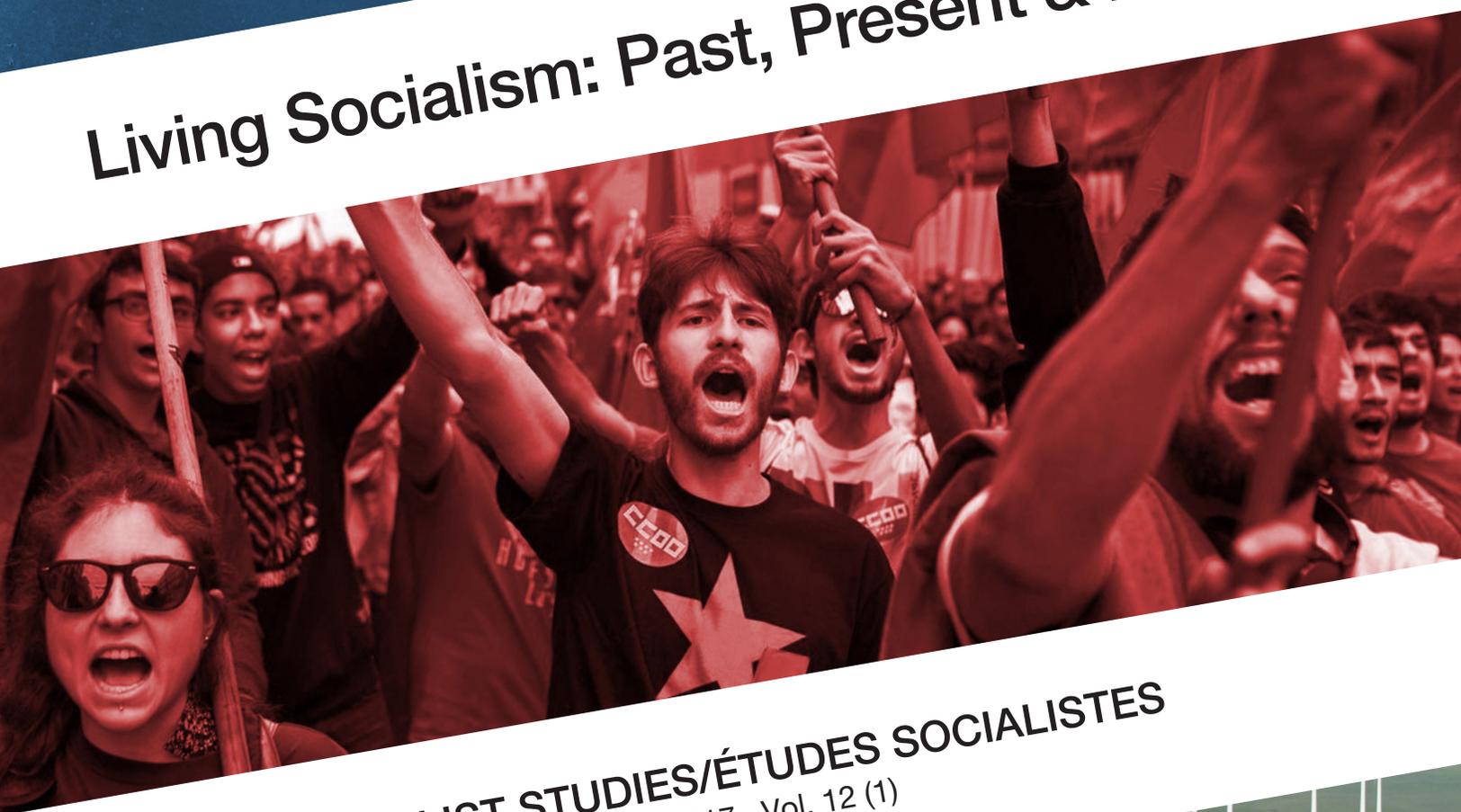




# Living Socialism: Past, Present & Future(s)



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## Front Matter

Many people speak about a “labour of love” to indicate the long-suffering patience of an endeavour that is worthy in and of itself. Although it might not make sense to speak of a journal as a labour of love, it is the case that you, dear readers and contributors, have been long-suffering and patient while I have laboured to complete this issue. Happily, we have another excellent issue of *Socialist Studies*! Contributions in this issue cover the gambit from Marx as an international theorist to the challenges of transcending “climate capitalism”; we journey to Cuba through Caliban, and remember Stuart Hall; we learn of real alternatives to capitalism and how we might decolonize our minds and classrooms; and importantly, we hear from authors and their “critics” in engagements about important and timely works, such as that by Dr. Paul Kellogg entitled *Escaping the Staples Trap*.

And, we are not at a loss for future content. Nearing completion now is a Special Issue on the Ghadar Movement (if you don’t know what it is, great ... another reason to read *Socialist Studies*), this will be followed by a mini-issue on the works of William Morris, and we hope to finish the year (or start the new year) with a Special Issue dedicated to Maoism and Class struggle in Canada. As it stands, our next “regular” issue will be in April 2018 but I am still accepting articles for the issue, so please, submit.

As I look to the future of *Socialist Studies*, it is busy and bright. But there are challenges. The Journal is run on mostly voluntary labour and a small contract for technical support. Finding reviewers is growing more difficult as everyone feels the pinch of increasing work-life demands. As I continue to look for creative ways to manage a professional, scholarly Journal within the important mission and mandate the Society has established for *Socialist Studies*, I invite each of you as readers, contributing authors, supporters, activists, scholars and comrades to think collectively with me about how to ensure that our Journal continues to provide the open space for critical engagement with a world that is in desperate need for real alternatives.

Article

## **CROSSROADS IN ALBERTA: CLIMATE CAPITALISM OR ECOLOGICAL DEMOCRACY?**

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### **Abstract**

In this article I outline two divergent visions of a post-carbon future which I label 'climate capitalism' and 'ecological democracy.' These models are necessarily simplified and incomplete, serving as rough ideal types that can help us make sense of policy choices with regard to climate change as decisions laying the foundations of our future societal development. Decisions taken now direct us along one path, often making other directions more obscure, inaccessible, or unthinkable. The outcome of each junction in the interplay of social forces opens and forecloses future possibilities for action within a given time frame. Some outcomes are easily overturned, others are 'definitive' for a generation or more. In the context of global warming and related ecological crises, what we humans choose to do within the next ten years can be expected to have irreversible consequences for many future generations.

Notwithstanding the potential for capitalists to invent and commodify new 'post-carbon' technologies or to invent eco-system service-based commodities, questions are posed about the ecological sustainability of a mode of production that relies upon ever-expanding growth in material and energy through-puts. Is capitalism, ultimately, unthinkable in a steady-state system of production and consumption? Can capitalism dematerialize while wage-labour continues to define the mode of production? Or, as many in the global climate justice movement believe, will a just solution to global warming require far-reaching transformations of the global capitalist economic and social order? Will the properties of the renewable energy technologies that we are currently able to envisage (solar, wind, geothermal, tidal, hydro-electric, conservation, etc.) resist monopoly ownership and control and underpin more decentralized and democratic communities? These are questions with which the left is grappling in every context, including in Alberta, where an unprecedented opportunity for change opened up with the election of the New Democratic Party in May 2015 following many decades of government by conservative parties. In the first part of this article I outline, in general terms, emerging post-carbon visions or models of development. In the second part, I shift the focus of analysis to the observable sign-posts and possibilities for post-carbon transition in the Alberta context.

### Keywords

Fossil capitalism; neoliberal globalization; Alberta; ecological democracy; climate change; climate capitalism; decarbonization

## Global contestation for humanity's future in the context of global warming

Over the last twenty years there has been a convergence of anti-globalization movements with environmental struggles, as reflected in the framing of climate change as a global ecological crisis linked to neo-colonialism and neoliberalism, and in the new political ontology of 'fossil capitalism,' 'petro-capitalism,' 'carbon colonialism,' 'carbon capitalism,' 'carboniferous capitalism,'<sup>1</sup> 'climate justice,' 'ecological debt,' 'peak oil,' 'decarbonisation,' and 'post-carbon development.' This crisis, as never before, demonstrates the limits to capitalist accumulation in the forms it has taken since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

While much attention has been paid to this junction as one of technological transformation, much less thinking has been done about the kinds of social relations that may be realizable in the 'post-carbon' era. As Timothy Mitchell observes in *Carbon Democracy* (2011), the transition from wood to coal in the industrial revolution resulted in the creation of large aggregations of wage-labourers and their communities and the development of powerful union movements and a unifying class culture in the early industrializing countries. Workers in the mining and transportation sectors were able to exercise substantial economic power to secure better terms for wage-labour as well as democratic reforms. Oil production, in contrast, required fewer workers for extraction and transportation, although pipelines were vulnerable to sabotage. Oil, transported with relative ease across great distances, fuelled the Fordist era's rapid industrialization and rates of growth. The declining cost of oil (until the 1970s oil price shocks) generated the perception that economic growth faced no resource limits (Mitchell 2011, 139-40). The Keynesian framework of national economic management and indicators—importantly, the concept of gross national product (GNP) introduced in the USA in 1944—measured the input of capital and labour but did not account for resource depletion or environmental costs. Indeed, Mitchell argues that the ontological concept 'the economy' arose in the 1930s-1940s in association with 'innovations in methods of calculation, the use of money, the measurement of transactions and the compiling of national statistics [that] made it possible to imagine the central object of politics as an object that could increase in size without any form of ultimate material constraint' (2011, 143).

Growing global acceptance, since the 1980s, of the science of climate change has, however, given new meaning and renewed urgency to the 1970s predictions of limits to

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<sup>1</sup> This term is thought to have been introduced by Lewis Mumford (1932), but has re-entered our political lexicon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

economic growth. Even investment consultants are now calculating the date of arrival of ‘peak fossil fuels’ (Bloomberg New Energy Finance 2016; CDP 2013; Carbon Tracker Initiative and Energy Transition Advisors 2016). This term no longer refers—like ‘peak oil’—to the inevitability of resource depletion (US Department of Energy 2005) or recession-inducing oil prices (Rubin 2009), but rather to the rapid improvements in the efficiency and cost of renewable energy alternatives and to the increased penalization of greenhouse gas emissions that are expected to make fossil fuels *unprofitable* within 25 years (Bloomberg NEF 2016). Solar power, in particular, is expected to meet a large share of global electricity demand. The global energy corporations are already factoring carbon price estimates and growing market shares for renewable energies into their investment decisions (Darby 2016; Pashley 2015; Shell 2016; Total 2016).

The critical questions facing us are what the future mix of energy sources means in terms of social relations of production, and whether the gradual transition envisaged by some leading oil and gas producers will be sufficient to prevent a rise in global temperature of more than 1.5 °C above the pre-industrial level (1750).<sup>2</sup> The so-called ‘market-based’ approaches to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) (mainly carbon pricing) that are preferred by neoclassical economists, business leaders, and governments have so far failed to bring about reductions on the scale that scientists tell us are necessary. Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels were measured at just above 400 ppm in May 2016 (Thompson 2016). According to a report prepared by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat (2016), global CO<sub>2</sub>eq emissions were estimated at 52.4 gigatonnes (gt) in 2015, and they will have to be reduced to no more than 34 gt by 2030 and 14.2 gt by 2050 if Earth is to have a greater than 50 per cent chance of staying below a 1.5 C temperature increase (53). The ‘intended nationally determined contributions’ submitted to the UNFCCC prior to the Paris Conference of the Parties to the convention (CoP) in December 2015 will not, however, produce the necessary reductions.

As for the social relations of production associated with future ‘technological frameworks’ (Buck 2007),<sup>3</sup> multiple paths appear to be open, although we can expect the pressures for commodification to be powerful. Fossil fuels made possible rates of growth and production of surplus-value that had not been seen before the late eighteenth century. By the mid-twentieth century, oil was replacing coal due to its properties of storability, transportability, and high energy return on energy invested (at least for conventionally extracted oil), and its use as a transportation fuel. The German ecological economist, Elmar Altvater, believes that it is ‘impossible to power the machine of capitalist accumulation and growth with “thin” solar radiation-energy. It simply lacks the

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<sup>2</sup> A ceiling of 1.5 °C is the Paris CoP target, considered less risky than the 2C ceiling.

<sup>3</sup> Buck argues that capitalism has driven radical transformations in ‘base technologies’ and their associated leading industries since the early industrial revolution.

potential of time and space compression, which 'thick' fossil energy offers' (2007, 45). Moreover, in Altvater's view, a solar revolution will require not only new technologies, but also new 'social forms beyond capitalism' -- 'a radical transformation of the patterns of production and consumption, life and work, gender relations and the spatial and temporal organization of social life' (54). This view is shared by many on the green-left, such as the signatories to Canada's LEAP manifesto (April 2015), a set of high-level principles to guide social movement and political programs. The manifesto states that 'the time for energy democracy has come; we believe not just in changes to our energy sources, but that wherever possible communities should collectively control these new energy systems.'<sup>4</sup>

Many green radicals envisage a solar age in which more goods and services are produced on a local or regional basis, while reliance on global supply chains (fuelled largely by oil) is substantially reduced. Renewable energies as well as climate change adaptation work are expected to generate more jobs than capital-intensive oil extraction, even if these jobs are less richly paid than those of oil-field workers. Likewise, increased local production of value-added goods and of food are expected to generate sustainable livelihoods. Smaller scale, diverse production for regional markets may lend itself to co-operative and petty-commodity forms of ownership. This vision does not negate an important role for the state (albeit a democratized state) in creating the regulatory framework and in directing investment in ways that support ecological restructuring and social justice imperatives.

