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**Neoliberalism vs. China as a Model for the
Developing World**

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Abstract

This work investigates how China represents an alternative development model to neoliberalism. It will critique neoliberalism and contrast recent neoliberal development recipes with a selection of Chinese development policies to underline their stark differences. As China rises and the US ebbs, it is timely to inject into the development debate anti-mainstream ideas that may make for better development. The purpose of this work is to propose some characteristics of the Chinese model as alternatives to the dominant ideology.

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Neoliberalism vs. China as a Model for the Developing World

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Introduction

Unlike India where the caloric intake for much of the rural population remains below Sub-Saharan levels despite two decades of around 5 percent yearly average growth (Patnaik 2018), China's standards of living have steadily risen since national liberation. In much of the developing world, no matter the growth rates, high or low over the last four decades, one witnesses either higher relative or absolute poverty. Contrariwise, Chinese development, dubbed a miracle, alleviated poverty. It is far from a miracle, and is rather a real, rational, and wholly explicable phenomenon. Furthermore, unlike the dominant dictum that attributes the Chinese breakthrough to the market reforms of 1980, the process began as early as 1949. *Post facto*, these 1980 measures were manifestations of resilient socialist adjustments to China's securitisation.

The real yearly average rate of growth during the Maoist period was nearly 6 percent until 1977. That rate would have been higher if we were to smooth the huge slump of 1961 and 1962—the years of parting with the Soviet Union—which would bring the yearly average significantly closer to the 8 percent rate experienced since 1980 (National Bureau of Statistics - China, various years).

There are two issues of note here. First, the Maoist period built the foundation of the knowledge economy, which would later prepare China to internalise advanced technology and exhibit enough productive capacity to become the factory of the world. In technical jargon, the significant Chinese elasticity of supply arising after 1980 did not spring from thin air. It had roots in the social and productive infrastructure built under Mao; specifically, self-sufficiency in agricultural production, which freed the hands of the state to finance industry and garner science-laden productive resources. The past is alive in the present. It is neither the

person of Mao nor Deng who endures, but the revolutionary ideology that charted the recent course of history. Whether Deng's cat was catching mice or whether China was feeling the stones as it crossed the river, it did so under the ironclad fist of the Communist Party. To falsify the structural continuity in modern Chinese history is an ideological position that aligns with imperialism.

Secondly, China's national liberation war marked it out as distinct from much of the remainder of the developing world, where the war of national liberation was structurally more about 'national' than 'liberation'. Regardless of the internationalist hubris and by the weight of China, the latter term filtrates into an internationalism as a result of shifting global power balances. China's national liberation war, with its development as part of its security structure, served double duty for the international anti-imperialist war. At first, it was Mao's visceral internationalism. Later, it was socialism with Chinese characteristics, which meant a massive publicly owned economy or controlled private sector, combined with its immensity, its nationalism and self-liberation transmuted into internationalism. The more China developed and improved its living conditions *qua* security, the more the global power composition has shifted against the imperialist Centre. At later stages of its development, its strategy of all-around internal development, as aptly envisioned by Chairman Mao, exteriorised in development for others and peace abroad. It recently reasserts the rights of people to sovereignty in Syria, Iran and Venezuela, and promotes peaceful cooperation through its Belt and Road initiative (BRI).

Popular democracy surfaces as the masses in China exert power over the state to redistribute in their favour and, of late, to preserve the environment. Although the nuclear deterrent is a means for sovereignty, the real security bolstering sovereignty is the steady development of the living security of the working class. On its own, the supersonic nuclear weapon displayed in China's military parade on its 70th anniversary is just inanimate matter. The Communist Party is aware of that, and as Lin Biao (1965) had rightly remarked, 'China has a spiritual atom bomb, the revolutionary consciousness that people possess, which is a far more powerful and useful weapon than the physical atom bomb'.¹ The directional causality is pellucid. In a process of accumulation by waste, imperialism would necessarily aggress and waste China, irrespective of whether China is capitalist or communist, so long as it accumulates by indigenous means and builds the national capital formation. Although as the commodity fully commands history and the course of imperialist aggression, the deployment of nukes cannot be discounted; however, it remains of sound reason to fight a people's war of self-defence with more sophisticated weaponry.

Despite its success, little has been done on the ideological plane to exhibit the anti-neoliberal macro-foundations of the socially-commandeered Chinese model. The explanation may be that just as China quietly climbed, it expects others by the demonstration effect and under its growing international clout to replicate its experience. Another calculation may be that China has vast financial resources at its disposal. Its provocative ownership of assets in an otherwise US-led capital owned/controlled world undermines the cornerstone of capital's power, its private property institution. Already China finances Iran and Venezuela against the US-imposed embargo to overcome the sort of financial containment that was the Achilles heel of the Soviet bloc. One overriding concern for China may well be to not flaunt its accomplishments and antagonise the hegemon where it hurts most: the war of ideas. Whatever the reasons for its resilience, and many will be valid, the interface between those and China's actual power as it erodes the ideological heritage of the Western hemisphere, the conceptual stock that promoted capital's expansion for over 500 years, culminating in neoliberalism, will leave room for social alternatives to grow.

As novel ideas of socialisation arise upon re-balanced international relations in the global environment, the old wealth of Europe, its historical surplus value stocked not only in commodities, but in the current supremacism along lines of race or culture, will come undone. US-led imperialism's attempts to redress the loss of ideological wealth, which is more European than American in terms of cultural structure, can likely be acted out with more imperialist violence led by the now-rising fascist Europe. The US and Europe cannot be weaned from a wealth principally bred by imperialist violence. The premise that better Western machines produce more wealth, the substantive approach to productivity, obviates the subject and lays the grounds for chauvinism. At any rate, the wealth is death and environmental poison, while violence is the law of value at work. A fetishism that annuls a synthesising role for politics, even as commodities snuff the human spirit, weighs heavily on the present and future. An orderly workout to disassemble empire and prevent bigger conflagrations will prove difficult.

In China's poverty alleviation programmes, the social wage tallies with social productivity as opposed to the fiction of metaphysical-abstract productivity setting some micro wage relative to a price of labour. It does so in relation to efforts that balance national security considerations with national welfare. There has to be a balancing act between maintaining integration with global capital without threatening it with extreme doses of the Iron Rice Bowl. The productivity of labour in conventionally money-measured quantity is arbitrarily divisible, but social man, the subcategory of social class, and social productivity are not. Social

man cannot be ripped from the social context because he ceases to exist. The divisible or abstract labour is an unreal one-sided abstraction; social labour is the fullness of reality, the relationship of class to the means of production. In short, productivity is social, and distribution is dictated by capital's historical imperative, its law of value. Relatedly, economic concepts of the mainstream such as scarcity, free competition, prices clearing markets and full employment assumptions are also unreal metaphysical abstractions. They are formal concepts without a referent in reality. In a better world, these should be laughed out of social science.

Apart from formalisation, mainstream social science resorts to pernicious eclecticism, the selection of historical facts to demonstrate cases in its favour. Socially erected chimeras – Serbs must fight Croats, and Sunnis, Shia, because of 'historically-rooted' hatred, or that tribalism in Africa is primordial and awaits the bombs of white man to deliver it through a baptism of blood and fire – are the sort of punctuations that add little to social science. History sliced like a sausage to prove a point is casuistry. There is nothing wrong with slicing history in the mind, but every slice of history should be referred back to the totality of history, its laws of motion and always with adequate periodisation.

The twentieth and the present century are the age of financial imperialism. It is a commodity-driven violent mode of wealth accumulation. Economics is determining in the last moment and is not separable from the prioritisation of power for capital. But that last moment itself is a balance of class forces in which capital must strengthen its rule. Hence, imperialism is sociological. The real power and wealth of the US and Europe is its dominant ideology interlaced with military superiority. However, as developing countries adopt sovereign or socially accountable macro policies and loosen the grip of the empire, the transference between the declining image of the empire and its ideological power ferment a conceptual revolution. At this conjuncture and in such socialist-ideological abyss, steering the class struggle in an anti-systemic direction presents itself as the necessary historical alternative.

In what follows, I will draw on some salient characteristics of the Chinese model to critique the conceptual constructs of neoliberalism. This article is extracted from a lengthier work under preparation. I will not be able to cover the whole gamut of China's development experience. Allegorically, China felt too many stones as it crossed the river, and although it crossed, it also stumbled here and there. I will focus on some foundational issues as they relate to Chinese development.

