

1919

Issue No 4 — November 2024

ABOUT US

1919 is a joint political journal between the two North American affiliates of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (ICT), Klasbatalo and Internationalist Workers' Group. We fight toward the historic task of the working class, communism. Communism is the organization of society directly focused on the fulfillment of need in which the antagonism between the individual and collective is abolished. It is a world which knows no classes, property, state, or bureaucracy. In short, communism is the abolition of political society. To achieve this task, we believe the working class must fight on its own terrain to defend against the bosses' attacks, and to push forth its own interest. We are for the formation of the world communist party. We do not believe that we alone will be this party. Rather, we see ourselves participating in the real work that is necessary for its formation.

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Editorial

The last issue of 1919 came in the summer of 2022. Since then, the world has been rocked by continued crisis, and we can only begin to ponder how these events will carry innumerable consequences for our class. Since the last release, we have seen conflicts erupt that continue to point toward generalized war among the imperialist powers. Prior to the First World War, crises beset the global capitalist economy, imperialist powers coalesced into coherent blocs with shared interest in domination of the world market. Despite technological advancements in both peacetime and war, we find ourselves in the same predicament so long as the working class remains hostages of a volatile bourgeoisie with no vision for a future beyond profit.

The current world crisis is marked by consistent decline in profitability as the “leading sectors” of the global economy seek said profit from an increasingly depleted workforce living on an increasingly stressed planet. The working class is commanded to work harder while wages decline as a necessary corollary to prices for necessities climbing. The proletariat of the developing world knows this formula all too well, and now the imperialist powers are committed to bringing home this tried-and-true strategy to squeeze blood from a stone. Only a tiny minority of the bourgeoisie deny the reality of an increasingly inhospitable climate—and now that the matter is settled the ones who will be asked to sacrifice will be a surprise to no one. With all avenues exhausting, the logic of capital manifests as the logic of war.

Between the Black and Red Sea, the capitalist world continues its downward plunge into global war. The relative détente following the collapse of the Soviet Union between world imperialist blocs has ended, with Washington pinned between supporting Ukraine, and the EU by proxy, and Israel; to uphold ‘democratic values’. Simultaneously Russia continues escalating wartime production, pivoting from a free-floating currency back to the gold standard benefitting from several years’ worth of mercenary work in Africa. China is rallying behind the trade war unleashed by the US, with the con-

stant tension of a faceoff with Taiwan rousing war-hawks the world over. It’s important not to forget the constant saber-rattling of Iran, with its militias creating a situation of the tail wagging the dog as its decrepit theocracy struggles under the combined pressure of international sanctions as well as social unrest in the form of women’s protests and secessionist movements.

The situation for the proletariat is dire, as the ensemble bourgeoisie of the world habituate themselves towards warfare as the new norm. So far, most conflicts have been limited, have taken the form of proxy conflicts, or as seen in the Israel-Palestine conflict, have amounted to a slaughtering ground whilst regional powers make side bets on what political or economic victory can be garnered from the chaos. Despite the byzantine alliances, historical grievances, and competing interests of the various excesses of imperialism, all these have their common cause in the sadistic tendency of bourgeois society to turn to war to solve political and economic problems.

Russia’s foray into commodity hoarding in the form of gold is an outcome of building up a war-chest in a world where it seems impossible to compete with the capital of the West. The US, despite deep political polarization in the wake of covid, waves of strikes, and the George Floyd protests remains afloat through the guarantee its armaments provide for various client states around the world from the EU to Israel, all the while it becoming obvious that the more fronts open for the US to intervene in, the more strain its economy will be forced under and the harder the boot will step on the workers in America to make up for deficits. Simultaneously, Israel is fracturing in real time, with the momentum of the invasion of Gaza being the only thing keeping the Netanyahu cabinet intact after years of protests and corruption charges, not to mention the absurd paradox of the country’s economy being beleaguered by a housing crisis whilst actively promoting the settlement of the West Bank to aim its workers and petit-bourgeoisie at Palestinian workers and petit-bourgeoisie as the tip of the spear of its expansionism. Palestine fares no better, as the

assault led by Hamas clearly signified their desperation in the wake of a world which is closing around Palestinian nationalism in the region – Egypt and Jordan, despite having popular pro-Palestine movements, are led by governments who point their weapons at refugees and construct prison camps in the Sinai to prepare for the immediate fallout of the slaughter in Gaza. Iran meanwhile sits and twiddles its thumbs as it decides where and when its proxies in Lebanon and Yemen will force their hand into a total war in the middle east. Workers are being decimated en masse for no better cause than maintaining the fraught scaffold of bourgeois society. Insofar as workers let themselves be guided by these grand games or internalize notions such as nationalism, such a state of war will continue building until the world is consumed in a tide of ‘necessary sacrifices’.

The working class in North America, as it is across the globe, is weak. The “great resignation” of the covid pandemic which saw a notably increased turnover rate as workers moved easily between jobs in search for higher wages and better conditions was followed by many notable strikes. Both phenomena signal a rejuvenation of working class confidence and fighting strength. In 2022, both the American rail strike and the Ontario education strike saw immediate and heavy handed state intervention to defend capital on a political basis and suffocate the possibility of a reference point for the wide working class.

But despite these moments of class confidence, no struggle was able to any significant extent overcome the limitations of sectoral isolation and union domination thus leading to a series of defeats with new contracts more often than not enshrining wages below the rate of inflation. In Quebec, at the end of 2023, the francophone teaching students at UQAM struck in solidarity with Quebec teachers. But in the context of a nearly empty strike fund for the teachers and the students not producing significant demands of their own, the strike slowly fizzled out into defeat. Later when students at the anglophone universities of McGill and Concordia went on strike; slowly, disconnected, as isolated departments, the francophone students didn’t respond and thus a section of the class that had pre-

viously served as a reference point for across Quebec was defeated. Only a year prior, the passive leadership of the Front Commun, dressed in national mythology, would bury the class history of the general strikes of the 1970’s, and manage the defeat of a swath of North America’s most militant section of the working class, in terms of living memory of class defeats and concentration of strikes. The situation is bleak, and while struggles continue, revolutionaries must fight in them and reveal the barriers facing our class.

As the escalation towards war becomes the greatest threat confronting the working class, the political elements that can fight against it, that is, the forces of internationalism, remain organizationally scattered. With no present means or opportunity for an international regroupment of revolutionaries in forming the party, some efforts have been launched in order to band together militants under the banner of internationalism.

Notably, the ICT launched the No War but Class War initiative in April, 2022 for the forming of committees that unite militants of different political orientations on the strict basis of internationalism in order to intervene within the working class struggle. This initiative has provided new avenues for propagandizing within our class, with militants from South Korea, to Montreal, and to Liverpool agitating in strikes and demonstrations against imperialist war. The importance of this work, which is a central concern for the ICT, only grows as does the threat of generalized imperialist war. The political strength of internationalism, the only true working class response to imperialist war by advocating and putting into effect its defeat by class war, will be a decisive factor in the drive towards war.

Of course, the political element is not sufficient. Only the working class in its own mass struggle can defeat imperialist war. Not only can the working class impede the drive towards war through its struggle against the capitalist class, most importantly and above all in a politically class conscious fight against war- ultimately an end to war means an end to imperialism and the capitalist system. This demands a working class revolution, led by its party, that will put to rest the social contradictions propelling the world to oblivion.



Indigenous radicalism pursues Reconciliation with capital

With particular respect to the United States and Canada, we find that although indigenous people may not reflect on Marx or Marxism daily, a current of suspicion and mistrust towards Marx and his legacy runs through indigenous circles both at the level of the lettered academics and professional elites and within the milieu of activists and popular agitators. Among the intelligentsia of the indigenous world, this mistrust is expressed in critiques of Marx's apparent stagism, vulgar progressivism and Prometheanism, at times deigning to softly "engage" with his work, albeit taking great pains to always expound upon his many supposed limitations. Among popular activist circles, Marx is dismissed almost immediately out of hand as simply another white European who cannot possibly grasp indigenous subjectivity, a prisoner of the circumstances of his birth whose work can only threaten to compromise the primacy of indigenous mystic epistemology. As these sentiments are not at the fore of the discourse in indigenous circles, they have not been honed into anything resembling a singular platform and therefore may range so widely as to be contradictory, such as accusations that Marx failed to engage with indigenous thought in his work (wrong) to Marx being little more than yet another rank

plagiarist of indigenous thought reinterpreted in the cold, desacralized language of European rationality (also wrong). Yet they are there, and as long as they remain, they can only hinder the flourishing of indigenous workers, who often face a unique challenge to their consciousness as such.

It is no coincidence to us that the indigenous leaders who ardently cry "No white man Marx!" like Angelita La Escapia in Leslie Marmon Silko's 1991 novel "Almanac of the Dead" ultimately find themselves willing to make accommodations with white man Hobbes, white man Locke, white man Mill and white man Rawls – really every white man from the Enlightenment onward but Marx. Consecrated with the required public lamentations that the superior material force of the bosses must be acceded to in the name of "harm reduction," they put their stamp of approval on every thwarted struggle for the real liberation of the toiling masses of the indigenous world and help wash down the bitter pill of defeat with a facility that would make the most dedicated union leaders green with envy, time after time. And like those very union leaders, they know no horizon of possibilities more ambitious than to contest for a more agreeably managed state of decline and destitution on

bourgeois legal grounds, encoded in the depressingly meager slogan of “honor the treaties” and realized in the countless hours and material devoted to agitate for the merest improvements in the state of the very reservations built for the purpose of sidelining them and restricting their movement. These kinds of strident liberal moral appeals are the province of the powerless and reflect an apparent ignorance of victor’s justice in the annals of history – assuming, of course, that this faith in bourgeois moralism has not been contrived by the leadership to misdirect the energy of those they claim to speak for.

Naturally, to be accused of collaborating with the “colonizers” (a term of dubious contemporary significance in an era where every “colony” has since flourished into an independent nation-state, no longer reliant on Europe for development) is gravely serious, perhaps even gauche beyond what good taste would deem a legitimate accusation. But as with all things under capitalism, there are seldom grand schemes being hatched by hidden cabals exerting granular control over the smallest of all moving parts; there is only a space of allowable tactics and responses to conditions that bourgeois culture, morality and material independence permits the working class, and those who struggle within these parameters to defy the forces that undermine their dignity unwittingly devise the aforementioned mode of collaboration, cloaked in the appearance of substantive radicalism. As much as they may shock or affront the most reactionary white supremacists they encounter, indigenous symbols, spirituality, ceremonies and values pose as little challenge to the power of capital for recuperation as any other culture on earth, indigenous or otherwise – all that is sacred is profaned, all that is solid melts into air. For all their power to heal, to center, to reassure and to connect, to ascribe to these traditions the power to defeat a force of history that annihilated or captured every monarch and aristocrat in Europe bent against its victory for two bloody centuries before finally spreading across the ocean and unleashing literal apocalypse on every continent on earth is perhaps wishful thinking born out of desperation, and perhaps even a degree of pride – after these

humiliating centuries, perhaps the only reliable source of dignity is the knowledge that in defeat and subjugation, at least there is the proof that one’s culture is not capable of such inhumanity, that there is a moral center in one’s traditions that is essentially (perhaps racially) distinct from that of the “colonizer,” such as they are.

At base, indigenous cultures are certainly no less distinct from those of colonizers than they are from each other; neither the supremacist who insists on the superiority of “their culture” nor the liberal who pleads for the recognition of the indigenous plight denies this. But after centuries of life under the dictatorship of capital, few places on earth remain where the essential facts of wage labor do not dictate the terms of our existence, to varying degrees of peonage. The sheer force of this transformative power is such that even the most privileged members of the prior social order best able to dictate the terms of their new position in the world that was emerging, the European aristocracy, are all nonetheless obliged to assent to the exigencies of capital as the ordering power in our world and to socially justify their positions as mid-rank capitalists or salaried professionals, often clinging to comically dilapidated feudal estates no longer able to extract land-based rents which their incomes cannot support upkeep costs for. As unlikely as they are to inspire pity, the fact that the second in line to the throne of England and his wife must justify their existence as producers of cultural commodities in California and live modestly by the terms of their peers in that industry evinces precisely how little even the most royal pedigree counts for under capitalism relative to before. In spite of their relatively high leverage in the twilight of the feudal era, the “way of life”, as it were, of the feudal lords and monarchs was utterly untenable and long lost to time and historic forces beyond the power of its class to reverse.

As we descend the ranks of those less well-positioned to dictate their position in this new order, the turbulence of this dispossession becomes even more stark and gruesome. Those who regard capitalism as a mere outgrowth of “whiteness” and the moral degeneracy thereof might well ask themselves why millions of white Europeans fought and

bled and died centuries before the first socialists were born or wrote a single word to formally express their discontent in order to avert the coming of such a system supposedly conceived to more fully express their dominance over others, as fitful and inchoate as their comprehension of it might have been in that era. Those who did not fight directly or supported those who did often fled in desperation, hoping to escape the inhuman terror that had been kindled in their former homes by braving lethal passages to distant unknown lands simply to be freed of the misery of the new wage system. As pervasive as racism is in our lives and for all it can be seen acting behind as of now, it is hard to explain the flight from penury of this early wave of desperate landless Europeans on wretched ships teeming with illness across treacherous oceans as being driven by a desire to assert their “whiteness” at the expense of a people they barely knew anything about. The depredations of Cortez upon the Aztecs in 1524, decades before any conception of race as we would know it began to sprout in Europe, probably had more to do with the knife to his back of debtor’s prison or possible execution under Spanish bankruptcy law that awaited him if he returned to his home country empty-handed; and for those who did, like the failed Scottish colonial venture in Panama of 1704 after two years of hunger and disease, the stakes went beyond their own lives to the threat of being eclipsed, absorbed and dominated as a whole by the English, enriched and expanded in martial capacity beyond the Scottish ability to resist after decades of successful returns on their own colonies. Centuries of bitter humiliations do not naturally dispose us to envisage a time where a blank slate existed between the first inhabitants of North America and the first Europeans to arrive in full measure, where the possibility of cooperation and mutual advantage and even earnest respect for the other is recorded; it is only through the intercession of capital and all which it demands that this budding accord becomes characterized by ceaseless violence and dispossession – “Nothing personal, but it’s me or you, and it’s not going to be me.”