Another, more dystopian vision is presented by Daniel Buck, for whom it is not unthinkable that capitalists will assert control over new technologies. Even renewable energies may be subject to centralized production by large corporations, depending on the scale of the technologies and infrastructures that are developed to produce and distribute electricity. Large oil and gas corporations are already diversifying their investments by purchasing capacity in the wind and solar energy sectors. Moreover, a shift to a post-carbon regime of accumulation may happen in a highly uneven fashion around the globe, with a greening of capitalist production taking place earliest in parts of the global north, while ecological catastrophes have the worst impacts, at least initially, in regions of the global south. Altvater also recognized such a possibility in a 1998 essay in which he spoke of a trend toward 'global apartheid.' Buck reminds us that future technologies and modes of regulation could be both ecologically harmful and authoritarian. Indeed, some capitalist solutions to the depletion of conventional oil reserves have already pointed in that direction (hydraulic fracturing, deep-water drilling for oil and gas, exploration of indigenous territories in remaining rainforest zones, projects to drill in the Arctic, carbon offset schemes that dispossess indigenous communities of traditional land use). Technologies like carbon capture and sequestration,

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<sup>4</sup> <https://leapmanifesto.org/en/the-leap-manifesto/#manifesto-content>.

or geo-engineering schemes to suck carbon from the atmosphere or alter the chemical composition of the atmosphere or the oceans are being developed by corporations with massive state subsidies.

### **Post-carbon capitalism**

Some political economists (Newell and Paterson 2010; Sapinski 2015) have begun to identify the outlines of an emerging ‘climate capitalism.’ Jean-Philippe Sapinski (2016, 89-90) defines climate capitalism as:

a regime of capital accumulation founded on climatically benign production technologies and increased energy efficiency. Developed within the bounds of neoliberal environmentalism (see Castree 2010), climate capitalism is founded on market mechanisms, mainly carbon trading and carbon taxes. The hope is that pricing access to the atmosphere’s sink capacity will foster the technical innovations needed to make ‘low emissions’ production technologies and energy generation cost competitive, so thus move investments away from fossil fuel dependent commodity production (Böhm and Dabhi 2009; Newell and Paterson 2010).

Key players in the articulation of such a regime include the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the European Business Council for a Sustainable Energy Future, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (USA), Global Climate Forum (Germany), Copenhagen Climate Council, and The Climate Group (UK), among others. There is, of course, a range of responses to the climate crisis from the large corporate emitters —from the attempts on the part of Exxon-Mobil or coal company executives to discredit climate science, to the public proclamations of the executives of Royal Dutch Shell, British Petroleum, and Total of their support for action on climate change (Saeverud and Skjaereth 2007; Skjaereth and Eikeland 2013; Skjaereth and Scheurs 2013; Skjaereth and Skodvin 2009).

Let us accept that a growing number of members of the global corporate elite view climate change as a serious threat to the well-being of future generations, or, at the very least, that they recognize that this is now the political consensus among governments and publics and that they must respond in some fashion to citizens’ demands for the decarbonisation of capitalist economies. While environmentalists are provoked to clash swords with the climate change deniers and to expose their ‘petro-turf’ networks, another --more subtle and complex -- game is being played out among corporate elites, government decision-makers, financial institutions, and policy consultants located in

think-tanks, ENGOs, and academic venues. In this game, there is a large degree of consensus about the privileging of 'market-based' and technological approaches to the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions. Although the language used to characterize these approaches reproduces neoliberalism's uncritical deference to markets and market actors, the policies in fact rely substantially on regulatory frameworks legislated by governments as well as public subsidies. The central message, however, is that the global climate crisis will be managed by government-corporate partnerships in which governments rely heavily upon corporations' investment decisions and technological innovation.

A more expansive characterization of the emerging climate capitalism includes these elements:

- Carbon needs to be priced (by means of government-legislated taxes or emissions trading systems) in order to incentivize GHG emitters to reduce their emissions. However, in the absence of a global carbon price, governments must set carbon prices at levels that do not trigger capital flight on the part of large emitters who can relocate investment to lower (carbon) cost jurisdictions. Thus, as in all market-based approaches, environmental targets are a function of acceptable rates of profit (given the opportunities available to mobile capital), rather than a function of the ecological imperatives identified by best available science.
- The financialization of carbon and the invention of other commodities (ecosystem services, biodiversity offsets) open up new opportunities for capital accumulation.
- GHG reductions will be achieved not by reduced consumption in the rich countries (shrinking markets and global trade, smaller economies, reduced energy and material throughputs in absolute terms), expansion of free time, and redistribution of wealth, but by greater energy efficiency, the use of new technologies (including technologies to capture or reuse greenhouse gasses) and expanded production of non-fossil fuel sources of energy. On the contrary, demand for energy is projected to grow due to human population growth and economic 'development' in the global south. Increased demand for electricity is also predicted as a result of transition to electric vehicles.
- Corporations, as well as international financial institutions, are the lead actors, supported by governments, in investing in R&D and 'innovation' (that will be commercialized and deployed mainly by corporations). There is no conflict between continued economic growth and ecological limits; all that is needed is a number of shifts in investment (e.g., carbon bonds, renewable energy markets) and technologies. Rich countries have a moral obligation to help transfer some of these technologies to poorer countries (but only limited obligations to transfer wealth, as we see in climate change negotiations at the international level).

- While a transition to renewable energies for electricity supply and other needs must be a medium-to-long-term goal, humankind will continue to rely upon fossil fuels (particularly, oil and gas) for many decades to come, since there are, as yet, no substitutes for certain uses of oil (especially in transportation), and because poor countries with large coal reserves (like India) have no more affordable means to fuel their economic development. Thus, it is only responsible on the part of large ‘energy’ corporations to continue to search for and develop oil and gas reserves (gas being a ‘bridge’ fuel), while improving the carbon footprint of such production and investing in renewables. Governments, meanwhile, should subsidize development of ‘clean energy’ technologies (such as CCS) to reduce emissions from fossil fuels as well as new fuel sources for transportation (biofuels).
- Coal-fired electricity production should be cut back first, with natural gas being its primary medium-term substitute.
- A large portion of the world’s population lacks the necessary energy to meet its basic needs and its development goals. Global energy corporations seek to supply these needs by extracting and exporting fossil fuels as well as renewable energy components.
- Corporations have been successful in securing compensation for ‘stranded assets,’ evading the deferred costs of resource extraction, and lobbying for downstream carbon taxes on the grounds that ‘we are all responsible, as consumers of energy, for climate change.’

This capitalist vision of the post-carbon future diverges radically from the green-left vision of community-based production no longer dominated by global corporations and supply chains, oriented to meeting democratically-determined social needs, fuelled almost entirely by renewable sources of energy, and animated by values of eco-centrism, egalitarianism, and solidarity (including global citizenship).<sup>5</sup> In green-left thinking, agency resides primarily in communities and governments, not large corporations, and the global crisis of justice (a term not found in climate capitalist discourse) requires an egalitarian rationing of the global carbon budget, along with a substantial transfer of resources to the poorest countries to finance low-carbon economic development and adaptation to the effects of climate change. While many grassroots organizations are

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<sup>5</sup> I recognize that ‘green-left’ is a wide umbrella and that there will be disagreements about which academic works, political parties, organizations, manifestos, and so on, fit under it. I would include the works of ecological economists such as Alain Lipietz and Elmar Altvater, along with many other Marxist and post-Marxist ecological thinkers, both inside and outside of Green parties around the world. In the Canadian context, green-left programmatic positions are being advanced today by the leader of the Green Party, Elizabeth May, some of the base of the NDP, Greenpeace and other ENGOs, and the authors of the LEAP manifesto (<https://leapmanifesto.org/en/the-leap-manifesto/#manifesto-content>).

calling for solutions that seem to imply a new order of global governance and regulation, global forums such as the CoPs are privileging the climate capitalist approaches.<sup>6</sup>

In the lead-up to the Paris CoP (held in December 2015), the President and CEO of TOTAL E&P Canada, Laurent Maurel, was invited to speak at an event at the University of Alberta organized by the French embassy in Canada.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Maurel, whose company participates in the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI) (discussed further, below), made many of the points that have become part of post-carbon capitalist discourse. He began by acknowledging to a large audience of the environmentally-minded that the energy corporations are ‘part of the problem and . . . also part of the solution.’ In a context in which the world economy will continue to grow, he said, there will be concomitant demand for energy—especially in the global south. ‘Energy needs to be available to all the people on the planet, especially the 1.3 billion people who do not have basic access to electricity.’ He specifically mentioned the great need for more energy in Africa.<sup>8</sup> Energy corporations are to industrialization of the global south, therefore, what the agribusiness corporations are to food production in the global south, that is, vectors of ‘development.’ Members of the OGCI, he said, are committed to reducing the GHG intensity of energy production, mainly by taking a ‘collective approach’ to the development of carbon capture and sequestration technology and other technologies (e.g., to stop methane leakage). They see increased production of natural gas as a replacement for a share of the world’s consumption of oil, and are ready to divest from coal. They are diversifying their investments into solar energy production, biofuels, and biomass conversion. An example offered by Mr. Maurel was the 2011 acquisition by Total SA, Europe’s third-biggest oil producer, of 60 per cent of SunPower Corp. (the second-largest U.S. solar panel maker).

The Oil and Gas Climate Initiative to which Mr. Maurel referred was formed in 2014 during discussions at the World Economic Forum in Davos, initially bringing together six (notably, none US-based) oil and gas giants: Saudi Aramco, BG Group, Eni, PEMEX, Sinopec, and Total (Oil & Gas Climate Initiative 2014). As of 2016, BP, CNPC, Reliance Industries, Repsol, Shell, and Statoil had also joined the group.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, for example, was launched at the Paris CoP. See: <http://www.carbonpricingleadership.org/>.

<sup>7</sup> The session, which was organized by the Science and Technology Secretary of the French Embassy in Canada and the European Union Centre of Excellence at the University of Alberta, may be viewed here: <http://livestream.com/accounts/3923053/events/4407075/player?width=640&height=360&autoPlay=true&mute=false>. The panel presentations described in this article took place on 29 October 2015. The event was one of a number of ‘French Ameri-Can Climate Talks,’ organized by the French embassies in the United States and Canada.

<sup>8</sup> TOTAL, Maurel said, had initiated ‘a crowdfunding platform dedicated to access to clean energy . . . for the people who need it most.’

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.oilandgasclimateinitiative.com/>. BG Group has been acquired by Royal Dutch Shell since 2014.

OGCI's 'Action Statement' (2014) refers to its members' 'pivotal role in providing the adequate and affordable energy that has powered global prosperity,' and their considerable investments in 'finding effective solutions to environmental challenges.' The statement highlights technological solutions to climate change, specifically: energy efficiency, reduction of gas flaring and methane emissions, carbon capture and storage, the expanded role of natural gas and renewable energy.'

Elements of the capitalist post-carbon vision are found in corporate reports and statements by CEOs. Ben van Beurden, CEO of Royal Dutch Shell, for example, was quoted as saying that although solar energy will someday be 'the backbone' of world energy systems, this will not happen for decades, and that in the meantime there will be a need for oil to meet a doubling of world energy demand (Pashley 2015). Another Shell executive, quoted in the same article, suggested that switching production from 'dirty coal to lesser-emitting gas or oil' was the way to avoid surpassing the 2C temperature increase. In Total's 2016 strategy paper, its CEO, Patrick Pouyanné, is quoted as saying:

Steering investment in the private sector is vital if we want to keep global warming under 2°C. Putting a price on CO<sub>2</sub> is the most efficient financial mechanism to change the rules of the game quickly. It's a must in the energy sector. The main priority is to reduce the use of coal, which generates more emissions than any other type of energy, and to switch to gas and renewables for power generation. A carbon price of USD 30 to USD 40 per ton would make this possible.