Neoliberalism and Autonomy

Neoliberalism and its financialization heighten living insecurities, corroding state sovereignty. China dodged the trend. That China is sovereign, and that China develops, and it could serve as a model, is no longer merely the fruit of its vastness. It is more about its social forces rearticulated for civilian-end commodities production, as opposed to militarism. To realise development without militarism, to own abroad in a planet *de facto* owned by US empire, to issue concessional loans for development and control a significant part of the use-value circuit is to hold a stake in history. Other big states such as Indonesia, India, or Brazil cannot remotely do the same. China's clout facilitates Russia's manoeuvring in Syria and covers up for Putin's outrageous remark in 2018 'we all go to heaven as martyrs.' The point that cannot be overlooked is that China's success and poverty alleviation measures are not attributable to the market economy. Markets deliver wellbeing only under the thumb of labour. Such an observation gives credence to the theory that the Communist Party is innately predisposed to national development through the state—the state, to which labour is an organic component, holds sway through control of property. Socialism with Chinese characteristics means everything is on loan from the state. The notion that the Communist Party commands from a height is rather idyllic. Nothing commands from a height and succeeds unless it has an organic tie and a vested interest in the masses.

Tangentially, the central debate of whether the Soviet Union or any Socialist state was a worker state or state capitalist, the notion of fitting the real into a pre-conceived ideal, is part and parcel of the ideological silo of imperialism. The method is to be practised as opposed to being applied. It is the discovery of practical-critical, revolutionary activity, such that the method of practice is the practice of the method (Marx 1845). Stemming from the Centre and laden with bias, these assessments of whether the starving Third World nation that hardly could feed itself is state capitalist or a decrepit worker state is alien to Marxist historical analysis. The structural debilitation of the Soviet Union after the First and Second World Wars is sidestepped in these analyses. There was little infrastructure and a significant chunk of the labour force was written off by imperialistically sponsored fascism (Jabara Carley 1999; Pauwels 2019). The Soviet Union effectively lost the war, while the Cold War finished it off. To have such debate from an imperialist Centre, whose historical surplus value was and remains the wasted lives, which aggresses and destroys developing formations whether they are socialist or capitalist because destruction itself is the means and end for its accumulation, is pro-systemic. Instead of discussing what warring opportunities the

Soviet Union blocked for the US, the Western Marxist debate resembled an imperialism arguing with itself about the colour of the prey it is going to devour.

Imperialism, the intense capital under monopoly finance, is the rule of things or commodities writ large. One may focus on community level struggles. However, without situating the issue in targeting the broader imperialism ruled by things, the struggle fragments and the achievements in one part undermine the advance of the whole. In an Althusserian complex whole structured in dominance, it is the dominant relationship, the Central link that is to be weakened for the articulation of community-level struggles to synergise. That is why China as counterweight to US imperialism attenuates the interface between the perceived power of the US and its ideology neoliberalism. As the US is perceived weaker, its ideology will weaken. To have not seen the holistic context, scholars argue on the side of imperialism and its wars much in the same way the pseudo left pontificates that China is capitalist either by commanding heights or disparaged lows. This is not a loss in the analytics of the debate, because the *a posteriori* condition, what we see before us, the autophagias social whole, is left unexamined. The concession in theory fuels the ideological justification for imperialism.

In the post-war age of capitalism or prior to neoliberalism, most economies obtained development due to a certain degree of autonomy, or from regulated capital and trade accounts. Development was about resource retention, mobilisation and recirculation of real and financial wealth within the nation. As autonomy eroded in the neoliberal age, development faded. Much falsification of fact followed. The contribution of working class security incarnated in national security, sovereignty and policy autonomy to development were clouded over by empirical studies that treated the historical agency in charge of national resources as the empirical equivalent of economic symbols such as tariff or quota reduction. After all, it is people organised in some form of social relation that impose tariffs, and it is the quality of these social relations, *qua* social classes, which constitute historical subjects. The class as subject invites further research, otherwise things explain things and phenomenon explains phenomenon. The mainstream economists treated people engaged in development as if they were things – and were vindicated insofar as the ideological crisis of socialism lets capital culminate into its logical end. Capitalists became personifications of commodities, and labour's ideology became capital's. As commodified humanity, or as the commodity delegated power to capitalists, people reasoned and acted at the behest of the commodity. The logical forms purportedly reflecting economic variables and instruments such as tariffs, exchange rates, wage rates or interest rates,

the language of the commodity circulating in the market, acquired lives of their own and dictated social processes.

In the background, estranged institutions governed by the reason of the commodity as self-expanding value marionetted the flux of macro prices. The alienated institutions, especially formal, foregrounded the social condition favourable to higher economic returns and always in the interest of the commodity. More personalised institutions, like village elders, had a more human touch to them than the formal IFIs, NATO and so on. So much so was the alienation, the lack of social control over the social process such that, in view of the existentialist calamity, not even the interest of the living, breathing narrow minority known as capitalists was served. True the sickened nature visits harm upon them, but they have the wherewithal for better treatment and longer lives, and maybe the schadenfreude to enjoy the earlier deaths of others. In the current historical conjuncture of waste production and the possibility of catastrophic natural disequilibria throwing the planet off course, it is too much of a gamble. It is in no one's interest to remain stuck in the capital relationship.

Few countries escaped the woes of neoliberalism. Fabrications denoting the success of the Asian first-tier tigers abound. In much empirical research about this group, security or the US military umbrella was treated formally, as if just another variable in an equation (Kadri 2017). As the essence of power, security was not treated as the historical component that forged the necessary context for development. In South Korea and Taiwan, US development agencies oversaw the institutionalised decisions leading to increasing productive capital formation, whilst simultaneously, enhancing the share of labour from total income. The US promoted socializing land reforms in South Korea and Taiwan to cheapen the cost of labour and free the hand of the state to finance industry. The implementation of land reform attenuated income inequality and released resources for industrial development (Burmeister 1990). State intervention was key to development especially in 'agriculture, as state agents mobilised bureaucratic resources to direct agricultural production activities in support of the national development project through the creation of strategic agro-industrial linkages.' However, in the case of rice and other basic commodities, self-sufficiency was more about defence and reducing the cost of labour's reproduction than the state's role in fostering inter-sectoral linkages. These latter concerns are crucial to deepening high value-added supply chains only as extensions of US hand-me-down technology, in a US-stewarded development process.

The containment of China prompted the US to pump resources into Taiwan and Korea. In Korea, the initial high level of American aid amounted to more than 10% of GDP (Moon and Park 2003). Whatever success these countries experienced may be attributed to their functional roles as imperialist police stations. Their relative success—relative because their development is more about building a mercenary army for empire rather than all round human development—cannot be speciously attributed to the emulation of American free market ideology.

Unlike Socialist East European economies of the Cold War, which were lent money as part of financial containment (Brzezinski and Griffith 1961),² supposedly to develop their export industries but had the market for their exports bracketed off, these countries benefit from preferential trade statuses with the US and Europe. States developing under the umbrella of imperialism serve as advanced US securitisation bases in an outstanding cordon sanitaire, around the former Soviet Union and China. Paradoxically, as hyped models of development to be mimicked by others, they buttress the ideological arsenal of imperialism. However, it is the wealth pumped into them as investment corresponding to preferential trade treaties rather than a Swiss '*propre en ordre*' inherent to their cultures that developed them. Often, countries that cannot develop are said to be *culturally* incapable of development. The cultural stance is the equivalent of a racism with long napping habits substituting for skin colour. More pertinently, because overproduction crises are omnipresent, the historical side of the argument, and logically because of the adding up fallacy, not all countries can develop under capital. The very idea that all or many countries can develop while pursuing profits is absurd by the rigour of the unity between the logical and historical: it is neither logical nor historical. As the late Samir Amin said, there cannot be successes without failures. By the absolute law of capital accumulation, most countries must be sources of cheap resources to create surplus value and profits.

To copy the Asian model, a nation must sell its labour into mercenary-soldiery for empire. Often, the projection of these Asian success stories purposely confounds development with imperialist security ties, especially as development garners the allegiance of a population willing to self-sacrifice for the empire. As a first-tier Asian tiger serves to extend the hegemony of the US, it will receive much aid/rather imperialist investment, albeit, to extend higher rates of commercial or super-exploitation to its more populated neighbours in South Asia. Given the connectivity of the class-power fabric, growing US hegemony also implicates the rest of the developing world. Their development will mean narrow material gains as opposed to

internationalism-infused development; to be clear, this is only development for the few well-armed northern states, South Korea and Taiwan, at the expense of a growing swathe of poorer countries around.

Countries enjoying a certain level of security by the extension of NATO partnerships or bilateral treaties with US defence ties develop from the market expansion side of capital as opposed to being grounds for accumulation by militarism and war. It is the shade of security complemented by policies that augment and recirculate value nationally that deliver development. The handful of developing countries that rose to First World rank neither avoided the IFI's neoliberalism or free market recipes, nor were Keynesians in the approach. They simply enjoyed significant imperialist privileges and investments masquerading as aid. However, the autonomy they enjoyed is on loan instrumentalised by the US-led empire. In terms of shaking the foundation of global power, the only country to develop with its autonomy intact was China.