From the crowned heads of Europe down to the roughest paupers and everyone in between, the

upheaval of capitalism remade the lives of everyone who lived through it, and only the barest traces of the former mode of existence now remain. Dripping head to toe in gore, capitalism ruptured the social order of old Europe like an ulcer, transforming all those who stood in its way to its ends. The best equipped, best disposed and best arrayed people of this world, both ideologically and by terms of literal force of arms, proved futile in halting this transformation in the end, which poses the question; why would a society even more utterly devastated, more powerless to stem the onslaught compelled by capital during this time, and even further removed from the circumstances which produced this change and concomitantly the tools to analyze it now prove somehow more capable of this task? Indigenous traditions, for all their value, cannot be both morally superior to the culture of their oppressors due to their aversion to ravaging peals of mass organized violence, and at the same time more adept at marshalling power to match such force.

To respond that it is by this very aversion to mass organized violence in indigenous traditions – a characterization sure to amuse many historians of indigenous cultures – that they express their moral fitness to meet this challenge is to collapse the distinction between them and the traditions of liberal pacifism authored by bourgeois intellectuals of European descent in every category of significance on this matter, a tradition which has equally little to show for itself across history in the struggle against capitalism. The varieties of “spiritual warriors” who engage in minor acts of civil disobedience, assert the case for the indigenous cause with limited regard for the colonizer’s standards of decorum, and otherwise imbue their defiant gestures with the heightened language of indigenous spirituality and supernatural forces may pride themselves on their daring in the service of justice, but they ultimately remain just that – gestures – and they seldom dare to venture any further beyond the bounds of “respectable” conduct established by bourgeois conceptions of radicalism than that of their white liberal counterparts. To insist that powers beyond the grasp of the mundane thought of European rationality are being summoned to set

right the world through these gestures is perhaps reassuring to many indigenous struggling to find hope amid a torrent of ceaseless losses, but this echoes all too closely the plight of Christians across history urged to stand down, forswear any action beyond the symbolic and let God work in his mysterious ways. To propose a set of etiquette and code of personal conduct that, when properly obeyed by all, will supposedly bring about the end of capitalism through the diligent observance of principles in harmony with the land is to utterly fail to apprehend what capitalism is and how it thrives on the atomized behavior of individuals no matter what they may be or what provenance they are drawn from.

In each case of a traditional indigenous remedy for the ills of capitalism proposed in contradistinction to Marxism, there is a well-established body of cases of a white colonial parallel having already been attempted and failing utterly, to which the only response appears to be "but we are different and we will succeed, because we are not colonizers and our traditions are drawn from the land," seemingly unaware that the peasant folk of medieval Europe could claim the same as well on the eve of capitalism's birth, for all that availed them. And like those who would variously appoint themselves the inheritors of the legacy of the peasant folk of medieval Europe, the authority to speak as the inheritor of any such tradition is fatally compromised by the material and social force of capital exerting itself across the centuries. Insidiously buried by a historical context that temporally prohibits firsthand experience of it, the proud survivors of the centuries of colonial dispossession credit the culture that has survived with them as the key to their resistance in circularly anthropic terms, certain that their very existence is proof positive that eventual victory is assured. That theirs may be a culture of mere survival for its own sake does not appear to occur to them; the cherished frybread and bannock recipes their grandmothers bequeathed to them may have sustained their families through immense hardship and earned their gratitude for it, but the larger picture that this food was born out of the material necessity of a forced displacement and restricted access to decidedly non-traditional food

preserves and lard, not the roasted duck with blueberry and rosehip sauce or corn and honey sorbet now lost to all but a few dedicated restorationists.

In reality, as worthwhile and noble a pursuit as the archivists and cultural restorationists are engaged in, the traditions and the culture of the modern indigenous subject is by far and away predominated by the single most powerful material force around which their lives are oriented - the working day, the wage system, the value form. Just a brief glance at employment statistics in Canada reveal that 63% of indigenous Canadians are deemed "employed" full time, compared to 71% on average. Assuming roughly comparable proportions of children, retired and disabled between the two demographics, what can we say most likely accounts for the 8% gap - an entire way of life oriented around some mode of production other than wage labor under capital capable of adequately furnishing a dignified life? Or the legacy of a colonial regime across generations of racist dispossession culminating in the disproportionate pauperisation of indigenous Canadians, brutalized into a state of physical and mental fragility that has left many unable to reliably meet their own needs without extensive outside assistance?

The working class is no monolith; from the instant there has been a communism to aspire to, this fact has been taken as a given from the very start. That indigenous people are members of the working class makes them no less indigenous, and never will. In fact, the forgotten legacy of indigenous contributions to the struggles of workers, as workers, appears more and more conspicuously absent from modern discourse among both white liberals and indigenous leadership alike, the further one explores its richness. Whether amidst the striking salmon fisheries of British Columbia or in the birthing of the first labor organizations among the early industrial workers of Alberta, indigenous workers of the past have chosen to stand foursquare against the assaults of those who would exploit them and their fellow workers to the bone. They did not particularize their struggle to the point of total abstraction or alienation from other workers, nor did they insist on seeking a separate peace with the state and the bourgeoisie for whom it op-

erates; their budding proletarian consciousness was as keen as any. Across a century of defeats for workers of every stripe, perhaps it serves little purpose to fixate on moral inquisitions into the activities of disillusioned workers scrambling to pursue contingency plans as class consciousness faded, but the duty falls to us now to halt our rout and regroup once more, freed of the illusions of any lasting concordat between us and capital, indigenous or not. The record of successes and losses being what it is, it may be time to confront the possibility that, whether consciously engineered by the scheming of collaborationist leaders or unconsciously emerging through the rough and ready heuristics assembled by well-meaning people operating within a narrow range of options, the insistence that indigenous traditions alone (or in dialogue with liberal thought for that matter) can deliver victory over capitalism has become at the very least a maladaptive strategy that risks rendering indigenous people terminally helpless at this stage of their struggle.

Truth and Reconciliation Day is presented to the workers of Canada, indigenous and otherwise, as a step on the path towards making amends for the historic injustices of the colonial period. It is no secret that while some greet this occasion earnestly in the intended spirit, reason for skepticism persists, and rightly so. Centuries of broken promises and exhausted faith do not engender trust from the aggrieved party, and so it is here that we encounter the “radical” arm of indigenous activism, defiantly positioned in resistance against what they regard as the source of all their woes; white Eurocentric settler colonialism. The legacy of all European thought cannot ultimately be reconciled with their traditions, so it is said, and while the concomitant implications of this ultimatum are never made clear, in the meantime an assemblage of interim demands emerge. Fund the reserves. Forswear land exploitation. Defund the police. Vacate sacred lands. Honor the treaties. There is something to recognize to various degrees in each of these, but is it enough? And if it isn’t, what accounts for the timidity of the supposed bleeding edge of indigenous radicalism?

Viewed historically, there can be no missing

the conjunction of this indigenous radical tradition with liberal academia, which would account for much of the performative, underwhelming action that characterizes said radicalism. This is no condemnation of the rich history of indigenous philosophy; indeed, it further emphasizes the extent of the brutal dispossession this culture has experienced, that it would be so prone to incorporation. What is often forgotten in the rush to commend the durability of a tradition that has survived such dispossession is precisely how the brush with annihilation compromises it, and even the most undamaged philosophical traditions seldom remain unchanged. Nevertheless, we observe a tragic irony here, where the routine exceptions granted to European thought that have become in effect the rule meet their limits; a hostility to the Marxist tradition exceeding any other. Again, do we detect the limiting hand of the bourgeois liberal here, amplifying the most disunifying voices, insisting that the organization of the working class menaces indigenous traditions with the very marginalization they have already inflicted upon it?

From the moment there has been a communism to aspire to, the workers who have aspired towards it have been no monolith, and the grand history of indigenous workers who have toiled, agitated and risked their lives alongside their other coworkers forms part of that tapestry. The abolition of wage labor, the value form and class society presents the only substantial way to achieve any of the ultimate aims of the stated demands of the indigenous radical, not the false promises of a concordat with a state, settler or otherwise, that has no higher duty than to capital. It is not the poisoned bait of a distinct nationhood for indigenous people, with borders to garrison and markets to protect, that will realize the efforts of cultural restorationists, nor the cozy sinecures of well-compensated academics of indigenous extraction that will win the dignity they seek; it is in their condition as workers with nothing to sell but their labor, indigenous or not, that the most vivid and pressing tradition of our present moment is shaped, and it is on these grounds alone that the liberation of all those same workers, together, can be won.

JW (Klasbatalo)



Sahel : Locus of Imperialism in Africa?

Magharebia, Public Domain

On July 26th, Abdourahamane Tchiani led a military takeover of Niger, ousting former President Mohamed Bazoum and placing him under house arrest. The new regime moved quickly under an anti-French sentiment, announcing withdrawals from military agreements with France, alongside marches of thousands of Nigeriens and the M62 Movement, an anti-French activist group. The protests have continued escalating in size and succeeded in getting French troops to exit the country. This coup is one of many in West Africa, and the Sahel in particular, which has been followed by the junta government seeking closer ties with Russia as a partner in counter-insurgency over France. At the same time, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), continues to be unnerved by the string of recent coups. The members of the bloc are threatened with the possibility of their own soldiers' rebellion, as shown in the attempted putsch in Sierra Leone, as well as the po-

tential for the insurgency in the Sahel to escalate and to spread into neighboring territories. Beyond these immediate political concerns, ECOWAS seeks to present itself as a third power between China and the US on the continent, militarily and economically. Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali have just unveiled their own military defense pact against potential incursion from ECOWAS, the Alliance of Sahelian States (AES), with the possibility of extending the bloc into Sudan. The current crisis in the Sahel is far from a localized battle against colonial powers, and does not represent some bold form of national liberation. Rather, it is a symptom of the general sickness of imperialism that plagues the world in the form of perennial civil conflicts as well as national wars. As Ukraine continues to fight Russia, as Gaza remains under siege, and the possibility of a China-Taiwan conflict is on the table, the instability in the Sahel bears on important lessons for the class. In particular, the conflict

demonstrates that the dynamics between ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ states in the form of peacekeeping operations are in fact part of the cycle of capitalist imperialism as are the civil wars that precede and follow such ‘interventions’ from hegemonic powers.

The immediate context

Conflict in the Sahel often revolves around the Tuareg community, and the conflict between Tuareg nationalism and jihadism – at times the two can have a common goal in being opposed to the local government, and at times they are adversaries. This is rooted in the pre-colonial ethnic identity of the Tuaregs being a primarily nomadic people, tightly knit and often ‘separate’ from the other ethnic groups in the region. Indeed, rather than being one coherent group, the Tuareg people are made up of many individual tribes, within which there can be significant cultural and political variation, with some groups retaining pre-Islamic practices more strongly than others. The MNLA for example, tend towards preserving traditional Tuareg hereditary rule and have often seen the southern Malians as inferior or illegitimate, emphasized by the historical position of many Tuaregs having been slave traders within the Sahel. Jihadists on the other hand tend towards opposing these specific cultural practices, seeing them as backwards or opposed to their interpretation of Islam. Generally, jihadists call for a universal Islamic culture, including the demotion of local languages in favor of Arabic, as well as an opposition to traditional Tuareg hereditary rule, and a restriction on women’s freedoms.

It is within this context that France chose to recognize the MNLA as an ally for Operation Serval, exploiting political tensions between them and jihadists, and enabling French forces to use the local knowledge of the MNLA to their advantage. However, this came at a long-term cost of undermining the legitimacy of the Malian state, as Malian troops were forbidden from deploying in the same areas where French forces were working with the MNLA at the risk of provoking ethnic conflicts. As a result, while the French strategy treated the ‘symptom’ of insurgency in Northern Mali, it directly undermined the Malian state’s capacity to deal with the root causes of insurgency by further alienating it from areas which comprised the rank

and file of jihadist and nationalist movements. Although the jihadist element was quelled, the root cause – the ethnic separation of Tuaregs from wider Malian society – was strengthened. This strategy was then generalized and applied across the Sahel for Operation Barkhane, which ended up lasting a decade and, failing to meet its operational objectives, resulted in the recent withdrawal of French forces.

The CFA Franc

Another important dimension to the coups in the Sahel is the common currency of the CFA Franc, which is a particularly volatile match for the powder keg of the region. The monetary union has been a staple of Francophone Africa since the mid-20th century and a symbol of the de facto economic rule that France enjoys within the region. The currency comes with a set of specific restrictions as well as guarantees, which animate a variety of conflicts between bourgeoisie which aspire towards greater participation in the global market and those which want to retain a privileged relationship with France. As a result, the position of any bourgeois government towards the CFA Franc is crucial to evaluating its political leanings far more than any stray statements made towards this or that state. The three politically pivotal conditions of the monetary union are as follows:

1. The CFA Franc is pegged at a fixed exchange rate with the Euro and is determined by the French Treasury
2. The CFA Franc can be exchanged for the Euro only through the French Treasury, which does not charge for currency exchanges
3. The French Treasury imposes strict criteria for the amount of foreign reserves that the regional CFA Franc central banks can hold at a given time

The above conditions ensure two vital conditions for local bourgeoisie, the first being that in order to make any purchases with countries outside of the eurozone, the treasury has to first convert the CFA Franc to the Euro, and only then convert to the desired currency, such as the Remnibi or the Dollar, and the second being that fiscal policy of the entire monetary union is de facto decided by France, the

most principal of which being the exchange rate of the CFA Franc to the Euro. The first condition takes away fiscal planning from the local economies, which means that their responses to typical crises of inflation need to be determined diplomatically with France rather than decided locally – devaluation is not an option, and a strong or weak Euro has direct repercussions. Such a situation has already played out in the 90s, where the re-evaluation of the CFA Franc caused the Cote d'Ivoire economy to boom whereas neighboring countries such as Togo and Benin suffered greatly and saw their debt to GDP ratio skyrocket. The second condition means that investment is principally geared towards France, but bourgeoisie who would be more competitive with clients such as China or the US must first transfer their funds into the Euro before transferring into the target currency, making the process slow and dependent on the value of the Euro. This further fuels resentment from local bourgeoisie who feel that their choice over trade partners is economically hampered by always having to move money through the eurozone first. The third condition means that total investment is always regulated through France ensuring that no one country ever pivots too strongly towards another economic hegemon, such as Russia or China.

