work six hours. In essence, an unequal exchange is occurring through pricing. Whereas commodities other than labor are bought and sold on the open market at an average or abstract rate, labor itself

is valued differently, allowing the better paid worker, myself in this situation, to benefit at the expense of a hypothetical Third World worker.

Obviously the world is more complex than this. Not everyone is either a First World or Third World worker, and various exploiting classes exist which skim surplus value. As well, this fairly straightforward model does not presup-

pose an underlying logic, function, or manner of maintenance of this unequal exchange. These are topics which have been covered elsewhere not only by myself but by a wide variety of authors.

My hope in making the above demonstration is to illustrate clearly and in the most succinct and accessible terms what is meant by net-exploitation. Understanding that First World workers are

themselves net-exploiters is not only relevant but fundamental for understanding the central dynamics shaping the world. For those who desire revolutionary change, firmly acknowledging the existence of net-exploitation via imperialism is a basic question of determining which classes and social forces can be lined up for revolution and which can only oppose and obstruct it.

A Model for How First World Wages are Based on Third World Exploitation

Days before his first trip to Cuba, Pope Benedict XVI stated that “Marxist ideology [sic] in the way it was originally conceived no longer corresponds to reality.”

Left-leaning commentators concluded with, “says man in giant hat who speaks to invisible cloud people.” It is easy for leftists to poke at the pope’s archaic religious views and supposed authority. Yet the pope’s criticism should not be dismissed outright, especially because it has some truth to it.

Marxism as it was expressed in the 1800s does not correspond to material or social conditions today. However, Marxism as methodology necessarily changes its outlook according to changes in material conditions and shifts in class struggle. But this does not entirely cut to the matter either. The pope didn’t need god to tell him what most people realize: that there are significant deficiencies and dogmatisms in mainstream Marxism today and that much of what is called ‘Marxism’ does not fully represent today’s reality. The pope did not say anything profound or deep. He was speaking to common perception.

There is one particularly deficient area where most Marxists fail in accounting for modern material conditions. In much of typical Marxism, there is consistent aloofness regarding the significance of the divide between rich over-developed countries and poor maldeveloped countries. 1 Given that the global divide is so basic and long-standing and that many contemporary Marxists continue to overlook this, it is understandable how someone like the pope could call out such ‘Marxism’ for not corresponding to reality.

So the question remains, how can the gap between a handful of wealthy countries and a majority of poor ones be accounted for under a Marxist paradigm? How can Marx’s methodological approach account for the world today?

In some ways, coming to a Marxist understanding on the global gap requires us to toss out much of Marx’s specific conclusions. While some mainstream Marxists resist this, it is necessary if we are to realistically grasp and explain current phenomena.

One of the long-held conclusions in mainstream Marxism is that workers are necessarily exploited under capitalism. This is one of the conclusions which must be reevaluated if Marxism is to come to terms with the world as it actually is today.

THE NUMBERS

The following examples provide an abstract model, based on the labor theory of value, of the mechanism by which value can be transferred between workers themselves. What is shown is how some workers can earn above the value of labor with part of their wages being drawn from the exploitation of others’ labor. (The examples all refer to the diagram on the next page)

Example 1: Simple Aggregate Model

This is the easiest way to demonstrate this model of aggregated capital accumulation under conditions with steeply tiered global labor markets. For the sake

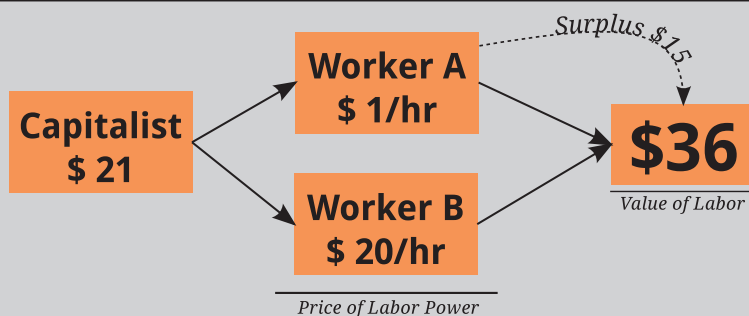
of ease of clarity, fixed capital is ignored in most of these equations. In example one, a capitalist takes \$21 to pay for one hour of labor from worker A at \$1/hr and one hour of labor from worker B for \$20/hr. The end result is a commodity which the capitalist sells for \$36 dollars, yielding a profit of \$15. In this case, labor in its abstract (or ‘socially necessary’) form creates \$18/hr in value [the full value of the commodity (\$36), divided by the two hours which produced it], and this represents the value of labor.

In this example, worker B is paid \$20 for an hour of labor power: this price of labor power is higher than the value of labor. In this case, for one hour of work worker B is able to purchase 1.11 hours of abstract labor. Consequently, worker A must work 18 hours to purchase the one hour of abstract labor. To clarify further: in this example, \$17 in surplus value is exploited from worker A [the abstract value of labor (\$18) minus the price of labor power paid as wages (\$1)]. Of this \$17, \$15 is kept by the capitalist and \$2 is handed to worker B on top of the full value of labor. Functionally, worker B is an exploiter.

Example 2: Simple Segment Model

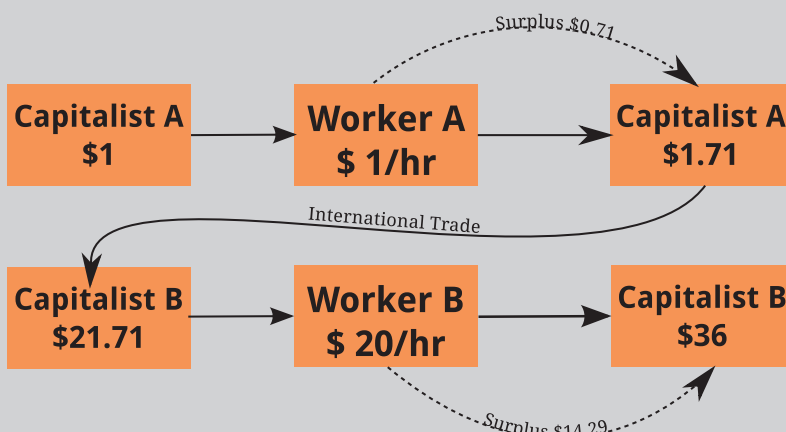
This example demonstrates how the system appears and operates at the single-enterprise level. Specifically, it begins to demonstrate how the surplus value rendered through labor can be distributed to other workers. It also demonstrates how this system can operate from the standpoint of individual capitalists who are only directly employing one or the other worker.

Example 1:
Simple
Aggregate
Model



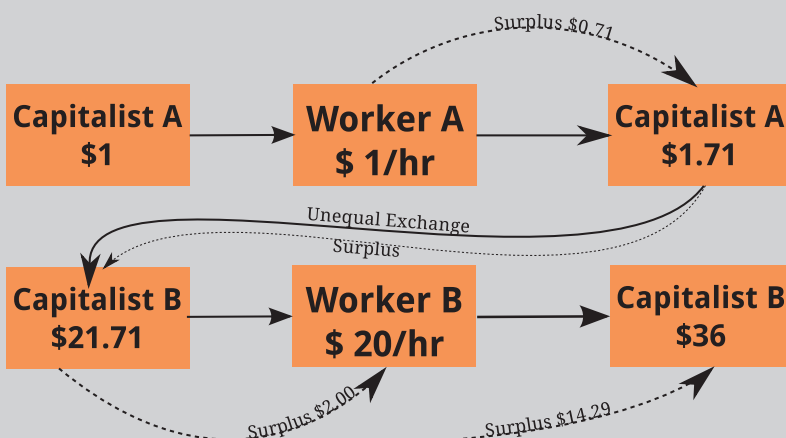
Abstract value of labor = \$18 / hr

Example 2:
Simple
Segment
Model



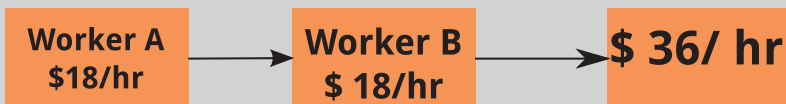
In this case, abstract value of labor remains \$18/hr. This example demonstrates a common sectional rate of exploitation. This is how economics seem to operate from the standpoint of individual capitalists.

Example 3:
Aggregated
Segment
Model



The structure of price of labor allows surplus value to flow through the global economic system, including to Worker B, while sectional profits remains relatively equal

Example 4:
Socialist
Revolution



Being paid full value of abstract labor represents a decline in living standards for Worker B

In this example, Capitalist A buys one hour of labor from worker A at a price of \$1/hr. Capitalist A then sells the commodity to capitalist B for a price of \$1.71. In this segment of the capitalist process, it appears the capitalist drew .71 cents of surplus value and the total value of labor for worker A is \$1.71. The commodity which passes through the initial (capitalist/worker A) circuit necessarily passes through a second (capitalist/worker B) circuit. 2 In the second part, worker B is

paid by capitalist B \$20/hr to further handle (e.g., transport, market, account, repackage, shelf, draw up a receipt for, etc) the commodity, after which it is sold for \$36.