Neoliberalism and the Reign of Commodities

Mind-gripping dominant ideology has mystified reality through strands of super-inflated individualism and auto-centred identity politics. It has clouded over the social nature of production. These have further distorted the cosmopolitan nature of human civilisation, the universality of knowledge and the political processes that command social development. The expansion of imperialistically-reared cultural phenomena, the phantasmagorical identity unchanging across time in particular, fulfil imperialism's requirement for real underdevelopment and deprivation of cultural development, especially the evisceration of real identity, 'the never completed process of becoming and shifting *identifications*' (as per Hall 2017). Intertwined with the imperialist military bases and NATO's reach, pro-imperialist cultural spinoffs write off the security, autonomy or sovereignty (used interchangeably) of the subdued nations. Zbigniew Brzezinski (1961) spoke openly about the perceived image of the American cultural model as a weapon in socialist containment. Imperialism operates with the rationing of the social infrastructures of knowledge, promoting private as opposed to communal ideas, the barring of modernisation in the hinterland and critical education, most relevantly, masking over the subject of history—the class. Reactionary forms of consciousness, the receptivity of the masses to a class recoiling upon itself, cannot be reduced to some generic cognitive map shifting in structure in relation to new technology. Dominant forms of consciousness are reproduced by the ideological apparatuses of capital and the deprivation of social being from social productivity and its means. The victory of the US in the Cold War was a victory for obfuscation, the individuation of social being, and the

further alienation of social being from social consciousness by the degree of alienation from the means of production and the technological component thereof. By the end of the Cold War, many claimed that Western democracy had won, not the global financial class. Scant few questioned democracy as a form of the exercise of class power.

Planned markets controlled by labour through the state are believed to have failed. As a corollary, the smarter, more efficient and price-driven market of free enterprise has won. Ideologically-laden terms such as free or efficient markets, and price signals allocating resources floating about, suffuse the airwaves. Everything social is obscured by formal-atomistic terminology based on outlandish assumptions of full employment and transitivity (Weeks 2014). Worst of all, history is presented as a chess game in which at a given point in chronological time, someone wins and leaves the set. Indeed, someone won, but it was the social class, capital, which never leaves the set. Capital, the class in charge is the weight of history. It has won, and the same old relation trailing from the long sixteenth century, the indefatigably aggressive force that tears down the walls protecting less developed formations, grew to tear the very spirit of people out of them. It robbed the resources, and the gravest yet, it estranged people from their own social being.

The glitz of capital's war machine has climbed the highest order of the commodity's sainthood. Whether through identification with power or by the plight of a superfluous population beseeching capital for a painless early death, a sort of mass-euthanasia,³ the post-Cold War era re-established the reign of the commodity with no liberated zones to be found. Because of absent socialist alternatives or coherent exposition of other successful social alternatives such as the Chinese model, mass consciousness slipped into a state of defeatism. The introjection of Thatcher's motto, 'there is no alternative,' derives from *capital as a system* that perfects and universalizes the alienation of humanity, especially 'its role as the self-mediating being of nature turning this essential human relation into a means of class oppression by removing workers from control of the means of production, thus severing their direct connection to nature and their own labour' (Mészáros 1970; as discussed in Foster [2014]). Insofar as the relation to nature is concerned, Foster (2014) designates Mészáros as one of the first major social theorists to put the relation of capitalism and ecological destruction at the very forefront of the burgeoning contradictions of the system— ahead of the Club of Rome's famous 1972 study on *The Limits to Growth*. Foster re-interpreting Mészáros jots down that the American pattern of 'high mass-consumption' was not only impossible— *given the reality of imperialism*—but was all the more absurd since this outlook in the event of the universalization

of that pattern...the ecological resources of our planet would have been exhausted well before the end of that century several times over' (Foster 2014; Mészáros 2014).

The notion that removing forests and reservoirs results in 'forlorn conditions,' as nature exacts its revenge, was observed by Engels (1876): 'at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature—but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature.' This unity of man and nature is social nature. Capital targets social nature for consumption, but always with the intent to erode nature to commodify/objectify labour. The erosion of the subject in labour is the dynamic of the substance labour, socially necessary labour time, which devolves into more value or higher levels of surplus value.

For capital, there are few other viable means of deforestation without bulldozing the indigenous tribes. The process of extirpation and depopulation is the furnace of surplus value. It is the core of production that metabolises man and nature and shortens many lives. Imperialist wars of encroachment are magnifications of the deforested tribal area, always with varying degrees of violence, and contingently upon power balances, with the reason of the commodity tempered to ascertain the rule of capital and mitigate the contradiction of the system. For Mészáros (1970), the system maintains cohesion by means of antagonistic second-order mediations such as the nuclear family, alienated labour/production, civil society, and the state, generating various vicious circles.

The issue one takes with the above has little to do with the fact that the system shifts primary contradictions onto a plane of second order mediations. The issue is one of prioritisation. There is always a show of pity in the Centre for deforested tribal areas. But the cornerstone of the struggle lies in arresting the channels of value transfer that fortify European supremacy. By European supremacy, I do not mean the fascism of Europe. I mean the many likes of Leopold the Second of Belgium and every other liberal voted into power in the Centre to have conducted imperialist wars.

Demands for equalisation of the conditions of production and reproduction should precede working class demands to acquire more through the sphere of circulation. Unionist activity recirculates additional pay for soldiers/workers of empire in the form of rent. It deepens rather than bridges gaps in the international working class. What Marx meant by 'wages rising due to moral component,' or as he put it, 'in

contradistinction therefore to case of the other commodities, there enters into the determination of the value of labour-power a historical and moral element' (Marx 1867) is not to say that capital's morality is a repository for higher Northern wages. He wrote this amidst a debate with other political economists concerned with ascertaining socially necessary labour time as the 'measure' of value – measure here is the dialectical measure, the market-mediated circumstance. Later in discussing the rate of profit, Marx (1894) asserted the conditions of the production process are largely the living conditions of labour, and 'economy in these living conditions (labour's) is a method of raising the rate of profit.' For Marx, ethics or morality under capital are those of the profit class. If it chooses to lift wages by some 'moral' component in one corner, it must relegate others to more misery. The moral maxim of capital is such that the rate of surplus value rises by the rate by which labour is under-valorised.

Value manifests in what it takes to reproduce society. 'Every child knows that any nation that stopped working,' stopped producing the commodities needed to sustain society, 'not for a year, but let us say, just for a few weeks, would perish (Marx 1868).'⁴ But what has been produced under the unfettered reign of the commodity so far is enormous destruction, so that waste eclipses anything of use that reproduces society. And if science is about a study of the relation of value, the science *propre* as Marx indicated, then that value relation is a waste relation. Waste was innate to capital at inception, and while capital shifted into its intensified mode of imperialism under financialization, it also intensified depopulation and waste relative to society's capabilities to self-reproduce. The wars to waste visited upon the colonised-imperialised world were always significant. However, recognition of waste as central, especially as wars became the constant and the pure state of waste, took time. By the early twentieth century, Veblen's wasteful consumption was central to emulation, leisure, recognition and conspicuous consumption (Davis 1957). In 1924, Veblen announces that ownership was by definition the legal right of sabotage. In 1960, speaking of the crisis of accumulation in the US, Davis, while noting how imperialism devours social nature abroad, says that at home capital leans heavily on war spending and other forms of systematic waste. He adds:

'So great is the expanding productivity of this glittering economic machine that its distributive channels are periodically inadequate to accommodate the flow of its goods and services. Without waste it would collapse. And the amount of waste, even on today's colossal scale, is not always sufficient.'

At the current conjuncture, the state of waste is enormous. However, it is treated from the consumption side as an illness to society (Jappe 2017) and not as production and not from the production side as well. It now appears that barbarism was all there is to capitalism. Wealth, the stock of value in substance, and the historical surplus value in terms of value relations, are the mediated genocides and poison and war-poisonous relations respectively. As the facts stand and by the losses to humanity so far, that capitalism is progressive was Northern Marxist adage to make the South live the horrors of Northern capital. The *reality of imperialism* is not about second order mediations. After all, these are secondary. It is about the intensification of the metabolic rate of capital accumulation by a class so engrossed in the reason of the commodity, such that, for a turnaround to happen the ruling commodity must be 'disconnected.' A similar term was used by the character Dave as he discussed his fate with an intelligent machine called Hal in the science fiction film *Space Odyssey 2001*. The restraint concerning overconsumption of social nature, man and nature, most of all by imperialist wars, has been lifted. There are no limits.

To prioritise token deforestation, used allegorically, and relegate uranium or carpet bombing and imperialist encroachment to the background is to assume that welfare state reform in favour of the Central working classes catalyses revolution rather than involution, the retreat of the Central working class into imperialism. It is to omit the fact that just like white South Africa, it is impossible to wean the European/ideologically white class from making a living off the desolation of the developing world under imperialist aggression, without shifting the balance of forces against the whole of the Central structure. The real first order mediation arising upon the first contradiction of labour and capital is that, which under the new more aggressive phase of capital, imperialism, is the contradiction between the imperialist and the imperialistically aggressed. This is realised in constant war. No matter the vicious circle arising upon second order mediation such as the nuclear family, the mediation that keeps the system together is the state of consciousness reproduced by capital such that Central classes acquiesce to the nuclear weapon and the wars of encroachment against the Third World. That state of consciousness is no individuated cognitive map. It stems from vested interests or from the share of the Central classes in imperial rents, from their stake in a Central mode of production that has grown in inverse proportion to severing the control of the developing world upon its means of production.

