I began the work of writing out these positions over the course of 2018 and 2019. But these ideas, like all ideas, are social in their origin: they’re the outcome of significant effort among proletarian revolutionaries working together for many more years in study, discussion, and in the practical collaboration of proletarian class struggle.

These ideas were first presented by me in late 2019 to a large group of comrades with common or overlapping struggles who were brought together to discuss the deepening crises of capitalism-imperialism, the emergence and proliferation of existential threats, the nature of class struggle today, and the necessity of developing a program for socialist revolution. In the first half of 2020, a convergence of crises that an earlier version of this piece had began tracking have exploded onto the world, making all the more urgent the need to find our bearings and throw ourselves into the present and coming fights.

This piece’s declarative style – summary assertions and sharp lines of demarcation – is intended as a means of posing as clearly and bluntly as possible our analyses and positions on the subject matter: namely, the nature of capitalist crisis and the realities of class war today, particularly in North America. Admittedly, many of these positions require further research and elaboration. And it’s with that goal in mind that I submit them to the wider scrutiny and interrogation of the comrades and readers of kites.

I. The progression of bourgeois society is simultaneously its further decay

Capital is no mere thing. It’s neither simply stacks of cash nor some digital equivalents just waiting to be invested in productive enterprise or consumed as luxury spending. These are only the appearances of capital. If capital were reducible to tangible things, then unprecedentedly large swathes of it wouldn’t be imploding with the lockout of workforces that have been forced to stay home under COVID-19 emergency orders. An economic report from Yelp in September 2020 revealed that 60% of the businesses on its platform,
97,966 to be exact, had disappeared over the course of the previous six months. Where did they go?

Understand this: capital is a social relation. It’s a social relation forged by centuries of violent dispossession and exploitation tracing from the mass murder and dispossession of women in old Europe through to the transatlantic slave trade and the genocidal advance of European colonialism and settler expansion. As Karl Marx bluntly put it in Capital:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation.¹

While this is capital’s history, this is not merely capital’s past. Capital is predicated on an entirely new kind of slavery: wage slavery, wherein an independent existence is made impossible and the exploitation of labor is made universal.² Capital is the antagonistic relation that takes concrete shape in the relation between the property holder and the dispossessed, the exploiter and the exploited – in short, the bourgeois versus the proletarian, wherein the accumulation of wealth on one side of this relation is entangled with the accumulation of misery on the other.

In the 21st century, the bourgeois/proletarian class division has become the dominant, ubiquitous, and most antagonistic of all social divisions. Capital has nestled into every part of the world, satu-

² This inexorable tendency toward the division of humanity into bourgeois and proletarian classes was clearly foreseen by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in The Communist Manifesto of 1848. But for a more comprehensive yet still introductory overview of the materialist conception of history that underpins this position, I would recommend Engels’ Socialism: Utopian and Scientific (1880). Available at: www.marxists.org.
rated every market and reached its monopolistic stage in every place it has taken hold. There is little room left to grow, and it’s compelled to invent novel forms of parasitism and destruction to further capital accumulation. In its struggle to survive, capital pursues a deeper exploitation of old markets (commonly called “neoliberalism”), the violent opening of new ones (imperialist wars of aggression), and the destruction or absorption of smaller, weaker sections of capital (as we have seen during the unprecedented global recession triggered by COVID-19 lockdowns).

The depth of the crisis is revealed by the unprecedented changes rocking the core countries and regions of the capitalist-imperialist world system. That the dominant alliance of capitalist-imperialist countries in the world today – the US, Canada, the UK, and the European bloc – are stepping up their offensive against the popular classes in their own countries signals a much deeper crisis of capitalist accumulation. The social conflicts and rebellious surges that have engulfed Europe and North America in recent years, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, has smashed through the facades of the world’s “leading democracies” to reveal a state of social war and state terror. The world is learning that the imperialist centers are not immune to the destabilizing crises and turmoil of the capitalist-imperialist world system. Capital has stalked and preyed up and down every road, street, and alley in the world, and it’s now returned home like a war vet with an itchy trigger finger. The depth of crisis in the imperialist centers signals that the bourgeois/proletarian class division is nearing, if it has not already reached, a breaking point.

The decay and implosion of liberal bourgeois societies into fascist hellscapes is proceeding rapidly. We are in now in the time of sharp, grotesque qualitative changes. One way or another, the contradictions at the heart of the capitalist mode of production will burst asunder.

The violent transformation of this system is not only certain,
it’s already here, in the form of one-sided class war from above. No amount of finger-wagging or fist-wringer will force this system into submission. The proletariat has a world to win or a world to lose. These are the stakes in the present class war, and the class or alliance of classes that is able to muster and field the superior politico-military forces will make the world anew from the wreckage of what remains. If the proletariat is to survive this war, it must be organized to see this war and win this war.

2. Only socialism can abolish the economic chaos and militarism of capitalism-imperialism

Capitalism is defined not only by the division of the world into bourgeois and proletarian classes, but also by a very specific type of relation among all units of capital. Marx and Engels understood first and better than anyone in their time that what distinguishes the capitalist mode of production from those that preceded it is how the ever-increasing combination and coordination of labor and machinery in globally-connected production processes moves in increasing tension with existing property relations that are rendering an increasing proportion of humanity dispossessed of the surplus product of global production. Since Marx and Engels, this has been understood as the fundamental contradiction of capitalism, the contradiction between socialized labor and the private accumulation of the surplus product of that labor.\footnote{For a compelling formulation of this fundamental contradiction of capitalism-imperialism in present historical conditions, see Kenny Lake’s “The Proletariat: What it is, what it ain’t” in kites #1 (Kersplebedeb: Montreal, 2020).} Centuries of humanity’s socialized labor in combination with Earth’s riches have raised productive forces that have the potential to eliminate all want and misery from the world, to supply every people, every individual, with a stable livelihood and a meaningful, dignified, and self-determined place in society, with ample resources for many future generations to come. But instead, in the global system of capitalism-imperialism, the productive forces exist in a permanent state of rivalry, competition, chaos, and warfare.

In the earlier period of capitalism, many European thinkers,
cluding Marx, had due cause to see the formal freedoms of economic competition and individual accumulation as a progressive historical break from the stagnant productive forces of Europe’s feudal civilization. However, by the late 19th century, capitalism, barely a century old, had already proven that its anarchic state of production – the “free market” so worshiped by liberals and libertarians alike – was, with every crisis, yielding higher and higher degrees of concentration and centralization of the productive forces of Europe. The anarchy of unplanned, generalized commodity production of all against all was leading to and always leads to bouts of overproduction and commodity gluts followed by corporate bankruptcies and financial crisis. The outcome of all capitalist crises is to wipe out excess capacity, overaccumulated capital, resulting in the overall structure of capital more consolidated and centralized than ever before. From the anarchy of many units of capital in competition comes the anarchy of fewer but larger monopolistic enterprises competing against one another, and against the other monopolized industries, for the domination of whole national markets and the world. The “free market” is, therefore, nothing more than oligopolization in motion. And oligopolization – the creation of a highly compact class of industrial and financial elites controlling an ever-expanding proportion of the productive forces of humanity, the monopoly bourgeoisie – abolishes the anarchic rivalry of local capital by displacing it onto the world stage. This process of oligopolization leads to the highest stage of capitalism possible – what V.I. Lenin so incisively analyzed as imperialism or monopoly capitalism.  

History has vindicated Lenin not once, but twice in his claim that this stage of capitalism, imperialism (what kites has been calling capitalism-imperialism), is not only decadent, moribund, and rife with crisis, but that it also tends towards inter-imperialist war (1914-1918, 1939-1945). As domestic competition among innumerable units of capital is replaced with the imperialist competition of the

4 Read V.I. Lenin’s Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1917) for an account of the tendencies of “monopoly capitalism” that have held true even after a century. Available at: www.marxists.org.
globe-spanning trusts, cartels, pacts, and financial concerns, the domestic centralizing processes of bankruptcy and acquisition are overtaken by the global centralizing processes of wars of conquest against weaker countries, violent conflict with rival imperialists over shared markets, and at the highest point of crisis, full-blown inter-imperialist war.

In 2020, the capitalist-imperialist world system has seen a sharp escalation towards inter-imperialist confrontation. US imperialism is in sharp decline, with few moves left to maintain its hegemony except for naked aggression against its dynamic and fast-emerging rival, the capitalist-imperialist power of China (in alliance with Russia). The world is rapidly polarizing into opposing, nuclear-armed capitalist-imperialist camps. These powers are willing to risk nuclear holocaust and an uninhabitable planet in their die-hard struggle to control and command the world’s flow of fossil fuels, precious minerals, and finite natural resources; monopolize data flows, artificial intelligence, nuclear weapons, 5G telecommunications infrastructure, and pharmaceuticals patents; and hold onto or fight for the world market by whatever means necessary.

The madness of inter-imperialist war and the capitalist destruction of the planet can only be put to an end by force, and only by the force of proletarian revolution. It’s been done before, and it can and must be done again. Just as the Bolshevik revolution tore through the very fabric of history to unleash the first wave of international proletarian revolution, it’s the work of communist revolutionaries everywhere today to work together in the search for and creation of ruptures with such historical significance, especially in and around the capitalist-imperialist centers experiencing a rather unprecedented scope of crisis. Communist revolutionaries must cultivate among ourselves and boldly apply the sort of political-military creativity

5 For an illuminating piece of scholarship on the Bolshevik revolution that reveals just how incredibly dynamic and up-for-grabs the course of history was in 1917 Russia, see Prelude to Revolution: The Petrograd Bolsheviks and the July 1917 Uprising (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1991) by Alexander Rabinowitch.
that was exercised and exemplified by the likes of Lenin and Mao. International proletarian revolution is the only force capable of abolishing the global anarchy of production that is responsible for the chaos of ecological collapse and imperialist wars.

3. **WE ARE IN THE TERMINAL PHASE OF A GENERALIZED CRISIS OF CAPITALIST OVERACCUMULATION**

The fundamental crisis in the world today and the determinant force behind all other major crises (including all existential crises facing humanity) is the *crisis of capitalist overaccumulation* that has become generalized to virtually the entire capitalist-imperialist world system. This crisis is structural and internal to the historical process of capitalist accumulation. We are in the midst of the second of such crises in world history. The first lasted from the late 1800s and climaxed into two inter-imperialist wars over the question of whether German and Japanese imperialism would be allowed to share in the spoils of a world already fully carved up by the pre-existing capitalist-imperialist powers. The first crisis of capitalist overaccumulation was resolved only after the two most destructive wars in human history, which were followed by a temporary re-establishment of the

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Table 1: Annual growth rates for the core imperialist (OECD) countries, 1961-2019 (www.worldbank.org)
capitalist-imperialist world system under the hegemony of the US superpower. It took less than thirty years for signs of capitalist over-accumulation to reappear, which it did by the 1970s. The signs and symptoms that we’re now deep within a generalized crisis of capitalist overaccumulation are many.

