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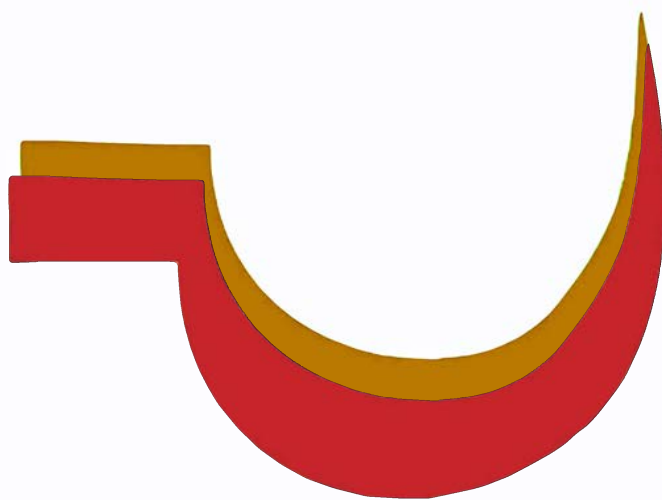
LAND

PEACE

BREAD

SPRING 2020





"Anyone who has learned anything from history or from Marxism will have to admit that a political analysis must focus on the class issue: what class represents the revolution and what class the counter-revolution? [...]"

Without the victory of the revolutionary proletariat there can be no peace for the people, land for the peasants nor bread for the workers and all working people."

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin

"They Do Not See the Wood for the Trees"

1917

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Peace, Land, and Bread

strives to be a leading voice of international Marxist-Leninist scholarship, offering communist perspectives on politics, history, economics, and aesthetics. Printed bi-annually, the print journal is dedicated to the publication of rigorous, peer-reviewed work.

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Peace, Land, and Bread (PLB) is brought to you by the publications working group at the Center for Communist Studies (CCS). We are a research center engaged in academic and public scholarship dedicated to the advancement of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice.

The CCS was founded in 2017 by three graduate researchers, and has since grown to a diverse and lively fellowship of scholars and activists. Complementing our broad goal of contributing to and encouraging Marxist-Leninist scholarship, our immediate aims include:

Increasing our publication of PLB from biannual to quarterly;
publishing books through our press, with four books scheduled for publication in 2020; and
the creation of a forthcoming educational program and school, in partnership with the socialist arts and literary group, the Wayland Collective.

The CCS is currently home to thirteen research fellows engaged in research on the various aspects of intersection between communist studies and law, philosophy, history, ecology, education, activism, art, literature, and theology. We exist to foster inter- and trans-disciplinary research amongst communist scholars and activists, and to build bridges between researchers, writers, and activists across the globe. At present, CCS fellows live and work in Brazil, Ireland, Vietnam, India, Australia, and the US.

In addition to PLB, CCS fellows are engaged in diverse projects such as the podcast 'Plough and Stars', the creation of audio texts, art, and agitpróp, longitudinal research projects, dissertation and thesis projects, the translation and publication of out-of-print works of communist theory, writing, journalism, and more.

Peace, Land, and Bread is a reflection of our collective vision: diverse and rigorous scholarship, with a place for all disciplines and peoples. We are creating a platform for Marxist-Leninist thought through which we hope to raise awareness on the carcinogenic nature of capitalism, and the scientific sustainability of communism.

We can be contacted at editors@peacelandbread.com



Peace, Land, and Bread

THE REVOLUTION IS
STILL UNDERWAY

Peace! Land! Bread!

This was the rallying cry of the Bolsheviks that united the disparate revolutionary factions of Russia in the early part of the twentieth century. Peace for the war-weary; land for the landless; and bread for the hungry.

Now, in the early part of the twenty-first century—as fascism mutates and reemerges in the form of right-wing nativisms sweeping the globe, entrenched within and complementing the structures of capital—communism once again stands to oppose it: to fight the global darkening at the hand of endless imperial war, climatological and economic disposessions, and of pervasive food insecurity.

In addition to the greater aim of communist revolution, communists today remain committed to the cause of public awareness and scholarship. Lenin roused the jaded Russian proletariat by showing them that a better society could be built with his call for peace, land, and bread. Today, we rouse the exploited and exhausted workers of the world and show them that the twenty-first century demons of capital can be fought with communism. Peace, land, and bread must once again be our rallying cry—the rallying cry of socialists everywhere.

In Solidarity,

Peace, Land, and Bread Editors



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"If the writer of these lines has succeeded in providing some material for clarifying these problems, he may regard his labours as not having been fruitless."

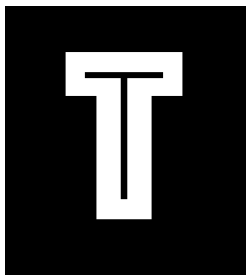
-Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, 1899.

Work and Toil

LABOR UNDER
CAPITALISM

THE EMPIRE AND THE GENERAL STRIKE

by JOSH ZOLOTIN



There is compelling evidence to suggest that the imperial expansion of the United States is reaching its apogee. To begin, we can turn to the investment of U.S. capital in foreign enterprises. Part of the function of the empire is to create a locus wherein capital can be safely valorized at a higher return than the metropole. This generally is accomplished through depressed wages in the post-invasion or post-imperialized country, as well as artificially cheap natural resources gathered at highly exploitative rates. To that end, we would see steady or increased investment in overseas possessions (both those that are direct and those that are debt-colonies) if the empire was healthy. However, in 2017 6,013,335 million dollars were directly invested in foreign mining. In 2018, that number fell to 5,950,991 million dollars; the first fall in six years.¹ Investment in foreign manufacturing

rose by 31,556 million dollars between 2017 and 2018. This is in sharp contrast to the 134,451 million increase between 2016 and 2017, and the 70,147 million increase between 2015 and 2016.² Shrinkages in wholesaling, a level banking investment, and marked increase in financing are matched with a fall in the “other industries” category.³ While some sectors grew, overall foreign investment is either flagging or falling.⁴

THE INCREASE in financial instruments should not be surprising: this is the very speculation we should look for on the cusp of a massive collapse. The overall reinvested foreign earnings for 2018 is -251,868 million dollars, indicating a large drop in re-investment.⁵ Real GDP dropped sharply at the end of 2018, had a phantom recovery in the first quarter of 2019, then dropped to pre-2016 levels in the second and third quarter.⁶

THE YIELD CURVE, which measures long-term investments against short-

term ones, has been in inversion or near-inversion since 2019 and leading into 2020.⁷ A steepening yield curve like this one indicates that long-term debt instruments have lower yields, which causes investors to begin buying short-term debt instruments instead⁸; this often occurs roughly two years before a market collapse, as it indicates growing speculation on the market. The volatility of the stock market since December 2018 would tend to bear this analysis out.

There is a way for capital to recover from such a situation: war. However, war is usually the tool of the financial capital fraction of the bourgeoisie. The financiers have indeed been calling for a new war, a shot in the arm for the flagging economy, and a redivision of the imperial spoils.

HOWEVER, at this unipolar stage, there is little redivision to be had. There are no obvious prospects for new financial colonies except for the *anti-imperialist states* like Iran and other regional hegemony that resist

U.S./NATO/IMF capital. The empire is, very likely, *contracting* or *about to contract* unless a new war is pursued with relative speed.

WARFARE IS GOOD for the financial bourgeoisie and good for the industrial bourgeoisie in the long run. However, the industrial bourgeoisie (like all capital) is short-sighted and generally, apart from the depressed labor costs of entering into a war, would rather increase capital extraction at home then send its labor-force abroad and see its materiel destroyed.⁹ This can be assuaged by the payment of government contracts to purchase finished goods (from both Department I and Department II) which has the effect of transferring tax wealth from the laborers to the industrialists.¹⁰ This strategy has been used in the past by the financial bourgeoisie to induce a war. These inter-imperialist wars have classically been focused on redivision of the colonized world. Asia and Africa have historically been the subject of the inter-imperial wars, with the imperial powers vying for control over colonies and semi-colonies. In the 19th and early 20th century, the Kingdom of China was a major target of imperial aggression.¹¹

THE IMPERIALISTS no longer have China to subdivide and fight over; as time goes on and the fascist contradictions in the core sharpen even further, they are robbed even of the capacity to recoup their

investments in Chinese capital that they have made.¹² Foreign investment laws are always evolving in the P.R.C., and are aimed at diverting foreign capital to needed industries.¹³ The unrest in Hong Kong is a direct result of imperial capital trying to penetrate into the P.R.C. beyond the Special Economic Zone.¹⁴ Even as the P.R.C. solicits further foreign investment, tariff walls are rising between the U.S. and P.R.C.¹⁵ Although the industrial bourgeoisie benefits from the inflated manufacturing prices this will produce, this obviously causes the financial bourgeoisie a great deal of hardship: the industrialists want to extract as much their profit at home as they can, while the financialists are happy to do so abroad in the workshops of China.

IN TIMES OF WAR, it has long been the tradition of the imperial powers to seek subdivision in Asia.¹⁶ The regions not protected by a regional hegemon are growing fewer. The U.S., to seek war in Asia, is increasingly confronted with the fact that this war will involve the People's Republic and the Liberation Army. Whether the U.S. armed forces can confront this army, which has trained since the War of Liberation ended in 1949 to fight the imperialist powers, is undecided. U.S. pundits certainly believe there is a substantial chance that the U.S. would lose a hot war with the P.R.C., particularly since the

P.R.C. has fostered an anti-imperialist bloc with the reactionary Russian Federation.¹⁷

WHAT IS THE CURRENT POSITION OF THE "REVOLUTIONARY LEFT" IN THE IMPERIAL CORE?

WHILE THERE ARE NO openly revolutionary parties in the imperial core (and for good reason),¹⁸ those that make pretensions to the mantle of anti-capitalism, including those that are nominally Marxist, have taken a position of parliamentary engagement coupled with community outreach. None have openly embraced a mass line. None have openly declared themselves inimical to the United States' imperial project. They are at most ambivalent about the continued existence of the settler-colonial state.¹⁹

THESE MARXIST (don't laugh!) parties are dedicated to a public-facing strategy of parliamentarianism and demonstrations. The anarchist groups have devoted themselves mostly to action and community work. These are the two most evident streams of approach. Both overlap with their use of public marches. While marching can be effective, neither the "Marxists" nor the anarchists have perfected their application in the core. While this will be addressed in full further

It is all very well for a Sozialdemokrat to sit in the engineer's seat, but we must remember that **the state is a train, not an automobile**. It will go where the bourgeoisie require it to go.



below, briefly: marches without disruption are masturbation. Direct attacks on the state are premature because they split their movement away from the non-mobilized masses.

THE FAILURE OF PARLIAMENTARIANISM

PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT has been used since the earliest days, to demonstrate the failings of the bourgeois state. However, this does not appear to be the current strategy of the left in the core. “Marxists” who encourage engagement with electoralism (which includes the soft leftists *as well as* the entryists in the DSA) are not doing so with the explicit purpose of demonstrating the uselessness of the parliamentary process. This is the *sole reason* for attempting an entry into politics. Indeed, presidential candidate Bernie Sanders is showing up the so-called Marxists in that regard!²⁰

CAN PARLIAMENTARIANISM or electoralism stop the onrush of war? *By no means.* War is the special tool of the advanced imperialist countries. Regardless of the professed ideology of their executive bodies, these countries will retain their essentially bourgeois-imperialist class character. We must recall what the bourgeois state is, itself: an organ for the management of market affairs and the suppression or temporary reversal of the fall of the

rate of profit. It is all very well for a *Sozialdemokrat* to sit in the engineer’s seat, but we must remember that the state is a train, not an automobile. It will go where the bourgeoisie require it to go.²¹

WHAT HAS HAPPENED to the latest crop of socialists running for office in both national and local elections? In many states, they are disqualified immediately by dint of not being part of the two-party duopoly.²² Gloria La Riva, the Party for Socialism and Liberation’s candidate for the 2016 Presidential Election, gained access to the ballot in *eight* states: Vermont, New Mexico, Iowa, Louisiana, Colorado, Washington, New Jersey, and California. She will be running again in the 2020 election. By the time this article is published that election will be over, and it will likely have been won by the current open fascist, Donald Trump.

A PRESCRIPTION FOR PARLIAMENTARIANISM

A PARLIAMENTARIAN approach in the core would need to be much more aggressive than anything forwarded by the “Marxists” so far. Indeed, any communist elected to an executive position should do their best to stymie any efforts of the State, including reducing funding for policing functions and being purposefully obstructionist to any effort that does not *directly*

benefit working people. Communist campaigns should be focused on the issues most pressing to the working-class electorate: things that would materially benefit their communities. They should loudly proclaim they *will not* support anything else and would actively stand against them.

MARXIST CANDIDATES in the United States should be anti-war candidates. While the masses are not yet ready to grapple with the reality that the United States must be destroyed in the quest for liberation, they are prepared to accept the same liberal anti-war rhetoric that has traditionally been deployed in the past. However, such anti-war candidates and stances must be *rigorously policed*. Rallies should be vetted for ideological consistency. The bugbears of spending money on people and education rather than war should be carefully eliminated.²³ Party discipline should run like an iron rod through all events, and every liberalism should be stripped from them. All slogans should appeal to the masses but also be *analytically correct*. Spokespeople should be prepared to explain these slogans in terms that are both appealing to liberals and to go into further detail to win over radicals or radicalizing (“activating” or “activatable” liberals) at the same time.

BEWARE! Opportunists have found electoralism, as a dead-end activity, to

suit them perfectly. Without ever trying to attain office, opportunists solicit donations, money, time, energy, and even lists of names, to work toward their “campaigns.” The same can be said of political rallies. Where anarchism is a breeding ground for adventurism, pseudo-Marxism is a magnet for opportunists.

THE FAILURE OF "DIRECT ACTION"

THERE ARE TWO TYPES of “direct action”—we may classify them as real and opportunist. Anarchists rarely fall into the trap of opportunist direct action. This is almost exclusively the province of pseudo-Marxists. Opportunist direct action is constituted of: toothless, permitted rallies and sloganeering. These are essentially liberal and petit-bourgeois in class character. Sloganeering must be condemned! It is worse than useless.

WHAT IS SLOGANEERING? It is the adoption of some anodyne, actionless pitch that is shouted over and over again at a passive crowd of some dedicated fellow-travelers so the people driving down the street will see and either be enraged or endeared, honk their horns, wave their hands, and feel more or less alone. *This accomplishes nothing among the masses.* Rallies of this kind have their purpose, which is to inspire the

hardliners who already subscribe to the ideology of the rally holder. This is a very limited purpose.

THE OTHER KIND of direct action is that undertaken by anarchists and anarchist-adjacent Marxists that generally is designed at wasting corporate resources, sewing distrust in the police, etc. This direct action has historically served little purpose except to accelerate the dialectic and prepare the ground for a backlash. While this can be a useful tactic once the masses are won, it is suicide in a period before the masses are prepared for revolutionary action. *Resistance against the State cannot be won without the support of the masses.*

ADVENTURIST VICTORIES split the masses. Adventurist defeats empower the forces of reaction. Both accelerate the dialectic. Unless we are prepared to fight off the counterrevolutionary backlash, which in this country will take the form of armed squads of militiamen and police, it is inadvisable to accelerate the dialectic. It is accelerating fast enough without interference. There is no reason to believe that the U.S. concentration camps will not soon become death camps, as widespread climate catastrophe prepares the population of the imperial core to accept greater and greater “sacrifices” for the survival of their way of life. The sharper the contradictions become, the sooner this will occur; we are not ready to face the

boot of the fascists (who have in their camp the entire apparatus of the U.S. armed forces and police).

HAS DIRECT ACTION won any victories for the U.S. left in the past two years? Yes. But these have been individualized victories. We do not seek the silencing of individual fascists; we seek to make it impossible for fascists to speak in public at all.

HE SAID DON'T MARCH!

NOT AT ALL! March! But do other things as well. If you cannot have a complete political plan together when you march, make certain that one is not far behind. Doing something is better than doing nothing at this stage. March! Silence fascists! But do more than this. This is not a condemnation of direct action or electoralism, but a criticism of their limits.

For too long, our imagination has been limited to these two instruments, despite the fact that we know that these instruments are insufficient to accomplish revolution, or to half the imperialist war machine. **It is essential that Marxists in the imperial core acknowledge these limits and plan for the use of new instruments.**

DEFENSE AND MASS WORK

DIRECT ACTION must be linked with other political programs. The most important kinds of action are those that join the political actor directly with the communities of the marginalized.

THESE INCLUDE things like the DSA's brake light clinic, but must be carried to their radical extreme: the organization of community defense. Direct action needs to be undertaken by the masses, and the masses themselves must be encouraged and trained to undertake anti-state action. This can only be done once trust is built in the community, which is a long process. In order to build trust, communists must be seen as *in the community*. That requires a presence. That requires aid. Food aid, money aid, even labor aid can help. Communists should never disdain to hide their true colors: we should wear red and gold proudly and publicly. If possible, a headquarters should be located in the community we seek to serve. In this way, the party, cadre, or organization may become a fixture. The local communists should intermingle with the people and provide whatever help they need. This establishes the much-needed bond of trust and permits that cadre, party, or organization to learn what it is the community needs.

STILL, the establishment of robust community defense organizations is critical at this stage of imperial

contraction. When the imperial bourgeoisie cannot extract value from its colonial holdings, it will inevitably turn inward to the communities of the marginalized. This can already be seen in the creation of a permanent precariat:²⁴ a workforce that can be imprisoned, subjected to slave labor, and deported at a whim.²⁵

IT IS IMPERATIVE on the Communists to stand for the precariat. Black bloc tactics such as de-arrest should be used to protect victims in marginalized communities. The police, who work hand in glove with the fascist ICE militias, should be *afraid to tread* amongst marginalized people. This is not an easy task to undertake, nor is it one that can be accomplished in an afternoon, a week, or a month. This is a process of political education and community assistance, and must be done in tandem with leaders from the community.

HOW TO GO ABOUT MASS WORK

IT IS IMPERATIVE for we communists to organize amongst and with the masses. It is difficult for those who have never engaged in actual organizing to conceptualize what form mass work takes. The guiding line should ever be this: to identify the needs of the community and to assist in providing those needs. Mass organization begins with material needs and, step by step,



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works toward political ones.

BEFORE ATTEMPTING to engage the community politically it is important to engage them materially. This helps to build trust between revolutionaries and the masses. When your organization goes about undertaking mass work, first identify a basic material need: food, shelter, medicine. Supplying this need is the first step in mass organization. Assisting those in the community should not be limited to those who share an ideological alignment with the organization; you must help *everyone*, unless they are openly reactionary and endangering your organizing space. Set up a clinic, a soup kitchen, a food pantry. These are things the masses will not soon forget.

ONCE YOU HAVE engaged in a material fashion, ideological mass work is required. Do not command the community, but rather listen to it. Hold mass meetings. These are not like your organizational meetings, as the intent is to gather people from the community to talk about problems in the community. Listen to them. Record the problems. Seek progressive, communist solutions while isolating regressive, reactionary elements in the community.

THE HIGHEST PHASE of mass organization is *political education*. Political education cannot begin without a firm basis in material aid.

The masses must trust you! Until they trust you, they will not care what you have to say. Prove that you are trustworthy, that you have their interests at heart, and then they will come to your organizing meetings. Simple political education can be to show movies and discuss them. Hold a monthly media analysis training where popular movies are shown and critics from the organization identify and dissect the overt, fascist, imperialist themes that are present. If you don't feel prepared to do this without help, consult people who have made such analyses before.

THE HIGHEST PHASE of political education is to start a party school and prepare the most progressive elements of the masses to join your organization by undergoing training at the party school.

THE ENTIRE TIME you are engaged in this project you must listen to the feedback from the masses! You must know what they want, and identify those needs that are most suited to radicalizing them and preparing them to engage first, in the strike, and second, in the revolutionary aftermath.

MASS WORK MAKES THE COMMUNIST

IS HE WHO does not engage with the masses a communist? By no means. Uniting with the masses and coming to

understand their positions, their needs, and their material conditions is the heart of communism. The ivory tower Marxists who insulate themselves from the masses cannot do the work required to bring about socialist construction. Communism does not mean to lead the people, but to serve them; communists do not command the people, but merely help the people find their own strength.

A "COMMUNIST" divorced from mass work is little better than a communist without a party at all. It is from these so-called communists, these Marxists-in-theory, that petit-bourgeois opportunism most commonly springs. Being divorced from the people, these Marxists are doomed either to commit the two cardinal errors of commandism or tailism. Those who refuse (through ignorance, classism, or for any other reason) to join the people and do mass work will be prone either to demanding the masses catch up to their own level of development (commandism) or else forever trailing behind the masses and only taking up the banner of struggles that are no longer the progressive forefront of class consciousness (tailism).

THERE MAY HAVE been a time when the insulated world of academics had useful contributions to Marxism. There were certainly guerilla academics who were members of the international communist movement and did

important work that contributed to liberation. However, since the collapse of the U.S.S.R., there have been no guerilla Marxists in the academy; any Marxist who claims that name is now isolated, atomized, and without the support required to make them effective. What was once a useful branch of a united strategy has become stranded, backward, stunted.

IN SHORT: to ignore the necessity of organizing, or to limit organizing to spaces that do not have contact with the masses, is to cut yourself off from the people. No communist can claim the credibility to the name unless they organize. We are not merely reshaping society: we are reshaping mankind itself, and it is we communists who must first undergo those changes.

*Communists do not lead.
Communists serve.* 

IS IT NECESSARY TO AVERT AN IMPERIAL WAR?

IT IS THE DUTY of every revolutionary, during a period of reactionary war, to work toward the defeat of one's own government. War is the special tool of the advanced imperialist countries to avert the fall of the rate of profit. It is through the re-division of the world in

imperialist war that the capitalist powers can protect their superprofits and maintain their stability. As the rate of profit falls, unrest ripples throughout the imperial core.

WHAT UNREST have we seen? Though the N.L.R.B. has been more or less defunct for several decades, labor struggles have intensified in the core. Public sector strike waves have won great strides for labor, beginning with the Teacher's Strike in West Virginia under the A.F.T.'s leadership. This is in a time when the official stance on labor rights has been to denude them, with the most recent blow coming under the Supreme Court decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, gutting the power of public sector unions. Yet, because the pressures of management are growing (these being one and the same as the pressures of capital, to suppress wages), labor struggles are intensifying. We should expect them to grow more and more intense as management scrambles to protect its profit.

THE LABOR FIGHT has been moved from the court room to the streets, where it began. U.S. labor has historically confronted the twin bastions of reactionary authority: the FBI and the U.S. Army. Indeed, labor was so dangerous in the early part of the last century that the House on Un-American Activities Committee was cooked up to purge the Communists from the AFL-CIO.²⁶

AS THE LABOR STRUGGLE intensifies, the contradictions between the police and the policed communities also continues unabated. These contradictions were sharpest some years ago after the very public police executions of a series of black American workers. Police forces in the West are increasingly militarized, increasingly using the logic of colonial domination against the population in the core. This continued oppression exaggerates the already-extant contradictions and pushes Western workers into the arms of radicalization.²⁷

INDEED, the vast superprofits are beginning to flag, and more and more workers in the West that once belonged in the labor aristocracy are finding they no longer do. Petit-bourgeois positions are being proletarianized at an enormous clip to continue to provide low-cost labor to their tech services industries.