The Context for Resource Allocation

On the economic plane and through resource divestiture and liquidation, neoliberalism instilled inimical growth in productive forces, including the productive capital stock, decent employment and in the incomes of the poorest working strata. Capital-biased institutional change botched up broader participation in the decision-making process as the state retreated, leaving the terrain free for imperialistically-funded civil society.⁵ Neoliberalism as an ideology does not function by selecting people who are corrupt and in the business of promoting their self-interest. It is not a formal network whose feedback readjusts its development for the betterment of social life. Gone unchallenged, a social and historical system of capital readjusts to the calls of its objectified ideological growth, the reason of the commodity as self-expanding value. An ideology *becoming* class creates the historical context into which it is only *decisively* possible for corruption to grow. The decisiveness stems from the inner logic of the capital relationship, its predisposition to expropriate what is social by any means, foremost by intellectual corruption and violence. As a matter of definition, what is or is not corruption in the moral sense relates to class values. While the usurpation of the social surplus via free capital and merchandise trade, the unequal exchange, is statutory policy under neoliberalism, because free markets are constructed as moral in relation to the benefits in welfare they supposedly impart, small bribes to supplement the subsistence income of lowly paid civil servants represent corrupt behaviour. Under capital's rule, the latter behaviour is in the spotlight, the former, which erodes the basis of subsistence for a whole population, is not.

For condensed capital, the neoliberal framework, income flows as geopolitical rents that dichotomise a developing economy: it splits it into an enclave of wealthy comprador and a swathe of poor. Resources flow to a highly capitalised modern sector where few jobs relative to the capital are created. Furthermore, decent job expansion occurs mainly through patronage and to a lesser extent in the public sector. The public sector is also hammered. In popular perception, patronage in the public sector or otherwise, the social control or pacification measure, connotes inefficiency. However, in the absence of social welfare programmes, or public employment meeting social concerns, the creation of lowly paid public jobs is a cushion and possibly a long-term developmental payoff—as savings fund production. Subjected to fiscal austerity and leakages, including capital and labour flight, the public sector's growth/employment growth in security-fragile developing countries has been far less than commensurate with the high rate of new entrants into the labour force. The contradiction of capital accumulation with population growth became acute in

Africa and the Arab world. Solutions to such predicaments are the relative and absolute de-population measures: people living way below the historically determined life expectancy or dying in wars.

Incidentally, the financial intermediation between money assets that accrue from geopolitically determined rents, remittances and Official Development Assistance, on the one side, and the build-up of physical capital associated with a healthy rise in income and productivity (wealth), on the other side, never counted for much. The aid paradox is no paradox. To de-reify or to introduce a subject into value making, capital does not develop what it usurps for fear of the masses acquiring autonomy on the basis of self-reliance (Ajl 2019). Capital builds the consumption side, the demands for its products, along with the self-consuming labourer as the ultimate end. Remittances and aid must erode savings or erode the agility of the economy to invest in its future, such that these dependent societies never recover. As a result, most developing economies lean towards the service and informal/low pay sectors.

From capital's pecuniary optic, inter working-class conflict spun around constructed identity or deepening labour force differentiation boosts the risks and the short-term rents in all the economic sectors making the present more valuable than the future. Speculation and finance overwhelm industrial investment because they are a spinoff of the insecurity plaguing the real economy, not vice versa. In that sense, the scourge of identity politics repelling national assets, plays in favour of capital and its comprador. However, it may be relevant to recall how the overarching condition of geopolitical risk and its impact on inter-temporal preferences, institutional capital bias, and the already inherent colonially-sponsored development, also contribute to making the financial rent fallout more valuable than investment in an industrial or an environmentally sound future. The combined effect of nationally bred divisions and imperialistically imposed threats upon small weakened states write off their future. Needless to say, within an un-sovereign institutional context, presumptive redistribution allowing for lesser concentration of private wealth and greater interest in development is remote. At the behest of its patron, finance capital, the comprador class chokes the developing state and its assets become the liquidated national wealth stock lodged abroad in dollar form.

The financial returns of the comprador, pre-determined by geopolitical rent channels, are material grounds for their unity in the financial sphere governed by imperialism and domestic division. Their conflicting positions at home are a sort of prisoner's dilemma. They are not invested in the future through industry, but through speculation on overvalued assets readied for grab. Such position pre-empts the possibility of a

national project as the state lacks legitimacy by national cohesion. Many developing states are failures or in tatters. Formulaically, the incremental growth of the dollar wealth of the comprador urges each of the comprador classes into a race to convert national assets into dollar assets, no matter the erosion to production. The comprador classes incapacitate their own states, setting the stage for surplus value-intense accumulation by waste production and its associated wars (Mészáros 1995; Kadri 2019). Comprador capital is an inter-conflicting relationship that draws rents first from the liquidation of national assets and the dismantling of the national productive structure at the behest of foreign powers. It does so secondly and more importantly, from setting their formations ablaze in conflicts qua pure waste production. The comprador's interests meet abroad in the common pool of dollar finance and savings, but collide at home over shares of snatched rents.

In contrast, the wealth of China's leading national class originates in national production, and apart from the cross-cutting finance with the US (which is more of a noose) China's production is national-currency denominated. China's capital recirculates nationally and increases as higher plateaus of living standards obtain to the working class. As to the noose of foreign-held dollars, the BRI is its attempt to offload the burden of lending to the empire.

In weak states serving as repositories for raw material and war, the comprador's inherent function is to de-invest in labour. It sets aside or neutralise national resources that could, by social implication, bolster the national position/platforms in international negotiations. Apart from competing by auto-destructing their own national formations, the comprador's nationalist hubris erases national competitiveness in the value-added export market and raises it as a result of pauperisation. Of the usurped resources, the mainstream literature emphasises financial flight and brain drain, the resources valued by the ideology paralleling the machination of the law of value. However, the premature deaths or exodus of labour, all labour, due to souring living conditions or wars epitomises the real value drain or resource usurpation. De-valorisation, the scrapping of national assets, undermines the basis for social productivity and unleashes the ravages of the wage system.

Institutionally-imposed inter working class divisions, represented by various identity conflicts reconstituted socially as a result of competition for rents around the state, is the mainstay of capital. After all, capital arises as fiction solidified by divisions in the real labour process. Acute social divisions de-develop societies.

In processes of blatant de-development or for states at lower ends of global markets, profits are more financial or merchant rents as opposed to industrial productivity-generated rents. The former form of rent dissolves wealth. The latter builds capacity. The point is this. Rent orchestrated by the imperialist class arises upon the disarticulation attendant upon the retreat of social consciousness as economic conditions worsen. It is not that the departures of consciousness from social being is unusual. But the current degree to which the formal or metaphysical conceptualisation, or intellectual corruption, guides events lacks precedent. An alternative or revolutionary school of thought, at least one that addresses the history of the disaster so far and points to the class in charge as subject, even in terms of bedtime story telling, is absent. The structure of the concepts with which the intelligentsia fathoms the social and environmental calamity, for instance, the dominant ideas of sorting trash for recycling, greening this or that, or more efficient machines, or addressing heads of state by the high school students to reverse course, are unreal. They are tantamount to capitalists committing mass suicide. Few revert the particular to whole. Few observes the articulation with dominant ideology as class and examines the predispositions of capital as the subliminal currents upon which the planet plunges into the abyss. The reason is not supernatural. It is a class position attendant upon value relations. It is also the weight of guilt and the compensation attendant upon Europe's admittance of culpability for a history that literally continues to drip with blood.

Constraining neoliberal finance is key to Chinese development. However, because of worldwide financialization, the ideological response required to restore nationalism in the practice of development is more elusive than ever. The comprador coheres with global finance and restrains national production subject to Central development, while promoting a culture of consumerism. Much of the phenomenal culture of consumerism – more aptly, the act of self-consumption – is co-supportive of intra-national wars. The model of earning without effort, the emulation, leisure, recognition and conspicuous consumption, are interrelated. And to conspicuously consume in order to be recognised or gain status implies more wasteful consumption (Veblen 1899). Hence, more waste production happens whose epitomal form is war. The production sphere holds primacy, for it creates the self-consuming subject. Conflicts visited upon the developing world are industries of waste and means of imperial hegemony. Combined with the stresses that ensue from lack of labour-oriented institutional development, they further divorce the working class from active politics. Naturally, there will be no popular democracy of the sort that daily negotiates projects for the masses at the heart of state, as in China.

