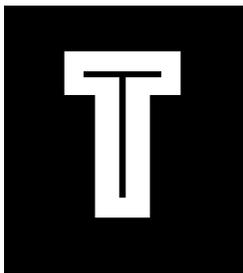


THE EMPIRE AND THE GENERAL STRIKE

by JOSH ZOLOTIN



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

THE FAILURE OF PARLIAMENTARIANISM

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

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

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

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

A PRESCRIPTION FOR PARLIAMENTARIANISM

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

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

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

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

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

THE FAILURE OF "DIRECT ACTION"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HE SAID DON'T MARCH!

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

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

DEFENSE AND MASS WORK

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

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

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

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

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

HOW TO GO ABOUT MASS WORK

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



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works toward political ones.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MASS WORK MAKES THE COMMUNIST

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

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

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

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

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

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

***Communists do not lead.
Communists serve.*** 

IS IT NECESSARY TO AVERT AN IMPERIAL WAR?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HOW CAN THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT AVERT WAR?

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

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



HOW AND WHEN CAN WE STRIKE?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF THE STRIKE?

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

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

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

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

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

ENDNOTES

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

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

7 U.S. Federal Reserve.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