The common currency therefore incentivizes perennial conflict not only between sections of the bourgeoisie within a country, already at the lower rung of global capital, but across the CFA Franc monetary union since the fortunes of one strongly-performing country are the misfortunes of another. This is why for example, despite historical appeals from various state leaders within the monetary union for Pan-Africanism as a bulwark against French colonialism such as Thomas Sankara, France can always directly play one country against another by tinkering with the CFA Franc as needs demand it on top of direct political intervention. The cards are therefore stacked up in such a way that France acts as the absolute center of economic activity for a vast economic region, centralizing exchange without the centralization of production. For proletarians, this vast economic structure means little other than which specific bourgeoisie is

guaranteeing their misery, but for the bourgeoisie this creates deep-seated resentment against their local government's complicity in the CFA Franc system or indeed for suggesting a move away from the system if their fortunes benefit from French demand.

Commodity trading fuels insurgency

This dynamic also produces the most essential incentive to the latest string of coups, in that these restrictions on foreign reserves make illicit commodity trading incredibly appealing to local bourgeoisie and aspiring bourgeoisie in the military. Gold forms the backbone of exports and local economies, meaning they are vital for whoever can control the mines. For example, in 2021 gold accounted for 96.3% of all exports in Mali, 85.3% of all exports for Burkina Faso, and 71.4% of all exports in Niger. The degree of corruption in the Sahel is relatively large with estimates for the size of the informal economy ranging from 20 to 65%. The state's willingness to supply troops with the proper equipment and training to fight against a guerilla force is also reluctant at best, which creates room for a rival bourgeois bloc to form within the military, further signified by many of the coup leaders being US/French trained. Therefore, the gold market lines the pockets of government officials, above board or cash-in-hand. As they are sent to battles they cannot win, military leadership ends up looking after its interests, cutting deals, and becoming a bourgeois section invested in preserving its operations against the rest of the state. So, jumps in gold prices provide opportunities for the military to gain more economic power by siphoning profits, cutting deals with mine owners, exploiting workers through seizures, and incentivizing juntas to maintain this newly gained economic power against other bourgeoisie. It is small wonder that there are reportedly massive discrepancies between the reported amount of gold exported by states in the Sahel in comparison to the reported amount of gold received by trading partners such as the UAE and Switzerland. Small 'artisanal' mines are left to the oversight of local producers which can number as few as two people, who can transfer the gold over the border to Benin, Togo, Senegal, etc. through paltry bribes and completely

circumvent regulation. This is also true for production controlled by separatist or jihadist groups, making gold production a politically powerful tool. This fact also sheds light on why the coups have taken a pro-Russia rather than a pro-China pivot in recent years, as the vast gold black market is incredibly useful to the sanctions-addled regime in Moscow, which in turn can provide mercenary deployment from Wagner in exchange for gold. It is also small wonder that the guarantee of gold through Wagner has culminated in Russia pegging the rouble to gold bullion. Indeed, the extent of the gold black market within the Sahel and Central Africa maps directly onto Wagner's deployment history, creating a 'gold trail' from Mali all the way to Sudan. The geographical distribution of Wagner's interventions contains the possibility of developing a discrete supply chain from the Sahara to the Red Sea, where the gold can be shipped using Russia's 'ghost fleets', which enjoy safe passage northwards into Israel (Russia maintains strong bilateral relations with Israel in spite of its nominally pro-Palestine rhetoric) and southwards where safe passages are officially guaranteed by the Houthis. One thing is clear however – Russia's interest in the Sahel is primarily economic and revolves around commodity reserves, and this interest is welcomed by states seeking support against jihadists without the option to pay in their local currency, but instead through access to mines.

Counter-insurgency and the endlessness of bourgeois conflict

However, far from being a unique political turning point in West Africa, the history of the coups in Sahel bears on important considerations for communists and those who would paint the issue as a struggle for national liberation. Russia and France are both principally fulfilling the same function and rely on a system of comparative inequality between bourgeois nations. Whilst the Russian strategy is yet to be properly evaluated as a 'success' or 'failure' in bourgeois terms, it is likely that it will end similarly to Operation Serval and Barkhane. This is because the French strategy bears the same failures as the counter-insurgency operations used by the US in Afghanistan, and demonstrates how the root of the issue is bourgeois solutions to political prob-

lems generated by bourgeois society in the first place. The US operated under the same assumptions as the French regarding working with local militias in Afghanistan, focusing its efforts on building up an Afghan government and keeping the Taliban pinned whilst the local state consolidated its power by building up state institutions and the military. The problem was that the US became the sole bulwark against the Taliban, with the government effectively having authority only by proxy from the US. This was also not an outcome of a particularly 'weak' Afghan military, given the general power of states in the region and having access to US training and resources, but the culmination of years of military work being done by a foreign power light years ahead of local militias, combining sophisticated air and intelligence support. As a result, the political legitimacy needed for the Afghan government to mediate political conflicts by mobilizing its own forces never developed, as it was always disproportionately more expedient for the US to take the reigns. This failure of operational objectives by the US was so catastrophic that it is no wonder the Taliban took over the country completely in just 10 days, in contrast to the two decades of US presence. The Taliban's eventual victory came through guerilla warfare and simply biding their time until the conflict proved too expensive for the US to directly supervise, knowing that the Afghan state will never live up to the task due to its rickety foundations.

Therefore, 'strong' states such as the US, France, Russia, etc. prop up 'weak' states, principally defined as either one by their ability to mobilize arms and to enforce bourgeois law, which is an outcome of both political and economic centralization. This status of being either 'strong' or 'weak' also informs the specific nature of imperialist conflict within counter-insurgency operations. Whereas 'strong' states operate under the assumption that the ideology and culture of a government determines its legitimacy as much as its resources, or in Russia's case, the ability to provide its services for resources intercontinentally, the prevailing trend in 'weak' states is that the material capacity of the state is what determines whether it is capable to contain its political conflicts or not. The US and

France are 'strong' states because they possess significantly larger shares of global capital than Afghanistan or Mali, and because they are significantly more politically centralized as an outcome of historical conflicts, fueled in no small part by a history of vast colonial holdings. Political and economic centralization are also mutually reinforcing, as political centralization is stimulated by economic imperatives, and economic centralization is also the outcome of political centralization. As a result, the picture for 'weaker' states is that they lack the political force and the economic means for one to develop the other, and the development of either from the 'outside', either by military substitution or economic restructuring will yield only temporary changes from the perspective of achieving autarchy. The local bourgeoisie in Afghanistan or Mali do not possess enough of the global share of capital to enjoy the privileges of monopoly capital, such as market dominance, bailout guarantees, and preferential trade, meaning that they are deeply susceptible to fluctuations in the global market, further maligned by their colonial history guaranteeing the shipping of profits overseas. This drives a wedge between the state and capital, meaning that at any given moment a civil war is ready to break out and can be facilitated as little as by tribal confederations over land disputes since in either case the state is too weak to do anything for its local bourgeoisie. However, once the dust of the civil war settles, that same bourgeoisie cannot provide for the state to properly build itself back up, as the ruling class settles for what petty profits it can secure at high rates before fleeing. As a result, perpetual military conflict is inevitable.

The AES' trajectory is principally tied to its ability to quell insurgency and importantly to achieve an exit strategy from the CFA Franc. However, despite the various fantasies of national liberation, the dual pressure of the monetary union and the current value of gold bouillon creates an enormous dilemma for the putchists. On the one hand, exiting the Franc zone means having direct control over sovereign currency, pleasing the internationally-orientated bourgeoisie, and enabling greater political and economic centralization. On the other hand, the comparative advantage of the gold mar-

ket lies precisely in its current state of deregulation within the Sahel and high demand in the global market. Because the CFA Franc terms produce the incentive for using gold as payment, formalizing the exchange process will be costly and will no doubt crush 'artisanal' miners in the long term. In addition, the inevitable economic warfare that France and the CFA zone will unleash on the AES will result in immediate political turmoil, as the bourgeoisie will quickly pivot to whoever can secure the most profitable conditions for the activity over the most stable, due precisely to their impoverished position in the global market. Burkina Faso and Mali have already experienced several counter-coups demonstrating that the army swings like a weathervane and that military dictatorship is no guarantee of stability. Introducing a new currency will require the centralization of the economy in terms of exchange and production, which itself cannot be arrived at until the state itself is properly politically centralized and no longer at the mercy of separatist or jihadist violence.

The Growth of the AES

Another important factor is the influence of conflicts outside of West Africa. Sudan represents a crucial theatre of civil war whose future may determine whether AES is able to stay afloat, since conflicts within the country have had direct ties to the insurgencies in the Sahel. The Sudanese War between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Force (RSF) paramilitary has further opened the already existing nexus across the Sahel to the gold markets of the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. Furthermore, the RSF have been an active faction in the Libyan Civil War, whose fallout helped to agitate tensions with the Tuaregs in the Sahel. The situation in Sudan closely resembles the Syrian civil war, during 2011-12, and the Yemeni civil war, where regional Imperialists are indecisive in seeing a clear interest in supporting the government or rebels. As of August, 2023 Egypt withdrew their open support for the Sudanese Armed Forces. While Turkey's continued support for Al-Burhan is greatly sustained due to Egypt's withdrawal of their support for the SAF. It was highly unlikely Erodoğan would have continued to support the SAF if Egypt's president Al-Sisi continued. This is due to the 2013

Egyptian military coup d'état against Turkey's ally, the Muslim Brotherhood aligned government of Morsi. Iran has also begun to support the SAF but this will likely dissipate since they're also likely to benefit from a gold trail to the Persian Gulf that Russia is carving out and will likely let its allies have access to. Lastly, it's also been implied that Saudi Arabia is leaning towards the Sudanese armed forces, to which they have held the Jeddah Peace accords in June 2023 with the aim of establishing a peace settlement favorable for general Al-Burhan's armed forces. Today in Sudan every state and non-state actor has denied their official support for either belligerent in this imperialist conflict. Despite what looks to be on the surface a fight between local bourgeoisie groups with international ties, it's instead foreign bourgeoisie fighting one another using Sudan as a theater of war.

In addition, Sudan has been pivotal in determining the balance of power in central Africa, which has a domino effect on the political powers comprising the CFA Zone. For example, Chad would allow for anti-Al-Bashir forces to operate on the border from time to time in the Darfur, leading to the counterinsurgency in the region and exchanges of atrocities on workers and toilers by the RSF and anti-Al-Bashir forces. This was the progenitor of the modern RSF, formed initially as the Janjaweed militias, composed of camel herders already in a sectarian conflict against the Darfur region's agrarians to suppress anti-government rebels in the region. The state couldn't use their regular armed forces due to international monitoring and therefore paramilitaries became preferable. The armed paramilitaries against the Sudanese state, or the Al-Bashir government, were generously aided by Chad, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda which were being supplied by the US and UK in the form of surplus arms. Despite the US condemning Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism Sudan maintained a relationship with the CIA and was considered integral for intelligence in the war on terror. Ever since the ousting of Omar Al-Bashir in 2019 in a military coup d'état, there's been a cycle of counter coup d'état's by the military, similar to the situation in AES.

The current war's more immediate cause was Ab-

del Fattah Al-Burham attempts to absorb the RSF into the Sudanese armed forces leading their boss Hemedti to rebel against the junta, with the paramilitary's elevation in the latter years of Al-Bashir's regime was to counterweight the military. This factor and their ability to recruit more freely from rural communities, the near permanently urban unemployed and from tribal communities in Chad and Libya along with how discredited and hated the Sudanese Armed Forces are from their equal penchant for anti-proletarian violence. There's also been the tightening of oil revenues from conflicts in the south, market turbulence from the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine leading up the war in April, 15, 2023. In the early days of the Sudanese War in April, 2023 Qatar's news agency Al Jazeera would give Hemedti the spotlight where he'd claim the reasoning for the revolt was Al-Burhan's plans to restore Al-Bashir. Despite the role the RSF would play repressing workers in the initial Coup d'état in 2019, by removing Al-Bashir they've set themselves as the belligerent more open to Islamism. Al-Burhan has separated himself from Al-Bashir and Islamism in a bid to get more international support and the support of anti-Al-Bashir forces in Sudan operating in the south and Darfur. It's important to account for his deputy Malik Agar, who led a split organization of the SPLM which were against separatism but in opposition to Al-Bashir until 2020.