Circuitously, the usurpation of national resources mirrors the feebleness of the masses in the state. As trade and capital accounts are set free, developing countries' control over their monetary/macro policy becomes a negotiated settlement measured in relation to the depth into which they sunk into dependency on foreign currency or dollar-denominated debt. The symptom of the central banks underwriting the expansion of credit to inflate asset prices, pegging to the dollar, financing internal borrowing with external savings, albeit, side by side with resource and capital flight, show that it is the capital class in the state that steers policy. It is not some second-hand nationalist affinity. The speculative pressure lay grounds for only ephemeral or fast gestating investment. Developing countries distort the path of their productive assets depriving future generations of bequeathed natural and productive wealth. They hold future labour/social nature as collateral against fictitious—and unpayable—debts.

Capital Formation

Chinese development experience could be summarised by a single principle: autonomy over policy (Long et al 2018). The nexus of security and development characterising its post-independence path revolutionises political economy and sheds new light on the nature of the agency steering policy. China confronts an imperialism that oppresses and expands by war, to boost the rate of exploitation or the rate of surplus value. In addition to super-exploitation and militarism, imperialism must also ratchet up its grip on power in order to capture surpluses via the financial channels. As a matter of definition, imperialism is constant war. It thrives by war. In such a world, China withstands a protracted assault, especially as it counters imperialism by building infrastructure in the developing world, alleviates poverty at home, and nurtures the power to retain its social surplus through the development of its own finances (Kadri 2017). This confrontation with imperialism is a pillar of human rights. I do not want to speak of China's technical development much. The literature brims with such debate. All I want to add is that its technological advance strengthened the grounds upon which the masses successfully fought and fight a people's war.

The premise of the capabilities of people's war, in its many manifestations, ideological, diplomatic and military, is the *sine qua non* for development and it is a concept that is rarely entertained (Hafiz 2005). Many speak of sovereignty and autonomy, but avoid the obvious: these require security. In a developing nation, armed masses are the only security. To not utter this concept in a world led by US-led imperialism, which violently caps development elsewhere to the demands of overproduction crises, is complicity. More

so in the imperialist age and under more alienated forms of social control, war in its various shades is the state of becoming of capital. Thus, for the developing world, a twining of security and development, the kernel of the Chinese model, presents itself as the historical alternative. A historical alternative is the task needed a present to mediate the future capacity of self-defence. Why?

Within the confines of the neoliberal framework, instead of investment in infrastructure, and plant and equipment, the imperialistically-reared model erodes autonomy and shifts the accent in development to stabilisation or de-stabilisation efforts. There always has to be stabilisation, a welfare function, to the degree that roots capital in the state and in space. However, in security-exposed formations, it is the imperialist class that resides at the bosom of the state. It is the stability of Central US capital rule, as opposed to the national classes, which is sought. The destabilisation of peripheral formations, their de-sovereignty, buttresses US regional hegemonies. With such strengthening, it accelerates accumulation by destruction, its finance and war revenues.⁶

Adherence to the conceptual framework of the mainstream, the introjected neoliberalism, sways resources away from national social and economic pacts into the building of repressive state apparatuses at the service of empire or at the deconstruction of states. As an example of deconstruction, consider Libya. The government may have repressed hundreds of political opponents, yet development, enshrined in the social and economic pact, proceeded. However, as the US bombed or starved millions and mustered more power to conduct more of the 'saving-people' by 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) operations elsewhere, it reasserted its hegemony, the power in social production, for higher imperialist rent.⁷ After US-led devastation, the run of the mill state repression and deprivation of basic rights swing into fully fledged brutality. There are different planes of repression and the phenomenal brutality in the Congo, the Central African Republic or Iraq, for instance, impart upon empire additional power and wealth to derail development elsewhere. The totality of capital and its expansion by belligerence are not abstract ideas. They lay the social groundwork for production and pre-set the velocity of global accumulation. They are forms of social organisation and their institutions in the US and Europe, which through the combined power of weapons and liberal cant impose all modes of repressions downstream, including the deplorable practices of developing states such as Libya, as it acts in self-defence.

Immiseration without revolutionary ideology is the womb of inter-working class violence. US-led imperialism immiserates to destabilise and earns rents from the lower wage shares and the conflicts that liquidate assets and mobilise its idle monopoly/financial assets. Institutions, including states, remoulded with the neoliberal *état d'esprit*, and developing under the onus of hollow and highly erratic economic growth, privatise or liquidate national assets as well as the state. The excessive practice of the comprador as they extend the state beyond what is necessary for its orderly functioning as per Alavi (1972), is only self-defeating for the local personalised class. However, just as history, a financialised class and its subaltern comprador are determinedly impersonal. For imperialism, the destruction of the state is itself social production. Capital's law of movement, the energy it gathers as it liquidates or shifts the public into private assets, also catalyses the social schism along political identity fault lines. The working class tears itself, instead of tearing capital. Dividedness is the fountainhead of income maldistribution. That income or wealth inequality rise is an epiphenomenon of the North-South class divide first and the cultural identities resurrected from the past by the guns of imperialism to incubate jaundiced-peripheral capital, second.

To address the interface of available resources to development without prioritising the *type* of historical agency mediating the decision to develop is to be held hostage to reified precepts. As the mainstream formalises the relationship between macro and social variables, the interpretation becomes devoid of socio-historical content. Formalism is a relationship of variables to variables, as opposed to socially organised agents, the dynamic social relation in which every part is a dynamic whole of a larger whole. The so-called mathematical rigour of mainstream economics is a pernicious attempt to conceal ideological proclivity. As a matter of course, in an overdetermined and dynamic context, quantification and measurement are wholly arbitrary.

Of the many so-called rigorous propositions, the notion that growth will trickle down without labour's command over the channels of resource allocation and distribution is the most outlandish. What purpose does it serve to measure omnipresent income inequality without mentioning the history of capital and its value relation? What is this, then, other than casuistry aimed at the justification of European barbarism? Absurdity, proving the obvious with the obvious, is not science. That the profit rate exceeds the growth rate is not an unintended consequence of a benevolent culture. It is rooted in the militarism and death of imperialised nations, the historical surplus value of Europe. Science, for instance, investigates why a working class in Europe for the last 500 years tolerated the genocide of nearly one billion people in its colonial wars,

and still does. Equally important, the economic efficiency criterion of the mainstream is set against non-existent assumptions of full employment and atomistic, abstract agents, or private rather than social considerations; it does not take a Plato cave to inform that the formal is unreal. Capital generates wealth and much wealth has been produced under bourgeois tutelage. From where one stands today, the wealth is waste. There was *decisively* no progress under capitalism. Wealth is the un-compensable damage to man and nature.

China as élan for Development

If possible and only under the clout of China, the replication of the Chinese model requires a re-articulation of the power structure biasing the working class, which implies a joint national front against the comprador and its patron imperialism. Although some compradors are turning to China for financing, the growth of China itself undercuts the foundation of comprador classes because it undermines the US-led hegemony and its financialization. As a matter of definition, capital is the war of each against each, while also being an existentialist crisis for all. In terms of surplus retention, the emulation of China requires first a social state whose politics determine in the last moment (whose politics has the final say), in addition to industrial, trade and capital account measures that lock in resources and re-circulate the social surplus nationally. With regards to the impact of leakages on growth, Weeks (2000) shows that Latin America performed poorly in comparison to East and Southeast Asian countries, the so-called High Performing Asian Economies, because the former's debt service burden sapped these countries of their savings. Regulated financial flows are the safety latch of Chinese development (Enfu and Xiaoqin 2017).

In parallel to the Chinese experience, I intrude with some remarks on investment in relation to neoliberalism.

Investment, more pointedly the incremental increase to capital formation, builds by the demands of growth and returns, or overall demand. Under the weight of shrinking credit to the working class and jobs, demand as well as demand for investment is adequate. Alongside an open channel to broader US financial market, investment shuns long-term productive activity and lodges abroad. For the financialised private sector, the macro context of openness combined with weakening industry, further facilitates the shedding/liquidation of real assets. In terms of the quality of investment, investment in plant and equipment and its corresponding industrial culture, neoliberalism induces dependency through a reduction in the quality of the capital stock

(Saad-Filho 2005). The more secure international market for finance shifts the accent away from home-grown engineering and technological know-how onto ephemeral or speculative pursuits at home. Instead of linkages with imported technology supplementing the home base, as in China obviously, imported machinery stands for a consumption item rather than a production item. These corrosive symptoms of dependency cannot be detected in the money value of output per worker or the output-capital ratio. As output rises by geopolitical rents or foreign savings (debts), productivity falsely appears high. It is not that productivity lends itself to measurement. But in any case, oil rich countries whose real productivity growth is insignificant, appear as productive. The efficiency of investment per unit of capital, the returns per dollar invested, also falsely appear high. As the market buoys for primary products exporting countries, the salient measure of investment efficiency, the Incremental Capital Output Ratio – ICOR, or how much does it take in investment to generate an extra unit of output, falls, signalling higher efficiency.

The interrelated challenge that China tackled in relation to the productivity-investment nexus and how to achieve incremental growth in quality investment is of manifold nature; but here I list several points.