One of the most damning signs of this crisis is the undeniable persistence of *global stagnation*: the sluggish pace of capitalist accumulation as evidenced by the overall secular decline of growth rates in the capitalist-imperialist countries since the early 1970s (see Table 1, previous page). Global stagnation reflects the dwindling supply of fresh markets for capital to expand within. With the restoration of capitalism in the socialist countries now decades in the past (summarized below) and with the global periphery now fully integrated into the capitalist-imperialist system, capital has shrinking space to grow into.

Stagnation also reveals itself in the form of the *excess capacity* that exists in many industrial sectors, which the effective demand of existing markets cannot satisfy. This excess capacity sometimes takes the form of the direct overproduction of commodities, which is chronic in auto manufacturing, consumer electronics, pharmaceutical industries, and, as we have seen in the Russia-Saudi conflict in the spring of 2020, in oil production levels. But given the advances of just-in-time production methods, excess capacity mainly exists in the form of unused or underused industrial capacity, which is but one of many forms of overaccumulated capital.

Yet another symptom of (but also a determinant to) this stagnation tendency is the *secular decline in the rate of profit* decade after decade for capitalist-imperialist countries. See Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy’s *Monopoly Capital: An essay on the American economic and social order* (Monthly Review Press: New York, 1966).
decade in the US since the Second World War and in the world as a whole since the 1970s. Marx attributed the falling tendency of the rate of profit to the replacement of human labor with machinery and technology, which narrows over time the proportion of living labor from which profits can be extracted. This declining rate of profit has been the secular trend for decades – a decline that exists in spite of the increasing rate of exploitation by capital against the international proletariat over the same period of time. The increasing rate of exploitation has been orchestrated through the international reorganiza-


The proliferation of “tent cities” within and around major centers of capital accumulation in North America is one of the more visible signs of the affordability crisis that is bearing down on the proletariat in the imperialist metropolises. According to official statistics, there are over half a million people living on the streets in the US on any given day. In Canada, as many as 235,000 are homeless at some point throughout the year. Below is the “Right 2 Dream Too” homeless encampment in Portland, Oregon, established in October 2011 and still running today in a relocated site. (Photo Credit: Israel Bayer)
zation of production, which has consisted of but not been limited to: the offshoring of manufacturing, the establishment of export-processing zones, and the gutting or repression of labor regulations in the periphery. That the overall rate of profit has declined steadily over the past four decades in spite of the maximal extraction of profits being drawn from the oppressed nations in the global periphery reveals the extent to which super-exploited labor is the principal force keeping capitalism-imperialism afloat.

This system of global wage scaling places pressure on the wages of workers in the capitalist-imperialist centers as well, whose experience of this crisis manifests in the form of severe crises of affordability for all those who live in or near major capitalist-imperialist centers.

What many progressive academics have analyzed and referred to as “neoliberalism” is not some new, meaner, greedier kind of capitalism, but rather the same old capitalism in motion, constantly re-configuring to survive endemic overaccumulation (and absent the immediate threat of proletarian revolution). Lenin long ago recognized that capitalism-imperialism tends to move in the direction of increasing parasitism. We’ve already addressed one form of this parasitism: the super-exploitation of the global proletariat that has been made possible through the international reorganization of production. But the increasing parasitism of monopoly capital outside of the production process is another thing entirely. Monopoly and finance capital employ whole armies of lawyers, accountants, managers, and technocrats whose only task is to devise new ways to swindle or seize the assets and wealth of the popular classes, oppressed nations, public coffers, the ancestral lands of indigenous peoples,

9 See Kenny Lake’s “Things done changed” in this issue of kites for an overview of these transformations in the capitalist-imperialist system in recent decades.
the riches of nature, and weaker or smaller sections of capital. The increasing parasitism of imperialist capital stems not only from the extraction of greater surplus-value from labor in the production process, but also from the seizure and monetization of all possible forms of wealth into new capital flows.

One of the most significant expressions of this increasing parasitism outside of production, and thus one of the defining features of “neoliberalism,” has been the financialization of accumulation since the 1970s, which has been defined as “the long-run shift in the center of gravity of the capitalist economy from production to finance.”¹¹ Financial instruments are engineered to capture surplus value that has already been generated elsewhere in production. Insurance companies, real estate agencies, fees for financial services, and creditors generate no new value in the world, and yet they rake in an increasing share of the world’s wealth. The increasing dependence on debt at every level of society signals this “shift in the center of gravity” of the accumulation process towards finance as monopoly capital struggles to find comparably profitable investment opportunities in production. The proliferation of debt bubbles at all levels of society is the long-run consequence, including sovereign debt crises, which were already a serious problem prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and which will now be tremendously exacerbated by the record-smashing new bailouts to finance and corporate capital. Alongside the unprecedented global sovereign debt bubble that exists in the world today are the record high levels of consumer, household, institutional, corporate, and municipal debt.

The emergence of speculative investments and bubble-economies are further evidence of the overaccumulation of capital. Asset bubbles are caused by the frenzied pace by which investment-seeking money flows into financialized commodities, inflating the value

¹¹ Next to the rise of monopoly power and stagnation, the political economists of Monthly Review consider this to be the third dominant economic tendency of the late twentieth century. See John Bellamy Foster, “The Financialization of Accumulation,” in Monthly Review (Vol. 62 /5, October 2010).
of such commodities far beyond the value rooted in the exploitation of workers, only to collapse in the near future, wiping out vast sums of capital and leaving in its wake unprecedented job losses. Since the beginning of COVID-19 lockdowns, over 20 million jobs in the US have vanished and not returned. The collapse of bubble economies invariably take down smaller or weaker units of capital, while larger units of capital tend to survive the crisis and buy-up collapsed asset prices at fire-sale prices. Often, these collapses are underwritten by national governments who foot the bill for the already dominant financial and economic concerns who essentially get to invest with little to no risk.

The most recent three major bubbles in the global economy have consisted of: the 2018 cryptocurrency crash (which saw an 80% collapse of cryptocurrency value); the sub-prime mortgage crisis and the global financial crisis it triggered between 2008–9 (when American homeowners saw some $9.8 trillion in their equity disappear, and European and North American public finances were raided by governments that bailed out private banks and corporations to the tune of trillions of dollars); and the dot-com bubble of 2002, which saw a 78% collapse of the inflated value in this sector (totaling approximately $5 trillion). In the lead up to 2020, economic commentators of all ideological hues were forecasting unprecedented near-term financial collapse. How convenient then for capitalism-imperialism that the COVID-19 pandemic has provided the pretext for the economic lockdown that has allowed for an ideologically-defensible, state-coordinated recession of the economy. In the second quarter of 2020, the US economy alone shrunk by 1/3, Canada by 1/4, wiping out 3–5 previous years of economic growth in these two countries. We are presently in the midst of the most dramatic and widespread economic collapse in the history of capitalism. This is the most damning sign that we are presently within a terminal phase of the second generalized crisis of capitalist overaccumulation. If the capitalist-imperialist powers were truly concerned with public health in their implementation of economic lockdowns, then the payment and collection of all debts and rents and the layoff of workers would
have all been prohibited. However, with eviction bans lifting in the summer of 2020 across many jurisdictions throughout North America, the economy is being savagely restructured in the interest of the more dominant sections of capital.

In the first generalized crisis of capitalist overaccumulation, the capitalist-imperialist powers finally settled their quarrels by pushing the world into the two most devastating wars in human history. The capitalist-imperialist powers of today face a similar impasse. The US, the unmatched global superpower of just three decades ago, is an economically stagnant laughing-stock of the world that is rapidly losing pace to the rising capitalist-imperialist power of China. US imperialism maintains the lead in military terms with the inconceivably large subsidies and purchases it makes to “the military-industrial complex,” but it does so, ironically, at the cost of the social decay, and by extension the social instability, that has become so much more apparent in the present conjuncture of crises.

Throughout 2019, and in an accelerated way since the onset of COVID-19, US imperialism has been escalating its moves and preparations toward a confrontation with China. Every week reveals bellicose new moves by the US, including blaming China for the novel coronavirus, applying sanctions against Hong Kong, pushing Huawei out of global markets, banning TikTok in the US, military escalation in the South China Sea, and finally, the US positioning itself as the human rights champion of Uighurs.¹² If history can be a guide for us, then one possible and very likely breaking point within the global crisis of capitalist overaccumulation will emerge if or when one of these capitalist-imperialist superpowers decides to turn the new Cold War into a hot one. And if, after 9/11, the US could justify a state of permanent war across the entire world as a commensurate response to the death of 3,000 of its citizens, then what will it try to

¹² For digestible and fairly balanced updates and analyses on the state of US-China relations, I would recommend the podcasts “US-China Trade War Update” and “Inside China” from the South China Morning Post at www.scmp.com.
justify against China once enough people have bought into US imperialist propaganda that “communist China” is responsible for its 200,000 (and counting) COVID-19 deaths in the US?

A social formation, like any material thing, can break in a number of ways: it can “burst asunder” in a revolution, it can undergo transformation through a slow process of decay, or it can rapidly implode or collapse. We should not think that the onset of the unprecedented state of crisis that we are presently within will automatically collapse capitalism. Competitors can be destroyed by novel means, new markets can still be forged by new forms and acts of violent dispossession, and widening segments of society can be cast into the proletariat to be exploited in new ways or else cast out of the labor force entirely to be rendered entirely superfluous to bourgeois society, with all safety nets, social welfare, and infrastructural upkeep removed, leaving people to fend for themselves or die trying.

Put simply, the historical process of capitalist accumulation is pushing the world deeper and deeper into crisis, driving capitalism-imperialism as a whole towards increasing parasitism and destruction. It is imperative to perceive this situation as a terminal phase in the long-running overaccumulation crisis if we are to make sense of the catastrophes and crises here and yet to come. This crisis is not terminal in the sense that capitalism is destined to collapse like a house of cards, as some have fantasized such crises could do, but terminal in the sense that the transformations and ruptures that this system is on the brink of or presently within will push us into a world that will look dramatically different from our own, as the COVID-19 pandemic is fast revealing. To recite the words Antonio Gramsci scribbled out a century ago in a world with striking parallels to ours today, “now is the time of monsters.”

