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BRICS IN AFRICA AND TASKS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT



In a few days' time BRICS nations, comprising two emerging imperialist powers and three advanced semi colonies, will meet in South Africa (SA). For the first time, one of the leading members of the grouping, Vladimir Putin of Russia, will be absent following manoeuvres by traditional imperialists, using the International Criminal Court (ICC), to disrupt the gathering. The meeting takes place at an important juncture in the development, or rather degeneration, of global imperialism. The proxy war in Ukraine, pitting NATO and Russia over the control of Eastern Europe, is the main feature of imperialist tension and aggression in frantic attempts to salvage the sure decline and death of capitalism without regard for the fate of humanity and nature. Many semi colonial states have applied to be part of the grouping and in most likelihood will be admitted.

The bloc is an international alliance of former deformed/degenerated workers states and former western colonies and semi-colonies for the purpose of projecting the economic and strategic interests of China and Russia as emerging imperialist nations engaged in a vicious war with their western counterparts for the extraction of surplus value and guarantee of key resources. One subject likely to be on the Agenda in South Africa is 'de-dollarisation'. BRICS members and prospective members are building closer trading relations paid by currency swaps. Brazil (and Argentina which is a prospective member) are already paying for imports with their own currencies. The UAE and India recently agreed to trade in oil with their own currencies. The effects will be to trade with partners without being forced to use the US\$. The advantage

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ZIMBABWE: ECONOMIC CRISIS, STATE OF THE WORKING CLASS, FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS AND URGENT TASKS

ECONOMIC CRISIS

In June this year President, Emerson Mnangagwa announced the next election dates. So all workers must consider the state's balance sheet. The [national debt to GDP ratio](#) explodes year over year peaking to 102.33% in 2023, with our lives in hock to imperialist finance capital year over year into the future. Zimbabwe experienced another round of hyperinflation hitting a high of [175.8% in June](#) retreating in July to 101.5%. This is how our ruling class imposes its debts on us, as long as we let them.

This is the second time, the other was last year around the same period, that in a short space of time the incomes of workers were wiped out by over 500 per cent with prices of basic goods and services ballooning at an absurd pace whilst incomes remain stagnant. Their debt imposed on the masses poses the question. For the working class to survive the capitalist system at home and imperialism must die. The working class needs to take control of wages and prices! Only the Revolutionary Workers Group(RWG) has a program to stop inflation. Our transitional program completes the national democratic revolution, it breaks the debt trap by workers self management and control of the big national and foreign businesses, industries, mines, and lands.

The immediate background to this is the neo liberal policies of the second regime which devalued incomes and savings by equating the values of the local currency and that of the US dollar in 2018 followed by a directive scrapping the use of other currencies other than the local one without express permission via the law. We need the laws to be written by and for the working masses, the poor and landless farmers. Our transitional program creates a bridge to the masses writing the laws that govern the economy, and that bridge is through class struggle, self-organisation and political independence from the capitalist class both foreign and domestic.

Through these raft of policies the state ensured that business and government made massive profits and surpluses respectively whilst the working masses continued to pay for the

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of de-dollarisation is that it undermines one basic mechanism which exploits the oppressed countries.

The US\$ is a fiat currency which is overvalued due to its role as a reserve currency. This undervalues other currencies relative to the US\$ allowing a transfer of value from oppressed countries to the US. As more nations are attracted to the new trading bloc the US\$ will gradually devalue weakening the financial hegemony of US imperialism. Whether de-dollarisation brings genuine economic independence to the BRICS nations from Russia and China remains to be seen. As imperialist powers they cannot afford to allow the genuine national self-determination of their economic partners. Of course, as agents of Russia and China, those in government and the labour movement in the oppressed members of BRICS, and who bought and paid for, promote the narrative of a multipolar world based on equality and sovereignty, using this prospect to sell BRICS membership to the masses as the road to national independence and freedom.

The attitude of so-called Marxists on the nature of China and Russia informs their position on the war in Ukraine and has influenced their characterisation of the role of BRICS in semi colonial countries like South Africa. Failure to recognise the imperialist nature of the two states has led to either defense of these countries as “progressive” anti-imperialist nations fighting for a “fair” multi polar world or exaggerating the influence and hegemony of the west. Either way the implication of such a view on the role these nations are playing in semi-colonial states is that they play a progressive role that is beneficial to them all. Nothing can be further from the truth. The relationship with Russia/China is one of unequals riding on the misery of workers and poor peasants who are affected by poor working conditions and displacements to make way for extraction of vital mineral resources and surplus value.

The SA Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is an excellent example of the new “progressive” popular front between a radical petit bourgeoisie party representing the “Pan African”

section of the national bourgeoisie in alliance with Chinese and Russian imperialism hiding behind the facade of mutual benefit. Malema is open about his admiration for Cuba as a model for future economic development in South Africa. China has found a reliable partner in the EFF which uses clever rhetoric to hoodwink the masses shifting focus from the African National Congress(ANC) which is reluctant to sever ties with Western Imperialism and the Maoist Socialist Revolutionary Workers Party (SRWP) which has failed to build a strong mass base in the working class. The bureaucrats of the South Africa Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) have delivered the workers to the dead end of the EFF-China/Russia Popular Front to ensure a compliant and distracted labour force. As in Cuba and other Bolivarian states this alliance comes at the cost of workers’ rights and acute exploitation. Petit bourgeoisie radical nationalist parties like the EFF have anchored themselves on pseudo Marxism with their radical rhetoric capturing thousands in the working class. An example of China’s influence on political parties across Africa is that of the leader of the Socialist Party of Zambia, allies of SRWP, who has openly voiced support for the bourgeoisie Zimbabwe African National Union(ZANU-PF) in the coming elections.

Recently a coup took place in [Niger](#) ousting the pro France president and government. The coupists claim they were forced to act as a result of the deteriorating security situation in the country, a key reason given by other western African countries which have experienced a coup recently, Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso. Burkina Faso’s coup regime supports the coup in Niger and injects a [strong advocacy](#) for the Cuban and Bolivarian ‘revolutions’ in Latin America which are strongly tied to Chinese and Russian imperialism. We argue that the [Bolivarian model](#) has, along with the formation of BRICS, been a strong inspiration for national revolutions in Africa. We would predict more coups in Africa that hold up the Bolivarian/BRICS example as a guide to their participation in the dominant existing global imperialist popular front.

Soon after the coup France and other western countries together with ECOWAS condemned the coup and urged for restoration of civilian rule. [France and ECOWAS](#) have shown their intent to intervene militarily if civilian rule is not restored. This latest coup, showing [popular](#) hatred for France and support for Russia, is just the latest expression of the ongoing degeneration of Western imperialism which has caused untold suffering on the masses and ravaged the region through continuing war. The working masses are facing the brunt of the war and economic crisis through slave wages and high prices as France, along with other imperialist nations, want to shift the cost of paying for the structural crisis of capitalism to the shoulders of workers and the poor masses.

The coup is a pre-emptive tactic by a section of the local bourgeoisie to forestall popular revolt and direct anger to a wing of imperialism whilst leaning on another wing as the basis for maintaining capitalist relations against the threat of revolution. Popular support for the coup is a reflection of the desperate situation workers and the masses find themselves in and yearning to break free of the exploitative and oppressive environment they find themselves in. The only solution to the crisis of capitalism in a semi-colony is the permanent revolution that combines national liberation with socialist revolution.

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tion in Niger as part of a socialist West Africa. We oppose the coup and call for the independent mobilisation of workers and poor masses against both the Bouzoma government and the coup government both representing wings of imperialism suffocating the country. This position arises from a correct view that contemporary global capitalist society is essentially characterised by the fight between traditional and emerging imperialist powers over resources and surplus value.

In SA the ANC and its spinoff the EFF arose out of the historic settlement to trade in the military struggle for bourgeois democracy in 1995. Since [SA joined BRICS](#) in 2009 it has pinned its hopes on China to break out of its subordination to Western Imperialism. 14 years later that dream has become a nightmare as the ANC regime is now not only the lapdog of Western imperialism but also China and Russia. The working people are locked into this imperialist popular front by the regime and by its corrupt unions incorporated in the state. In Zimbabwe ZANU-PF does China's bidding legislating against Western sanctions, and against workers' rights to meet the terms of China's win-win deals. Here is the evidence that the BRICS model for development is a trap that denies the working masses any say in their future. This must not be the future of the Sahel and the whole of Africa where the military regimes are allowed to build new popular fronts with Russia and China. To smash the armed popular fronts like ECOWAS we call for independent workers' organisations to form a continent-wide anti-imperialist united front capable of defending itself from military repression.

Marxists, opposed to Stalinists and centrists, should start from the basic position that China and Russia have transformed to become imperialist states exporting excessive finance capital for their own interests and using comprador bourgeoisie governments in semi-colonies and labour bureaucrats to protect and advance their interests. We argue that this relationship is that of an international popular front tying the working masses to the imperialists through the national bourgeois regimes. Against this popular front which exploits the masses desire for national independence to draw them into this popular front, revolutionaries must counter-pose the Anti-Imperialist United Front (AIUF) to break workers and oppressed from the bourgeois regimes and the imperialist powers they serve.

How will this struggle take shape? In West Africa we see the military leadership as one fraction of the national bourgeoisie substituting itself for the people. Marxists have no confidence in military rule which, like Sisi in Egypt, or Mnangagwa In Zimbabwe, imposes an authoritarian regime with the barest of democratic figleaves hiding their subservience to imperialism. Marxists warn against military regimes and their bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalist agendas. **We are for building an international united front of workers, poor peasants and rank and file soldiers in every country to take the power into our own hands, to join hands across national borders and fight to complete the unfinished bourgeois democratic revolution as the Permanent Revolution.** The theory of permanent revolution is our guide for socialist action in a semi colony dominated by two wings of imperialism. Alliances like BRICS and NATO serve these different wings in a rush to maximise production and super-exploitation.

To provide jobs all big and imperialist assets must be nationalised and put under workers control and self-management!

For workers action committees to lead the resistance to the growing attacks on the wages and working conditions of the poor and the livelihood of the majority poor!

Workers form rank and file bodies to lead action in all unions and break with the reformist trade union leadership!

No to US/EU and China/Russia imperialism fronted by local bourgeoisie parties!

No to reformism, centrism and fake Trotskyism, build a fighting revolutionary socialist party!

For workers and peasants' government on the basis of the armed people to implement decisions that benefit the workers and the poor!

For an African socialist revolution as part of the international revolution that alone can guarantee a better life for all!

For a new World Party of socialist revolution based on the Transitional Program of 1938 to lead the revolution to end capitalism and open the road to socialism!



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crisis through devalued wages right through the Covid-19 era. Internationally the last five years have generally been characterised by slow growth and a recession during the Covid-19 era with governments, from imperialist centres and semi colonies, resorting to attacks on incomes and working conditions to navigate the crisis of falling profitability.

STATE OF THE WORKING CLASS

The state of the working class is dire. De-industrialisation and informalisation of the economy has drastically reduced the numbers and quality of employed workers. Workers in formal employment now constitute a minority of the working population which is dominated by informal or self-employed workers with a large number of unemployed on the margins. This objective situation has weakened the working class coupled with subjective actions by leaders which have rendered the class redundant and docile in the face of attacks by capital. Very few trade unions are still standing up to attacks by both business and capital as they force on the working class the burden of paying for the crisis of capitalism in a subdued semi colony.

The situation has been made worse by the capture by the ruling party in alliance with its Chinese and Russian masters of a leading faction in the main trade union federation the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) at the 2021 congress resulting in the up to now dominant pro main opposition, Citizens Coalition For Change(CCC), faction being vanquished. Despite being aligned to the opposition the former leaders engaged in actions which despite being insufficiently prepared provided opportunity for deepening and broadening fight backs.

Today even token action has become taboo with the last nail in the coffin being the suspension of a militant trade unionist on spurious charges in desperate attempts to weed the federation of any alternative voices. The recent call by workers for action against useless local currency(ZWL) wages and in support of a petition to stop the president from signing the Labour Amendment Bill was actively sabotaged by the federation. Workers should organise themselves on the ground to conquer unions and a federation which are independent of various wings of imperialism through total workers control and militant action.

FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

On 23 August presidential, legislative and council elections will be held. This will be the second time Zimbabweans go to a poll since the advent of the post-coup second republic. In the 2018 elections we called on workers to boycott the plebiscite as a contest between bourgeois parties in which workers had no viable representative. Our assessment is that the election is heavily tilted in favour of the ruling party which has manipulated the pre-election environment as well capturing the election management body, Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC), despite its core base of the peasantry and beneficiaries of mining claims and residential stands in the cities and peri urban areas. South Africa Federation of Trade Unions(SAFTU), in its statement on the elections, acknowledged that the elections will not be free and fair and are essentially a contest between parties that represent the reigning and rising wings of imperialism. The opposition CCC enjoys massive support across the population especially from workers, informal workers, unemployed youths and urban poor. A large number of the peasantry also support it. The continued

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economic crisis and absence of a viable working class alternative have all worked in favour of the opposition despite its pro-capital and impractical Manifesto.