In this case, the final price of the commodity (\$36) includes both the 'raw material' provided at a price of \$1.71 and \$34.29 (which appears to be the value of labor for worker B), and it appears \$14.29 is the surplus extracted by capitalist B from worker B. This example illus-

trates how under conditions of disparate wage strata, rates of segmental exploitation can remain fairly constant throughout. In a manner, this model demonstrates how the global economy works from the perspective of the individual capitalists. This is a narrow view also encapsulated by much of what is currently (erroneously) thought of as Marxist class analysis.

Example 3: Aggregated Segment Model

This model fully demonstrates the links between the first two models, and demonstrates how the surplus derived from the exploitation in one segment can be transferred throughout the entire process via the structuring of prices.

What is missed by Example 2 is the manner in which the disparity in price in labor is more than incidental. Price itself does not necessarily reflect value. Instead price is a mechanism through which value is circulated. This disparity between prices of labor didn't magically happen. It is historically formed, deeply part of the modern system, and militantly enforced by imperial and neo-colonial regimes. This divide is structurally significant. It effects class alignments and the development of class struggle.

Where example 2 falls short is that it sees the process of capital accumulation as random forms of segment labor, not specific forms of labor abstracted as part of a general aggregated process. It fails to define abstract labor within the context of an interconnected historically-formed global economy. There are not multiple separate economies and societies under which production and accumulation are happening ignorant of each other. In the

model, the roles that circuit A and B play represent historically-created relations based on power within a larger system of general capital accumulation. Indeed, capital can move around the world with little restriction whereas borders merely serve to bar Third World workers from the status of the hypothetical worker B.

In example three, worker A is paid \$1 to work for an hour for capitalist A. From this labor, \$17 is rendered as surplus. Capitalist A, in selling the commodity to capitalist B for \$1.71, keeps \$.71 of this surplus. Capitalist B pays worker B \$20 for an hour of work with the commodity, then sells it on the market for \$36. In doing so, part of the surplus drawn from worker A goes towards paying worker B \$2 above the value of labor, and the remaining \$14.29 of surplus is kept as profit by capitalist B. This is basically how example one was illustrated, only in a manner that is an aggregate of two connected processes.

Example 4: Socialist Revolution

In this example, the capitalists have been done away with and exploitation no longer exists. Worker A and B both work for an hour to produce a commodity with a value of \$36. In this case, each worker keeps the full value of labor (\$18). Yet curiously, for worker B this amounts to a \$2 decrease in pay from the previous examples.

Conclusion

This abstract model is significant for a few particular reasons. First, it shows that in a system of drastically disparate wages, some workers can actually receive wages based on the exploitation of others. This raises an interesting notion. Insofar as the hypothetical worker B actually benefits from the system of accumulation, its class interest is different than that of worker A. The demand of worker A to end the system of exploitation implies a lowering of price of labor power for worker B. The higher wages demanded by worker B would necessarily be drawn from the surplus value created by worker A, even if it appears to come from the pocket of capitalist B.

The reality of global disparities between workers themselves, its significance for class struggle, and the further questions it raises are things Marxism must account for if it is to remain relevant and incisive today. Dogma and "Marxist ideology" explain little about the modern world. However, the methodological approach based on Marx's own has not ceased to be paramount to understanding and changing the roots of today's common phenomena.



A Discussion with Dr. Zak Cope (AUTHOR OF 'DIVIDED WORLD DIVIDED CLASS') on the Stratification of Labor under Global Capitalism

Zak Cope is the author of *Divided World Divided Class: Global Political Economy and the Stratification of Labour Under Capitalism*, which was just published this past August by Kersplebedeb Press as part of their recently launched Kalikot series. The book "charts the history of the 'labour aristocracy' in the capitalist world system, from its roots in colonialism to its birth and eventual maturation into a full-fledged middle class in the age of imperialism. It argues that pervasive national, racial and cultural chauvinism in the core capitalist countries is not primarily attributable to 'false class consciousness', ideological indoctrination or ignorance

as much left and liberal thinking assumes. Rather, these and related forms of bigotry are concentrated expressions of the major social strata of the core capitalist nations' shared economic interest in the exploitation and repression of dependent nations. I recently got the chance to interview Zak Cope about the project.

Nikolai Brown for Anti-Imperialism.com: Greetings and thank you for the interview.

Dr. Zak Cope: It's a pleasure! Thank you for your interest.

NB: I first want to ask you about the book itself. Who did you write it for and why; and what can someone who is perhaps just discovering the subject expect to find out by reading your book?

I think that the ideas discussed in the book are accessible and of great interest to anyone concerned with international relations, poverty and inequality. As well as scholars and students researching in the fields of political economy, development studies, and the history of labour and socialist movements, I expect the book to have some appeal amongst teachers, lecturers, civil servants, social

workers, counsellors, professional politicians, anti-capitalist, anti-racist and national liberation activists, and anyone at all interested in understanding and changing the grossly unequal and inhumane world we live in. Above all, I hope the book will have some appeal to English-speaking people in the developing countries and oppressed people in the developed countries. Ideally, the book will appeal to at least some working people in the latter, too.

I think that people will find out from the book about three things that are not often highlighted. First, that the depredations of colonialism and slavery provided not only the historical impetus for the rise of capitalism, and for the birth of the working class as such, but also a crucial source of food, employment opportunities and land for metropolitan labour. Second, the book highlights a historical shift whereby metropolitan labour first depends upon colonial labour for its existence, then, later, increasingly for its sustenance, and finally, now, upon neo-colonial labour for its entire lifestyle. Third, the book shows that the tasks facing workers in the developed countries are not those facing the workers of the underdeveloped countries. That fact may seem obvious, but the book goes further and shows that there is a deeply rooted contradiction between the aims and interests of the respective workforces, as demonstrated by metropolitan labour's active engagement in colonial and neo-colonial politics.

NB: What initially motivated you to write this book? How did you stumble across the topic and what drove your research in this direction?

My initial motivations for writing the book were threefold. Firstly, I wanted to examine why workers in the rich countries seemed to have given up on socialism. As Donald Sassoon's magisterial *One Hundred Years of Socialism* shows, the working class of the imperialist countries has for a century and more struggled to regulate and socialise capitalism, not replace it. If it is true that capitalism is an inherently exploitative and oppressive socioeconomic system how is it that workers in the rich countries have been so content to put up with it? Moreover, how is it that workers in the developed capitalist countries are so far from having, as Marx wrote, "nothing

to lose but their chains"? My second motivation, then, was to counter those ideologies on the left which seek to explain these phenomena (that is, metropolitan working class conservatism and embourgeoisement). So, for much of the left, it is its militancy, its productivity or a combination of both, that explains metropolitan labour's relative affluence. Paradoxically, however, the Western left has felt the need to explain working class conservatism by something other than this. Thus it has tried to excuse metropolitan labour's conservative, complacent and fully reactionary politics with reference to its having been brainwashed or divaricated from its revolutionary tasks by all-powerful ideological state apparatuses (attempts to excuse it with reference to job insecurity and "precarity" notwithstanding). In short, for much of what passes for the left, it is "false class consciousness" that has led the Western working class to prefer social democracy, social partnership, and blatant national chauvinism (all these predicated on a political alliance with the capitalist class and its representatives) to socialism. Finally, and most fundamentally, the book was motivated by a desire to reinvigorate an internationalist perspective which had been sorely neglected by a Marxism deeply marked by a pernicious Eurocentrism. In that sense, the book was motivated by wholehearted opposition to colonialism and imperialism, which provide the real underpinnings of embourgeoisement, reformism, and racism alike.

The book is a continuation of my prior research into what I call the political economy of bigotry. My first book, *Dimensions of Prejudice* (Peter Lang, 2008) showed that unreasonable dogmatic beliefs are expressions of socially structured patterns of prejudice. I argued that beliefs about religion, gender, "race" and culture are not simply the product of personal ignorance or miseducation, but the ideological by-product of various types of group relation (patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism). The new book substantiates the older analysis by showing that the division between the rich and poor countries brought about by colonialism and imperialism is today the most fundamental "group relation" shaping peoples' worldviews.

Fanciful ideas about toiling masses chomping at the bit for revolutionary

change only to be misled by a corrupt union and/or political leadership or befuddled by capitalist propaganda are routinely trotted out by the Western left. Yet the "one working class" approach ignores both the political and historical facts of labour conservatism and the (parallel) economic facts of embourgeoisement. In short, it ignores the historical and contemporary inequalities created by colonialism and imperialism.