13 This species of thinking is observable in the work of the late Mark Fisher, who, in his influential text *Capitalist Realism*, spoke to the despondency that he and many people faced in the wake of the Great Financial Crisis of 2008–09 because capitalism didn’t automatically collapse. See *Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative* (Zero Books: Hampshire, 2009), 78-79.
4. The overaccumulation of capital is the motive force behind the existential threats we face

The existential threats accumulating against our species in general and against the international proletariat especially are the outcome of the dynamics and imperatives of capitalist accumulation. However, whatever the origins of these existential threats, many of these are developing into runaway crises with material logics that are spiraling beyond the control of capitalism-imperialism and will overtake the capacity of any present day or future social formation to cope with.

The gravest and most certain of existential crises is the planetary ecological crisis. This crisis is, in fact, a complex of existential threats and catastrophes, which, when viewed together, amount to irreversible damage and destruction to the Earth's biosphere along with a significant disruption to the equilibrium of planetary processes and climatic conditions that make up the Earth system that our species (along with much of the rest of life on Earth) has evolved within.

This is what capitalist-imperialist “clean energy” looks like: vast evaporation ponds that concentrate lithium salts are extracted for export to feed the present boom in lithium-ion batteries that power cell phones, laptops, and now battery-powered vehicles. The world’s largest concentration of lithium is found under the salt flats of the “Lithium Triangle” that covers parts of Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile. One of the greatest environmental consequences is the depletion of fresh water. Some 65% of the water in Chile’s Salar de Atacama region goes into the evaporation ponds pictured below. (Photo Credit: Edward Burtynsky)
adapted to, and is fundamentally dependent on. The catastrophic changes in motion include but are not limited to: climate heating that will make Earth increasingly uninhabitable for much of terrestrial life in the coming century; top soil erosion and desertification leading to increasing crop failures; ocean acidification and the consequent destruction of vast ocean ecosystems; catastrophic global flooding that will displace hundreds of millions from coastlines in the coming decades; the emergence of antibiotic-resistant microbial threats; and, of course, the accelerated genesis of new and deadly zoonotic pathogens, of which SARS-CoV-2 virus is only the latest and certainly not the last. Each and every one of these existential threats has emerged as an “externality” to some segment of capital’s frantic pursuit of profit and the accumulation of capital.

The reclassification of geological time since 1750 to the “Anthropocene” by geologists has been done to capture the stunning reality that human production since the beginning of capitalist industrialization is very clearly the primary driver of planetary transformation over the last two and a half centuries. Even more revealing is the naming of the “Great Acceleration” to that period of time since 1950 alone, wherein as many as two dozen distinct socioeconomic and Earth-system trends have undergone change at exponential rates, some of which constitute irreparable ecological rifts. In other words, in the short span of historical time since it became an empire and

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the world’s sole superpower, US imperialism has managed to drive our species and life on Earth towards a whole series of apocalyptic catastrophes. Much of the damage rendered to the planet is irreversible, such as the acidification of the ocean and biodiversity loss. If wasteful, anarchic, profit-driven production is not abolished and the reckless burning of fossil fuel is not dramatically scaled down in the coming decade, our planet will, according to an unprecedented consensus in the global scientific community, pass a series of tipping points after which apocalyptic climate change will become an unstoppable, runaway phenomenon.¹⁶ The US-led capitalist-imperialist system is quite simply the Grim Reaper of human civilization.

Each and every one of these crises taken alone poses extremely serious threats to human civilization. Attempting to neutralize any one of these crises through “market solutions” – through further capital accumulation – will invariably spawn new threats and crises. Confronting the combined sum of these existential threats would be

¹⁶ Some of these tipping points are examined in the Ecological Rift, which is cited in a footnote immediately above.

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The logic of ecological tipping points is illustrated in the record-smashing California wildfires of 2020. Global warming over the past four decades has led to a tenfold increase in the size of California’s wildfires, peaking this past summer with this season’s fires ranking as the first, third, fourth, and fifth largest wildfires in California in recorded history. (Photo Credit: Josh Edelson/Getty Images)
extremely difficult even under a global system of fully-coordinated, socialist central planning. But within the anarchic and war-mongering system of capitalism-imperialism, we are instead accelerating toward these existential catastrophes. The expropriation of the productive forces of humanity and subjecting them to centralized economic planning has never been more urgent. The COVID-19 pandemic is revealing in tragic terms, yet again, that disaster relief and mitigation within capitalism is a complete catastrophe for the broad masses of people.

The second great existential crisis we face – our species as a whole and the proletarian class especially – stems from the capitalist control and application of the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution – artificial intelligence, automation, quantum computing, the Internet of Things, 3D printing, and genetic engineering – to the exigencies of capitalist survival. It is critical to emphasize that the fourth industrial revolution is only a threat to humanity from within

FANUC, a Japanese robotics company, has been operating as a “lights-out factory” – basically, a fully-automated facility with little to no human input – since 2001. In one of its facilities, robots are building other robots at a rate of about 50 per 24-hour shift and can run unsupervised for as long as 30 days at a time. Needless to say, the COVID-19 infection rate in this factory is zero.
the trappings of capitalist-imperialist relations of production. Under socialist relations of production, these same technologies are not only not an existential threat, but rather they are the material basis for universal human liberation. Capitalist-imperialist relations of production, however, will guarantee that any advances in the forces of production will be used to displace human labor with machinery and machine intelligence whenever and wherever possible. Artificial intelligence, instead of being applied towards increasing total social well-being, is instead being developed to surveil, contain and repress the increasing proportion of humanity that is being dispossessed from playing any essential role in future production processes. This is already quite discernible by the technologies to which AI is being deployed: namely, facial and voice recognition technologies, automated weapons systems, totalizing real-time surveillance, robotized warfare, the list goes on. These technologies are being rapidly developed, sold, and applied to surveil and target popular discontent rather than address the urgent needs of more and more of humanity. Left to its own devices (pun intended), why would we expect the world that the bourgeoisie is building to look like anything but the next season of Netflix’s *Black Mirror*?

The third existential crisis facing our world is the threat of thermonuclear warfare, which will menace humanity for as long as any capitalist-imperialist power remains in possession of nuclear weapons. We face an unprecedented danger wherein the world’s dying hegemon, the US, is not only the world’s sole perpetrator of nuclear holocaust to date (in 1945 against the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), but is also a declining empire with few trump cards left to play. And to make sure that the US is always capable of playing this card, the Trump administration in 2020 announced $46 billion in new spending on “nuclear modernization,” which includes an en-

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17 To anyone unfamiliar with the immense destructive force of nuclear weaponry, I would recommend Netflix’s *The Bomb*. Though uncritical of US imperialism, this documentary’s breathtaking montage of nuclear weapons testing footage from the Cold War is a stunning portrayal of the extent to which nuclear weaponry poses an existential threat to our species and life on Earth.
tirely new class of nuclear warhead, the submarine-launched nuclear warhead named W93.

To put it simply, the accumulation of existential crises all trace back to the dynamics, imperatives, and contradictions of the crisis of capitalist accumulation.

5. The proletariat faces a pincer-like convergence of existential threats

The historical convergence of ecological catastrophe and artificial intelligence within a capitalist-imperialist world system poses an unprecedented, pincer-like threat to the vast majority of humanity. On the one hand, biospheric destruction will render increasing proportions of the planet uninhabitable while, on the other hand, the harnessing of automated production and artificial intelligence by the imperialist bourgeoisies for the continuance of their control will render increasing proportions of humanity obsolete in the face of new technologies. The global proletariat is at once being dispossessed and rendered obsolete. In these historical circumstances, exterminationist ideologies like ecofascism are and will continue to find fertile ground.
As existential threats converge, reactionary “conspiracy theories” are being spun faster and faster to obscure what is playing out right in front of us every day. More and more people are falling prey to simplific and obscurantist conceptions of “the elite,” like the claim that some “deep state” cabal of child-trafficking pedophiles or some secret alien civilization that has colonized Earth aims to “depopulate” the world with killer vaccinations. As people become pathologically fixated with wild, unverifiable fables from far-right corners of the Internet, they are rather effectively inoculated (forgive the pun) from readily accepting materialist explanations of reality. The social anxieties and distrust of established authority that these conspiracies are grabbing hold of are very real, but they are deflecting people’s fear and rage onto scapegoats or phantom social enemies that never really materialize and provide no real outlet or vision for popular, revolutionary struggle.

Meanwhile, increasing proportions of humanity are being subjected to shortened, nasty, brutish lives that life in the slums, favelas, barrios, ghettos, exurbs, bombed-out cities, and emptied-out countrysides will guarantee. In these regions, the state concedes power to gangs, drug cartels, warlords, and mercenary armies. But the observable, daily genocidal force of capitalism-imperialism is no conspiracy at all; it plays out right in the open under a universal consensus of the international bourgeoisie and under whatever ideological castings are required to enable it in a given time and place (“War on Terror,” “War on Drugs,” anti-communism, “free trade,” the “Responsibility to Protect,” and so on).

6. The first generalized crisis of capitalist overaccumulation escalated into two world wars that were concluded only through the intervention of proletarian revolution

The first generalized crisis of capitalist overaccumulation traced from the late 19th century through to 1945, culminating in the unprecedented death and destruction of two inter-imperialist wars (the
“world wars” of 1914–1918 and 1939–1945). It was only after the second of these two cataclysmic collisions of fully industrialized societies that two of the world’s capitalist-imperialist powers, Germany and Japan, were subordinated to the new US-led capitalist-imperialist world system. The economic stability of this new world order lasted barely 30 years, with the signs of a new crisis of overaccumulation returning by the 1970s, as discussed above.

However, we must understand that each of these inter-imperialist wars came to an end not to the satisfaction of the prevailing imperialist powers – not because their financial quarrels had been settled or enough destruction had been carried out. No, these inter-imperialist wars were concluded because of the necessity for the capitalist-imperialist world system to regroup in the face of an advancing proletarian revolution. The First World War was only concluded because of the success of the proletarian insurrection in Russia in October 1917 and the subsequent consolidation of the Soviet Union across the former Russian empire. The October Revolution not only removed Russian imperialism from the map of the world and abolished tsarism, it also placed a new, revolutionary people on the main stage of history. This proletarian rupture in the geopolitical fabric of the capitalist-imperialist world was the main force in bringing WWI to an end in 1918. The war’s end was precipitated by the urgent need of the imperialists to close ranks against the infant

V.I. Lenin, leader of the Bolsheviks and political-military strategist behind the Russian revolution, addressing soldiers in the Red Square, 25 May 1919.
socialist state, which they did through sponsoring the fascist, counter-revolutionary White Army in the Russian Civil War of 1919–1921. Although the Soviet people heroically fought and succeeded imperialism’s attempt to exterminate the Soviet republic, it came at the cost of millions of more lives lost.