THE CONTRADICTIONS are the sharpest in the great commercial-financial centers of the West: the high-population cities such as San Francisco, Paris, London, New York. Even secondary population centers in the U.S. exhibit powerful revolutionary potential due to the increased (racialized) contradictions inherent in their design.²⁸ These exhibit the highest concentrations of capital juxtaposed next to the most congregated masses of urban

proletariat. It is for this reason that policing is more intense in urban centers, the conflicts between police and policed tend to result in greater violence, and the revolutionary potential of urban centers.

THE LAST and most dangerous contradiction is the ecological one that is now flexing and displaying its impact for the first time on a global scale. This contradiction is utterly beyond our ability as revolutionaries to control, but will continue to impact the harvesting of imperial superprofits by affecting the areas from which those profits are gathered. The collapse of our planetary ecology will, perversely, destroy the regions least capable of withstanding change. The centers of imperial valorization will become boiling cauldrons of pain and sorrow; the ability of the empire to reap its tithe will be vastly reduced by the sheer human suffering and destruction of capital resources that will result. In the long term, this can only spell death for the empire.

WAR IS THE ONE WAY the bourgeoisie can attempt to preserve their position. First, their wars abroad will bolster superprofits until they can turn their army of trained killers inward.²⁹ Then, they will use their army to murder the excess workforce at home. However, it is possible to stop this process, arrest their preparations for war, and stall the machinery that props up the empire. If the revolutionary left can

stop the capitalists from going to war, the empire will be unable to reach for its strongest prop and support. It will enter the terminal stages of capital and, weakened, fall prey to the revolutionary forces already nascent within.

HOW CAN THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT AVERT WAR?

REGARDLESS of the apparent strength of capital, it has one weakness for which it can never compensate: it requires the labor of the proletariat to do its dirty work. It requires proletarian feet on the pedals of the trucks that supply its centers of production. It requires proletarian hands to make the commodities that run through its cities and towns. It requires, in short, the complicity of the proletarian class in reproducing the society that supports the war effort. Though the proletariat is no longer drafted into the war, they support it *at home* by enabling those makers of war to continue their everyday lives.

ALL OF THESE things can be disrupted. There is one sure tool to disrupt them short of open revolt and that is **STRIKE**.



HOW AND WHEN CAN WE STRIKE?

IN ORDER to begin the strike, there must be broad cross-party consensus that a strike is necessary. A strike cannot be begun spontaneously without planning; while the material conditions to permit victory will happen *without* revolutionary involvement, the revolutionary must still be prepared to seize those conditions. The revolutionary must be prepared in the following categories to make good use of the spontaneous outbreaks of anti-State anti-bourgeois sentiment.³⁰ The revolutionary must prepare:

1. Organization
2. Strike Funds
3. Lines of Communication
4. Safehouses
5. Demands

ORGANIZATION. In order to carry out a general strike, it is imperative that key industries be identified, that key unions be engaged, and that the parties engaging in the strike be prepared and ready to act together in solidarity.

STRIKE FUNDS. Strikes will invariably sap the resources of the workers who engage in them. Strike funds in the form of additional monies, food, etc. must be laid by and prepared. This should include funds for legal defense of members of the striking force that are taken in by the police.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION. Every individual group engaging in the strike must have interconnections and communicate at all times. Every group of strikers must communicate with the center. The center must communicate with every striker.

SAFEHOUSES. The strike groups should prepare places safe from police interference to move those members of their organizations that attract too much unwanted attention. These safehouses should also include arms, beds, food, etc. and can serve as communal gathering centers for members of the striking groups. The safehouse is a hidden barracks. The most progressive elements of the strike must be prepared to act in defense of the more center and some of the rearward elements who will not be prepared to engage in direct anti-State violence.

DEMANDS. The striking groups should set forth a minimum demand program that all can agree upon. No reactionary demands may be included. The most progressive demands that can be stomachied should be forwarded. *At the*

minimum the demands must include a demobilization from war footing, as this is the purpose of the strike. Other demands can be included to demonstrate working-class power.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF THE STRIKE?

THE GENERAL STRIKE is a tool in the hands of the working class. It forges class solidarity, shows the proletariat that they alone control the engines of production, that society lives and dies off of *their backs*, and that without them there can be no more war; not only war, but no more peace. The proletariat comes into their own by the tool of the strike, and awakens to their own immense power. Yet, the general strike is not a cure-all panacea. It may be enough to turn aside the imperialist warmongers, but it will provoke a deadly response. Capital is not used to being thwarted. The bourgeoisie will deploy their most potent and dangerous weapons: racist gangs to break the solidarity of the worker, fascist militia, police, strikebreakers, the national guard, and eventually the military itself.

THIS WILL SET the stage for open revolution. When the violence required to force laborers to their task is at last exposed and the capitalist send their goons to exercise it, it may be that a revolutionary situation develops. In that case, we should be prepared to

seize it. That must be the topic of an entirely separate article, however.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

THIS IS A CALL for every revolutionary party in the United States to begin organizing a general strike to paralyze the industry of war! If we are to defeat the fascist threat and make good on the promise of revolution, we must have a cross-left coalition devoted to the minimum program of stopping U.S. aggression. Join with the RAS! Contact the CCS or the hosts of the Plough and Stars for more assistance in beginning to plan for a general strike.

ENDNOTES

- 1** U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis Report on historical cost-basis of industries between 2009-2018.
- 2** Id.
- 3** Id.
- 4** Foreign investment can serve as a barometer for the valorization of value *abroad*, which is directly tied to the “health” of the empire and its net capital export.
- 5** U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis Report on U.S. Direct Investment Abroad: Income on Equity 2018.

6 U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis Report on GDP for 2015-2019.

7 U.S. Federal Reserve.

8 By their nature, short-term debt instruments are riskier, and more speculative than long-term instruments. This is the period of wild speculation predicted by the crisis of overproduction as the rate of profit falls.

9 And depressed labor costs are far from certain. The labor market will contract during a prolonged period of warfare, making labor more expensive. A countervailing effect is seen in the deployment of national pride as a form of rhetoric requiring workers to “make sacrifices” and “put all in for the effort,” etc. In this sense, war represents a gamble for industrialists, who cannot be certain that their falling rate of profit will be bolstered by the reduced labor pool.

10 Because government contracts are paid out with collected tax revenue, any privatized production for the government necessarily means a portion of the wages paid to laborers and then later captured as taxes are returned to the industrialists who paid the wages in the first place. This also allows the financial bourgeoisie to help subsidize the industrial bourgeoisie, in part, to make a war more appealing in the short term.

11 The “century of humiliation,” beginning with the division of China in 1839 and the intrusion of imperial powers in “zones of influence” throughout the kingdom and its ports only came to a close, in the Chinese historiography, with the triumph of the Communist Party of China in the civil war 1949.

12 The question over whether the P.R.C. lured the rest of the capitalist world into making capital investments in China so they could become the “factory of the world” is still a live and somewhat acidic one in leftist circles in the West. The fact remains that the capitalists *did* invest capital in China and as the trade war between the U.S. and the P.R.C. takes on new and surprising dimensions, it will remain relevant.

13 For example, the Special Management Measures for the Market Entry of Foreign Investment (the FDI Negative List) published by the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Commerce took effect on July 30th 2019. Under the revised FDI Negative List investment into automotive industries was liberalized permitting expanded investment in “special” and “new-energy vehicle” development, that is, automobiles that use sources other than gasoline as their motive energy.

14 Resources showing the collaboration between the “protestors” (labeled “pro-democracy” by all Western sources) and the U.S. State Department and C.I.A. are too many and varied to be addressed by the scope of this paper.

15 Half of U.S. imports from the P.R.C. are now under tariff. Almost all imports into the P.R.C. from the U.S. are under tariff.

16 See: the Opium Wars, World War I, the Afghan War, etc.

17 Every month we are greeted by new public war maneuvers from this anti-imperialist alignment. Most recently, when the U.S. threatened all-out war with Iran, both the P.R.C. and Russia made it clear that they would intervene in a proxy contest. The U.S. subsequently backed down. Regardless of what analytical position the Western left holds about the P.R.C. and Russian Federation, it cannot be denied that this alliance has acted as an effective check on imperial expansion. Any check on expansion also acts as a lever to bring down the tottering powers of capital. Where it cannot expand, it must die.

18 The United States is the single most all-pervasive, powerful, and complete police state ever to exist. Revolutionary parties are, obviously, outlawed.

19 The C.P.U.S.A., for example, *openly embraces* a narrative of “American Exceptionalism.”

20 This is by no means to say that Sanders is actually anti-capitalist or engaged in a strategy of revolutionary parliamentarianism. However, given the state of the working class in the imperial core, the *Sozialdemokraten* are doing more to highlight the impossibility of their winning elective office in the executive branch (and of any real change) than any of the so-called Marxist candidates!

21 Dwelling on the structure of the state for even a moment will reveal this truth: in every way, the bourgeois state is designed to bow to the will of the bourgeoisie. State actors move seamlessly between official and private duties, the one bolstering the other. State regulatory bodies are required to consult and even empanel business interests before regulating those same interests. Local “boards of commerce” are given authority to interfere with State functions. The entire legislature is an open bidding ground for the purchase of influence by large-scale graft. Draft legislation is written by corporate interests and then passed by their puppet legislators. Etc.

22 For example, in the State of Connecticut, a certain number of signatures are required to be collected before candidates can be added to the ballot. The Secretary of the State requires *double that number* to *actually* be collected, because it is possible that *some signatures are fraudulent*. In the last election, the Trotskyist candidate for Senate was stricken from the ballot mere days before the election by the Secretary of the State. This position, it should be noted, is a partisan one, controlled by an election.

23 The empire *cannot* spend money on education rather than war. An enormous war-chest is required to keep the imperial super-profits flowing into the core. It is a

patently ridiculous position to suggest that the United States should cut its military budget and increase its educational budget or any other social services. Imperial wars *make profit*. They are not a losing proposition.

24 The precariat is a class-fraction of proletarians, rather than its own class. It has the same relationship of production as the rest of the proletarian class but other features, such as criminalization and deportability, that grant it fractional status.

25 The most horrifying development of the precariat in the last year has been the use of ICE as a strikebreaking force.

26 The Western labor struggle is at its most intense in France and the E.U. where the government has been faced with escalating displays of labor unrest for the past year. As of Monday January 20, France has faced a continuous 46-day uninterrupted strike. Labor unrest has been visible every weekend for over a year in Paris.

27 For example, the latest confrontation between the police and the so-called “fare jumpers” in the New York City subway system.

28 Atlanta, Chicago, all the major urban centers in the U.S. are marked by a pattern of racialized poverty. These often serve as the most progressive revolutionary sites in the United States because the contradictions are sharpest there. These population centers are dealing not only with the overarching contradiction of labor and capital, but the specific, tangible effects of *racialized black labor* and *racialized white capital*.

29 The bourgeoisie is already developing more and more efficient automation. When automation reaches a certain degree of efficiency and reliability, they will be able to liquidate great swathes of the workforce and replace them with an eternal labor aristocracy, a small and elite group of technicians and engineers who will serve them until the final days of ecological catastrophe.

30 This sentiment, in the instance for which we are to be prepared, will be disguised. It will not come as out-and-out class consciousness (due to the long influence of the allegiance-purchasing superprofits paid to the labor aristocracy) but rather in one of the following forms: *anti-war sentiment*, *anti-management sentiment*, *pro-wages sentiment*, or *anti-ICE sentiment*.





A
Critical Analysis
on the Rise
of *Precarious*
Work
in the
Neoliberal Age

by D.M.

“The chance to be exploited in a long-term job is now experienced as a privilege.”

– Slavoj Žižek

INTRODUCTION

Precarious work, though not new, is a rising phenomena worldwide. This essay argues that worker precariousness is a very much anticipated effect of capitalism and by extension, neoliberalism, and cannot effectively be resolved in an economy that incentivises worker exploitation. The phenomenon of precarious work was predicted by Karl Marx as an act of the bourgeois to improve profits.¹

At the very outset, there is a distinction to be made within the cohort of precarious workers. Those in under-developed countries are different from those in developed economies. While most of the difference revolves around the scale of precariousness and instability that both groups face, those in developed countries generally (with the notable exception of the U.S.A) have some form of a social safety net to rely on. In countries such as India, this is non-existent, and means the precarious worker faces poverty and degradation in a much more immediate way. In India, more public sector jobs than private sector ones are precarious,² a

stark indicator of the scale of the problem.

The gig economy generally, but not exclusively, refers to first world countries more than others, and they are a subset of precarious workers. The sharing economy, represented by platforms such as Uber, is “neoliberalism on steroids.”³ These platforms do exist in countries such as India, but the choice in engaging with them is far more limited, as we will explore below. In essence, the gig economy is marketed on the premise of “choice” and is supposedly more beneficial to the worker in terms of flexibility, work life balance and skill development. This narrative has been pushed by many of the gig platforms, and even governments see them as a route to full employment. Whether this choice really exists is questionable, and the ultimate assertion is that the choice between poverty and degrading employment is no choice at all. All workers have a right to decent work, “a wage that enables workers to support their household, basic social security protection, contractual stability, protection from unjustified termination of employment, and effective access to freedom of association and collective bargaining.”⁴ Does precarious work provide this?

“Precarious work is not a challenge; it is a meticulously constructed assault.”⁵

PRECARIOUS WORK

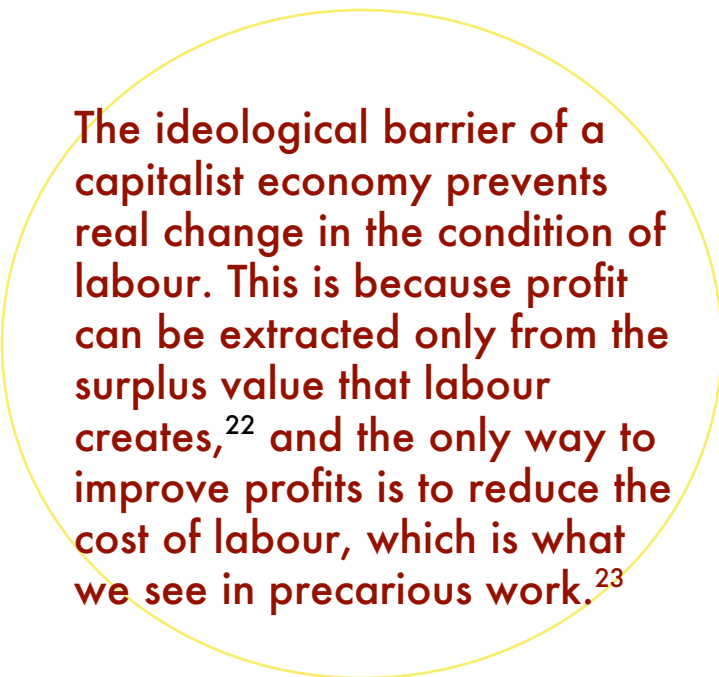
Precarious work is work that may be temporary, stand-by, pseudo self-employment or that with unclear employer-employee relationships,⁶ in which employer responsibilities are vertically disintegrated over a lengthening sub-contracting chain⁷ all with a violation of labour standards.⁸ There is no protection against dismissal, and a lack of collective bargaining rights and labour benefits. It engages in regime shopping for the weakest and most exploitable labour conditions, and tends to hire the most economically vulnerable workers who have no bargaining power.⁹ Precarious work has four dimensions: uncertainty over continuing employment, lack of control over the labour process, lack of regulatory protection and low wages.¹⁰

It is essentially the forms of work that have been redefined by employers to reduce labour costs, improve flexibility¹¹ and diminish the ability to unionize.¹² Work relations are hyper-individualized, and workers assume the burden and risks of work using their own tools, while employers appropriate the surplus.¹³ Precariousness is normalized as individual choice, and flexibility is the trade-off for the ability to choose how they work.¹⁴ This informality,¹⁵ the low wages and limited social security is causing workers to be entrenched in poverty.¹⁶ This “precariat”¹⁷ are forced to accept jobs, especially as governments push these as an “empowering” alternative to unemployment.¹⁸ In countries such as Australia, this is a policy move aimed at satisfying employers with unattractive jobs. The “precariat” is created by the

“interaction between abuse of economic power, economic liberalization, global capital mobility, fierce lobbying against protective labour laws, and a whole range of state policies guided by economic thinking that believes in the efficiency of free markets.”¹⁹ It is the result of increasing competition, and it increases competition in its turn.

THE IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF PRECARIOUS WORK

The first and most important point is that there is a “strong ideological dimension to the rise in precarity.”²⁰ It is often argued that precarity is the result of “a broader conservative offense that began with the neoliberal turn of the 1980s.”²¹



The ideological barrier of a capitalist economy prevents real change in the condition of labour. This is because profit can be extracted only from the surplus value that labour creates,²² and the only way to improve profits is to reduce the cost of labour, which is what we see in precarious work.²³

The Gini coefficient, and the gap between the rich and the poor, has been increasing consistently, and the underlying cause is the explosion of precarious work, increase

in profits, and decline in real, profitable investment.²⁴ The share of profits in GDP has increased, whereas the share of wages has decreased.²⁵

The global financial crisis, instead of showing the flawed economic model, has increased the demand for flexibility and precariousness, further deepening the fault-lines.²⁶ The resulting austerity measures created conditions of deprivation and a lack of social cohesion that lead often to social unrest and resentment.²⁷ Precarious work has a number of regulatory dilemmas that have become sharper with the rise of neoliberalism, that unleashed market forces at the cost of regulatory protection.²⁸ In Ireland, the crash did not increase precarious work, but was seen as an opportunity to erode labour protections.²⁹

A persistent argument by capitalists has been that profit is the reward for the risks that an entrepreneur takes.³⁰ This argument is less and less relevant, since precarious work is essentially a shift of the risk from the employer to employee.³¹ This further diminishes the legitimacy of profit. In the development of capitalism, “precariousness is the historical rule – the permanent exception to its promise.”³² Employment under capitalism has always been governed by the investment cycle.³³ Capitalism is, in fact, not geared towards efficient resource allocation. It channels funds into wasteful financial bubbles, or causes over investment.³⁴ This speculative investment does not create real value,³⁵ and the need to satisfy these investors creates a pressure on labour standards.

NEOLIBERALISM AND PRECARIOUS WORK

Neoliberalism is a political-economic theory that proposes that humans can best advance by “liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong property rights, free markets, and free trade”³⁶ and emphasizes the triangular relationship between the individual, the market and the non-interventionist state.³⁷

These policies focus on the free market, fiscal discipline over social protection,³⁸ financial liberalization, deregulation and privatization,³⁹ a limited welfare state, lower taxes and decentralized labour relations. However, the state is still required to maintain the institutions on which the economy rests.⁴⁰ It uses “wonderful-sounding words like freedom, liberty, choice, and rights, to hide the grim realities of the restoration or reconstitution of naked class power.”⁴¹ There has been a shift from the law to the market to achieve labour standards. Employment is not decided only by the free market, but also by fiscal and monetary standards. In the neoliberal era, fiscal and monetary policy is aimed at preventing inflation rather than unemployment.⁴²

Neoliberalism is the reorganization of capital where the hegemony of capital displaces Keynesian welfare, particularly in advanced industrialised nations. It is essentially the dismantling of the welfare state, breaking of union power and therefore resulting in the precarity of labour.⁴³ The fact of the matter is that the welfare state and collective bargaining

made capitalism “bearable.”⁴⁴

Precarious work is not an inevitable consequence of globalization, but “the outcome of deliberate policies to use the opportunities of globalization to change the rules of the game.”⁴⁵ It is a result of the change in employment and production patterns, from the industrial to the service sectors, “just in time” production and the rise of the knowledge worker. It is the perspective that precariousness is not an unintended effect, but the solution to unemployment.

The reserve army of labour “enduring and indispensable feature of capitalism.”⁴⁶ Without a contingent workforce, rising labour standards would cause wages to rise and profits to fall. This reserve army has to demand rights outside the zone of legality, and this is a breeding ground for precarity.⁴⁷ In this context, workers operate in a buyers’ market⁴⁸ and making work flexible, casual and informal has been a means of disciplining labour.⁴⁹

Precarity is seen as an exception to the normal growth of capitalism, and has resulted in calls for the return to the so-called golden age of capitalism.⁵⁰ However, one of the primary aims of neoliberal policy is weakening labour and strengthening capital.⁵¹ Integration of the formerly planned economies, such as of the socialist bloc and former colonies, into the world capitalist system has thrown millions of workers into new forms of employment.⁵² The organized labour of the global north may have worked well for some, but it insufficient to counter the ever increasing drive for profits.⁵³ In this context it is clear that neoliberalism deepened precarity.⁵⁴

Another interesting facet of neoliberalism

is that capital bears no responsibility for the social reproduction of labour.⁵⁵ This means that care work, largely delegated to women and migrants, is invisible and precarious. These groups are the “cushion” of neoliberalism.⁵⁶

ADVANTAGES OF PRECARIOUS WORK

The benefit of this form of work is reaped nearly exclusively by the capitalist class. Concerningly, and in what is a stark example of the pervasiveness of capitalist propaganda, this form of work is packaged as “empowering” for the workers. It allegedly provides flexibility, the benefits of which are to include greater work-life balance, control of schedules and improved productivity and well-being.⁵⁷ This enforces a perceived sense of control.⁵⁸ Flexible work can also improve labour force participation, increase capital and labour productivity, stimulate consumption and create a consumer surplus.⁵⁹ Another justification is that many gig economy workers already have full time jobs with benefits, and so it is unnecessary to extend protection.⁶⁰ This itself is concerning – why do workers with full time jobs even need to participate in the gig economy? In a situation where even a full-time job with benefits is not enough to ensure a reasonable standard of living, what hope do these temporary, powerless workers have?