NB: How important is the understanding the role and history of the 'labour aristocracy' for radical, emancipatory, or socialist movements today?

There are several problems associated with the failure to understand how imperialism affects the global class structure. First, workers in the Third World must be careful when heeding the political or ideological leadership of First World organisations professing to help them overthrow capitalism. Labour and its representatives in the developing countries need to examine closely the deeply embedded character of the First World left in each and every one of its manifestations, so that they can better formulate their own independent strategies. Second, narrow appeals to self-interest on the part of the workers of the imperialist countries have historically tended only to result in trade unionist reformism and further descent into national chauvinism. Insofar as metropolitan labour's demands for higher wages, jobs monopolies and industrial protectionism are met, they are met at the expense of workers and farmers in the Third World and serve only to make a subsection of the international workforce dependent upon imperialism. Third, understanding how the "labour aristocracy" is formed means understanding imperialism, and conversely. It is not a coincidence that those organisations which do not understand the embourgeoisement of labour play down the significance of imperialism. Even socialist organisations nominally opposed to imperialism very often miss their target. So, a handful of socialist organisations might prioritise peace work and opposition to militarism, equating imperialism with the exercise of brute force against one or more sovereign nations. Their foil may be a particular administration or its foreign policy. It may even be the military-industrial complex. Or, imperialism

might be opposed as supposedly benefiting only a handful of ultra-rich bankers and foreign investors (even, at a stretch, a handful of very well-paid union bureaucrats and highly skilled professionals). In this case, only the richest 1-5% of society is seen as upholding the rule of monopoly capital. The multi-faceted approach articulated in my book, by contrast, is to treat imperialism as essentially involving the transfer of surplus value from one country to another and an imperialist country as a net importer of surplus value. Only this approach allows us to really gauge the size and boundaries of the labour aristocracy and, hence, the concrete possibilities of mounting effective opposition to capitalism and its military, legal, financial and political bulwarks.

NB: What consequences does such an accurate understanding of the division of labour under capitalism imply for radical and revolutionary praxis both in core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral economies?

In the developed countries, an accurate understanding of the division of labour under capitalism must impact on the aims, strategies and tactics of movements committed to genuine social progress, both globally and domestically. Hopefully the analysis in the book largely speaks for itself with regard to political conclusions, especially the possibilities of organising opposition to capitalism in the core nations. I don't wish to sound a despondent note with regard to what workers in the imperialist countries ought to do, but what must be avoided are self-defeating prognostication and moralistic injunction without regard to social conditions. In the so-called "developing" countries, the main foci for what you call "radical and revolutionary praxis" have been clear for some time. What has not been so clear, I think, is the extent to which opponents of imperialism must necessarily confront the First World as a whole, and not just its very richest and most powerful members.

NB: Over the last few years, there seems to have been a resurgence in discourse on the stratification of labour. Within this context, what do you hope this book accomplishes?

I think you're right that these debates are really coming to the fore again, in no

small part due to the work of groups like your own. I hope that the book can be useful as providing a battery of arguments for people concerned to challenge the prevailing First Worldism of the left and, hence, better praxis on its part. I hope, also, that the book stimulates much needed research into imperialism and value transfer. There are several areas of research barely touched on in the book which must be integrated into any full analysis of how imperialism works. For example, how does global value transfer as described in the book relate to the systematic undervaluation of Third World currencies in terms of purchasing power parity? How, in turn, does this relate to "petrodollar warfare" (whereby the denomination of oil sales in US dollars forces countries to maintain large dollar reserves, thus creating a consistent demand for dollars and upwards pressure on the dollar's value, regardless of economic conditions in the United States)? What have been the consequences of the current recession in relation to imperialism and what role has imperialism played in precipitating the recession? What alternative methods and means of calculating the transfer of value from the countries of the global South to the imperialist countries are there? My book should be considered a work in progress, in all of these regards.

NB: I know you don't see a lot of potential for progressive or revolutionary mass struggle in imperialist countries. However, I do wonder what kind of effect a wider, more systematic, and watertight discussion on global political economy occurring within or on the margins of imperialist economies may have on wider movements against imperialism. What potential significance do you see in wider discussions which expose these issues, even if for now this is mainly occurring among "English-speaking people in the developing countries" and "oppressed people in the developed countries?" In other words, do you think if discussions on how class is actually construed gain more traction, even among people who are generally themselves alienated from the day to day struggles of the world's exploited majority, a more correct understanding of class can be imparted onto these struggles by way of osmosis? If enough people begin bringing up these issues in a critical

way, even in the language of imperialism (i.e., English, French, Spanish, etc), at some point will nominally revolutionary or Marxist groups in the Third World, some of them engaged in armed struggles against neo-colonial states, 'get it?' Or, given wider engagement in the issues on the part of a broader section of the English-speaking left, may this embolden those in the periphery who already do 'get it' to take a more clear stand? Otherwise, what do you think the possible significance of a wider discussion of these issues among your main target audience may be? Finally, how does Marxism fit into your analysis? Why did you approach the topic from a Marxian perspective, and what do you think of its broader significance in respect to ideological trends like Anarchism or Radical Islam?

Firstly, it's worth mentioning that these ideas about the global class structure are not as foreign to Third World revolutionaries as some might assume. Kwame Nkrumah, M. N. Roy, Sultan Galyev, Julius Nyerere and Che Guevara are just a few revolutionaries from peripheral nations who at one time or another espoused the idea that the workers of the core nations were receiving a portion of the surplus value extorted from their countries. (This does not imply endorsement of any of these men's political lines, incidentally). Today, there are positive signs that trade union movements in the global South are becoming much more conscious of the conservative role played by Northern-dominated labour organisations and parties. In that sense, I agree that sound studies of class emanating from the developed nations can serve to strengthen and embolden workers and activists in the periphery determined to once and for all delink from imperialism, including its "left" standard bearers.

More generally, I think it vitally important that these issues be discussed with a view to clarifying the potentials inherent in various social struggles, wherever they might be happening. What, for example, must we conclude about the struggle to redistribute the wealth of the top 1% of the US population, when almost 1 in 10 of the remaining 99% are millionaires and the rest are in the top 10-15% of the world by income? What do we say about

those groups on the left seeking to organise grassroots opposition to neoliberalism, even though some of the most popular anti-neoliberal parties are fascist? The same thing goes for the anti-globalisation movement, of course. The question people concerned with global inequality, including inequality within the working class, ask is: what does redistribution of wealth derived from imperialism amount to, politically speaking? What good does socialising imperialism do? If we can show just how much of the wealth of First World countries is predicated on superexploitation, we get a truer picture of the social, economic and political underpinnings of current realities.

Marxism teaches that consciousness does not determine life but, rather, life determines consciousness. This means that ideas about the basic inhumanity of large groups of people, our right to treat them with complete and utter disdain, do not simply drop from the clear blue sky. They are the product of certain conditions of life, primarily, the way in which societies wherein such ideas predominate organise their production. For several hundred years, production in the core nations has been organised on a capitalist basis, for which Marxism has provided the most in-depth and scientific critique. Nowadays, capitalist production has become truly global, but Marxism has largely failed to keep in step with it. In my view, this is mainly due to the phenomenon articulated in the book, namely embourgeoisement occasioned by a specifically imperialist capitalism. Yet by utilising the concepts (particularly value theory) and methods (dialectical materialism) developed by Marxism we can get to the roots of the matter, certainly much more so than were we to rely on religious and quasi-religious doctrines like Islam and anarchism to inform ourselves.

NB: Given how controversial these views are, how has the book been recieved by academia and the wider 'left'?

If ideas like those in the book have any currency anywhere, I would say that that

it is within academia, and at the outer margins of the left. In general, however, both academia and the left are completely hostile to the ideas found in the book. To a great many socialists the working class has become a sacred cow. Any and all manifestations of chauvinism by metropolitan workers must immediately, and quite frantically, be explained away as "not their fault". It is at least tacitly assumed that the workers of the developed countries are incapable of acting in their own rational self-interest. At all costs, it must never be admitted by the left in the developed

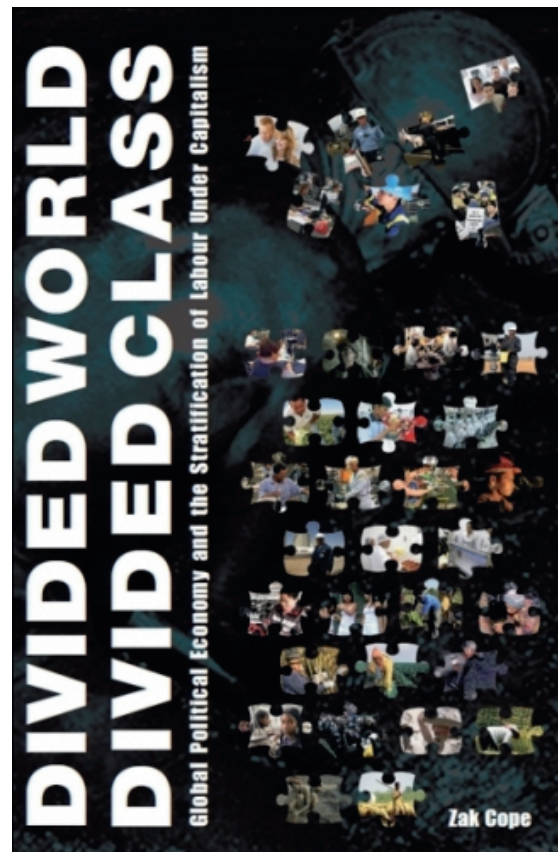
ent sympathy, and even outright hostility, towards national liberation struggles at home and abroad.