The second inter-imperialist war arose from the unsettled and newly-emergent contradictions of the first. The inter-imperialist contradictions preceding World War I were far from settled in 1918. In the 1930s, Germany, Italy, and Japan re-industrialized, re-militarized, and reclaimed the offensive in Eastern Europe, Africa, and in China and the Asian Pacific, respectively. The existing imperialist powers of the US, Britain, and France understood the threat this posed, but they were even more concerned with the consolidation of socialism in the Soviet Union and the advance of communist forces elsewhere, especially in China. World War II therefore contained the entirely novel geopolitical dimensions of socialist countries and advancing communist movements. In the lead up to the breakout of hostilities, all the capitalist-imperialist allies were in words and deeds supportive of the Nazi Reich’s designs to annihilate and colonize the Soviet Union. The capitalist-imperialist powers only parted ways because German imperialism was clever enough to attack England and occupy France before venturing into a much longer war of attrition against the Soviet Union. The German imperialists were correct in their strategy to take Britain and France out of the war before attacking the Soviet Union, but they were wrong in thinking that they would prevail against the new socialist power.  

Once hostilities between the Soviet Union and German imperialism commenced, this was a war principally fought between the Nazis and the Soviet people. The second greatest military theatre was in China, where the People’s Liberation Army combined with the nationalist army of the Kuomintang to wage an anti-Japanese war of liberation. Proof of who bore the greatest burden of the war

18 For a classic account on the geopolitics of this period, see Anna Louise Strong’s *The Soviets Expected It* (Progress Publishers: Toronto, 1942).
is evidenced by the colossal loss of life – 40 million – suffered by the Soviet and Chinese peoples alone. After subtracting the high death tolls of the Holocaust against European Jews and the defeated imperialist powers of Germany and Japan, the bulk of the remaining deaths were concentrated in the colonies of Indonesia (3–4 mil.), India (2–3 mil.), and Vietnam (1–2 mil.). The Allied imperialists barely rank in the top 20 countries in terms of death toll (see Table 2, next page), which makes sense considering the US, Britain, and Canada took to the offensive and invaded Europe quite belatedly – in Italy in 1943 and in France in 1944 – and only after the Soviet Union had put the Nazis on the retreat after winning the largest military battle in human history, the Battle of Stalingrad between 1942–43. To put it briefly, the main force behind the defeat of fascism in the world during World War II was not the bourgeois democratic countries (many of whom actually sponsored the Nazis for some time) but the communist and anti-imperialist forces of the world.

The role of communists was not limited to the immense brunt borne by the Soviet Union and the People’s Liberation Army in China, but also included the anti-Japanese guerrilla struggles in Indochina, Korea, and the Philippines, as well as communist-led anti-fascist partisans in Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere.
The historical facts of the last inter-imperialist wars are imperative to grasp correctly, for it is only within a correct understanding that the main lesson becomes clear: Without the intervention of the first wave of international proletarian revolution, the imperialist powers would have carried their wars to far greater destruction, the colonial subjugation of the rest of the world would have held for much longer, and some kinds of fascism would have ruled the world for some time to come. Proletarian revolution changed the whole course of the last century, and so to can it change our present one.

7. THE CONQUESTS OF SOCIALISM AMOUNT TO UNPRECEDENTED STEPS TOWARD UNIVERSAL HUMAN LIBERATION THAT MUST BE UPHOLD AND RECLAIMED AS PART OF THE NEXT WAVE OF INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The foregoing points have established that the proletariat exists as an objective class that has an objective basis to rebel and fight for its future through proletarian revolution. But the decisive factor in this latent, objective revolutionary potential is a subjective one. The proletariat requires a consciousness of itself as a class: it must understand its history, and it must establish the conviction that it has a historic right, duty, opportunity, and imperative to not only liberate itself but to abolish classes once and for all. The source of such conviction can only come from a correct and full account of its historical practice, which establishes distinctions between what has been tried and tested, what has succeeded, and what has failed.

The first successful proletarian revolution was established by the Bolshevik-led insurrection of 1917 in St. Petersburg, Russia, the living example of which set off an entire wave of international proletarian revolutions. The consolidation of the proletarian revolution in the Soviet Union was at one and the same time the disintegration of tsarism and the Russian Empire and the establishment the world’s first federation of socialist republics. The consolidation of socialism in the ruins of a centuries-old empire revealed that the oppressed and exploited classes can not only make a revolution (which the Haitian revolution had already proven), but also establish a mode of produc-
tion that could achieve levels of human development and standards of living for the laboring classes never before seen.

The international communist movement that the Bolshevik revolution inspired and helped lead – though not without internal contradictions, errors, and moments where the incorrect or bourgeois line prevailed\(^\text{19}\) – galvanized anti-colonial movements and revolutions that upturned national oppression and patriarchal domination that were centuries if not millennia old. The Soviet Union in particular and communists in general also played the leading role in the fight against fascism. The Bolshevik Revolution not only brought the remaining belligerents of World War I to a speedy conclusion of their carnage, but the Soviet Union that consolidated out of 1917 would also go on to play the leading role in the defeat of the Nazi Third Reich, earning for the revolutionary Soviet people the distinction of being the main force in ending both inter-imperialist wars.

This first wave of proletarian revolution completely reconfigured the geopolitical landscape of humanity. Taken altogether, the survival and triumph of the Soviet Union in the second inter-imperialist war, the expansion of socialism into Eastern Europe, the rise of fighting communist forces throughout all of Europe, the advance of the People’s Liberation Army in China, and the transformation of the armed experience of colonized peoples throughout the war into full-blown national wars of liberation completely smashed up the geopolitical landscape of the old capitalist-imperialist world. The first wave of proletarian revolution conquered a near balance of

\(^{19}\) For a substantial account of the two-line struggles that played out within the Communist International (Comintern) from the 1920s-1950s, see E. Tani and Kaé Sera’s *False Nationalism, False Internationalism: Class Contradictions in the Armed Struggle* (Seeds Beneath the Snow Publications: 1985), which is due for republication in late 2020 by Kersplebedeb. Two salient examples of the wrong or bourgeois line in command that are covered in this text include the Comintern’s misdirection of the Chinese Communist Party through the 1920s, and the CPUSA’s suppression of militant internationalism amongst its Black base in Harlem and elsewhere that was concerned with the national liberation war in Ethiopia against the invasion of Italian fascism.
power between the forces of capitalism-imperialism and the forces of socialism and national liberation on a world scale.

In this historic conjuncture, we must see that the anti-colonial revolutions were not merely the result of an additive accumulation of existing anti-colonial struggles: they were the result of a very conscious movement of proletarian and anti-colonial internationalism directly inspired by the Russian and Chinese revolutions. A global colonial system that had been in existence for centuries fell within decades once the subjective conditions had been established that it was not only necessary but also possible to defeat the capitalist-imperialist powers and replace exploitation with socialism. The onset of such visionary and internationalist consciousness was driven by the communist parties and communist-led people’s wars beginning in the 1920s, with aid and support of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and ’30s (again, not without it’s contradictions, as mentioned above) and later passing to revolutionary China in the 1950s and ’60s. It is no coincidence that the historic upsurge of anti-colonial revolutions waned and reversed once the commanding heights of socialism in the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China were captured by capitalist roaders in 1956 and 1976, respectively. To be sure, people’s wars and guerrilla struggles continued on through the 1980s in southern Africa, central America, and with remarkable breakthroughs in the Philippines, Peru, and India. But with vast stretches of the world no longer held by dictatorships of the proletariat, but instead by newly emerging capitalist social formations, the balance of power in the world no longer favored (relatively easier) transitions to socialism.

20 For a look into the build up of protracted people’s wars in the 1980s, see Kenny Lake’s “When We Ride on Our Enemies,” the third installment in The Specter That Still Haunts series, which was first published by RI at www.revolutionary-initiative.com and is scheduled for republication in kites #3. Though not its central argument, this essay reveals how the Maoist people’s wars in the Philippines, Peru, and India were able to make significant advances in accumulating revolutionary forces in their respective countries despite the dramatic reversals on the world scale.
8. Socialism neither failed nor collapsed; it was overthrown by internal forces of capitalist restoration

Socialism as a mode of production neither failed nor did it “collapse.” It achieved exactly what was anticipated of it by two generations of communist revolutionaries and thinkers that preceded the establishment of real socialism under a real dictatorship of the proletariat. Socialism yielded highly planned, rapidly industrializing societies that not only far outpaced the rates of industrialization and growth of their capitalist antecedents and contemporary rivals, but they did this while ensuring that the total social product of those societies were made to serve and defend peoples’ present and future needs in a manner for more equitable than anything that preceding it.

The raging hysteria of anti-communist ideology, of course, denies these accomplishments at all costs. This is done in conjunction with the wild but largely uninterrogated claims that declare planned economies caused untold hardship and led to unprecedented industrial catastrophes and crop failures, and that all this was overseen by “totalitarian regimes” that oppressed their own people, killing an untold hundreds of millions. Curiously, little to no documentary evidence is offered up of the rebellions that such supposedly oppressive states would naturally provoke. Surely, the death of hundreds of millions of people would provoke some resistance that would have left a record, no?

Anyone who manages to navigate their way through the dense filter of anti-communist ideology that is so hegemonic in bourgeois societies today to finally get through to the vast array of documented history, first-person accounts, and oral histories of the socialist countries will find that standards and quality of life for people in these societies far surpassed anything that they had ever experienced before. The achievements of socialism included but were certainly not limited to: rising life expectancies; increasing caloric intakes; decreasing infant mortality rates; increasing industrial output; increasing wages
and salaries; expanding social provisions in housing, healthcare, and education; and significant inroads against patriarchal, national chauvinist, and anti-scientific ideologies and institutions.

And yet, one century after the Bolshevik revolution consolidated the world’s first socialist bloc and sparked an entire wave of international proletarian revolutions, socialism exists essentially nowhere on the planet today (despite the persistence of countries that may call themselves or which people may call “socialist”). What exactly happened must be clearly understood by every proletarian revolutionary on Earth. Bourgeois “collapse” narratives obscure rather than clarify essential truths that every proletarian revolutionary must know. Capitalism was essentially restored in the socialist countries. The only question that remains is how.

First, let’s be clear about what exactly socialism is. Socialism – as it was articulated in scientific terms first by Marx and Engels, and as it’s been further defined in the writings and practice of many revolutionary leaders ever since (Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Ho, Cabral, Sankara, etc.) – has always been defined by proletarian revolutionaries (but

“This is how much further we gotta go to get to communism, comrades.” A scene from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.
not the revisionists) as a *transitional state* between capitalism and communism. All of these communist leaders after Marx and Engels have understood that socialism is *not* a brief transition, mainly because we cannot achieve communism so long as capitalism-imperialism remains in place anywhere in the world.