The chances of the opposition in this election can, to an extent, be favoured by the relative access to rural areas, digital innovation and cracks within the ruling party and regime which can manifest in the conduct of ZEC, the courts and security apparatus. Its greatest challenge will be the entrenched apathy among its support base and its organisational capacity as a result of shambolic primaries and sidelining of key leaders and groups. To its credit CCC did survive an onslaught to capture and/or crush it by the ruling party using an array of strategies soon after the death of its founding leader in 2018. It has emerged as a strong petit bourgeoisie party rising on the desperate support of the working class and poor masses eager for “change”. Despite the economic crisis and huge support, its ascendancy to political power depends to the extent to which ZEC, the courts and security forces are “pressured” to respect the will of the “people” by the working masses, ruling party factions, observers and most importantly the different wings of imperialism.

LEFT DIVISIONS ON PARTICIPATION OF WORKERS

Three distinct positions have emerged on the attitude organised labour, the working masses, youths/students, progressive movements, radical intellectuals and socialists should take on the impending elections. Two are on extreme ends with one occupying the middle space. The first one is that *‘...let us fully and unconditionally support the viable opposition, CCC, as the best foot forward to defeat the regime and usher in democracy first. Everything else, including key workers’ demands, would follow from this.’* No conditions just hope for the better thus giving the opposition a blank cheque. This position is being propelled by the pro opposition bureaucrats with some workers in tow. The second, and middle of the road, position is, that *‘...despite the character of the main opposition and facing a formidable and ruthless dictatorship workers cannot stand aside and have to offer conditional support to the viable opposition, CCC, by tabling workers demands to it.’* The main reason for this is the entrenching of an authoritarian dictatorship of the military supported regime that has closed all democratic space through crushing protests and strikes as well as persecuting and jailing activists and workers. A section of the working class and socialist organisations champion this call. They argue that not doing so will alienate the left from the workers still under the grip of liberal illusions.

The last position characterises elections as a bourgeoisie democratic ritual more so if it is a contest between capitalist parties. In the absence of a workers or centrist party workers would be called on to boycott the elections and concentrate on building their forces to fight neoliberalism and dictatorship in alliance with progressive sectors of society. It argues that, firstly, it is naive for workers to think that merely participating in an election being run by an authoritarian and neoliberal coup dynasty (waiting for turns to rule) can usher in a new government. Secondly, it is disingenuous to suggest that a new petit bourgeoisie neoliberal (anti-worker) government brings about democracy and good conditions for workers.

It is true that workers still have faith in CCC because of its roots in the working class but we cannot run away from the fact that once in power CCC will not serve workers but capital so it is our duty to point out clearly that a CCC victory will not fundamentally change the situation of workers. The condition of workers can only be transformed through struggle. It is not in dispute that we are in a semi-colonial authoritarian state presided over by a comprador bourgeoisie class managing the economy on behalf of both Western and Eastern imperialism and local capitalists whilst looting massively. It is doing everything to close the democratic space and take away workers rights simply because that is demanded by imperialism facing acute crisis coupled to late primitive accumulation.

“Crony capitalism” is small fish compared to traditional, historic capitalism and imperialism despite its apparent concrete and immediate form. It is expressed as anachronistic “primitive accumulation” which involves overt looting and corruption, actions that have been disguised by the big mafia through legal and ideological smokescreens. The basic proposition is that the working class should not rely on elections to change its situation. Instead it must take it upon itself to organise and lead the fight for basic social and economic rights and interests.

TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARIES FACING MONOPOLY CAPITALIST STATES

The level of democracy corresponds to the economic stability of a given country. It is naive to think that any new leaders would be neutral on labour and democracy issues especially now when the capitalist system threatens human existence and nature. An example is Zambia where the “liberal” Hichilema is already closing democratic space by blocking the opposition from holding rallies as the economic situation begins to deteriorate with the price of basic goods like mealie meal skyrocketing. The form of a bourgeoisie regime or state does matter to the working class in proportion to its level of organisation and preparedness to fight.

In Egypt and Sudan workers played a key role in bringing down brutal dictators despite subsequent retreat as a result of insufficient organisational and ideological independence. The crisis of the working class in Zimbabwe is a crisis of working class leadership. A liberal state can change into a dictatorial one and vice versa due to objective conditions and not subjective choices. Why do workers have to wait for elections to fight a dictator who is in charge of the elections when it could have unleashed the mighty power of the working class? What we are seeing is the deliberate design by labour leaders to ignore basic working class principles only to stampede behind a liberal regime as part of a counter-revolutionary global popular front with imperialism.

What then should be the attitude of revolutionaries to an election in which there is no workers’ alternative yet the issue of protecting the democratic space is of great importance? The ruling regime has become so vicious and brazen that in the near future it would be almost impossible to organise if workers do not act in time. The recently passed Labour Amendment Act makes it impossible to engage in a lawful strike whilst punishing severely anyone involved in collec-

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tive job action, the bedrock of working class resistance and advancement of its interests. Other laws have been enacted to criminalise receiving support and solidarity from outside as well as making it impossible for community organisations to operate. What is more threatening is the lurking military faction of the regime waiting for total control and imposition of deep attacks on workers on the basis of a militarised state like Rwanda and Thailand. That would spell doom for the workers and must be resisted.

URGENT TASKS

Workers should not wait for five years to fight dictatorship and poverty through a popular front with an anti worker petit bourgeoisie party that is controlled by Western imperialism through the Brenthurst Foundation, a rabid anti worker outfit. Any call for support of the main opposition is a deliberate ploy to deliver the working class to imperialism disarming them for imminent struggles ahead, no matter the outcome of the elections. A united, mobilised and independent platform of workers alongside other exploited and oppressed groups can fight the dictatorship better.

Workers must fight and defeat partisan bureaucrats tying them to different imperialist wings thereby demobilising them. Ultimately, the question of working class action is a question of leadership and workers control of unions. We cannot rely on China to resolve our problems brought to us by western exploitation. Workers need to organise councils in the factories, build the unions and councils and coordinate them across Southern Africa that fight and are managed democratically, up to and including the insurrection by a Government of Workers and poor Farmers!

We recognise the counter-revolutionary character of the situation that requires us to advance our program of building an Anti-imperialist United Front(AIUF) of Southern African workers and poor farmers to resist the imposition of a regional and global Imperialist Popular Front(IPF) behind rival imperialist blocs East and West. For us in the first instance this is a matter of fighting imperialist proxy wars and building the international party to overcome the crisis of revolutionary leadership by means of militant propaganda for Trotskyism and Leninism.

For a sliding scale of wages and prices and employment for all who can work; working conditions should improve for all workers!

For the introduction of state projects to employ all the unemployed; central and local government must stop the attacks on vendors!

Land must be distributed to all poor peasants together with a state bank to provide inputs to all small farmers!

Jobs for all with a reduction in working hours until all who want to work can find a job!

To provide jobs for all big and imperialist assets must be nationalised and put under workers control and self-management!

Workers form action committees to lead the resistance to the growing attacks on the wages and working conditions of the poor and the livelihood of the majority poor!

We call for free and quality health care, housing and education for all!

Workers break with CCC and ZANU (PF) and form a worker's party that truly champions the interests of workers and poor masses!

Workers form rank and file bodies to lead action in all unions and break with the reformist trade union leadership!

For a workers state that defends workers and peasants against the local and foreign capitalists!

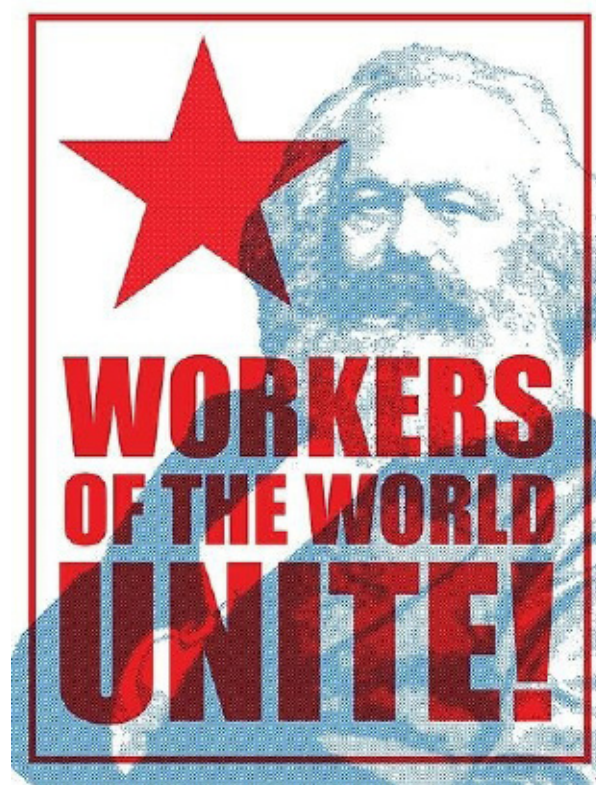
No to US/EU and China/Russia imperialism fronted by the two leading parties!

No to reformism, centrism and fake Trotskyism, build a fighting socialist party!

For a workers and peasants' government on the basis of the armed people to implement decisions that benefit the workers and the poor!

For an African socialist revolution as part of the international revolution that alone can guarantee a better life for all!

For a new World Party of Socialist Revolution based on the Transitional Program of 1938 to lead the revolution to end capitalism and open the road to socialism!



Yes, comrades, China is an Imperialist Power. An Open Letter to South African Workers and Small Farmers

May 4, 2023

Comrades, we are writing this open letter to raise the important question of China's influence in the world today, and specifically in Southern Africa. Without a clear understanding that China is imperialist and engaged in inter-imperialist rivalry with the US led block of imperialists, workers and poor farmers are disarmed in the class struggle leading to defeats which setback the revolution and make the catastrophic prospects of economic slump and ecological destruction much more likely. We need to fight the counter-revolutionary influence of all capitalist/imperialist powers, recognising the class enemy, and their treacherous agents in the labour movement, and organising independent workers organisations from unions, councils, self-defence militias to Workers and poor Farmers' Governments.

Back in November of last year, a member of our tendency (International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency) was visiting South Africa. He had discussions with the Shaun Magmoed branch (SMB) of the SRWP (Revolutionary Socialist Worker Party) on the question of China's influence in South Africa, especially its corrupting influence on the leadership of the NUMSA union and the SRWP. We were invited by one of its leading members, Cde Shaheed Mahomed, to write a response to the resolution ([Reform vs Revolution](#)) on the question being discussed in the branch. We wrote the letter quickly and got acknowledgement it had been received, but heard nothing more about it. We viewed the letter as part of an internal discussion, but in the light of events since then, we are obliged to publish it in this Open Letter. (See ['For a Workers' Government'](#)).

First, the SMB took the threat of China seriously when evidence showed that the NUMSA leadership under Irvin Jim had been corrupted by a rich individual with clear links to the CPC. As we said in our letter China's influence in the labour movement must be challenged and the unions rebuilt under the control of the rank and file. Despite assurances that our contribution would be discussed and answered, no further communication with us about their intervention in the SRWP took place. Nor was any comment forthcoming on the [ILTT Report on South Africa](#) written by our comrade on his visit which dealt at more length with China's influence in the economy and the labour movement, and with the inadequate worker resistance to it.

In both documents we make clear our view that China's influence in SA is as an imperialist power, that its corruption of the leadership of NUMSA is clear, but is not being effectively resisted by workers who are disarmed by confusion over China's character. That confusion was evident in the SMB. Its resolution characterised China superficially as a capitalist semi-colony acting as the agent of imperialism.

"Today China is awash with many imperialist companies. Apple has its production facility in China and according to the Economist Newspaper only 2% of the value of its sales go back to China. This is not a Socialist state but a semi-colonial capitalist state under the thumb of imperialism. China today is the mass production facility for imperialism with very low wages and harsh conditions. It has helped imperialism spearhead the de-industrialisation of the rest of the world." (*Reform vs Revolution*)

We stated that a correct understanding of China was urgently needed to build effective worker resistance in the unions and for building a revolutionary party to lead the vanguard against imperialism and its national comprador agents. This confusion over China's imperialist character seems to have led to impotence in the SMB in its attempt to take on the union bureaucracy and its Maoist connections.

"To transform the SRWP (or any new party that becomes necessary) into a mass workers' party independent of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie we need a Marxist party to form the left wing of the SRWP, based on a Transitional Program (TP) for a Workers' Government. That is, comrades, for a Workers' Government! (See critique of SRWP in ["Workers' Unite"](#)). Already, in the revolutionary period up to 1924, Trotsky's [report on the 4th Congress](#) of the COMINTERN insisted that the party program must always be crowned with the comrades' demand for a Workers' Government." (*For a Workers' Government*)

Then, four months later, we saw an exchange of letters ([Once Again on the China Question](#)) between Cde. Shaheed of the WIVL (who as we noted above is a leading member of the SMB in Cape Town) and the FLTI. Cde. Shaheed wrote:

Dear FLTI Committee

Could you send us your latest analysis on China, as some of the local groups are starting to raise the question that it is imperialist?