In interesting evolution of this “flexibility” is that it has changed from allowing greater work- life balance to essentially having workers perpetually on-call as a marker of such adaptability. Businesses have a number of advantages in

precarious work: greater flexibility, lowered labour costs, and layoffs are no longer seen as a sign of distress but that of efficiency, incentivizing it further.⁶¹ The benefits of the gig economy are shared partly by the shareholder and partly by the consumer, with the burden falling on the working class.⁶²

ISSUES, EFFECTS, AND CONCERNS

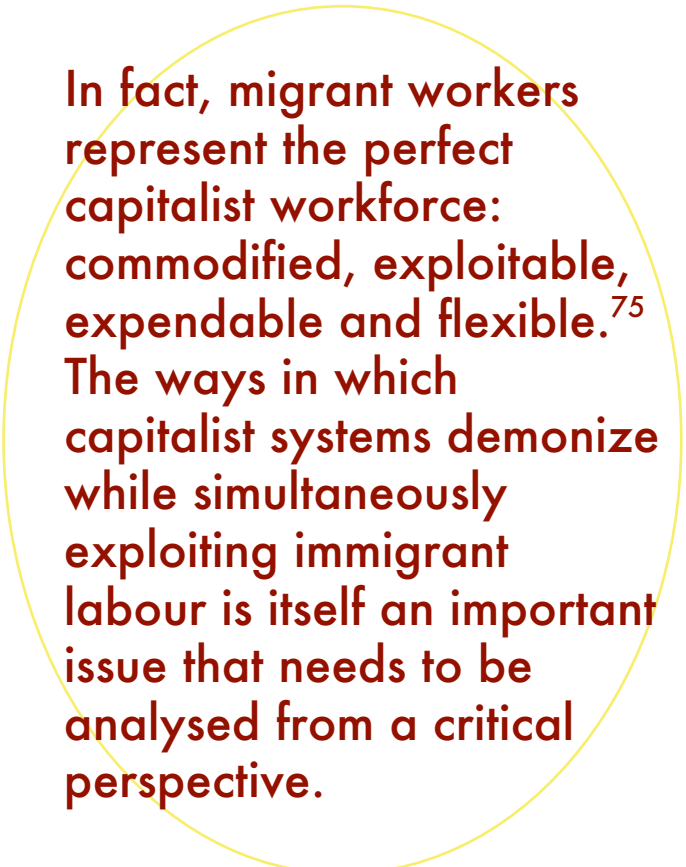
Precarious work is a time-tested business model of labour exploitation. In this economy, workers have gigs and not jobs, and rarely have any legal protections. Firms avoid employee status to evade legal frameworks and prevent unionizing. Firms are engaging in a race to the bottom on labour standards.⁶³ Dangerously, flexibility, from meaning greater work life balance, has come to mean a situation where staff are required to prove their flexibility by being permanently available.⁶⁴

A major issue is that firms that may not want to operate on this model, and may want to maintain labour standards, operate at a cost disadvantage.⁶⁵ This means that eroding labour standards is incentivised. The cost of investment has become flexible labour standards and dismantling of collective bargaining rights.⁶⁶

Technology has led to a downward pressure on employment and wages,⁶⁷ but these innovations should not reduce welfare.⁶⁸ Technology has caused the evolution of workplaces, and exposed a number of regulatory gaps.⁶⁹ Even countries that have legal frameworks to combat precarious work cannot keep up

with the online platform and the scale of the problem.⁷⁰ Oftentimes, especially with new platforms such as Uber, higher wages are advertised. However, even if the wages are more (which has been proved untrue), this can be attributed to the lost benefits and the personal cost.⁷¹ Uber, and the gig economy generally, may “represent and reinforce post-capitalist hyper-exploitation.”⁷²

Undocumented immigrant labour is a state of (highly profitable) hyper-precarity.⁷³ These immigrant workers are crucial to global capitalism. It creates a scarcity of jobs and extracts discipline. In this context, it is clear that the denial of civil and political rights to immigrants is designed to control rather than prevent immigration, and to keep migrants locked in a permanent state of profitable insecurity and vulnerability.⁷⁴



In fact, migrant workers represent the perfect capitalist workforce: commodified, exploitable, expendable and flexible.⁷⁵ The ways in which capitalist systems demonize while simultaneously exploiting immigrant labour is itself an important issue that needs to be analysed from a critical perspective.

The role of international organizations, particularly those bankrolled by capitalist states, such as the IMF and World Bank, cannot be underestimated.⁷⁶ For example, in South Korea, the number of precarious workers rose dramatically as a result of neoliberal reforms under IMF guidance.⁷⁷

In many societies around the world, precarious working conditions is causing people to delay or opt out of having families.⁷⁸ This is eroding the social safety net that states depend on for unpaid care work and is also reducing the next generation of workers. The normalization of precarious work is already showing deeply disturbing social effects.⁷⁹ Precarious workers suffer a higher rate of occupational health and safety concerns, and research shows a link between such work and lifestyle diseases,⁸⁰ occupational health hazards⁸¹ and mental health issues.⁸² It also impacts the family members of these precarious workers.⁸³

“[P]recarious workers are united in their experiences of anger (due to blocked aspirations), anomie (a passivity due to despair about not finding meaningful work), anxiety (due to chronic insecurity), and alienation (due to lack of purpose and social disapproval).”⁸⁴

BARRIERS TO REGULATION

Labour law rests on the assumption of clear employee-employer relationships.⁸⁵ One of the central issues with the employment contract is that it emphasizes the central male breadwinner model. It also privileges waged work over unpaid work, which excludes a large proportion of workers from protection. In truth, such a contract does not characterize even most work in a country such as India.⁸⁶ Are these emerging forms of employment substantially new, or just a different manifestation of contingent work?⁸⁷ This researcher opines that these forms of work are essentially the same forms of precarious work that have been in existence, with the exception that the gig economy is marketed as a choice, whereas workhouses were ignored but not glorified. Defining these forms of work is a major barrier to regulation.

The commodification of labour by capital is widely discussed. It is argued that labour is a commodity because it can be bought and sold, but not a commodity in the sense that it cannot be stored, transferred or separated from its bearer.⁸⁸ Treating labour purely as a commodity is problematic. This means that the result of laissez-faire policies is social dysfunction.⁸⁹ This would require a radically different approach to labour, which itself can serve as an obstacle.

Can labour law improve the standards of worker protection within a capitalist market economy? Some research shows that up to 80% of the employers' cost of providing benefits is borne by the employee.⁹⁰ In this context, how beneficial will regulation really be? Any regulation

that is proposed should not improve the burden on labour. There is also some argument that platforms may be willing to extend benefits to their workers, but they are deterred from doing so because of a fear of the employee status.⁹¹ Is it necessary to work around this?

The contradictory positions of labour and capital in a market economy seems to be a zero sum game where one parties interests can only be advanced at the cost of the other.⁹² Marxist thought emphasises that in a market economy, labour standards will come at the cost of efficiency and the power of employers to advance profit⁹³ and in discussions on job security versus flexibility and profitability, economic goals are ranked higher than social goals.⁹⁴

There are a number of barriers to regulation, stemming primarily from the ideological stance on labour law. Whether and how they can be resolved is explored in the next section.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AND A WAY FORWARD

This essay concludes that, short of a radical change of our economic system, the only way to improve the position of labour is strong, detailed and all-encompassing regulation together with robust enforcement. Framing such regulation in the context of capitalism will lie in incentivising higher labour standards, such as by showing that secure workers are more productive.

“Minimum wages globally, basic income security through a universal Social Protection Floor and policies to combat

the erosion of the employment relationship are indispensable to limit precarious employment, indecent working and living conditions.”⁹⁵ The ILO recommends that contracts not deprive workers of protective rights. Without workplace empowerment, legal regulations do not materialize.⁹⁶ Further, precarious work needs to be curbed for there to be any form of equality.⁹⁷ The only way to reduce precariousness is to de-commodify labour.⁹⁸

A dilemma the informal workers face is being inside the punitive arm of the law but outside the protective arm of the law.⁹⁹ One of the first forms of reform is recognition of the informal sector. These eliminates the situation of being forced to operate illegally, and also increases the access to benefits.¹⁰⁰

The only redeeming inclusions in capitalist labour law, the welfare state and collective bargaining, came about because of the radical organization of the poor and the fear of the rich that they might implement radical leftist policies.¹⁰¹ This organization of the poor is necessary for any bargaining. In the fight against this exploitative economic model, it is important to recognize that unionizing of workers is possibly the most important short-term measure.

The pluralist perspective postulates that, far from having contradictory positions, workers and employers have a shared interest in productive workers, profitable employers and a strong economy.¹⁰² Capital needs stability and predictability, and this can possible coincide with labours need for security.¹⁰³ Labour issues must be integrated into economic planning. This could be a way forward.

Regulation is needed that mandates that deviations from standard contract employment should be short term and extraordinary, and there should be a limited set of conditions under which precarious workers can be hired. Short term contracts should also be converted into a permanent contract after the expiry of a certain term of employment. Employers cannot exceed a certain proportion of worker that can work precariously. Another strong way to disincentivize precariousness is requiring that precarious workers be paid a higher wage than regular workers.¹⁰⁴

New labour movements can also be community rather than workplace based,¹⁰⁵ which would mean that previously excluded groups can now be represented. This is tricky in the context of how bargaining would work, and with whom they would bargain.

The emerging gig economy does not fit into worker or independent contractor categories, and so requires a new nomenclature.¹⁰⁶ Some countries work on a rebuttable presumption of employee status. Countries such as Canada and Germany have the option of a “dependent worker”, one who is independent, but with limited choice and control.¹⁰⁷ This could be a regulatory solution to ensuring worker protection while preserving market flexibility. In Denmark, the model is “flexicurity”. Employers can hire and fire at will, but there is a strong labour market and social security net that helps in finding jobs, compensation and in training and practical education.¹⁰⁸

The common law test to determine if an individual is a worker or an independent contractor is to examine which party

controls the employment process.¹⁰⁹ In the UK, in *Aslam, Farrar v. Uber*¹¹⁰ the court found Uber drivers to be employees¹¹¹ as they have no bargaining power and no control over the labour process.¹¹² In *Autoclenz Ltd v. Belcher*¹¹³ the court found valets to be employed rather than self employed for the same reasons.

There is a lot of change happening worldwide. In India, drivers working for platforms such as Uber are collectively striking for better conditions of work.¹¹⁴ The European Parliament recently approved minimum rights for gig economy workers¹¹⁵ including the right to be informed of working conditions, duration and rate of pay on the first day. Workers are to be compensated if assignments are cancelled at the last minute, and employers can no longer exploit flexibility in the labour market.

The lens of labour law should be social protection and not the employment contract.¹¹⁶ This is important because rights flowing from labour law enjoy greater legitimacy than human or other socio-political rights because of the economic component of labour law.¹¹⁷

This essay has established that precarious work is a harmful economic trend, and is closely linked to and is a tailored product of capitalist neoliberal ideology. While regulation should be enacted within this system to incentivize higher labour standards, along with improving social security nets to combine the economic need for flexibility with the social need for security, there is no substitute for organizing workers and collective bargaining. Governments in capitalist economies are no more than the tool of the capitalist class, and cannot be relied

on to protect the vulnerable from the never ending drive for profits.

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*"[P]recarious work is a **harmful economic trend**, and is closely linked to and is a tailored product of capitalist neoliberal ideology. While regulation should be enacted within this system to incentivize higher labour standards, along with improving social security nets to combine the economic need for flexibility with the social need for security, there is no substitute for organizing workers and collective bargaining."*

Poiesis & Physis

ART AND THE
REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT

MONTANI SEMPER LIBERI

by DYLAN PARSONS

Imagine a red star rising
over the west virginia hills,
a red dawn glowing
like a cardinal in the snow,

the people of Almost Heaven
storming the golden dome,
amidst the cries of Country Roads
and Solidarity Forever.

Imagine star thirty-five
bleeding red onto the flag,
the new John Browns avenging
the ghosts of Logan County,

and the Internationale echoing
from Spruce Knob to the Potomac,
signaling the final struggle between
coal bosses and the miners.

Imagine a people liberated,
wild, wonderful, unwavering,
treading water in the streams
clear as honeysuckle nectar,

with flags on their shoulders
and a motto finally ringing true,
Montani Semper Liberi,
mountaineers are always free.

PARSONS

RED ROSA

after Rosa Luxemburg (1871 - 1919)

Red Rosa plays
with her feline companions,
her wild cats strike
at her arms, and she strikes
right back, hissing
playfully. They recognize her
not as an owner
but as an equal, a fellow striker
whose eyes glow
red in the photographs, just like theirs,
whose blood runs
red when struck, or when striking,
just like theirs.
Red Rosa, Red Rosa, sends her wild cats
right over, right over
Berlin's gates, forcing them open,
and right over to
the future, where bread is guaranteed
with red roses.



PARSONS

ON CHE GUEVARA'S MURDERER BEING TREATED for CATARACTS by CUBAN DOCTORS

Irony is the opposite of justice,
and justice the opposite of an empty cross
or a Che Guevara t-shirt.

At *La Higuera* they pray
to *Santo Ernesto* but you stopped praying
long ago, didn't you?

You saw
the face of Christ
in the revolution
and settled for thirty pieces of silver.

You've contemplated, barrel in mouth,
splattering yourself across the walls
while he stays splattered across the stars.

Shoot coward,
you're only killing a man.

LOCUST STREET (PHILADELPHIA)

by TERRA OLIVEIRA

i cross the street,

we lock eyes and bow our heads
at the sidewalk, you in your sunglasses,
me in the air;

strollers carrying hopes of mothers,
children carrying dreams,

fathers and sons.

thousands of gnats are born
and make angels in the grass,

university marches
excavate parks for their expanse,

erase the keepers of the Black Bottom.

further south,
a deer walks across the train bridge
while we pass underneath,

birds sing in the sanctuary
hidden between the row-houses,

the landlords & the rosemary survive the winter.

how many house-less didn't,
how many people-less houses;
enough to warm us all.



WORKERS' STATE

OLIVEIRA

the state
is only a beast
in the wrong hands,
and in the right hands
a beast
to those who exploit us.

one day
she will dissolve
and become small,
but only after
we seize it;
only after
oppressed and oppressor
merge to one.

this will take patience,
understanding, and time.

generations of work
and diligence and time;

time in need of defending.

imagine what we could do
with power in the hands of the many:

build hospitals quickly as wuhan.
heal the sick. heal the schools.
let the hands of our brothers
and sisters go free.

**one by one, hand by hand,
laborer by laborer
to make that Great Ship
be the vessel of the Lord.**



WWIII

by CHRISTIAN NOAKES

Buzz & bang of metal works and breweries

Sad humming lullabies

radiating from the tracks

Sound like World War III

I can see it in passing faces

eyes of red-hot iron

the almost-trembling hand

Teenage mothers going from cart to cart

asking for a dime so as to afford to speak

with words on loan

language punctuated with dollar and cent signs

Stigma painted

on homes & on pavement

on people

In flashes of blue light

What is sold sweet

is bought bitter

before melting into air

Beams of light turn to ash in hand

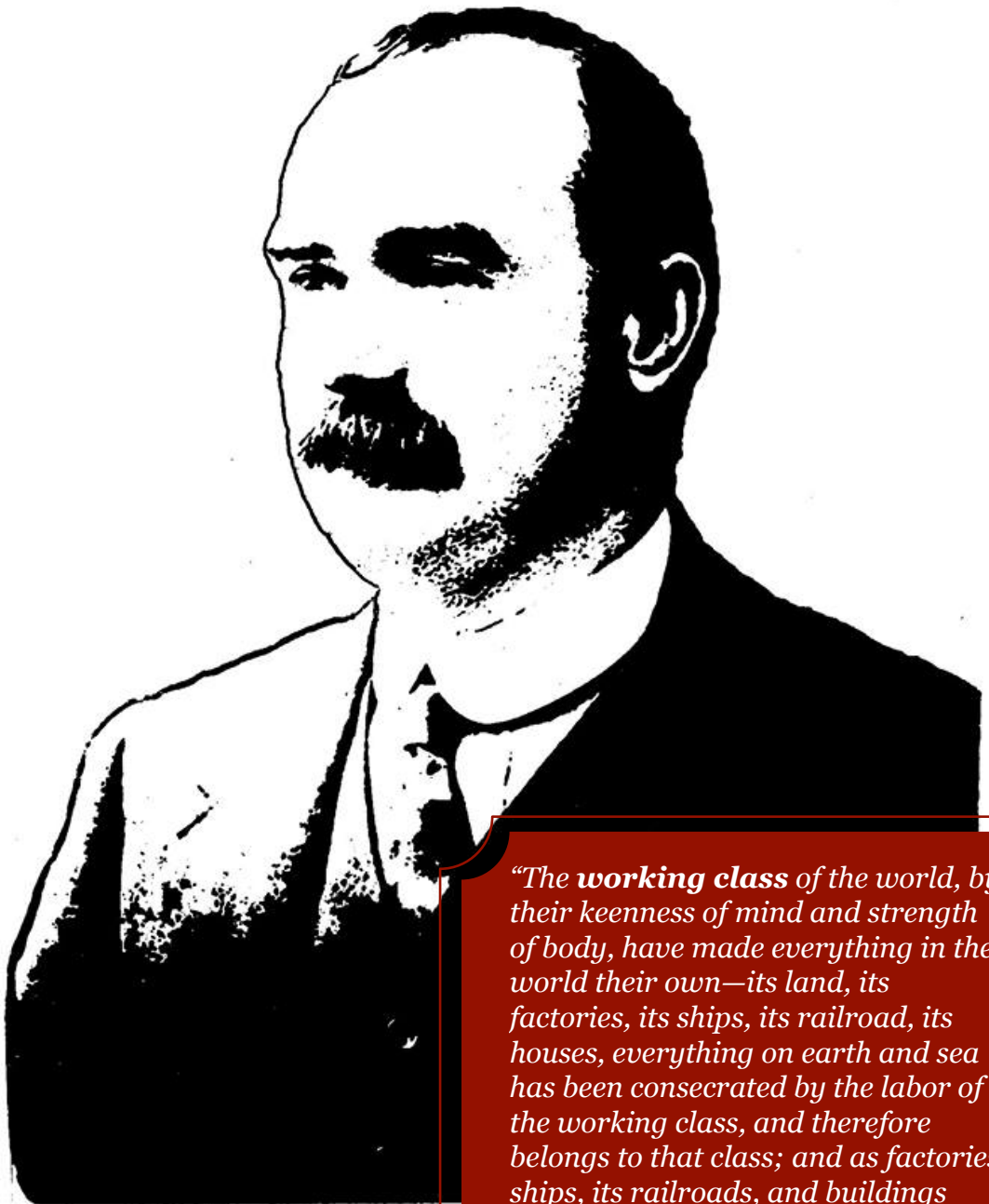
the sense of having devours all others

All the while Man is made to be an appendage

homeless at work

JAMES CONNOLLY

NOAKES



*"The **working class** of the world, by their keenness of mind and strength of body, have made everything in the world their own—its land, its factories, its ships, its railroad, its houses, everything on earth and sea has been consecrated by the labor of the working class, and therefore belongs to that class; and as factories, ships, its railroads, and buildings cannot be divided up in pieces, they must be owned in common"*



A CONNECTION TO NATURE

by MIKE WEINSTEIN



My current research focuses on the conservation psychology concept of connection to nature, which describes how an individual identifies with the natural environment and the relationships they form with nature. In this project, I wanted to explore how the expansion of the ethical circle to not only all living things, but the processes of the biosphere itself, might sit at the heart of a transition to a truly egalitarian, just, and sustainable global society.

Is it impossible to dismantle oppressive sociopolitical superstructures without individual transcendence, or are these structures the impediment to a shift in human identity? While I suspect the answer to both questions is yes, I drew inspiration for this piece from the writing of Aldo Leopold, who maintained that that an internal change in “intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions” was a necessary precondition of profound, ethical reformation.





ALLENDE, ET AL.

by BEN STAHNKE



SAINT JOE

STAHNKE



SEPTEMBER 2017

T.

Sweltering heat
Beats down on our backs
Sweat drips off our flesh
Sun fueling our rage

Another injustice occurred
Another murderer let free

Coming together
Full of heartache and disbelief
Feel it in our crying, feel it in our wailing

Gas and sticks will not stop
These bricks
Thrown to destroy
Planted to build
A barricade
Protecting the people
From your bullets

One day
We will gather
And the people
Will be aimed
At
You.



***Mankind**, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic.*

***Communism** responds by politicizing art.*

-Walter Benjamin



Things Before

HISTORY AND
MATERIALISM

Lenin, Ecology, and Revolutionary Russia —

by **BEN STAHNKE**

The leading contemporary theorist of Marxist ecology, John Bellamy Foster, once noted that:

“Early Soviet ecology was extraordinarily dynamic. Lenin had strongly embraced ecological values, partly under the influence of Marx and Engels, and was deeply concerned with conservation.”²

Lenin the conservationist is not a title we often hear, yet it is one worth considering. Well-known for his revolutionary politics, Lenin is less well-known for his contributions both to ecology and to ecological theory. Why is this? On the one hand, we might be tempted to trace the thread of blame back to the last one hundred years of anticommunist propaganda,³ carried out in part by the appendages of the various repressive apparatuses within the U.S. and abroad, and in

part by ideological, scholarly, and public discourse.⁴ Lenin himself acknowledged this when he noted that, “The bourgeois scholars and publicists usually come out in defense of imperialism in a somewhat veiled form and obscure its complete domination and its profound roots.”⁵ Yet, on the other hand, a simpler explanation might suffice: Lenin’s ecology was not overt; it was not the overarching point of his politics, and, as such, has been overshadowed and

obfuscated. Lenin's driving focus was, patently, on the social and economic emancipation of the exploited underclasses of Russian society⁶; but, that aside, Lenin had indeed made incredible contributions to the field of ecology⁷ in several key areas: with legislation, with political support of the sciences, and with his theoretical contributions to both scientific and ecological discourse.

The goal of the present essay will be to examine some of the historical and philosophical circumstances connected to the ways in which Lenin furthered ecological science. I will begin by presenting a very brief environmental history of Russia, from the 10th Century until the modern era. I then will move into a brief overview of Lenin's life. From there, I will examine one key influence on the development of Lenin's ecological leanings: the Russian philosopher-in-exile, Georgi Plekhanov. Following that, I will move into a brief examination of several scientists with whom Lenin interacted, before closing with a philosophical investigation of Lenin's historical contributions to ecological theory. In these ways, I hope to examine Lenin in something of a fresh light.

I will operate under the bias and the *a priori* assumption that, as an adherent to the dialectical nature of Hegelian-Marxist thought⁸—further developed by Herzen, Plekhanov, and others—Lenin's interest in social emancipation could have *only* coexisted alongside ideas of ecological emancipation, as both society and the land itself constitute a dialectic. In this essay, I am primarily interested in beginning to unearth, trace, and articulate some of the formative conditions of Lenin's latent ecological philosophy. Thus,

this paper will sit on the juncture of not only environmental history and biography, but upon philosophy as well. In sum, I will work to trace the roots of Lenin's ecology to the historical conditions present in pre-Soviet Russia, to examine seminal and formative events in Lenin's own life, to look to pertinent aspects of Soviet ecological-scientific work, and to begin to tease out the philosophical ecology of Lenin's own thought.

With the 100-year anniversary of the October Revolution recently having passed us by, and with a renewed interest in the real world environmental politics of socialist states such as China and Cuba, the timing seems both fortuitous and appropriate to begin teasing the ecological leanings within Lenin's own body of work. Not much has been written on such a teasing-out, and, as Lenin's work moves Marxist theory from abstraction into praxis, I feel that it is only sensible to begin to articulate what might remain otherwise abstract. As the dominant productive mode of capitalism fails to provide its own solutions to the ecological crises which *it* metes out, other—oppositional—approaches must be sought. Lenin's ecology might be one such approach.

CATCHING UP: A BRIEF ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY OF RUSSIA

The historian Douglas Weiner suggested that, "Without embracing yet another rigid determinism, it may be proposed that certain forms of political economy

leave their own footprints on the physical landscape and bequeath identifiable environmental legacies.”⁹ Here, Weiner’s idea seems to follow that old Marxist crux which suggests an inextricable intertwining of the human animal with the land—a *social metabolism* which binds the former to the latter. To exist, polities, societies, and communities throughout history have needed to produce and reproduce their material existences; and, to do so, land had to be utilized in all of its abundance for shelter, protection, and sustenance. These utilizations, and the ways by which they occurred, have left marks upon the land. And, as such, an area of land may be read based solely upon the history of its inhabitants. “History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations,” Marx observed, “each of which exploits the materials, the forms of capital, the productive forces handed down to it by all the preceding ones, and thus on the one hand continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances.”¹⁰

Environmental history is that which reads the imprints left by successive generations of human habitation upon a specific portion of land, and then tells the story.