Socialism is best conceived not so much as a *third* mode of production apart from the other two, but rather a mode of production *somewhere in between* the class divisions and economic anarchy of bourgeois society and the classless civilization of communism wherein global production has been socialized and planned to meet the needs and aspirations of our entire species. In brief, socialism is *not yet* communism, and it is not yet completely beyond capitalism. As a *transitional* mode of production, socialism can only be in one of two states: a state where class divisions are disappearing and relations of production are being pushed forward towards a communist horizon, or a state where the relations of production are back-sliding into new bourgeois relations of production, as happened in both the Soviet Union and China. The socialist road splits in two directions: towards communism or towards a new capitalism. The direction taken depends entirely on the class forces in command of the socialist society in question: are the outlook and intentions of those in command consciously and measurably advancing toward proletarian liberation and abolishing class divisions and all social divisions upon which class divisions are based, or have liberal/bourgeois views and practices been smuggled into or arisen from within society that foster competition and personal aggrandizement, individualism, reconfigurations of patriarchy, and an increasing hierarchy between mental and manual labor? All socialist societies have essentially developed in accordance with the struggle between these two orientations and outlooks.

If we buy into the idiotic anti-communist scenes of grey and dreary scenes depicting the people standing in long bread lines and yearning for Western rock music and bluejeans, we’ll remain duped. Such tropes only serve to naturalize the bourgeois conception of
“man” as a self-serving individualist and consumer, which is part of the centuries-old colonial and liberal ideological project of establishing a (false) equivalency between capitalism and human nature.

That socialism was transformed into capitalism in the second half of the century in the Soviet Union and China is in no way a repudiation of the successful historical achievements of socialism or the body of communist theory and philosophy from which this civilizational project emerges. If anything, it is a validation of the Marxist / communist revolutionary position that communism is not some guaranteed end of history; it is consciously fought for and achieved by a self-conscious proletariat under its dictatorship, or it is lost to the forces of bourgeois restoration.

It is noteworthy that socialism survived all bourgeois, capitalist-imperialist assaults from without with heroism and ingenuity unmatched in human history, but tragically failed to survive the bourgeois threats that arose from within.

The greatest shortcoming of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) under the leadership of Joseph Stalin resided in Stalin and the CPSU’s inability to foresee, theorize, and recognize how capitalism could be restored from within a socialist society. This is one of revolutionary China’s main (though not the only) criticisms of Stalin: the latter’s inability to see and theorize that there must be a continuation of class struggle in socialist society. That said, it is necessary to balance out this critique with a view to the extreme conditions in which the Soviet Union was forced to consolidate itself.

From its birth in 1917 through to the 1950s, the Soviet Union was always in a state of preparing for or recovering from bearing the brunt of world war. The near permanent state of siege or threat of siege by imperialism that the Soviet Union was placed under had a blunting effect on the continuation of class struggle within the Soviet Union. In preparation for its collision with Nazi armies, a new sort of Soviet patriotism was mobilized and a “state of the whole people” way of looking at social-
ism crowded out proletarian line struggle in favor of a state bureaucracy enabled an eventual counter-revolution and laid the basis for an entirely new bourgeoisie to emerge in subsequent decades.

This wasn’t inevitable, as Mao Zedong himself would demonstrate in his own leadership of the Communist Party of China. Read the works of Mao from the 1920s through to the 1960s and you’ll see that what differentiated Mao from Stalin was a more acute consciousness and mastery of the shifting class alliances that were necessary at any given moment of historical time to advance proletarian revolution. By contrast, Stalin’s and the CPSU’s “advice” to Chinese communists from the 1920s through to the 1940s concerning the latter’s relationship to the nationalist Kuomintang was, time after time, disastrously incorrect. Mao understood better than Stalin that class struggle continues within socialism and within the Communist Party itself through all phases of the revolution.

With the death of Stalin in 1953, a new leadership consolidated rapidly in the Soviet Union that would prepare a whole new program for bourgeois restoration. Of course, it could not bring about these changes openly and explicitly. But the death of Stalin provided the perfect opportunity for this new clique of capitalist roaders, led by Nikita Khrushchev, to begin reorienting the Soviet Union. At the 20th Party Congress of CPSU in 1956, Khrushchev initiated an unprecedented campaign of vilification against Stalin, signaling to the


bourgeois presses of the entire world that there was a new order in Moscow. Khrushchev proceeded to make declarations of “peaceful coexistence” with the imperialist powers, which essentially meant the restoration of the impractical and bankrupt position of a “peaceful transition to socialism” that Lenin and the original Bolsheviks had so bitterly fought and prevailed against in order to clear the way for a successful Russian revolution. By the late 1950s, the Soviet Union was no longer supporting world revolution, it was only making geopolitical maneuvers. So dramatic was this reversal that Khrushchev’s Soviet Union turned against revolutionary China in the late 1950s by withdrawing its aid and technical assistance. After years of open ideological struggle against one another, in 1969, the “Sino-Soviet split” had escalated to the point of Soviet threats of military aggression against China.

Mao Zedong, to his credit, would not repeat Stalin’s mistakes. Mao Zedong upheld and applauded all that was correct and could be assimilated from the Soviet experience. The lessons of Soviet socialism under Stalin provided the Chinese communists with decades of lessons, positive and negative, to learn from. The capitalist roaders of the CPSU, by contrast, were no mere comradely critics of Stalin: quite the opposite, they sought to tear down the whole legacy of Bolshevism and the success of the dictatorship of the proletariat. “Peaceful co-existence” was code for the CPSU’s policy of no longer promoting or advocating for the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is why Mao became the principal defender of Stalin in the world after 1956. Keep in mind that barely more than a decade before Khrushchev’s traitorous denunciation of Stalin, half the world viewed Stalin as humanity’s savior against fascism. Mao’s contribution here was to remain firm and principled in his own criticisms amidst the reactionary convergence of thinking between the capitalist roaders of the CPSU and the capitalist-imperialists of NATO. Mao was not afraid to make essential criticisms of Stalin, which he did very publicly, repeatedly, and in a principled fashion.²³

²³ For one account of revolutionary China’s evaluation of the Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin, see “On the Question of Stalin: Second Comment on the
In sharp contrast to Soviet revisionists that took power after 1956, Mao Zedong took up the mantle of global proletarian revolution by supporting proletarian revolutions all across the world throughout the 1950s and ’60s. This included proletarian revolutionary movements right in the heart of the imperialist countries, including China’s very public support for Black communists and revolutionaries from Robert F. Williams to the Black Panther Party. More importantly, Mao Zedong also superseded Stalin’s critical limitations by insisting that class struggle necessarily continues under socialism, which it did in China through a whole series of intense, society-wide political campaigns, one after another, that sought to advance proletarian and peasant interests against those of the bourgeoisie. These repeated confrontations between the masses and bourgeois forces culminated in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) that began in 1966, dividing even the Communist Party of China (CCP). A much deeper elaboration is required to capture the complexities of that period of near-civil war in China. Suffice it to say that while the GPCR was not won by the proletariat – it was won by the capitalist roaders in China who, with the death of Mao in 1976, commenced a counter-revolution that forced China into a capitalist path of development – it was still the highest form of struggle ever achieved by the international proletariat. It was a proletarian revolution within a proletarian revolution.

To summarize, capitalist restoration does not mean that so-

Open Letter of the Central Committee of the CPSU” from the Editorial Departments of Renmin Ribao (People’s Daily) and Hongqi (Red Flag), September 13, 1963. Available at: https://www.marxists.org.
24 For a summary of revolutionary China’s relationship to the people’s wars throughout Southeast Asia, see Jose Maria Sison’s “Notes on People’s War in Southeast Asia” (May 2007). Available at: www.josemariasison.org.
25 For a detailed account of these society-wide class struggle campaigns throughout the 1950s and ’60s, see Pao-Yu Ching’s Revolution and Counter-revolution: China’s Continuing Class Struggle Since Liberation, especially Chapters 1-2.
26 For two important studies on this period that aren’t pure bourgeois, anti-communist hysterics, see Dongpin Han’s The Unknown Cultural Revolution: Life and Change in a Chinese Village (Monthly Review Press: New York, 2008) and Mobo Gao’s Battle for China’s Past (Pluto Press: Ann Arbor, 2008).
cialism “failed” or “collapsed” as a mode of production. All that we can deduce from this history is that it is possible for socialism to be transformed into a capitalist mode of production; it is possible for new bourgeois classes to arise, organize themselves, and seize control from within. In all instances, capitalist restoration happened within and through the same political force, “the Party,” that was also the political agent of the revolution. How the Communist Party can turn into its opposite can only be apprehended by understanding that the movements within it are always already defined by the internal contradiction of opposing forces: that is, the opposing class forces that will struggle for the mutually-exclusive roads toward either communism or some new kind of capitalism.

A question that proletarian revolutionaries will have to face in the future is not whether socialism via proletarian revolution is necessary or works, but rather how proletarian revolution will be advanced against not only external enemies but also the internal forces of class compromise and capitalist restoration that are bound to appear and emerge from within the center of the revolutionary process itself. As has been said already, the highest level reached by the international proletariat in its struggle for communism is the GPCR.

9. “Neoliberalism” begins with the restoration of capitalism in the socialist countries, which clears the way for one-sided class war

The academic critics of modern capitalism have given ample description and chronological detail to the regressive transformations that capitalism has undergone in recent decades. The problem with many of these analyses, however, is that what’s new about “neoliberalism” has been elevated to the exclusion of what remains fundamentally the same in capitalism.

“Neoliberalism” is not a new kind of capitalism, it is merely capitalism on the offensive because (1) the immediate threat of an organized, conscious proletarian counter-power has been dissipated for the time being, and (2) the pressures of the second generalized
crisis of capitalist accumulation continue to build up. Sure, “neoliberalism” dismantles and replaces “the welfare state” that once consisted of wider social safety nets for a wider section of the population (not so much for oppressed nations, however), lower taxes for the popular classes, and ambitious public works projects. It is clear enough that the privatization of public goods and services and the “austerity” gutting of social spending are clear attacks by capital on the popular classes. It is clear enough that the masses being made to pay for what was once a collective social expense equates to new markets for capital accumulation. It is clear enough that “free trade” and “deregulation” are euphemisms for the unilateral domination of finance and other monopolistic fractions of capital over the markets of smaller or weaker countries. It is also clear that the slow-grinding transformations that “neoliberal” capitalism imposes on the proletariat have been felt most acutely by the oppressed nations (the “War on Drugs,” mass incarceration, the proliferation of opioids). But what the academic critics of “neoliberalism” generally fail to account for is the shifting balance of power in the world that enabled capitalism-imperialism to resume its one-sided war against humanity and the planet.