Greetings comrades.
Shaheed Mohamed
WIVL (9 April)

So, it appears that the silence of Cde. Shaheed and the SMB in response to our intervention in November may have masked an ongoing discussion about China which remains unresolved. The fact that in April the Cde had to appeal to the FLTI to provide him with a reply to those questioning China's role as imperialist we see as significant, first, because it indicates that no serious response to China's influence in NUMSA was underway. Secondly, because the Cde as a member of the WIVL was affiliated to the FLTI when we (as HWRS and CWG – now in the ILTT) had a dispute over China which led to a split in 2010. While we do not want to waste time over an old dispute, the FLTI raises it again to convince Cde. Shaheed that its position has not changed. Since that position was always wrong, and counter-revolutionary in its consequences, we have to once again deal with the 'China Question' as a matter of urgency.

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On April 11 the FLTI replied to Cde. Shaheed,

Comrade Shaheed,

"We have read your note asking for our views on the current situation in China. Not only in Africa, but also internationally, very many left currents coming from the former Trotskyist movement, affirm that China has become a "new imperialist country", while the old Stalinist currents, today again "in fashion", continue to see it as a "market socialism" and, together with the Russia of the butcher Putin, a focus of "anti-imperialist struggle". It is clear that all those who call themselves "Putin's friends", like those in the Communist Party and other Stalinists in South Africa and throughout Africa, Latin America and the Pacific, are well and truly servants of the IMF and the US imperialist transnational corporations. (Our emphasis)

Surely you remember that we together produced a pamphlet on China in polemics with the US HWSR and the New Zealand CWG which we jointly elaborated at an FLTI Congress in 2010. There we defined the key questions of what is still our position, also expressed in our assessment of the fall of the workers' states in '89: after the imposition of capitalist restoration, both China and Russia were left as relatively independent capitalist countries, which gave fresh blood to the imperialist capitalist world market. But that blood has now run out and imperialism, after successive crises and crashes, is looking for new markets to survive, as the old ones have shrunk, and new colonies and semi-colonies to throw its crisis at. (Our emphasis)

As the last decades have shown, imposing capitalist restoration in the former workers' states was not enough for imperialism. Since the crash of 2008, there has been a brutal open offensive by the US in dispute with Maastricht Europe to take over these new markets, trying to recolonize China and Russia for good, while the European glacier nations, Georgia, the Caucasus, the former Soviet Muslim republics, Vietnam and lately also Cuba are already in the process of colonization."

What is clear here is that the FLTI characterises Russia and China as 'independent' capitalist states coming out of the fall of the workers' states which have since resisted colonization. This 'independence' allowed China to act as agents of imperialism without submitting to re-colonisation. We can agree to that point but not on its consequences. Independence was the legacy of the workers' states, principally a centralised state and economic plan. However, for the FLTI, this legacy while useful to the imperialist powers, has only two possible outcomes, Russia and China either submit to colonisation (breaking up under imperialist dominance to get 'fresh blood') or are overthrown by a workers' revolution to take power, smash the regime and create a workers' state.

Let us assume that the 'blood' the FLTI is talking about is actually 'value', pumped out by workers' labour power in Russia and China, and increasingly in the semi-colonies where they trade and export capital, all of which serves to restore the rate of profit in the imperialist countries. To understand the importance of flows of value we must return to Lenin's definition of the definition of imperialism as the export of finance

capital to colonies and semi-colonies to extract super-profits as a basic counter-tendency to the law of the tendency of the rate of profits to fall (LTRPF) in the imperialist countries.

But how have 'independent' countries like Russia and China survived attempts at recolonisation from 1992 to 2023? For the FLTI 'independence' means a country is neither imperialist nor a semi-colony. While 'independence' can resist colonisation it cannot create the conditions for capital accumulation on a scale that leads to imperialism. This scenario raises the question. What stopped the existing imperialist powers from completing the colonisation process dividing up Russia and China and stopping them from accumulating value in their own right and emerging as imperialist powers?

Our response is that 'independence' is not a static state that allows Russia and China to survive recolonisation for 30 years without undergoing a qualitative change leading to their emergence as imperialist powers. Resistance to colonisation was only possible if the restored capitalist state could manage the process of transition by increasing its share of value extracted and accumulated to strengthen its 'independence' and at the same time reduce 'dependence' on foreign ownership. As against the FLTI's abstract outcomes, colonisation or socialism, we argue that actual resistance to colonisation creates two real possibilities, imperialism or socialism, according to which class is in power and leading the resistance.

Thus, when the FLTI, and what is the ILTT today, split over China in 2010 it was because we argued that Russia and China were able to exert control over the extent to which their markets became owned or controlled by foreign interests. From 2000 this allowed these economies to accumulate capital in their own right sufficient to create surpluses requiring capital export. As we noted, the FLTI flatly rejected the view that any capitalist country could make the transition from semi-colony to imperialism, as since WW1 the world was already divided. We said this dogmatic position on China was the 'Elephant in the room'.

We argued that the historical precedent of former workers' states restoring capitalism and retaining sufficient political control of their economies to resist colonisation did not contradict Lenin's view of a world already divided among the imperialist powers. The Bolshevik revolution in 1917 had 're-partitioned' the world between capitalist and 'socialist' worlds, and capitalist restoration in 1992 did not destroy the legacy of the former worker states. The strong centralised state apparatus overseeing relatively developed forces of production, was now instrumental in managing the process of restoration. By 2010 it was clear that Russia had largely restored political control of its economy against foreign domination and regulated the flow of value abroad. China in 2008 had already demonstrated that its rapidly expanding state capitalism was both capable of managing FDI (as is the case in all imperialist countries) and yet able to accumulate and export excess capital globally under its 'going out' policy.

Today the FLTI continues to characterise both Russia and China as 'independent' but facing further 're-colonisation'. It doesn't occur to its leadership that the concrete reality of increasing inter-imperialist rivalry is that value is now flowing away from the US imperialist bloc, towards the Russia-

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China bloc and its expanding BRICS+ trading partners which is now posing a threat to the US bloc. According to the [FLTI](#):

“Our characterization of China today is that, like Russia, they inherited the old gains of the former workers’ states which are in the hands of strong native bourgeoisies, associated and totally imbricated with imperialism in their business, on which they depend in the world-economy. In the midst of the world crisis, imperialism is after them and they are resisting to be recolonized. The US in particular does not yet find the strength in its proletariat to go for higher offensives, although the campaign of demonization of China within the US gives it a certain basis for attacks, including military attacks. The encirclement of Russia with the NATO countries is the gun to the head that the US uses in order to surrender Moscow.

China and Russia, then, are capitalist countries in a state of transition. Either the struggle for socialist revolution and the restoration of the dictatorship of the proletariat under revolutionary forms returns there, or if they continue to be dependent on the world economy, as is happening now, they will be cornered, encircled by imperialism and in the future, colonized.”

Today we are looking at two scenarios, one where the former workers’ states restored capitalism and remained ‘independent’ despite mounting attempts at recolonisation in trade wars and military wars. The other, where the former workers’ states restored capitalism but whose ‘independence’ was integral to the transition to imperialism. To test these two propositions, we must continue to apply the value analysis of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, in the epoch of imperialism.

The FLTI scenario is based on an empiricist method which fits the facts to its preconceptions. These are that Russia and China are neither imperialist, nor semi-colonies but historical hybrids. It applies the abstract characterisation of ‘independent’ states that exploits on behalf of imperialism, but resists semi-colonisation. Lenin used the term ‘independent’ to refer to several states that were exploited by finance capital, such as Argentina and Turkey, but were otherwise sovereign states. Yet, despite appearances they never had ‘independence’ from imperialism. In the imperialist epoch there were only oppressor and oppressed states. The emergence of new oppressor states could only arise under special as yet unforeseen circumstances.

Such circumstances led to the unprecedented restoration of capitalism in the former workers states. Under these circumstances what does ‘independence’ mean for Russia and China? It can only mean independence from foreign finance capital. What changes have occurred in Russia and China since restoration in 1992 that might justify the claim of ‘independence’ from foreign finance capital? The FLTI argues that such real, concrete independence is not possible since they are trapped as servants of finance capital.

The FLTI argues that since 2000 Russia and China exploited their own workers and increasingly foreign workers, not to accumulate on their own behalf, but to provide cheap labour and raw materials for the US and other imperialist finance capital, on which they are wholly dependent. They are cast

as throw-backs to the epoch of mercantile capitalism in the 21st century. Russia was a provider of oil and gas. China was a trading state profiting mainly from its trade in imports and exports. They did not invest significantly in raising labour productivity at home and abroad but relied on inefficient state-owned industries and heavy-handed control of the labour markets. Economic surpluses barely covered the external debts. They were exploited by getting less than the full value of the commodities traded or processed on behalf of the imperialist powers, but also exploiters of their own national and foreign labour forces.

In concrete reality, Russia and China for a decade after restoration underwent an historically unprecedented transition. They emerged from former workers’ states briefly as mercantile or comprador powers sourcing cheap raw materials, acting as agents of foreign investors, engaging in a form of primitive accumulation – a take-off stage in managing the transition to capitalism. That process was already being driven by independence from foreign finance capital as foreign investment was wholly subordinated to central state planning of the economy. Surplus value flows abroad were tolerated as trade-offs for the transfer of technology which enabled market reforms including the privatisation of state owned enterprises to increase labour productivity ‘up the chain’. Now the market was setting prices, albeit within the limits of the plan. Russia and China were able to escape re-colonisation and develop the forces of production, accumulating value and excess capital to be invested abroad, thus emerging as new imperialist powers and as rivals of the old.

Russia and China, understood as imperialist powers, can explain what cannot be explained when they are characterised as hybrid states. Their ‘independence’ was due to the legacy of the former workers states which allowed the new capitalist class to resist re-colonisation, create the conditions for capitalist take-off, and the inevitable emergence of imperialism. It is that growing ‘independence’ now backed by an alliance between Russia and China, and the rapidly rising BRICS+ that led the US bloc to provoke trade wars and military wars over Ukraine and Taiwan. This has backfired as the EU and Japan are refusing US dictates to cut off trade and investment with Russia and China. The US bloc is cracking as EU powers face economic ruin from economic sanctions. The Russia-China bloc is stepping into the vacuum left by the decline of the US bloc. There is no question that in the coming inter-imperialist war workers of the world must take a dual defeatist position and arm themselves to turn those wars into civil wars for the socialist revolution.

We trust this open letter will provoke more debate on the status of China in the world economy, including Southern Africa, and arm the workers and poor farmers of the semi-colonial world alongside those of the imperialist powers to reject any hopes attached to any capitalist regime and put all their energy and will to the task of overthrowing the rotten capitalist system.

For workers to live, capitalism must die!

ILTT May 1 2023

Bipolar World

Socialism or Extinction! Down with Capitalist War! For a Socialist World!



The 1917 February Revolution in Russia was led by striking women

From Crises to Wars

As Marx once said the old order is dying but the new order is yet to be born. Capitalism is a finite society which goes from its birth in Europe in the late 18th to maturity in the late 19th century, the 'Late stage' capitalism in the 20th finishing in 'End Stage' capitalism in the 21st. The basic contradiction between Capital and Nature brings the death sentence to Capital. As the contradiction intensifies it speeds up events driven by class struggle. Capital's destruction of the material conditions for its own existence becomes visible as chaotic forces such as slumps and ecological collapse. There is no way out for the ruling class. It can no longer rule in the old way because the working masses have nothing to lose and refuse to be ruled. Workers refuse to starve or die in wars of mutual destruction to give the breath of life into capitalism. As Trotsky said, workers are natural dialecticians, they see the objective reality of capitalism destroying itself, creating the chaos of destruction of nature and humanity, and subjectively begin to become conscious of the necessity for socialist revolution.

The new socialist order exists inside the dying capitalist order in embryonic form as the precondition for socialism. The working class is now the big majority, and its advanced productivity can produce enough material plenty for a good life for all. But while it is *conscious of itself*, it is not yet *conscious for itself* as the only class capable of building a new socialist order. Workers need an international revolutionary party and program based on Trotsky's *Transitional program*

of 1938 that subjectively transcends the objective situation. The program teaches them that class struggle will prove that even their most basic needs for life and liberty cannot be met short of the overthrow of the capitalist system. Yet since capitalism will not die of its own accord it has to be overthrown. In what follows we outline our method and program for making that historic transition from the death agony of capitalism to the birth pangs of socialism. We begin with the analysis of the war in Ukraine.

The Lessons of the Ukraine War

The war in Ukraine is the chaotic manifestation of the underlying contradiction between Capital and Nature exploding to the surface in the inter-imperialist war for Ukraine. *Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism – the epoch of crises, wars, and revolutions.* The war is the result of the terminal crisis that leads to war which in turn creates the conditions for revolution. Lenin, in *Imperialism; the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, argues the limits to profitability in the advanced capitalist countries forces them to export surplus capital to the colonies to extract enough labour value, by driving down the value of wages, to restore the rate of profit in the 'motherland'. Marx explains in [Capital](#) that this is caused by the Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall (LTRPF) due to the rising ratio of Constant capital which does not create value, to Variable capital which does produce value (c/v). The export of surplus capital is a counter-tendency to the LTRPF

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and drives the redivision of the world among the big powers competing to maximise super profits/absolute rent.