It appears at the time the momentum is behind the RSF. The UAE is supporting the RSF due to their long term relations with the paramilitary's commander Hemedti in supplying the UAE with soldiers against the Houthi Movement in the Yemeni civil war. The UAE is also a major market for the illicit Gold trade and has been an integral link for Russia and Iran to gain forex. The SAF has alleged that the UAE has set up a base in Chad's Amdjarass airport to supply the RSF. Chad's president Mahamat Déby has secured a \$1.5 billion loan from the UAE and has been accused of using the loans for weapons to give to lease to the RSF and treat their fighters in Chad. Russia's Wagner Group has also been accused of supplying the RSF with surface to air missiles they procured in Syria and a Convoy of over a hundred trucks from Libya con-

trolled by Haftars Libyan National Army from Chad, Niger and the Central African Republic. Their deployment is a part of establishing the gold trail's headwaters – what appears to be a grand plan by Russia to create a corridor from Mali to Yemen for transporting commodities to fight off international sanctions and to build up a war chest. It's also been alleged that Chad has been receiving continued financial support and weapons from the UAE and Russia by opening up their airspace and allowing for operations in their territory, further highlighting the scale of cooperation for this gold trail. They've been fighting their own insurgency throughout the entire country and the presence of military aid and financial support, alongside the potential in a new currency bloc, presents an appealing opportunity for the sixth poorest country in the world with multiplying internal crises, particularly as Mahamat Déby's military junta comes off of the death of his father Idriss Déby. Nevertheless, this opportunity is one which maintains the bourgeoisie dictatorship. Idriss was killed in a counterinsurgency campaign, and during his own presidency he acted as a military dictator. Even though the Chadian military has terminated their military agreement with the USA, one imperialist partnership will be swapped out for another. In this manner, Chad joining the AES creates an opportunity for Sudan to be more closely incorporated into the Russian gold trail demonstrating the interconnectedness of conflict by the Red Sea and deep into the western borders of the Sahel.

Competing Blocs

On the other hand, there is ECOWAS, whose interests do not immediately align with the US and NATO, nor with Russia, or China, and whose whims will prove decisive for the future of the AES. ECOWAS is the Nigerian and Ghana dominated bloc, and to a lesser extent, Côte d'Ivoire, which is competitive internationally in their commodity exports. The states animating ECOWAS are seeking national solutions by trying to export their imperialist contradictions to stabilize their current conditions. These states have their own monopolies, a greater share of surplus profits and have demands for an even greater share of profits. This is all to maintain capitalism's basic functions and produce

fiscal income for the state's growing demands. Nigeria was for some time Africa's largest economy, but since 2022 they've slipped to fourth due to ever-multiplying international crises. Nevertheless, Nigeria has been particularly bold in imposing sanctions against Niger and has drawn ire from the AES by going as far as cutting electricity to Niger, which depends on its neighbor for up to 70% of its energy needs, triggering widespread outages and worsening an escalating humanitarian crisis. Nigeria has long been a key fighting force in West Africa and a lynchpin of regional security, successfully deploying in a number of conflicts with the most recent being in The Gambia in 2017. With escalating attacks from Boko Haram along its border to the North, its ruling classes grow increasingly impatient with threats to their holdings and investments, incentivizing invasion for a country that has exercised its localized imperialism under cooperation with global imperialist blocs. In addition, President Tinubu's tenure has been controversial – cutting fuel subsidies, as well as transitioning Nigeria's currency, the Naira, to a free-floating currency, has shown him to be one of the most economically radical leaders in the region in recent history. The coups in the Sahel present not only a possible threat to Nigeria's government, of being ousted by its military cutting or other bourgeois blocs propped up by wide economic discontent but also an opportunity to resolve its internal economic crises through imperialism. Furthermore, the possibility of AES states creating their own currency is causing anxiety in ECOWAS. The military juntas have begun to bet on a new currency to increase their own influence through strengthening the state and centralizing their own economies. A currency backed by gold bullion will benefit their capitalist factions who market strategic commodities. In addition, there's contradictory geostrategic relations within major Imperialist blocs, and the regional blocks in Africa are no different - in many ways, more volatile. This currency plan would also hamper ECOWAS' plans to introduce its own regional currency, the ECO slated to be the bloc's single currency by 2027, with central banks, reserves locations and other infrastructure are already being mapped out in the region.

The East African Federation Sudan also acts as a centerpiece for African alliances extending to the South, finding its influence into Sudan, and from there, into West Africa. For example, Kenya's president Ruto has had his intentions in being a part of a proposed peace deployment in Sudan questioned over accusations of business relations with the RSF. Kenya itself is one of the main states involved in the formation of the East African Union/ East African Community alongside Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo with plans for a new supranational alliance turned eventual state. Their rationale is similar to ECOWAS in reflecting the need to form another imperialist pole through greater political and economic centralization. It is also worth emphasizing that Kenya's ambitions are intercontinental, as shown in its participation in the Haiti peacekeeping operation with the UN. Although The EAU/C and ECOWAS are currently middle power imperialists, their ambitions presage a greater involvement in global struggles that are unfolding in the context of the recent string of coups.

These blocs offer a greater degree of economic and military concentration in order to secure a greater portion of the world market. States now will interact with much more viable and influential capital, being a struggle in the periphery during capitalism's period of imperialism. Traditionally, this was pursued through Ba'athist, Pan-African and Pan-Arabist ideologies trying to replicate the USSR's productivist state-capitalist regime alongside a healthy dose of their own imperialism. Historically such attempts would culminate in losing their credibility and *raison d'être* through their own inter-imperialist conflicts, or through the USSR's maneuvers, such as its detente with Israel around the time of the 1967, 6 Days War and the end of the last accumulation cycle in the 70s. No matter the ideological fervour or degree of centralization actually achieved, these blocs would nonetheless remain dependent on major partners and thus their relative success determined the feasibility of ideas such as the United Arab Republic, which ECOWAS, AES, and the EAU/C could be categorized under.

The Driving Force For African Regional Powers

Since the beginning of the 1970s' when capitalism's insoluble crisis of profitability re-emerged in full force Africa's debts ballooned, commodity prices depressed, and states had to renegotiate re-financing with the IMF in what was called structural readjustments, which gutted whatever existed as a social state across Africa. Even now Africa, the second largest continent rich with resources, only makes up 3% of world trade. With this there's the constant flight of profits towards financial institutions in the capitalist heartlands which offer the greatest rate of return on investment.

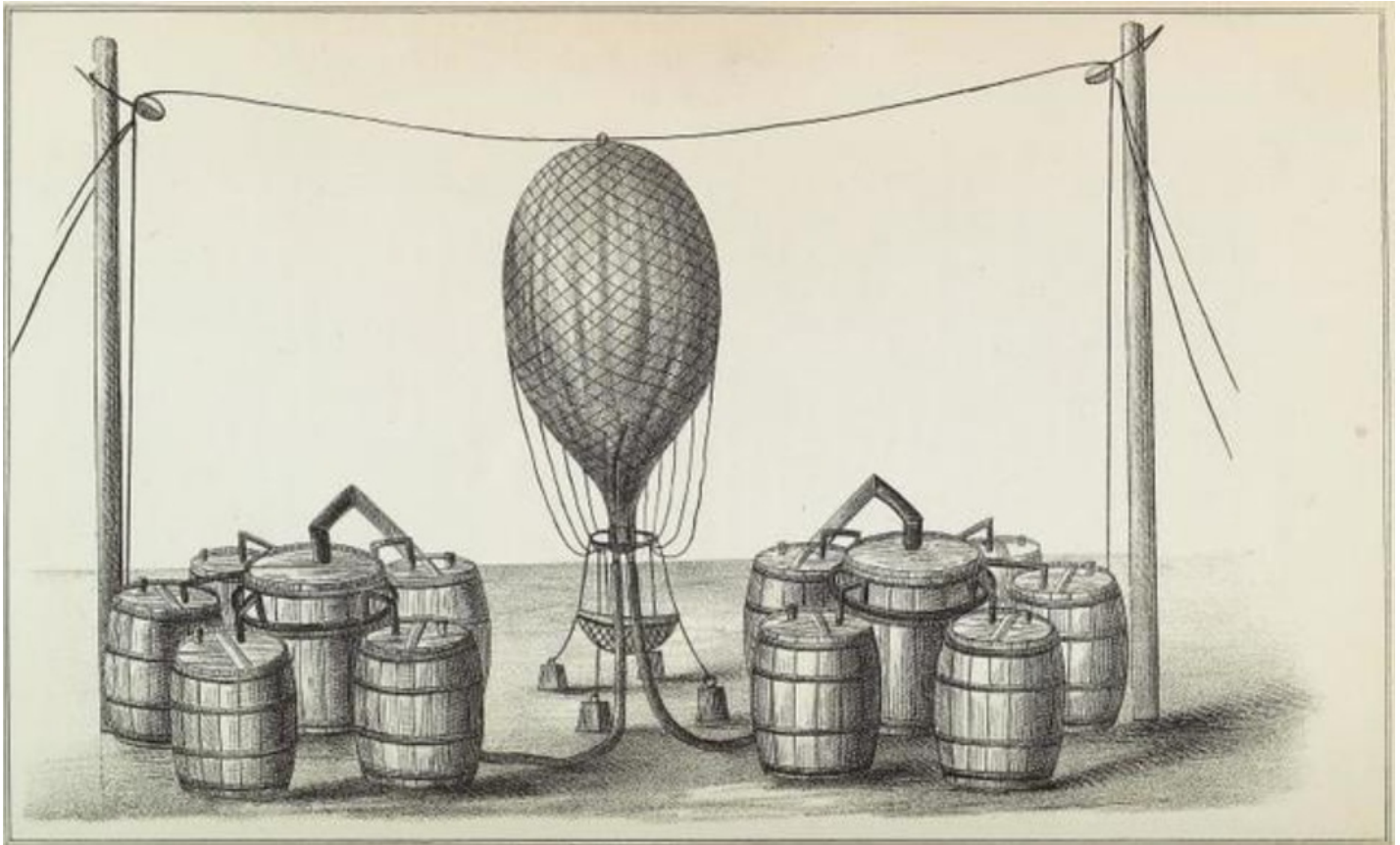
Thus although the relative market share of individual African countries in a global sense is low, they are nonetheless highly valuable for monopolies in the US-NATO and Russia-China blocs, as the relatively smaller capitals have significantly higher rates of profitability, propping up the lumbering conglomerates at the head of the capitalist ivory tower. States such as Nigeria have Islamist insurgents around Lake Chad and BLA (Biafran Liberation Army) separatists on the coast who make up the lion's share of oil graft, which is estimated at 25% of what's produced in Nigeria. They are aided by collaboration from politicians and organized crime groups who pose their own slew of issues such as contributing to a blackmail, extortion, and kidnapping epidemic, which deters financial investments, dislodges capitalists, and further exacerbates the worsening conditions for workers. The situation is similar, but different in the EAU/C, where Kenya and Tanzania have less of an insurgency crisis but are being choked by the demand for profits. On the other hand, the Democratic Republic of The Congo has had upwards of five million people displaced in the Congo wars, millions of premature deaths, and militias preventing their own bourgeoisie from being able to fully exploit their nations labor power and natural resources. The conflict, along with the Great Lakes conflict in Central and Eastern Africa have together had a cross-pollinating effect on Sudanese conflicts which have had nearly the same civilian casualties and displacements and the horn of Africa.

The situation is terse; many confederates in these proposed blocs or future federations have their own interests as already illustrated. Despite what

proponents of national liberation may believe, the further consolidation of political and economic power will lead only to the emergence of victorious regional blocs who will nonetheless continue the capitalist system across the continent and the world and therefore continue the tendency towards imperialism. They may find an advantage by working with a major Imperialist in the region, but undermining regional imperialist ambitions of states they are allied with leading to a guarantee of further conflicts. The interests of these blocs are more difficult to solidify, besides for the largest bourgeoisie factions who see political centralization, a regional common market, and economic and financial cen-

tralization as their way to enforce their interest better in world capitalism. Nevertheless, the conditions for them to retain this position will hinge on trampling on workers through military means in times of crisis. The crisis in the Sahel therefore unfolds not only the continuing misery that capital forces onto the working class worldwide, but also demonstrates how localized conflicts are deeply integrated, politically and economically into the rest of the continent through the ambitions of middle powers and major imperialist blocs. One thing is for sure – capitalist solutions in the form of counter-insurgencies or national liberation lead to more misery and more kicking of the can down the road.

B (Klasbatalo) & B (IWG)



Return of Inflation: A Review

Since the dawn of the capitalist epoch there have been periods of crisis. Prior to capitalism there was deprivation, famine, and war, of course, but since capitalism there have been noted periods of crisis that seem to stem from the system itself and go beyond the “natural causes” of past eras. The content of Paul Mattick Jr’s new book *The Return of Inflation* is primarily focused on one type of lingering problem in capitalism. While inflation has at certain points slowed, throughout the 20th and into the current century inflation has been a persistent headache for the economist disciples of capitalism. Mattick sets out to provide an historical roadmap to guide us through the early modern period to today in hopes of explaining the current crisis of worldwide inflation that seems to defy the diagnosis and to stubbornly survive the treatment. Modern-day capitalist economics can be traced back to multiple schools, each of which themselves arrived as a challenge to the current orthodoxy. In each case, macroeconomic policy was held in the ultimate regard as scientific truth—that is until a new crisis emerged and the current paradigm

could neither explain it nor solve it. So in each case a new school challenged orthodoxy. After a period of relative stability since the last crisis, a new crisis would emerge, and the economists would be forced to smash their idols and form a new sect with a new focus and set of prescriptions for the real-world problems created in some cases by the old institutions. Mattick provides a concise historical account of these developments in both capitalism and its institutions.