As briefly accounted for in thesis three above, the generalized

The “great man view of history” that attributes the policies of specific heads of states as the origin of “neoliberalism” obscures and draws attention away from the long-running accumulation crisis that has compelled capitalism-imperialism through every bourgeois state and ruling class to move in the exact same direction of history. Were it not for Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, or Brian Mulroney, then it would have been some other three Anglo-imperialist stooges. As Marx wrote in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.”
crisis of overaccumulation that capitalism-imperialism once again finds itself gripped by has emerged from within processes and dynamics inherent to capitalism-imperialism. Much of what is called “neoliberalism” is just one policy or another advancing capitalist accumulation parasitically against the direct interests of the proletariat, and usually against the interests of the broader popular classes as well.

This global, one-sided offensive that commenced the “neoliberal” period is not merely the outcome of the crisis of capitalist overaccumulation; this offensive began in the concrete historical conditions of a dramatic shift in the balance of power between capitalism-imperialism and socialism that occurred in the 1970s. The loss of huge red base areas in the Soviet Union (1956) and China (1976) sent shockwaves of disarray and disillusionment throughout communist parties and movements around the world, leading to the collapse of many organizations and a generalized retreat of the class consciousness and fighting spirit of proletarians the world over. Capitalism deafeningly pronounced that humanity had, with democracy and liberalism, arrived at “the end of history.” The reversals and retreats of the international proletarian revolution has enabled the bourgeoisie everywhere to negate and vilify communism in the most hysterical and absurd ways that go completely unchallenged under the hegemonic anti-communist consensus.

To be sure, armed struggles against colonialism and imperialism would continue raging on all across the world, in India, the Philippines, Peru, Colombia, Palestine, Lebanon, Burkina Faso, southern Africa, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Turkey, and elsewhere, keeping the ideas of Marx, Lenin, and Mao alive and relevant right up to the present day. However, the unfavorable balance of power on a world scale for the past four decades has prevented revolutionary movements from being able take or hold power beyond their enclaves of dual-power. Meanwhile, the pink tide of social democratic experiments throughout Latin America from the early 2000s has proven to be no exception to the rule: while many effectively pushed
back on “neoliberal” imperialist globalization for some time, most have fallen or failed in their project to mediate the antagonism between the bourgeois and proletarian classes in Latin America, and have lost significant ground to fascistic counter-revolutionary organization of the bourgeois classes, leaving the masses with no revolutionary organization and no friendly governments to protect them.

We must acknowledge that the 1970s until now has been a period of unmitigated offensive by capitalism-imperialism against the international proletariat, a one-sided class war. But as a one-sided class war, capitalism-imperialism has only ripened the objective conditions and clarified the battle lines for the next wave of international proletarian revolution.

10. Social Democracy in the Period of One-sided Class War Is Just Counter-revolution

Despite nearly a half-century of unchecked capitalist-imperialist offensive against the majority of humanity, many a reformist still pines for the good old days of the “welfare state” – that dreamy time when things were “fair” and workers shared in the profits of large manufacturers in the Fordist social contract. This “welfare” somehow or another always managed to take the form of murderously oppressive and counter-revolutionary policies against the Black or indigenous oppressed nations, but that’s another matter entirely. What these fantasies of reforming capitalism back to a more “balanced” society completely ignore is the very obvious historical fact that a global balance of power between the proletarian revolution and capitalism-imperialism was the historical context out of which such a “balance” was struck in the imperialist countries. Furthermore, this “balance” was essential to demobilize and dissipate proletarian revolutionary forces in the imperialist countries (more on this in thesis 14). Social democrats and “democratic socialists” don’t like to be informed that what happens when an enormous weight is removed from one side of a scale is that everything in the middle rapidly shifts and is pulled toward the other side. This is why social
democracy today is indistinguishable from liberalism, and this is why every social democratic government since the 1970s has ruthlessly advanced a “neoliberal” agenda.

Whatever the “welfare state” was for the more privileged stratum of the (largely white and settler) working class that it was built for, that period of capitalism is long gone. Preaching “peaceful coexistence” with bourgeois classes that have, in their few decades of largely unchallenged power since the 1970s, driven our species and the biosphere to the brink of multiple existential threats is worse than foolish: it’s treasonous, counter-revolutionary, and ecocidal. Social democracy today has no other function than to check the aspirations and channel the frustrations of the popular classes continuously back into the political dead-end of career politicians and their hopeless electoral programs.

The lieutenants of the labor aristocracy and social democratic politicians seduce and intoxicate the working class with the hopes of easy concessions and reforms while peddling a tacit imperialist-nation chauvinism and deep-seated anti-communism that ensures that large segments of radicalized people end up moving to the right instead of to the left.

If the proletariat has been made to suffer four decades of one-sided class war, it is not because of a lack of fighting spirit or creativity among the trade union jefes and paid organizers that make up social democracy, but because of the dearth of proletarian revolutionary formation embedded within and cultivating the class consciousness and combativity of the proletarian masses. Social democracy persists into the present not because it has any legitimacy left or deep roots in the working class. It exists because it fulfills a useful function within capitalist-imperialist society as an agent of class peace and left legitimation of this exploitative and oppressive system, serving as a permanent obstacle and disorganizer of militant responses and movements coming out of the working classes.
II. THE COLLAPSING LEGITIMACY OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IS ROOTED IN ITS ROLE IN FACILITATING THE ONE-SIDED CLASS WAR SINCE THE 1970S

The deep crisis of legitimacy facing liberal democracies in the capitalist-imperialist countries has as its material basis the four decades of one-sided class war from above. Faith and confidence in the old liberal, conservative, and social democratic bourgeois parties are at all time lows. All these bourgeois parties that professed their loyalty to the “free market” for so long have been exposed as accomplices in capitalist globalization and the rule of big corporations.

Most people can see that every bourgeois electoral circus just yields yet another government all too ready to serve the bourgeoisie and quell the people. The popular classes are increasingly seeing that their governments are not subject to popular control, but rather some kind of global elite domination. The precise nature of this global elite is completely obscured, however, by the anti-communist consensus that is shared and peddled by all bourgeois parties and the entire mainstream press. As a consequence, the delegitimation of liberal democracy sends people not in the direction of proletarian revolutionary organization, but toward the far more readily available fascist thinking and organization.

The platitudes of “freedom” and “democracy” ring more hollow today than ever before. These words sound fraudulent to even say. Consequently, liberalism has refurnished the ideological content of its worldview to sustain the legitimacy of, or at least breed passivity within, capitalism-imperialism.

12. NEOCOLONIALISM IS THE PREVALENT LEGITIMATING IDEOLOGY OF THE ONE-SIDED CLASS WAR TODAY

The weight of the one-sided class war is not and has never been evenly distributed throughout the proletariat. While the proletariat as a whole has experienced a perceptible decline in its quality of life and hopes for the future since the 1970s, the Black and indigenous
oppressed nations in North America have experienced the one-sided war as another three generations of violent, genocidal and colonial oppression and exploitation. National oppression kept shifting shape to advance capitalist accumulation. In the US, a whole new form of chemical warfare (crack cocaine) was concocted to repress and disrupt the Black population, while the mass incarceration agenda behind the “War on Drugs” killed or incarcerated Black populations across whole cities or regions of cities in order to depopulate them for capital takeover. Meanwhile in Canada, while the smaller proportion of Black people have experienced much of the same treatment, the colonial deprivation and oppression faced by indigenous people on northern reserves have pushed generation after generation out of their rich ancestral lands and into towns and cities full of people all too ready to kill them with impunity. From one side of settler-colonialism on this continent to the another, national oppression has been a driving force behind capital accumulation.

27 I am not suggesting that settler-colonialism in the US and Canada are identical, but only that each of these capitalist-imperialist countries were founded through and continue to be structured along antagonistic settler-colonial lines. Further elaboration is certainly necessary, but is beyond the scope of this piece.
But as national oppression intensified and took on wholly new forms, new ideological terms had to be set, and new political forces had to be brought forward to help manage, oversee, and justify the changing order of things. The one-sided class war has only been tenable through the domestic allies that have enabled it: namely, the neocolonial elite.\footnote{For a comprehensive study of the forms taken by neocolonialism in the US from the 1920s-1950s, I would seriously recommend the critical historical summation of the Black liberation movement, \textit{False Nationalism, False Internationalism} (referred to above in footnote 19). For a comparable study of the development of neocolonialism through the 1980s and ’90s, see \textit{Nightvision} by Butch Lee and Red Rover (Kersplebedeb: Montreal, 2017).}

As the significance of industrial labor in the imperialist countries waned with the global restructuring of production, so too did the role of the labor aristocracy and social democracy in cultivating popular legitimacy. New allies were needed to contain and mislead whatever sections of the proletariat were breaking out, or threatened to break out, in revolutionary struggle. The old forces of class peace were losing their ability to reach or contain the proletarian upsurges of the oppressed nations. Since the 1950s, virtually all of the major proletarian revolutionary upsurges in North America have had the militant or revolutionary struggles of oppressed nations at their core, and with little to no contribution or help from the old “labor movement” or the revisionist “communist” or “socialist” forces.

In the US, from the Civil Rights Movement through to the Watts rebellion in 1965, and the whole wave of militant and armed revolutionary nationalist and Black communist organizations that were launched through the rest of the 1960s and sustained into the 1970s, to the repeated explosions against police brutality from the 1990s up to the present, the violent oppression of Black people in the US has been the primary factor in all these rebellions. The same can be said for the most significant proletarian upsurges in Canada over the same time period: from Oka and Gustafsen Lake to Caledonia, Elsipogtog, Tyendinega, Wet’suwet’en, and the countless other sites of indigenous struggles and stand-offs in between, rebellion against
colonial oppression has been the foremost expression of proletarian resistance in Canada in the period of the one-sided class war. Herein lies the invaluable function of neocolonial legitimation.

The resistance and revolutionary struggle of oppressed nations that have for decades been the leading and main force of proletarian struggle in North America are the concrete historical conditions that demand pacification and confusion with neocolonial structures of legitimation.