Ukraine is a perfect example. Applying Marx's law, in the post WW2 boom period the US and the EU powers experienced falling profits. To create the conditions for a new boom in production it was necessary to massively destroy existing *c* and *v* as the equivalent to another world depression or world war to restore the rate of profit. Neoliberalism was launched in the 1980s to 'restructure', i.e., destroy fixed assets and wages in the semi-colonial world and the imperialist heartlands. But the real prize of neoliberalism was the restoration of capitalism in Russia and China in 1992 opening up the former Degenerated Workers States (DWS's) to world capitalism and a massive devaluation of *c* and *v*. Yet by 2000 the Western Powers had failed to replace the state monopoly capitalist (SMC) regime in Russia then under Putin and gain access to devalued assets. Similarly, in China they succeeded in opening up the restored capitalist economy for Western investment, but failed to break the monopoly state's control over its banks and key economic sectors. Even the 'boom' of the 1990s was due more to credit and speculation than real value growth. All up neoliberalism failed to return the [rate of profit](#) to the post-war boom level and the so-called "End of History" was history.

Neoliberalism privatised state-owned property and drove down wages in the existing capitalist states, but ultimately failed to re-colonise the newly restored capitalism of the former Soviet Union and capitalise on the re-valuing of assets and labour to counter the Law of the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall ([LTRPF](#)). So long as the former DWS's resisted colonisation by Western imperialism it was Russia and China which capitalised on their massive territories and economic resources beyond the super-exploitation of Western finance capital. The US/EU then resorted to an aggressive expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, using the membership of Georgia and Ukraine as a weapon to provoke a war. The object was to bankrupt, force a regime change and breakup Russia as a stepping stone to recolonising the ex-Soviet Union (SU) and the whole of Eurasia. This plan backfired dramatically as Russia's economy is now [growing faster](#) than Germany's.

The imperialist ruling classes are in denial. Ideology and the propaganda war in both camps dress up their imperialist rivalry with slogans about personal/national freedom (US) and equality/win-win (China). The reformist left pimps the bourgeoisie's propaganda – for US imperialism or for Russian and Chinese imperialism. This is the [social imperialist left](#) – living off the super-exploitation of their colonies and semi-colonies. Most advocates of US social imperialism defend Ukraine from Russia on the grounds of supporting Ukraine's independence. Those who deny the proxy character of the inter-imperialist war, put Ukraine's national rights ahead of defeating US militarism. US social imperialists justify the killing both Ukraine and Russian workers in uniform in a war which risks breaking out into nuclear war.

In reality, inter-imperialist war sharpens the contradiction between bourgeois democracy/ equality, and the underlying *bourgeois dictatorship*. It exposes the hypocrisy of praising Western democracy against Eurasian dictatorships when both

evolve into imperialist [monopoly capitalist states](#) to manage inter-imperialist war. US military invasions since 1991 push the propaganda of 'democracy and freedom' against Russia's 'equality and sovereignty' and China's 'socialist win-win' narratives. All are crisis-driven projects that serve their bourgeois sovereign 'right' to restore profits by any means necessary. The cannon fodder gets no say in this proxy war in Ukraine as it affects both individual rights and national rights of minorities. Ukraine's right to national self-determination, and the rights of national minorities such as Russian speakers in the Donbass, are sacrificed to the inter-imperialist war. This subordinates these national rights to the reactionary right of rival imperialist powers to go to war over Ukraine to decide which one will exploit the strategic resources of their victims.

Geopolitics: From Eurasia to Africa and Latin America

Imperialism arises from the shift from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism where finance capital concentrates and centralises into fewer, bigger imperialist powers to create [state monopoly capitalism](#). As mentioned above, it is the reaction to the limits set by nation states by exporting capital to capture super-profits and absolute rent to counter the crisis of falling profits. But 100 years later when neoliberalism has failed to restore profits, the structural crises of the 20thC Late Capitalism has become End Stage Capitalism's terminal crisis in the 21stC as it crashes into the limits imposed by Nature. We define the *terminal crisis* as capitalism destroying its conditions of existence. It can no longer activate [measures to counter the LTRPF](#) without destroying nature. The terminal crisis spreads from the top to bottom to download the cost of the crises onto the workers and poor farmers in the semi-colonies and the imperialist rivals, as they compete for the shrinking sources of strategic resources.

As the terminal crisis intensifies it picks up speed and spreads globally creating the impression of chaos among nations. But 'chaos' is a bourgeois tag which does not penetrate to the underlying causes of the terminal crisis which is the decay of global capitalism. Lacking a Marxist analysis, *the bourgeois fail to see that their national sovereignty like their individual sovereignty is a fetish*. Nations were formed to protect national capital, but capitalism since the late 19thC was forced by the LTRPF to escape national borders to restore the rate of profit. All wars since have been in the interests of one or other imperialist power. That is why the war in Ukraine cannot be a war confined to Ukraine and Russia and must overflow into a global war. It is currently the major front marking the fault line between Europe and Asia – a proxy war on both sides that must spread to other fronts across other continents to repartition the world and reset the imperialist pecking order. We scratch below the surface of trade deals, coups, special military operations and there we find the US/EU facing off against China/Russia.

The speed and intensity of this global war drive cannot be explained other than by Marx's dialectical method. The US and EU powers as declining imperialisms exhibit a failing capacity to produce value at home caused by the LTRPF. The export of excess profit to compensate for falling profits at home then determines their relative competitiveness in the world market. To make super-profits abroad the US and EU have to build branch plants in countries with cheap labour

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and compliant states. As we argued above the US/EU were desperate to recolonise the SU and China as new sources of strategic resources and markets to save their massive capital stocks from devaluing. They poured in masses of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to take advantage of the natural wealth of these countries only to be faced by protectionist barriers imposed by a newly evolved form of state monopoly capital. The outcome is that the US/EU economies in decline not only failed to recolonise them, they had to face the prospect of failing to compete with them on the global market.

As the war in Ukraine heads for a stalemate Russia and the US are negotiating with advanced weaponry over a new border between Eastern and Western Ukraine. Both are under pressure from their allies to end the war. The EU cannot sustain more economic damage from the blowback from the war and China has to make preparations for what it sees as the coming war with the US. The US sees China as its mortal enemy globally as each competes to expand their spheres of influence at the expense of their rival. The Ukraine war on the Eurasian front is now 'pivoting' into a wider war with Russia and China in East Asia over several fronts. While Taiwan is the main target as the US Pacific ground zero, South East Asia and the whole Asia Pacific is being drawn into the fallout. In Europe, Poland is mobilizing at the Belarus border as Wagner parks its troops there. At the same time new fronts are developing in Africa and Latin America.

Such fronts in South East Asia and the Asia Pacific are being built to encircle China as the US bullies countries in the region to sign up to NATO East to oppose China's growing economic influence. The object is to boost friendly regimes like Myanmar and regime change unfriendly ones such as Thailand. Australia's Labor Government is in AUKUS and NZ is attending the meetings of NATO East. In East Africa the latest coup in Niger has thrown up a new front where a proxy war between US/France and Russia for control of its uranium appears certain. The US has long supported Uganda and Rwanda in a covert war in the DRC to contest China's grab of vital minerals like diamonds and Cobalt. Other African countries are being forced to take sides or stay neutral.

In Latin America the US is bullying Brazil and Argentina to abandon BRICS as the BRICS meeting draws closer. In all the Latin American regimes, the fractions of the bourgeois that side with one or other great powers, will create opportunities for the US to intervene to stage color revolutions and coups that end in proxy wars. All these wars are blatantly about whether the US or China dominates the control of global strategic resources like uranium, gold, lithium etc etc to further plunder the Global South and impoverish its peoples.

As the global terminal crisis of capital deepens, imperialism unloads the cost of paying for its crisis onto the shoulders of the poor masses of the global south. They have no choice but to fight for their existence. In the past the Western powers subdivided the world into their own spheres of interest. Both world wars arose when a declining power Germany went to war to rebuild its global position. Today, the whole West is in decline. Germany's GDP has fallen behind Russia as it pays the price of the EU backing the US/NATO war on Russia. Ironically Russia has taken its place as the economic sanctions and the Ukraine war has forced it to develop a close

strategic alliance with China.

So, while Western imperialism declines, the new imperialism of the East continues to grow. In End Stage capitalism as we have argued, all wars will tend to become a world-wide war with many fronts. ***Since both imperialist blocs are equally destructive of humanity and nature, both must be opposed by the world's workers. Yet the revolutionary left either does not recognise Russia and China as imperialist, or retreats to the defence of one against the other as being the more 'progressive', suppressing the organisation of an independent working-class position on imperialist war.*** We now move to an analysis of the prospects for a growing resistance to inter-imperialist wars, to the alliances between imperialism and pro-imperialist bourgeois regimes, and the need for the new world party of socialist revolution and program necessary to lead the global masses to overthrow imperialism and build socialism.

The Global Imperialist Popular Front

The vast majority of the ostensible revolutionary left include those from Stalinist, Maoist or centrist Trotskyist origins. They are the modern Mensheviks who believe that imperialism has the capacity to be reformed in stages. This strategy calls for popular fronts, in which workers ally with the progressive petty-bourgeoisie and the liberal bourgeoisie, to take the parliamentary road to managing any crisis in the interests of workers. Historic examples abound of such *imperialist popular fronts* (IPF) betraying the workers to imperialism and preparing the ground for fascist reaction. Both WW1 and WW2 were sold to workers by Mensheviks as gigantic IPFs. Workers were rallied around the national flag of one or more imperialist powers against the enemy imperialist powers.

The historic betrayal of the Menshevik 2nd International in not opposing WW1 was condemned by Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky at the [Zimmerwald](#) conference in 1915. Lenin and Trotsky guided the Bolsheviks through the first four Congresses of the Comintern to counterpose the Anti-Imperialist United Front (AIUF) to the IPF. The Stalinised Comintern after 1924 transformed the AIUF of the Second Congress into an imperialist popular front. Stalin's first great betrayal was the 'block of 4 classes' with the bourgeois KMT which led to the massacre of the leadership of the Communist Party in 1927. Later, following its ultraleft block with Hitler against the German revolution in 1933, Stalin flipped into a popular front with social democracy and the centre parties in the European imperialist states to forestall socialist revolutions in Europe and prevent the political revolution against the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. It was in this period that Trotsky warned that in Latin America the Popular Front Party (PFP) was the governmental form of the IPF, betraying the revolution in Latin America in the interwar period. With the rise of Russia and China in the 21st our tendency was the only one to argue that the [Bolivarian movement](#) of Chavez joined with Castro's 'socialism' in the ALBA states, to form an IPF with the emerging Russian and Chinese Imperialism. The rise as a 'progressive great power bloc' was sold to the masses as the 'socialist 5th International' alternative to Western imperialism, and an escape route from the crisis of capitalism wrought upon the global south entirely by the US/EU powers.

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We predicted that the Bolivarian IPF would become an [example](#) for more betrayals across all the continents. The Mensheviks in the West (aka social imperialists) put off action to defeat their own ruling classes into the future. In Ukraine, the Russophiles pretend that the war is *not* a proxy war between imperialists because Russia is not imperialist. Those who recognise Russia and China as Great Powers refuse to acknowledge that they are imperialist in the sense of plundering the Global South for strategic resources and pumping out surplus value immiserating the working masses. Russia is only defending itself from US regime change and NATO encroachment with the help of China and other allies. They conveniently pass the task of defeating US imperialism to Russian workers in uniform in a military front with their national bourgeoisie. It is not surprising then, that as the war spreads to more fronts on other continents, that the prevailing position in the Global South is inspired by the Bolivarians. The US hegemon is held responsible for all the reaction in the post-WW2 period and Russia and China are progressive states defending themselves.

The formation of two blocs around the US/EU and Russia and China exist only because members regard theirs to be the more 'progressive'. We have seen how this applies to the Western bloc's propaganda proclaiming dedication to democracy and human rights. It is equally clear in the Eastern Bloc. If we take the case of BRICS+ which is undergoing rapid expansion, we hear the same message from the pro-Russia/China national bourgeoisies. It runs like this. *'Russia and China do not sanction or threaten to go to war with their partners. They do win-win deals where both sides get a fair share of the profits. Their models of economic development since the restoration of capitalism continue that of the Soviet policy of economic and military aid. It represents the historical model for the Global South where state to state deals are done without political strings attached.'* The bi-polar military front opening up over Niger vindicates this model when the Coup leader preaches the evils of US/French colonialism and the benefits of alignment to Russia.

This Bolivarian model is presented flamboyantly by Julius Malema, leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in South Africa. He campaigns like an African Hugo Chavez for a united Africa which can become equal partners in the development of capitalism with the help of Russia and China. His statement that "Africa is open for investment" is clearly directed mainly at them because, unlike Western imperialism, they supposedly do not behave like imperialist powers. We reject the popular front narrative of Russia and China engaged in win-win diplomacy and economic fair shares with their colonies and semi-colonies. The slogan of multipolarity rather than bipolarity [is a cover for BRICS](#) as a union of oppressor and oppressed countries as if they were equals. We argue that the win-win deals are between the imperialist ruling classes and the semi-colonial ruling classes whose 'fair shares' in the plunder cost the workers and poor farmers their lives.