We live in the wake of a paradigmatic upheaval created by the 2008 financial crisis and the unprecedented economic disruption of 2020. The One True Faith of Monetarism was shaken by the financial crisis, and this even led to a resurgence in attention to Keynesianism, the arcane theories discredited by their failure to resolve “stagflation”, or rising unemployment and inflation, in the 1970s. Since 2008 risked a return of deflation—and indeed a depression—the singular tool of the Monetarists of manipulating the money supply would be put to test. A period of very low inflation

would follow, despite the desire of the world's economists to stimulate higher inflation. Keynesian methods of "priming the pump" to stimulate growth were also attempted, but these methods overpromised the recovery. The Global Pandemic brought an end to a period of slow but steady growth and low inflation. The resultant shock was instead followed by inflation across the globe. Economists point now to a resurgence of the fear of inflation in the 1970s (never mind that unemployment more closely resembles that of the 1950s in many countries). The argument is given that wage workers have too much leverage and control over the economy. This can only be broken through restricting the money supply, and so again we find ourselves the target of the same old tool in the Monetarist toolbox. Instead of trying to increase the money supply through financial mechanisms, the goal is to vastly contract the money supply

through mechanisms meant to raise interest rates for loans across all sectors.

Mattick provides ample evidence against these various schools, and effectively demonstrates a pattern of declining rates of profit over the centuries that capitalism has at first exploded onto the scene. States have come to the aid of capitalism largely through manipulation of the money supply. This theory rests on the notion that the quantity of money in existence determines its value, in spite of the fact that the theorists who developed this notion have never quite been able to provide material evidence for it. Indeed, as Mattick points out, the evidence seems to indicate that rapid increases in the money supply simply don't seem to correlate with inflation. Price rises instead flow from corporations acting in a self-interested manner to suppress competition.



Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump uses a frier during a visit to a McDonald's outlet in Pennsylvania. (New York Times/AP pic) Creative Commons

Populism, Trumpism and Democracy - How about Communism ?

Political Crisis

The 2016 electoral victory of Donald Trump shook bourgeois politics to its core. The alarms were being raised to defend democracy against populism. In reality the populist political crisis was brought on by low participation in the democratic system by workers, declining trust and support for democratic institutions and the destruction of intermediaries, such as unions and worker associations used to help the state maintain consensus.

The threat of populism in the USA with Donald Trump's electoral victory was voter abstention for the Democratic party and elsewhere the communist, Labour, socialist and social democratic parties. This isn't to say that the workers who didn't vote are inherently class conscious; most have only

critiques for the current state of representative politics and unions. The working class hasn't begun to see unions and representative parties as a barrier in the development of class consciousness, or unions specifically as state offices to enforce what amounts to wage cuts.

Faced with the conditions of the deepening capitalist crisis and the failures of expedients to offset anemic profits, democratic consensus is becoming more difficult to attain. The state has lost the integration of the working class base achieved by the labor movement during World War Two, alongside unions as a major support base for parties.

Democratic consensus, is the collective consensus of the capitalist and remains as a source of alienation for the working class. As the former prosecu-

tor now current Vice President Kamala Harris said in her 2020 election victory speech "You fought, you organized, you voted!"

"...Revolutionary democracy is no good at all; it is a mere phrase. It covers up rather than lays bare the antagonisms of class interests. A Bolshevik must open the eyes of the workers and peasants to the existence of these antagonisms, not gloss them over..." Lenin, Petrograd City Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks) April 14–22 (April 27–May 5), 1917

To be clear neither Donald Trump's politics nor any of the other populist electoral victories were a subversion of democratic rule. The state didn't have to change its form in order to prepare the USA to play a more decisive role through war that would revise the current Imperialist order. Trump's emphasis on anti-immigrant social reaction wasn't geared towards suppressing working class activity, or funneling the nations social energy for a revanchist war. Workers weren't further incorporated into the state to force economic growth, but rather it was a continuation of democratic social reactionary policies that are useful in further fragmenting workers. There aren't any mass paramilitary forces in direct command of Trump, the Republican party, or a mass social movement either. Democratic states cozying up to fascist and reactionary organizations from time to time as auxiliaries isn't a populist phenomena either. Neither are mass acts of private violence such as shootings, bombings or state violence in the form of police departments committing anti-proletarian violence to maintain the capitalist order.

Populism isn't antithetical, rather it's perfectly compatible with democracy; the state was reinforced by an inter-class support. The block is composed of workers in productive regions most affected by the crisis of profitability and the multiplying crisis stemming from it, along with the middle strata struggling against proletarianization and capitalists that are desperate to modernize and are the least insulated from the growth of international competition over the division of anemic profits.

Populism has served as a buoy for the state and

has brought in some votes. The depth of the political crisis expresses itself in Trump barely winning against Hillary Clinton in 2016, and Biden barely making it out on top of the 2020 election despite mobilizing votes in "defense of democracy". This supports the theory that it's a response by governing state institutions to maintain support and keep workers off of the class terrain. All together though workers participation in elections are down hence why president Biden still only won by a razor thin margin. Rather the class whose electoral participation has soared is the petit bourgeois who fears their own proletarianization the most.

The 70 million votes casted for Donald Trump in 2020 and the Capitol riot on Jan 6, 2021, indicated the weakness of democratic institutions. For the past three decades most elections have had at least idle chit-chat about the possibility of a conspiracy to fix them, calls to recount the votes or controversies about officiating elections. 2016 saw "Russiagate" which led to the nearly three year long federal investigation into the possibility of collusion between Donald Trump and Russia's government.

On January 6, 2021 a disorganized and unprepared mob of reactionary activists believed the same thing, that the results weren't valid and shouldn't be certified. The class composition of the riots were mainly capitalist and petty bourgeoisie contending against their proletarianization; many still believed Donald Trump as president could secure them an advantage.

They took it a step further and overran the Capitol police and broke into the Capitol building, we could see the distinction in police violence over the summer 2020 during the demonstrations following the murder of George Floyd. The Capitol police were more for public outreach so they took selfies with the mob of petty bourgeois activists. The situation was presented as being perilous, the state held back on dispatching the national guard, feeling it would be an overuse of force. The innovators of democratic ideology have been shaken by the lack of respect for their institutions. Some have deluded themselves and workers into believing that Trump, who's rather unpopular with the military joint chief of staff, was somehow going to lead a military junta without any organized support base or mass

movement.

A Worldwide Phenomena

Trump's electoral victory, the election gains of other populist and plebiscites such as Brexit marked the failures of expedients used by capitalist and politicians to contend with the crisis of profitability. The crisis reemerged in full force in the 1970s' after the post war accumulation cycle ended. The already existing crisis was compounded by the international financial crisis in 2008 and ensuing fiscal crisis. Neoliberal restructuring towards high profit, high tech industries along with financialization and globalization had completely maligned entire regions and state's productive industries. Workers' wages had been continuously attacked throughout the "great recovery", while the state's expenditures toward social spending were continually cut back and capitalists received tax cuts and fiscal gifts to restore profitability.

The capitalist system has been further shaken by the worldwide Covid- 19 crisis, market distortions caused by the Russo- Ukrainian war, and high interest rates to refinance credit institutions. This has further highlighted the current weakness of capitalism and has accelerated the trend towards economic nationalism and protectionism. States are operating under increasingly narrow constraints giving way to these lambasted ridiculous politicians who appeal towards increasingly confused workers who see nothing past capitalism.

The bourgeois media cries for better leadership pointing at the UK's musical chairs prime minister position, Meloni's election in Italy which was predicated on the collapse of the national coalition, likely electoral victory of Donald Trump in 2024 over the incumbent Joe Biden who doesn't give the state much confidence either, and the AfD's potential electoral gains.

In late 2023 there was also the peculiar victory of Javier Milei over the Justicialist Party and treasury secretary Massa, this took place in Argentina where neoliberalism showed its first grand failures in a major economy during the late 90s credit crunch from a string of defaults starting with Russia. From the economic miracle ending the late 80s' hyperinflation to debt default in 2001 the state had to renege on most neoliberal expedients. Now it

appears Javier Milei's presidential victory is in part due to voters being disabused towards the Justicialist Party, since most workers aren't anarcho-capitalist libertarians. As of February 14, 2024 defense minister Prabowo Subianto has unofficially announced his victory in the first round of elections with the right-wing populist Gerindra party in Indonesia. They're in support of mediation of the Ukraine-Russo war and normalizing relations with Israel. Indonesia normalizing diplomatic relations with Israel is a massive divergence from past policies of having no formal diplomatic ties and only quiet trade deals and security contacts.

Initially economic nationalism was a part of the programs of the left and liberal- left capitalist, opposing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the TTIP trading blocs and also conferences such as the WTO. Populism has become the standard bearer of it despite the equally protectionist ideology of the Democratic Party under Hillary Clinton in 2016, or American Jobs for Americans Sanders. Trump became the prime mover for protectionism and social reaction against the Democratic party and Hillary Clinton. The Democratic party with Clinton was seen as being a part of the crisis and proponents of the most internationalized factions of capital. The Democratic party was also able to unleash a further wave of social reaction and completely abandon any pretense of being for the working class, some of whom she dubbed "the basket of deplorables", composed more so now of extremely precarious workers in the gig economy and other "casual work."

Using identity politics to mobilize votes has statistically been a loss for the Democratic party too. The turnout for the 2016 election was low, Clinton won the popular vote by 2.5 million more votes and lost the electoral college vote by only 74 delegates. The "identities" courted by the Democratic party either abstained from voting or their support rate stagnated. The much lauded "white vote" remained similar to past election results for the Republican party. College educated white's casted fewer votes for Trump than Romney in 2012 while more "uneducated" voters casted theirs for Trump. The strengthened identity was an increasingly precarious inter- class block of voters mobilized as

"Americans" against immigrants. Workers are directed to fight amongst themselves against immigrants over the fewer jobs offered. Workers are directed behind economic nationalism for the capitalist who control industries which haven't been able to modernize due to the crisis of profitability and the failures of neoliberalism's expedients.

Rightwing populism and sovereignty proves to be just another rendition of a fool's socialism. With the competition for scarce profits becoming increasingly militarized, the promises of good jobs for good citizens and a semi communitarian idealism where the national capitalist, petite bourgeoisie farmers can coexist cooperatively. It's just as unrealistic as the capitalist- left still trying to sell a program that resembles the post-World War Two welfare state that the more successful states could temporarily enjoy, and which came with increased social cohesion and labor tranquility until crisis returned. The various populist electoral movements provide the state with persistent demands to pursue the national interest more vigorously against a domestic "fifth column" and against other states. We could see this clearly during the Brexit Plebiscite. They'll use many ideologies including those used by the leftwing of capitalism such as "anti-Imperialism"—read support for another state. A great example of this is Slovakia's Direction-Social Democracy party which describes itself as a sovereigntist party with a political orientations that's predicated on "the rustic social democracy that perceives the specifics of Slovak reality."

This phenomena emerged from extremely low levels of working class self-activity. The international working class barely identifies itself as a class in capitalism and definitely lacks the subjectivity of class consciousness to act as a class for itself. The rising factions of the populist, "alternative", "third positionist" right or whatever nomenclature they might use, and the capitalist are struggling to perfect the formula of triangulation amongst capitalist, middle strata who represent a large block interested in maintaining the capitalist system. Under the current conditions these political orientations are here to stay and respond to growing economic and social crises, only altering some window dressings.

Great Powers ?

Beginning in the 2010s, right populist have gotten the ball rolling accentuating capitalism's protectionist tendency. This so far appears to be populism's lasting influence on the capitalist system.

Bilateral diplomacy and economic policies such as demanding greater economic contributions from allies in defense treaties, increased tariffs and reneging on trade agreements have grown in importance. They've become the states preferred expedients to shore up their national economies. These expedients exemplify states increasingly ruthless drive to appropriate a greater share of surplus value at the expense of other nations. The opportunities for accumulating capital current and future are themselves accumulated. For the most dominant Imperialist states, bilateralism has become the best way to contend for a unilateral world, in their favor, since the collapse of the USSR.

The US has demanded greater contributions from the states in NATO and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They're all dependent on the defense treaty and are limited in opposing the new demands, despite the effects greater defense expenditures have on their national economies. This is far from completely scrapping treaties to contain Russia, or Iran; rather it's an expression of the USA pursuing a foreign policy which places these states more thoroughly behind the interest of the US.

This tendency has been greatly exacerbated by the Russo - Ukrainian war, members of NATO have had to increase their contributions to be equal to 2% of their GDP. The march towards generalized war will continue; the tempo can be modified, so too can Imperialist blocks based on imperialist interest. Russia's economy is buoyed by the economic and diplomatic support from China and India. Prolonging the current conflict in the Ukraine has severely stretched Russian Imperialism thin and deepened their dependence on China. There's the potential of a situation where the west will give Russia a more free hand in comparison to China, which the USA has been pivoting towards containing in the event of a confrontation over the island of Taiwan, the commercial offensive from the Belt and Road project, or the growth of the Yuan currency sphere.

The war has also greatly reduced economic growth in Europe's most advanced industrial and financially dominant states such as Germany. This is a result of the harsh regime of sanctions placed on Russian energy by the USA and the sanctions on companies who do business with Russia. This has caused Germany to become antsy as their share of exports to dip, and Macron's visions of a grand European army to fade with ether.

Initially prime minister Scholz put forward a plan based on their position on the US invasion of Iraq opposing the USA's more aggressive policies. Germany will likely detente relationships with Russia enough to meet the demanded growth in economic activity, however they'll remain hostile diplomatically and sanction select firms and individuals. It won't matter who governs Germany, in late 2022 the Bundestag amended the constitution to facilitate an 100, billion increase in the state's military expenditure. If the AfD makes the predicted parliamentary gains and forms a new government it's unlikely this course will be reversed, but only modified. The hostilities with Russia will continue and their dependence on the North Atlantic Treaty will remain a fact, explicit support for arming Ukraine is dissipating and as political crisis intensifies politicians become more divided on the way forward. In February, 2024 Prime Minister Scholz began to drag his heels in continuing unabashed aid for Ukraine, especially with the questions of providing Taurus missiles which required German crews to operate.