Unfortunately, hitherto there has not really been a sufficiently watertight and rigorous analysis of labour stratification in the capitalist world economy. That fact has facilitated academic marginalisation of analyses like my own, but does not explain it entirely. The fact is, as I say in my book, whether it is for reasons of institutional self-preservation, well-intentioned "false cosmopolitanism" or avowedly conservative proclivities, by presenting the bifurcation of the world workforce into rich and poor as the natural and inevitable outcome of national differences in economic efficiency, educational attainment and cultural norms, the Western left, including in academia, effectively promulgates a mollifying, but self-serving, ideology that obscures the imperialist structures underlying international political economy. This must be faced up to.

With all that said, I am delighted that the book has been picked up by Kersplebedeb Press as part of its Kalikot book series. Kersplebedeb publishes and distributes a wide range of very useful work.

NB: Are there any other projects or books you are working on which we should be on the look out for? What's next?

At the minute, I am preparing a couple of essays for publication. Hopefully, at least one will see the light of day this year. Otherwise, I have material on the history of the German labour movement that I may try to work up into a book. I also plan to make a more thorough study of political and economic conditions in Ireland today. I would encourage all your readers to keep up their study and add further substance to the analysis developed in the book.



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countries that the economic struggles of the Western working class can, in the last instance, only be successful at the expense of the exploited nations. Persons and groups with perspectives like mine are criticised as severing the organic connection between struggles in the Third World and those in the imperialist countries. This is so even when it is impossible to see any link between, say, the struggle for Palestinian statehood and the struggles of UK workers for higher wages or a monopoly on jobs vis-à-vis foreign labour. It is so even when the workers themselves show no appar-

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Imperialism and the Split in Socialism

V.I. LENIN

In light of all the hoopla around the election and specifically in response to all the 'leftist' and 'socialist' tailing and support for Barry Obama and the Democratic Party, is it appropriate to re-post this short article by V.I. Lenin, entitled 'Imperialism and the Split in Socialism.'

Lenin was prescient in regards to a phenomena, the 'labor aristocracy,' which was only beginning to show its full implications for the international communist movement. While most nominal 'Marxists' and 'Leninists' today have backed away from Lenin's thesis on the corruption of working class movements via imperialist superprofits, the movements surrounding Anti-Imperialism.com are among the few today which take these theories further in a systematic way so as to keep pace with ongoing developments in capitalist-imperialism. Thus, while First World nominal 'socialists' were celebrating Obama's electoral victory, he bombed Yemen.

Is there any connection between imperialism and the monstrous and disgusting victory opportunism (in the form of social-chauvinism) has gained over the labour movement in Europe?

This is the fundamental question of modern socialism. And having in our Party literature fully established, first, the imperialist character of our era and of the present war [World War I], and, second, the inseparable historical connection between social-chauvinism and opportunism, as well as the intrinsic similarity of their political ideology, we can and must proceed to analyse this fundamental question.

We have to begin with as precise and full a definition of imperialism as possible. Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is monopoly capitalism; parasitic, or decaying capitalism; moribund capitalism. The supplanting of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the quintessence of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in five principal forms: (1) cartels, syndicates and

trusts—the concentration of production has reached a degree which gives rise to these monopolistic associations of capitalists; (2) the monopolistic position of the big banks—three, four or five giant banks manipulate the whole economic life of America, France, Germany; (3) seizure of the sources of raw material by the trusts and the financial oligarchy (finance capital is monopoly industrial capital merged with bank capital); (4) the (economic) partition of the world by the international cartels has begun. There are already over one hundred such international cartels, which command the entire world market and divide it "amicably" among themselves—until war re-divides it. The export of capital, as distinct from the export of commodities under non-monopoly capitalism, is a highly characteristic phenomenon and is closely linked with the economic and territorial-political partition of the world; (5) the territorial partition of the world (colonies) is completed.

Imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism in America and Europe, and later in Asia, took final shape in the period 1898–1914. The Spanish-American War (1898), the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) and the economic crisis in Europe in 1900 are the chief historical landmarks in the new era of world history.

The fact that imperialism is parasitic or decaying capitalism is manifested first of all in the tendency to decay, which is characteristic of every monopoly under the system of private ownership of the means of production. The difference between the democratic-republican and the reactionary-monarchist imperialist bourgeoisie is obliterated precisely because they are both rotting alive (which by no means precludes an extraordinarily rapid development of capitalism in individual branches of industry, in individual countries, and in individual periods). Secondly, the decay of capitalism is manifested in the creation of a huge stratum of rentiers, capitalists who live by "clipping coupons". In each of the four leading imperialist countries—England, U.S.A., France and Germany—capital in securities amounts to

100,000 or 150,000 million francs, from which each country derives an annual income of no less than five to eight thousand million. Thirdly, export of capital is parasitism raised to a high pitch. Fourthly, "finance capital strives for domination, not freedom". Political reaction all along the line is a characteristic feature of imperialism. Corruption, bribery on a huge scale and all kinds of fraud. Fifthly, the exploitation of oppressed nations—which is inseparably connected with annexations—and especially the exploitation of colonies by a handful of "Great" Powers, increasingly transforms the "civilised" world into a parasite on the body of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations. The Roman proletariat lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletariat. Marx specially stressed this profound observation of Sismondi. [Marx, Preface to the second edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*] Imperialism somewhat changes the situation. A privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations.

It is clear why imperialism is moribund capitalism, capitalism in transition to socialism: monopoly, which grows out of capitalism, is already dying capitalism, the beginning of its transition to socialism. The tremendous socialisation of labour by imperialism (what its apologists—the bourgeois economists—call "interlocking") produces the same result.

Advancing this definition of imperialism brings us into complete contradiction to K. Kautsky, who refuses to regard imperialism as a "phase of capitalism" and defines it as a policy "preferred" by finance capital, a tendency of "industrial" countries to annex "agrarian" countries. ["Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to subjugate and annex ever larger agrarian territories irrespective of the nations that inhabit them"] Kautsky's definition is thoroughly false from the theoretical standpoint. What distinguishes imperialism is the

rule not of industrial capital, but of finance capital, the striving to annex not agrarian countries, particularly, but every kind of country. Kautsky divorces imperialist politics from imperialist economics, he divorces monopoly in politics from monopoly in economics in order to pave the way for his vulgar bourgeois reformism, such as “disarmament”, “ultraimperialism” and similar nonsense. The whole purpose and significance of this theoretical falsity is to obscure the most profound contradictions of imperialism and thus justify the theory of “unity” with the apologists of imperialism, the outright social-chauvinists and opportunists.

We have dealt at sufficient length with Kautsky’s break with Marxism on this point in *Sotsial-Demokrat* and *Kommunist*. [Central Organ of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party] Our Russian Kautskyites, the supporters of the Organising Committee, headed by Axelrod and Spectator, including even Martov, and to a large degree Trotsky, preferred to maintain a discreet silence on the question of Kautskyism as a trend. They did not dare defend Kautsky’s war-time writings, confining themselves simply to praising Kautsky (Axelrod in his German pamphlet, which the Organising Committee has promised to publish in Russian) or to quoting Kautsky’s private letters (Spectator), in which he says he belongs to the opposition and jesuitically tries to nullify his chauvinist declarations.

It should be noted that Kautsky’s “conception” of imperialism—which is tantamount to embellishing imperialism—is a retrogression not only compared with Hilferding’s *Finance Capital* (no matter how assiduously Hilferding now defends Kautsky and “unity” with the social-chauvinists!) but also compared with the social-liberal J. A. Hobson. This English economist, who in no way claims to be a Marxist, defines imperialism, and reveals its contradictions, much more profoundly in a book published in 1902 [J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism*]. This is what Hobson (in whose book may be found nearly all Kautsky’s pacifist and “conciliatory” banalities) wrote on the highly important question of the parasitic nature of imperialism:

Two sets of circumstances, in Hobson’s opinion, weakened the power of the old

empires: (1) “economic parasitism”, and (2) formation of armies from dependent peoples. “There is first the habit of economic parasitism, by which the ruling state has used its provinces, colonies, and dependencies in order to enrich its ruling class and to bribe its lower classes into acquiescence.” Concerning the second circumstance, Hobson writes:

“One of the strangest symptoms of the blindness of imperialism [this song about the “blindness” of imperialists comes more appropriately from the social-liberal Hobson than from the “Marxist” Kautsky] is the reckless indifference with which Great Britain, France, and other imperial nations are embarking on this perilous dependence. Great Britain has gone farthest. Most of the fighting by which we have won our Indian Empire has been done by natives; in India, as more recently in Egypt, great standing armies are placed under British commanders; almost all the fighting associated with our African dominions, except in the southern part, has been done for us by natives.”