An environmental history of Russia might be seen as a history of both domination and subjugation. “At least since the Mongol-Tatar invasion of the thirteenth century,” Weiner noted:

"and particularly with the rise and expansion of the Muscovite state, and later, the Russian Empire and the USSR, a succession of militarized, predatory tribute-taking regimes have

dominated the Eurasian land mass. Whatever they called themselves, the attitudes of these regimes toward the human and nonhuman (natural) resources of Russia have been similar."¹¹

In the first millennium C.E., the area presently comprising western Russia was initially home, by and large, to the autochthonous¹² groups of the Slavic peoples—a people whom, to quote Weiner, lived as “a free people of the forest.”¹³ Prior to the waves of Viking invasions,¹⁴ the Slavs tended towards semi-nomadism and practiced various methods of slash-and-burn agriculture, field rotation, hunting, and pastoralism. With the establishment, and growth, of the federated lands of the Kievan Rus (*Rus'skaya zemlya*) around the turn of the second millennium, the land economy of Russia began to take to a new direction, inching towards intensive resource-harvesting, profit, and trade. The wealth of the Kievan Rus’ republic of *Novgorod*, for example, “was based on the export of forest products”¹⁵—fur pelts especially, as suggested by the loss of beaver populations in the area.¹⁶ As commerce began to take its toll on the landscape, social and political attitudes towards the land also began to change.

From pagan Slav land management to the emerging Christian management of around the 10th Century, and from Mongol and Golden Horde management to the eventual land management of the Muscovites, the landscape of Russia has stood as an object of both exploitation and profit. And if, as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel has suggested, “Man is at home in [nature], and that only passes for truth in

which he finds himself at home,”¹⁷ then we should be led to examine the ways in which material and ideological forces work to alienate humanity from both its home and its truth.¹⁸

In 1649, after the so-called *Time of Troubles*, as well as lengthy, punctuated periods of social upheaval and instability, the newly-appointed Tsar Alexis and the *Zemsky Sobor*¹⁹ instituted the *Sobornoye Ulozheniye*, or the “council code,” effectively reorganizing the Russian slave and free peasant classes into a totalized serf class—a regressive legislation that ensured

an inescapable and hereditary serfdom for vast majorities of the population. The so-called council code restricted travel between towns, and granted an almost-total ownership of the serfs to the nobility, who were themselves sworn to military service by the code. Under Romanov dominance, the 17th Century also saw waves of both progressive and regressive reforms; interestingly, going as far as the 1698 Beard Tax²⁰ of Peter I—a type of forced cultural Europeanization of the previously diverse (and generally bearded) Russian men.

In an effort to join the great game of European imperial politics, the Russia nobility increasingly saw itself—both in culture and in its political organization—as European. When the truncated liberal-democratic revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries began to occur, Russia moved quickly to align itself against the French populist movements—allying with Austria and Prussia, and forming into a so-called “Holy Alliance” against the *haute* and *moyenne* bourgeoisie uprisings.

The 1825 defeat of Napoleon cemented Romanov Russia’s status as a European superpower—one which granted, more-or-less, equal socio-political footing with the pre-established empires of Western Europe. This status, however, soon led—inside of Russia, and amongst the serf and military classes—to the proliferation of liberalism; a philosophy which lent its support to things like the French Revolution, Napoleon Bonaparte, and the removal of nobility by way of swift cranial decollation.

Under Nicholas I, in the early 19th Century, Russia existed in a unique state of social tension, between, on the one hand, the emerging ideas of liberalism and, on the other, Tsar Nicholas’ reactionary



conservatism. Events such as the failed Decembrist Revolt gave hints of a swirling revolutionary subtext lying just beneath the surface of Russian social consciousness.

As Russian monarchism came into increasing friction with quickly-rising European liberal values, the Russian nobility began to exercise stronger and more volatile monarchic reactions. These reactions gave fervor and rise to such philosophers as, for example, Alexander Herzen, the so-called father of Russian socialism. Herzen, in 1843, wrote that:

"This struggle seemed like an apparition come from the other world to witness the debut of the new world, to hand on its powers on behalf of its two predecessors, its father and grandfather, and to learn that there is no place for the dead in the world of the living."²¹

This world, where the living displaced the dead both in body, in spirit, and in politics, was the world into which Lenin was born.²²

THE EMERGENCE OF LENIN

However, "Lenin was not born," the historian Christopher Read has noted, "Lenin was constructed."²³

Russia, in the time of Lenin, was a volatile land. And Lenin, as a social product of

such a unique period in Russian history, was immersed in, and indeed emerged from, this volatility. Born on 22 April 1870 as Vladimir Illyich Ulyanov, the figure who would later come to be known as Lenin—a pseudonym taken after his 1901 exile in Siberia, after the *Lena* river—was the fourth child of Ilya Nikolaevich Ulyanov and Maria Alexandrovna Ulyanova, well-to-do civil servants of mixed Jewish and Russian ethnicity who dwelled in the Volga region—halfway between Moscow and the Caspian Sea. Lenin was born in the town of Simbirsk—later renamed *Ulyanovsk* in his honor—from a family grounded in the roots of the pervasive serfdom of the late Tsarist era. Lenin—affectionately known as *Volodya* to his parents and siblings²⁴—was born to a happy family, and his childhood was noted to be pleasant. Indeed, Lenin's familial ties remained strong throughout his life.²⁵

In 1881, when the young Lenin was 11 years of age, and against the backdrop of Russia's increasing social frictions, several members of the *Narodnaya Volya*, or "People's Will"—a revolutionary organization founded on militant agrarian populism—succeeded, after several failed attempts, in murdering Tsar Alexander II.

Across the land, monarchic reaction intensified. The succession of the Tsar's son, Alexander III set back the gradualism of the liberal reforms which had been taking place under Alexander II, leading to series of violent repressions, anti-Semitic pogroms, and a growing sense of anti-collectivism and anti-democratism amongst the nobility.

Christopher Read noted that, "It could be argued [...], in the long term, the return to

a stifling, anti-democratic police state undermined the autocracy more successfully than any revolutionary movement, but that was not apparent at the time.”²⁶ Amongst the growing collectivist-populist movements, discontent towards the monarchy and towards the growing police state continued to brew. In this vein, a small group of student radicals at St. Petersburg University—among them Lenin’s older brother, Alexander Ulyanov—plotted to assassinate the newly-succeeded Alexander III. “Alexander had become something of a role model for his younger brother,” Christopher Read noted; and “[t]hrough hard, academic work Alexander had succeeded in getting to university, no mean feat at a time when there were only some ten thousand university students in the whole Russian Empire.”²⁷

The assassination plot, quickly uncovered by the Tsar’s secret police, led to Alexander’s arrest, trial, and subsequent execution by hanging in 1887. The young Lenin was a mere 17 years old at the time. The death of Alexander—who had been a student of zoology and the natural sciences—acted as a driving catalyst to the young Lenin’s burgeoning radicalism. “[Alexander’s] fate raised the question,” Read noted, “what had driven him to sacrifice his own life, so young and so full of promise?” Read went on to observe that:

"The impact turned the Ulyanov family inside out, pushing them further into increasing hostility to the autocracy. All the members were deeply affected, but none took the execution to

heart more than Volodya [Lenin]. While, up to that point, Volodya’s life had been normal and showed no signs of revolutionary tendencies, the arrest and execution of Alexander changed all that. In 1886, Lenin began to form in the soul of Volodya.”²⁸

The death of Alexander would have not only an impact on the young Lenin himself, but eventually upon Russia as well. Lenin—after a life of tumult, education, exile, and action—would eventually lend his life’s efforts to the complete restructuring of Russian society, and to ecology and the sciences as well. In this regard, Lenin was an astute theorist. Read observed that:

"He advocated armed uprising and fully supported the Moscow workers when they embarked on one, but his contribution to it was minimal. Ironically, for a movement which later came to pride itself on its revolutionary praxis, that is the active combination of theory and practice, Lenin eschewed direct activism. Theory was his practice.”²⁹

PLEKHANOV AND RUSSIAN MARXISM

Russia during the time of Lenin was a land in rapid upheaval: an upheaval which included war, industrialization, and city-building; radical socio-political and

economic restructuring; and a nation-wide philosophical and *ideological* restructuring as well. The national building-up of Russian Marxism, during Lenin's time, emerged from a Marxism which had already been around for quite some time.

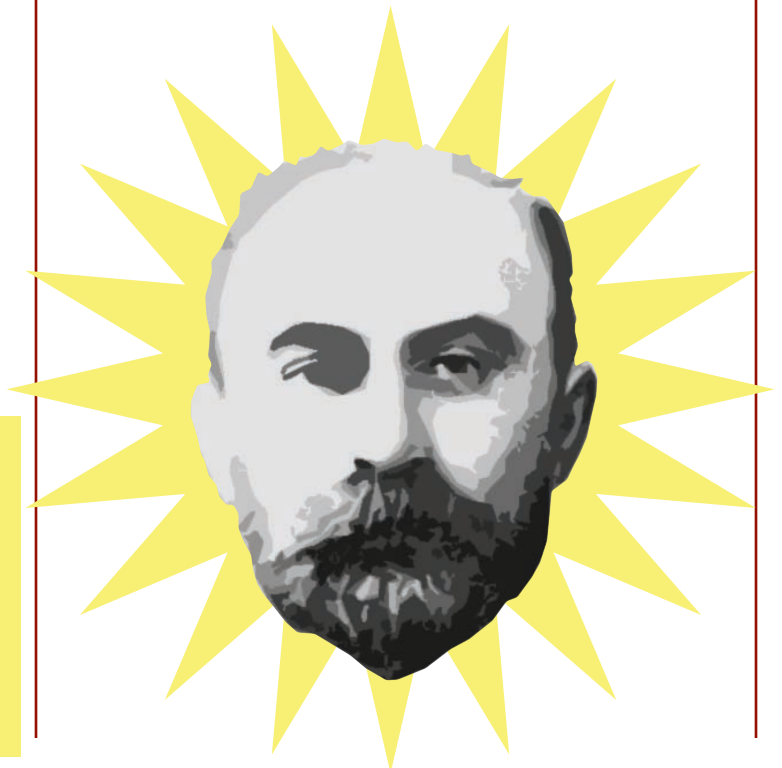
In the late 1880s, Marxism in Russia, as a distinct political theory, moved away from populist-anarchist thought—the theoretical motion behind the agrarian collectivist movements of the serfdom. In addition to distinguishing itself from collectivist anarcho-serfic thought, Russian Marxism sat in powerful contradistinction to the increasingly reactionary and fractious politics of the monarchy. As Marxism's import as a political theory grew, so too did its intelligentsia work to articulate a new Marxist science; a dialectical science. One which was neither mired in feudal crudity, nor which repressively legitimated—and thus reproduced—the exploitative monarchic social hierarchy.

This new scientific thought was grounded upon a materialist interpretation of Hegels theory of *Aufhebung*³¹: in the interaction and sublation of seeming opposites. Applied to scientific thought, this took shape as the similitude and dialectical interchange of humanity and nature. Writing on this, John BellamyFoster noted that:

"Others, such as leading Marxian theorist and close Lenin associate Nikolai Bukharin, and historian of science Y. M. Uranovsky, generalized such discoveries in terms of historical

materialism. Bukharin, following Vernadsky, emphasized the human relation to the biosphere and the dialectical interchange between humanity and nature."³²

The most important proponent, and foundational theorist, of this new scientific thought was a man named Georgi Plekhanov; a man whose ideas were seminal in the development of such a way of thinking. Plekhanov helped to define this new, scientific notion of Marxism; the very-same Marxism which, as noted in Plekhanov's 1883 text, *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, "enormously influenced the whole course of intellectual development"³³ in Russia. Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov,³⁰ one of the first Russian Marxists and founder of the Russian Social Democratic Party, would, unfortunately, later be at odds with Lenin's Bolshevik revolution.



This, however, would not completely affect Lenin's views of the man, and Plekhanov to this day is often regarded as a founding theorist of Bolshevism and of the revolution itself.

"At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution."³⁴

The brilliance of the Soviet project, moved forward by the astute work of theoreticians like Plekhanov, Lenin, and others, was in the radical overhaul of science itself; in the development of a dialectical science—a science befitting Russia's epoch of social revolution.

THE NEW SOVIET SCIENTISTS

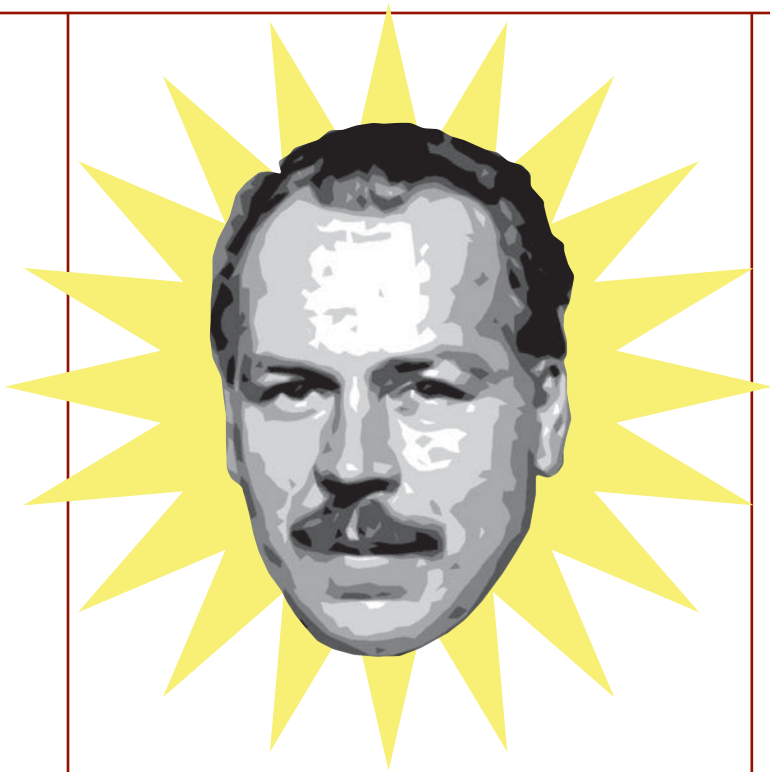
"Natural science will one day incorporate the science of man, just as the science of man will incorporate natural science; there will be a single science."³⁵

Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov, a Russian botanist and polyglot who spoke an

astounding 22 languages, had, after the Revolution, been charged by Lenin "with the responsibility for organizing an institute for genetics and plant breeding to end the chronic problem of insufficient food production in Russia."³⁶ The historian William deJong Lambert noted that, "Vavilov shared the Bolshevik belief that communism made possible the development of science on a scale capitalist countries could only dream about. To this end," Lambert continued, "he traveled the globe collecting plant samples and a library of literature on the biological sciences."³⁷ As an emissary of Soviet science, Vavilov was sent by Lenin to seek out and study with the famous American botanist Luther Burbank, famous for his early epigenetic experiments and the now-ubiquitous Burbank potato. Burbank once commented on the odd yet radical notion that:

"The secret of improved plant breeding, apart from scientific knowledge, is love. [...] While I was conducting experiments to make 'spineless' cacti, [...] I often talked to the plants to create a vibration of love. 'You have nothing to fear,' I would tell them. 'You don't need defensive thorns. I will protect you.' Gradually, the useful plant of the desert emerged in a thornless variety."³⁸

Burbank's experiments and his hefty body of work inspired Vavilov; which in turn affected the whole field of Soviet science—a field which eventually



became intertwined with the idea of the *heritability of acquired characteristics*. The heritability of acquired characteristics dominated Soviet scientific thought, and emerged from the (dialectical) notion that an organism's life was intertwined with its life processes; that life processes changed organisms just as organisms change life processes.³⁹

On Lenin's advice, Vavilov went on to found the Institute of Applied Botany, from which he "organized a chain of agricultural experiment stations, stretching from Murmansk [...] to the southern Caucasus."⁴⁰ Vavilov worked enthusiastically on agricultural problems with the overarching goal of ending the famines which had plagued Russia for centuries. Themes of public service and food security dominated Vavilov's work; themes which similarly motivated Burbank and, later, the plant biologist Ivan Michurin.

Michurin, whom Lenin called the "Russian Burbank"⁴¹ was a Soviet plant biologist who had come from humble family origins. Working on his orchard near the city of Tambov, Lambert noted that Michurin was "determined to succeed where his father had failed, and set to attempting the creation of new varieties of fruit by grafting seedlings onto types he wished them to resemble."⁴² Michurin's ideas stand out for their epigenetic import: his work included the grafting of seedlings onto existing plants in an attempt to coax the seedlings to adopt the characteristics of their hosts; characteristics which he then hoped would be passed onto subsequent generations. "Like Burbank," Lambert noted, "anthropomorphism formed the basis for Michurin's understanding of the natural world, and he believed all living things were endowed with an intelligent ability to adapt in the struggle for existence."⁴³ For his work, Michurin was elevated to the status of a Soviet hero. His 70th birthday was celebrated as a national



holiday, and his ideas went on to inspire the thought and work of future scientists—notably, the famous Soviet agrobiologist Trofim Denisovich Lysenko.

Long after Lenin's death, during the destructive de-Stalinization (*Destalinizatsiya*) efforts of Krushchev, and under the pressure of the aftereffects of these efforts, the theory of the heritability of acquired characteristics, along with much of the new Soviet science, was deemed pseudoscience, and written out of Soviet ecology altogether.⁴⁴

HINTS OF LENIN'S ECOLOGY

"Nature is the existence of the idea in diversity. Its unity, as the ancients conceived it, was necessity, fatum, the mysterious universal power irresistible to both Earth and Olympus [...] The ancient world placed the external on a par with the internal, which is the case in nature, but not in the truth where the spirit dominates the form."⁴⁵

Lenin's ecological underpinnings are important. As organizations under the sway of capitalist productive relations scramble to think up solutions to counter the relentless force of *capitalocentric* climate change (and its resultant, destructive impacts upon biodiversity, ecosystem stability, and community equilibrium), ecological theories grounded

both *in* anticapitalist sentiment and *outside of* the capitalist hegemony appear increasingly relevant. Further, such theories may hold answers yet to have taken root in present-day ecological discourse.

Lenin was a man who, as John Bellamy Foster noted, had:

"read Vladimir Nikolaevich Sukachev's *Swamps: Their Formation, Development and Properties* and was, Douglas Weiner has speculated, 'affected by the holistic, ecological spirit of Sukachev's pioneering text in community ecology.' Immediately after the October 1917 Revolution, Lenin supported the creation of the People's Commissariat of Education under the leadership of Anatolii Vasil'evich Lunacharskii, which was given responsibility for conservation."⁴⁶

How might we go about our initial reconstructions of the ecological philosophy of such a man—a political radical, a revolutionary, and a conservationist?

Firstly, utilizing a philosophical archeology—in the Foucauldian sense—we might link Lenin's earliest ecological

leanings with his interest, not only in the philosophical ecology of Marx and Engels, but with the ecology of contemporary Soviet scientists and thinkers such as the geobotanist Vladimir Sukachev, the geochemist Vladimir Vernadsky, the biochemist Alexander Ivanovich Oparin,⁴⁷ and others. Lenin's ecology had to have been grounded in the leading philosophical and scientific thought of his day. At the time, Soviet thought was radical in the sense that it aimed to seek answers outside of the prevailing Malthusian discourse of the bourgeoisie; grounded, rather, in ideas of cooperation and in dialectical interchange.

Secondly, we should seek to understand, and attempt to reconstruct, the primary ontological assertions upon which Lenin might have based his ecology. In this regard, we must turn to Lenin's own work on the matter and begin to sift out his thoughts on both humanity and nature, as well as the interrelationship thereof.

It must be recognized that Lenin's ecology sat upon a *dialectical* reading of materialism—a militant materialism, in his own words.⁴⁸ The materialism of Lenin was not, contrary to temptation, a materialism of reduction; his was not the collapse of subjectivity into objectivity as was argued by Richard Avenarius, and other *empirio-criticismists* of Lenin's day, who had sought to reduce all subjectivity, dualism, and phenomenal experience into a type of deterministic physicalism.

Rather, Lenin's materialism, militant as it was, was radically dialectical. Here, the dialectic is used to refer to the interchange between separate, yet interwoven,

ontological categories: nature and man, subject and object. For Lenin, thought and conscious activity were patently real, and forever identified with—*yet not reduced into*—matter, or nature. In *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, Lenin wrote that:

"Natural science positively asserts that the earth once existed in such a state that no man or any other creature existed or could have existed on it. Organic matter is a later phenomenon, the fruit of a long evolution. It follows that there was no sentient matter, no "complexes of sensations," no self that was supposedly "indissolubly" connected with the environment in accordance with Avenarius' doctrine. Matter is primary, and thought, consciousness, sensation are products of a very high development. Such is the materialist theory of knowledge, to which natural science instinctively subscribes."⁴⁹

And, in *Did Nature Exist Prior to Man?* Lenin quoted Feuerbach, who wrote that:

"Natural science, at least in its present state, necessarily

leads us back to a point when the conditions for human existence were still absent, when nature, i.e., the earth, was not yet an object of the human eye and mind, when, consequently, nature was an absolutely non-human entity (absolut unmenschliches Wesen)."

From this, Lenin's ontology could be conceived from both dialectical realist and emergentist lenses.

The basic syllogistic structure of Lenin's matter-primary ecological philosophy might thus be posited as follows:

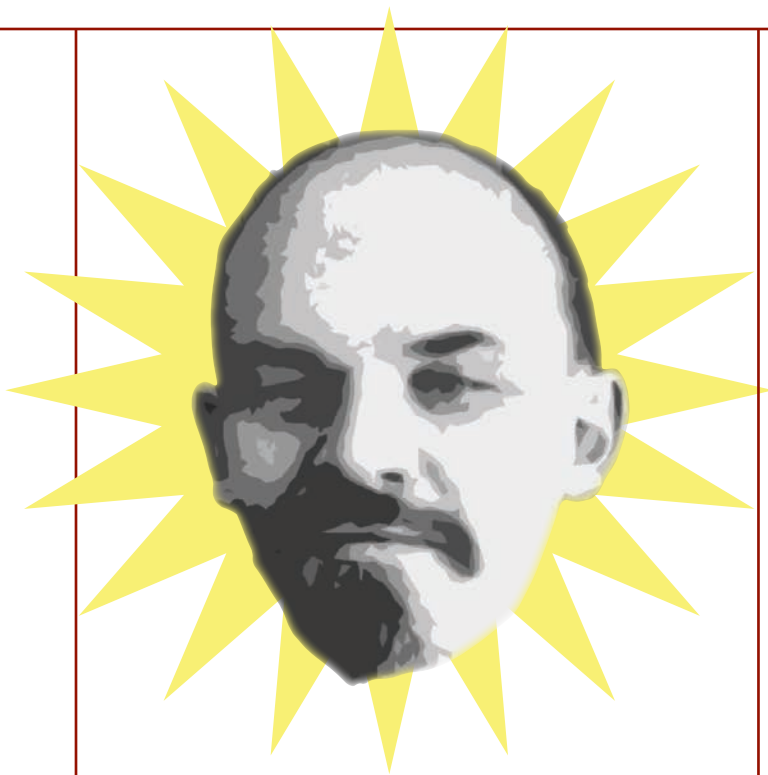
1. Social knowledge must reflect economic systemicity
2. Economic systemicity must reflect nature (i.e., dialectically-developing matter)
3. Social knowledge must reflect nature

Here, the movements of Lenin's ideas follow that old Marxist crux, which is, most essentially, that Hegelian assertion of the dynamic, and method, of change: out of a thing emerges a new thing, *ad infinitum*. Out of nature: humanity. Out of humanity: society. And so on. However, in Lenin's case, as for Marx, the substrate of all emergence is matter itself—nature, that great collection of inorganic matter which gave rise to organicity. Thus, Lenin's statement that, "man's knowledge reflects nature"⁵⁰ is at once true because there is simply nothing else for man's knowledge to reflect. And, further, the premise of

reflection itself entails two ontologically distinct categories—a source of knowledge and an organism able to reflect such a source—which, by way of their interchange, can be considered as two *real* aspects of a singular Nature. In *What is Matter? What is Experience?* Lenin noted, of his detractors, that:

"Their denial of matter is the old answer to epistemological problems, which consists in denying the existence of an external, objective source of our sensations, of an objective reality corresponding to our sensations. On the other hand, the recognition of the philosophical line denied by the idealists and agnostics is expressed in the definitions: matter is that which, acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation, and so forth."⁵¹

In my view, Lenin's conception of nature seemed to follow along with Baruch Spinoza's *Deus sive Natura*⁵²—a notion in which nature is both objectively real, and has, by its own means and systematic machinations, produced humankind as an evolute of itself; differentiated, emergent, and identified. Being objectively real, nature—in which humanity is not reduced, but dialectically produced—is thus in essence the true



creator of humanity, and deserved to be conserved, protected, and respected. It was, in my opinion, upon this foundation of respect that Lenin's ecology ultimately sat. For Lenin, nature had dethroned God.