Commercial Before Shooting Wars

Trade wars in the forms of tariffs on key resources and technologies tend to presuppose open war. They've been preemptive strikes before in the lead up to the past two periods of generalized war. This is especially the case with the trade war with China and policies against exporting semiconductors and more advanced graphics microchips to China. There's also taxes on importing finished manufactured commodities from China. These policies are supposed to temporarily set China's economy back, and allow the US to retain its military predominance, which is the center focus in its imperialist power politics.

There's also similar instances when the USA trashed

the JCPOA with Iran over enriching uranium. This also greatly impacts the Euro zone which appeared to be in the best position for exporting capital to Iran. The Eurozone itself makes importing commodities simpler for the USA and eases the balance of payment for the smaller economies in Europe too. This however also is a way to help set back the Eurozone's ability to be a major competitor against the US dollar.

Iran's ability to maintain its growing military spending was the main target for rescinding the JCPOA and maintaining sanctions on Iran and firms who do business in Iran. It's become increasingly tenuous for Iran to grow their military expenditures without more capital to modernize. There's been many schemes such as the "resistance economy", where the state attempts to generate forced savings for a domestic loan. These policies, alongside strategic privatization and simply not paying wages not to mention sanctions, sky high inflation and unemployment have greatly deteriorated the social situation in Iran for workers.

The US had a more unified capitalist opposition to the proposed Trans Pacific Partnership. Since Trump's presidency the US formed separate military and economic alliances with the partner states. This has temporarily allowed China to gain a greater foothold with "soft power" imperialism, by investing into emerging markets and more direct support for states in currency exchanges to alleviate their balance of payment crisis. China's Belt and Road initiative is a commercial assault and seeks to expand the influence of the Yuan against the USD. China has made massive investments into various state's finances and direct investments for modernization in order to realize these expedients.

In May 2022 the USA would relaunch the Indo - Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity initiative. This has become a way for the USA to signal that they're still fighting to retain their influence in the region. The US is the keystone for the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), it was founded in 2007 but has taken a much more paramount role since 2017 in order to integrate India and Japan behind the USA's Chinese containment policies.

In September, 2021 AUKUS was formed with a much greater military emphasis. The AUKUS has been qualified as the new Monroe Doctrine, now India is having its imperialist interest stifled. In 2020 the US Navy would conduct exercises in India's exclusive zone under the pretense of the "Indian Oceans" interest. Within AUKUS there lies the clear weakness of the EU, not only did Australia renege on a contract to the French Naval Group for the stake of 12 submarines and instead would receive US nuclear submarines. This is a clear warning as any that France's plan to regroup states in the region to avoid a direct confrontation with China is becoming untenable.

In many ways Donald Trump's economic nationalist policies were more modest in scale than the counter cycles implemented during the presidencies of George Bush Jr's, which centered around military and security expenditures following 9/11, or Obama's first term. Donald Trump's initial plan to allocate \$1 trillion dollars for modernizing the USA's infrastructure. Due to the crisis of profitability, industry in the USA hasn't modernized since the mid 90s' microprocessor revolution, or really since the Volcker shock (citation) of the late 70s. This is because the amount of profits produced aren't sufficient for expanding capital, most investments are directed towards finances.

The state's fiscal policy is still heavily geared towards recycling US dollars, or Petro dollars. Providing higher returns for investing in US debt and high tech industries helps slow down economic development elsewhere. Much of what the bourgeoisie call the "developing world" is less industrially developed than in the 70s', this can be observed since the late 70s' interest hike and ensuing debt servicing crises. This is still the capitalist rationale behind the Federal Reserve's motivation for the current regime of interest rate hikes beginning in early 2022. The US's fiscal policies are also used to sop up surplus profits from the EU, Japan and the UK since their rates are lower than in the US.

The trade war tactic has become synonymous with Donald Trump's administration and the deflationary currents across Asia, mainly for China. But these brutal commercial conflicts to scrape up the last cent of profit are oftentimes a zero sum for all

states involved, it places further pressure on growth and can only temporarily stabilize conditions giving way to the eventual predominance of state demand for commodities. A major knock on effect from the 2008 subprime mortgage crisis was the already growing protectionist tendency from declining world trade and restructuring financial systems. Before then most raw materials and semi finished commodities would find their way into the capitalist heartlands, giving their capitalist the best opportunities to secure the greatest portion of profit.

The 2008 crisis has accelerated the regionalization of supply chains in Asia especially, there's been the growth of local monopolies and the domestic division of labor has become more complex in Modi's BJP India, which serves as a glaring example. Or the Cross Straits commercial Crisis between Taiwan based Foxconn and mainland China based Lens technology who produces glass, the two hash it out over how much profit from manufacturing the iPhone stays where, the workers pay a growing price as their labor must be devalued to meet profit targets. Aggressive mercantilist policies for contract manufacturers have been used to attempt to regenerate industrial activity, these have been accentuated by the Russo - Ukrainian war where there's been a more severe decoupling of economies.

Ripping Up The Old World

There's been the process of tearing up old conferences such as the IMF, WTO and even the UN. These conferences helped maintain American unilateralism, and are increasingly facing irrelevance. The USA is moving towards investing into its own military preparation and demanding greater contributions from allies as the world market shrinks. This goes alongside greater competition to retain strategic allies who see that the US isn't the only major imperialist and in some cases have less to offer for regional Imperialists. The US will likely use similar soft power tactics such as preferable deals for commodity sales and semi gratis loans to secure states support.

China has been able to make significant gains with their "currency exchanges" to help states maintain their balance of payment. There likely won't be another instance similar to the IMF mobilizing

more than 100 billion for Yeltsin's Russia to modernize their capital. Many states have begun dropping out of the WTO and can't adhere to the IMF's demands for loans. States such as Sri Lanka have had to go against these conferences and doubled down on protectionism especially in agriculture.

There's historical parallels during capitalism's watershed moment; the Great Depression where it became clear that capitalism's basic economic mechanisms were no longer functional and only state induced production could stabilize conditions, but only war and the destruction of capital values could restart profitable accumulation and usher a boom. During the depression the USA seemingly abandoned its policy of military intervention, especially in the Caribbean. This was a mainstay of American imperialism since the implementation of the Roosevelt Corollary, but began with the regional imperialist, Spanish American war.

The USA which was the main beneficiary of the first world war alongside the main allies would also begin to trash the league of nations and other strategic conferences such as France's little entente or the Kellogg - Briand pact dealing with military diplomacy.

Many would qualify President Hoover's policies as isolationists when the last intervention forces were pulled out of Haiti, Dominican Republic and then Nicaragua in the early thirties, but this would be all codified by president Franklin D, Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy which ramped up military preparedness in order to intervene in the future.

Many states such as Cardenas Workerist Mexico, or The Infamous Decade era Argentina and lastly Vargas Brazil underwent extensive nationalization measures as the world market shrank. The US was focused on ensuring these states' strategic materials would be placed under their own interest and weren't going to intervene for a few firms being nationalized, or tariffs being enacted. This proved to be effective in the late 30s' in combating Germany's and Japan's trade offensive, despite these developmentalist states having an interest in the axis led barter systems they were placed under military lockdown by the USA. The US would in some instances get fleeced by these states in higher commodity prices or demand more loans.

Trump's plan for modernizing infrastructure was to mainly get private firms involved in helping to finance the projects in exchange for fiscal gifts; this has accelerated with Biden's administration.

The covid -19 pandemic and the political and economic decouplings with Russia has really accelerated public - private partnerships in key industries. The Federal Reserve has begun to also explicitly finance most "midsize" to "large" industries, just not the largest most organized multinational firms who have access to international credit markets. There's also the stripping of workers protection and even more direct confrontation with unions as their relevance for the state drops further. Normally they'd be in support of Trump's protectionist policies and infrastructure projects. This has continued with Biden dashing the proposed railroad strike in late 2022 under the window dressings of national security and defending democracy during the Russo - Ukrainian war. Stripping internal regulations on labor and attacks on the state's former intermediaries is an expedient to free up American capital to restructure with even more fluidity. The Inflation Reduction Act is centered on investing into energy production to ease inflation, but also raising profits through unemployment which also increases the state's life blood, taxable profits and future profits to borrow on.

The current regime of rate hikes by the federal reserve have been used as ways to further discipline already heavily indebted and precarious workers, by hammering in the threat of unemployment and farming out growing debts on workers. The rate hikes are attempts to increase profitability and to restore the interest of creditors who's loan principal are eaten up by inflation.

In the USA, just as all states, the political crisis is deepening whereas the old established politicians and parties have lost their sheen and the various populist orientations have been able to take advantage of the increasing confusion of workers who see nothing beyond decadent capitalism and the governments operating under increasingly narrow constraints. In the USA the incumbent president Joe Biden isn't offering the state much more confidence than the former president Donald Trump. Since the 70s' in the USA and around the world the capitalist

left have long been in support of austerity measures and even kicked off neoliberalism as seen with President Jimmy Carter and Prime minister Callahan. This was followed up by the milieu of "third positionist" types from Mitterrand's socialist party in France, Clinton's democratic party in the USA and Blair's New Labour in the UK. They're all adhering to the expedients capitalism demands; increase profits and increase state revenues or the ability to finance the state. After the 2008 speculative bubble burst even the most bare boned palliative social spending dried up and these parties no longer pretended "to be for the working class against the corporation!" Or whatever old slogans were still being distributed.

The working class has suffered decades of constant defeats and direct assaults on their living standards, the capitalist left can only try to sell a bridge in these conditions and offer a better tomorrow in the form of greater social spending, in exchange for greater sacrifice. The capitalist left will keep workers off their own terrain and involved in democratic politics, they will frame the current conditions as a crisis of Autocracy, Fascism and Populism. While the various hues of populist are offering the working class promises of greater wages through economic nationalist policies. The drive towards generalized war has been ramping up as there's

less expedients available for decadent capitalism, only a war that dismembers the international working class can allow for fresh accumulation.

Communists must oppose all capitalist politicians, intervene in the class struggle whenever possible, and contend for positions that take it beyond the control of the bourgeoisie politicians, unions and other intermediaries and the state. The working class must create its own class wide bodies against the organs of the state. Through the class struggle communists must consistently fight towards the creation of a unified communist party, with a political program that contains reflections of the past experiences of the revolution, and counter revolution, only then the workers can win more than bragging rights over which government will send them off to war or enact austerity.

As Onorato Damen wrote in the 1952 Platform of the Internationalist Communist Party

"There is no possibility of working class emancipation, nor of the construction of a new social order if this does not emerge from the class struggle ... At no time and for no reason does the proletariat abandon its combative role. It does not delegate to others its historical mission, and it does not give power away, not even to its political party."

B (IWG)



Credit: Marsel Minga

Capitalism's Environmental Destruction & Imperialism

For the class-based capitalist system, production is for profits while human needs aren't considered unless they're "marketable". Workers are alienated from exercising control over the production process. Production for profit comes into contradiction with the preservation of the environment, which is not marketable in itself. Politicians may occasionally have success rolling out reforms, pledging their commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the degradation of the environment, and certain more "far-sighted" politicians can see the need to maintain the basic conditions for capitalism. However, their actions are limited by the needs of their nation's competitiveness in the international system of imperialism and thus are unable to fully address the destruction of the environment

and rising CO₂ emissions.

As the capitalist state is directed by profits, politicians can only put forward the most myopic reforms. These cannot interfere too greatly with the needs of capital accumulation and the imperialistic interest of the state, the most predatory monopoly grouping. During times of crisis it is driven to reconstitute competition through economic, financial, and diplomatic means—up to and including imperialist war. Capitalism is rooted in productivism, constantly driven towards exploiting labor power and expanding production (capital accumulation) on a greater scale.

Marx wrote in *Capital*:

"Accumulation for accumulation's sake, production for production's sake, these are the watchwords of

the political economy announcing the historical mission of the bourgeois period. And it doesn't delude itself for a minute on the pains of giving birth to its wealth..."

This makes the goals of reformism untenable whenever the Green parties, or other reformist parties with environmental programs or proclamations about ushering in a greener capitalism come to power. Last October, during the German parliamentary elections, a new government coalition comprised of the SPD (which has an illustrious record for serving the needs of capital), the Green Party and Free Democratic Party. The new state coalition presents their program as a "vitamin shot for Germany," committed to maintaining the competitiveness of German industry while protecting the environment and combating climate change.

In the USA, members of the Democratic Party who support environmental reforms have put forward the "Green New Deal", a program to save the environment and revive the moribund capitalist system through capital-intensive investments in high profit green industries.

States and politicians will obscure their intentions. President Biden promised "net-zero emissions no later than 2050" and established the Climate Security Advisory Council while leasing out millions of acres of land for oil exploration. All that he can really do is protect capital against the working class who will experience the brunt of climate collapse.

30 years ago, the Kyoto Climate Conference proposed to commodify states' ability to pollute and degrade the environment through carbon credits. Some states could sell surpluses of carbon credits, allowing others to pollute. This would benefit financially dominant states that pollute heavily like the USA. States such as China, India, major European powers, and Russia (which reconstituted itself as a major imperialist actor through its oil pipelines flowing into Europe and as the largest supplier of raw materials) instead fought for a resolution that gives their nation's social capital an advantage. It would allow them to pollute based on their population, which would better adhere to their capital's competitive needs. Seven years ago, at the Paris Climate Conference, individual nation states pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in or-

der to keep the rise in temperature to only 1.5° C. In November 2021, the Glasgow Climate Conference abandoned this target and moved it up to 2.5° C!

The constant competition to produce and market more commodities prevents states from meeting these targets. States must promote and increasingly support their nation's capital, especially in times of crisis. States place these considerations above the environment, and in fact some states in the arena of international imperialism are completely dependent on the constant degradation of the environment.