In May 2015 the CEOs of BP, Shell, BG Group, Statoil, Eni, and Total wrote to the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, Christiana Figueres, reiterating points made in the OGCI statement, and calling on national governments to 'introduce carbon pricing even-handedly and eventually enable global linkage between national systems' (Lund et al. 2015). Shell's 2016 global scenarios report frames the problem as the need to 'decarbonise the global economy in a way that might address both the challenge of climate change and the need for broader economic growth.'<sup>10</sup>

The evidence so far suggests that it is the corporations based in the European Union that are leading the formulation of a long-term, carbon-constrained investment strategy with a view to making a sufficiently gradual transition to renewables so as to extract maximum revenue from their existing investments in oil, gas, and LNG production. Unlike US-based Exxon, they accept the writing on the wall with regard to the intensifying pressures from publics (particularly in Europe) for deeper and faster reductions of global GHG emissions. Their strategy may also be responsive to divestment

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<sup>10</sup> This statement is found in the summary of the report, at <http://www.shell.com/energy-and-innovation/the-energy-future/scenarios/a-better-life-with-a-healthy-planet.html>.

campaigns. The OGI group does not have much to lose in the phasing out of coal production, and some of its members are already integrated into emissions-trading schemes or operating in jurisdictions with carbon taxes or levies. These corporations, unlike some of the smaller producers of oil and gas, seem well able to absorb the additional costs of carbon pricing without significant effects on their bottom lines. Indeed, there are important benefits, such as social license to operate. In addition, the financialization of carbon in the form of offsets and tradeable permits has created lucrative new markets.<sup>11</sup>

In the jurisdictions where large multinational oil and gas corporations operate, and where states are particularly reliant upon oil revenues, carbon price ceilings are being set in relation to so-called 'carbon leakage' thresholds. According to this economic hypothesis, if the price set for CO<sub>2</sub>eq emissions is 'too high,' large emitters will relocate production to jurisdictions where the price is lower (or non-existent). As a result, the GHGs will continue to be emitted, doing the planet no good, while the jurisdiction with the highest price on carbon will lose revenue it otherwise would have earned in royalties and taxes, along with jobs and income for its citizens.<sup>12</sup> How carbon prices are set, and what constitutes a 'too high' price are mysterious matters, since carbon pricing regimes are created by governments, which are in turn responsive to lobbyists with structural power.

As we have seen in the cases of Shell and Total, the global energy corporations commonly cite the figure of USD 30 to 40 per tonne as an operative or predictable carbon price in the jurisdictions that have – or may soon have – some form of market-based policies to regulate GHGs. The calculations by corporate emitters of the 'risk' of carbon pricing vary depending on where they operate and the sectors they are in. A 2013 survey by Climate Disclosure Project (CDP) of 29 companies based or operating in the United States found a range of USD 6 to 60. Jurisdictions arrive at different carbon prices depending on the nature of their local economy and its leading industries, their motivation to reduce GHGs, and their negotiations with large emitters. Corporations have every incentive to exaggerate the burdens of policies that seek to internalize environmental costs and to threaten capital strikes or flight to bargain down these costs.

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<sup>11</sup> There is a mushrooming literature on the commodification of nature (including carbon markets) that I cannot review here. It is, however, a major element of climate capitalism, offering new opportunities for accumulation. See, e.g., Lohmann 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Given this logic, it is not surprising that the next step is to conclude that what is needed is a 'global price' on carbon. Christian de Perthuis (Climate Economics Chair at Paris-Dauphine University) and Jean Tirole (Toulouse School of Economics and Nobel Laureate 2014) called for the inclusion of the principle of a single world carbon price in the Paris CoP Agreement. This is also being talked about in terms of 'linking' regional carbon markets. Rachel Tansey (2015), in a critical overview of the Sustainable Innovation Forum at the Paris CoP, raises the likelihood that this may well have the effect of driving down the global average price of carbon.

Corporations, governments, and economists involved in price-setting (through the design of a new policy) attempt to calculate the average carbon price for the market in which the emitters operate and compete for market share. That average price generally becomes the ceiling for a new initiative, due to the carbon leakage hypothesis. Thus, what is often represented as a ‘market determined’ carbon leakage threshold is in reality the outcome of prior political decisions by governments. The fact that carbon prices are, in most cases, far too low to achieve the emissions reductions that are necessary according to climate *science*, supports the conclusion that the predominant criterion for carbon pricing is the price ceiling acceptable to the regulated emitters.<sup>13</sup> That price, in turn, is based on some calculation of the effects of carbon pricing on their rates of profit.

There is little evidence, to date, that environmental regulation has triggered significant capital flight or carbon leakage. Economic modelling has been used to try to *predict* the effects of different carbon prices on investment decisions either on a sectoral or economy-wide basis, and is subject to a wide range of assumptions. A recent report looking into claims of carbon leakage as a result of the EU’s ETS found no evidence of carbon leakage, although the reason for this may be the generous emissions permits handed out to EU emitters (ECORYS 2013). A study commissioned by the World Bank Group found that ‘empirical examinations tend to find limited evidence of carbon leakage’ (PMR 2015, 24). An OECD study, likewise, found that carbon pricing ‘promotes abatement,’ but has no measurable negative effect on the ‘competitiveness’ of regulated corporations (Arlinghaus 2015). The World Bank report observes that similar claims about environmental regulation causing firms to relocate investment to ‘pollution havens’ have been made ever since the 1970s, but that there has been little evidence to show that environmental costs have played a significant role in investment decisions (PMR 2015, 25-26). On the contrary, the report highlights a study (Leiter et al. 2011) of the effects of environmental policy in 21 European countries on investment levels which found that ‘higher environmental stringency is associated with increased, rather than decreased, investment levels’ (26). In a review of studies relevant to the carbon leakage question, economist Larry Karp concluded that modelling results are contradictory and that empirical data are insufficient to establish a predictable magnitude of leakage (Karp 2010, 33-34). His best guess was that ‘leakage will be small or moderate’ (34). The World Bank report authors suggest that this uncertainty, combined with ‘the political economy of

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<sup>13</sup> Even in Sweden, where the general carbon tax implemented in 1991 rose from 29€ to 125€ in 2014, and is considered to be the highest carbon tax in any country, industry was taxed at only 50 per cent of this rate, and electricity used in the industrial sector was not taxed. Emitters covered by the EU’s ETS were not subject to the carbon tax. Fossil fuels were heavily taxed in the 1980s—especially petrol. Almost all of Sweden’s electricity by 1999 came from nuclear, hydro, or biomass sources. With a combination of multiple taxes on CO<sub>2</sub>, fuels, and pollutants along with energy efficiency programs, Sweden reduced its GHG emissions by 23 per cent from 1990 to 2013. See: Johannsson 2001; Andersson and Lövin 2015.

lobbying,’ make it likely that the threat of carbon leakage ‘will remain an important part of carbon pricing policy despite the generally weak evidence’ (PMR 2015, 27).

In other words, ‘carbon leakage’ is a new variant of earlier corporate threats of disinvestment in response to environmental regulation. It is essentially synonymous with the use of the more euphemistic term ‘competitiveness’ by large corporations and their lobbying associations.<sup>14</sup> The ‘concerns’ expressed by industry spokespersons, whether publicly or behind closed doors (lobbying), have an effective disciplining role on governments.

What governments, corporations, and economists do not want to say is that the full internalisation of the environmental costs of production would make many firms *unprofitable*, as this would be equivalent to acknowledging the conflict between capitalism and ecological sustainability that sustainable development discourse tries so insistently to erase. An adequate response to global warming requires political action and structural change of the kind that few governments are prepared to engage. Such action could range from the use of fiscal and regulatory policies to effect rapid transition to ‘mixed ownership’ post-carbon economies to the extensive use of public ownership of productive and financial capital. There are costs and obstacles to account for with regard to such strategies, not least of which is the WTO regime. Nor does a sub-national jurisdiction like Alberta have at its disposal all of the levers of change that are available to a national government. It is to the Alberta context that I now turn.

### **Climate Capitalism and Climate Change Policy in Alberta**

‘Climate capitalism,’ as mentioned above, gives a central place to technological innovation as the magic formula for reconciling growth in fossil fuels extraction and exports with reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (the ‘greening of energy production,’ or ‘reducing the GHG intensity of the global energy mix’), with such innovation being substantially subsidized by governments. This element of climate capitalism has certainly been a pillar of the Progressive Conservative (PC) governments’ climate change policy in Alberta since the 1990s (Adkin 2014; Adkin and Stares 2016). The ‘innovation’ corporations established by the PC government in 2010 have pursued this agenda in their funding of corporate-university research partnerships. The CEO of Alberta Innovates – Energy and Environment Solutions (AI—EES), argued at a forum in October 2015 that the ‘key’ to making Alberta’s oil sands production environmentally sustainable was

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Competitiveness’ appears 17 times in the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers’ submission to the Alberta Climate Change Advisory Panel: CAPP, October 1, 2015, <file:///I:/publications/climate%20policy%20Alberta%20paper/CAPP%20submission%20to%20AB%20Climate%20Panel%202015.pdf>. On ‘competitiveness’ discourse in relation to Canadian climate change policy, see Blair 2012.

‘disruptive technology and innovation.’<sup>15</sup> He highlighted the potential of CCS, small modular nuclear reactors (to supply energy to the oil sands upgraders), and CO<sub>2</sub> ‘utilisation,’ as well as technologies that promise to reduce water use in the oil sands. The Alberta government has been a strong proponent of CCS, in particular, as the solution to GHG emission concerns (Adkin and Stares 2016). In response to a statement by an audience member associated with EcoJustice that we need ‘democratic’ solutions that empower local communities rather than relying upon business, Isaac insisted ‘we can make business our friend . . . because they have the capacity to make the transformations that are needed. They are the ones that can invest.’

In its brief to Alberta’s Climate Change Advisory Panel, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) argued that a much better alternative to increasing ‘climate-related cost burdens’ on the oil and gas industry would be to ‘focus on technology and innovation enhancement.’ CAPP clearly assumes that such investment will take the form of ‘partnerships’ between ‘industry and government.’ Large emitters have benefited from grants from the Climate Change Emissions Management Fund (CCEMF). CAPP also proposes a ‘clean infrastructure’ royalty credit program as an incentive for the further ‘uptake of clean technologies’ (CAPP 2015, 21). It asks for the loosening up and expansion of the Scientific Research and Experimental Development Tax Credit (21-22) and the doubling of the funding to another royalty credit program, the Innovative Energy Technologies Program (22). In addition, CAPP proposes yet another government-funded research institution that would focus on ‘R&D into conventional oil and natural gas production and environmental performance,’ thereby complementing the R&D already funded by Alberta Innovates (23).

The PCs’ framework for GHG reduction, put in place by the Klein and Stelmach governments, consisted (in addition to the ‘technology and innovation’ pillar described above), of a requirement that the emitters of more than 100,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>eq per year reduce their emissions *intensity* (i.e., the CO<sub>2</sub>eq emitted per unit of production, such as a barrel of oil) by 12 per cent per year, beginning in 2007. The *Climate Change and Emissions Management Act* created a CCEM Fund into which large emitters have, since 2009, paid a fee per tonne of GHG emissions exceeding their annual emissions intensity reduction requirement. The Specified Gas Emitters Regulation (SGER) set out three options for companies to comply with their emissions intensity reduction requirements (in addition to actually reducing their on-site emissions): purchase of an offset within Alberta; payment into the CCEM Fund (at \$15 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>) for a credit; or the procurement of an emissions performance credit from another facility that has reduced its emissions by more than the required amount.<sup>16</sup> Under this system, Alberta’s GHGs

<sup>15</sup> This was the forum described in note 7.

<sup>16</sup> Specified Gas Emitters Regulation, Alta Reg 139/2007, <http://www.canlii.org/en/ab/laws/regu/alta-reg-139-2007/latest/alta-reg-139-2007.html>.

have *grown* from an estimated 234 megatonnes (mt) in 2005 to 274 mt in 2015, with most of the emissions growth coming from the oil sands. If the Alberta government's claims about its climate change plan in 2002 had been realized, the province's total emissions in 2020 would be 218 mt. They are instead expected to be closer to 290 mt.<sup>17</sup>

In the summer of 2015 the NDP Minister of Environment and Parks appointed the Alberta Climate Leadership Panel, chaired by an energy economist from the University of Alberta's School of Business. After a highly compressed public and stakeholder consultation period, the Panel issued its report in November. The government immediately accepted most of its recommendations, without further public consultation. Among the measures that the Alberta government delegation carried to Paris in December were:

- a \$30 per tonne price for regulated CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions, justified as the upper limit before carbon leakage (disinvestment) will occur (Climate Panel 2015, 11)
- coal-powered electricity production will be phased out by 2030 (with compensation for the plant owners)
- emissions from expanding oil sands production will be permitted to rise to a ceiling of 100 mt from their current level of 70 mt (Government of Alberta 2015)
- a 45 per cent reduction in methane gas emissions from Alberta's oil and gas operations by 2025
- a target for renewables as a share of provincial energy supply of 30 per cent by 2030

A year into its mandate, the NDP government also passed *The Climate Leadership Implementation Act*, which set a \$20 per tonne carbon "levy" (the term "tax" was avoided) effective January 1, 2017; this rate will be raised to \$30 per tonne January 1, 2018 (Alberta 2016a). The carbon levy will be included in the price of all fuels that emit greenhouse gases when combusted (including transportation and heating fuels such as diesel, gasoline, natural gas and propane). It will not apply directly to consumer purchases of electricity, to the "specified gas emitters" (large emitters that are covered by the SGER), to fuel used by farmers for farm operations, or to other exempted groups/uses. The large industrial emitters will continue to be subject to the SGER framework until the end of 2017, when product and sector-based performance standards will be introduced (as recommended by the Alberta Climate Leadership Panel). In the meantime, the emissions intensity requirement has been increased to 15 per cent per year (from 12 per cent), and the price per tonne for emissions exceeding this target was increased to \$20 (from \$15) in 2016 and to \$30 as of January 2017.