'Win-win' deals or 'fair shares' steals

Let's unpack the delusion of the 'win-win-fair shares' model which sends the message that Russian and Chinese imperialisms are 'progressive'. Much of the appeal of this model is

the history of both as 'socialist' states. Julius Malema speaks effusively of China's "socialism with Chinese characteristics". We heard that often from Castro and Chavez. We argue that all that remains of this legacy today is the centralised bureaucratised capitalist state. The [state monopoly capitalism](#) (SMC) of Russia and China is subject to the law of value and defends that law. Their states' ability to moderate the free market is designed to maximise profits in the interests of state capital-in-general. In other words, any advantage they have in competing with the US/EU powers owes nothing to 'socialism', past or present.

It took Western imperialism 200 years from birth to maturity to become imperialists exporting capital to super exploit the world's workers to restore profits. China (and Russia after the lost decade of the 1990s) has had to take the same path from restoration of the market to a high-tech global value chain in 30 years. But it is the same imperialism, the same relations of production, and the same underlying laws of motion. It follows that as SMC regimes Russia and China must compete with their Western rivals to prevent the LTRPF from driving down profits. This means that any sharing of profits with partner regimes will be based on China's own experience of capitalist development but presented as 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.' Aid and debt forgiveness then is made to appear as part of a state socialist plan to gain popular approval for equal shares in 'progressive' win-win state-to-state deals.

Therefore, mimicking China's developmental plan requires similar SMC regimes. State-to-state deals between Russia and China and their economic partners must share the 'characteristics of state capitalism'. In the name of 'state socialism' the partner states will eliminate the problem of private property, a major unnecessary cost to capital, by nationalising property rights. Malema is a big fan because he knows that the 'win-win' deals depend on taking the workers along.. To win popular support for 'state socialism' the working masses must believe that they will get a fair share of the win-win deals like Chinese workers with the provision of infrastructure, jobs, health, housing, living incomes etc. shifting millions out of poverty. China was able to do this by allowing Western imperialism to profit from FDI with cheap inputs from Chinese and global labour in exchange for technology transfer.

But critically, China never allowed imperialist private direct investment to spread from high tech manufacturing to control of the state, finance and state-owned land. Russia since 2000 has rolled back foreign investment to restore a centralised state-run economy. But now Russia and China are becoming their imperialist partners, they will not be able to retain sufficient value to control the economy except as the agents of imperialism. So while Russia and China's partners in the Global South may technically become economically independent but not as Malema promises on 'our terms', rather 'their terms'. *Those terms will be dictated by the making of profits that are necessary to allow Russia's and China's stock of surplus capital to be reproduced at a long-term profit rate that allows the further accumulation of capital. Any apparent 'advantages' over the US/EU bloc resulting from win-win deals with Russia and China of the US/EU will be determined not by goodwill, or 'socialism' but by the efficiencies of state capitalist long-term planning.*

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Therefore how can Russia and China deliver on promises made by the client regimes to the working masses? There are many risks. The 'long term' plan is subject to constant disruption by the terminal crisis of capital, the prospect of unending wars, and more importantly, revolutions. The terminal crisis affects all imperialist states, democratic or autocratic. Russia and China are not immune from the terminal crisis of capital, made worse by climate emergency and the threat of more pandemics. Capitalism on its last legs and nature on the brink of collapse does not contribute much to reducing the risk of permanent crises leading to war and revolutions.

Therefore, any advantages that Russia and China have to displace the US/EU as the 'lesser evil', if not 'progressive' imperialist bloc, are subject to economic laws of motion that will mobilise an intensified class war between the capitalist and working classes on every front. This high risk of mounting class struggle is factored in by all imperialists when preparing contingency plans for risk management of investment. The new imperialists carry some soviet era goodwill baggage with them which once exhausted cannot offset the risk of the working masses rising up in revolution. This baggage has the name of the IPF used to trap, disarm and divert workers from revolution. This raises the urgent necessity of building an international anti-imperialist united front (AIUF) to challenge and smash the counter-revolutionary IPF.

The Anti-imperialist United Front

AIUF is a UF of workers and poor peasants against imperialism that embodies the permanent revolution in the epoch of imperialism. We recognise that after Lenin's death the Stalinists turned it into a pro-imperialist popular front. For this reason, Trotsky abandoned it for his concept of permanent revolution after the defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1927. But it remains an accurate concept today, provided it consciously excludes petty bourgeois and bourgeois forces in the UF.

We justify this practice first, by Lenin's characterisation of the epoch as imperialist where national self-determination is not possible without the defeat of both the national bourgeoisie and their imperialist masters. Second, by our recognition that Lenin shared Trotsky's concept of [permanent revolution](#) in Russia which Trotsky, after the lesson of China, then applied to all the colonies and semi-colonies. Only revolutionary workers can resolve the unfinished program of the bourgeoisie by means of international socialist revolution. Hence the AIUF applies the method of the UF to the theory/program of permanent revolution in the epoch as a whole.

This is why in the first decade of the 21st End Stage capitalism, when the new imperialisms of Russia and China are presented as the 'progressive' or 'socialist' friends and partners in the revolution, we opposed the Bolivarian IPF posing as a AIUF in front of the masses to trap, defeat and divert the workers and poor farmers. Hence, we recognised the Venezuelan PSUV and the Cuban Communist party as the same reactionary [Popular Front Parties](#) (PFP) that Trotsky identified in Latin America in the 1930's. And this is exactly the model adopted in all colonial and semi-colonial bourgeois regimes in Asia and Africa. In fact, they describe the class composition of all 'populist' parties including the Peronist party, the South African ANC, and the Communist Party of China (CPC). In

every case it is necessary to confront the PFP as the agent of imperialism with the AIUF to break the workers and poor peasants from the petty bourgeois and bourgeois classes.

The AIUF therefore is formed politically to break the workers from the bourgeois PFP particularly when it controls the government and hence legislative power. The object is not to create an independent workers' party to contest elections but to build a revolutionary party. The AIUF can critically support workers' parties inside government unless they are in a governmental popular front where the bourgeois partner dominates and provides an alibi for betrayal. ***When workers parties put up candidates they stand as tributes to promote the program, not to join in parliamentary circuses.*** Revolutionaries do not spread illusions in worker majorities, or in workers' ministers, pushing a government to the left. This is the classic strategy of all shades of reformists who believe that workers can take power by winning control of the parliamentary executive. The object is not to participate in the government but to smash workers' illusions in reforms and break workers from the PFP.

Marxists know that the state is the organising committee of the bourgeoisie. State power is not concentrated, nor separated, in the legislature, executive and judiciary. Bourgeois parliaments are the democratic front for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Once exposed the dictatorship will dispense with democracy and resort to the use of state forces to repress revolution. Therefore, the AIUF must be based on the independent organisations of the working class. It must be armed to defend itself from state and parastatal institutions/forces in order to win dual power and prepare for socialist revolution. Yet while the AIUF is the unity of a workers' front for an action, specifically to break and destroy the popular front, it is composed of workers at different levels of consciousness. Reformist workers and trade union conscious workers remain trapped at the fetishised level of relations of exchange. ***Revolutionaries use the AIUF as a tactic to put transitional demands on the reformist leadership of the labour movement to expose their role as agents of the class enemy and transform the reformist workers and trade union conscious workers into class conscious proletarians.***

From War to Revolution

The AIUF to be effective has to be guided by revolutionaries. And revolutionaries cannot exist outside a revolutionary party and its revolutionary program. The revolutionary party is the subjective force acting through its program to change objective reality. The AIUF is a tactic in the Transitional Program to break workers from the bureaucracy and from the bosses. We argue that the AIUF arose out of the discussion around the [Left Zimmerwald Manifesto](#) of 1915 which called for the defeat of both imperialist sides in war. In 1916 Liebknecht made his famous demand, "workers turn your guns on your own ruling class." The Left Zimmerwald program on the war was summed up first as "turn imperialist war into civil war", and second, "build a new international" to replace 2nd International which liquidated itself into social imperialism and social chauvinism.

The 3rd international was therefore also conceived at Zimmerwald. The AIUF tactic was next applied in the Bolshevik

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program that led to the October Revolution in Russia and the formation of the 3rd International in 1920. The Left Zimmerwald program was now part of the Bolshevik Party program “to turn the guns of the workers and peasants” in uniform on the Russian imperialist ruling class. After the February revolution led to the fall of the Tsar, the Bolsheviks applied the AIUF against the bourgeois Provisional Government. It was put to the test against the counter-revolutionary coup attempt by the white Russian (Tsarist forces) led by General Kornilov in August. The Bolsheviks formed a tactical military bloc with the bourgeois government against Kornilov to prove to reformist soldiers and trade unionists that the bourgeois government’s real class enemy was the Soviets not the Tsarists backed by the imperialist powers.

Then came the “turn imperialist war into civil war”. As the embryonic Red Army, the Soviet forces easily outmaneuvered and defeated the Kornilov coup as a preliminary to the Civil War that began almost immediately after the revolution. Workers and poor peasants staged the insurrection in October 1917, formed a workers and poor peasants’ government, and negotiated for peace at Brest-Litovsk with the German high command in the attempt to spark the revolution in Germany. This tactic did not wholly succeed as the Germans invaded southern Russia occupying around a third of the old Russian Empire, forcing an end to the negotiations on March 3rd 1918. As a result, this changed the character of the war in Soviet Russia into that of the national defence of the revolution in the Civil War against the imperialist powers.

Moreover, the Bolshevik’s stalling tactic at Brest-Litovsk may have helped incubate the [wave of mutinies](#) in the German armed forces that first broke out exactly eight months later in the navy at Keil on 2nd November 1918, setting off the German Revolution. Armed soldiers and workers set up soviets in several parts of Germany and turned their guns in their defence. But there was no revolutionary general staff to take the next vital step of armed insurrection, that is, to aim their guns strategically at the ruling class. The soviets were suppressed by ‘special forces’ of the defeated Germany army led by proto-fascist white guards. What was lacking was the next vital step, an established Bolshevik-type party that could stage the break from the treacherous social democracy which formed the popular front Weimar Republic.

The small Spartacist League of Luxemburg and Liebknecht came too late and was too small to make a difference. The general staff, revolutionary party and program, was missing in action. The ruling class suppressed the German revolution but feared its return unless the Soviet Union was destroyed. The imperialist powers buried their differences after the capitulation of Germany, invaded the Soviet Union to wage a civil war from 1918 to 1921, until they met an historic defeat at the hands of the Red Army. This stalemate made another world war inevitable, once more creating the conditions for revolution out of crisis and war to decide which class rules. The old world was still dying, the new world was born, but smothered by “all the old shit” of the old world.

The AIUF tactic was first formulated officially by the 3rd International led by the Bolshevik Party at its [Fourth Congress](#) in November 1922. It was part of the turn towards the United Front (UF) as a result of the failure of the workers revolution

to spread to Europe and the rest of the world. The Congress balance sheet of this failure isolated the missing ingredient. It was the inability to break the social chauvinist and social imperialist IPF between workers and the bourgeoisie formed by the SPD as part of the executive of the new Weimar Republic. The way forward from 1922 was through the application of the United Front tactic led by Bolshevik-type parties in all the European powers to win the majority of reformist workers to class consciousness and the revolution. However, at that point the revolution was already isolated and degenerating under the influence of a growing bureaucratic leadership under the influence of the weight of the peasantry.

As the revolution degenerated under the influence of the bureaucracy, it became the task of Trotsky, and the Left Opposition, to take up the battle for the UF against the PF in the years between the WW1 WW2 against the bureaucracy in the SU and the rise of fascism. After the victory of fascism in Germany in 1933 Trotsky set out to build a new international. It was founded in 1938 on the [Transitional Program](#) based on the method of dialectics which shone through the writings of this period, many published in the book [In Defense of Marxism](#). Here we have the living Marxism of Lenin and Trotsky raising the flag of the vanguard party firm in principle but flexible in tactics, preparing for WW2 and arming the worlds’ workers with the program to stop the war by turning our guns against the ruling classes and the imperialist war into civil war.

The application of the AIUF in WW2 continued that of WW1 but was now strengthened by the lessons learned by the victorious Bolshevik revolution. Two demands were fused together at its heart; *the dual defeatist position in inter-imperialist war to turn the war into a civil war, and the unconditional defence of the Soviet Union*. Dual defeatism required the arming of the working class to join with the ranks in the military to turn their guns on the ruling class. Revolutions in the imperialist states would empower the international workers army to unite with Russian workers and soldiers and stage a political revolution against the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union. In the US Trotsky devised the [Proletarian Military Policy](#) to arm the trade unions and unionise the official army. It was grounded in the lessons of the historic betrayal of 1914, the Manifesto of the Zimmerwald left of 1915, the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, and of the defeats of the German revolution at the hands of social democracy, Stalinism and fascism.

These are the ‘principles’ of the program against imperialist war rooted in Marxism that are the basis of any assessment of the application of the AIUF in WW2. All the preconditions for turning war into revolution were there in the program, but not in practice. The vital factor, the revolutionary leadership of the 4th International after Trotsky’s death, was lacking. The assessment of our [tendency](#) is that even more so than during WW1, the Bolshevik-type party was missing in action. Despite valiant struggles against the imperialists, Stalinists, and their own ruling classes, by the militant ranks, especially in [Greece and Indo-China](#), the leadership of the main sections in the US and Europe capitulated to social chauvinism, and the war against fascism. Instead of turning their guns against their imperialist ruling classes the leadership of the 4th International turned their guns on the fascists in an IPF with imperialism and the Stalinist Soviet Union.