- Insecurity over the decision-making horizon requires a state as provider of security. A question regarding the necessity of planning then arises. How to put back the state not only as booster of ongoing activity, but also in designing and articulating factor inputs with output and, thinking ahead, with regards to the market for such output? The state in China with its vast ownership of productive assets manages the inter-industrial input-output relations at social prices that respect the value of direct producers while guaranteeing growth in industrial investment. In my discussions with some entrepreneurs investing in China, I was informed that their demands for expansion require the decision of the state as partner, while the final decisions always rests with the concerned ministries. The entrepreneur then added that socialism with Chinese characteristics allows the private sector to grow, but always under the watchful eye of the state and in some partnership with it. The state remains the decider of last resort. State ownership of productive assets is the doorway to security because socially designed prices allocate incomes to favour the security of the working class.
- A related question appertains to industrial culture and the indigenisation of productive knowledge. It may be fine to measure the real dollar growth in productivity and investment, but the real impetus for development remains how much of this knowledge is home spawned as opposed to borrowed

for consumption. Needless to say, China is an outstanding example of knowledge nationalisation. Its depreciated capital stock is replaced or refurbished with indigenised as opposed to borrowed know-how. Its focus has been on the department that produces the means of production. This partnership with a final say for the state is coordinated with a hierarchical command structure that sacrifices much in other departments in order to push the internalisation of knowledge in department one (the department that produces the means of production). As opposed to comparative advantage and the nonsensical ordering of the Flying Geese Paradigm, China has a politically motivated paradigm, the intent to build national security—although the loose use of the term paradigm is unwarranted. Fixation with national security is central to the thought of Mao and later president Xi: ‘the building of a solid national defence and strong armed forces that are commensurate with China’s international status and national security and development interests’.⁸ The emphasis on upgrading development and security capacity is the real impetus, which drove the rise in the national technological component in the composition of commodities in China.

- Economic growth as per the Chinese model reduces poverty by the degree to which it extends jobs to its workforce. The socialist criterion for jobs under socialism is social. Brown (2010) notes that China has moved to balance its successful growth with better coverage and social security nets as employers face increasing obligations. The long-term development perspective has a bearing on the economy as per its impact on demand and purchasing power. As the extension of free health, education and other social support measures kick in, the real median wages would be much higher than the reported pecuniary money wage. For China, peoples’ security from want, the guarantee of the consumption bundle, a permutation upon the iron rice bowl, is the backbone of national security.
- As in all tautological components of demand, economic growth and investment are co-determinants. The expansion of markets, whether within the nation or abroad, creates the demand that may not dampen growth in investment. However, no matter the size of markets, de-valorisation of capital by new technology settles in at various intervals. In China, the burden of the costs of re-adjustment and rescaling of industry in adaptation to new technology is shared socially. By employing more productive techniques and scaling the value chain, the additional revenues stand as insurance premiums against downturns, including capital write-off by new technology. In China, cyclical

costs of de-valorisation are less acute as the equalising distributional impact of the returns of previous investment supplements current costs. At any rate, ongoing internal build-up of capacity and BRP expansion and infrastructural projects lay the groundwork for rising investments. Labour shedding technological improvement is offset via the social employment creation channel and parallel labour-intensive sectors. The expansion of the arts and creativity are a point of critical mass for China, and cultural sectors are providing more employment across a number of emerging industries (Keane 2013). China's social criterion for productivity aligns with the objective of all-round development.

Closing Comment

Development transpires by the power labour exercises in the class struggle: the true gauge of democracy. That China had developed and alleviates poverty is *ipso facto* proof that labour *votes* daily in the state. It is popular democracy, as the late Samir Amin (2016) stressed, which imparts the autonomy in policy. Control of value flows in money form through capital account control and autonomous industrialisation are central to the Chinese development experience. Put differently, autonomy is how much people, principally through their state, control the decisions that shape their lives. Elsewhere, the emulation of the European democratic model resulted in a marked absence of democratisation as materialisation of working-class power in the state. European democracy has evolved as a resource allocation mechanism paying off sections of the working class to solidify Central capital's rule and/or expanding empire and imperialism. European welfare states are manifestations of the European circles of capital, which is a social democracy breeding fascism at home and imperialism abroad (Browder 1933). Browder's main point is that social democracy arrives at this state through an emphasis on the sphere of circulation, as opposed to homogenising production and wage conditions across the globe. With whichever means achieved, the forms of working-class control over the state are democratic provided they impart positive sum improvement in the living conditions of nationals and extra-nationals, the non-national boundary innate to the definition of an internationalist working class. The reason I say with 'whichever means possible' is because violence is, necessarily but not exclusively, a means to defend oneself against capital.

Re-distribution is effective by the degree of popular participation, as opposed to political processes, such as ballot box charades destined to rebreed the same capital class. In a developing context often subjected

to imperialist assault, the effectiveness of monitoring or embedding the gains from development becomes a learning process that grows by the distance the ruling national class keeps from imperialism: delinking. Autonomy itself is the decolonisation of development, including a reinvention of the concepts, language and practice of development. Accountability to popular democratic forms of organisation raises the social payoff of redistribution over time. Autonomy is the common thread that holds together the macro themes of sound development through the nationalisation of knowledge and resources.

The question then becomes: why were national institutions non-autonomous and/or why did the national bourgeoisie in so many places betray the national agenda?

As forms of social organisation, classes supersede and instrumentalise the state and its national boundary. History proceeds by auto-negation. Under capital, accumulation is highly entropic, it overconsumes man and nature, and grows new sprouts as it decimates others. China is the last new shoot whose very development is anathema to capital, the five hundred years build-up of waste-wealth by an egregious law of value. The subject of the historical surplus value culminated in the ideology known as neoliberalism.

International relations have now evolved into a central contradiction between a globalising China versus a protectionist US (Lauesen 2018). The assault on Iran, Syria, Venezuela and the war in Ukraine are hurdles facing China's market expansion. Iran's assault compromises China's energy deficit and security. China defends itself by socialising and bolstering its home front. It aids those falling under the onus of imperialist sanctions and raises standards of living at home. However, the dominance of Western ideology infiltrates every nook and cranny of the global social mind. Visions are blurred. While the history of bombing the Congo for tin or the slavery and deforestation associated with sugar cane are a bigger enterprise than the sale of the coke can, received theory focuses on an illusory price system and its instantaneous account to show that the coke business is bigger. The array of waste commodities' realisation for prices in social time is reduced to the fairy tale of the one high-end commodity selling in a high-end market. Truly, 'what is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live' (Althusser 1994). All it took to make a coke can, all the real and difficult relations, disappeared in that moment of sale. What has disappeared also is priceless *social responsibility*.

A Postscript in 2 points:

1. Indeed, development requires democracy; however, not any democracy, and certainly not selective or European-style democratic processes. Selective democracy, the rule of the few personifying capital is not democracy. Similarly, for a Central working class to vote for an imperial government that bombs and invades a developing country is not democracy. A working class besotted with the one time voting procedure reproduces capital and its more intensified form, imperialism. A vote for the Euro-American wars of encroachment is a vote for a share of imperial rents (Kadri 2015). The Central working class casts a vote for the imperialist class, which violently under-price and overconsume man and nature. Needless to say, cheaper under-priced commodities from the developing world buttress the purchasing power of Central wage earners. And as material circumstances influence consciousness, the Central working class exhibits an affinity for an ideological prism that mirrors the short-termism of corporate profit making. In popular culture, the maxim ‘what is good for General Motors is good for America’ best summarises its ethos.

The Central working class is, to be sure, a class that conjointly with capital reduces its own necessary labour by reducing and snatching, albeit by means of imperialist violence, part of the necessary labour of other hegemonized working classes. Super-exploitation, the long working hours for low wages in industrial accumulation (Lauesen 2018), or commercial exploitation, the wars of encroachment at the heart of militaristic accumulation (Kadri 2019), bolster global surplus labour, the foundation or abstract side of surplus value. Although both exploitative regimes are forms of wage slavery, wars of encroachment curtail the state and hijack *en masse* the power people exercise over their resources. Higher plateaus of surplus value characterise commercial exploitation because the weakening or destruction of states de-subjectify or rips the representation of the masses/labour in the value relationship. Modern forms of commercial exploitation, the subjugation and destruction of states are magnifications of older forms of chattel slavery. Moreover, militarism bears upon demographic shifts and growth rates through population expulsions, and relative or absolute depopulation; hence, commercial exploitation reduces necessary labour piecemeal and outright by reducing the numbers of the reserve army of labour.

Now as then, the selectively democratic lot, the Central working class organically tied to capital, assume that underlings are simply part of the natural order. Their Eurocentric frame of reference overlooks history. By doing so it forfeits the social responsibility for colonial plunder. It also fails to question the cost reduction

prerequisites of capitalist production, the war, child or slave-like labour like conditions or the environmental carnage. And if they do, for reasons of second-hand sentiment, they inculcate a false or reified subject. It is either human nature or market forces, but never capital.