Lenin's work followed closely with the directness and use-value of Marx and Engels, in whom he saw a methodological simplicity: a philosophy of common sense. On this, Lenin wrote that:

"One expression of the genius of Marx and Engels was that they despised pedantic playing with new words, erudite terms, and subtle 'isms,' and said simply and plainly: there is a materialist line and an idealist line in philosophy, and between them there are

various shades of agnosticism. The painful quest for a 'new' point of view in philosophy betrays the same poverty of mind that is revealed in the painful effort to create a 'new' theory of value, or a 'new' theory of rent, and so forth."⁵³

Following such a philosophy of common sense, a philosophy contra pedantry, the ecology of Lenin emerged as nothing but a natural reflection of nature by man himself: a reflection devoid of any idealism or superstition, and in line with nature-in-itself. This ecology, patently demystified, rests upon a foundation of geochemistry, biology, and philosophy decidedly outside of the capitalist superstructure. Lenin's ecology was rooted in a reflection of nature itself *outside of* the logic of profit; in a reflection of that Spinozan concept of *Deus sive Natura*; a conception which can only lead one towards custodianship and respect.

The philosophical ecology of Lenin was thus an ecological materialism in which "the fundamental premise of [such a] materialism is the recognition of the external world, of the existence of things outside and independent of our mind."⁵⁴ And, as such, it was an ecology which sought not to transpose *a priori* one's ideas onto nature, but an ecology which sought to adequately *reflect* nature as-it-is, as a thing-in-itself responsible for existence itself, for life, and for the sustenance of living beings.

While the various sides of history⁵⁵ will remember Lenin in various ways, he was, at root, a man who—riding the crest of the great and crashing wave of the people—worked to end income inequality, poverty, and illiteracy; to liberate women, Jews, and other ethnic minorities; and to both protect and conserve Russian natural spaces. He was a man who sought to live up to that old assessment of Plato, who, in the *Republic*, noted that:

"Until philosophers rule as kings in cities or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophize, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from evil [...], not, I think, the human race."⁵⁶

ENDNOTES

1 Lenin, V.I. "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism," in Lenin's *Collected Works: Volume 19*, (Moscow, 1977): 21-28.

2 "On the other hand," Foster (2015) continued, "the Soviet Union developed some of the world's most dialectical contributions to ecology, revolutionizing science in fields such

as climatology, while also introducing pioneering forms of conservation. Aside from its famous zapovedniki, or nature reserves for scientific research, it sought to preserve and even to expand its forests. As environmental historian Stephen Brain observes, it established 'levels of [forest] protection unparalleled anywhere in the world.'" Foster, John B. "Late Soviet Ecology," *Monthly Review* 67, no. 2 (2015). Accessed 26 Nov. 2017.

3 Wall, Wendy. "Anti-Communism in the 1950s," *The Gilder Lehman Institute of American History*, Accessed 26 Nov. 2017, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/fifties/essays/anti-communism-1950s>.

4 "Under no circumstances," Louis Althusser wrote, "should we forget that the themes of democratic freedoms and national independence are, first and foremost, integral parts of the bourgeois State Ideology, especially in periods when the communist party can rightfully invoke them against bourgeois politics" (2014, p. 113). Althusser, Louis. *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. (London: Verso 2014), 113.

5 Lenin, V.I. "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism," in *Essential Works of Lenin: 'What is to be Done?' and Other Writings*, (New York: Dover, 1966): 254.

6 Lenin noted that, "The exploiting classes need political rule in order to maintain exploitation, I.e., in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority and against the interests of the vast majority of the people. The exploited classes need political rule in order completely to abolish all exploitation, i.e., in the interests of the vast majority of the people, and against the interests of the insignificant minority consisting of the modern slave owners—the landlords and the

capitalists.”

Ibid., 287.

7 A term newly coined (*Ökologie*) by Ernst Haeckel in 1866.

8 Lukács cited Marx when he noted that, “The premise of dialectical materialism is, we recall: ‘It is not men’s consciousness that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness.’”

Lukács, Georg. *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*. (Cambridge: MIT Press): 18.

9 Weiner, Douglas R. “The Predatory Tribute-Taking State: A Framework for Understanding Russian Environmental History,” in *Global Environmental History*, ed. J.R. McNeill (London: Routledge, 2013): 283.

10 Marx continues with the idea that, “The further the separate spheres, which interact on one another, extend in the course of this development, the more the original isolation of the separate nationalities is destroyed by the developed mode of production and intercourse and the division of labor is naturally brought forth by these, the more history becomes world-history.”

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *The German Ideology*. (Connecticut: Mansfield Publishing): 38.

11 Weiner went on to note that, “Unbounded by the rule of law (although constrained somewhat by custom), these regimes saw the population and the land over which they ruled as a trove of resources to be mined for the rulers’ purposes” (Ibid., 283).

12 Mielnik-Sikorska M, Daca P, Malyarchuk B, Derenko M, Skonieczna K, Perkova M, Dobosz T, and Grzybowski T. “The History of Slavs Inferred from Complete Mitochondrial Genome Sequences.” *Plos One* 8, no. 1 (2013): 54360. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0054360.

13 Ibid., 284.

14 Marx lamented that, “Nothing is more common than the notion that in history up till now it has only been a question of ‘taking.’ The barbarians ‘take’ the Roman Empire, and this fact of ‘taking’ is made to explain the transition from the old world to the feudal system” (Ibid., 62).

15 Ibid., 285.

16 Ibid., 285.

17 Hegel, G.W.F. *The Philosophy of History*. (Mineola: Dover Publishing): 440.

18 Lukács cited Hegel, when he noted that: “In contrast to nature in which, as Hegel emphasizes, ‘change goes in a circle, repeating the same thing,’ change in history takes place ‘in the concept as well as on the surface. It is the concept itself which is corrected’” (Ibid., 18).

19 The “Assembly of the Land,” an early form of Russian parliament made up of the Boyar nobility, the clergy, and the early town-dwelling bourgeoisies.

20 An interesting aside: “beard coins” were carried by bearded men to show municipal authorities that they had paid their taxes, and thus were allowed to wear a beard.

21 Herzen, Aleksandr. *Selected Philosophical Works*. (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific,

2003): 32.

22 “To smash the machine,” Lenin wrote, “to break it up—this is what is truly in the interest of the people, of the majority of the workers and most of the peasants [...].”
Ibid., 299.

23 Ibid., 4.

24 Read, Christopher. *Lenin : A Revolutionary Life*. (London: Routledge, 2008): 7

25 “The first point to make,” Christopher Read noted, “is that in the life of the young Vladimir, known as Volodya within the family, there was no sign of the developing Lenin. Volodya’s childhood seems to have been entirely conventional for the circles in which he lived. The family seems to have been a happy one. Indeed, Lenin remained close to his surviving family members through- out his life.”
Ibid., 7.

26 Ibid., 10.

27 Ibid., 10.

28 Ibid., 10.

29 Ibid., 83.

30 Ibid., 11.

31 The term literally means “to pick up,” but when used by Hegel often has a double, or often triple meaning.

32 Ibid., 2015.

33 Plekhanov, G.V. *Socialism and the Political Struggle*. Accessed 26 Nov. 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/plekhanov/1883/struggle/chap1.htm>.

34 Plekhanov, G.V. *Socialism and the Political Struggle*. Accessed 26 Nov. 2017, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/plekhanov/1883/struggle/chap2.htm>.

35 Marx, Karl. “Private Property and Communism,” in *Early Writings*, trans. & ed. T.B. Bottomore. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963): 164.

36 DeJong-Lambert, William. *The Cold War Politics of Genetic Research: An Introduction to the Lysenko Affair*. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012): 6.

37 Ibid., 6.

38 Yogananda, Paramhansa. *Autobiography of a Yogi*. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946): 344

39 “The animal is one with its life activity. It does not distinguish the activity from itself. It is its activity.”

Marx, Karl. “Alienated Labour,” in *Early Writings*, trans. & ed. T.B. Bottomore. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963): 127.

40 Ibid., 7.

41 Ibid., 7.

42 Ibid., 8.

43 Ibid., 8.

44 Here, we must point out the similarity between modern day epigenetic research and the work of both Michurin and Lysenko. These connections will be discussed at length in a forthcoming paper.

45 Ibid., 37-38.

46 Foster went on to note that, “In 1924 the All-Russian Conservation Society (VOOP) was created with an initial membership of around one thousand. The Education Commissariat with Lenin’s backing set up the celebrated ecological reserves, known as zapovedniki, of relatively pristine nature, set apart for scientific research. By 1933 there were thirty-three zapovedniki encompassing altogether some 2.7 million hectares.”

Ibid., 2015.

47 Ibid., 2015.

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50 Ibid., 1977.

51 Ibid., 1.3

52 “God or Nature.”

53 Ibid., 1.3

54 Ibid., 1.4

55 i.e., history *qua* ideological warfare.

56 Plato, speaking as Socrates to Glaucon, in his *Republic*, Book V.

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COMMUNISM begins where the simple worker starts to think, in a self-sacrificing way even as coping with hard work, about the increase of labour productivity, about saving each and every pound of grain, coal, iron and other products even though those will not benefit him, nor his "next of kin" but "those distant ones," that is, the whole society.

-LENIN



BY CHRISTIAN NOAKES

THE SACRED-SECULAR DIALECTIC

Zionist Superstructure in
Palestine





In any society the economic base (the mode and means of production) is stabilized by the superstructure (i.e. politics, ideology, religion, culture, etc.). This stabilization is due to the dialectic relationship between base and superstructure in which the former shapes and is shaped by the latter.¹ The ideological and cultural apparatuses of capitalism serve to both naturalize and maintain necessary social relations through mutation of common sense (i.e. what is taken for granted). However, in the colonial context the base is also often the superstructure.² That is, the appropriation of space, resources, and/or highly exploitable labor is at once the means of production and political/cultural dominance. This colonial reality is particularly pronounced in the political, cultural, ethnic, and economic goals of Zionism.

Taking a principled anti-imperialist and anti-revisionist position, the following paper analyzes Zionism from an historical perspective in order to assess its roots and ideological affiliations as well as to understand its role in processes of

accumulation and dispossession. However, as Edward Said asserts:

[p]resent political and cultural actualities make such an examination extraordinarily difficult, as much because Zionism in the postindustrial West has acquired for itself an almost unchallenged hegemony in liberal ‘establishment’ discourse, as because in keeping with one of its central ideological characteristics, Zionism has hidden, or has caused to disappear, the literal historical ground of its growth, its political cost to the native inhabitants of Palestine, and its militantly oppressive discriminations between Jews and non-Jews.³

Colonial amnesia reinforced and reshaped by a public-private partnership of the Zionist superstructure is vital for ongoing Israeli expansion and Palestinian dispossession. Nowhere is this more evident than in Jerusalem. Struggles for legitimacy and recognition determine, in large part, who has a right to Jerusalem and what that right entails. At times, these struggles

play out both within and between Israeli and Palestinian communities that are all trying to assert their right to the city—a right reserved for the group that is able to produce space that reflects their beliefs and collective identity. While the Israeli state may enjoy dominance in Jerusalem, its monopoly is only relative and is subject to contestation on the part of Palestinians, non-Israeli Jews, and in some cases Israeli citizens. That is why the Zionist memory—which creates legitimacy in passing as a fixed and uncontested past—must be actively maintained and adapted to reproduce consent for further colonization.

The prime actors or institutions that work to construct the legitimacy of the Zionist monopoly include the Israeli state—which itself includes both the Israel Defense Forces and agencies such as Israeli Department of Antiquities and Israeli Antiquities Authority—and the private Ir David Foundation/El ‘ad which finances archeological excavation of the city, educational tourism, and residential programs restricted to Jews. While the first two tactics play key roles in Israel’s pursuit of a legitimate dominance of space, El’ ad’s residential programs are intended to make the area strictly Jewish—thereby undermining Palestinian contention. This adds to the Israeli narrative of Zionism and a legitimate monopoly of space by projecting the

Jewish exclusivity it seeks to construct and disseminate (through archeology and tourism respectively) on to physical space. Through the appropriation of Palestinian land for the sole purpose of Jewish settlement, Israel has been erasing the living Palestinian history that contributes to a contending meaning of Jerusalem as a place and a home beyond the exclusionary Zionist representation.

Zionist Memory and Colonial Amnesia

The Zionist cause of expansion requires legitimacy which it produces through a shifting and inconsistent memory of Israeli space. The continued colonization of Palestine is powered not only by the financial and military support of the U.S. and other imperialist nations but by a process of “dispossession through amnesia.”⁴ As such, there are certain inconsistencies in the collective Zionist memory that when analyzed reveal significant contradictions. The tendency to ignore British imperialism and Zionist colonization prior to the 1948 founding of the Israeli state is a convenient blind spot in the supposedly ancient memory of Zionism. This of course serves a vital purpose as such memories would delegitimize the Zionist narrative. It would expose the origins of ethnic

cleaning in Zionist ideology—as opposed to the narrative that Zionist appropriation is justice for the Holocaust which happened after the processes of colonization was already underway. It would also expose the foundational role of western imperialism in strategically creating the conditions and propping up the state of Israel for political and economic dominance in the region. Straight from the mouth of one former British governor of Jerusalem, the Zionist cause gave the British empire the opportunity to set up a “little loyal Jewish Ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism.”⁵ In forgetting this history, Israel can claim land taken from the Palestinians through British conquest—such as Jerusalem in 1917—without acknowledging the dispossession of its inhabitants or the fundamentally imperialist nature of the Zionist project.

The establishment of the Israeli state and the conflict that led up to it resulted in the 1948 conception of the Green Line—the internationally recognized border created by the United Nations’ Resolution 181. This resolution divided Jerusalem into Israeli (West) and Arabic (East) territory, thereby leaving the Old City and the City of David in Jordanian control. The newly established Israel chose Jerusalem as its capital. It was also assumed that East Jerusalem would house the capital of a separate

Palestinian state that intended to govern from the Orient House—a culturally significant seat of Palestinian power. This conception was at odds with Ben-Gurion who was determined to make the entire city the capital of Israel.⁶ In 2001 Israel shut down the Orient House in a move to bolster their monopoly of political legitimacy. Israel’s development beyond the Green Line began after the Six Day War in 1967 when Israel captured the Old City. The official state narrative would suggest that this was a move to unite Jerusalem. In reality, it marked a new phase in the ongoing campaign of settler colonialism. Paradoxically, Israel has since coupled with its assumptions of an ahistorical and ancient antagonism with Arab inhabitants the assertion that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict originated in 1967—thereby limiting any negotiations to Gaza and the West Bank and refusing to acknowledge earlier acts of ethnic cleansing.⁷ Here again, the Zionist memory is purged of historic detail to legitimize continued colonization as an ancient right of Jewish people.

Israel’s claim to space is rooted in the monopolistic assertion of first arrival—a claim of indigeneity meant to displace the indigenous. Ancient religious text is the basis for assuming the essentially Jewish character of Jerusalem.

The state believes it can prove or legitimize this view of exclusively Jewish space via archeology. This ancient narrative is used to make the City of David and the idea of a “unified” Jewish Jerusalem authentic to inhabitants and visitors alike. According to historian Ilan Pappé,

“Zionism secularized and nationalized Judaism. To bring their project to fruition, the Zionist thinkers claimed the biblical territory and recreated, indeed reinvented, it as the cradle of their new nationalist movement.”⁸

This synthesis of the sacred and the secular serves to make the process of expansion and dispossession hegemonic to Israelis and many western states.

The importance of archeology in producing and reinforcing this hegemony can not be overstated. Archeological excavations are used to justify further expansion beyond the Green Line. It is from findings that can be claimed to verify ancient texts that the settler colonial Zionist memory is constructed. The ancient



City of David is used to assert the right to contemporary Israeli expansion—a right that entails Palestinian dispossession and the erasure of non-Jewish history. Archeology serves as an institutional means to connecting a modern Jerusalem to Biblical Jerusalem so as to legitimize contemporary development within a religious conception of history. This historical approach to religion and spatial politics means that Israel can find only remains that are understood under their religious paradigm which by its very nature can not be itself disproven since religious authority escapes the rigorous standards



historians, geographers, and other scientists are subject to and instead is subject to its own internal logic. All findings that corroborate the narrative are deemed significant while anything that does not fit the conception of a united and inherently Jewish Jerusalem are disregarded as mere static—if not destroyed.⁹ It is this blurred line between faith and fact (i.e. religious right and archeological excavation) that Ir David Foundation/El ‘ad seeks to straddle in its ideological battle with Palestinian (or non-exclusive) Jerusalem.

The conception of a greater metropolitan Jerusalem is the social

product of a political struggle over who has the right to space.¹⁰ A united Jerusalem, therefore, implies (at least in the Zionist common sense) a Jerusalem for Jews. The right which Jews feel they are granted through religious history has become a means to monopolize space. The right to the city in Jerusalem and the City of David, in particular, is restrictive rather than liberating. Jews have a right to the city not afforded to Palestinians. In fact, the rights of the former are founded on the dispossession of the latter. While Jewish settlements are frequently erected, most Palestinian construction is considered illegal and therefore subject to demolition. Israeli’s are granted some say as to the composition of Jerusalem, whereas Palestinians are systematically excluded from development decisions and political acknowledgment—with the exception of when they take to the streets. The conception of what constitutes the City of David also grants Israelis the supposedly sacred right to the Old City and Silwan as parts of each are considered to fall within the national park.

The Public-Private Partnership of the Zionist Superstructure

Israeli development is first about claiming a monopoly of space it deems to be exclusively Jewish. It is a means to actualize the Jewish Jerusalem in the here and now, of physically constructing social and symbolic space. To do so requires that political, religious, and capitalist components work in lockstep toward Zionist ends of accumulation through ethnic cleansing. Private development relies on political or state power—whether in the form of conquest, security, or subsidization. The relationship between the state and private institutions like the Ir David Foundation combines political and religious authority bound together by Zionist ideology in order to fuel continual expansion.

The blurred line between Israeli development and the state serves to entrench further the expansionist approach of “uniting” Jerusalem into Israeli common sense—thereby preventing mass dissent of its citizens and encouraging their willingness to occupy territory they see as essentially and exclusively Jewish. Getting Israelis to not only consent but to contribute their bodies is essential in making a Jewish Jerusalem as it provides settlers necessary for further development

and expansion. This participation is essential to constructing Jewish space out of appropriated land. A parallel can be drawn between imperial subsidies given to British citizens willing to settle in Ireland who were also necessary for establishing political dominance and claiming the land to be legitimately British due to the presence of British people. In fact, the same British forces and tactics that were used against the Irish were unleashed on Palestinians. British politicians saw Zionists serving the same role as the Scottish Presbyterians that colonized the north of Ireland in the 17th century.¹¹ In the same fashion, creating Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem is used to construct Israeli space in the present as proof of an exclusively Jewish past—the ideological justification of continued expansion. Settler colonialism requires a particularly active form of consent on the part of settlers.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the nearby Palestinian village of Silwan. El’ad’s financing of residential programs in Silwan expands the City of David and therefore Jewish Jerusalem. By continually appropriating land, El’ad achieves two goals: reducing Palestinian control of space and the expansion of Jewish space into what is becoming a suburb of the City of David. Such appropriation of land serves to both undermine Palestinian

claims and bolster Israeli claims to Jerusalem. As mentioned above, Silwan is seen to fall partially under the jurisdiction of the City of David. Therefore, Zionist common sense gives settlers a supposedly religious right to the land under Palestinian feet.

Given the role of religion in the Israeli narrative of Jerusalem, the authority of the state and institutions like Ir David Foundation represents an ongoing dialectical process between the sacred and the secular in which the public political society and private civil society work hand in and to maintain Zionist dominance. This



uniqueness also informs the sociopolitical dynamics at play in Jerusalem. The Zionist cause is preoccupied with justifying Israeli dominance through traditional religious claim which it, in turn, justifies via the institutional function of archeology. Where the public (i.e. the state) provides military protection to instill a sense of security necessary for Ir David Foundation and El 'ad to function as intended, the sacred aspects serve to justify the secular power of Israel over Jerusalem as an ancient right reserved solely for Jewish people. It is in the use of archeology that sacred and secular authorities coalesce in an attempt to legitimize the Israeli colonial monopolization of space.

**However,
archeology is not
only a tool for
Israeli hegemony
but a weapon of
counter-hegemony
to be turned back on
the Zionist
conception of
Jerusalem.**

While the Ir David Foundation looks only to archeological excavation as a means to corroborate with the narrative of Israeli ownership, other organizations see archeological findings as revealing a more demographically diverse spatial history. Emek Shaveh is an archeological activist organization that has been a vocal opponent of the politically motivated City of David excavations. They work in places such as Silwan conducting educational campaigns to promote an opposing view of a land with a diverse history and ethnoreligious demographics. Zochrot—an Israeli-Palestinian organization—is an institution that embodies this spirit of cohabitation and cooperation. These oppositional institutions show that Zionist hegemony is not absolute amongst its citizens and that Israeli civil society



(and the larger Jewish population even more so) is a site of contestation that is capable of aligning its interests with Palestinians. The counter-hegemonic understanding that has developed amongst Israelis and Palestinians alike suggests an alternative conception of Jerusalem as an inclusive and egalitarian place of shared significance. With contending Palestinian claims to space and the absence of absolute consent amongst Israelis, political stability can only be



achieved through inclusiveness and cooperation. There is therefore a certain irony in the fact that the assaults perpetrated by Israeli forces in the name of security (a euphemism for exclusivity) actually undermine Israeli hegemony and perpetuate conflict.