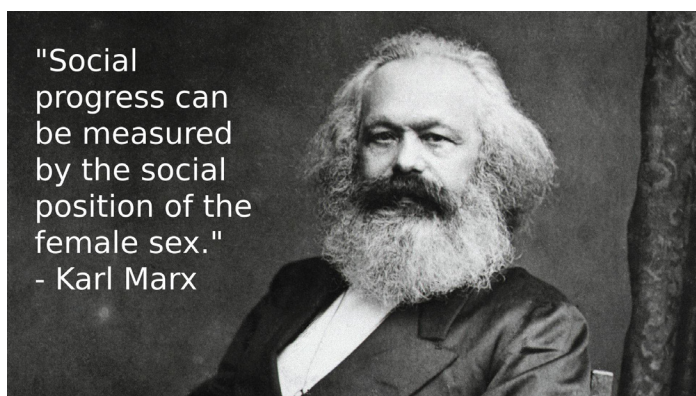
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The lessons learned from this history of the AIUF in its struggle against the IPF are what shape our response to the war in Ukraine as the first of many wars towards a 3rd Imperialist war. In summary, we call for a New Zimmerwald and a new Proletarian War Policy embodying the principles of Lenin and Trotsky in a new AIUF. The old world still lives in all its reactionary barbarism and its counter-revolutionary IPFs. There can be no confusion here. The conditions for international revolution are now so overwhelmingly objectively present in the capitalist destruction of its ecological foundation in nature. Humanity survives only in the capacity of the working masses to put an end to rotten capitalism. Yet the subjective will of the working masses which is bursting through the cracks to rise up, overthrow capitalism and restore nature in harmony with humanity, is blocked by the liquidation of the revolutionary Marxist party and its program. The new revolutionary international is still missing in action. We call on all those exploited and oppressed of the world who yearn to complete the world revolution that began in 1917, to unite with us in our call for a [New Zimmerwald](#). Together we can build an AIUF to smash the imperialist ruling classes and their client states and create a new World Party of Socialism to organise workers, poor farmers and all oppressed peoples internationally, for the fight to make a new world to save the world!

International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency

– ILTT, 08/18/2023



Reprinted from our comrades of the Communist Workers' Group of New Zealand/Aotearoa (CWG-A/NZ):

Transfascism or Posthumanism?

On Saturday, March 25 this year, 2000 transactivists surrounded and invaded the Band Rotunda at Albert Park, Auckland and violently ended a 'Let Women Speak' meeting organised by Posie Parker. The trans rights movement, with its allies the state, unions and media, had been hyping up a defamation campaign that Parker was a fascist to justify an attack.

There are many independent [factual rebuttals](#) of any support by Parker for any fascist individuals or movements. The conservative right has an interest in opposing trans (and gays and lesbians) because it wants to shore up the bastion of the patriarchy in family, church and state. Though fascists may oppose trans, they do not support women except as an oppressed sex-class in the patriarchal family. Women as a sex-class can stop trans attack only by organising to smash the pa-

triarchy, both of the right and left. The fact that the trans riot against Parker used fascist-like violence backfired because it gave the new women's right movement some impetus to fight the fascism smear.

Why would trans activists attempt to smear Parker and incite a riot to stop her and other women speaking? The short answer is that the liberal left is the postmodern manifestation of the patriarchy which wants to finish off the job of enslaving women to exploit their labour and their bodies. Enslaving women starts with shutting them up politically, dividing them from their male allies in the labour movement, and ends with replacing their bodies with synthetic reproduction technology.

The liberal left comprises a petty bourgeois coalition made up of labour bureaucrats, union officials, government politicians, state employees and other quasi-state groups whose employment is dependent on state funding as is true of NGOs like the National Council of Women, and trans organisations like Pride. Collectively they are all dependent upon funding and support from the bourgeois state to enact the 'rights' legislation that allows them to legally live off the working class.

There is nothing 'left' about these liberals let alone socialist or Marxist. It is a fake left that serves the state and its corporate bosses. Like the Nazis who tried to appeal to declassed workers, the fake left uses them as 'shock troops' against militants to smash any threat of workers revolution. Trans activism has some aspects of fascism – it serves a corporate state; forms violent street gangs; targets oppressed minorities – but not all. The state is legitimated by bourgeois democracy passing laws that validate trans rights at the expense of women. There is no revolutionary crisis and threatened overthrow of the state. Yet capitalism's terminal crisis will provoke such conditions, so the trans activists attack on working women today prepares the ground for the inevitable fascist coup.

That's why capitalism uses the patriarchy to wage a war on women to disorganise the revolution. Over the past century there has been a gradual weakening of the bourgeois family as the buttress of women's oppression. Today it can no longer contain the contradiction between women who defend nature, against capital that destroys nature. It needs a new rebranded patriarchy in the 21st century. Not the restoration of the family but its dissolution. It seeks to destroy all resistance to patriarchal capitalism, de-humanising women as the historic sex-class, seizing control over their bodies, and consequently human reproduction.

So, while we do not yet face trans fascism, we face something potentially worse - post-humanism – the systematic wiping out of women as a sex-class that has fought for humanity against the patriarchy for around 40,000 years. The trans activism we face today redefines mothers as others, and invades their spaces to snatch their bodies and body parts. Control of their reproductive power goes to men in a post-human dystopia.

The violent occupation of the Band Rotunda in Auckland on March 25 2023 teaches us that working women and men must organise their self-defence to keep alive women's historic fight to overthrow patriarchal capitalism and build a new commune that rescues civilisation from extinction.

Women's Fight for Humanity

The original commune was the birth of humanity. It created an egalitarian society in which social relations were reciprocal and in harmony with nature. Without it, homo sapiens would not exist today. The rise of class society began with the overthrow of the commune and the domestic slavery of women by the patriarchy, followed by the wider exploitation of slaves, peasants and wage workers since. But humanity survived in the historic class struggles of the exploited and oppressed for the revolutionary overthrow of class society culminating in decaying capitalism. We must rescue humanity from the deathly destruction of patriarchal capitalism in terminal crisis and create the conditions for its rebirth with the abolition of class in a future communist society returned to nature. To build support for socialist revolution we need to harness the power of the international proletariat in the uniting all workers of all ethnicities, creeds, nations, sexes and sexual orientations. The socialist revolution will build on the lessons of class struggle through the ages, founding a world party of socialism with a revolutionary transitional program that guides workers in the struggle for world revolution and a communist world yet to be born.



Rosa Luxemburg

The Birth of Humanity

The birth of Humanity was the result of the original social revolution that created human society in which women organised the social relations between the two sexes as reciprocal and equal. To be *human* began when women over-rode natural selection to socially select male partners who would defer their sexual gratification for part of the monthly menstrual cycle.

Women went on [sex strike](#) during menstruation synchronized with waxing moon to force men to hunt to provide meat for the children's hungry brains. The men were then rewarded during the waning moon with sex when women were most fertile.

This is not biological 'essentialism' or determinism, but rather the social determination of the reproduction of human life. Beyond *natural selection*, which is random resulting from genetic variation, this is *social selection* where women collectively organised the *lineage social relations* between men and women as equal sexes. The result was the original [classless commune](#) which lasted for 200,000 years before women's resistance gradually succumbed to the patriarchy 40,000

years ago. The [evidence](#) of this timeline and the distribution of red ochre used in the menstrual rituals in Mesolithic Africa shows the rise and fall of the original human commune.

Moreover, in many parts of the world there are communal societies surviving more or less intact to the present day. Therefore, the evidence for an historical commune at one with nature is unquestionable. Human society was egalitarian rather than a hierarchy ruled by men. Rosa Luxemburg [wrote from jail](#) that the 'overthrow' of the original 'primitive communism' more than 10,000 years ago was a "brief passing phase" within the total history of humanity. She venerated 'primitive communism' as a [damning critique](#) of capitalism and inspiration of its return in the future communism.

Marx, Engels and Luxemburg while marking 'primitive communism' as a major transition in human history, did not recognise it as a mode of production. But each for different reasons came close. Luxemburg saw communal property as the basis for allocating labour to meet social needs. She read history forward from the ancient commune to recreate it a higher level. Marx and Engels, discovered the residue of the commune as a survivor within 19th century capitalism and reasoned backwards that its fate was to make way for the development of the forces of production necessary for socialism.

In the 1960's the path-breaking [Marxist anthropologist](#) Eleanor Leacock took on Luxemburg's intuition that the egalitarian 'primitive communism' was more than a descriptive label. She used Marxist analysis to reveal the 'communal mode of production' (CMP), complete with social relations of production where matrilineal control of communal land was the material base for an egalitarian society that allowed unlimited personal freedom of expression.

The Overthrow of Humanity?

The existence of a CMP makes sense of the transition from 'primitive communism' to the 'patriarchy', as distinct Modes of Production. It explains why women put up a continuous class struggle over 100,000s of years for the future of humanity, defending the CMP against men seeking to exploit their labour as propertyless slaves.

For many millennia in all parts of the world the communal society could expand hunting and gathering into pastoralism and agriculture on the basis of its principle of equality and personal freedom. It could coexist in complex relationships with patriarchal bands that augmented hunting with pastoralism and were moving away from communal property ownership towards [private property](#), and the hierarchy of social class or caste.

So historically significant was the 'overthrow of mother right' that Marx and Engels viewed the new social relations between men and women as like that of the 'bourgeoisie' and 'proletariat'. Had they followed through their observation that women became 'domestic slaves' of men to provide surplus labour, they might have concluded that a patriarchal class society based on the exploitation of women's labour was the forerunner of the Ancient Slave mode of production (SMP).

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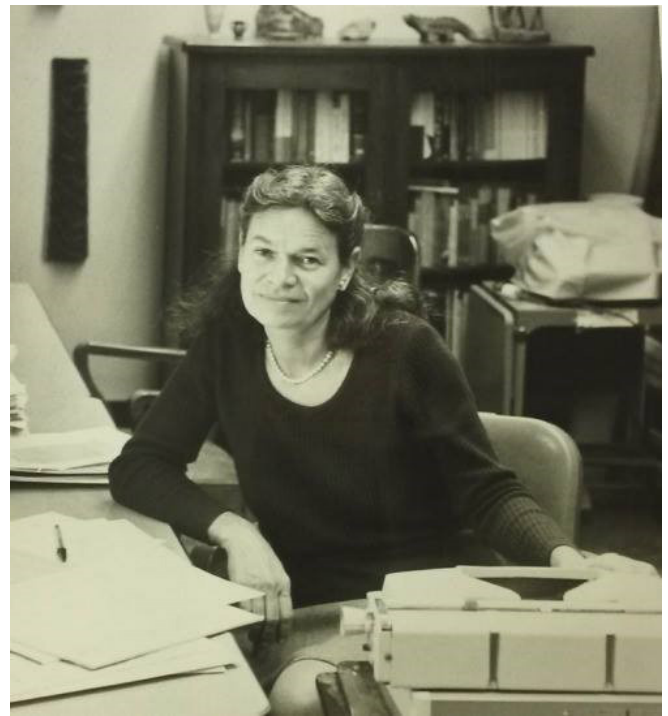
De Ste Croix in his magnificent book *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, examined the Ancient Slave mode of production and concluded that women were largely propertyless. He questions why Marx and Engels didn't draw the conclusion that in the ancient world women were an exploited economic class dependent on men:

"... [For anyone who believes that] Marx was right in seeing in the whole system of production (necessarily including reproduction) as the principal factor in deciding class position, the question immediately arises: must we not allow a special *class* role to that half of the human race which, as a result of the earliest and most fundamental of all divisions of labour, specialises in reproduction, the greater part of which is biologically its monopoly? Marx and Engels, it seems to me fail to draw the full necessary conclusion. Engels, in the *Preface* of the original edition of the *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, acknowledged specifically that 'the production of and reproduction of immediate life' is 'according to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history'... 'The first division of labour is that between man and woman for the production of children', and he added 'the first *class* antagonism which appears on history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first *class* oppression with that of the female sex by the male'... 'The nucleus, the first form, of property lies in the family, where wife and children are the slaves of the husband. This latent slavery in the family, though still very crude, is the first form of property, but even at this stage it corresponds perfectly to the definition of modern economists who call it the power of disposing of the labour power of others'... Yet Marx and Engels seem hardly to have realised what far-reaching consequences ought to have been drawn from this particular specialisation of role, within their own system of ideas above all.

Meanwhile, this is the position I propose. In many societies, either women in general, or married women (who may be regarded as monopolising the reproduction function), have rights, including above all, property rights, markedly inferior to those of men; and they have these inferior rights as a direct result of their reproductive function, which gives then a special role in the reproductive process and makes men desire to dominate and *possess* them and their offspring. In such societies it is surely necessary, on the premises I have accepted, to see the women, or the wives (as the case may be), as a distinct economic class, in the technical Marxist sense. They are 'exploited', by being kept in a position of legal and economic inferiority, so dependent upon men (on their husbands in the first place, with their kin, so to speak, in reserve) that they have no choice but to perform the tasks allotted to them. Aristotle... could speak of the propertyless man, who could not afford to buy slaves, as using his wife and children in their place." (p 100)

The Patriarchal Mode of Production

Following the logic of De Ste Croix, Marx and Engels should have recognised the first class in history as the 'sex-class' of



Eleanor Burke Leacock

women, exploited on the basis of their social reproductive labour. It is women's sex that determines their lack of property and enslavement by men. This gives the radical feminist definition of women as a 'sex-class' a material basis open to the Marxist analysis of class relations. These class relations define the *Mode of Production* where men exploit women as a class to extract and accumulate labour time from their labour as reproducers and producers.