The prospect of partitioning China elicited from Hobson the following economic appraisal: “The greater part of Western Europe might then assume the appearance and character already exhibited by tracts of country in the South of England, in the Riviera, and in the tourist-ridden or residential parts of Italy and Switzerland, little clusters of wealthy aristocrats drawing dividends and pensions from the Far East, with a somewhat larger group of professional retainers and tradesmen and a larger body of personal servants and workers in the transport trade and in the final stages of production of the more perishable goods: all the main arterial industries would have disappeared, the staple foods and semi-manufactures flowing in as tribute from Asia and Africa . . . We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western states, a European federation of Great Powers which, so far from forwarding the cause of world civilisation, might introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal

or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy. Let those who would scout such a theory [he should have said: prospect] as undeserving of consideration examine the economic and social condition of districts in Southern England today which are already reduced to this condition, and reflect upon the vast extension of such a system which might be rendered feasible by the subjection of China to the economic control of similar groups of financiers, investors [rentiers] and political and business officials, draining the greatest potential reservoir of profit the world has ever known, in order to consume it in Europe. The situation is far too complex, the play of world forces far too incalculable, to render this or any other single interpretation of the future very probable; but the influences which govern the imperialism of Western Europe today are moving in this direction, and, unless counteracted or diverted, make towards such a consummation.”

Hobson, the social-liberal, fails to see that this “counteraction” can be offered only by the revolutionary proletariat and only in the form of a social revolution. But then he is a social-liberal! Nevertheless, as early as 1902 he had an excellent insight into the meaning and significance of a “United States of Europe” (be it said for the benefit of Trotsky the Kautskyite!) and of all that is now being glossed over by the hypocritical Kautskyites of various countries, namely, that the opportunists (social-chauvinists) are working hand in glove with the imperialist bourgeoisie precisely towards creating an imperialist Europe on the backs of Asia and Africa, and that objectively the opportunists are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of a certain strata of the working class who have been bribed out of imperialist superprofits and converted to watchdogs of capitalism and corruptors of the labour movement.

Both in articles and in the resolutions of our Party, we have repeatedly pointed to this most profound connection, the economic connection, between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the opportunism which has triumphed (for long?) in the labour movement. And from this, incidentally, we concluded that a split with the social-chauvinists was inevitable. Our Kautskyites preferred to evade the question! Martov, for instance, uttered in his

lectures a sophistry which in the *Bulletin of the Organising Committee, Secretariat Abroad* (No. 4, April 10, 1916) is expressed as follows:

“The cause of revolutionary Social-Democracy would be in a sad, indeed hopeless, plight if those groups of workers who in mental development approach most closely to the ‘intelligentsia’ and who are the most highly skilled fatally drifted away from it towards opportunism .”

By means of the silly word “fatally” and a certain sleight-of-hand, the fact is evaded that certain groups of workers have already drifted away to opportunism and to the imperialist bourgeoisie! And that is the very fact the sophists of the O.C. want to evade! They confine themselves to the “official optimism” the Kautskyite Hilferding and many others now flaunt: objective conditions guarantee the unity of the proletariat and the victory of the revolutionary trend! We, forsooth, are “optimists” with regard to the proletariat!

But in reality all these Kautskyites—Hilferding, the O.C. supporters, Martov and Co.—are optimists with regard to opportunism. That is the whole point!

The proletariat is the child of capitalism—of world capitalism, and not only of European capitalism, or of imperialist capitalism. On a world scale, fifty years sooner or fifty years later—measured on a world scale, this is a minor point—the “proletariat” of course “will be” united, and revolutionary Social-Democracy will “inevitably” be victorious within it. But that is not the point, Messrs. Kautskyites. The point is that at the present time, in the imperialist countries of Europe, you are fawning on the opportunists, who are alien to the proletariat as a class, who are the servants, the agents of the bourgeoisie and the vehicles of its influence, and unless the labour movement rids itself of them, it will remain a bourgeois labour movement. By advocating “unity” with the opportunists, with the Legiens and Davids, the Plekhanovs, the Chkhenskis and Potresovs, etc., you are, objectively, defending the enslavement of the workers by the imperialist bourgeoisie with the aid of its best agents in the labour movement. The victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy on a world scale is ab-

solutely inevitable, only it is moving and will move, is proceeding and will proceed, against you, it will be a victory over you.

These two trends, one might even say two parties, in the present-day labour movement, which in 1914–16 so obviously parted ways all over the world, weretraced by Engels and Marx in England throughout the course of decades, roughly from 1858 to 1892.

Neither Marx nor Engels lived to see the imperialist epoch of world capitalism, which began not earlier than 1898–1900. But it has been a peculiar feature of England that even in the middle of the nineteenth century she already revealed at least two major distinguishing features of imperialism: (1) vast colonies, and (2) monopoly profit (due to her monopoly position in the world market). In both respects England at that time was an exception among capitalist countries, and Engels and Marx, analysing this exception, quite clearly and definitely indicated its connection with the (temporary) victory of opportunism in the English labour movement.

In a letter to Marx, dated October 7, 1858, Engels wrote: “The English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat alongside the bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable.” In a letter to Sorge, dated September 21, 1872, Engels informs him that Hales kicked up a big row in the Federal Council of the International and secured a vote of censure on Marx for saying that “the English labour leaders had sold themselves”. Marx wrote to Sorge on August 4, 1874: “As to the urban workers here [in England], it is a pity that the whole pack of leaders did not get into Parliament. This would be the surest way of getting rid of the whole lot.” In a letter to Marx, dated August 11, 1881, Engels speaks about “those very worst English trade unions which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by, the bourgeoisie.” In a letter to Kautsky, dated September 12, 1882, Engels wrote: “You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they

think about politics in general. There is no workers’ party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England’s monopoly of the world market and the colonies.”

On December 7, 1889, Engels wrote to Sorge: “The most repulsive thing here [in England] is the bourgeois ‘respectability’, which has grown deep into the bones of the workers . Even Tom Mann, whom I regard as the best of the lot, is fond of mentioning that he will be lunching with the Lord Mayor. If one compares this with the French, one realises, what a revolution is good for, after all.” In a letter, dated April 19, 1890: “But under the surface the movement [of the working class in England] is going on, is embracing ever wider sections and mostly just among the hitherto stagnant lowest strata. The day is no longer far off when this mass will suddenly find itself, when it will dawn upon it that it itself is this colossal mass in motion.” On March 4, 1891: “The failure of the collapsed Dockers’ Union; the ‘old’ conservative trade unions, rich and therefore cowardly, remain lone on the field.” September 14, 1891: at the Newcastle Trade Union Congress the old unionists, opponents of the eight-hour day, were defeated “and the bourgeois papers recognise the defeat of the bourgeois labour party” (Engels’s italics throughout) .

That these ideas, which were repeated by Engels over the course of decades, were so expressed by him publicly, in the press, is proved by his preface to the second edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 1892. Here he speaks of an “aristocracy among the working class”, of a “privileged minority of the workers”, in contradistinction to the “great mass of working people”. “A small, privileged, protected minority” of the working class alone was “permanently benefited” by the privileged position of England in 1848–68, whereas “the great bulk of them experienced at best but a temporary improvement” . “With the break-down of that [England’s industrial] monopoly, the English working class will lose that privileged position” . The members of the “new” unions, the unions of the unskilled workers, “had this immense advantage, that their minds were virgin soil, entirely free from the inherited ‘respectable’ bourgeois prejudices which hampered the brains of

the better situated ‘old unionists’” . . . “The so-called workers’ representatives” in England are people “who are forgiven their being members of the working class because they themselves would like to drown their quality of being workers in the ocean of their liberalism”

We have deliberately quoted the direct statements of Marx and Engels at rather great length in order that the reader may study them as a whole. And they should be studied, they are worth carefully pondering over. For they are the pivot of the tactics in the labour movement that are dictated by the objective conditions of the imperialist era.

Here, too, Kautsky has tried to “befog the issue” and substitute for Marxism sentimental conciliation with the opportunists. Arguing against the avowed and naive social-imperialists (men like Lensch) who justify Germany’s participation in the war as a means of destroying England’s monopoly, Kautsky “corrects” this obvious falsehood by another equally obvious falsehood. Instead of a cynical falsehood he employs a suave falsehood! The industrial monopoly of England, he says, has long ago been broken, has long ago been destroyed, and there is nothing left to destroy.