The capitalist system demands continual accumulation in order to continue to function properly; since the 1970s the world's GDP has increased by 300% calculated in financial terms. The global population has nearly doubled in the past 50 years from 3.7 billion in the 1970s to 8 billion. This led to a drastic increase in the amount of greenhouse gas emissions; since the 1970s the amount of energy used has followed the rate of capitalist growth, increasing by 300%. As late as 2020, 84% of all energy generated still comes from fossil fuels. Maximizing profits lies as the basis of capitalism; this translates into decreasing wages and the cost of raw materials while increasing the productivity of labor and the amount of commodities produced and marketed. The capitalist has no control over this; if they decide to not increase their firm's productivity, they face the depreciation of their capital and ruination. If not, they'll be forced to sell their commodities below the cost of production. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other initiatives to mitigate damages to the ecosystem factor in as waste production and a reduction of already anemic profits. Any attempt to create a "Greener society" under the framework of capitalism is fiercely resisted by how deep-rooted the influence of major greenhouse gas producing industries is in financial markets.

"For capitalism all natural resources are nothing but gold. The more quickly it exploits them, the more the flow of gold accelerates. The private economy results in each individual trying to make the most profit possible without even thinking for a single moment of the general interest, that of humanity. As a

result, every wild animal having a monetary value and every wild plant giving rise to profit is immediately the object of a race to extermination."

"The Destruction of Nature" - Anton Pannekoek.

The Crisis of the System

Any attempt to create a "greener society" is immediately confronted by the demands for constant growth - the capitalist system has long been profit-starved and crisis-stricken as a result of the post war accumulation cycle's coming to an end over 50 years ago. This reality has been disguised for decades by various expedients used to temporarily alleviate the crisis; the most successful of which has been financial deregulations and globalization which have increased greenhouse gas emissions.

Globalization has been a way to manage the crisis - anemic profits were bolstered by creating a new accumulation regime through restructuring investments in favor of learner, more profitable industries and outsourcing low profit industries away from capitalist heartlands towards low wage centers. Outsourcing low profit industries has increased the production of commodities that cause the greatest amount of greenhouse gas emissions, such as concrete, steel, oil, and coal, each fueling the construction of new productive capital. Meanwhile, capital has stretched supply lines across the world while increasing the amount of oil consumed. Shipping costs have increased by over 600% due to labor-shortages, shipping backlogs from the pandemic, and the cost of fuel. This cost is passed onto the working class, contributing to the decades-high inflation eliminating its paychecks as the destruction of the environment continues full steam ahead .

On October 5th, 2022, OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) defied U.S. pressure and is cutting oil production by 2 million barrels a day. Oil prices were on a downwards trajectory starting in June 2022, when the price was \$120 a barrel to \$80 currently. This has led to White House spokesperson Karin Jean-Pierre accusing OPEC members, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE of "aligning with Russia" and U.S. president Biden directing the Department of Energy to release 10 million barrels of oil in November 2022. This further demonstrates capitalism's lack of any

real ability to address the climate crisis. Even "progressive" politicians are subordinate to the imperatives of international imperialism, including the need to control the production and sale of oil and other raw materials. There's a need to reconstitute competition on an expanded scale in order to regulate the capitalist system.

Economic Contradictions, Imperialist Rivalries and Further Environmental Degradation

Imperialist relations make pursuing real, worthwhile environmental reforms that could potentially curve greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the worse aspects of environmental degradation completely untenable. The economy must "go on" and grow as that's the only way for the capitalist system to function. Due to the lack of surplus value this basic drive for capitalist profits becomes increasingly monumental. State intervention takes center stage in the decadent imperialist epoch of capitalism, due the breakdown or failure of the underlying economic mechanism. The state must act "imperialistically" to regenerate competition on a greater scale. Instead of between competing firms, you have states and their war machines. Politicians who pursue programs that appear to aim at addressing these concerns will do only what's possible without further negatively effecting profitability and the states position in the arena of international imperialism.

Inter-imperialist relations depend on the continual exploitation of the environment. The main sources of GHS (greenhouse gas) pollution come from heavy industry, these being coal, concrete, oil and steel. These productive industries are also the main tributaries for the public and private financial systems, too, and so, effectively function as the basis for currency exchange, such that all international transactions get routed through the banks of major imperialist blocs. The significance of this is that it allows for constant state investments rewarding dominant imperialist states with the ability to fund spending deficits. States such as Russia with a somewhat weak financial system have cemented their place in international imperialism through their ability to control the flow of energy resources into Europe and much of Asia. The USA has massively increased oil and gas production to tighten

its grip on NATO and weaken the influence of the Chinese Yuan. So, too, NATO and EU members engage in the extraction of coal, as well as the still-destructive production of renewables. In some cases, like that of Germany's, these states have become obliged by systemic imperatives to ratify policies that increase net GHS pollution merely in order to pull themselves out from under the thumb of either imperialist bloc and pursue their own national interest.

Environmental reforms constitute a deduction out of the total mass of profit generated by each nationally organized capital. The state, therefore, sees a more rational form of waste production in arms production and, to a lesser extent, soon-to-be profitable ventures like EVs and batteries. All aforementioned cases have doubtlessly contributed to the escalation of the competitive dynamic which invariably develops between competing blocs over limited resources to produce the same commodities and gain access to a new supply of comparably cheaper labor-power.

Moreover, with the production of things like batteries, the drive towards protectionism within periods of deepening crisis becomes accentuated. This impetus stems from the need to regenerate capitalist competition, which requires productive capacity to be maintained through state ownership, public-private ventures or patronage to various state-controlled large firms, monopolies. It is also the case for agrifirms, which states are obliged to subsidize in order to keep in business for war preparedness, use as a geopolitical instrument to cultivate alliances and to maintain the conditions necessary for maintenance of the working class. Many agrifirms have lower productivity, are wasteful and contribute to environmental degradation, expelling noxious chemicals which cause thousands of premature deaths annually. The production which takes place in these agrifirms and processing firms that often also require the typically seasonal exploitation of migrant workers to be profitable is a result of imperialist relations.

The war being fought in Ukraine is a major development in imperialist relations. It differs between the imperialist wars of the 2010s such as the various wars in Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and

Afghanistan, or, even more currently, in the 2020's wars within the Southern Caucasian mountains over control of pipelines flowing into Europe; or even the war being carried out in Tigray over federal reforms that would decrease the influence of the local power brokers. In truth, these are all imperialist wars in which each belligerent and co-belligerent are connected to one or another imperialist power bloc. The war is a direct confrontation between two imperialist blocs, namely that of Russia and the Western European/US block, into whose orbit Ukraine has been successfully brought. The current war is inseparable from the general crisis of profitability that ails capitalism today, which has caused imperialist actors to become more reckless and uncontrollable by the "chiefs" within their respective blocs.

The crisis of declining profits and the states mobilization of resources for armaments has indefinitely removed the possibility for environmental reforms. This current round of imperial barbarism allows for the US to strengthen the dollar. The sanctions against Russia, meanwhile, enable the USA to effectively replace Russia as the seller of natural and oil from fracking to the EU members of NATO, while selling an ever-greater number of arms to the NATO member states. Russia has been trying to revive the weak ruble and increase its influence as an exchange currency by making "hostile" states in the EU pay for Russian energy in rubles only. A major motivation for Russia is the instability of energy prices and movements away from fossil fuels, which would mark effectively signal the end for the Russian state and its greatest income source. These sanctions have allowed Russia to demand more favorable contract contingencies with these "recalcitrant" states. Such as greater fuel prices, longer contracts and so on. Russia's annexations in Eastern Ukraine will also allow Russia to temporarily accelerate the rate of capital accumulation by removing a potential regional competitor, seizing their markets. This would allow them to better use their industrial resources while strategically countering NATO's offensives throughout the course of the war.

It's an insoluble contradiction for the capitalist system that the further the system pursues a higher

rate of profit, it only makes the opportunity to produce profits more difficult in the long run. As the organic composition of capital increases so too does the amount of surplus - value required for the maintenance and expansion of capital. This is while the rate of profit declines as a result of the growing value of constant capital, the means of production, which don't produce surplus value. Only continual capital accumulation can usher in a period of relative prosperity for the capitalist system. Economic stagnation and depression can bring for the capitalist class the potential ruination of capitalist society; or the reorganization of production to usher in a new cycle of profitable accumulation. Capitalism was forced to develop imperialistically due to its inability to escape its own contradictions; instead, it exports them and makes them greater. Marx identified the driving force of this tendency: With every successive accumulation cycle there was the concentration and centralization of capital and political power into fewer hands, monopolies, trust, and the state which is the most influential institution in the current imperialist epoch of capitalism. The state develops an interest in ensuring the survival of these monopolies. In capitalism's epoch of imperialist decay, the state must increasingly intervene more often in the economy and assume a greater role to do what individual capitalists can't do because of a lack of economic incentives. In periods of relative profitable accumulation, if the opportunity isn't there to raise the rate of profit appropriation, then extra profits will have to be appropriated abroad. This only sharpens imperialist rivalries in preparation for the ensuing crisis brought on by the dearth of capital. There's also the need for imperialist wars' the greatest form of capitalism's destructive barbarism, has ever growing needs. In which this entails keeping as much of the nation's social capital utilized through inducing waste production the preferred form being armaments.

As a result of these tendencies, since the late 19th century the market cycle could no longer regulate the system through cyclically devaluing capital. State intervention became the main regulator for capitalist society. With each successive accumulation cycle capital values would increase and so

would the concentration of capital and political power. Brought on by the concentration of capital, competition multiplied between monopolies and later between states, the most predatory monopolies, asserting their own interests and utilizing means such as imperialist war. In capitalism's decadence, new accumulation can only result from a massive destruction of dead labor, the means of production. This is the only perspective capitalism has and any national reformist solutions for climate change must adhere to it.

The decadent imperialist epoch of capitalism sees competition between states take on the form of open warfare and the predominance of politics over economics. Though war has accompanied capitalism throughout its entire development, politics have become intertwined with economics. Marx's statement is more relevant now than ever: "to seize things is the vital principle of every bourgeois and to take foreign provinces is after all 'taking'."

In the epoch of capitalism's ascendancy, the international distribution of surplus value was relatively determined by the exchange process. Though there were of course extra-economic modes of distribution, these became more predominant in the current epoch of capitalism.

The tendency towards war as the "solution" to capitalist crisis finds its expression in the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is an imperialist confrontation between Ukraine; which has fully entered the orbit of the EU, NATO (USA block) and Russia. The war in Ukraine is a major development in International imperialist relations. It has led to consolidating alliances between imperialist actors and has provided great impetus for these states' massive overhaul of military spending, all trending towards an all-out generalized war.

Russia's wider imperialist goal is to create a space for itself in the world imperialist arena so as to better compete in the oil, gas, and strategic raw materials markets. In terms of industrial competition, it aims to control the extraction of rare earths and coal, but also to gain strategic space that allows it to face opponents in an advantageous position, even if only from a defensive point of view. This conflict has allowed Russia to increase their finan-

cial influence too, 'hostile states' have been made to pay for their natural gas and oil in rubles. (10) There's also the shift towards "green energy", which threatens the Russian state's strategic position gained through controlling most energy exports in Europe.

"Meanwhile, Western capital and states are beginning the transition to a new energy structure, the so-called "green energy", aimed at reducing the consumption of gas and oil in the future. For Russian capital and its economy, this will mean the same strategic collapse that the fall in oil prices once caused for the Soviet economy. Therefore, the Kremlin seeks to prevent this energy turnaround, or slow it down, or at least achieve more favorable conditions for itself in the redistribution of the energy market. For example, looking for long-term supply contracts and better prices, pushing out competitors, etc. If necessary, this can involve direct pressure on the West in various ways."

KRAS

This war and annexation of Ukraine's industrial heartland can help Russian capital temporarily accumulate but the crisis isn't overcome, but rather is reproduced greater. This can be seen as well in Ukraine. The western part of the state has seen the flight of some 600 firms from the threatened, more industrialized eastern part of the state.

"However, the Blitzkrieg changes the map of the world even faster than the imperialism of liberalism; all-purpose production exceeds all previous records; capital spreads to all corners of the world; populations are displaced on a scale that makes the mass immigration of the past seem like joyous weekend getaways. Munitions factories in the jungles of the Dutch Indies, aircraft assembly lines in the deepest forests of China, "Liberators" that carry death across the Atlantic in seven and a half hours, bomb-proof shelters that are true feats of engineering and protect 46 divisions waiting for Der Tag of the invasion, enthusiastic shock troops on the battlefield, in factories and in enemy territory - surely this cannot mean that they turned back the clock ."

From Liberalism To Fascism -Paul Mattick, Sr.

If either imperialist bloc doesn't expand, they contract and can be made fodder of by the other im-

perialist states. There's no shortage of examples of the American bloc courting with Ukraine to bring them more firmly into their orbit. The USA, along with Britain and Canada, has armed and trained the Ukrainian military to NATO standards while in May 2022, when the US House of Representatives asked to spend \$33 billion on aid, President Joe Biden augmented the package to \$40 billion. All this was without any reformist opposition to US imperialism. Through control over environmentally degrading industries and the production of military waste material, states assert themselves and defend their position against their rivals.

Defending US markets and maintaining its position in the arena of international imperialism is costly. The war machine can't be built with private capital, which requires the state to organize the flow of capital into the imperialist war machine. Imperialist objectives require the organized state-capitalist apparatus to produce the commodities and provide services needed to keep the imperialist war machine running and help stabilize capitalist social relations. The health insurance industry, university systems, and a myriad of infamous corporate entities directly depend on the patronage of government tax dollars.

The social democratic chancellor Scholz who leads the new German ruling political coalition initially opposed the US-led NATO's policies for the war in Ukraine. It's only going to sideline 'Germanpolitik'. Germany is a leading power in the EU and has close economic relations with Russia. Up to half of Germany's gas imports came from Russia. Now, with the war they're more dependent on US natural gas imports. However, German industry is by and large still reliant on Russian energy, as 31% of its used energy originates there.