Conclusion

In closing, the increasing domination of Zionists over Jerusalem reflects struggles over legitimacy and ownership. This colonial domination is twofold: the ideological process of creating Israeli consent as to what constitutes Jerusalem (and Israeli territory more generally) and the political struggle against conflicting Palestinian claims to space. Israeli hegemony requires consent of citizens as well as the exclusion and eventual expulsion of those who it deems alien. Due to its colonial and exclusionary nature Israel cannot gain Palestinian consent but must control by means of coercive force instead. The consent and active participation (i.e. settlement) that are essential for Israeli hegemony are produced by a narrative of ancient authenticity and rightful ownership. While the Zionist memory sees archeology as a means to legitimize solely Jewish ownership of Jerusalem, no archeological findings

can justify exclusion and marginalization of Jerusalem's other inhabitants.

In fact, archeology has also been used to challenge such attempts at justifying Israel's takeover by providing evidence of diverse communities that would suggest a more open and inclusive right to the city. This is the counterhegemonic understanding of Jerusalem put forward by organizations like Emek Shaveh. The continued assault on Gaza, annexation of the West Bank, and the full support of the U.S. government—most recently codified in Trump's "deal of the century"—serves to fully realize the colonial aspirations of the Zionist project. Nothing short of complete extinction of Palestinians can wipe out indigenous resistance. In order to truly resolve issues of ownership and citizenship in Jerusalem—and Palestine more generally—there must be a radical reimagining of space and how people use it to relate to one another. Such a conception implies a shift from the traditional relations of power and exclusion to relations of cohabitation and cooperation. Only then can there emerge a single secular state based on the common right to the land. Only then will Palestine be made "into a human paradise for Arabs and Jews and lovers of freedom."¹²

Endnotes

1. Friedrich Engels, *Letter to J. Bloch* (1890).
2. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), 5.
3. Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (1992), p. 57.
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5. Ronald Storrs, *Orientations* (1945), p.345, 2nd ed. London: Nicholson & Watson.
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9. Dubrovsky A (2018) *Jerusalem municipality seizes historic Islamic cemetery*.
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11. David Cronin, *Balfour's Shadow: A Century of British Support for Zionism and Israel* (2017).
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Photo Credit: Mustafa Hassona



The Palmer Raids and the First **Red Scare**

THE ROOTS OF LIBERAL ANTICOMMUNISM
IN THE UNITED STATES

by JARROD GRAMMEL



F

or one reason or another, there is much more literature about the second “Red Scare,” now known as McCarthyism, than there is about the First Red Scare.

Perhaps it is only because the second one, which occurred in the late 1940s into the early 1960s is more recent and many of those who lived through it are still alive today. Maybe it is because the second one coincided with the intensification of the Cold War that has had such a profound impact on the U.S.’s collective understanding of history and culture. There’s even the theatre of HUAC hearing and the Hollywood Ten. It is also plausible that the First Red Scare, which occurred from around 1917 into the mid-1920s, was much more violent,

repressive and does more to harm the reputation of the U.S. as a bastion of democracy and freedom.



Arguably the most important part of the First Red Scare is what became known as the Palmer Raids from December 1919 to January 1920. These were a series of government raids on the offices and headquarters of leftist radicals all across the country. They're named after the Attorney General of the time A. Mitchell Palmer. They were carried out specifically against radical organizations such as the IWW, the Socialist Party, and especially the newly formed Communists parties following the formation of the Third International.

The Palmer Raids matter precisely because they fit within a continued history of class struggle in the U.S. and throughout the world. Unfortunately, many of the histories of these raids downplay this fact. Well intentioned liberals, and some moderates look at events like the Palmer Raids and proclaim that these were glitches, mere mistakes that the collective we (whoever this "we" means is never spelled out) made and have now learned from. Yet, this completely misses the point.

The late 19th and early 20th Centuries saw massive growth and support for socialist, communist and other radical political

groups and aims, including the elections and appointments of 73 socialist mayors and 1,200 small-time officials throughout 340 towns and cities in 1911.¹ In this context it should not be a surprise that at this moment of increasingly left radicalism the bourgeois government would lead a massive attack on leftist organizations and people. Understood this way, the violence and violations of the Palmer Raids were not a poorly thought out decision, hastily made by politicians swept up by the Red Scare. Rather, they fit into the larger context of class antagonism, and within the framework and very functions of a state.

One of the major deficiencies of current histories is that they either ignore class conflict or downplay its importance, and take away the agency of individual radicals and radical organizations. They tend to paint the victims of the raids as passive subjects or at most "philosophical radicals" who simply held some controversial ideas. Current histories rarely include the voices of the victims, and instead we hear retellings by some liberals and progressives. While these liberals and progressives often offer a strong indictment of the government's overreach and in defense of the raid's targets, they do so by ignoring the larger antagonism at play. In so doing, it perhaps improves the argument that the raids were excessive and wrongful violations, but at the cost of understanding the full history. These narratives ignore the fact that there were revolutionary groups and people who were in fact organizing and working toward revolution, and understood that they were doing exactly that.

The aim of this essay is to add important context to existing literature on the raids. Most scholarship does point to the

antagonisms between labor, primarily radical workers, and the interests of industry, which is closely linked to the government, especially during wartime. However, the basis for this antagonism, namely class struggle, is almost never mentioned. Often, historical narratives point to the motives of individuals, like Palmer's political ambitions, or missteps by government organizations in the wake of "public hysteria." That these things influenced the outcome of the raids is undeniable. However, these histories feed into the "great men of history" myth, and paints individual dissenters like Louis F. Post as brave freedom fighters who defended the poor helpless victims of a misguided government that was mistakenly violating the rights of the victims. Yet, there is an underlying basis that remains excluded if scholars stop there. A Marxist analysis has greater explanatory power precisely because it is able to contextualize these events to show that they share a continuity with the rest of U.S. and world history. Therefore, this essay will use a Marxist analysis to show that the Palmer Raids were a part of ongoing class struggle, that the "victims" were not passive subjects without agency, and that a more accurate history must include these key elements.

BEFORE THE RAIDS

Though there has always been an element of antiradicalism toward the left in the U.S., one of the first times it came into major conflict with the government and its aims was during WWI. It was during this time that the two major leftist groups, the Socialist Party and the International Workers of the World (IWW or Wobblies), a

radical labor union, came out in opposition to the war. Both groups saw this, much like Lenin, as a war between imperialist powers where the poor would die for the profits of international capitalists. The press, politicians and superpatriots loudly denounced these groups, and the government began its suppression by suspending many of their constitutional rights, mostly in regards to the First Amendment.²

In addition to the antiwar stance of the radical left, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 that was spreading across Europe at the time contributed even more to this antiradicalism. While the Bolsheviks were gaining popularity and influence, especially throughout Eastern Europe, organized labor in the U.S. continued its struggle with successes, often using militant tactics and strikes. The forming of the Third International in 1919, which aimed to guide revolutionaries around the world to help spread world socialism, further fed the flames of antiradicalism. There were also opportunists in the media, public office, and some in the business community who seized this moment to push antiradicalism against the left even further. There are even those who believe that on some level there were people within the U.S. who wished to fill the void of the now-ended WWI with a new enemy, replacing the German "Hun" with radical left agitators, especially foreign born ones.³ This connection was not a mere fabrication. While the Communist Labor Party at the time was mostly native-born, the Communist Party was 90 percent foreign, out of 60,000 members.⁴

Another one of these "enemies" were labor unions. The most militant of the labor unions was the IWW. What made the IWW

different from other labor unions is that they wished to not only bargain for the interests of workers, but also aimed to eventually overthrow the existing structure of capitalism. The IWW's preamble read:

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.⁵

This is roughly the same goal as that of the Socialist Party, both of which aim to take control of the means of production in order transfer ownership away from a handful of industrialists and into communal and democratic ownership of the workers themselves. Similarly both aimed at this radical transformation of society through the use of nonviolent tactics. In the case of the IWW, “[t]he revolution was to be achieved by a series of strikes, leading to a general strike, which would force the capitalists to capitulate. Thus the IWW was to be both the embryo of the new society and the revolutionary instrument for achieving it.”⁶ Additionally we can compare this with the tactics of the Socialist Party that aimed to raise class consciousness and use electoral politics to move toward socialism. This can also be seen through the electoral successes of socialists as mentioned above.⁷

In this context of increasing influence of left groups and parties, the end of the war ushered in a period of stagnating and falling wages, and increasing living costs. This spurred unionization efforts and labor kept on the offensive. On top of this, a series of bombs targeting many public officials were uncovered. Perhaps most importantly, one of the bombs was designated for Palmer himself in a spectacular dynamite explosion that destroyed the front of his house in Washington, D.C.⁸

Historians are divided over what actually sparked the full-scale Palmer Raids. Murray offers a fairly nuanced account, trying to contextualize the times that were filled with growing militancy among labor, the string of anarchist bombings, growing fear of the “Red menace,” and the xenophobia toward Eastern European, Jewish and Russian immigrants. Renshaw marks the start of the antiradical crusade with the trial of IWW leaders in Chicago in 1918.⁹ However, historians almost unanimously point to all or most of these complex factors. Regardless of what specific event or events sparked the Red Scare, the seeds had been planted, and the attitudes and forces behind it have been a part of U.S. history long before the raids and First Red Scare. “Anti- Communism, anti-union activity and nothing short of an all-out war against the organised left had been a constant feature of life in American in the previous half century.”¹⁰ Really, the only difference now was that the government had found legal backing and a public that was whipped up by the “hysteria” of the changing times.

THE PALMER RAIDS

Although the government and even individual vigilante citizens attacked left radicals leading up to and during WWI,¹¹ the most thorough and harsh attack came in 1919 with the Palmer Raids. As mentioned earlier, there were a complex host of events leading to the Palmer Raids. WWI brought a massive increase in industrial output that in turn increased demand for workers to fill the labor shortage. This left workers with increased bargaining power that allowed them and their representative unions to push for greater demands. But after the war, unemployment and high prices put strain on already tense relations between labor and capital. Also, President Wilson had a very mixed record on labor issues, a fact that certainly didn't make matters any better. "He certainly had no love for the pre-World War I period with its progressive reforms and its New Freedoms, and he had eyed apprehensively the growing power of labor. Therefore, with the cessation of hostilities, he was more than happy to engage labor in battle."¹²

In this almost perfect storm, "[t]he result was a sharpening of class antagonisms and an increase in the number of labor strikes across the continent, including the first general strikes, most notably in Seattle and Winnipeg, in addition to major steel and coal strikes later in the year."¹³ On top of all this, there was one last factor that would be used against the radicals: anti-immigrant fears.

Radical agitators have long been tied to foreign influence by those who wish to discredit them. One of the oldest attacks against those who speak out against



specific wars or just war in general, is the idea that they are secretly on the side of the enemy. During WWI, this was also the case and those who opposed the war were loudly denounced as agents of the Kaiser.¹⁴

Believing that radicals were largely foreign born prompted the U.S. to pass legislation aimed at foreign-born radicals. In the U.S., one of the most important events that turned anger toward immigrants was the assassination of President McKinley. Despite the fact that his assassin was actually a native born American, his foreign sounding name was enough. Leon Czolgosz's killing of McKinley in 1901 sparked much anger against foreigners and anarchists. While he was a native born citizen, Czolgosz was also a self-professed anarchist. As a result, in 1903, Congress passed an Immigration Act that, for the first time, prohibited entry of immigrants into the country



solely based on their beliefs and political ideology. It was aimed at those radicals who believed in violent revolution or anarchy.¹⁵

Then in 1917 came a new Immigration Act that not only could exclude radicals from entry, but could also deport radicals for teaching and advocating for radical ideas.¹⁶ The final solidifying of anti-immigration laws came on Oct. 16, 1918, usually referred to as the Deportation Act. This act was much stricter and punitive than all previous ones, removing the time limit on deportations and the burden of proving individual guilt. Now, “[t]here was no longer a time limit for anyone. Any unwanted alien could be deported at any

time. Belief in certain ideas or membership in certain organizations was sufficient cause for deportation. Proof of individual guilt was no longer necessary. [And although it was applied much broader, it] was passed with the IWW in mind.”¹⁷

Louis F. Post was the Secretary of Labor under President Woodrow Wilson during the events of the First Red Scare and the Palmer Raids. Because of his position as Secretary of Labor, he was in charge of immigration. While so many other government officials either remained passive or fully supported the deportations and suppressions of the First Red Scare, Post actively dissented. He

thought that the Wilson administration was going too far, and that the deportations were wrong, legally and morally. Additionally, Post published his personal account in 1923, almost immediately after the events of the First Red Scare, *The Deportations Delirium of Nineteen-twenty*.

Among many of the things he writes about, one of his concerns was the excessive bail to keep immigrants detained for longer periods of time.¹⁸ He also notes the lack of probable cause that the arrest warrants for the raids had:

The accompanying affidavits of probable cause appeared to the Solicitor to be so flimsy that he refused to sign the warrants in behalf of the Department of Labor as Acting Secretary, without first scrutinizing the proof in each case, and the proof had not been made available to him. The general grounds for the proposed arrests were membership in the Communist Party and Communist Labor Party. Evidently the detectives intended to make another sensational 'round up' of 'dangerous' aliens charged in fact with nothing more dangerous than formal membership in a proscribed organization.¹⁹

According to Post, Wilson was against this broad application. It is unclear exactly why Wilson appears to have, at least to some extent, been hesitant to commit to such overarching deportations. On the one hand, it is clear he was willing to do quite a lot to weaken and destroy militant labor movements. He didn't hesitate to pass sedition laws and signed into law the Deportation Act. Post's account here seems to contradict that of most other narratives of the First Red Scare.

However, one important fact that Post writes about in his book is the preparation leading up to the raids. According to Post, the Department of Justice had field agents across the country that had infiltrated radical groups, specifically the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party. They were given specific instructions to instigate or call meetings for a predetermined date.²⁰ In this way, government agents could be sure that when they raided the offices of these radical parties, they would find them full of members, making arrest and

"On 7 November 1919, the second anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Palmer's agents raided left-wing organizations in 18 cities and summarily deported nearly 250 people, including such notorious anarchists as Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. In January 1920 about 10,000 people were arrested in seventy cities, many of them IWW members or sympathizers."²¹ The Communist Party of America's newspaper reported in February 1920 that 3,000 of their members alone were being held for deportation solely because of their membership in the party.²²

deportation easier.

Understanding the Raids

A Marxist-Leninist understanding of the state as not a neutral entity is critical to understanding the raids, and why liberal historians tend to distort its retelling.

Paraphrasing Marx, Lenin writes that “the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another; it is the creation of ‘order,’ legalizing and perpetuating this oppression by moderating the clashes among the classes.”²³ Liberals, progressives and many on the far right object to this notion of the state, thinking that it is an inherently neutral body, and that in a “democracy” the state is merely the institutions that carry out the will of the “people.” However, Lenin’s point is that the state arises out of the need to limit the conflicts and resolve them in a way that leaves the integrity of the state intact, thus protecting the interests and power of the dominant class.

exists to prevent the workers from simply violently and forcefully taking the factories and wealth from its owners. It legalizes and legitimizes property relations, and to the extent necessary, gives concessions to workers in the form of welfare programs to ease discontentment and prevent violent confrontations. “Above the economically necessary minimum there has also been a politically determined lowest level, a measure of welfare willingly accepted by elites in hopes of preserving their position.”²⁴

This point is important enough in relation to the First Red Scare, but it’s only part of the story. As mentioned above, labor was able to win important victories during WWI and continued this push after. This intensified class antagonisms enough, but coupled with the recent victory of an actual socialist revolution in Russia, and a string of bombs many people attributed to radicals, tensions increased even more. While many historians downplay the radicalism of many of the targeted groups, there were people and organizations that were fully committed to violent revolution that were operating within the U.S.

Murray’s account is somewhat confused and unclear about the actual strength of the radical left. For instance he continuously downplays the radicalism of the Union of Russian Workers (URW), something that Grueter believes is a fundamental flaw in his work. The mistake, according to Grueter is that historians have largely ignored the actual writings of the URW because they are primarily written in Russian.²⁵ Yet, Murray dedicates a whole chapter, titled “The Fire behind the Smoke,” that paints

Put simply, in capitalist society, the state

a picture of a somewhat strong radical left, pointing out that the 70,000 official members of both major Communist parties offer a flawed view. He notes that more than 50 Bolshevik publications began circulating in 26 languages after the formation of the two Communist parties. He further points out that in addition to these Bolshevik publications there were 471 radical publications circulating in the U.S. in 1919 that called for a violent revolution to overthrow capitalism.²⁶ Murray concludes the chapter by writing, “[e]ven so, it remains clear that the 70,000 members of the two Communist parties do not tell the whole story. And although the postwar trend of events, both domestically and internationally, tend to exaggerate the importance of the Communist menace, the nation’s fears were not predicated entirely on mere figments of the imagination. There was some fire behind and the smoke.”²⁷

In the context of the First Red Scare and the success of the Bolsheviks, it was widely believed by the government and individual citizens that “Reds” from Russia were infiltrating the labor movement and generally trying to instigate a violent revolution in the U.S. These fears are not totally unfounded. In 1918, Lenin himself wrote and published “Letter to American Workers.” In it, he urges Americans to follow the lead of the Bolsheviks in taking state power from the bourgeoisie. He pointed to the American Civil War as an example in U.S. history of revolutionary violence and tried to convince readers that a new civil war to overthrow the system of capitalism would be similarly justified and a worthy cause.²⁸ Although most Communists, then and now, tend to agree with Lenin that violent

revolution in the U.S. was probably still not likely in the near future in 1919/1920, this letter became widely circulated with an estimated readership of about 5 million.²⁹

All of this is to say that the fears of revolutionaries desiring and working toward the overthrow of the government were not complete fabrications. Additionally, the people and groups targeted were not innocent of the charges, mere “philosophical radicals” that many of the authors claim were the main targets. It is of course the case that innocent people became victims of the raids, and prosecuted and deported as a result. Hoyt tells many anecdotal stories about people who were caught up in the raids because their membership in one social organization or another somehow got transferred to a radical one without them knowing.³⁰ Murray claims that the URW was mostly a social organization that had no intention of working toward violent revolution or anarchy.³¹ In virtually every source, the radicalism of the victims is downplayed and the raids are portrayed as a major unjustified violation of civil liberties.

Yet, this interpretation misses the point. “Such claims are made to strengthen arguments against the abuses of the Palmer raids in the defense of civil rights: the more the URW’s political essence can be denied, the more illegitimate the raids appear to be.”³² This is an appealing logic. Defenders of free speech and civil liberties scarcely want to be accused of defending the rights of violent political agitators and those who wish to destroy the current way of life in the U.S. Painting the victims as unintentional radicals caught up by

xenophobia and antiradicalism is a useful narrative. “The general attitude taken toward the URW is condescending; it is often suggested, for example, that URW members were incapable of or uninterested in reading and understanding, even in their native Russian language, the clear statements of revolutionary anarchist principles printed in their membership books. The members should be pitied as victims, not respected as autonomous actors whose ideas and actions might be of some interest to scholars.”³³

However, while painting the raids and the victims in this way, scholars often miss the underlying class conflict driving these events. Drawing from a book by Beverly Gage, Grueter notes that during investigations into the wrongful actions taken by officials during the Palmer Raids, none of the victims or those targeted were even invited to the Congressional hearings.³⁴ The result is that we are left with an interpretation of events that leave out the voices of important groups, obscuring their motives and leaving it to liberals and progressives trying to paint themselves as the true protagonists who rushed in to protect the civil liberties of all Americans.³⁵

Not only are these historical narratives often self-serving, they also serve the ruling class as a whole in that they obscure the history of radicals. What this does is paints events like the Palmer Raids as momentary blips of poor decision making on the part of leaders, while at the same time twisting narratives to make it seem like there were checks-and-balances and people who tried to bravely resist in the face of a hysteric public and power-

hungry politicians like Palmer. This way, the Palmer Raids aren’t part of a continuity of radicals struggling against a powerful government to help bring about a more egalitarian society. Consider this lengthy quote that sums this point up well:

Gage’s analysis helps explain how and why scholarship on the Red Scare went off on the wrong track. From the beginning, Gage argues, there was a concerted effort to downplay the radicalism of communists and anarchists to make a stronger legal case against the raids and deportations:

Horried at the excesses of McCarthyism, many liberal historians... went out of their way during the postwar years to minimize past controversies over violence, terrorism, and class conflict. They tended to depict the Red Scare as an anomalous episode, the result of paranoid delusions, not genuine social conflict.

In this context, the great bomb cases of earlier decades began to be understood as cautionary tales about McCarthyism, more important for the “hysteria” and repression they produced than for the tensions they revealed . . . Many of the social historians who transformed the study of American radicalism and labor in the 1960s understood their task as a redemptive one, an effort to move beyond tired images of bomb throwers and dangerous subversives. They emphasized the unequal nature of class violence . . . and they were

admirably sensitive to the ability of those in power to channel public fear into campaigns of repression. In the process, however, they robbed at least a few revolutionaries of their militancy.³⁶

The key, as Gage points to, is that the events of the Palmer Raids and the First Red Scare reveal the underlying conflict. This conflict has been carefully glossed over, as scholars ignore and downplay

voices of radicals. To fully understand the history of the raids and the First Red Scare, scholars must understand the motivations of radicals. This requires an acknowledgement of class struggle, something the radicals openly proclaimed they were waging. It is in fact the politicians and liberal scholars who deny that such motivations were behind the violence and suppression directed toward political radicals.

Even Murray grants that there were radicals and that there were indeed many



who aimed for violent revolution. Yet, in his conclusion, he offers the typical liberal analysis. He believes that while the raids and violence of the Red Scare was a mistake, the U.S. should genuinely resist communism and political radicalism. Murray still wishes to destroy political radicalism and communism, but thinks “hysteria” and the accompanying crackdowns and suppression are ineffective methods. In his analysis, the best cure is “by retaining our national sanity and by removing the turmoil, the tension, the race prejudice, and the poverty which communism exploits, we stand a much better chance of rendering the doctrine impotent. The real key to fighting communism is not spy hunts, congressional investigations, or loyalty oaths; it rests instead in combating those very problems which bring the issue of communism to the fore – low living standards, sickness and disease, illiteracy, racial intolerance, unequal opportunity, and war.”³⁷ In his prescription, there is no real, genuine class conflict. “Sanity” will simply put an end to these antagonisms if only we had the will to maintain our “sane thinking,” and preserve individual liberties and freedoms.³⁸ This seems to be nothing more than wishful thinking, given centuries of class conflict, and instance after instance of government repression and violence against those who wage class struggle on behalf of the proletarians.

Legacies of the Palmer Raids

As this essay has attempted to show, the Palmer Raids did not arise out of nowhere, a spontaneous hysteria whipped up by a combination of opportunistic politicians

and businesspeople, sensationalistic media, and a frightened public. What is interesting is the almost paradoxical way in which so many scholars portray the mass of American citizens. On the one hand, the public was the source of the hysteria that politicians were supposedly responding to when they launched the repressive measures. They were also apparently pleased at first with the raids.³⁹ On the flip side, perhaps Renshaw is right when he writes that the raids “shocked the conscience of liberal America.”⁴⁰ However, this shock is likely confined to liberals. Radicals who understand the aims and nature of the state are likely not to be terribly surprised.