Why is this argument false?

Because, firstly, it overlooks England’s colonial monopoly. Yet Engels, as we have seen, pointed to this very clearly as early as 1882, thirty-four years ago! Although England’s industrial monopoly may have been destroyed, her colonial monopoly not only remains, but has become extremely accentuated, for the whole world is already divided up! By means of this suave lie Kautsky smuggles in the bourgeois-pacifist and opportunist-philistine idea that “there is nothing to fight about”. On the contrary, not only have the capitalists something to fight about now, but they cannot help fighting if they want to preserve capitalism, for without a forcible redivision of colonies the new imperialist countries cannot obtain the privileges enjoyed by the older (and weaker) imperialist powers.

Secondly, why does England’s monopoly explain the (temporary) victory of opportunism in England? Because monopoly yields superprofits, i.e., a surplus of

profits over and above the capitalist profits that are normal and customary all over the world. The capitalists can devote a part (and not a small one, at that!) of these superprofits to bribe their own workers, to create something like an alliance (recall the celebrated “alliances” described by the Webbs of English trade unions and employers) between the workers of the given nation and their capitalists against the other countries. England’s industrial monopoly was already destroyed by the end of the nineteenth century. That is beyond dispute. But how did this destruction take place? Did all monopoly disappear?

If that were so, Kautsky’s “theory” of conciliation (with the opportunists) would to a certain extent be justified. But it is not so, and that is just the point. Imperialism is monopoly capitalism. Every cartel, trust, syndicate, every giant bank is a monopoly. Superprofits have not disappeared; they still remain. The exploitation of all other countries by one privileged, financially wealthy country remains and has become more intense. A handful of wealthy countries—there are only four of them, if we mean independent, really gigantic, “modern” wealth: England, France, the United States and Germany—have developed monopoly to vast proportions, they obtain superprofits running into hundreds, if not thousands, of millions, they “ride on the backs” of hundreds and hundreds of millions of people in other countries and fight among themselves for the division of the particularly rich, particularly fat and particularly easy spoils.

This, in fact, is the economic and political essence of imperialism, the profound contradictions of which Kautsky glosses over instead of exposing.

The bourgeoisie of an imperialist “Great” Power can economically bribe the upper strata of “its” workers by spending on this a hundred million or so francs a year, for its superprofits most likely amount to about a thousand million. And how this little sop is divided among the labour ministers, “labour representatives” (remember Engels’s splendid analysis of the term), labour members of War Industries Committees [War Industries Committees were set up in Russia in May 1915 by the big imperialist bourgeoisie for aiding tsarism in conducting the war], labour officials,

workers belonging to the narrow craft unions, office employees, etc., etc., is a secondary question.

Between 1848 and 1868, and to a certain extent even later, only England enjoyed a monopoly: that is why opportunism could prevail there for decades. No other countries possessed either very rich colonies or an industrial monopoly.

The last third of the nineteenth century saw the transition to the new, imperialist era. Finance capital not of one, but of several, though very few, Great Powers enjoys a monopoly. (In Japan and Russia the monopoly of military power, vast territories, or special facilities for robbing minority nationalities, China, etc., partly supplements, partly takes the place of, the monopoly of modern, up-to-date finance capital.) This difference explains why England’s monopoly position could remain unchallenged for decades. The monopoly of modern finance capital is being frantically challenged; the era of imperialist wars has begun. It was possible in those days to bribe and corrupt the working class of one country for decades. This is now improbable, if not impossible. But on the other hand, every imperialist “Great” Power can and does bribe smaller strata (than in England in 1848–68) of the “labour aristocracy”. Formerly a “bourgeois labour party”, to use Engels’s remarkably profound expression, could arise only in one country, because it alone enjoyed a monopoly, but, on the other hand, it could exist for a long time. Now a “bourgeois labour party” is inevitable and typical in all imperialist countries; but in view of the desperate struggle they are waging for the division of spoils it is improbable that such a party can prevail for long in a number of countries. For the trusts, the financial oligarchy, high prices, etc., while enabling the bribery of a handful in the top layers, are increasingly oppressing, crushing, ruining and torturing the mass of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat.

On the one hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to convert a handful of very rich and privileged nations into “eternal” parasites on the body of the rest of mankind, to “rest on the laurels” of the exploitation of Negroes, Indians, etc., keeping them in subjection with the aid of the excellent weapons of extermination provided by

modern militarism. On the other hand, there is the tendency of the masses, who are more oppressed than before and who bear the whole brunt of imperialist wars, to cast off this yoke and to overthrow the bourgeoisie. It is in the struggle between these two tendencies that the history of the labour movement will now inevitably develop. For the first tendency is not accidental; it is "substantiated" economically. In all countries the bourgeoisie has already begotten, fostered and secured for itself "bourgeois labour parties" of social-chauvinists. The difference between a definitely formed party, like Bissolati's in Italy, for example, which is fully social-imperialist, and, say, the semi-formed near-party of the Potresovs, Gvozdyovs, Bulkins, Chkhaidzes, Skobelevs and Co., is an immaterial difference. The important thing is that, economically, the desertion of a stratum of the labour aristocracy to the bourgeoisie has matured and become an accomplished fact; and this economic fact, this shift in class relations, will find political form, in one shape or another, without any particular "difficulty".

On the economic basis referred to above, the political institutions of modern capitalism—press, parliament associations, congresses etc.—have created political privileges and sops for the respectful, meek, reformist and patriotic office employees and workers, corresponding to the economic privileges and sops. Lucrative and soft jobs in the government or on the war industries committees, in parliament and on diverse committees, on the editorial staffs of "respectable", legally published newspapers or on the management councils of no less respectable and "bourgeois law-abiding" trade unions—this is the bait by which the imperialist bourgeoisie attracts and rewards the representatives and supporters of the "bourgeois labour parties".

The mechanics of political democracy works in the same direction. Nothing in our times can be done without elections; nothing can be done without the masses. And in this era of printing and parliamentarism it is impossible to gain the following of the masses without a widely ramified, systematically managed, well-equipped system of flattery, lies, fraud, juggling with fashionable and popular catchwords, and promising all manner of reforms and blessings to the workers right and left—as long as they renounce

the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of bourgeoisie. I would call this system Lloyd-Georgism, after the English Minister Lloyd George, one of the foremost and most dexterous representatives of this system in the classic land of the "bourgeois labour party". A first-class bourgeois manipulator, an astute politician, a popular orator who will deliver any speeches you like even r-r-revolutionary ones, to a labour audience, and a man who is capable of obtaining sizable sops for docile workers in the shape of social reforms (insurance, etc.), Lloyd George serves the bourgeoisie splendidly, and serves it precisely among the workers, brings its influence precisely to the proletariat, to where the bourgeoisie needs it most and where it finds it most difficult to subject the masses morally.

And is there such a great difference between Lloyd George and the Scheidemanns, Legiens, Hendersons and Hyndmans, Plekhanovs, Renaudels and Co.? Of the latter, it may be objected, some will return to the revolutionary socialism of Marx. This is possible, but it is an insignificant difference in degree, if the question is regarded from its political, i.e., its mass aspect. Certain individuals among the present social-chauvinist leaders may return to the proletariat. But the social-chauvinist or (what is the same thing) opportunist trend can neither disappear nor "return" to the revolutionary proletariat. Wherever Marxism is popular among the workers, this political trend, this "bourgeois labour party", will swear by the name of Marx. It cannot be prohibited from doing this, just as a trading firm cannot be prohibited from using any particular label, sign or advertisement. It has always been the case in history that after the death of revolutionary leaders who were popular among the oppressed classes, their enemies have attempted to appropriate their names so as to deceive the oppressed classes.

The fact that is that "bourgeois labour parties," as a political phenomenon, have already been formed in all the foremost capitalist countries, and that unless determined and relentless struggle is waged all along the line against these parties—or groups, trends, etc., it is all the same—there can be no question of a struggle against imperialism, or of Marxism, or of a socialist labour movement. The Chkhaidze faction,[the Menshevik

group in the Fourth Duma led by N. S. Chkhaidze. Officially followed a Centrist policy in the First World War, but factually supported the Russian social-chauvinists] Nashe Dyelo and Golos Truda[Menshevik publications] in Russia, and the O.C. supporters abroad are nothing but varieties of one such party. There is not the slightest reason for thinking that these parties will disappear before the social revolution. On the contrary, the nearer the revolution approaches, the more strongly it flares up and the more sudden and violent the transitions and leaps in its progress, the greater will be the part the struggle of the revolutionary mass stream against the opportunist petty-bourgeois stream will play in the labour movement. Kautskyism is not an independent trend, because it has no roots either in the masses or in the privileged stratum which has deserted to the bourgeoisie. But the danger of Kautskyism lies in the fact that, utilising the ideology of the past, it endeavours to reconcile the proletariat with the "bourgeois labour party", to preserve the unity of the proletariat with that party and thereby enhance the latter's prestige. The masses no longer follow the avowed social-chauvinists: Lloyd George has been hissed down at workers' meetings in England; Hyndman has left the party; the Renaudels and Scheidemanns, the Potresovs and Gvozdyovs are protected by the police. The Kautskyites' masked defence of the social-chauvinists is much more dangerous.