For instance, they pay the one dollar for the can of coke, but do not relate the cheap tin to war in the Congo, the cheap sugar cane to slave-like labour, or the cheapened costs of unpaid labour and pollutants associated with production before and after consumption to untold expenses shouldered by people over the lifecycle of society. In real time, in the time it takes to reproduce society with socially necessary labour time, a coke can would cost far in excess of that one dollar paid at the moment of sale. Each and every step of the coke production and consumption cycle involves value relationships mediated by the market over a social time turnover cycle, arrayed against a price system symbolic of shifting power structures. Almost nothing under capital exists outside of value relationships.

Instead, Central working classes focus on fantasies of fair trade, trash sorting and greening the environment; all logical impossibilities under capital. What is logically undesirable by capital is real to the extent it eliminates labour. To be sure, they simply overlook the value relations, the determinedly waste producing relations, instantiated in the momentary act of consumption. Beyond the cant of charity, they endorse the political measures their ruling political class implements to produce the cheap things they consume. Just as they detach themselves from the overwhelming waste emitted in production, they cast that ballot and literally detach themselves from the political process. They do so for reasons of vested interests. They are beneficiaries of imperial loot. Their consumption bundle and savings rise by the intensity of super and commercial exploitation. They systemically and systematically re-elect an imperialist class to do whatever it takes to protect their 'way of life.' That 'way of life' is rooted in a highly entropic system whose overproduction, by existentialist boomerang, reduces their own quality of life. Still, for reasons of eco-imperialism, the rate at which the wasting of lives, or life's auto-consumption, proceeds in peripheral formations exceeds the rate experienced in Central formations. Moreover, the costs of poverty, pollution and wars in the developing world are heavier relative to its limited resources. Immersed in social recognition arising from conspicuous consumption and/or the false belief in scarcity, the Central working class acclimates itself to an imperialism and eco-imperialism that inflict greater damage upon the natural underlings.

Doubtless, the ongoing social and environmental calamity carries over by a dominant ideology. The *pro forma* concepts winnowed from pervasive positivism and the current received-theory, are all about the alleged efficient use or not enough resources for everyone; subsequently, in a world of scarcity, the select lot ‘justly war’ against the developing world to protect their way of life. They are the ‘lifebuoy’ of civilisation, and if many from the Third World jump on board, humanity will altogether sink (Hardin 1968). As befitting of an ideology that turns reality upside down, the real world happens to be a planet plagued by overproduction crises. Waste produced by waste accumulation, which also produces consumerist man alongside the consumption item, abounds. Additionally, imposed scarcity, a social reality constructed to differentiate labour by politicising and weaponizing identity, also abounds. In terms of real physical scarcity, not even oil is scarce.

In the absence of labour’s historical agency, capital’s cost cutting effort transmutes into the production of waste for profit. Waste unravels as the identity of capital and the lynchpin of the system. The industry of de-reproduction determinately trumps that of reproduction. Without labour, the reification is complete and the logical form assumes a physical form. Value relations turn into waste relations, the ruling class becomes the wasting class and the working class becomes the wasted class. The absurdity of capital’s mainstream logic, the two-dimensional diagrammatic in which prices clear excess commodities, becomes more and more a condition in which the excess commodity to be cleared is labour power and its bearer living labour. So far, the principal output of the capital relationship has been wasted lives in wars, austerity and pollutants that waste lives. In the contradiction between a capital that grows by replacing living with dead labour while the sturdy currents of demographic growth in areas prohibited from modernisation expand unabated, the biggest industry becomes that of resolving the contradiction between capital and population growth. Imperialist wars and austerity not just solve the disparity between the development of productive forces and the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies and spheres of influence for finance capital on the other, as per Lenin (1916), they also address the requirements for infinite growth by creating an industry of pure waste, a militarism whose products are the premature dead, a commodity produced by the literal infusion of living with dead labour, and which mediates the capital-population contradiction.

Capitalists are personified capital (Marx 1867). However, the introjection of the rule of capital by the Central working class makes it also a personification of capital. Capital, a commodity presupposed by a

social relation, a substance and a subject, in the process of self-expansion and self-realisation thrusts itself forward by its own reason or ideological arsenal. It does so by the stock of accumulated historical surplus value, including, the store of received knowledge, ideology or store of culture at its disposal, and its pile of thingified people. The thingification is contingent upon the degree to which socialist ideology ebbs. That so many people have adopted the reason of the commodity, or have become things as per the phenomenon of alienation (Mészáros 1970), this acquisition of the commodity fetish of a life of its own may be the only viable explanation for the outstanding devastation of man and nature. Only things, not humans, unquestionably bring about their own destruction.

Furthermore, the rule of commodities, or the state in which people uncritically assimilate the rule of capital, is the ultimate form of authoritarianism. The rule of a thing, the commodity, upon things, the thingified humans, is the furthest of all positions from democracy. Correspondingly, the development attendant upon the consumption of commodities by commodities is the type of development that only occurs under a so-called democracy reigned over by commodities. Humans as actual and potential waste, determinedly, as opposed to by a question of degree, produce and consume waste. Moreover, the worker transmuted into commodity exhibits a consciousness whose horizon is capped by the prospects of immediate consumption, including the consumption of oneself. In a world of socialist ideological defeat, the prospective of labour metamorphosing into historical agency to re-organise man and nature would wither, if it was not for the counteracting systemic tendency that things pass only the value contained in them in production.

The thingification of humans is not solely a Central phenomenon, as in European or white. Whiteness and centrality are constructs of capital with tentacles all over, but whose key structure is nonetheless Europe, NATO and other instruments of capital. To set the record straight for 'the politically correct' modern slave owners, Mobuto and MBS are whiter than many white people. Still, variants of selective democracy are also superimposed upon the developing world. Democracy *per se* becomes a commodification process to be exported from the core to the periphery. Iraq's democracy after occupation serves to illustrate the point. The US bombs, starves, invades, rewrites the constitution empowering sectarian and ethnic cultural forms as purveyors of rent from the state, setting the stage for inter-sectarian fighting for years to come. Iraqis also cast that vote for the sectarian lackey of imperialism to do whatever to provide jobs for some of his sect members at the expense of other sect members. The dormant or flaring inter-working class war reduces the politics and the wage share of Iraqis altogether. Working class dividedness also weakens the

Iraqi state by the loss of security and sovereignty arising upon the living insecurity of the working class. The rush of the sect to acquire a bigger share from a dwindling income on the basis of its weight in the state, holds the weak state hostage to imperialist strategy. The true voters in the case of Iraq are the Euro-US alliance, the subject of history. The victors of the cold war adopted the historical alternative for Iraq, the real vote cast in real historical time, while the vote of the vanquished Iraqi population is a mere ornament of modern day slavery.

That the subject of history votes by the form of power it exercises in its choice of alternatives is clear enough. However, unlike the white privileged class of the Centre, imperialism deprives the Iraqi and similar masses not only of their control over resources, but comparatively of much of their lives or longevity. Imperialism often consumes the peripheral comprador, the labour aristocrat and possibly the whole of social nature, lock, stock and barrel. A hinterland, subjected to militaristic accumulation, the imperialism as condensed capital, spares nothing; whereas in the Centre its labour aristocrats work hand in glove with capital to boost the imperialist campaigns. The prematurely wasted life is itself a product of militarism, just as a coke can is a product of the Coca-Cola corporation and industrialism. The more cokes and wasted-lives are consumed, the more returns capital generates. To illustrate with an adage: industrial scale killing is an industry.

The unrelenting assault of imperialism, hitherto the insatiable meatgrinder, more frequently de-commodifies peripheral labour resurrecting the commons again and again as tools and means in anti-imperialist resistance. Because machines and people as things do not produce surplus value, capital in a roundabout way elicits the development of opposition to its rule or revolutionary consciousness in places like Iraq. The dynamics of the labour process undergirding surplus value requires a labouring class that demands its rights just as it demands that people become things. Some may say a typical case of composition fallacy, however, it is no more than a dialectic of qualitative change. There is a world of difference between these two approaches, the most pronounced of which is that the world cannot be known to the former, whereas a process of knowability is possible for the latter. No logic is outside of ideology, and suffice it to say that the things in themselves of formal logic are the things falling under the thumb of capital; that is the facts concealed by its command of scientific progress.

Under the law of value, the law that designates resources for the creation of surplus value, capital, by its objective stock of commodity's reason, erects labour as subject in the value relationship only to be crushed. The Marxian business cycle is not a political cycle in the putative stop-go policies (fund or de-fund the demand side of the economy); it is a value cycle determined by the subject in the class struggle. The turnover time of capital is its 'moral wear and tear,' a component of the ideological sphere, swings in consciousness and subjectivities in relation to profit signals (expanding Marx's notion of moral wear and tear in Marx [1978]). Profits emerge as a higher dialectical unity of labour and capital shaped by resurrected oppositional forms of consciousness. A pro-systemic enemy of capital is its enemy of choice.