Renshaw, Murray, Hoyt, Feuerlicht, and countless other historians paint the events of the First Red Scare as mere unfortunate mistakes that resulted from panicked decision making or miscalculations. However, it’s important to note that the raids were monumentally successful, and these government agents knew exactly what they wanted to accomplish. This is class war, and the bourgeois government had largely succeeded in their goals of weakening the radical left by fracturing its organizational structure, and by intimidating leftists and dissuading any others from thinking about joining radical groups. On this front, the raids accomplished exactly this:

"In the final analysis, the raids on the Communist parties accomplished their purpose. Both the Communist party and the Communist Labor party were driven underground and



demoralized. So complete was this demoralization that it was impossible to know just how many of its members were lost. Benjamin Gitlow estimated that both groups dropped from about sixty thousand members in 1919, to a hard core of less than ten thousand a few years later. Furthermore, the raids struck terror into the hearts of those who remained, especially if they were foreign-born."⁴¹

Murray further adds that by 1923 the labor movement was thoroughly decimated, losing more than a million members in two short years.⁴²

Reading the histories, many authors point out that the raids and the Red Scare should be seen as a cautionary tale, and that we've since learned our lesson about the excesses of antiradicalism. The narratives offer a neat ending: Post was vindicated, Palmer discredited after his May Day predictions were false, Congressional investigations were held, and the public as a whole began to see the perils of sacrificing civil liberties for security. Curious, then, that a mere 25 years later an almost identical wave of antiradicalism took hold, and once again Americans rallied behind the idea that the government should lead the fight against domestic Communists, once again eviscerating civil liberties and free speech rights. Instead of honestly looking into this history and revealing the deeply entrenched conflicts, historians crafted

lofty narratives that downplayed these divisions and minimized the role of class struggle in shaping these events.

Conclusion

Scholarship on the First Red Scare is limited, and lacking in diversity. The voices and perspectives of the radicals who were the targets of the raids are difficult to come by. Similarly, there is virtually no scholarship on the raids coming from a right-wing or conservative political view. Almost all scholarship comes from liberals and progressives. As noted above, these groups found a convenient narrative in the Palmer Raids and First Red Scare. These progressives and liberals distanced themselves from the radicalism of targets and victims, then downplayed the radicalism of the actual targets. Conservatives likely avoid this topic because it illustrates the extreme excesses that can result from reactionary right-wing politics. For obvious reasons, this lack of diversity makes balanced scholarship difficult, though not impossible.

Further research on this topic should include a more thorough look into the writings of the groups targeted. This was difficult. Some barriers were simply that much radical literature, as Grueter pointed out, was written in foreign languages. Additionally, many of the targeted groups are no longer in existence.

This essay has chosen to take a relatively narrow focus, though important historical and philosophical context was added to guide the reader. A longer essay could have included more information on Palmer himself, a man who had a

complicated political career, and perhaps on President Wilson and his stroke. The author chose instead to avoid focusing too much on individuals. Care was taken to avoid an analysis that is typical of the “great men of history” narratives that oversimplify complex conflicts and social interactions. After all, there was in fact a whole other Red Scare, which came to be known as McCarthyism. The outcomes of this second Red Scare were roughly the same even though almost all of those involved in the first were no longer in any meaningful positions. Therefore, analyzing the events of both Red Scares by focusing on individuals is insufficient.

This paper has attempted to show that the events of the First Red Scare and the Palmer Raids are best understood through a Marxist-Leninist framework that emphasizes class struggle and the repressive nature of the state. Further, it is important to understand the motives of the groups involved. On the one hand, there were the radicals who did wish to overthrow the government in a class war, and on the other hand there was the government and bourgeoisie who wanted to crush radical groups at a time when they were gaining influence. Though most scholars agree the radicals scarcely had any real chance of waging a successful violent revolution, the aims of the Palmer Raids and accompanying violence and suppression was to crush dissent and weaken the power of labor.

It should be the goal of Communists and historians both to not forget how and why the First Red Scare occurred, and why another such another red scare happened shortly after. It should also be the goal of Communists to take back this history. As

this essay has shown, the retelling of this history has been largely ignored, and when it is told, it's left to self-serving liberals. As Communists we also should recognize that the bourgeois governments of the world will use the full force of their repressive apparatuses to prevent workers from gaining power.

Above all, we should take inspiration from the workers of past generations who struggled to end the misery of capitalism and hoped for a better world.

Endnotes

1 Howard Zinn. *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005), 353

2 Julian Jaffe, *Crusade Against Radicalism*, 2-3. Also consider countless Supreme Court cases, such as Charles Schenck and Eugene Debbs, or the refusal of the government to allow the postal service to mail leftist publications. More on this can be found in later chapters of Jaffe and countless other sources.

3 Ibid, 3.

4 Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study of National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955), 53.

5 "Preamble to the IWW Constitution," Industrial Workers of the World, <https://www.iww.org/culture/official/preamble.shtml>

6 Patrick Renshaw, "The IWW and the Red Scare, 1917-1924," *Journal of Contemporary History* 3, no. 4 (1968), 64.

7 Jaffe, *Crusade Against Radicalism*, 2. Also here we can see this tactic as part of the general strategy of the Second International throughout most of Europe that worked toward greater democratization and representation of workers by using electoral politics. For more info on this see Eley, Geoff. *Forging Democracy: the History of the Left in Europe, 1850- 2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), Chapter 4.

8 Murray, *Red Scare*, 78.

9 Renshaw, "The IWW and the Red Scare," 63.

10 Nick Shepley, *Palmer Raids and the Red Scare: 1918-1920 : Justice and Liberty for All*. (Luton: Andrews UK Limited, 2011) 5.

11 Countless sources recall citizens beating, tarring and feathering, and general harassing of IWW members. A great example of vigilantes being supported by government officials is the Everett Massacre of IWW members.

12 Murray, *Red Scare*, 8-9.

13 Mark Grueter, "Red Scare Scholarship, Class Conflict, and the Case of the Anarchist Union of Russian Workers, 1919," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 11, no. 1 (2017), 55-56.

14 Murray, *Red Scare*, 34. Interestingly, this was also applied to Lenin himself who many claimed was working for Germany, even though he denounced the war as imperialistic and criticized Germany heavily for their imperialism.

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- 15 Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht. *America's Reign of Terror: World War I, the Red Scare, and the Palmer Raids* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 1971), 64.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid, 66-67.
- 18 Louis F. Post, *The Deportations Delirium of Nineteen-twenty* (Chicago: C.H. Kerr & Company, 1923), 75.
- 19 Ibid, 78
- 20 Ibid, 88.
- 21 Patrick Renshaw, "The IWW and the Red Scare," 69.
- 22 *The Communist*, vol. II, no. 1, Feb. 15, 1920.
- 23 V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (Penguin Books, 1992 [1918]), 9.
- 24 Peter Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State, 1875-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5.
- 25 Grueter, "Red Scare Scholarship," 55. Though he mentions Murray here specifically, he believes almost all historians are guilty of this. His paper focuses largely on the radicalism of the URW, by examining the primary source writings of the organization.
- 26 Murray, *Red Scare*, 53. I quote this from Murray, who claims he got these numbers from the Annual Report of the Attorney General, 1920, and from Investigation Activities of the Department of Justice.
- 27 Ibid, 56.
- 28 V. I. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers" (*Pravda* No. 178, August 22, 1918) accessed from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/aug/20.htm>.
- 29 Murray, *Red Scare*, 46.
- 30 Hoyt, Edwin P. *The Palmer Raids 1919-1920: An Attempt to Suppress Dissent* (New York, N.Y.: Seabury Press, 1969), 115. Hoyt gives one example here of a man named Thomas Truss, but there is no shortage of examples in the literature.
- 31 Murray, *Red Scare*, 196-197.
- 32 Grueter, "Red Scare Scholarship," 54.
- 33 Ibid, 55.
- 34 Ibid, 64. Grueter's citation is: "Beverly Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in Its First Age of Terror*" (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 239. NPGL had close ties to the newly founded American Civil Liberties Union."
- 35 This should be obvious enough, but Post's whole book is of this character.
- 36 Ibid, 65. Here I quote again from Grueter who is quoting Gage. I thought it useful to include Grueter's contextual introduction to the quote, rather than going straight to Gage's

source. Grueter cites the same source as follows: "Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded*, 7."

37 Murray, *Red Scare*, 280.

38 Ibid.

39 Feuerlicht, *America's Reign of Terror*, 98.

40 Renshaw, "The IWW and the Red Scare," 69.

41 Jaffe, *Crusade Against Radicalism*, 192.

42 Murray, *Red Scare*, 269.

Suggestions for Further Reading

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Prima Facie

CAPITALISM AND
ALIENATION



Neoliberalism Survives by Destroying Social Cohesion

by **RAINER SHEA**

Neoliberalism emerged like a **spectre**; billed as an unavoidable step in the development of history, selling its policies as the routes towards growth and prosperity. But it survives by way of a destruction of all socially cohesive forces.



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hen you compare socialist countries like China, Cuba, Vietnam, and the DPRK with those of neoliberal countries like the United States and Britain, a particular factor stands out in how their developments have differed: the socialist countries have vastly more social cohesion than their counterparts do. By this, I mean they have a lack of serious political polarization and a relatively small amount of ethnic or class divides. In these countries, most people think favorably of the governing parties, racial and religious violence aren't sanctioned by the

state, and strong social safety nets and firm checks on private business keep inequality from becoming too pronounced. These places aren't perfect, but they lack the deep rottenness that pervades neoliberal societies.

The goal of neoliberalism is to ensure that property is protected over all other facets of society. The ability to make profits is streamlined under neoliberalism, with social safety nets, democratic rights, and humanitarian or environmental concerns being disregarded if they stand in the way of the ultimate priority. The neoliberal

philosophers who supported Pinochet clarified¹ that they didn't believe mass executions and torture delegitimize a regime that fulfills the goals of the market.

When the importance of profit usurps the importance of liberty, popular consensus, and social justice, most of society comes to live in alienation from their corporate-controlled government. A unified nation ceases to exist, with most people being either politically apathetic or entrenched in deep political and cultural divides. There's a widespread sense of disconnect from the major institutions. Political literacy and material satisfaction become relegated to those within the higher classes, with the workers and the unemployed growing detached from the centers of power.

This deterioration of the popular intellect happens both because the system benefits from having a proletariat which is too overworked to engage in politics, and because media and education under neoliberalism naturally discourage class conscious thought. When you're constantly working and struggling to keep your livelihood afloat, you have little time and energy to pay attention to politics. And what you'll get from the most accessible media sources reinforces the ruling class worldview that's promoted by bourgeois academia.

This dynamic of the exploited class being deprived of the education they need to overthrow their exploiters is of course nothing new. But neoliberalism is so uniquely good at making those in the exploited class fragmented, isolated, and divorced from class consciousness that during its almost half-century of global dominance, it's managed to continuously increase² wealth inequality without provoking revolt or meaningful opposition in most places.

Instead, neoliberalism has made itself appear to many like an unavoidable step in the development of history, selling its policies as the routes towards growth and prosperity. The intelligentsia of both the mainstream right and “left” have embraced this paradigm of privatization, austerity, and expanded corporate monopolies. The bipartisan love for neoliberalism is best reflected in the fact that liberals and conservatives have consistently shared the desire to impose a corporatist system onto regime change target countries like Venezuela and Bolivia, the latter of which is currently being turned³ into a new version of the Pinochet regime through the machinations of U.S./NATO imperialism.

Even in the United States in 2020, where half⁴ the country can be considered poor and household debt is at a record⁵ high, the vast majority of people aren’t doing anything to defy the system. And the constricting nature of neoliberalism explains why so few of them are joining socialist groups, carrying out civil disobedience, or working to educate themselves about

proletarian revolutionary theory. It’s not just that their country’s traditional anti-capitalist organizing engines have been devastated, though the decline⁶ of America’s unions and the marginalization⁷ of its communists have contributed greatly to the American people’s apathy. It’s that in a neoliberal society, all the facets of everyday life make it convenient not to seek out developing revolutionary consciousness.

When average worker productivity in the U.S. has increased⁸ by over 70% since 1970 while average wages have effectively dropped⁹ throughout this time, most people naturally put work and financial management over politics. When these efforts to maintain access to basic living arrangements have driven¹⁰ most Americans into thousands of dollars of credit card debt, the more money a working class person tries to save the worse their situation tends to get. If you fall too far behind, you’re not just penalized by exponential debt. You also experience the criminalization of poverty,¹¹ where something like a broken taillight or a miscarriage of justice by a classist court system¹² can get you fined or

incarcerated.

The shrinking of much of the proletarian consciousness to apolitical survival mode is one part of how neoliberalism's architects have socially engineered the populace. It's intertwined with another social behavior that's been instilled by neoliberalism, which is a mentality of intense competition. In his article "What Kind Of Thing Is 'Neoliberalism'?", Jeremy Gilbert observes that "neoliberalism, from the moment of its inception, advocates a programme of deliberate intervention by government in order to encourage particular types of entrepreneurial, competitive and commercial behaviour in its citizens."¹³

Amid this environment that encourages people to trample on those who lose out under capitalism, it's no wonder why large numbers of Americans—including ones in the lower classes—tend to express¹⁴ in surveys that they feel the poor are to blame for their poverty. There's a cultural obsession with success that can cause one to resent those not perceived to be

contributing enough wealth, a resentment that one is especially susceptible to if they're experiencing scarcity themselves and want to blame those who supposedly aren't doing their share of the work.

So suspicion, hostility, and fear are the main attitudes that the different facets of society express towards each other under neoliberalism, with community and solidarity not being nurtured by the centers of culture. Alienation, both in terms of people's labor and in terms of people's social relations, is what prevails.

Of course, at a certain point people start to act against the system. Many millions throughout France, Chile, Ecuador, Iraq, Lebanon, Haiti, Honduras, and Hong Kong have protested in the last year because they're angry at how bad social inequality has gotten under neoliberalism. (Note: I mention Hong Kong's protests not because I support the fascist movement they represent, but because neoliberalism helped provoke them.¹⁵) In January, a similar outbreak of class anger

happened in the U.S., where over a thousand poor and working class New Yorkers stormed¹⁶ the subway to demand free public transit and an end to the abusive presence of subway police.

However, without the right guidance, these kinds of movements can become co-opted by the ruling class or be ineffective at achieving their goals. U.S. imperialist interests have turned¹⁷ the Lebanon protests into a weapon against Hezbollah and turned¹⁸ the Hong Kong protests into a weapon against the Communist Party of China. And without an analysis about imperialism or a consensus around the goal of socialist revolution, populist protest movements don't have the tools to upturn the power structure. They lack a coherent plan for the future, mainly serving to be reactive. This is what happened to Occupy Wall Street.¹⁹

And in any case, bourgeois propagandists will try to undermine class struggles by appealing to reactionary sentiments and sowing further division among the people. The white supremacist Tomi Lahren

said on Fox News in response to the recent subway protest: "Last Friday night, a group who calls themselves 'Decolonize This Place' called on New York City area communities to join them as they fucked shit up. So what are they so enraged about? They don't think they should have to pay the fare—of get this—\$2.75 cents. And they don't want 500 new officers hired to police their indecent and unlawful behavior on and around the city transit system."²⁰ By portraying the city government's daily tax on the poor as trivial and portraying the protesters as unreasonable, Lahren was trying to keep her audience alienated from people whose class grievances they could potentially sympathize with. It was also important for her to encourage solidarity with police officers.

We can't make such propaganda effective by failing to follow up events like the subway protest with a larger organizational effort.

The steps towards creating a new society run through the methods that were used by Lenin, Mao, and the other architects of cohesive socialist societies. These methods are build the revolutionary vanguard, defeat the bourgeois power structure, and construct a proletarian-run democracy that makes social equality its focus.

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Ireland The European Union And the Climate Crisis

by Seán Ó Maoltuile



Decades before the establishment of the European Union, Lenin recognised that a 'United States of Europe' would be 'tantamount to an agreement on the partition of colonies' with 'the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe [and] of jointly protecting colonial booty against Japan and America'.¹ The EU has functioned as just such an imperialist coalition. The internationalism it preaches is exclusively in regard to

Western Europe. Even within its borders the primary role of the European Union has been to limit the power of European states to act outside the bounds of its strict economic and political model. This ensures maximum profits and power for the monopoly capitalists in control of the EU, and maximum destitution for the countries in its peripheral orbit, such as Ireland, Greece, Bulgaria and Portugal.

With each passing year the EU courts enforce further resolutions allowing

the claws of capital to dig deeper into society. Resources, services and infrastructure under state control are increasingly under pressure from the EU's cardinal doctrine, the bogeyman that keeps German and Belgian bureaucrats getting up in the morning: interference with free competition.

Privatisation is ever the means of overcoming this obstruction to an unimpeded free market. Basic functions of a state, such as public investment, have been restricted to an unprecedented degree under the auspices of the neoliberal EU. The independence and sovereignty of states is thoroughly eroded.

Forcing Ireland to take on 42% of the EU's banking debt following the 2008 crash assured the European imperialists that the Irish working class would be straddled with

crippling taxation and that the Irish state would have to operate along the lines they dictate.² Marx recognised that national debt is the means by which the modern state is sold to the capitalist class, determining which section of that class will be politically dominant. With even more striking relevance to the people of Ireland today, he went on to write, 'The only part of the so-called national wealth that actually enters into the collective possessions of modern peoples is their national debt.'³ The European imperialists, encouraged by the Irish bourgeoisie, have seized Irish sovereignty by means of treaties and debt-trapping, replacing it with the politics of the neoliberal consensus. The most concerning consequence of the destructive EU model is Europe's institutionalised inability to tackle the intensifying ecological crisis.

The consensus of the scientific community is that stopping, or even mitigating, ecological breakdown will take nothing short of revolutionising the global economy. Since becoming a mainstream political issue, the Irish state has only demonstrated its utter impotence in the face of this global threat. The country has barely

dented its targets for carbon emission reduction.⁴ Hemmed in by enormous debt and the politics of austerity, the urgent need for investment in reforestation and renewable technologies has been alluded to by the state but hardly tackled.

Transforming Ireland's agricultural base away from big beef farming to sustainable, ecological agriculture should be prime among the tasks of any government that has the interests of the people and the planet in mind. Yet, among other factors, the big farmers have enough political and economic power to ensure this necessary transition does not take place. This kind of monopoly control of an industry has proven to make the implementation of new technologies or techniques (namely, those that may upset profits) a difficult and protracted, if not hopeless, process. Demonstrating the obstinacy of Ireland's agricultural monopolists, whose authority is upheld

by means of subsidies from their friends in Brussels, Ireland has the second lowest area of organically farmed land in the EU.⁵

The prayers of the EU bureaucrats to the gods of the free market have been answered and 'out of the soil of free competition' monopoly has grown.⁶ Granting capitalists the freedom to compete over land and



Art by Christian Noakes



resources always leads to the concentration of essentials in the hands of a few profiteers. Both in Ireland and throughout the capitalist world vast monoculture is the dominant character of agricultural production. The competitive anarchy inherent to capitalism encourages the maximisation of short-term profits through cultivation of a single 'cash' crop, generally just one strain of a particular crop. In the long-run the soil is exhausted and degraded.⁷ But a country's agriculture must operate along these lines to be eligible for EU membership.

Ever in favour of bourgeois internationalism, the European Union's dedication to free market principles is not limited to its jurisdictional boundaries. Monopoly capital reaches around the world for the best rate of return. With startling relevance James Connolly wrote, 'To-

day the competition of the trust-owned farms of the United States and the Argentine Republic is a more deadly enemy to the Irish agriculturist than the lingering remnants of landlordism'.⁸ As the EU signs trade deals with Bolsanaro for Brazilian beef increasingly frustrated Irish farmers are beginning to recognise the imperialist union does not represent their interests. With a smile the EU offers them subsidies and grants while simultaneously ensuring their destruction as a class by inviting annually 99,000 tonnes of cheap South American beef into the European market.⁹ The immense environmental costs of this deal show the hypocrisy of their many climate summits and solemn declarations of intent. Monopoly capital's hunger for new markets and cheap resources will always take precedence over ecological concerns, such as the preservation of the Amazon rainforest, consciously burned to make way for this beef production.

Daring not to break the capitalist laws of 'free competition,' the Irish state cannot subsidise and invest in new forms of agriculture which would allow farmers to make a living while ensuring the long-

term sustainability of our land and our planet.

Without a transition toward socialism the small farmer will be ground under the wheel of capital, forced to maintain ecologically-harmful practices in order to stay afloat, holding off their inevitable ruin as long as possible.

As Marx advised, a ‘rational agriculture... needs either the hand of the small farmer living by his own labour or the control of associated producers.’¹⁰ On the opposite side of the Atlantic another small island has heeded his advice, taking a path antithetical to the agenda of the European Union. Cuba has been named the world’s most sustainable country and this is in large part due to its revolutionary agriculture. Having seized the land from the imperialists and their compradors, the Cuban people have been moving toward self-sufficiency, utilising small-scale production and organic urban agriculture to resolve the antagonistic contradiction between man and nature inherent to capitalist production. The revolutionary creativity and struggle of Cuba’s people, even under the

crippling weight of a US blockade, serves as a beacon in our historic struggle to eradicate imperialism and maintain the planet for future generations.¹¹

No ready-made answers or blueprint for the Irish struggle can be found in the struggles of other nations, but the living experience of the Cuban revolution can provide some indication of our goals and how we might go about achieving them. The immediate task of the Irish proletariat is to break the chains of European, British and US imperialism that hold it fast and embark on the path of socialist construction. Upon defeating the imperialists and their domestic running-dogs Ireland can transform its economy, developing a sustainable relationship with the earth and ensuring a healthy and lengthy life for our island, the planet and all its creatures.

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TEACHING REVOLUTION

COMMUNIST
PEDAGOGY



THE CONTRADICTIONS TEACHER ORGANIZATION THE CONTRADICTIONS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN COMMUNIST STRATEGY

by ETHAN DEERE



PERHAPS NO OTHER state institution shows such marked contradictions, both ideological and actual, as the public school: as a place of learning and a preparatory for menial work; a center of community and a formal-political arena; a site of development and a dominating ideological apparatus. Marxists, and indeed Marx himself, have recognized the complex nature of education within capitalist society from the beginning and emphasized its importance.¹

IN THE UNITED STATES, the initial roots of public schooling are often traced to working class and Black struggles for equitable and accessible education, part of a broader movement for justice and equality.² This premise is a likely source of the natural sympathy of communists for teachers, their struggles and potential, developing from an understanding of the necessity of education in levelling the disparities of class society. But even the staunchest advocates of this position would not fail to recognize the hijacking of the public school by bourgeois and racist elements, and starting in the early 1970s, with a significant shift in the Marxist-Leninist analysis of public education shaped by the ascendant Althusserian theory of ideology, a special attention has focused on the role of education and schooling in the reproduction of capitalist relations.

WHILE THESE DEVELOPMENTS have advanced a nuanced critique of the school and contributed to a general Marxist-Leninist theory of education, a coherent organizational strategy surrounding teachers has yet to manifest. Communist parties and organizations have and are

currently forging links with teachers unions in their labor struggles and do not fail to note the inequities engendered by the farce known as public education in the United States.³ This is no doubt a commendable step, but nonetheless there remains a particularly wide gulf between communist politics and the mass of teachers who operate within the schools on a daily basis. Teacher unions focus their efforts on mounting a defence against the assault on public education by the neoliberal regime. At the same time, the communist position recognizes the school as a tool of class and racial domination, as a critical component of capitalist reproduction, a point which is recognized by teachers in only the fuzziest outline and has not concretely informed how the communists should politically organize teachers.