One of the most common sophistries of Kautskyism is its reference to the "masses". We do not want, they say, to break away from the masses and mass organisations! But just think how Engels put the question. In the nineteenth century the "mass organisations" of the English trade unions were on the side of the bourgeois labour party. Marx and Engels did not reconcile themselves to it on this ground; they exposed it. They did not forget, firstly, that the trade union organisations directly embraced a minority of the proletariat. In England then, as in Germany now, not more than one-fifth of the proletariat was organised. No one can seriously think it possible to organise the majority of the proletariat under capitalism. Secondly—and this is the main point—it is not so much a question of the size of an organisation, as of the real, objective significance of its

(LENIN, continued from last page)

policy: does its policy represent the masses, does it serve them, i.e., does it aim at their liberation from capitalism, or does it represent the interests of the minority, the minority's reconciliation with capitalism? The latter was true of England in the nineteenth century, and it is true of Germany, etc., now.

Engels draws a distinction between the "bourgeois labour party" of the old trade unions—the privileged minority—and the "lowest mass", the real majority, and appeals to the latter, who are not infected by "bourgeois respectability". This is the essence of Marxist tactics!

Neither we nor anyone else can calculate precisely what portion of the proletariat is following and will follow the social-chauvinists and opportunists. This will be revealed only by the struggle, it will be definitely decided only by the socialist revolution. But we know for certain that the "defenders of the fatherland" in the imperialist war represent only a minority. And it is therefore our duty, if we wish to remain socialists to go down lower and deeper, to the real masses; this is the whole meaning and the whole purport of the struggle against opportunism. By exposing the fact that the opportunists and social-chauvinists are in reality betraying and selling the interests of the masses, that they are defending the temporary privileges of a minority of the workers, that they are the vehicles of bourgeois ideas and influences, that they are really allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we teach the masses to appreciate their true political interests, to fight for socialism and for the revolution through all the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices.

The only Marxist line in the world labour movement is to explain to the masses the inevitability and necessity of breaking with opportunism, to educate them for revolution by waging a relentless struggle against opportunism, to utilise the experience of the war to expose, not conceal, the utter vileness of national-liberal labour politics.



Telling the Truth may be More Radical than Smashing Windows

by MIM-Prisons

Recently comrades at Anti-Imperialism.com have brought up the question of how First Worldism sets back the revolutionary movement within the oppressor nation itself. [Nikolai Bown, "Problems with First Worldism"] When anti-imperialists begin banging their heads against walls of cops, it seems a good time to consider this question.

Over the Amerikan KKKolumbus Day weekend, a series of anti-colonial and anti-capitalist demonstrations were organized on the west coast. Judging by the turnout and support, there is not a big anti-colonial movement in the United States. This is no surprise, for it is the most powerful imperialist country in the world.

One anti-colonial march in San Francisco was dwarfed by the crowds of consumers, shopping on a Sunday afternoon. The organizers showed little interest in reaching out to the shoppers, and more in smashing symbols of wealth and exploitation. An hour pre-march rally seemed hardly noticed by the shopping masses. And the march itself lasted only a few blocks before violent clashes with police left 22 people arrested. A significant loss from a crowd of maybe 150 who had just begun to unveil its message.

The lack of interest in reaching out to the shoppers may reflect a correct analysis among the protestors that those people had no interest in or alliance with the message of their march. But if so this line was not put out publicly in literature or banners. We will argue here that doing so would have done more to promote divisions among the pro-imperialist camp, whereas the tactics of the day instead have helped consolidate those forces in recent years.

Last fall, thousands and thousands of Americans, primarily youth, rallied to the call to Occupy Wall Street, which evolved into Occupy Everywhere — a rather frightening slogan for the youth of the number one imperial power to take up. More progressive, and often more experienced, poles in the movement steered things in an anti-occupa-

tion/anti-colonial direction. But somehow this wasn't as appealing to the Amerikan youth as rallying for more jobs, free schooling and better interest rates on loans. If we eliminate the flow of wealth from the neo-colonies, the people in this country will lose their high paying jobs and easy lines of credit.

Despite this self-evident truth, there is still not a strong voice drawing a clear line between those who benefit from imperialism and those who suffer from it.

In practice we see lines being drawn, as the more radical messages seem to accompany some tactics that trigger anger from the Amerikan "middle class." There continues to be backlash in some instances of calling those who vandalize property "terrorists" while telling them to target bank windows rather than their nice neighborhood. We have little interest in the petty bourgeois debate over what is okay to smash, but this whole debate serves as a convenient excuse for the Amerikan left to ally with the imperialist state. What needs to be challenged is the idea that the Amerikan "middle class" somehow deserves more than everyone else in the world and therefore is not the enemy like those evil bankers.

Interestingly, the bourgeoisie gets away with attacking those who act against the interests of the "middle class" as "outside agitators" and "spoiled white kids." This name calling serves as a distraction from the issues being demonstrated around. Of course there will be anti-colonial struggle in white faces in a white country. To argue otherwise is to breed confusion.

While we believe there is more anti-imperialist potential here in the United States than those who showed up this weekend, particularly among the internal semi-colonies who were sparsely represented at these events, the dominant ideology of this country is pro-middle class, which is pro-imperialism. Even the most radical Black organizations out here will say that "white people are exploited too." Yet the truth is the com-

plete opposite: Black people aren't exploited either in this country. The sooner we all start being accountable for what we have, the sooner we can take a realistic approach to what we can do about it.

We need a strong line that says, yes, the petty bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy in this country are the enemy of the world's people. Just as MIM has always attacked identity politics, this does not mean that petty bourgeois people cannot be anti-imperialists. We welcome and honor those Americans who choose to stand with the exploited peoples of the Third World. But let's make it clear that doing so requires opposing your own class interests.

After we draw that line, maybe we can think of ways to actually attack the interests of the exploiter classes, rather than just attack their symbols. Boots Riley, Oakland rapper and activist, has cri-

ticized the tactics of vandalism for alienating the majority in the city. There is some truth in what he wrote in that we should not be helping the petty bourgeoisie unite with the imperialist state in opposition to anti-colonial voices, at least not without making significant gains somewhere else. Instead, we should be driving wedges between the various class alliances of our enemies, creating cracks in the system that make a little more room for the oppressed to move and organize. And perhaps ironically, pointing out the unity of the material interests of almost everyone in this country with imperialism can contribute to creating these cracks among those who have subjective moral objections to living off the suffering of others.

We do not believe that moralizing will "wake up" the American people and end this system of exploitation. We recognize there is no winning the majority in this country. So it is a question of re-

cruiting the minority that care or suffer greatly under this system and promoting disunity among the rest. Finding effective tactics for either is our challenge.

Before we split the anti-imperialist camp over what we should do after the revolution (where we differ with the anarchist majority at this weekend's events), let's split with those who will organize and fight for the deepening exploitation of the Third World to feed the over-consumptive, privileged lifestyles in the imperialist countries. And let us be honest with our fellow exploiters, breaking the illusions of an alliance between First World social democracy and the interests of the exploited and oppressed. The one cannot exist without the other. The clearer we are about that, the more Americans are forced to make the choice between committing daily violence through their privilege and becoming a virus within the matrix.

The Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons, or MIM-Prisons, is an independent Maoist cell founded in 2007 and dedicated to fighting imperialism and the criminal injustice system.
[go visit them at prisoncensorship.info](http://prisoncensorship.info)

Commodification and Democratization of Bourgeois Privilege vis-a-vis the Expansion of Personal Services under Imperialism

Marx defined productive labor as that which produces surplus value. Under these conditions, laborers whose work does not produce surplus value for a capitalist are not exploited in any technical sense.

Not so much Marx's error, but that of those who claim his legacy, is to conflate the realization of value with the production of value. Whereas Marx was analyzing conditions of 'classical capitalism' in which the two categories often overlapped (and hence the error was easy to make), under imperialism the dislocation of production of surplus through wage labor and the realization of surplus as profit is increasingly accentuated. Thus, it becomes imperative to include this distinction in any analysis of modern political economy.