The repressive apparatuses of the imperialist powers of the US and Canada know better than most that the revolutionary movements of the oppressed can never be fully stamped out – certainly not with repressive means alone. As the authors of *False Nationalism, False Internationalism* recognized:

It is not the long-range strategy of the security apparatus to wipe out all revolutionary opposition. For the simple reason that they do not believe that this is possible. For example: a classified counter-insurgency analysis by an official in the FBI's Latin Amerikan division concluded that revolutionary opposition was a permanent fixture, because the mass discontent that produced it could never be avoided in capitalist societies.²⁹

They go on to cite a Department of Justice report from 1976 that reads:

A substantial segment of the community is... easy prey for extremists and is materially influenced by the apparent successes of radical action. Civil authorities cannot afford to ignore the existence and attitudes of this passive mass or wait until it has thrown its support in a crisis to those seeking change by violent means.³⁰

The imperialist powers and their repressive apparatuses know very well that the conditions imposed by the one-sided class war and intensified colonial violence lay the basis for the sorts of rebellious explosions we have seen in 2020. The threat of rebellion or

revolutionary foment is accepted as a permanent feature of capitalism-imperialism, and this assumption lays the basis for all counter-insurgency theory. It is this imperative to repress and prevent the proletarian revolution that renders the capitalist-imperialist state into a permanent regime of preventive counterrevolution (discussed further below), which, in North America, takes on a fully colonial character.

Neocolonialism is imperialism transforming the conditions of its rule and domination through new political alliances that are made to give appearance and substance to the idea that capitalism allows for class ascendancy, prosperity, and inclusion irrespective of “race,” national origin, gender, sexual orientation, etc. It allows for this class ascendancy through neocolonial collaboration. The wonder of neocolonialism is how it manages to give this impression, in spite of growing numbers of people beginning to recognize that the destiny for more and more of us, particularly of the oppressed nations, is economic ruin, mental crisis, drug addiction, homelessness, incarceration, and early death.

When we see Lori Lightfoot, a Black lesbian, go from heading the Chicago police board to being elected mayor of that city, or when the Democratic nominee for Vice President, Kamala Harris, is someone who can punch the air for Black people, Black women, Indian women, Tamil women, all women – all while walking a very straight path down the thin blue line – we have indeed reached a very mature phase of neocolonialism and counter-insurgency.

Many people today simply call this “identity politics.” But these token appointments that push the oppressed to acquiesce to a worsening world is in essence the same old, if not more developed, neocolonialism and counter-insurgency of the earlier periods.

In the neocolonialism of today, however, every historically aggrieved or oppressed grouping can and must be given representative authority to “speak,” “hold ground,” be conceded some turf in liber-
al arts and academic departments, and be given token positions in as many of the managerial levels that bourgeois society can accommodate them. The more the better, as the dominant consensus in the ruling class is that tokenism goes a very, very long way to securing the consent and participation of a significant part of its shifting population.

What makes this political reality somewhat confusing is that the specific agents of neocolonial legitimation in the US and Canada no longer only hail from the oppressed nations, but also from non-white immigrants. It’s brilliant. People whose parents may have been part  

31 The main exception to this generalization is the Chicano and Mexican population in the US, which – while tagged as “immigrant” and lumped in with Central American migrants, maybe even with “Latinx” peoples whose parents may descend from latifundio owners – has an historical claim to and an enduring presence throughout the regions of the US southwest that were conquered and ceded by Mexico in 1848. The point here is that since the ancestral lands of the Chicano people and Mexicans in general lay within or adjacent to the borders of the US settler-colonial empire, Chicano, Mexican, and by extension Central American peoples pose an existential threat to US imperialism in a way that overseas immigrants, even other people from Latin America do not and never will.
of the elite neocolonial classes back home can, in North America, get to flex as woke “POCs” against white supremacy and demand inclusion, representation, and class mobility in the settler-colonial project. To imperialism, this inclusion is better than cheap: in fact, it’s an asset. As the violent dispossession and subjugation of the oppressed Black and indigenous nations carries on, imperialism props up its legitimacy through multiculturalism and other forms of inclusivity that is one step removed from the oppressed nations. The non-white bourgeois politician signals inclusion and diverse support for capitalism-imperialism even while the war on oppressed nations rages on.

The real existential threats to the US and Canada are the rebellious Black and Native nations that were dispossessed of their ancestral homelands through genocidal displacement and/or enslavement, and which remain, up to the present day, palpable threats to not only to white supremacy, but to the stability and endurance of the whole empire of settler capitalism-imperialism throughout North America. Counter-insurgency thinking in the US and Canada in the past few decades could not be clearer about this fact.\textsuperscript{32}

What opportunistic politics that has been lumped into “identity politics” over the past decade is just a newer species of the old neocolonialism. Also referred to as “identity opportunism,” this is the politics of constituting representative authority that can claim an authentic connection to previously or presently oppressed groupings within the overall settler-colonial and imperialist society. But this representation never amounts to more than cultivating identities of individual personalities that can be safely bought, traded,

\textsuperscript{32} To add a Canadian example to the one given above, see the work of one of Canada’s leading counter-insurgency thinkers, Douglas Bland, especially his report \textit{Canada and the First Nations: Cooperation or Conflict?} (McDonald-Laurier Institute: 2013). The thesis of this report is basically that indigenous peoples within Canada, owing to both their national oppression and their vast geographical spread throughout Canada, constitute the greatest insurrectionary threat to the country, especially to Canada’s vast and indefensible energy and transportation infrastructures.
and sold as tokens to help redeem and relegitimate the crumbling institutions of bourgeois society. The opportunistic mobilization and sale of oppressed identity categories to the inclusivity schemes of the “neoliberal” institutions of capitalist-imperialist society render these neocolonial elements, no matter what is going on in their heads, accomplices of the bourgeoisie in its one-sided class war that rages on. Today, this newer form of neocolonialism has been, like the forms preceding it, an essential prop to the crisis-ridden advance of capitalism in the imperialist countries of the US and Canada – arguably the main brake on the revolutionary consciousness of the oppressed nations in these societies.

“Black Lives Matter” has literally been taken up as a battle cry by a significant chunk of the bourgeoisie. The assimilation of “feminist,” “anti-racist,” and “trans-inclusive” discourses into bourgeois institutions has been essential in legitimating and sustaining a bourgeois order that oversees the expansion of mass incarceration, police terror, the “War on Drugs,” the sex trade, and the dispossession and destitution of the proletarian majority of the oppressed nations. The propping up of neocolonial agents, even if they employ radical discourses, serves to deflect attention from the reality that the patriarchal oppression and colonial violence faced by the international proletariat, including the oppressed nations within the US and Canada, have in fact substantially advanced in recent decades.33

To make matters worse, because these new neocolonial ideologies invariably set themselves up against the “privileged” social groupings of white people, men, heterosexuals, etc., these neocolonial ideologies draw incorrect battle lines among the broad masses of people. Many people have been made to think that white supremacy and patriarchy can be “dismantled” while capitalism-imperialism is left intact.

But never will you find these salaried social justice seekers biting the hands of the big foundations and imperialist government agencies that feed them. Instead, like many of the graduates of liberal universities today, they are ontologically oriented against those “privileged” segments of society – white hetero men (and women too... they're coming for you too, Karen) – who, no matter their class situation or outlook, are told they are privileged and must be held to account. Neocolonialism thereby becomes an unwitting agent in helping polarize society away from popular confrontation with capitalism-imperialism and towards the racial and gendered lines that white settler fascism in the US has long been stoking.

13. Fascism is approaching parity with liberalism as the dominant bourgeois ideology

Fascism emerged for the first time in history in a situation much like our own, a situation marked by the decay of bourgeois society and a proliferation of crises. Today, however, fascism is not compelled forward by the rise of an opposing proletarian revolution. Quite the contrary, it’s a caricature of communism that’s helped drive fascism’s resurgence, as today’s fascism draws its legitimacy by setting itself up in opposition to both the bankrupted older expressions of bourgeois politics as well as the neocolonialism (the whole lot of which the fascists lump together as “communism”).

For decades, far-right organizations have waged a war of position in the decaying, crisis-ridden regions of the imperialist countries that were once its bastions of pro-imperialist mass support. All the while, for decades much of anything fancying itself “left” has waged its own war of position in major urban centers and university towns for academic jobs, NGO money, diversity grants, and inclusivity opportunities. This has placed the organization and strength of fascists far ahead of where communist and proletarian revolutionary forces are presently at.

Of course, the rebellion against police violence across North America since the police killing of George Floyd proves that deep
reservoirs of militant, proletarian rage exist across the US that can and have put the repressive apparatus on the defensive. But however unprecedented this upsurge is, it arrives in the streets unarmed and unprepared to confront the pre-existing fascist organization of large swathes of the population that have been able and permitted to come out and confront the mass upsurge with direct, counter-revolutionary violence. From Minneapolis to Kenosha and countless clashes in between, far-right organizations have taken to the field, building legitimacy and presence with persistent and active armed vigilance and confrontation with a proletarian rebellion that refuses to die down.

Fascism is no longer the marginal extremism that it was in the 1980s and '90s. Fascist organizations and movement, however ideologically divided, are acting as an increasingly unified force against the emerging proletarian revolutionary threat. And while fascists holding ground in and around the repressive apparatuses of the bourgeois state – police forces, the military – is nothing new in US history, the recent developments signal a shift that shouldn’t be lost on us. Fascist thinking, organization, and mobilization are expanding and co-existing within or adjacent to the regular armed forces and policing structures to a higher degree than has been seen in a

On August 25, 2020, little fascist vigilante Kyle Rittenhouse, left, marched alongside other armed civilians during a curfew. Some time after being tossed a water bottle by Kenosha police, Rittenhouse went on to murder two and wound a third.
very long time. Counter-revolutionary violence is being carried out by or farmed out to fascist structures without implicating the official arms of the bourgeois repressive apparatus. We are seeing vigilante terrorists and armed reactionaries attack protests all across the US, and in July 2020, we saw the deployment of federal agents in unmarked vehicles snatching protesters off the streets of Portland. A fascist leviathan is rising, this is for sure.

This doesn’t spell doom for the proletarian revolution, but it does mean communist revolutionaries today are fighting on very different terrain than in the 1920s or ’30s. The proletarian revolution must figure out how to adeptly conquer ground in this “three-way fight” against both liberalism and fascism without letting revolutionary forces become dispersed or disaggregated by the appeals of liberalism or encircled and annihilated by a growing fascism.