THIS POINTS TO a confusion within and between Marxist-Leninist theory and practice surrounding education, the schools, and the teachers. How can communists support the teacher's struggles if those struggles are almost universally limited to a defense of public schools without also implicitly reinforcing an ideological apparatus which helps to maintain the status quo? Further, if it is correct to view the public school as an ideological state apparatus, why does the neoliberal state seem so driven toward the historic negation of public schooling via austerity and privatization?

IF, FOR NOW, we may grant that the basic Marxist analysis of education is not so easily discounted, even in the light of these seeming limitations, there remains a clear importance for communists to

actively organize teachers to overcome this political incongruity, to focus collective efforts on the ultimate goal of dismantling the class society which creates, among its many monstrosities, inadequate, inequitable, and ideologically-driven schools.⁴ In order to achieve this lofty aim, it is first necessary to articulate the position of teachers in capitalist society.

THE ECONOMICS AND POLITICS OF TEACHERS

WHILE WE MUST be careful not to reduce the question of education solely to the domain of economics,⁵ it is an obvious but essential acknowledgement that the practicing teacher is dependent on the school as a workplace, and like all those who must work in capitalist society, they are dependent on their workplace for their economic survival and well-being. Starting here, it can be seen that a communist politics of education stands opposed in many ways to the spontaneous politics of teachers, which grows, as every union movement does, due primarily to raw economic interest. But what complicates any economic or class analysis of the teachers, what separates the teachers' movement from other workers' movements, is the employment of the majority of professional teachers within the bureaucracy of the capitalist state. The teachers occupy a distinct position within the state structure, and thus are dependent on the continuation of the current state.

FROM THIS VANTAGE, the professional organizations of teachers can be understood to occupy a reactionary role, though, in recent times, very rarely a consciously reactionary role. The complex relationship developing in public education, that is, the conflict between teachers unions and the neoliberal state, does not justify the position that the spontaneous politics of teachers arising from this conflict can be seriously understood as necessarily or really radical, let alone revolutionary. No matter how easy it may seem, it is a mistaken tendency among communists that enables viewing teachers as an inherently progressive force in society. It is a matter of acknowledging the success of ruling ideology when we consider how completely the idea of teachers as a neutral or inherently positive force has penetrated public consciousness. The demands of the professional organizations of teachers today rest, in the last instance, on the securing of guaranteed and expanded state funding and do not rely on any fundamental change in the state or school as bourgeois formations, only on an ideological shift from the neoliberal to liberal position, both firmly within the capitalist paradigm.⁶

FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE, it is evident that a communist politics of education goes far beyond the normal politics of teachers, and is therefore unlikely to be immediately appreciable to most teachers. Our position that fundamental changes in the structure and practice of schooling are necessary to modify the function of the school as a state apparatus, to facilitate its transition from a tool of bourgeois domination to one of proletarian hegemony, develops out of the

revolutionary necessity of an upheaval of the state as a totality. Even teachers that advocate substantial reform to the school system fail to couple that approach with a broader revolutionary sentiment. Such a question is unnecessary, nay currently unthinkable, for most teachers.⁷

IF TEACHERS are improperly exposed to communist politics in general and to revolutionary politics of education specifically, two options appear: (1) the current situation, where it seems that the school will be released to the whims of private interests by the neoliberal regime, or (2) the seizure and destruction of the state would destroy the foundation of the school, i.e., the workplace which employs teachers.

IN THE FIRST CASE, while the teachers lose their economic privilege,⁸ the school still remains and in fact develops as a bourgeois institution, in its delivery from the capitalist state directly unto the capitalist class. That both teachers and communists are generally opposed to this new course should be noted, though it also must be emphasized that this opposition originates from very different sources. In the second case, the revolutionary movement would have made enormous strides, but it is not inconsequential that the teachers will appear to lose the very basis of their economic position and be thrown into a nebulous haze of what comes next. There is necessarily a period of confusion before the reestablishment of essential services under the control of the revolutionary state, and it is leading up to and during this time that we should expect to find teachers most sensitive to the sways of counterrevolution and liberalism.

Such a conclusion drives us to the question: if the communists and teachers are not natural allies, from where can such an alliance arise, and how complete can it be?

PROGRESSIVE TEACHERS AND RADICAL PEDAGOGIES

WHAT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD as progressive within the teachers as a mass is not necessarily equivalent to the teachers unions or professional organizations, as we have stated briefly above. Instead, it appears that the most progressive elements are also the most fragmented, operating primarily within their individual classrooms, lacking any degree of organization outside of periodic professional conferences and journals. These educators are informed not by raw economic desire or in the reproduction of a docile workforce, but in the production of subjects capable of enacting social change, and in this way, are potential allies in the broad front against capitalism-imperialism. In most cases, such educators are informed by the popular currents of progressive pedagogy, oftentimes in a simplified form, though they lack the essential theoretical and political contexts from which these pedagogies developed. And thus, unfortunately, despite remarkable intention, the notion that these progressive pedagogies can, in the context of the capitalist school, solve the issues these teachers set out against is not sound.

THE THEORETICAL DISTANCE between progressive teachers in the capitalist classroom and contemporary developments in Marxism-Leninism, in theories of social reproduction, neocolonialism, and neoliberalism leaves an indelible mark upon their practice, blunting any effectiveness their pedagogy might otherwise have. Progressive educators reduce the potential of their practice by steering away from material analysis and instead embarking from subjective and localized understandings of power, failing outright to conceptualize power in a scientific sense. The teachers remain in the domain of informed citizenship and critical thinking without being themselves informed or critical of their social context.

MUCH OF contemporary progressive pedagogy descends from the Friirian tradition,⁹ whereby schooling under capitalism is said to follow the banking model, i.e., a bombardment of irrelevant and ideological information whose main function is the reduction of subjectivity and obscuring of class consciousness in the student.¹⁰ In contrast, the Friirian tradition aims to utilize experience as a basis for constructing an overarching critique of society and knowledge, an education that inspires and empowers the student to investigate and ultimately transform reality. Such a notion appeals to both the educator on the periphery of the dominant ideology and the communist: if students are given the genuine opportunity to reflect on the conditions they find themselves thrown into, they will develop a kind of social consciousness and an opposition to injustice.¹¹

SO WHAT EXACTLY is the problem? If we can distance ourselves from the romantic appeal of critical pedagogy, we quickly come to realize that the progressive pedagogists, among other problems, especially in the context of the United States and the imperial core, overestimate the role of the school, or more accurately, underestimate the influence of other social factors in the production of subjects under capitalism. They do not see the forest for the trees.

ALTHUSSER ARGUED that the school had a primary position in ideological reproduction, taking over from the religious institutions before it.¹² I am arguing that the expansion of new technologies has enabled a once unimaginable penetration of media, and as a result, it seems the centrality of education in its role as primary ideological apparatus is giving way. The school maintains an important role, but not necessarily the dominant one, in the neoliberal era.

IT IS IN this historic development that we see the root of the neoliberal drive to privatize education: privatization of education and schools is made possible as other ideological apparatuses¹³ develop under new contexts. The absolute necessity of public schooling is diminished by the rapid development of other ideological apparatuses, ones that more neatly fit within the overarching ideologies of the neoliberal state. Leading into the modern neoliberal context, the contradictions of public schooling sharpened, and as it turned out, some schools did periodically serve as sites of genuine class struggle,¹⁴ though often in complex ways that did not directly involve teachers as a progressive force.

LASTLY, whereas it has been noted that the activities of the teacher unions do not necessarily align with a communist politics, a real friction does exist between the unions and the neoliberal state. Without calling into question the power of capital, the teacher unions do advocate for a social role of capital that is inconsistent with the neoliberal vision. And with the

National Education Association forming the largest single union by membership within the United States, the teacher unions do form a significant, though not radical, political force in national politics.¹⁵

IN THIS SENSE, the public schools have three major weaknesses for the neoliberal



WHAT IS LOST when the Friarian tradition is brought into the context of the bourgeois school is clear: its revolutionary context and therefore, content.



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state: (a) they require extensive financial support from the state for their continued existence, (b) their efficacy as a stabilizing force in capitalist society has been irreversibly called into question, and (c) their degree of unionization offers an obstacle against the implementation of neoliberal policy. Likewise, the dominant ideologies of neoliberalism, and especially the penetration of consumerism in all spheres of life, find home more easily in the new media than the schools, granted these ideologies do of course impact schooling.¹⁶ On the other hand, the enclosure of the schools offers a growing site for capital investment, one historically limited by the presence of the public sector, i.e., the state, within education.¹⁷

THE PROGRESSIVE teachers, armed only with the methods of so-called radical pedagogy, remain incapable of recognizing and acting upon the limits of that theory, limits that can only be overcome when the politics of teachers is brought in line with a revolutionary theory of society. In advanced capitalist societies, these pedagogies are inadequate, failing to achieve their

liberatory goals because of their failure to correctly analyze the social context in which they operate. For these teachers, pedagogy takes the place of political strategy; it is the communist task to reverse this trend. The school is a site of class struggle, not the site.

WHAT IS LOST when the Freirian tradition is brought into the context of the bourgeois school is clear: its revolutionary context and therefore, content. All of the progressive pedagogies that have grown up, so to speak, in the context of the public school under the auspices of the capitalist state, are either (a) inherently limited by the confines of the dominant ideology, failing to establish a sound critique of education in bourgeois society and thus a sound basis for action and strategy, or (b) lacking realistic utility for teachers in the classroom due to the repercussions of conflict with dominant ideology and the reduction of state support. In the second case, the trend toward the "professionalization" of career teaching and the education system, which may be seen as a massive expansion in administrative oversight, plays a critical role. In the schools, this trend is expressed and reinforced through the use of arbitrary assessments of both student and teacher performance, either of which ultimately justifies the use of economic coercion, e.g., further funding cuts, school closures, and terminations of employment.



CONCLUSIONS: TEACHERS IN REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

WHEN COMMUNISTS investigate and discover the potentials and limits of various segments of people within the complex structure of modern capitalist relations, it is a first step toward new methods and strategies of organization. In the case of teachers, a potential ally remains, though perhaps not one as natural or close as might be assumed.

AS HAS BEEN established, the teachers are, by and large, at a distance from any genuinely revolutionary politics. They are under the assault of the neoliberal regime, ideologically confused, and all the while still reinforcing the reproduction of capitalism. What, then, can be the value of the teachers to the revolutionary movement and what is the role of teachers in revolutionary strategy?

FIRSTLY, COMMUNISTS must recognize they cannot confine their activities to passive support of the current demands of public educators against the neoliberal state, though critical support of and sympathy with these struggles is a critical inroad in establishing initial links with teachers. Once said links are established, activity must be expanded and directed toward identifying the most radical elements within the teachers and aiding these elements in establishing organizational capacity inside and outside of the school, classroom, and the

professional unions. So far, little progress has been made on this front, with only vague statements of support, with only the weakest of links established between revolutionary organizations and teacher organizations, with only a tailing of the teacher unions in the political sphere. Work on this front is indispensable, serving a definite purpose in strengthening revolutionary forces and hampering reactionary forces. In the context of public education in the United States, this struggle takes on vast importance when considering the current vulnerability of the school as a state institution.

AS LENIN NOTED, education is a major component in revolutionary struggle.¹⁸ A current revolutionary task in the United States is achieving an overall increase in the number of organized revolutionaries. Such a task depends on how successfully a rigorous communist education can be carried out among different contexts and elements. The recruitment of dedicated educators into revolutionary organizations and the fostering of their radical pedagogical spirit, something which can be facilitated infinitely better in the schools of revolutionary parties and organizations than in the bourgeois schools, serves a valuable organizational purpose. Parties and organizations can utilize creative pedagogies to refine both internal and external education programs and move into more accessible and more practical modes of teaching beyond the old reading and study circles. For the teachers, the intimate connection between the failures of public education and the fundamental nature of capital, and the limits of progressive pedagogies in the current context, must be made clear, and

in this sense, it is the communists who must teach.

FOR BROADER organizing efforts, despite their limits, the size and relative success of the teacher unions warrants further study by Marxist-Leninists interested in mass organization within the United States. Mobilization of mass elements will almost certainly require the use of existing organizations; therefore, radical elements in these unions should be identified and organized at once. Genuine links between the communist parties and the teachers unions should be formed, but the communist parties and their front organizations should always lead rather than tail when developing these relationships.

PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS must make resources available toward these ends, targeting appropriate segments for both support and opposition within the teachers and their organizations. Whether work among the teachers means pulling in individual educators and utilizing their specific skill sets to advance revolutionary work, organizing with and within teacher unions toward shared goals, or propagandizing among teachers against the limits of reform, depends only upon the situation communists find themselves, but the necessity of each type of work remains.

ENDNOTES

1 Marx, Karl. “On General Education”. Accessed 14 Feb. 2020, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/iwma/>

[documents/1869/education-speech.htm](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/iwma/documents/1869/education-speech.htm)

2 Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America*. (New York, Russell & Russell 1963): 637-667.

3 For one recent example, see Henchenk, Catherine. “Chicago teachers prepare to strike”. Accessed 14 Feb. 2020, <https://www.liberationnews.org/chicago-teachers-prepare-to-strike/?fbclid=IwARoFFIMHu1mZMtpngWdtAphhqOb9ObVHJY5luPYQoZpThVm4uGB8p2olJZE>

4 To be sure, this same necessity applies to every major social sphere, not just education. It is, as we have said, the complex nature of education in capitalist society that warrants a more specific discussion of this matter in regards to teachers.

5 For perhaps the most advanced analysis of the role of education in capitalist society, see Bowles and Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*.

6 To be clear, the demands of teachers include reasonable positions on currently-possible reform, such as an end to excessive standardized testing and an emphasis on expanded services offered by the school, but we note that these positions are, again, nothing more than liberal-progressive if the function of the school itself is not called into question.

7 In fact, each year members of teacher unions receive a letter from their organization's lawyer stating the legal rights of teachers. At the end of that letter is a section insisting that teachers shall not involve themselves in any political organization or activity which seeks the abolition of the current government of the

United States. Such sections are a holdover of the old anti-communist oaths once demanded of all state employees.

8 Note that, as an educator, the author recognizes that although the economic privileges of teachers are incredibly poor compared to those of the capitalist class and even other segments of the state bureaucracy, those benefits dwarf what is available to huge swaths of working and colonized people.

9 Giroux, Henry. "Rethinking Education as the Practice of Freedom: Paulo Freire and the promise of critical pedagogy." *Policy Futures in Education* 8, no. 6 (2010): 715-721. Accessed February 15, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2010.8.6.715>.

10 Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York, Continuum International Publishing Group Inc): 71-75.

11 I emphasize that this tradition, as expressed in the United States and throughout the imperial core, does a great disservice to the Frierian tradition in general.

12 Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Accessed February 13, 2020. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>.

13 Though it does not fall within the scope of this paper, the further extension of the repressive state apparatuses also plays a definite role in this historic trend. I posit it is the continued necessity of the military and police institutions to, in the final instance, prop up imperialism and colonialism (especially in the face of the development of anti-US economic and defensive blocs) that explains their expansion.

14 Bloom, Joshua and Waldo E. Martin, Jr. *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*. (Berkeley, University of California Press 2013): 284.

15 Layton, Lyndsey. "Nation's largest labor union: We want 2016 hopefuls talking about schools". *The Washington Post*. Accessed February 16, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/nations-largest-labor-union-we-want-2016-hopefuls-talking-about-schools/2015/03/25/2715929e-d301-11e4-ab77-9646eea6a4c7_story.html

16 Wolff, Richard D., "Ideological State Apparatuses, Consumerism, and U.S. Capitalism: Lessons for the Left." (Economics Department Working Paper Series, 2004): 74.

17 Fromm, Jeffrey A., and Todd V. Kern. "Investment Opportunities in Education: Making a Profit While Making a Difference." *The Journal of Private Equity* 3, no. 4 (2000): 38-51. Accessed February 16, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/43503242.

18 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/aug/28.htm>



Social Being in Juche



by SHANE LAWRENCE PICK



The fundamental principle of the Juche philosophy is that humankind is the master of its own destiny. For Juche philosophers, this fundamental principle of the Juche philosophy is scientifically produced on the basis of a novel understanding of humanity. Therefore, in order to have a deeper understanding about this fundamental principle of the Juche philosophy, it is important to have an understanding of humankind as clarified by the Juche idea.

Historically, the question of what kind of being humanity is, and what essential features, qualities, and characteristics we have, has been the driving question of philosophy since the beginning of philosophical thinking. Philo of Alexandria, an ancient Roman philosopher, argued that there were, in his time, a full 208 unique views of humanity. From the Juche lens, philosophical perspectives from the ancient slaveholder societies—from theorists such as Democritus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustinus, Thomas Aquinas—from the renaissance period, and from the German philosophers such



"In their day, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin represented the aspirations and demands of the exploited working masses, and the cause of socialism was inseparably linked with their names."

as Kant, Schilling, Hegel—as well as the various philosophical controversies that have taken place throughout the many centuries—simply could not give the correct view.

ONE OF THE MAIN reasons for this is that the previous philosophers tried to discover the essence of humanity by regarding them as either a simple material being or as a spiritual being, focusing on the question through a lens of relationship between matter and consciousness. Another reason is that the essential features of mankind were distorted to suit the

taste and class interests of the reactionary exploiting classes, then used to justify exploitative societies. The question of humanity's essence is, at root, a socio-political question that reflects the class interests of philosophers, and is not a simple academic question.

IT WAS MARXISM which clarified humanity's place as a social being, for the first time claiming that, “man is, in essence, a totality of social relations” against the unscientific and reactionary viewpoint which regarded humanity as either a simple biological being or an idealized spiritual being.

Marxism considered, with the term social being, the material conditions of human activity and the extant mode of production, attaching a decisive significance to them. Thus Marxism explained that humanity is a being defined by the social relations, but it failed to explain what the essential features of humanity are; or, in other words, the features which are unique to humanity and not found in any other material beings known.

THE JUCHE IDEA raised the issue of essential features as an important philosophical task, in an attempt to explain the essential features of humanity and to both explore and provide, for Marxism, the most scientific and accurate answer to this question—and, thus, to establish a thorough revolutionary philosophical understanding of humanity.

GENERAL SECRETARY Kim Jong Il observed that:

“Considering mankind in social relations, the Juche idea cast a new light on their essential features. It expounded that mankind is a social being with independence, creativity and consciousness, and thus gave a scientific philosophical elucidation of humanity.”

THE TERM SOCIAL BEING is used in the Juche philosophy for two purposes:

1. It is used as a foundational concept which enables Marxism to find the essential features of mankind as fundamentally differentiated from all other material beings
2. It is regarded as the starting point of philosophical and socio-political inquiry of humanity itself

As a biological organism—with both natural and biological attributes, according to biological law—humans are born, grow and die. If this process is absolutized, and one regards humanity as a simple natural or biological being, one can fall into the incorrect view of trying to find the essential features of humanity in only natural or biological attributes, considering our attributes as merely the reductive development of biology. It is true that humans, as biological organisms, have natural and biological attributes commensurate with, and related to their organismic nature; but the essential

features of humanity—those which separate us from all other known material beings—are not to be found there.

WHAT IS ESSENTIAL and important for humanity lies within its social aspect. Therefore, only when one starts from the fact that humanity is a social being, is it possible to correctly identify the essential attributes of humanity, in the philosophical consideration of man. General Secretary Kim Jong Il noted that:

“Humanity is a social being. This implies that they are a being who live in a social relationship. This term is used to distinguish humanity from a natural being (i.e. animals).”

When, in Juche, humanity is referred to as a social being, this means a being who both lives and conducts activity in social relationships and settings differently from other beings—in a distinctly human way. Humanity’s life and activity are possible only in

the social collective organically linked on the basis of certain social relations. Marx himself noted that, “The animal is immediately one with its life activity. It is not distinct from that activity; it is that activity. Man makes his life activity itself an object of his will and consciousness.”

THERE CANNOT BE a human who lives outside of social relations. All of our activity is bound to the species as a whole, and to the ways in which the species produces and reproduces its mode of existence. That humanity lives and conducts its activity inside the social collective and within social relationships is peculiar. Yet, there are animals such as ants and bees which exist in groups according to certain orders, building nests jointly and procuring food. However, for our purposes, there is a qualitative difference between the animals’ mode of group-life, based upon orders and relations, and the peculiar mode of existence of humanity, who forms and lives through social relations. In so many words, here Juche distinguishes between the unique form of human social organization, and the social organizations of other beings.

TO TAKE ONE example of this, monkeys and chimpanzees maintain their unique voice and walking manner even though they live apart from their groups after their birth. This suggests the idea that the mode of existence, or mode of activity, of these animals are defined not by their social group relations but by instinct based on genetic information. Thus, monkeys and chimpanzees are monkeys and chimpanzees from their birth. But, the case is quite different for humanity. If humans grow apart from social relations, they struggle to walk upright, to speak, and so forth. In other words, a human can not be said to be truly human by their biological birth alone. Only when humans form social relationships and live as social beings will they be able to progress and develop as the bulk of humanity does. For the existence and development of humanity as a species, social relations become indispensable and permanent conditions: herein lies the essential meaning of the notion that humanity exists, at root, as a social being.

HOWEVER, WHEN HUMANITY is referred to as a social being in Juche philosophy, some positions should first be made clear.

FOR JUCHE, in human society, there exist notions of social wealth and social relations. Social wealth and social relations *belong to* society, they do not belong specifically to nature. In the Marxist definition of humanity as a totality of social relations, social wealth and social relations are included in the definition of social being, but not so in the definition of humanity as a social being by Juche.

FROM THE VIEWPOINT of Juche philosophy, social wealth and social relations are created by humanity, the social being. Just as creator and creation can not be the same, social wealth and social relations can never be the same as mankind, the social being; only a product. If social wealth and social relations as created by humanity are regarded as a social beings themselves, then the essential differences between humanity and these products become obscured or abstracted. So, in Juche, only humanity can be the social being—a being who creates and enjoys social wealth in social relations.

IT IS IMPORTANT to clarify the differences between the concept of social being in the Juche philosophy and in Marxist theory. As noted at the beginning of this essay, the early

Marxist classics criticized both the mystical-idealistic view of humanity and the biological-reductive view, defining the essence of humanity as a “totality of social relations.” This was the first historical recognition of humanity *qua* social being, and thus was a great advance in humanity's philosophical understanding of itself.

BUT THE CONCEPT of social being used by Marxism equates to the *material* conditions of social life; the economic relations as distinguished from social consciousness. Of course Marxism considers humanity as a component element of extant productive forces and as part of the totality of social relations, so for Marxism humanity is *also included* in the concept of social being. But, from the perspective of Juche, Marxism does not qualify the notion of *social being* with the unique focus on essential features. With Marxism's conceptualization of social being, it is possible to clarify that humanity is indeed a social being defined by social relations and its extant mode of production, but here Juche holds that it would be impossible to clarify that humanity forms and develops social relations independently of the relations of production. Recognizing that humanity is thus restricted and

influenced by social relations alone, the Juche philosophy worked to clarify that to be a social being means that one is both influenced by and influences its own society; that is, that social beingness is a basic and essential feature that humanity forms, developing social relations purposefully and consciously; thus clarifying the genuine meaning of what Marxism originally posited as the concept of social being.



"It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, **publish** their views, their aims, their tendencies [...] The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels
Communist Manifesto, 1848