In order to demonstrate this distinction between productive and unproductive labor as it relates to the production and

realization of value (and to provide a historical materialist sketch of the commodification and democratization of bourgeois privilege), imagine the following situations:

1. Imagine a situation in which a capitalist hires a maid and pays her a wage directly. Because surplus is not being accumulated by a third-party capitalist through the maid's labor, Marx would describe this situation as one in which the maid, even in the case in which she is paid a wage consistent with the value of labor power and that typical of the proletariat at large, is performing unproductive labor and is not exploited for surplus.

But, the above analysis misses another important factor. The money with which the capitalist pays the maid has to come from somewhere. In this case, the maid's wage is drawn from the surplus value the capitalist has realized from his exploitation of workers engaged in

productive activity. The wages which the capitalist pays the maid do not grow his capital, but he nonetheless pays her because (being as he is a capitalist) he can afford the service.

2. Imagine a situation in which a capitalist hires a maid through an agency. The capitalist pays the agency a fee, a portion of which supplies the wage of the maid and another portion which is realized as surplus by the owners and managers of the agency.

Under this situation, Marx would have considered the maid's labor both productive and exploited because her labor realizes surplus for the owner of the agency. However, Marx missed the mark somewhat.

The above situation still implies that the money the capitalist pays to secure the service of the maid (i.e., that paid by the capitalist to the agency) was produced and accumulated through the

exploitation of productive labor by the capitalist. All that has changed is that an intermediary, i.e. an agency and its owners, have stepped in to secure for themselves a portion of this surplus. This difference between the expanded realization of value in relation to its production (i.e., between situation I and 2), is reflected in the commodification of services associated with bourgeois privilege.

3. Imagine a situation in which some workers (associated with and herein formulated as the 'middle class'), due to advantages via various forms of oppression, receive incomes which are above both the value of labor power (the cost of reproducing the class of productive laborers) and labor (the average price at which the product of labor is exchanged within the world-economy). In this situation, which Marx never considered, these workers receive a portion of surplus within their incomes which enables a fairly comfortable existence relative to the global proletariat at large.

Imagine that a middle class family uses a portion of their income to hire a family friend as a maid and pays her a wage directly. In this situation (as in situation I), it is safe to say that the maid produces no surplus value and hence is not exploited. But, the questions still arises: from where comes the money which constitutes her wage?

In this case, the middle class family, while not directly engaged in the exploitation of productive labor (such as a capitalist is), is invested with enough surplus in their own income to expend a portion of it towards hiring the unproductive labor of a maid. This reflects the democratization of bourgeois privilege to include the 'middle classes.' Whereas before (in situation I and 2) the capitalist, which was engaged directly in the exploitation of labor, was able to devote a portion of his exploited wealth towards purchasing the unproductive labor of a maid, now, because their wages also include a portion of surplus generated out of the productive labor of others, the 'middle class' family is able to do the same.

4. Finally, imagine a situation in which a 'middle class' family under similar conditions hires a maid through an

agency. Again, surplus included in the middle class family's income enables them to spend a portion on the services of a maid. However, in this case the money is supplied to an agency, which takes a cut of surplus above what is paid to the maid itself. As in example 2, it may appear that the maid is engaged in productive labor because her work secures for her employing agency a portion of surplus. Again however, we must consider the distinction between the production of value and its realization.

In the case that the middle class family's income includes a portion of surplus which is used to pay the agency for the services of the maid, this is still an occurrence of realization of surplus, not its production. The maid's services, which are hardly necessary for the literal reproduction of the middle class family, are in no manner accessible to the proletariat at large. Instead, the maid's services are an expression of the commodification and democratization of bourgeois privilege within the context of imperialism.

Expansion of bourgeois privilege in history

The above situations, presented rigidly to highlight the distinctions and similarities between classically-described unproductive labor and that which serves to realize surplus, traces the historical expansion of bourgeois privilege under imperialism. The service of a maid, once the exclusive privilege of the ruling classes, is now accessible to the propertyless-petty bourgeois. The propertyless petty bourgeoisie owes its existence to imperialism. They receive income which includes both the full value of their own labor and the surplus labor of others. The facilitation of such bourgeois privilege for this class has been expanded as a distinct parasitic sector of the capitalist-imperialist world-economy.

Moreover, it is not simply an amorphous middle class which is consigned to the conceptual and functional distinction of propertyless-petty bourgeois. In the above situational sketch, the maid may well belong to this category as well. Her wage, after all, is sourced from the capitalist's exploitation

of others in situation I and II and from the surplus invested in the middle class family's income in situation III and IV. The only question left to ask is whether her wage is the above or below value of labor.

This expansion of bourgeois privilege under capitalist-imperialism is not only represented by the services of maids. Paying someone else for a haircut, paying someone else to prepare one's meal, paying for a massage, giving someone a dollar for holding a door or handing you a towel, and having someone else drive you places were all original domains of the bourgeoisie and other ruling classes. All of these services are now available to the propertyless petty-bourgeoisie. These services, not normally available to the proletariat at large, do not produce value. Rather, under conditions of monopoly capitalism in which wealth is exploited from the Third World and realized in the First, such services are a means of value realization by individual enterprises in imperialist countries.

Consider for example a yard of grass. Yards have not always been an eternal fact of life for everyone but they are prevalent throughout the United States and other First World countries. Their original purpose being aesthetic and to provide a comfortable surface on which to carry out leisure, they too were originally the domain of the classical bourgeoisie. In the 20th century and especially in the U.S. yards became a regular characteristic of the propertyless petty-bourgeoisie. In this latter case, the yards main purpose is not to reproduce labor (such that might be accomplished by a garden in place of the yard) but to demonstrate status. Moreover, a wide range of products and services catering to this middle class privilege of grass yards have been created with the aim of realizing value. The increasing devotion of labor and capital toward fulfilling frivolous privileges (such as yards, etc) occurs at the expense of the general well being of the proletariat (i.e., private landscaping does little advance the satisfaction of general wants) and is an indicator of the growing irrationality associated with monopoly capitalism (imperialism) and the massive propertyless petty-bourgeoisie it spawns.

Expanded bourgeois privilege v. the socialization of use values

There is a tendency, especially among First Worldists, to think of socialism as simply a further democratic expansion of bourgeois privilege to a broader middle class. According to this line's implication, everyone around the world should be able to live even better than a middle-class Amerikan and everyone should have even greater access to bourgeois privilege. Not only is this conception of socialism impossible in ecological terms (i.e., if everyone on the planet consumed at the level Americans do now, humanity would need over four Earth's worth of resources), but it is highly utopian and opportunistic.

Socialism is both democratic control over production and the increasing egalitarian expansion of use-values. In contradistinction to modern bourgeois privilege in consumption (which occurs at the expense and exclusion of the proletariat at large and is a hallmark of the growing irrationality of capitalist-imperialism) the socialization of use-values aims to efficiently raise the standard of living of the proletariat at large while altering the very nature of production and distribution. Rather

than the petty-bourgeoisie and other net-exploiter classes having access to the individual consumption of things that are presently bourgeois privileges, the socialization of use-values is part of the economic revolution away from a capitalist society to a communist one. Instead of the private consumption and use of cars and passenger vehicles, there would be an expansion of infrastructure associated with public and alternative transportation as well as changes in patterns of commuting. Meals, rather than prepared through unpaid labor or purchased as a commodity, would be prepared and distributed socially in a rational and egalitarian manner. Labor and resources once dedicated to maintaining plush yards would be spent in part on restoring much of the damage caused under capitalism to biospheres and the Earth's natural metabolic processes.

Conclusion

Imperialism has led to the democratization and commodification of bourgeois privilege and to the creation of a parasitic economic sector geared towards the facilitation of such privilege. Such bourgeois privilege is largely inaccessible to the proletariat at

large. Instead, a First World propertyless petty-bourgeoisie whose wages are invested with surplus, through partaking in such privilege in commodity form, recirculates this surplus as realized profit for largely First World firms. Hence not only is this First World propertyless petty-bourgeoisie the social base of First Worldism and modern social chauvinism, it also plays a fundamental component in the concentration of capital within imperialist countries.

First Worldism, which is ignorant or evasive on the issue of class and class struggle under imperialism, and Third Worldism, which opposes such opportunism and social-chauvinism, offer two very different visions of socialism. First Worldism is a reformist program which merely represents an idealized further expansion of bourgeois privilege whilst ignoring the manner in which this necessarily comes at the expense of the proletariat at large. Third Worldism promotes a revolution in the relations and means of production and distribution and aims for an expansion of use-value such that radically transforms the everyday lives of humanity at large. ★ ★ ★



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What is Maoism-Third Worldism

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:

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 bore from wider experiences of class struggle, and it is often brought to the proletariat masses by its most conscious elements or from without.

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.

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

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.

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 be 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, Maoist-Third Worldism opposes all economism on behalf of workers in imperialist countries.

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.

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.

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.



Ecological congruence!

As a paradigmatic shift, the struggle for socialism and communism must take a totally different approach to humanity's relationship the 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.

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 won't fall on it's 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.