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<sup>17</sup>These figures from Environment and Climate Change Canada, <http://www.ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=en&n=18F3BB9C-1> (accessed June 2016).

The government has also mandated, through *The Climate Leadership Implementation Act*, that all revenue collected through the carbon levy will be used only for ‘initiatives related to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases or supporting Alberta’s ability to adapt to climate change, or to provide rebates or adjustments related to the carbon levy to consumers, businesses and communities, including adjustments in the form of tax credits or tax rate reductions’ (‘Purpose’ 3.2). With the aim of mitigating social inequality effects, the government has chosen to rebate the carbon levy to taxpayers according to income, and estimates that 60 per cent of households will receive some annual rebate.

Schedule 2 of the Act established the Energy Efficiency Alberta (EEA) crown corporation with a mandate ‘(a) to raise awareness among energy consumers of energy use and the associated economic and environmental consequences, (b) to promote, design and deliver programs and carry out other activities related to energy efficiency, energy conservation and the development of micro-generation and small scale energy systems in Alberta, and (c) to promote the development of an energy efficiency services industry’ (Bill 20, Schedule 2, Art. 2 (2)(a)). The EEA will be funded by a portion of the new carbon levy, with a budget for 2017-2022 estimated at \$645 million (Government of Alberta 2016a).

This is an impressive body of actions for a new government inheriting a long-entrenched conservative-appointed senior civil service and an understaffed Ministry of Environment (Adkin 2016). The government’s measures have faced vocal opposition from the Wildrose Party which constructs the carbon levy as a cruel tax on Albertan families during a period of economic recession (which is also blamed on the NDP government). A number of the large oil and gas corporations operating in the province have, on the contrary, supported the NDP’s climate policies. How should we assess the policy, as it has been rolled out to date, in relation to the climate capitalist and green-left, or deep decarbonisation paths that I have outlined above?

From the perspective of the global climate crisis and the inadequacy of the commitments made at the Paris CoP, it is questionable whether Alberta’s current suite of policies will amount to a ‘fair share’ of the burden of GHG reductions. According to the Alberta Climate Leadership Panel’s report, the implementation of its recommendations will result in the continuing rise of the province’s total emissions (as a result, mainly, of rising emissions from the oil sands) until 2020. Thereafter, a gradual decline is expected, with emissions returning to their 2015 level (or 270 mt) by 2030. Beyond 2030, no predictions have been made nor targets set. Compare this commitment to Canada’s 2002 commitment under the UNFCCC Kyoto Protocol to reduce GHG emissions by 6 per cent of 1990 level by 2012. Had Alberta adopted and implemented this target, its 1990 GHGs of 175 mt would have fallen to 164.5 mt by 2012. If Alberta were held to the IPCC target of a 25-40 per cent reduction below 1990 by 2030, and were it to aim, moderately, to reduce its emissions by 30 per cent, its emissions in 2030 would be 122 mt. Looking

ahead to 2050, the EU has adopted a target of an 80 per cent reduction below 1990, and the Deep Decarbonisation Pathways Project (DDPP), 'taking seriously what is needed to limit global warming to 2 °C or less,' has recommended a target of an 87 per cent reduction over 2010 by 2050. In the first scenario, Alberta's emissions would plummet to 35 mt, and in the second, to 31 mt. At present, neither Canada nor Alberta has any plan to achieve such a massive reduction of its GHG emissions.

It is frequently argued by economists and politicians that Alberta should not be held to such targets because of the heavy reliance of its economy on fossil fuel extraction, which is carbon-intensive. Moreover, adopting a carbon price that would bring emissions down faster (which most economists estimate to be \$100 per tonne or more) is ruled out on the grounds that it would result only in carbon leakage. Among the many possible responses to the first argument is the ethical argument that the burden of stopping the global temperature rise must be shared equally. The UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), in conjunction with the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI) have calculated that, taking the global carbon budget (measured in tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>eq) required to limit temperature changes to 2 °C in 2050 and dividing this by a forecast of the world's population, global *per capita* emissions of GHGs must be no greater than 1.7 tonnes by 2050. Even if the planet achieves this, there is still only a 66 per cent chance of staying below the 2 °C threshold (Bataille et al. 2015, 12-13). As the DDPP's 2015 Canada report concludes: 'This DDPC implies dramatic reductions in GHG emissions in Canada, where per capita emissions are presently 21 tonnes, with our analysis and modelling indicating that this is truly a stretch scenario relative to current and forecast policy stringency' (Bataille et al. 2015, 13, italics added).

The authors of the Canada report do not, however, consider the task to be impossible. Their package of policies includes: 'best-in-class regulations that strengthen existing policies for the electricity, buildings and transport sectors,' a cap and trade system to drive abatement in heavy industry and oil and gas, and a 'complementary carbon price on the rest of the economy that essentially mops up reductions to reach areas where the regulations do not go, and returns the revenues to reduced income and corporate taxes' (Ibid. 13). If Albertans do not reduce their per capita emissions of GHGs to their equal global share, it means that people elsewhere will have to reduce theirs by more than their equal global share. Canadians are, overall, much better positioned in terms of human capital, scientific capital, and natural resources to achieve such targets than are populations in many other parts of the world. These are the kinds of arguments made in the green-left LEAP manifesto.

Regarding the carbon leakage argument, which the NDP government appears to have accepted, the \$30 CAD ceiling price on carbon recommended by the Climate Panel was not explained, leaving us to assume that it was based on a survey of prices in other jurisdictions where heavy oil is produced (and might attract investment away from

Alberta).<sup>18</sup> No doubt the Panel also heard from corporate ‘stakeholders’ during its ‘technical’ meetings with industry representatives in 2015 regarding the carbon price range that would be acceptable to them. In its brief to the Climate Change Advisory Panel the CAPP stated: ‘The sector is highly competitive, and there are many producers operating in a variety of basins around the world producing comparable products. Alberta (and Canada) needs to offer fiscal terms that are competitive with other jurisdictions to ensure industry activity in Canada remains viable’ (CAPP 2015, 25). CAPP uses the carbon leakage argument in its brief (Ibid., 26-27). Yet whether the corporations that have invested heavily in capital-intensive bitumen extraction are in any position to cut their losses and transfer investment to other sites of heavy oil production (e.g., in Mexico, Venezuela, or Saskatchewan) is a question that calls for serious examination. Companies that have already sunk capital in the oil sands are likely less ‘mobile’ than corporate rhetoric suggests. A bigger obstacle to investment in Alberta’s oil sands is the opposition to new pipeline capacity to the west and the east. Citing frustration with the delayed approval of the pipeline, CNPC International (a subsidiary of the China National Petroleum Corp.) withdrew from the Northern Gateway pipeline project in 2007 and turned to Venezuela, instead, as a source of crude oil (Lorenz 2007). More generally, low oil prices make investment in high-cost non-conventional oil extraction unattractive to investors. In October 2015, with no sign of a price recovery, a *New York Times* story reported:

Since the price collapse, Teck Resources has delayed the start of its oilsands project by five years to 2026. Cenovus Energy substantially reduced budgets for its long-term developments. And Osum Oil Sands has set aside some of the expansion planned for a project it purchased from Shell last year. The Chinese-owned company Nexen, which had its oilsands production curtailed by regulators for about a month in August because of a pipeline leak, has deferred plans to build another upgrader facility, where tar-like bitumen of the oilsands is converted into synthetic crude oil, until the end of 2020 (Austen 2015).

Following the Paris CoP, Shell and Total released strategic investment reports that reassured shareholders that their investment portfolios are ‘resilient’ vis-à-vis the predicted environmental costs (and low prices) of extracting non-conventional oil. Total, which has four facilities in the Athabasca oil sands (Surmont, Fort Hills, Joslyn, and Northern Lights), as well as several exploration leases, announced in its May 2016 strategy paper, *Integrating Climate into our Strategy*, that it would be reducing its exposure in the oil sands and that it would not be pursuing exploration in the Arctic.

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<sup>18</sup> The term carbon leakage is used only once in the Panel’s report, on p. 11.

In today's challenging production environment, we are prioritizing our projects and *focusing on moderately priced production and processing assets that meet the highest environmental and safety standards*. On that basis, in 2015 we decided to reduce our exposure in Canada's oil sands, which are particularly expensive to develop and operate (26, italics added).

At the same time, Total—along with other oil sands producers like Shell and Suncor—affirmed its support for carbon pricing. Total's 2016 strategy paper stated that it applies 'an internal CO<sub>2</sub> price of USD 30 to USD 40, depending on the oil price scenario or the actual price if it is higher in a given country, when evaluating our investments. This is consistent with our support for mechanisms to replace coal with gas in power generation and our investment in R&D on low-carbon technologies' (Ibid., 26).

Alberta's foreign-owned oil and gas giants have not (at least publicly) protested the moderate proposals for pricing carbon that were made by the Climate Panel in November 2015. Indeed, the NDP's measures to date, insofar as they affect profit levels in the oil and gas sector, may be less costly to the industry than those that were being considered by the Redford government in 2013 (Dyer 2013; McCarthy et al. 2013; Mitchelmore 2015; Mandel 2016). The crisis of profitability the oil sands producers face at present is due to factors that are not unique to Alberta, but are common to all producers of high-cost non-conventional fossil fuels in a low-price era brought on by over-production. Given the global prognosis for 'peak fossil fuels' set out in the first section of this article, the primary question for the Alberta government is not whether a higher carbon levy for large emitters will result in carbon leakage, but what will take the place of the oil sands in the province's economy within the next 20 years.

### **A crossroads for the climate and for the left in Alberta**

Humankind has reached a critical crossroads: One road leads in the direction of shallow decarbonisation, intensifying climate change feedback effects, and worsening global economic insecurity and political instability. This road will be one of market-driven politics that privilege capital accumulation, but its sign-posts will read 'providing energy to the world,' 'clean energy,' and 'sustainable growth and prosperity.' This is the path of climate capitalism.

Another road leads in the direction of deep decarbonisation and shrinking opportunities for capital accumulation, underpinned by new forms of democratic governance. We could call this ecological democracy. Achieving deep decarbonisation in the next 20 to 30 years will not be possible using the carbon pricing that has been implemented or proposed to date. A transition on this scale using 'market based'

approaches would require such approaches to be driven by ecological imperatives rather than constrained by corporate threats to relocate investment to under-regulated jurisdictions. Governments have a number of ways to counter such corporate power, including the renegotiation of trade and investment agreements (or their abrogation), efforts to secure stronger international environmental agreements, investment in a parallel, publicly-owned, renewables-based economy, and expropriation of corporate assets. A state like Norway's has given itself considerable leverage to determine the rate of resource exploitation and to appropriate the wealth produced, by maintaining a dominant role for public exploitation of its off-shore oil reserves. Thanks to the decisions made by its Social Credit and Conservative governments from the 1940s onward (Pratt 1976; Richards and Pratt 1981) Alberta has never asserted majority public ownership of productive capacity in the oil and gas sector. Its rentierism has been based on an increasingly shrinking share of resource rents paid by large private corporations dominated by US capital (Campanella 2012; Roy 2015). In January 2016, following a review of the province's royalties regime, and in the context of the collapse of oil prices and strong industry pressure, the Notley government decided not to increase royalty rates for oil and gas producers.<sup>19</sup>

By virtue of being a Canadian province and subject to the international trade and investment treaties to which neoliberal Canadian governments have signed on, the expropriation of energy corporation assets now would incur massive market and 'constitutional' retaliation (e.g., lawsuits under NAFTA) on the part of bond holders and investors.<sup>20</sup> In any case, assets in the oil sands are beginning to look less and less attractive. In this context, what levers are available to the NDP government of Alberta to raise revenue and use it to rapidly shift investment away from the fossil fuels industries toward sustainable agriculture and urban design, renewable energy substitution, and other leading sectors of an alternative development model? What other resources can be mobilized by the state and civil society to effect a green transition? These are hard questions that call for 'practical' answers (Williams 1989). However, the answers cannot wait. To secure this opening for change and extend it into the future the immediate political-economic crisis of sustainable livelihoods and income security must be met head on with rapid new job creation and income redistribution.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Video press conference with the Premier, 29 January 2016.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtpjaqGay5o>. Accessed 18 February 2016.

<sup>20</sup> During the recent US Presidential election campaign, Donald Trump claimed that he would tear up or renegotiate NAFTA but it is impossible to know at this time what this may mean for Canada.