If the original commune is essentially the same as 'primitive communism' (CMP) recognised by Marx and Engels as a classless, egalitarian society, then the overthrow of mother right was a *revolution*. It created a *Patriarchal Mode of Production* (PMP) which exploited women's labour and accumulated their surplus labour in patriarchal families.

Similarly, the SMP *revolutionises* the limits of the PMP by extending the domestic slavery of women to the whole of society, allowing the harnessing of slave labour by slaveowners. The new ruling class could increase the labour productivity of slaves to develop the forces of production in pastoralism and agriculture beyond the limits of the PMP, until the SMP itself imposes a barrier to the further development of those forces.

If this is correct, the concept of *Patriarchy* used by radical feminists today to signify the universal power that men hold over women, is given an historically specific material basis in the social relations of production of the PMP. It then becomes the *original class* mode of production and the precursor to the Slave Mode of Production (SMP). Looking back from the standpoint of 19th century European capitalism, Marx and Engels accepted that the end of the commune had allowed a succession of class modes (Slave mode, Feudal mode, Asiatic Mode) each of which overcame temporarily the limits set by the social relations of existing modes which had to be overthrown in order to develop the forces of production.

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For Marx and Engels, the object of human social development was in the reduction of necessary labour time - the labour time necessary to reproduce the material basis of life. Human freedom became possible with the development of the forces of production reducing necessary labour time and increasing the productivity of labour as the material basis of freedom.

In its essence then, the end of the original commune was a casualty of the first exploiting class, men who introduced slave social relations, reducing necessary labour time. Women as domestic slaves had their labour time expropriated to create surplus labour consumed by the patriarchs. The giant leap in freedom made possible by the original commune and the creation of universal human society, was now subjected to class rule and class struggle over the distribution of labour time.

The exploitation of the labour of women, slaves, peasants and wage workers, was always contested by the resistance of the oppressed and exploited. Their fight for freedom from private property and the family was never abandoned. It was the class struggle, the motor of history, defending nature and revolutionising class society to further develop the forces of production. It created the conditions for the final social revolution to end class society and to create the new Commune where human society can return to a state of harmony with nature.

The Struggle for Humanity

Was Marx and Engels view of history as a succession of class struggles necessary to create the conditions for a new commune a grand narrative? Hardly, they saw the survival of previous modes in vestigial form within modern capitalism as evidence that a number of *social revolutions* had contributed to the development of the forces of production sufficient to realise human freedom in a future communism. Towards the end of his life, Marx [argued](#) in his draft letter to Vera Zazulich, that in Tsarist Russia there was the theoretical possibility of the survival of the rural commune “replacing capitalist production with cooperative production, and capitalist property with a higher form of the archaic type of property, that is, communist property.”

In the interests of historical accuracy, the possibility of the new commune was conceived in embryo in the Soviet Union until it was aborted by the counter-revolution of Stalinism and global capitalist reaction which halted and drove back the revolution.

So, for Marx the realisation of socialism and communism had to be the work of future class struggles, that unleashed revolutionary consciousness, opening the road to socialism. We agree with Marx and Engels that a future communism is no utopia. Humanity is capable of choosing communism against extinction. It can make the material conditions for the realisation of universal values of humanity, of equality and freedom from oppression and exploitation.

But there are many who reject Marxism as reeking of historic inevitability, of the suppression of human agency, and of

the pre-determination of the future of humanity. Clearly, the onus is on those who argue for an alternative past and alternative future of human agency to put their theories to the test. What other mechanism for human progress can be conceived other than the powerful motor of collective class struggles by women, slaves, serfs and wage workers, whose accumulated revolutionary past unites them for the final struggle to end class society and reunite humans with nature?

In the end the only theory that can work is one which makes humans capable of understanding that though they may be driven by forces seemingly beyond their control, they have the capacity to break free from those forces to create their freedom. A recent challenge to ‘historically determinist’ theories that ostensibly suppress humans’ capacity to rise above historic inevitability is the *empiricist* theory expounded by David Graeber and David Wengrow in the recent book: *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*.

Inhumanity against Humanity

Bearing in mind that Rosa Luxemburg saw primitive communism as representing humanity against the inhumanity of capitalism, let’s [consider](#) the passive-aggressive critique of *historical determinism* by Graeber and Wengrow.

“One notable recent competing theory is that of David Graeber and David Wengrow, who in their recent book, *The Dawn of Everything* argue against any original commune. Their method is a radical bourgeois empiricist rejection of any pre-determined historical evolutionary dogma which fails to cope with the diversity and complexity of human society. The absence of Marxism in their work is pointedly obvious. Yet the material presented in their book fits neatly with Marx’s non-dogmatic theory of evolution from the *Grundrisse* to *Ethnological Notebooks*. Rather than face this challenge to meet Marxism head on, the authors end up replacing the grand old narratives of pre-determined stages of development with the grand new narrative of a [21st century anarchist version](#) of the ahistorical radical bourgeois individual.

Their postulated ubiquitous blossoming of an anarchic ‘free will’ is substituted for the historical contradiction of kinship with kingship, of competing modes of production, where the original commune rules for millennia, is overturned and women enslaved. They struggle to resist kingship, are again suppressed, once more rebel, and are never fully subordinated. Far from being a schematic social evolution through the rear-view mirror of bourgeois ‘civilisation’, this resistance is the ongoing class struggle of the residual commune that survived the overthrow of women, their historic exploitation as slaves, serfs and wage labourers and which today represents the potential for the revival of the commune in modern form.”

The Dawn of Everything rejects class and class struggle as the motor of history because it rejects the material premises of human evolution, the biological determination of life and the mode of production and reproduction that determines class relations. Class struggle as the motor of history is erased. The mechanism for social development that replaces social class

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is individual agency and radical democracy as the ultimate driver of history. *Humanity* as the result of class-conscious agency, dissolves into the fragmented isolated agency of post-modern alienated actors magically choosing to defend an abstract democratic, egalitarian society, while the class conquests of the very real bourgeois warlords necessarily turn it into an actual authoritarian, hierarchical society.

Post-modernism is the ideology of late capitalism facing terminal crisis. It represents the degeneration of capitalism destroying the forces of production reflected at the level of ideas, and bankrupt of a revolutionary program. This ideology is no challenge to Marxism since such radical individuals are not the motor of history. They are buyers and sellers of individual 'wants' and 'desires' in the market to feed their *alienated identity in which they are separated from the process of production*. Ironically, they are blind to the real material forces driving social development, and become cyphers in the laws of motion of capitalism. That is why this postmodern radical/liberal 'woke' ideology is being sanctioned by the state to destroy the unity of the only class that can put an end to the certainty of human extinction.

As bourgeois ideology, trans ideology turns the reality of biological reproduction into its opposite, the fetishising of biological sex as gender oppression. Men appropriate women's biology by synthesising prosthetics and erasing women's control of their bodies. They celebrate gender to oppress women, substituting men for women in subordinate roles where surrogates are not 'mothered' but 'othered'. Men become 'women'. They cease to be brothers of mothers. Women become 'men'. Material production and reproduction in nature becomes transformed into its opposite, the consumption of 'people' as commodities bought and sold on the capitalist market. Trans ideology can only be understood as the end game of capitalism to destroy mothers as part of nature for profit.

Against this ruling class ideology of othering mothers, Marxism fights to return mothers to their brothers. Against bourgeois empiricism, which alienates humans from nature, it practises dialectics. It arms the proletariat to act *subjectively* as a class for itself against the *objective* reality of decaying capitalism to create the conditions for the final revolutionary leap forward.

Down with the trans Patriarchy!

As argued above, trans ideology is all about weakening women's sex-class struggle against the surviving PMP within the ruling Capitalist mode to divide the working class. Its method is to justify the state-backed attack on women. The state uses transactivists to attack women in general, specifically terrorising young Lesbians 'born into the wrong body' to trans into boys, and Sex Self ID-ing AGP men to legally become transwomen to attack Lesbians. In arming these attacks on women, it is both misogynist and homophobic towards the same-sex attraction of women. The ultimate in post-modern gay conversion "transes the gay away".

Why is this [attack on women](#) on behalf of capitalism legally sanctioned in the 21st century? Precisely because the failure of neo-liberalism to restore post war profit rates at the end

of the 20th century has now become an existential crisis for Late Capitalism. Crisis can only be resolved in two ways, either Capital destroys the working class as the only class capable of overthrowing it, or, the working class rises up and overthrows Capital. To survive this time capital resorts to the same means it used in the major crises in the 20th century - fascism. Only this time fascism takes the form not only of national chauvinism, racism and homophobia, to smash the working class, but is now an attack on the original minority in history – women as domestic slaves!

In 2021 we wrote about why trans activism (TRA) could be turning into a fascist movement [here](#):

"Capitalism in terminal crisis is throwing up all the old crap of ages in preparation for fascism that divides and destroys the working class as the revolutionary class. It draws on the slavery and serfdom of all prior modes of production as wage labour ceases to deliver the profits. Most important it casualizes wage labour to break down the solidarity of social labour and replaces it with disorganized internal class warfare.

As if to rub our noses in this historic decomposition of social labour, capitalism dredges the underworld to make a new iteration of the patriarchy in the form of the trans cult seeking to destroy women whose historic resistance is an unbroken link back to the overthrow of the commune, introducing the original class society, the patriarchy.

Since then, all attempts by the patriarchy have failed to defeat women's historic liberation struggle. So today with late-stage capitalism in terminal crisis, the bourgeois state now recognises men as legal women attacking the historic solidarity between men and women in the working class, uniting to defeat fascism and overthrow patriarchal capitalism."

The resistance to trans ideology has been met with violent attacks on women's rights to free speech, to assembly, and to women's spaces separate from men.

"Women's resistance to the threat posed by trans ideology has been countered by the trans cult with increasingly violent arguments directed at them as transphobes, even fascists, justifying open violence by the 'left' to shut them up. Judith Butler, a US academic influential in developing the argument that gender trumps sex, [recently stated](#) that those who criticise trans gender people are motivated by the alt-right and are fascists. Gender critical women are therefore fascists.

But Butler gets it all wrong. Fascists defend the patriarchy. So does gender ideology which insists that transwomen with penises are women. Therefore, for both alt-right and alt-left versions of the patriarchy, the common enemy is women who lead the resistance to patriarchal capitalism. The real left takes the side of women, especially lesbians, against the threat of the trans cult, against fascism and rotten capitalism.

Cont. from pg. 20 *Womens Fight...*

Butler is wrong because she is essentially a liberal intellectual. She glosses over end-stage Capitalism and argues for human rights despite capitalism's inability to deliver them to all but the ruling class and their agents. She rejects the determining influence of capitalist social relations. She takes the post-modern line that individuals can self-determine their identity as a matter of free choice.

This is an idealist erasure of production relations by exchange relations. The market rules, and freedom translates into freedom of choice. Into the vacuum left by the missing production relations Butler validates the alienated exchange relations of bourgeois individuals.

The theory of 'gender' demonstrates this perfectly. Production relations under capitalism are class relations. Gender identity denies the production relations of labour and sex and the necessity of class struggle to revolutionise these relations. Instead, the alienated subjectivity of exchange relations defines self-identity as the buying and selling of commodities to meet socially contrived needs, that is, the 'performance' of self-determination.

The performance of gender miraculously erases the historical oppression of gender grounded in the exploitation of women's reproductive power. By privileging gender over sex, men re-define women as determined by their gender, that is, subordinated to their oppression. They attack women's human agency as a revolutionary force that can overthrow the patriarchy as part of the socialist revolution.

That is why it will be women, and lesbians in particular, that lead the struggle against trans ideology, as part of the socialist revolution that ends capitalism and builds socialism."

Forward to Communism

The first commune was made by the collective agency of the human revolution. It created the conditions for homo sapiens to emerge and then survive other branches of hominids. The *sex-strike theory* is best in explaining how women during the Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic, used their collective power to socially 'select' men creating a social division of labour in reproducing hunter-gatherer societies. This egalitarian society was dominant until its gradual overthrow by men beginning around 40,000 years ago in Africa, but later elsewhere, usurping common lineage property as private property. This patriarchal private property then became the model for the ruling classes in successive class modes of production to the present day.

Marx, Engels and Luxemburg recognised the overthrow of 'primitive communism' (CMP) as a class revolution, but failed to realise that it comprised a new PMP in which gender ideology now justified new social relations between the patriarchal ruling class and women as domestic chattel slaves. If we are correct then the PMP was the model for the SMP.