As an adequate theory of value should contain a concept of organic change identical with qualitative change (Niebyl 1940), measuring value transfers to the imperialist Centre in dollar terms, often by Western Marxists, reduces the contribution of cheapened deaths over 500 years to nearly nothing. For instance, a recent measurement by Roberts and Carchedi (2019) assesses the value transfers arising from imperialism at \$120 billion or 0.6% of US GDP and 0.2% of what the IMF calls the advanced economies' GDP.⁹ Because the ties of value relations are organic and prices unfurl as contingent immediacy in relation to power structures, these rather insignificant numbers restate the old imperialist position that the Centre does not need the Third World to develop. These voyages of colonial discovery were simply vacations to exteriorise the dark evils of human nature. Colonial or imperialist slaughter is *the* predicate of capital. It is all the wealth *qua* waste not by the measures of machine outputs in dollars, but in the value of the subject. Facetiously, with Marxists friends pricing imperialism at 120 Billion US\$, who needs the white supremacists. Accordingly, unlike the smugly paid Northern foot soldiers of empire, the Southerners and their nature are to be consumed in production at a much higher metabolic rate; if not by war, then by austerity and inordinate amounts of pollution and environmental degradation. A crisis is the starting-point of a large volume of new investment and profits and '*society as a whole,*' more or less, is the new material basis for the next turnover cycle (Marx 1978). The un-Eurocentric society to be voraciously consumed in the social time of wars, austerity and super-exploitation is the global South.

With regard to the latter point, just as imperialism renames its wars of encroachment as responsibility to protect (R2P, it now names the intensification of the environmental assault on the South a 'Global Green New Deal' (UNCTAD 2019). In one of mainstream's more pernicious fairy-tale, the world deploys 'the eight trillion US\$ of its sovereign funds' to finance the greening of the planet for sustainable development.

Capital, the centuries of European colonial and ongoing massacres, the relation whose law of value fashions the condition for profits by demolishing man and nature, is supposed to undergo a *volte face* and to discipline itself for the sake of mankind. Crises of overproduction necessitating massive underutilisation or the barring of additional resource mobilisation by outright violence are supposed to suddenly disappear. Not that it is an insult to anyone's intelligence to humanise the rule of commodities, but the very idea of lowering profit rates to the low levels of those exhibited by the long standing German family businesses so that the environment could be served, that fascist platitude of cramming reality into an arithmetic mean, not even an algebraic mean of profit rates, is ultra-nationalist corporatism. Under National socialism, Schacht's monetary policy of free money for full employment worked only because Europe abetted the process to hold down the Soviet Union, the new 'black people' according to Losurdo (2019), or because 'the superfluous' population could be exterminated. Unlike fascism, which targets an identity group for elimination, the American empire is less racist and targets all identities indiscriminately.

At any rate, the superfluous population continues to be mowed down by wars and sickened by poisoned nature. The greening of the planet under the rule of capital remains a platitude of an insidious white supremacy. Even in its best outcomes, it will have the impact of an air condition system in inferno. The low profit rates over the long run in which the empty logics of the widow's cruse, or the rising wages according with rising productivity, work only for the whites as they eliminate the excessive population and the environment supporting the global reproduction of that population in their own non-white strata or in the developing world. The Veblenian consumption trap couched in the language of social democracy, in which the developed world exhibits *schadenfreude* as the developing world perishes at faster rates, is neither an economic nor a political democracy.

Democracy is the political form of the exercise of power. The democracy required for all round development is a popular democracy. It is what transpires in the class struggle in favour of labour, or the measure by which labour fares in the balance of power of the class struggle at the bosom of the state. The brace of popular democracy is the sovereignty built upon the solid foundation of working class freedom from want. Once latched to the institution of the state, the organs of labour oversee each step in the social production and redistribution process. Labour votes daily in state action. Democracy is not labour as 'an' organic constituent of the state, it is 'the' organic constituent of the state. The vote of the working class is not cast one time every few years by un-historical individuals whose medium is capital. The workers vote is consistently

cast by the politics of the state to steer policy and divert resources to labour. Such is the democracy responsible for development in China.

2. China is vulnerable to the dominant ideology. The American-educated Chinese, the visiting academics, and the Hong Kong and Macau professors are gripped by the US's model of voting booth democracy. These are deleterious to working class democracy. Ideology, as class struggle, is the process/subject of history. Whereas China eradicated poverty beginning in 1949, the US sinks the world in war, austerity and misery. Yet, with all, this, unbelievably, it is the US that is said to observe human rights.

The rise of China retards the growth of European civilisation, a store of culture whose ethos is accumulation by waste. Arresting the civilisation of waste is the historical necessity; hence, to be appreciated as an exercise in *social responsibility*. In relation to the counterfactual argument that China is an imperialism in waiting, Chinese development against the odds was about the purposeful mobilisation of resources in ways that improve living standards and with it the underlying resources available for peoples' war. The counterfactual cannot be entertained because it is not only the event that occurred, which must be assumed away, it is every other event associated with the removed incident that has changed in itself, was changed by the hypothetically assumed away condition, and brought about the counterfactual occurrence. Apart from the fact that such an approach lays the accent on one point to attract attention, in reality it is too difficult to fathom. There is the knowability - as opposed to knowing - of the laws of development of capitalism, roughly the piling up of contradictions resolves in conflict of one sort or another, which only informs us of that which is happening at the moment: the West might spare no weapon to arrest China. What is actually surfacing as well is that smaller states that are imperial satellites, organic extensions of imperialism or colonial settler states will soon have their umbilical cords severed as the US empire ebbs. What should be feared is the victory of imperialism rather than the rise of China.

People's war arises because for capital, the totality of social production, any improvement in living standards or an increase in the power for China, erodes the foundation of surplus value creation and the power the US deploys to snatch value transfer through finance. That these are the reason for constant war is no novelty (as per Lenin 1916). The make or break condition is that China assists the development of Third World countries whose very rise and autonomy is anathema to imperialism. Much of the world has to be de-developed or set aside, for surplus value to be created. Feeling the existentialist threat, US-led imperialism

heightens its offensive against China. A new more adequate form of people's war for China must involve a higher degree of socialisation; certainly if it is to survive, it has to finance the national front as well as working classes far afield. It has to fight back and it is better to fight with a working class free of want as well as supersonic missiles.

Notes

- ¹ Lin Biao (1965) Long Live the Victory of People's War! https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/lin-biao/1965/09/peoples_war/ch08.htm
- ² Financial containment as part of differentiated or aggressive containment was spawned by Z. Brzezinski in the early 1960s. It is engagement with economic and cultural 'aid' or, better put with crippling debts, and with the manifest intent to cripple socialism.
- ³ The idea is a re-expression of the last sentence in this excerpt of Mark Twain's War Prayer (1905) projected upon the capital relationship: "O Lord our God, help us tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it". <https://warprayer.org/>
- ⁴ Marx-Engels Correspondence 1868, Marx to Ludwig Kugelmann in Hanover. https://marxists.catbull.com/archive/marx/works/1868/letters/68_07_11.htm
- ⁵ Of note is the concession made by China to American missionaries who never slipped through the fingers of the state. Their inroads into society remained immaterial and clipped, at times. For instance, ChinaAid, an American watchdog group that monitors religious freedom in China claims that 'the repeated persecution of Golden Lampstand Church demonstrates that the Chinese government has no respect for religious freedom or human rights;' Apart from the bigger historical context, the contribution of the Western structure to the build-up of capital's ideology qua the dominant class of imperialism, which imparts war, hunger and retrogression globally, one may ask whether it was worth it when European/American missionaries eradicated the natives in America and, of late, half a million children in Iraq. As quoted from the New York Times 2018, Chinese Police Dynamite Christian Megachurch, Jan. 12, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/12/world/asia/china-church-dynamite.html>
- ⁶ Accumulation by destruction is not a by-product of accumulation by non-destruction, as per the tenets of Western Marxism. The destruction is the real sphere of production, while what appears as production is the fiction that conceals the real production in real time and/or the value relations. This proposition turns the industry of destructing the developing world and the waste produced thereupon, the destruction to social nature, into the real factories of the world and salient products respectively (Kadri 2019).
- ⁷ For an account of numbers, see Physicians for Social Responsibility as quoted by MintPress News. 'Do The Math: Global War On Terror Has Killed 4 Million Muslims Or More' A recent study suggests the War on Terror has had two million victims, but reporter Nafeez Ahmed claims this may be only a fraction of the total dead from

Western wars. <https://www.mintpressnews.com/do-the-math-global-war-on-terror-has-killed-4-million-muslims-or-more/208225/>

⁸ 'Xi demands strong army, solid troops', http://www.china.org.cn/china/2016-10/21/content_39538893.htm

⁹ Roberts M. and Carchedi G. (2019) 'The economics of modern imperialism' <https://thenextrecession.wordpress.com/2019/11/14/hm2-the-economics-of-modern-imperialism/>

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