<sup>21</sup> The unemployment rate in Alberta has risen from 4.7% in December 2014 to 8.5% in October 2016. The last time the unemployment rate in Alberta was above 7.0% was in April 2010. The unemployment rate in Canada as a whole in October 2016 was 7.0%. Sources: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, December 2015, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160108/dq160108a-eng.htm>; Statistics Canada, CANSIM,

### *How Government Can Lead*

Government does have the authority to take the lead in comprehensive planning for green transition. Ecological and equity criteria, along with food self-sufficiency, employment-generation, and respect for aboriginal rights must guide every area of government policy. For this to happen *democratically*, the government must invest in public education (about the stakes, the options, the benefits of energy transition), and in the meaningful involvement of citizens and communities in decision-making. A mobilizing, inspirational politics of principles is called for that speaks to global and intergenerational equity. Beyond this, we need a vision of the better world we will win. The transition we are facing should be presented as an opportunity to create a society that brings us greater security, well-being, and happiness.

The NDP's key resources lie in the civil service and in civil society. The capacity of the civil service, combined with the knowledge and research resources in civil society (think tanks, unions, universities, NGOs, indigenous peoples) should be supported and mobilized to undertake comprehensive planning for a green transition. The government has been gradually rebuilding the policy capacity of ministries, including by hiring leaders from civil society organizations who have been engaged in these issues for many years. It is, however, constrained by the current fiscal environment in regard to expansion of the public service. One recent move has created a possible revenue stream that the government could use to multiply its policy and planning, as well as its public involvement resources. Its *Climate Leadership Implementation Act*, passed in May 2016, amended the *Climate Change Emissions Management Act* to permit the CCEM Fund to be used for:

(g.1) education initiatives, including education programs, research programs and scholarships; (g.2) outreach initiatives, including initiatives to provide information to stakeholders and the public; (g.3) reimbursing salaries, fees, expenses, liabilities or other costs incurred by the Government in respect of activities or functions related to reducing emissions of specified gases or supporting Alberta's ability to adapt to climate change; (g.4) funding salaries, fees, expenses, liabilities or other costs incurred by a Provincial corporation or the Independent System Operator in respect of activities or functions related to reducing emissions of specified gases or supporting Alberta's ability to adapt to climate change (Government of Alberta 2016b, 94).

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table [282-0087](#) (accessed 25 November 2016); Government of Alberta, <http://economicdashboard.alberta.ca/Unemployment#alberta> (accessed 25 November 2016).

While the new carbon levy has attracted most of the attention of the opposition parties, these changes may be subversive of the hegemony of oil and gas industry interests in ways that are more important. The CCEM fund may provide a source of revenue to carry out the kind of public education and consultation initiatives that will be critical to garnering support for reforms in the direction of deep decarbonisation – should the government choose to undertake these. Funding for research programs and scholarships may be directed to post-secondary institutions where research capacity already exists, and may be mobilized to advance green transition priorities. Because previous government funding priorities (both federal and provincial) heavily favoured R & D related to fossil fuels (Adkin 2016b), Alberta’s post-secondary institutions structured their hiring and grant-seeking accordingly to maximize their funding and endowments. If governments establish new “green transition” priorities for their funding agencies, university hiring and research priorities will shift accordingly, and research capacity that was under-resourced will be tapped. The CCEM Corporation could also be redirected by the government to prioritize investment in R & D in energy efficiency and renewable energy systems, rather than the fossil-fuel-related or biofuels projects that it has prioritized since 2009 (Adkin and Stares 2016).

In addition, the government is in the process of amalgamating the Alberta Innovates corporations created by the PC government in 2009-2010, and this could be an important opportunity to redefine funding priorities and to shift funding from industry-university partnerships to community-university partnerships. Communities could include municipal governments, community leagues, First Nations and Metis settlements, and organizations working on everything from local food production to co-operative investment in passive housing developments.

These developments, if well co-ordinated and focused, could go a long way toward building a robust research and planning capacity to feed into and accelerate government policy development and the implementation of green transition strategies. However, the governmental and corporate understanding of “innovation,” with its focus on commercializable technology, must be changed to encompass innovation with regard to institutional design, political decision-making processes, participatory citizenship, public policy, and cultural transformation. This is the kind of knowledge produced by the comparatively underfunded social sciences and humanities, in conjunction with social movements and communities, and researchers in these fields are also eager to participate in interdisciplinary work that will move our societies and economies in the direction of ecological democracy.

Every opportunity should be taken to prioritize public investment in new job-creating areas such as ecologically sustainable agriculture, value-added manufacturing, renewable energy production, energy conservation, as well as education and human services. Alternative employment needs to be created before growing unemployment can

be exploited further by the right and become a drain on revenue. Government should seriously consider *public ownership* of new growth sectors (in lieu of subsidies to the private sector) as well as support for *community-based* planning and management of resources and services.

It bears repeating that the messaging from the government to the public about the public interest and the future of Alberta must change. NDP leaders continue to repeat the assertions of their PC predecessors that growth of oil and gas extraction is both critical to Albertans' future prosperity and can be made environmentally sustainable. Action on climate change is presented as a condition for securing social license for the oil and gas companies. Such messages are found in this speech by Premier Notley to the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, April 15, 2016:<sup>22</sup>

Our Climate Leadership Strategy is about responsible energy production. It is showing the world that we are committed to being one of the most environmentally responsible energy producers in the world. It will help open new markets for our products, and ensure Albertans get full value from the energy we sell. But first, we need the infrastructure to get our energy to new customers. Market access is so important to the future of Alberta and of our country. And pipelines are the safest and most environmentally responsible way to transport oil. As I said last weekend, and as I have been saying for months: I will continue to advocate for pipelines until we get to "yes" so that Albertans – and all Canadians – get full value from our resources.

The 'last weekend' to which the Premier referred was the federal NDP convention, held in Edmonton in April 2016, which was the occasion of a visceral split in the party between so-called 'pragmatic' and 'radical' factions. The provocation for this split was a debate about whether or not the party should adopt the left-green LEAP manifesto. The Alberta Premier and her cabinet were firmly opposed to the manifesto's rejection of new fossil fuel infrastructure, instead reiterating Alberta's demands for new pipeline capacity to carry bitumen and other products to 'tidewater' for export. Although there is not space here to examine the manifesto or the debate in detail, the fracture lines closely followed the opposition between climate capitalist and green-left visions that I have mapped in this article.

A government seeking rapid and deep decarbonisation with a just transition for directly affected workers needs a new discourse about the public interest and a new construction of Albertans' identity. Rather than presenting action on climate change as a condition for securing national and international social license for the export of bitumen

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=41590B28C3B56-E600-600A-D5B848FB7DFCCD90>.

and crude oil, political leaders need to represent decarbonisation as the building of a new future for ourselves, and a form of solidarity with others. Central Canadians and environmentalists are not Albertans' enemies when they decline to help us prolong our fossil-fuel-extraction-based economy. We need a new collective identity—one that speaks to our role as global citizens and creators of a better world. How can Alberta be a model for the world? If Alberta can build a post-carbon economy with greater self-sufficiency and resilience for its communities, so can the rest of the world. Building support for this complex, collective transformation of our economy and our society requires government to *lead as an educator and as a mobilizer of public involvement*. The government can move in these ways to democratize our political institutions.

### **What civil society actors can do**

The high-level principles of the Leap Manifesto, linking social justice demands to rapid green transition, need to be concretized for regions and communities. Civil society organizations can engage their members and networks to participate in decision-making, research, and planning processes. They can continue to build programmatic convergence and consensus within civil society, using conferences, media, and cross-sectoral working groups like the Alberta Green Economy Network (<http://www.albertagen.ca/>). The unions, along with progressive think-tanks, First Nations, Metis Settlements, academics, environmental, sustainable food, and anti-poverty organizations, and groups like Iron and Earth (<http://www.ironandearth.org/>) all have important roles to play in identifying a future path of development for Alberta.<sup>23</sup> None of us, alone, has all of the expertise needed to produce adequate answers to these complex problems; that is why we need to collaborate and build coalitions.

At the same time, civil society actors must preserve their autonomy from the NDP/government while partnering with it wherever their goals converge. Their vision of ecological democracy must not be muted by, or subordinated to, electoral politics or party loyalty. The government could help to deepen and broaden a green public by removing obstacles to organizing and contributing resources; but regardless of what the government chooses to do, civil society actors must try in whatever ways possible to shift the political consensus. Without a mobilized green public, no progressive government can hope to stand up to the attacks that will surely come from corporate interests and the populist right.

We have no time to lose following a climate capitalist path that seeks to keep the old model running with some repairs and new paint. As Naomi Klein puts it, 'there are no non-radical options left' for acting effectively to stop climate change and to create a

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<sup>23</sup> There is unfortunately no space here to provide a detailed picture of the terrain in this regard, and much of this research remains to be done. For one recent study, see Haluza-DeLay and Carter 2016.

livable world.<sup>24</sup> The current junction is one of enormous potential for change in Alberta, and the decisions taken now will determine whether climate change policy becomes the driver of a new model of development or a prop to the old one.

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<sup>24</sup> From the transcript of Michael Winship's interview with Naomi Klein in *Salon*, February 4, 2016, [http://www.salon.com/2016/02/04/naomi\\_klein\\_there\\_are\\_no\\_non\\_radical\\_options\\_left\\_before\\_us\\_partner/](http://www.salon.com/2016/02/04/naomi_klein_there_are_no_non_radical_options_left_before_us_partner/).

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Article

**EVERY INCH O' TH' ISLAND:  
CUBA, CALIBAN, AND CLANDESTINIDAD**

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**Abstract**

This article presents the metaphor of the character Caliban seen in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* that has been used as a manner to compare colonial subjectivities in postcolonial contexts throughout the Caribbean. Analyzing the sociological and economical impact of tourism on Cuba, this paper explores how tourism has given rise to a new subjected "Caliban" in Cuba through the promotion of social and economic disparities. The disparities inherent between the tourist and the Cuban in the country are seen all throughout the island: the disparity arrives from outside of the island, affects the operations within the island, and even influences the operations "below" the island through the development of the Cuban black-market. Caliban, as this paper proposes, is subjected in "every inch" of the island, yet no longer by colonialists that arrive by ship, but by tourists arriving by plane.

**Keywords**

Cuba; Cuban; Tourism; Caliban; Socialism; critiques of capitalism; globalization; social justice; Caribbean; Culture; Postcolonialism; Colonialism; Black-market; prostitution; socialism; communism

*Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises*

- Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

*Cuba has many voices, and they are often contradictory.  
The nation is educated but starving for information,  
proud but prostituting its daughters,  
revolutionary but suffocating.*

- Catherine Moses

## Prologue: The New Prospero

The character of Caliban taken from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* has been used as a common metaphor to compare colonial subjectivities in postcolonial contexts throughout the Caribbean. Shakespeare creates the name Caliban as an anagram deriving from both cannibal and Carib (a reference to indigenous people, groups of which the Caribbean was named after, scattered throughout Venezuela, Brazil, and the Lesser Antilles islands). The anagram itself describes the prejudice inherent in the name Caliban. The native Caliban, the subhuman son of the witch Sycorax, is considered by the magician Prospero and other colonizers of the island as a monster. He is both cannibal and Carib, the anthropophagous monster and the native. The Cuban writer Roberto Fernández Retamar, in his now classic essay "Calibán" (1971), understands Caliban to be a metaphor for Cuban culture in which the Cuban people, much like Caliban, were colonized (by Spain and by the neo-colonial threat of U.S. imperialism) and taught the colonizers language (Castilian). Fernández Retamar therefore spins the classic dichotomy of the Uruguayan writer José Enrique Rodó who took the characters Ariel and Caliban of *The Tempest* to respectively imply Latin American and North American cultures. Instead, Fernández Retamar throws Ariel out of the mix completely—" [t]here is no real Ariel-Caliban polarity" (1989, 16)—and defines Caliban to represent not North America, but the historical context of Cuba. In doing so, he focuses on a new dichotomy between Prospero and Caliban, between colonialism and Cuban culture. For Fernández Retamar, Caliban is the perfect metaphor to highlight the history of Cuban oppression in order to reshape a postcolonial identity out of the mutual oppression and victories achieved by the Cuban people: "I know no other metaphor more expressive of our cultural situation, of our reality [...] what is our history, what is our culture, if not the history and culture of Caliban?" (1989, 14). In qualifying Cuba to represent the culture of Caliban, Fernández Retamar aims to hang a victory medal over Caliban's head. The Cuban revolution of 1959 comes to represent for Fernández Retamar the era of a new beginning, of Che's *hombre nuevo* (new man), the escape from imperialism, and thus the metaphorical victory of Caliban over Prospero. As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri adamantly put it, "the culture of Caliban is the culture of resistance that turns the weapons of colonial domination back against it" (2009, 98). Caliban, the "monster," becomes less the timid creature of the cage, and more so the vibrant dragon of the air, liberated, powerful, and resistant.