Why is the analysis of modes of production so important? Marx's method was to abstract from the surface features of capitalist society to penetrate below the level of appearances

to discover the defining elements of the mode of production. We have argued that the CMP, or Leacock's PCMP, is a non-class egalitarian society which long pre-existed, co-existed with, and was in Africa, and parts of Eurasia and America, overthrown by the PMP, or successive modes, surviving as a subordinate mode. The PMP privatised land and slave labour to turn pastoralism and subsistence agriculture into a new source of wealth that was accumulated by the patriarchal ruling class.

Similarly, the SMP generalises the social relations of the PMP to create a class of chattel slaves. When slave rebellions and territorial wars weakened the ancient city states of Greece and Rome this led to their breakup into smaller-scale Feudal or Tributary modes extracting 'rent' or 'tribute' from workers and peasants. The bourgeoisie, the new 'middle-class' of the market and the bazaar, was born in the Eurasian city states to expand trade and accumulate wealth. Their new wealth challenged the existing tributary modes based on rent and tribute that were holding back the development of the forces of production.

Capitalism arrived when the bourgeoisie plundered the existing modes to create private ownership of the means of production, exploiting the labour value of slave and wage labour as a commodity to increase labour productivity and develop the means of production. It became the revolutionary class by removing or subordinating the existing modes of production, colonising their forms of labour appropriation to augment capitalist wage labour.

This is not an evolutionary sequence of 'stages' in which 'progress' necessarily follows with each social revolution. One could justifiably argue that the PMP was inherently a counter-revolutionary mode subordinating women as domestic slaves to men who valued their labour not in the survival of children but as so many cattle. Yet the overthrow of women as a sex-class was met by never ending resistance by women. We need the Marxist concept of Mode of production to reject historic inevitability and show how human agency has been kept alive in the *ongoing class struggle between ruling and exploited classes throughout history*.

It is this historic class struggle that determines revolutionary change, harnessing the subjective force of revolutionary ideas and actions, creating the class consciousness necessary to overthrow the CMP, and to create the pre-conditions for the future commune. We learn the lessons of the actual history of revolutions that overturned existing Modes, subordinating them to the new dominant mode. At the same time, we recognise that each revolution is the result of the class struggle that is devoted to defending the interests of the oppressed classes advancing the conditions necessary for the future commune.

We learn from [Marx on India](#). He condemns the brutality of the colonisation of India by British imperialism, but at the same time says that the development of capitalism that resulted produced in the working class and its relation to nature, the seeds of the future commune.

"These small stereotype forms of social organism have been to the greater part dissolved, and are disappearing, not so much through the brutal interference of the Brit-

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ish tax-gatherer and the British soldier, as to the working of English steam and English free trade. Those family-communities were based on domestic industry, in that peculiar combination of hand-weaving, hands-spinning and hand-tilling agriculture which gave them self-supporting power. English interference having placed the spinner in Lancashire and the weaver in Bengal, or sweeping away both Hindoo spinner and weaver, dissolved these small semi-barbarian, semi-civilized communities, by blowing up their economical basis, and thus produced the greatest, and to speak the truth, the only social revolution ever heard of in Asia.

England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan, was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution."

The class-conscious struggle to defend the original commune against inhumanity's 'unconscious tools' never ended and will not end until it has created the conditions for the new commune. To win that objective we have to defeat the assembled reactionary fascist forces of patriarchal capitalism and all of its agents of inhumanity, and revive the revolutionary class agency of women and men united in the working class to bring about socialism and ultimately, communism, to rescue humanity.

Open letter to the workers movement on the AMLO and Biden anti-immigrant police

Workers, seeking economic and political refuge from the crisis of capitalism unfolding in the semi-colonies of Latin America, are being detained on both sides of the US/Mexico border as they try to come to the imperialist center for work.

The Democratic Biden regime, seeking to avoid the bad press endured by ex-president Trump for detention of migrant workers and families, has made Mexico their proxy enforcer. AMLO (President of Mexico Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador), a dutiful semi-colonial henchman, complied, restricting the rights of Latin Americans to pass freely, denying them visas to stay in Mexico and detaining them while waiting for entry to the U.S.

As a consequence of the inhumane detention conditions 39 detainees in the Ciudad de Juarez died on March 27th when a fire was lit protesting Mexico's deportation orders back to their countries of origin. **Guards refused to open the gates during the fire condemning the detained to their deaths.** AMLO tried to download responsibility onto the detention center guards and the immigrants themselves. But workers understand the responsibility lies in the anti-immigration policies of the USA and their enforcer and partner in crime AMLO himself.

Protesters in the City of Juarez have been assaulted, slandered and have sustained injuries at the hands of the state. **Workers must unite under the banner "An injury to one is an injury to all!" We say build workers mobilizations and strike to free the detainees and open the borders!**

AMLO's role as chief executive of the Mexican ruling comprador class is to obsequiously assuage the interests of U.S. imperialism, navigating the flow of migrant workers, the drug cartels and the competing imperialist interests. China needs workers for its new factories and requires safe terrain to operate. Will AMLO create safe havens for [Chinese capital](#) as it has done for the U.S. dominated *maquiladoras*?

Just as low wage Maquiladora jobs did not resolve Mexican's workers' poverty, Latin American workers are not fooled by China's promises of 'Win-Win' deals the Bolivarian 'left' hangs its hat on. The workers know these deals either from the North or the Far East are aimed at keeping wages low in the semi-colonies. ***That is why workers across the world are on the march toward the massive economic centers.***

Workers in Latin America have only to look to the South African 'Win-Win' experience, where in 1994 a quarter of all employment was industrial manufacturing, whereas now, with Chinese agents subverting the trade union militancy, the figure for industrial manufacturing is 12%. South Africa has mass unemployment and is just another source of bargain "Win-Win" raw materials. Likewise, Venezuela has been put in a Chinese economic vise by a long-term, bargain basement price oil supply deal, to the detriment of the state's ability to support consumer goods production, even the production of basic necessities.

U.S. imperialism requires Latin American and Mexican workers to feed the assembly lines of the *maquiladoras* in the borderlands. Yet while labor shortages have spiked in North America [pre-and post COVID](#) and despite the need for workers in the United States, barriers to entry are maintained for both political, read racist, and economic reasons, read no profits in retraining.

Politically the U.S. immigration policy is a racist war of terror against migrant workers consciously being waged to stoke the embers of xenophobia and nativism; race and ethnic hatred are the capitalist's tools used by media and politicians to drive a wedge into the heart of working-class solidarity.

Economically, on top of and as consequence of the underdevelopment and super-exploitation of the semi-colonial world, limiting legal entry creates pressure on hundreds of thousands of displaced workers, political and economic refugees to cross the borders without state approval and legal documents required to live freely and work legally. The capitalist employers exploit their vulnerability by cheating on labor laws, wage laws and health and safety regulations. The undocumented who make it to the US live a super-exploited, subterranean existence living in fear of ICE, La Migra, detention, familial separation and deportation.

The workers movement and the left cannot expect AMLO to undo the structures of semi-colonial oppression he has been hired on to administer and has agreed to enforce. It has be-

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Migrants grieve in front at a Mexican immigration detention center in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

come the task of the comprador ruling class of Mexico to control flows of labor across Mexico; AMLO can no sooner dismantle the detention centers than he can liberate Mexico from imperialism. Like other semi-colonial leaders, trapped by the reality of the power of imperialist finance capital, he is merely a foreman for imperialism.

We reject the fake left leaderships who build the Popular Front which deprives the workers, small farmers and oppressed across Latin America of their agency. The national big bourgeoisie sees the offers to support AMLO, if he would just ‘do the right thing,’ as the supine weakness of the far left, and as a signal they can bring on the Falcones or similar death squads. Perhaps they think that as an extension of the ‘Bolivarian revolution’ AMLOs’ turn toward China means he can lean on the ‘bourgeois progressive’ Chinese Communist Party to implement a branch of the Belt & Road initiative to develop the forces of production in Latin America and to open Mexico’s borders to the wider Latin American labor market.

The democratic demand that “*the visa requirement to enter Mexican territory be annulled in favor of all Latin American citizens*” demanded by this *de facto* peoples’ front and others would essentially decriminalize Latin American migrants while in Mexico, yet it is not a transitional demand but a mere protest culture manifestation with no threat to Capital’s profit for the workers’ movement to limit itself for the following reasons:

- It serves international finance capital by trapping migrant workers in Mexico seeking work at semi-colonial wages in the Win-Win factories and *maquiladoras*
- It invites Latin American capitalists to pass freely into Mexico
- Does not call for open borders for workers into the U.S.
- Does not call on workers organizations to take up integration and hiring of migrants
- Does not fight for workers who do the same work to have the same contract on both sides of the border.

The fight for migrant labor rights of passage, free from detention and abuse can only be won by the mobilization of the

workers organizations. Open the U.S. borders to immigrant workers. While finance capital crosses borders freely, workers are detained and brutalized. Workers organizations must fight for migrant workers’ rights. In the factories and *maquiladoras* on both sides of the borders we demand: **SAME WORK SAME CONTRACT SAME RIGHTS-elevate all labor to the highest standards!**

- **For full citizenship and labor rights for all migrant workers.**
- **We demand AFL-CIO stop affiliation with the US AID which subordinates labor unions around the world to US imperialism.**
- **#We demand AFL-CIO, SEIU, ILWU and other labor federations open membership to immigrant labor.**
- **We call for labor self-defense guards, marches, labor actions and strikes at the borders to free the detainees and in the towns, cities and workplaces to protect and defend immigrant labor!**
- **We demand jobs for all! Thirty hours work for forty hours pay! Open the books of all the employers, banks and finance capitalists and their politicians and lackeys!**
- **Against inflation we demand labor set up worker run price and wage committees to set and enforce living wages and affordable prices!**
- **Companies which do not comply must be nationalized without indemnification and run under workers ‘control.**
- **For a workers’ government which expropriates the capitalist class at the hands of workers militias deputized by the workers assemblies!**

To win the fight for workers’ rights in the semi-colonies as in the imperialist centers, workers need a revolutionary workers party and new workers international that uses class struggle methods to displace collaborators from the leadership of the unions, to resolve the crisis of leadership raising up new leaders from the ranks-in particular youth and women—to apply the methods of the Transitional Program.

International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency (ILTT)

For a New Revolutionary Workers International!

“All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet “ripened” for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only “ripened”; they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.”

- Leon Trotsky, [The Transitional Program](#), 1938

From [Class Warrior](#), Volume 1 Number 6 Summer 2014, Theoretical Journal of the ILTT:

“Why are Russia and China imperialist powers and not capitalist semi-colonies”

Russia and China are different

In stark contrast, Russia and China *did* complete their national revolutions to break from imperialism to a point sufficient to develop the forces of production beyond that possible in a capitalist semi-colony. The only possible explanation for the economic growth of Russia and China outside the global capitalist economy is that they were post-capitalist planned economies that accumulated a social surplus product. What makes Russia and China different from the rest of the BRICS is their independence as post-capitalist economies, outside the sphere of interest of any existing capitalist power, allowing these degenerated workers states to develop independently of the law of value. Yet at the same time their almost complete isolation from the global capitalist market forced them to backslide into economic stagnation as the parasitic bureaucracy consumed the surplus as its privileged income at the expense of the further development of the forces of production. While this isolation and stagnation ultimately led to the restoration of capitalism, their independence from imperialism allowed them to escape semi-colonial oppression when they re-entered the global capitalist system and to make the transition to imperialism.

This analysis allows us to develop Lenin’s theory to the new situation of restored former workers states. We do this by integrating Lenin’s theory with Trotsky’s theory of the degenerated workers states. These are *not* the same as the classic ‘limits to growth’ faced by capitalist semi-colonies promoted by development theorists like Walt Rostow. As Trotsky [had predicted](#), if the working class was unable to mount a political revolution to resist the growing distributional inequalities resulting from the stagnation of the plan, the bureaucracy could overturn workers property and restore the law of value to stimulate economic growth and convert itself into a new capitalist class. The gradual step by step bureaucratic reintroduction of the Law of Value (LOV) became a total transformation in the class character of the state between ‘89-‘92 in Russia and China, when the bureaucracy decided to restore capitalism and, given the laws of motion of capital, created the pre-conditions for the necessary emergence of imperialism.



WHAT WE STAND FOR

The **Revolutionary Workers Group of Zimbabwe (RWG-ZIM)** is a revolutionary Trotskyist political organization of the working class and all the oppressed. The RWG-ZIM stands on the theory and practice of the revolutionary workers movement associated with the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We are part of the **International Leninist Trotskyist Tendency (ILTT)** together with the **Communist Workers Group of Aotearoa/New Zealand (CWG-A/NZ)**, the **Communist Workers Group of USA (CWG-USA)** and the **Revolutionary Workers Group of Brazil (RWG-BR)**.

We fight to eliminate the system of capitalism and replace it with a socialist collective at an international scale through a socialist revolution that necessarily must be characterized by armed insurrection and civil war against the capitalist class. We fight for the unity of all fighting and genuine organizations of the poor and the oppressed whilst keeping an eye to the dangerous policies of social democratic, pseudo-revolutionary and liberal groups bent on obstructing workers and the poor. Only with a revolutionary world socialist party fighting as the leadership of the workers can the working class and the poor win. We are fighting for the construction of such a party.

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