US and NATO imperialist interests are becoming antagonistic toward the imperialist objectives of German social capital. Germany has no choice but to remain aligned with the NATO block as they still require their military support and as of now can't fully realize their imperialist foreign policy alone. The German economy is export-dependent and its share of international exports has been reduced since the 90s' by nearly 50%.

In response, German capital is driven towards bol-

stering military spending and revamping their energy policy. The state has issued a 100-billion-euro program for armaments which required constitutional amendments. The state will be intervening more thoroughly in the already substantial renewable/green energy sector to free itself from US and Russian gas.

Arms or Green Investments? It all ends the same!

The state's rationalization of waste production is primarily done with the considerations of imperialistic national competition. It's used in a way to insulate the nation's social capital from the crisis of profitability.

Armaments also have no market besides the state in which due to the way capitalism develops has its own interest namely in the defense of certain firms which will produce revenues, the life blood of the state above all else. The growth of this form of production corresponds with the prolonged and worsening crisis. Arms induce production temporarily alleviating the decline in industrial activity. So too are they used to stake claim and defend resources. Such as the ones necessary for the production of the myriad of "green alternatives" which have taken center stage between contending states who all see the future profits in the ventures. Diplomacy accords, preferential treatment agreements, concessions and wars ensure the flow of these commodities while leading to a flow of blood and environmental destruction. These commodities are produced under the same capitalistic dictates as any other. To produce as many and as cheaply as possible to increase market share and profits for the firm.

State intervention was traditionally geared towards complete utilization of the state's national capital along with waste production (specifically armaments). The state's waste production increases in the form of armaments as the crisis becomes deeper; fewer tools are available in a state's repertoire besides direct confrontation. Weaker imperialist states like Russia already began from a poor position with fewer means to handle the deepening crisis.

Most 'green investments' such as reforestation, land remediation, etc., just as armaments are waste

production since they are neither means of production or consumption. Their expenditures are deducted from total profits. The US military produces more greenhouse gas than the state of Portugal. However, unlike reforestation and the myriad of other capitalist cleanup projects, armaments help the state achieve their imperialist objectives. Capitalists don't mind armament spending as it helps promote their nation's social capital on the world market. Furthermore, the demand is created by the state, so it doesn't crowd out the marketability of profit producing capitalist formations.

However, "green energy" sources, the accompanying divestment of fossil fuels, and the production of commodities such as electric vehicles (EVs), solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries are very much value producing industries, even though they receive plentiful state funding. In the most recent U.S. spending bill, \$13.8 billion has been allotted to firms that produce both EVs and batteries, funding the construction of new factories. Along with tax rebates to purchase EVs as part of the Inflation Reduction Act, individual state governments have been giving firms incentives to build their factories in their states. Meanwhile, General Motors announced that their electric vehicles will be as profitable to them as their regular internal combustion engine vehicles by 2025. With "green energy alternatives", production has to keep growing and the commodity must be produced as cheaply as possible in order to continue to gain market shares. The same has been said about solar and wind energy since they can't produce energy as cheaply as coal and oil. We don't just need alternative energy sources and different power sources for vehicles, but rather a different social order that produces for human needs and isn't dictated to by market dynamics no matter how couched they appear. These "green alternatives" in capitalism can be seen as equally damaging to the environment and are finding themselves in the forefront of the accentuating imperialist tensions in world capitalism. Wind turbines for example require 240-400 tons of concrete per megawatt installed. This means the usual 2.5-megawatt turbine requires 600-1000 tons per turbine.

Similarly, imperialist rivalries are intensified by Chi-

nese, American and Japanese mining and tech firms prying to gain control over Cobalt deposits in the Congo needed for lithium batteries used in most electronics and electric vehicles. By 2016, 60% of the world's cobalt came from Congolese mines with the deaths and illnesses of mainly Congolese proletariat in the wake of these operations. These small mines help firms keep the cost down in the low profit industry of ore extraction. The environmental devastation caused by mining operations, fueled by the hunger of global capitalism for ore, has been tremendous. The effects on the already heavily impoverished local populations and their families living near mines are horrific, from having traces of cobalt and other heavy metals in their urine 43 times greater than average to lead levels five times as high (the levels for heavy metals were greater) in children. Spikes in birth defects and other diseases are common in these ore dust covered regions of the world ripped apart and undermined by global capitalism's quest for profit making.

Much of the mined cobalt finds its way to China, the largest producer of lithium batteries and solar panels. China dominates the mining industry in the region while the Chinese proletariat is producing much of these batteries used for electric vehicles in polluted cities for low wages. China's capitalists have had a growing demand for cobalt and other metals used in the production of batteries. The battery maker GEM had purchased a third of all cobalt shipped by Glencore, the world's biggest producer of the metal. Between 2018-2020 it amounted to half of the 110,000 ton production before in 2017. This goes with the increased competition for market shares in the electric car industry and battery production. The amount of cobalt needed is 10-20 lbs per electric car battery. The other mineral needed in great abundance for the production of lithium batteries in China is graphite. Chinese graphite production is primitive, being baked in high heat to be purified. This is simply the cheapest way to do this manufacturing process. However, it unleashes greater misery on the greatly exploited working class in China. Crops and water supply are poisoned by the toxic soot and the air quality becomes unsafe. Factors like this has wors-

ened the contradictions between living and dead labor in China as seen recently with increased strike activity and demonstrations against work and living conditions and state oppression. This isn't unique to China as the decaying world capitalist system is desperately trying to recuperate profits and increase the mass of it. The constant demand for enlarged accumulation of capital makes the environment a casualty. It doesn't matter if alternative fuel measures are implemented, capitalist production is the core of the problem.

Many of the solutions favored by the Green lobby involve environmental destruction and pollution themselves. Mining large quantities of rare earth metals, cobalt and lithium, required for green energy, causes appalling pollution. China, where 70% of rare earths are mined, has poisoned vast areas of land. Mining lithium, for car batteries, in the Atacama Desert in Chile has already destroyed saltwater lakes and robbed the freshwater aquifer. The fact that capitalism requires continual growth, and that each nation state is in competition to gain a competitive advantage over its rivals means the environment always remains an "externality." What capitalists can never admit is that the cause of the entire suite of environmental problems is global capitalism itself. Hence all solutions which leave capitalism in place are futile.

System affirming solutions

Despite decades of retreat, only the working class can save the world from climate disaster. The state machinery and capitalist system must be abolished, only one class has an interest in doing such. The only answers the capitalist class have adhere to the needs of capital, themselves the cause of the crisis. There's a need for constant growth in production; this is the case too with "green alternatives." Production must constantly increase in order to produce the commodities cheaper and pump out more profits.

In the USA, solutions such as the "Green New Deal" is brought up, the deal is anointed with what was considered the highest point of reformism by the capitalist, one of their greatest victories presupposed by increased industrial activity, funding through inflationary measures, and legalizing unions in exchange for outlawing strikes. The

Green New Deal, just as the New Deal, seems like an initiative to have the state support capital demanding industries with high profits. In 2022, \$73bn has been allocated by the state for battery factories. In some states this has amounted to their largest economic development project. Supporters of green investments claim that curtailing environmental degradation isn't mutually exclusive from revitalizing the moribund capitalist system.

This is another arena for imperialist competition just as FDR's New Deal was. It was centered around ending monopoly-determined stagnation through an ever-greater degree of centralization of capital in order to reconstitute imperialist capitalist competition.

The greatest example that lays the contradictions of environmentalism bare is how China is 'deals' with climate change without making any actual progress. China is the world "leader in clean energy", the massive factories of traditional industries that Chinese capitalist accumulation has relied on for so many decades. Where is their place in this green revolution? In Africa, apparently. China, just as dominant Western states, exports much of its waste material to developing countries for recycling back into industrial inputs or shipped out low profit and environmentally degrading industries, for example coal production. Countries like Kenya are already becoming toxic dump sites for the Chinese economy, with potentially disastrous effects on Kenya's coastline that will negatively affect not only the local environment and wildlife, but Kenyan workers, if this continues. China is reducing its domestic contribution to worldwide emissions of greenhouse gas while adding even more to global emissions through business developments and the destruction of nature in other countries.

Then there's the systems affirming solutions put forward by the environmentalist organizations' that belong to the capitalist left such as Extinction Rebellion. Activists for the Extinction Rebellion aren't coy about holding capitalism and the elite to account for 'destroying the climate' and in turn bringing 'mass starvation' and 'social collapse'. Mercifully "the capitalist system is going to be brought down by itself", doing so posing the "need for fundamental change in the structure of the

economy". This reveals their fear of capitalism collapsing. Otherwise their neo religious "longings ... to be in unity with each other and with the life-source, call it the divine, call it the still small voice", has no affinity with the only way to bring about communism the superior social alternative to capitalism. What they're actually doing, despite its claims, is channeling people's fear of climate disaster into a campaign to reform capitalism. It makes demands for reform in the state and cooperates with the police, while its leaders run in elections. The capitalist left and the Green New Deal which is an umbrella for these initiatives was gaining traction during Trump's presidency before the Covid 19 pandemic. Now, it's unlikely the state will massively increase their expenditures for most initiatives (save highly profitable capitalist formations such as the production of electric and hybrid vehicles, wind turbines, and other 'green' technologies. These would have to be made globally and agreed by all countries to have any effect, something that individual nation states have been unable to fully accomplish, let alone competing imperialist alliances).

There's no alternative in capitalist society

For capital, regardless of which politicians are in charge, there's no solution to reverse the climate crisis. All solutions put forward are myopic since the cost towards profit making must be considered. Accumulation is the basis of capitalism and the life blood of the capitalist state. With each successive climate change accord, greenhouse gasses emissions continue to rise. The climate emergency becomes graver for the future of humanity. The climate crisis is exacerbated by the fall in the rate of profit and with that accentuated imperialist relations which is informing the march towards a total war.

Their solutions tend to have the increasingly precarious and immiserated working class foot the bill, through increased taxes and prices to decrease consumption. Workers' consumption has already been in decline. This is a result of wages remaining stagnant and declining as the percentage of workers' wages as part of the GDP has been in decline since the 1970s.

The international working class has the ability to do

away with capitalism and implement an international communist society. The labor of the working class is what allows for the continuation of the capitalist system. This historical class has the ability to develop a revolutionary anti-capitalist consciousness through its struggles against the capitalist system.

Capitalism, in its imperialist decadence can only lead humanity towards environmental destruction, wars and unforeseen barbarism as the class struggle also allows for the mutual ruination of both contending classes. The only option is for its replacement with a higher form of social organization and production, a communist society.

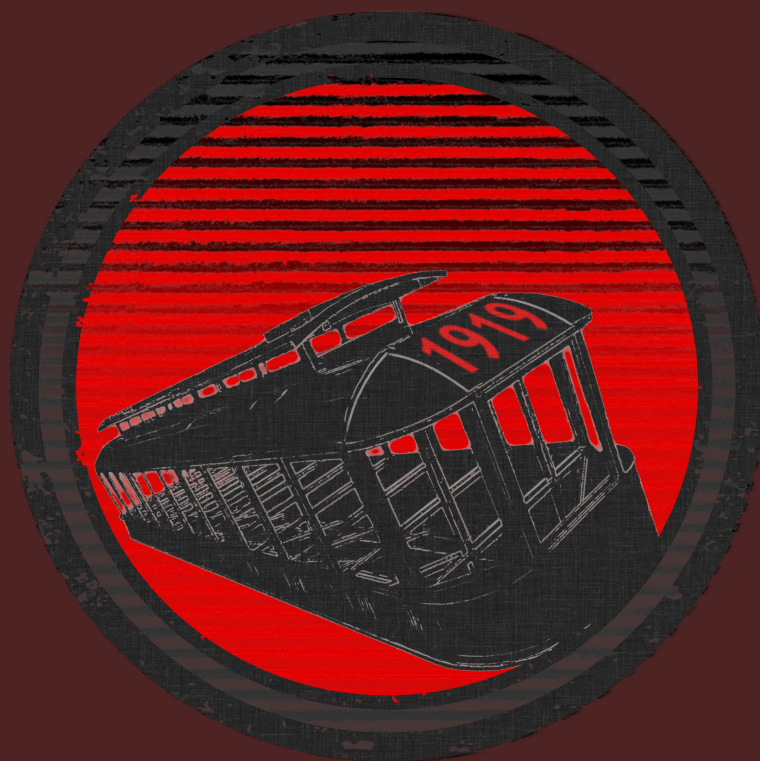
The conditions of capitalism have created a world market and the working class which is bound only by radical chains. The worsening climate crisis and

wars will lead to mass unemployment and privation. This will increase class antagonisms to their fullest and the working class struggle as a result of the working class's basic living conditions will become nearly impossible for the capitalist to provide. Crop failures from droughts, food being plowed back into the soil or used as animal fodder, natural disasters and wars causing mass migrations. The economic struggles open the possibility of workers developing class consciousness. These struggles need direction from a revolutionary political organization that's already rooted in the working class, with a revolutionary program to steer the struggle out of system affirming channels and act as a guide for the creation of a communist society.

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About Us

1919 is a joint political journal between the two North American affiliates of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (ICT), Klasbatalo and Internationalist Workers' Group. We fight toward the historic task of the working class, communism. Communism is the organization of society directly focused on the fulfillment of need in which the antagonism between the individual and collective is abolished. It is a world which knows no classes, property, state, or bureaucracy. In short, communism is the abolition of political society. To achieve this task, we believe the working class must fight on its own terrain to defend against the bosses' attacks, and to push forth its own interest. We are for the formation of the world communist party. We do not believe that we alone will be this party. Rather, we see ourselves participating in the real work that is necessary for its formation.



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