The difficulty with Fernández Retamar's metaphor is that Caliban's victory—that is, the achievements of the 1959 Cuban revolution—implies simultaneously a new hegemonic structure that remains interconnected to Prospero's colonial lust. Where the subaltern finds victory, so must the power of another find defeat and this hegemonic circle does not stop, it cannot stop, at Prospero's exile. Rather, resistance does not evolve

into the complete elimination of oppression inasmuch as it does the superseding of it. That is to say that Caliban's liberation does not take away his prejudice as monster. Caliban is not the frog, that when kissed, "becomes prince," as Hardt and Negri put it, referring to "the process of the multitude learning the art of self-rule and investing lasting democratic forms of social organization" (2009, viii). Rather, resistance struggles are often more complex than a simple tug-of-war victory between Caliban and Prospero. We see not just one side or the other, but both sides at the same time pulling each end of the rope, fighting not the other side, but the consistent tension between the two. As a dichotomy, the two are intricately connected in a manner that guarantee's a constant tension between oppression and resistance. "The monster's labor is needed," explains Hardt and Negri, "and thus he must be kept inside the island society" (2009, 97). Therefore, although Prospero conquers Caliban, he at the same time requires Caliban to legitimate his power. Likewise, Caliban's victory does not assure that Prospero will encounter his full defeat. On the contrary Prospero needs the monster's labour and will do what is necessary to search it out, whether resisted or not. This is the essence of what Hardt and Negri seem to be implying by the monster's "labour," whereby Prospero seeks the consumption of capitalist labour to fuel his hegemonic control.

Are we then to assume that Caliban's victory implies the end of Prospero's exploitation of labour? Fidel's nationalization of all foreign-owned private companies, many US operated, seemed to give that impression. However, Cuban society today reveals a fair amount of liable realities that shed doubt on Prospero's eternal exit. Capitalist exploitation—which includes corporeal exploitation evidenced in the existence of sex-tourism and prostitution—is a common thread in Cuban society that challenges assumptions of Prospero's absence. What it comes down to is a question that seems to conflict with Fernández Retamar's metaphor of Caliban: how are we to define Caliban as victorious while removing his label of "cannibalistic monster"? The truth is that we cannot, for Caliban's monstrosity is not an image that was wiped away by bearded men in the Sierra Maestra in 1959, but one that is consistently being placed upon him, tugging him without end, always evoking a tension.

The "monstrous" tension between Caliban and Prospero represents our metaphorical components of hegemony. The hegemonic struggle between Caliban and Prospero does not disappear with revolutions or time, it merely changes appearance. If it is not Prospero who subjects Caliban to the label of "monster," then it is Trinculo or Stephano, other colonizers arriving to the island cloaked under different names. In the classic play the jester Trinculo and the butler Stephano, both drunk servants of King Alonso (who assisted with Prospero's exile), stumble across Caliban while on the island. Stephano shares some wine with Caliban who believes it to be a "celestial" drink thus causing him to believe that Stephano has come from heaven. In awe of this new celestial being, Caliban offers himself to Stephano begging to be his servant: "I'll show thee every fertile inch o' th' island," declares Caliban, furthering his gesture to Stephano by

exhorting, "And I will kiss thy foot: I prithee, be my god." (Shakespeare 2004, 52). And indeed it is every inch of the island where Caliban, even in the absence of Prospero, finds himself subjugated as the "monster" of society, oppressed, and colonized. Caliban, as Fernández Retamar claims Cuba to be, may appear to have his victory over Prospero, but not over Stephano. For this reason, where Fernández Retamar assumes Caliban's victory, I see only a restructured tension. Where Hardt and Negri see the power of resistance on the side of Caliban, I see at the same time the other side the rope pulled by another power, at times even known for the image of drunkenness and unruliness like Stephano, arriving in the form of tourists to the island. That is to say that tourism is Stephano, a new Prospero that exploits Caliban's labour through the service industry.

By applying the new metaphorical relationship of Caliban and Stephano to the power relations between the national project of Socialism and the capitalist project of tourism in Cuba, I intend to reveal how transnational travel and business places structures of political power in Cuba beyond a concept of "victory" as implied by Fernández Retamar and at the same time within conditions too complicated to be labeled as "neocolonial." This means that the Cuban state and industry of tourism are not synonymous with the binaries of the colonized and colonizer relationship that is so often where the metaphor of Caliban has been placed. We are not dealing with the cliché binaries of communist and capitalist forces or proletariat rebellions and bourgeois defenses. Rather, by adapting Caliban according to a different relationship with Stephano the metaphor becomes set on the subjectivity of power relations itself. The sociological, political, and economic conflicts brought about by tourism in Cuba reveal a system where power remains at work within the island and, moreover, is interacting on a global scale. This globalized relationship between Caliban and Stephano therefore draws attention to the inevitable existence of power discourses in Cuba that cannot be eliminated, but rather remain taut with power imbalances promoted through the capitalist labour market which, evidently, is ramified in Cuba through the tourism industry.

To clarify, Caliban ought to be considered as something beyond the metaphor of a revolutionary people (*el pueblo*). He should be interpreted as a general metaphor of resistance itself. Beyond the subject who rebels against a sovereign power, Caliban represents the character of resistance inherent in the structures of hegemony. Therefore, between Caliban and Stephano we are witness not to the rise of a new "neocolonial" regime, but to a power-structure recast in the era of globalization between a tourist enterprise fueled by capital desires and a country hinging on socialist ideologies. This metaphor of resistance is closer to Silvia Federici's interpretation of the figure of Caliban in her acclaimed work *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation* (2004). Her work uses Caliban as a metaphor to detail the history of state terror and oppression against women during the rise of the capitalist proletariat. According to Federici "Caliban represents not only the anti-colonial rebel whose struggle still resonates in contemporary Caribbean literature, but is a symbol for the world

proletariat and, more specifically, for the proletarian body as a terrain and instrument of resistance to the logic of capitalism" (2004, 11). As Federici argues, Caliban the rebel becomes Caliban the symbol— a *terrain* of resistance rather than a *target*. In particular, there are two conditions of Federici's interpretation of "Caliban" that I draw on. First of all Caliban does not refer to a single resistant subject, but—and I reference here specifically to the philosophical work of Hardt and Negri—to a proletarian "multitude" that, in the words of Federici, acts as an "instrument" of resistance to the logic of capitalism. It is important here to note that resistance does not necessarily imply "victory" or "liberty." Resistance does not refer to a concept of liberation from capitalist exploitation, but rather to the discourse of power in which capitalist industries such as tourism are involved. Caliban, unlike Fernández Retamar's claim, therefore does not represent the condition of a "liberated" Cuban culture, but rather is a symbol of hegemony, discourses of power that are consistently at work in Cuban culture. This distinction between culture and power is important because it de-essentializes the concept of cultural identity—which in Cuba has taken on the term *cubanidad*—and removes the label of "cultural" resistance from the hegemonic discourses of globalization (a key "discourse" here being tourism).

The second insight I take from Federici is to understand Caliban as a corporeal metaphor that evokes the Foucauldian notion of biopolitics. Federici sees the "body" as the starting point for feminist criticism, that is, "as key to an understanding of the roots of male dominance and the construction of female social identity" (2004, 15). In a similar manner, Caliban's "body" is the starting point to understand the roots of tourist dominance and its role in Cuban society. For example, the practice of *jineterismo*—the Cuban term for Prostitution and black market activities in the country (which I will expand on later)—brings the objectification of Cuban bodies into direct contact with the economic disparities entrenched in tourism. Sex-tourism capitalizes on bodies. Consequently the accumulation of bodies for capital gain implicates, to borrow Hardt and Negri's term, a "biopolitical event," (2009, 59). It is an event where capitalism erupts against biology, where bodies and life become structured according to economic capital and consequently seek ways to resist.

Hardt and Negri's idea of a "biopolitical event" can be challenging, but remains an important concept in the context of tourism in Cuba. According to Hardt and Negri, a biopolitical event represents "the production of life as an act of resistance, innovation, and freedom [leading] us back to the figure of the multitude as a political strategy" (2009, 61). What then would be the multitudinous political strategy of Caliban against Stephano? We know that Stephano complicates Caliban's political stance. Based on a study of urban tourism in Cuba Andrea Colantonio and Robert B. Potter highlight the tension of two political forces at work in Cuba:

It can be argued that today's Havana (and Cuba as a whole) is characterized by two diverging forces that are pulling the city in two different directions. One force is embedded in the Cuban leadership's socialist ideology and is driven by an inward-looking model of development which aims to preserve the social achievements of the 1959 Revolution despite the scarcity of financial resources. The second force is exerted and driven by the global economy and the tourism industry, both of which are pulling Havana into the world market economy and forcing the city to look outward rather than inward. (2006, 5)

Indeed Caliban's island renders a unique location in the world, a place covered by billboards, signs, and propaganda praising the communist victory, yet in the meantime is built upon a capitalist market fuelled by tourism. So, is the answer to loosening this political tension achieved through political strategies of the multitude? Taking from Fernández Retamar's interpretation of Caliban, Prospero was defeated by Caliban through a political strategy of the multitude conducting a violent revolution leading to the establishment of socialism. The arrival of Stephano, however, requires us to reevaluate how political strategies play a role in the multitude. Caliban's encounter with Stephano cannot be resolved through mere political strategy, for the environment between them is already wrought with an economic dependency on tourism that makes it implausible to be solved alone by political or revolutionary means. The international market of tourism demands Cuba's contingent involvement with globalization, which as Hardt and Negri exclaim brings capital to a position where it "creates, invests, and exploits social life in its entirety, ordering life according to the hierarchies of economic value" (2009, ix). Can Caliban truly be liberated in a socialist state when waves of global industry and influxes of tourists are seen and felt throughout every inch o' th' island, from the *Capitolio* of Havana to within the clandestine operations of *jineterismo*? Perhaps the more important question, and what Stephano obliges us to consider, is whether the notion of Caliban's so-called "liberation" should even be the focus here? Simply said, Stephano may require the monster's labour to enjoy the island, but the monster requires Stephano's resources to survive on the island. It is a power relationship built upon exploitation and expediency.

Hardt and Negri's traits of resistance, innovation, and freedom remain at work between Caliban and Stephano creating a biopolitical event, however they are restructured based on mutual economic strategies rather than resistant political strategies. The "event" does not seek to kick out the capitalist presence of tourism, but strategizes how to benefit from its inevitable co-existence. Stephano pays to see every inch o' th' island and Caliban is consequently able to drink Stephano's wine; the relationship is mutually beneficial. In this sense, I disagree with Hardt and Negri's perhaps too propitious belief that the biopolitical event "inaugurates an alternative production of subjectivity" (2009, 63). To eliminate Prospero does not provide Caliban with a *new*

*subjectivity* but rather makes room for a *new relativity*, a re-structured power discourse with Stephano. Resistance remains at work here, only as a "terrain" of hegemony characterized by the subversion of power (to switch positions of power) rather than the overthrowing of it (to become power itself). The difference is an understanding of "place": the former sees Stephano resisted while remaining on the island, the latter sees Prospero resisted until removed from the island. One is rooted in the realities of globalization while the other is rooted in ideologies of post-colonial liberty. Being that Cuba's "terrain" of hegemony must balance between exploitation and expediency there are, unsurprisingly, consequences to be had in a relationship of this type, residual tensions that occur across every inch o' th' island. These tensions, which I now turn to, are three-fold: there are economic divisions occurring "above" the island, cultural commodification occurring "within" the island, and corporeal exploitation occurring "below" the island. The manner in which both Caliban and Stephano tug on each side of these tensions represents well the modern conditions and challenges of Cuban identity under the plights of globalization and transnational industries such as tourism.

### **I. Above the Islands: Dollars and Planes**

Beginning in 1991, *el período especial en tiempo de paz* (the Special Period in time of Peace) brought about a historical shift in the Cuban economy. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Cuba's dependency on their communist allies led to a drastic decline in economic resources necessitating economic reforms for industries of agriculture, health, education, and especially aliments and nutrition. The current tourism industry in Cuba is in many ways indebted to the Special period. With the severity of economic conditions after the Special Period Cuba was left desperately looking for means of stabilizing an already declining economy. The answer was evident, not within banks and business offices, but among the iconic palm trees, white-sand beaches, fat cigars, and classic *guantanamera* lyrics accompanied by old *trova* guitars—the solution was tourism. By the time of the Special Period, the benefits of tourism were questioned due to the possible risks implied both politically and socially. Before the revolution tourism was directly associated with the very institutions that inspired the revolution in the first pace: social disparities and societal corruption exemplified in casinos, prostitution, drugs, and other illegal activities. In fact, before WWII tourism in Cuba was not only tied to illegal activity in the country but in many cases was organized and run by illegal organizations. Much of tourism, especially in Havana, was fuelled by the money and influence of the US mafia whereby casinos, hotels, and nightclubs were seen under the direct supervision of organized crime figures such as Meyer Lansky and Charles "lucky" Luciano who, notwithstanding their social connections with Batista himself, were largely influential in promoting tourism from the US. The role that tourism would play at the end of the

twentieth-century was thus stigmatized by the memory of what tourism had once represented. Nonetheless, the economic necessity of the time obliged Cuba to return to the external sector of tourism to benefit their economy. To avoid the mistakes of the past, tourism was to act as a stimulus for other sectors of the economy as well so to promote national unity rather than corruption. Acting on an ad hoc basis, the Cuban government promoted tourism alongside national reforms targeting areas such as the environment, science and technology, education, healthcare, and transportation with the intent of connecting the tourism industry with the promotion of other institutions across the country. According to Colantonio and Potter the result saw Cuba acting as the "critical catalyst for social change and political transition in both former and current socialist countries" (2006, 5). Fuelling this change, tourists arrived by the thousands, representing a rapid production in tourist targeted businesses. According to recent statistics in the *Caribbean Tourism Organization* (2013), Cuba saw nearly 2,850,135 tourists, arriving second to the Dominican Republic as the most visited Caribbean country in the world. Caliban was and continues to be a popular stop-over for the curious Stephano.