The rebellion sparked by the police murder of George Floyd has revealed that a demographic exists that is ready to take up the historic mission of proletarian revolution. We know it exists because it is fighting in ways that few of us alive today have seen before. It’s remarkable that in the absence of a revolutionary strategy and program, the upsurge of proletarian youth in 2020 has attacked every hated institution and symbol of white supremacist violence that it

The Kenosha, Wisconsin rebellion in the wake of the police shooting Jacob Blake in the back seven times on August 23, 2020.
can find in US society. Bursting through the dominant pessimism held against millenials and Gen-Z’ers is a revolutionary people in the making. That said, however hopeful these developments make us, fascism will overcome us and we will not survive the decay of bourgeois society unless we transform this potential into an organized, coherent proletarian revolutionary movement that can lead millions into the necessary engagements against the correct enemies.

14. The Form of Bourgeois Dictatorship Today is the Permanent Regime of Preventive Counter-revolution

Since the success of the Bolshevik insurrection of October 1917, the capitalist-imperialist countries have transformed into permanent regimes of preventive counter-revolution. With the consolidation of socialism out of the Russian revolution and its reverberation across the world in the form of dozens of worker insurrections and the birth of new communist parties, including in the capitalist-imperialist countries, bourgeois power understood that it was losing its capacity to repress away the advance of the proletarian revolutionary movement. Other counter-revolutionary measures, including preventive ones, were needed to unseat and beat back communism.

Every historic move and major policy implementation by the capitalist-imperialist bourgeoisies since 1917 have been geared to

34 I am adopting this term as it was developed by the (nuovo) Partito Comunista Italiano (or the (n)PCI). Although developed in relation to Italian and European postwar conditions, the (n)PCI argues that the permanent regime of preventive counter-revolution is a universal expression of the State in the imperialist countries today, and I have to agree. There is a striking applicability to North American conditions of the view that bourgeois hegemony is established through a mix of targeted repression, material privilege aimed at sections of the settler population that are strategic to imperialism, and the promotion of ideological backwardness among all. For a full account of the (n)PCI’s theorization on this question, see Four main issues to be debated in the International Communist Movement (March 2010) at www.nuovopci.it/ei/en/sommen.htm. Kenny Lake employs this concept in the article “On Infantile Internet Disorders and Real Questions of Revolutionary Strategy” in kites #1.
ward preventive counter-revolutionary ends. The examples in this long war of position by capitalism-imperialism against communism on a world scale include but are not limited to:

- The aiding and sponsoring of fascist powers and leaders by the Allied imperialists through the 1920s and ’30s;
- The New Deal and the construction of the “welfare state,” the constitution of labor law, and the legalization of unions after World War II, which completely reconfigured the relationship between organized workers (predominantly the white sections and those assimilable to whiteness) and the bourgeoisie in North America;
- The recruiting of thousands of Nazi technical, scientific, military, and Gestapo cadre who, rather than being put up against a wall and shot or placed on trial, were recruited to fill identical positions in the United States military programs (Operation Paperclip) or throughout Latin American regimes after the collapse of the Third Reich in 1945;
- The redefinition of whiteness in the US and Canada to assimilate the previously-excluded European proletarians, while even more violently oppressing and exploiting the Black, indigenous, Chicano, and Puerto Rican peoples;
- The invention of the Internet by the Pentagon starting in the 1950s as an explicit project to mass surveil humanity;
- The shift in military and policing structures throughout and beyond the Cold War towards counter-insurgency in order to deal with the new terrain of warfare (i.e., the people), tracing back to COINTELPRO in the US and Operation Profunc in Canada;
- The advent of multiculturalism to assimilate and win a hegemonic consensus from “model minorities” in order to undercut solidarity with Third World liberation struggles and the revolutionary struggles of oppressed nations in the imperialist countries;
- The ubiquitous anti-communist consensus, with all the
myth-making and fabrication that this entails, across every stripe of bourgeois political thought, from social democracy to liberalism to fascism;

- The advent of mass incarceration and the genocidal “War on Drugs”;
- The “War on Terror”; and, as we have already covered,
- The emergence of the neocolonial politics in the US and Canada that legitimate an otherwise decaying and unpopular social order with the token inclusion of women, oppressed nationalities, and LGBTQ people in all institutions of bourgeois society up to and including the repressive apparatus and the highest echelons of bourgeois executive power.

The modern bourgeois state remains in essence the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie that Lenin theorized in *State and Revolution*. However, since Lenin wrote this text, the bourgeoisie has accumulated a century of experience in developing and perfecting how to contain the spread of communism and working to ensure the revolutionary proletariat never again rears its head. In short, the bourgeois state

While the world is grips by the greatest epidemiological and economic crises in a century and the greatest ecological crisis in the history of our species, naturally, in the heart of this crumbling Babylon, tens of millions of North Americans can see nothing but secret cabals of elite pedophiles vying for global domination. (Photo Credit: Chris O’Meara)
is unified across its repressive and ideological apparatuses into a \textit{permanent regime of preventive counterrevolution} against the proletariat and its political vanguards. Conceptions like the “welfare state” and “neoliberal state” blur the essential unity that exists across both periods of the bourgeois state. Coming to terms with the fact that counter-insurgency thinking forms the backbone of bourgeois rule is the first step in the direction of building the revolutionary movement that is up to the task that history has given us.

15. \textbf{The capitalist-imperialist countries are destabilizing and giving rise to revolutionary situations}

As Lenin taught us, a revolutionary situation arises where a ruling class has become deeply divided and unable to govern in a unified fashion, where the masses are unwilling to suffer any longer the existing state of affairs, and where the conditions exist for the oppressed and exploited to develop an understanding of these conditions and the subjective factor for revolutionary transformation.

The forms of crisis that have terrorized and immiserated the neocolonized periphery for decades have also, in recent decades, made significant advances into the imperialist countries themselves. The Brexit crisis, the militant Yellow Vest and anti-austerity movements in France, the vast refugee and migrant flows into Europe and North America, the divisions in the ruling class that are reflected in impasse around US President Donald Trump, the opiate overdose crisis gripping North America, urban gun violence rates with body counts that match civil wars in the neocolonized world – all these crises speak to the slowly unraveling economic, social, and political stability in the imperialist countries. While revolutionary consciousness is a missing ingredient that still has a long way to go, we are within historical conditions that otherwise suggest that revolutionary situation is developing in the imperialist centers that has been unmatched since the 1930s. The US leads the world with 200,000 COVID deaths and
counting.\textsuperscript{35} The deteriorating situation in the imperialist countries is creating opportunities for proletarian revolution in or near major capitalist-imperialist centers that have not existed since prior to the Second World War. The explosions of 2020 rival those of the 1960s. These objective opportunities are of world-historic importance, and we cannot afford to let them pass us by.

We must not forget that the first wave of the international proletarian revolution that unfolded and consolidated across the world between 1917 and well into the 1970s proceeded from proletarian revolutions that took hold across vast regions of the world that were too expansive and populous to be easily contained by imperialist encirclement and war. Before 1917, communist revolutionaries banked on the equally grandiose but ultimately failed revolution in Germany – which was anticipated to lead to the European-wide advance of socialism. When this strategy failed, V.I. Lenin and the Communist International that he helped establish, didn't retreat from the lofty objectives of international proletarian revolution; they took a read of the objective situation in the world and doubled down with plans to exploit even greater opportunities for revolution that existed in both the other capitalist-imperialist countries, especially in North America, as well as in national liberation movements of the colonized nations.

We communist revolutionaries today, in this time of unprecedented global crisis, must elevate our thinking to strategic levels that are as grandiose and realizable as those that our forerunners thought of and fought for. The object of every communist revolutionary is international proletarian revolution on the road to communism. Nothing less than a strategy that is viable and adequate to these ambitions is demanded of us. The crises unfolding today, as briefly elaborated in this document, implicate the entire capitalist-imperialist world system and the vast majority of humanity. World revolution is our objective, and objectives as big as these must

\textsuperscript{35} This was the death toll in late September 2020 as \textit{kites #2} was on its way to publication.
be studied, named and meticulously worked toward. Revolutionary movements in the peripheries of this system have never stopped since the dawn of capitalism. But now, with this unprecedented level of crisis, new opportunities for the advance of proletarian revolution in and around the capitalist-imperialist countries are materializing, and they cannot be squandered. The pincer-like convergence of existential threats against the international proletariat, including the proletariat in and around the centers of capitalism-imperialism, will, one way or another, render present generations of proletarians among the final line of gravediggers that have haunted capitalism since its inception. Our proletariat will be the final line of gravediggers either because it finally completes its historic mission of universal human liberation in communist civilization, or it will be the final line of gravediggers because it has failed and it ceases to exist as a class that is materially capable of leading humanity in that direction.

16. It’s time to make this a two-sided war

The sum of the previous 15 points leads me to conclude that capitalism-imperialism is locked into a permanent and inescapable crisis of its own making. It is the maker of crises that it will have no means to contain in the future (significant biospheric destruction). There are absolutely no signs that point to this unprecedented period of crisis laying the basis for some kind of new unity of humanity. Quite the opposite, there are

Like so much of the artwork of Filipino/a New People’s Army artist ‘Parts Bagani,’ this piece gives us an eye into some of what it means to live as the proletariat’s final generation of capitalist-imperialist gravediggers: a humble life, rich social relations, small daily joys, many mundane tasks, and heroic action.
innumerable signs that, left to its own devices, the capitalist-imperialist bourgeoisies of the world will continue on the path of ecological destruction and marginalization of the surplussed and obsolescent portions of humanity, while they frantically work toward the establishment of whatever “runaway civilization” is possible with the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution.

Humanity is locked into a permanent, one-sided class war of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. War, we must be clear, is a campaign of belligerence by a force that has as its aim the defeat and subordination, if not annihilation, of its opposing force. Until recently, this one-sided class war in North America has principally taken the form of subordination as preventive counter-revolutionary containment. Within this war, certain sections of the people – Black, indigenous, and revolutionary people – have had to contend with the annihilative violence of the capitalist-imperialist state. However, as advances in automated production render the needs of labor inputs more narrow and technocratic and as ecological crisis wreaks havoc across the world, this war from above is widening its annihilatory scope against the masses. The treatment of the sick, elderly, and immuno-compromised people during the COVID-19 pandemic are just the latest instances of the expendability of people to capitalism. The proletarian and proletarianizing masses of humanity who are being dispossessed by this system face existential threats that can only be averted if we enter the class war as conscious agents of history once again.

This can only be done by consolidating the most advanced segments of the proletariat – its most conscious, militant, and rebellious segments – into a coherent, active, unified, and vital striking force acting with and through the proletariat. The reorganization of the proletarian vanguard is tantamount to the salvation of the majority of humanity from any further descent into the hell of what’s to come. Our class must come to know the war at hand, not just as its victims, but as conscious agents of history. The dawn of the second wave of international proletarian revolution has arrived. It’s time to lay out our plans to crack the empire. As Frantz Fanon once wrote to his contemporaries, “Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it.”