Tourism thus sits today on an economic throne within the island surpassing its sugar and tobacco industry as the primary form of revenue in the country. However, the promotion of tourism differs from other markets of commodities such as sugar, tobacco, or coffee. What is promoted is no longer the quality of an item, but the quality of an experience. Thus, as Rosalie Schwartz aptly describes it, with the arrival of tourism "pleasure became the island's business" (1997, xxi). The consequence of this reality is found on the flip-side of the coin whereby the promotion of pleasure concurrently necessitates a supply of service. One's pleasure depends on another's service, and this is without doubt the ideological mirror of supply and demand in the tourism industry. In tourism, where there is a greater supply of pleasure there will inevitably be a greater demand of service. As such, there are various social repercussions of this industry that have made headway in Cuban society, the return of pre-revolutionary social divisions being most evident. Tourists that arrive in Cuba take the position of the "consumers of pleasure," whereas the Cuban workers in the tourism industry become the "producers of pleasure."

To maintain the labour divisions between producers and consumers of pleasure Cuba had to divide their currency as well. The increase in tourism implied an increase in international currencies flooding the system which coerced Cuba to adapt to and work within the global economy. Tourism, being the only true sector of the Cuban economy readily available to lead the country's development, then placed the Cuban government at a crossroads whereby both the need for foreign investment and foreign currency were knocking at their doors. According to Marguerite Rose Jiménez, tourism was the obvious choice to give way to economic development due to "Cuba's abundance of natural resources, which provided a competitive edge over her Caribbean neighbors," emphasized in the fact that, "Cuba has more beachfront than all of the other Caribbean islands put

together" (2008, 147). Therefore, to promote the growth of tourism the government implemented two important reforms, the first emerging out of the October 1991 Fourth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party that granted protection for foreign-owned property, thus permitting foreign companies a 49 percent share in business operations within the island. The second reform came in 1993 with the legalization of the US dollar. This was later revised in 2004 when the US dollar was removed from circulation and replaced by the equivalent valued currency of *pesos convertibles* otherwise known as CUC or at times as *doláres* or *divisas*. As tourists arrived with wallets filled with CUC and entered a country of citizens living on wages of *pesos nacionales* (CUP)—a 25 peso to 1 CUC exchange rate—an inevitable disparity between economic value was realized. Those with CUC held the keys to the "high-life" while those with CUP were locked within their quotidian scarcity.

The economic division in Cuba is also evident within the social lifestyle of Cubans. Tourists exchange foreign currency directly into CUC at airports or at specified hotels with exchange offices while Cubans are paid in CUP. Therefore the life of the tourist, for the most part, runs on the CUC which includes all basic operating services such as transportation such as *turitaxis* (taxis paid for in CUC), accommodations such as hotels or *casa particulares*,<sup>1</sup> and tourist activities including restaurants, clubs, tours, and purchased goods. This is indicative of what the tourist represents, that is, a means for access into the CUC currency both by the Cuban economy and by the Cuban entrepreneur.<sup>2</sup> Tourism is then seen in two ways, both as the foundation of economic development and as the access beyond peso salaries through entrepreneurship with tourists which often implies working within networks of the Cuban informal sector which I will discuss further in part three. Stephano is thus both the developer and the escape route, the grounding and the flight of the economy.

The economic disparity between Stephano and Caliban is no secret. In fact, many restaurants will mirror the dual economy by having dual menus. If a Cuban walks into the restaurant they will receive a menu in pesos while a foreigner will receive the same options shown on a menu in CUC indicating that the tourist is to pay likely five to ten times higher the price for his plate. This makes sense for Cuban business which is able to subsidize prices for citizens while gaining their profit from tourists. Other measures in the market system ensure this. For example, it is illegal for a foreigner to stay at *casa particulares* paid for in pesos, or for that matter to stay anywhere overnight that does not have a license or permission to house foreigners and is not paid for in CUC. The

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<sup>1</sup> *Casa Particulares* (Particular Housing) refers to bed and breakfast style accommodations throughout the country whereby Cubans with lodging licenses are able to host foreigners in their homes.

<sup>2</sup> The dual currency system has been weighing on the Cuban government. Since 2015, there have been serious discussions of eliminating the CUC, a process already in transition. However, although the equivalent distribution of pesos is now permitted in the island, the anticipated removal of the CUC is likely to create economic inflation.

legislation on hotels and housing however has previously led to consequential social disparities. Until recently Cubans, unless authorized personnel, were not permitted access into tourist areas such as resorts and hotels for fear of prostitution, crime, and harassment. In many areas of the island Cubans are still harassed by law enforcement if caught fraternizing with tourists. Cubans that are seen with foreigners are often stigmatized as *jineteros/as*, a term referring to either street hustlers, black market vendors, pimps, or prostitutes. Where there is economic discrepancy social prejudice is never far off. As such the divisive tools of tourism in Cuba have recently been alluded in sociological contexts as a "tourist apartheid" implicating that the division between Cubans and tourists is imitative of the racial segregation practiced throughout the early 1900's in the US. Wittily, Ana Alcázar Campos depicts the tourist apartheid to be funded on the "reino dólar" (the dollar kingdom), thus indicating that tourist segregation is directly associated with economic disparities (2010, 316). This is, overall, an issue of balancing social disparity while defending economic prosperity; it is a tension of protecting the tourist experience while protecting Cuban rights — both important objectives in Cuban society.

## II. Within the Island: Window Shopping for an "Authentic" Culture

Above the islands tourists arrive on jet planes colliding a globalized market into a socialist state. Meanwhile, within the island the changes that occur to accommodate Stephano are felt both within the social and economic spheres. Likely one of the greatest ramifications of tourism within the island is seen in the dramatic attempts to develop an "authentic" culture that appeals to the desires of tourists who arrive on the island in search of the "real" Cuban experience. In Cuba, cultural authenticity is very much a reflection of the tourist's desire. In his theoretical insight of the tourist experience described in *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976), Dean MacCannell describes a connection between the tourist's search for authenticity and the mystification of social reality. "Authenticity itself," as MacCannell claims, "moves to inhabit mystification" (1976, 93). In other words, the tourist reality is often staged or "mystified" to some extent in order to satisfy the desires for a real and authentic experience. An example of this can be seen in the musical constructions of cultural nostalgia in Cuba through the rise of the folk-rooted group *Buena Vista Social Club*. Vincenzo Perna explains that the rise of this album, recorded in 1996 in Havana "constructed a nostalgic representation of Cuban culture that fits flawlessly into the neo-colonial image of the island promoted by the tourism industry at the turn of the millennium" (2005, 240). It was in fact an American musician, Ry Cooder, who helped to create and record the album thus promoting the band beyond Cuban borders to US audiences. In a comment made in *Folk Roots* magazine, Cooder in fact admits his marketing ploy of *Buena Vista*: "People

want to go somewhere and stay at home, to travel in their armchair. That's fine. Journey with us now for an hour or so and that's enough" (Perna 2005, 240). One could say that the truly "authentic" Cuban sound that extended from the voices of Cubans such as Ibrahim Ferrer and Compay Segundo was however inspired, promoted, and invented from abroad. MacCannell notes that the consequence of structuring such authenticity is that "a kind of strained truthfulness [becomes] similar in most of its particulars to a little lie [...] social structure itself is involved in the construction of the type of mystification that supports social reality" (1976, 93).

When speaking of "authentic culture" it is important to emphasize that Cuban culture, although involved the production of the tourist experience is not derived from tourists. It is tourism that "mystifies" experiences in a culture, but not culture itself that is "mystified." The key to understanding the difference is predominantly a question of economics. Through tourism what is experienced as "authentic" does not refer to what is quotidian, but rather what is marketable. What MacCannell terms as *mystification* could just as easily be a synonym in this context for *commodification*. By connecting the authenticity of culture with market values, Cuba has in fact packaged culture into a capitalist storefront for window-shopping foreigners who, coming upon their desired option, walk into the location that meets their eye and purchase their desired experience. This is what Rose Jiménez describes as the commodification of culture whereby "cultural practices are transformed into something whose value is measured by sales in the marketplace" (2008, 152). In this sense, tourism tends to promote the "mystical" or "commodified" perspective of Cuban culture, motivating artists to conform their work to the market of tourists. Seeming as tourism provides access to the preferred currency of CUC, then artists are likely to direct their efforts toward this market. As such, to draw the attention of Stephano, Caliban can never truly show him the whole of the island, only the parts that count. For one's business depends on assuring that Stephano does not get bored looking through all the windows. This is, in turn, a positive market strategy for Cubans seeking to be more entrepreneurial. For artists, musicians, artisans, dancers, vendors and other performance-based professions directly associated with tourism, marketing their skill-set to the "authentic" experience tourists are looking for provides the ability to sell and receive a commission for their work that otherwise would likely not exist. Tourism, in this way, becomes a great promoter for Cuban artists, acting as a financial catalyst for their work and an audience for their performance.

The tension of authentic culture must be recognized as an issue founded on the commodification of tourism, but not on the tourist. Being that cultural commodification can never cover every inch o' the' island, we are left then with a divide between what parts to show, and what parts to hide. In a manner of speaking, Cuban culture becomes a "hide-and-see" game for the tourist. MacCannell calls this split of culture the "front" and "back" regions, adding that when the tourist shares with these back regions of culture they in turn experience a stronger level of cultural intimacy believing that they have had an

authentic contact with the culture. The truth is that the tourist experience, no matter how far "back" they enter into the culture, can never set the bar for the "authentic" cultural experience, for the concept of authenticity here is a category of invention; it is the creation of a capitalist logic, not the definitive measure of cultural identity. Authenticity, in this way, tends to divide culture in categories rather than unify it. For example, an "authentic tour" cannot possibly cover the whole of a city. For this reason, there is an urban division that occurs in tourist-heavy cities such as Havana, split between the "authentic" cultural regions, and the other local regions. For the most part, Havana sees a division between the northern region dense with tourism and the southern end of the city less populated by tourists. Colantonio and Potter confirm that the division between northern and southern municipalities in Havana is both spatially and socially relevant, creating what they term as a "socio-spatial change in Havana" (2006, 133). The split is contingent on differing levels of economic output to the areas, the northern receiving a great deal more investment due to the tourist sectors found there. Consequently, where tourism thrives in Havana, so too does government investment and local business. The economic focus on the northern zone of Havana has likewise affected the social constructs of the city. As an example, Colantonio and Potter make a connection with the tourism industry and its influence over local recreation. Many of the new clubs and nightlife facilities in Havana are being built within newly refurbished hotels rather than within the city's neighbourhoods. Combining the old stigmas of Cubans not being permitted in hotels ("tourist apartheid"), plus the reality that the entrance fees of these nightclubs often cost around 10-20 CUC, there is a strong divide then created between Cuban and non-Cuban clientele. For the majority of Cubans who would risk venturing into the hotels the entrance fee of nightclubs are far above their price range, limiting the access only to tourists or wealthy Cubans. The use of high entrance prices and hotel locations for nightlife creates what Colantonio and Potter describe as "urban tourism enclaves" that divide the local residents recreational needs from that of the tourists (2006, 134). It would appear that the division of recreational services in fact reflects the spatial divisions evident in the Capital city implying that tourism in Cuba is both geographically divisive inasmuch as it is socially.

The Cuban economy tends to follow the divisive residuum of tourism. Local business leans to the northern end of the city where there is greater remuneration for services, both in the formal and informal sectors. Many businesses within the formal sectors are connected to the tourism industry such as hotels, restaurants, bars, clubs, retail stores, and tour guide centres. According to Archibald R.M. Ritter, we can understand the formal economy to include "those enterprises and activities that are within the regulatory and taxation powers of the state, though also benefiting from a wide range of supportive public policies" (2005, 3). Nonetheless, if Cubans have any entrepreneurial interest outside of their specific career, options are limited. Most Cubans are limited to accepting meagre salaries as stipulated by the government even within highly educated jobs such as

a lawyer, doctor, professor, or trades worker. Ironically it is jobs such as taxi drivers, or careers within hotels, resorts, and restaurants that are better paid. These jobs have access to tourists and thus the potential to be paid in CUC.

Should a career in tourism or other state employment not pan out, a secondary option is to seek employment as a *cuentapropista* (a self-employer). Examples could include private work running bicycle taxis, small restaurants, *paladares* (home-based restaurants), street vending including *pregoneros*<sup>3</sup>, vending at an outdoor market, art and craft sales, cell-phone repair shops, street musicians, artists, artisans, or *casa particulares* (bed and breakfasts). *Cuentapropismo* (the art of being a *cuentapropista*) is a leading force of entrepreneurial business in Cuba and owes its existence to the tourist market. For the government, this is beneficial in that it provides work opportunities outside of government funded jobs either for *cuentapropistas* or those who have lost state jobs due to cutbacks. It is only recently however, under president Raúl Castro's leadership, that steps have been made in Cuba to create further employment opportunities for *cuentapropistas*. Under a new economic strategy set out by the Communist Party Congress held in April 2011, the role of the *cuentapropista* has gained a greater recognition. As an example of this individuals are now permitted greater access to start home-run businesses, often operated on the front porches or within living rooms. This has created a boom in private enterprise specifically in businesses such as *paladares*, artisan and craft shops, hardware and kitchen item sales, and clothing retail. Logically then many of these businesses appear where tourism is most prevalent, in hopes of finding revenue in CUC rather than pesos.

Even though *cuentapropismo* provides greater employment opportunities to the formal sector, the economic realities still prove limiting. Although doors are being opened slowly for access to new businesses the division in currency between CUC and national pesos limits Cuban access into numerous markets. As an example, mobile phones have recently entered the market, monopolized by the government legislated company Cubacel. Recognizing that Cubacel charges approximately 40 CUC to activate a cell phone and a monthly minimum of 5 CUC to continue the plan leaves many Cubans scrambling financially to keep their plan active. According to recently published statistics in the National Office of Statistics and Information in Cuba (ONEI), the average Cuban only earns around 455 pesos, averaging out to less than 20 CUC a month. This would imply that the average Cuban would need to spend at least a quarter of their salary every month in order to keep their cell phone plan active. For this reason Cubacel has marketed outside of Cuba, allowing non-Cuban residents to recharge Cuban cellphones, often providing promotions to "double the recharge for the price of one." In a manner of speaking then, remittances become a primary investment in the company. Internet access

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<sup>3</sup> A *pregonero* is a specific street vender known for their *pregón* (literally "street cry") that is characterized by their song-like calls they use to announce their sales throughout the streets.

has also crept into the economy, but remains costly for the average Cuban. Although the extension of public wifi zones across major municipalities has been introduced (at approximately 1.20 CUC/hour) the prices of internet limits its use outside of hotels and resorts. University students are given extremely limited access to the internet and only certain professionals such as doctors, educators, or government officials are guaranteed email access. For the most part then, internet is most easily accessed in the tourist sector. Even a car market has also crept into Cuba in the last year due to new laws limiting the restrictions on vehicle ownership in the island. Similar to Cubacel or internet access this market proves extremely pricy. One Canadian news article comically summarizes this market: "New Car Sales in Cuba: Where a sedan costs as much as a Ferrari" (Garcia 2014). Indeed, that is what the vehicle market appears to imply, seeing as a 2009 Jeep Santa Fe can be seen going for 90,000 CUC, a 2011 Kia Picanto for around 40,000 CUC, or a 2002 Toyota Yaris becoming yours for only 25,000 CUC. Never mind the newer 2013 Peugeots that reach from a minimum price of 90,000 CUC to over 260,000 CUC. Overall, what we see is that new corporate ventures within the formal sector become extremely limiting for the general Cuban population while smaller entrepreneurial ventures such as *cuentapropismo* is working to provide more job opportunities. The tension of the Cuban markets hinges, in part, on the dual currency that caters the higher valued CUC to the wallets of tourists, corporations, or aid from foreign remittances. Above the island is where the real money comes from, but within the island, even as a *cuentapropista*, it can still prove difficult to get access to these funds. Tourism therefore becomes both the access and the limitation to the formal market. At the same time that it provides a market for *cuentapropistas* is also monopolizes other markets unavailable to Cubans citizens. This leads many Cubans to seek work in the informal sector of the economy where they can conduct business in the informal market or "underground." Caliban thus takes the journey below the island.

### III. Below the Island: Underground Jockeys

Beyond the division of currency, urban space, and social life in Cuba, tourism also influences the division of the economy which is split between both the formal and informal sectors. For the most part Cuba's informal sector implies any economic activity occurring without proper government regulation. Agna Martha Wierzbicki describes the term informality to refer to "the incompleteness of judicial orders in the realization of certain economic activities" (2005, 3). However, defining informality in Cuba is difficult due to the fluctuating status of the formal sector, as well the progressing nature of the informal sector. Cuba is a place, where at times everything appears illegal to some extent. There is illegal forms of transportation, food, medicine, hotels, markets, music and art, gatherings, education, and more. Moreover, the legislation is constantly changing. As I

already noted, the role of *cuentapropistas*, thanks to the tourist market, has gained greater access into the formal sector of the economy. As well new markets such as cell phones, internet, and vehicles have entered the market, revealing a relaxation on past restrictions for new business. What was once illegal at one point appears to be formalized at another.

The fluctuations in the formal sector are often matched by changes within the informal sector. For example, with the arrival of cell phones, there has consequently been an influx in informal cell phone vendors and cell phone repair shops. The same goes for internet access, mechanic work, construction labour, food distribution, cigar and rum markets, transportation, and even illegal tour guides. Each of these forms of informal work are largely indebted to the dual currency in Cuba. Where the CUC market progresses the informal economy is likely follow. Furthermore, this dual economy creates an inevitable tension in Cuba whereby a capitalist regulated economy ends up running below socialist legislation. In his study of international economics Giancarlo Gandolfo explains that if there are controls placed on capital movements, as is obviously the case in Cuba, then "clandestine capital movements provide a way to evade these controls" (2004, 62). This is threatening to the Cuban government since a capitalist market undermines the socialist framework of societal equality. In Cuba, capitalism then evades control through division and dispersion. Hardt and Negri confirm: "[t]hrough processes of globalization, capital not only brings together all the earth under its command but also creates, invests, and exploits social life in its entirety, ordering life according to the hierarchies of economic value" (2009, ix). It is in this way that the informal sector of the economy gives Cubans access into a capitalist system whereby the value of goods can be bartered and exploited and moreover, to the benefit of many, done so in the currency of CUC.

The conflictive nature between socialist ideology and the capitalist informal sector creates a unique situation in the country in which the "underground" markets represent a culture of political dissidence in Cuba. As such the informal sector has given way to a Cuban subculture which is to say that the informal sector in Cuba extends beyond merely the economic. The term *clandestinidad* (literally "clandestinity") implies that there exists a whole underground or clandestine subculture balancing on the informal affairs throughout the country. This culture, in particular, balances on the work of *jineterismo*, a word coming from the term *jinete* meaning "jockey" or "rider." According to Amir Valle, the term finds its history in the cavalry soldiers during the Cuban war of independence from Spain known as the *mambis* who were renowned for their persistent fight for Cuban liberty (2000, 7). Satirically then, *jineterismo* has come to represent the "liberty" offered by the dollar currency that male *jineteros* and the female *jineteras* aspire for through informal activity. As Valle explains, *jineterismo* now "has come to represent all those who attempt to obtain dividends in the complicated trauma of sexual commerce, the traffic of narcotics, and the black market" (my trans; 2000, 7). One should, however, be wary of

Valle's notion of the "black market." *Jineterismo* is more wide spread than typical black market activities such as prostitution and narcotics. It is difficult to say that someone selling a cigar or food items like lobster or beef on the street is a "black market" dealer on the same level as someone selling drugs. Both are actions of *jineterismo*, but not necessarily of the "black market." For that reason, I attempt to avoid categorizing *jineterismo* as a "black market"; the more suited word in Cuban contexts is the "informal market."

One question that is likely to arise concerning *jineterismo* is the role of gender. For the most part, there is a rather strong division between the masculine and feminine roles of *jineterismo*. Often the male role (the *jinetero*) represents a variety of street hustlers and informal workers. This can include anything from that of pimp to an illegal taxi-driver. The female role (the *jinetera*) however has generally referred to female prostitutes. Male prostitution is certainly not excluded from informal activity either, however taking on a different the term known as a *pinguero*. G. Derrick Hodge explains this terminological distinction in his essay "Colonizing the Cuban Body":

The new [male] sex workers had to distinguish themselves from the female sex workers, *jineteras*, now reemerging with vigor since the legalization of the dollar. They could not simply masculinize *jinetera*, since that would suggest that they, too, are penetrated by tourists . . . So, to the slang term for "dick" (*pinga*) was added the suffix *ero*, meaning, a man whose activity, or profession, has to do with his pinga. (2006, 632)

The rise of *jineteras* and *pingueros* after the legalization of the dollar is a direct result of the return of the pre-revolutionary industry of sex tourism. Sex tourism brings with it serious consequences for the communist state by representing the most destructive force of capitalism. Prostitution implies by far the most desperate and grave form of capitalist ventures whereby it is no longer objective commodities that are marketed, but subjective commodities; no longer the sale of objects, but of bodies. Sex tourism degrades the Cubans from a citizen of production to an object of consumption. For this reason Hodge acquires the concept of commodification and describes *jineteras* and *pingueros* to represent what he calls the "commodification of desire," by which he refers to the "transformation of sex, body, and desire into a marketable product" (2006, 634). Sexual relationship, for the prostitute, is no longer a personal desire, but a capital apparatus; it becomes a tool for market exchange. Therefore, in the similar manner for which tourism commodifies a perspective of culture through the market of authenticity, sex tourism promotes the commodification of desire through the market of Cuban bodies.

*Jineteras* and *pingueros* represent the most contradictory aftermath from Caliban's and Stephano's reunion, which I have previously described to represent a "biopolitical

event." Firstly, it is contradictory because sex tourism exploits Cuban bodies for capital gain placing a negative stigma on tourism in general. Sex tourism is not indicative of tourism in general and the sex tourist does not represent every tourist. The inability to generalize obliges us to look at sex tourism as a consequence, as "collateral damage," of tourism rather than the tourist. On the other hand, because sex tourism is so heavily supported and economically funded by tourism we are witness to a "biopoliticization" of the tourism industry as a whole. That is to say that the tourism industry becomes directly linked to the biopolitical disruption of Cuban bodies— their sexuality, their health, and their identity. It is biological because sex tourism transforms bodies into tools of capital; it is political because tourism, in Cuba, is politically overseen, defended, and promoted. Sex tourism therefore complicates the Caliban-Stephano relationship and, in a manner of speaking, attempts to reduce the globalized relationship to a colonized conflict. We see, for example, Hodge describe *jineterismo* as the "colonization of the Cuban body" (2006, 628). To title *jineterismo* as a form of colonization also implies that there is a hegemonic relationship between tourism and Cuban prostitutes whereby *jineteras* or *pingueros* are in some manner "forced" by tourists into their colonized position. Although it is true that sex tourism objectifies bodies in a similar way that colonizers historically have objectified indigenous populations, such a comparison often proves too parochial. One must not ignore that prostitution in Cuba is not without choice. The agency of both sides, the *jinetera/ pinguero* and the sex-tourist must be considered. Nonetheless, the difficult economic conditions of the island may be understood to place a "colonial-style" pressure upon individuals that is at times hard to overcome. In poverty, one's temptation of dollars is for another an irrefutable decision to submit. Stephano can be convincing like that.

The dilemma with viewing sex tourism in Cuba as a "neo-colonial" activity is that in doing so one immediately negates the agency of the *jineteras* and the *pingueros*. Sex tourism as neo-colonial desubjectifies the participants, that is, it associates them not as subjects, but as corporeal "territories" that are conquered. The reality is that *jineterismo* is too dynamic to be a neocolonial discourse; there is agency on both sides promoting its existence. In the late nineties, for example, the stigmas of *jineterismo* in fact started to shift from that of judging the *jinetera* to encouraging her. The *jinetera* became true to her name, a female *jinete*, riding herself towards her economic "liberty." The well known *timba* band from Havana *La Charanga Habanera* led by Afro-Cuban musician David Calzado released the album *Pa' que se entre la Habana* in 1996 flaunting a hit song titled "El temba," an Afro-Cuban slang for a middle-aged man with plenty of money. The song represents well the shifting perspective of *jineterismo* in Cuban culture. The lyrics of the song present an Afro-Cuban man who in recognizing that he cannot support the woman he loves tells her to find herself a *temba* so that she can have everything she wanted. The song seems to encourage the woman to act like a "gold-digger" and give herself up to an older man with money. Simply put, the song encourages the female subject to act as a

*jinetera*. The lyrics guide the listener to have pity on the man while sympathizing with the woman who appears to only be able to find what she deserves in a rich older man:

But taking into account  
There is no salary in order for you to keep  
Your dreams of a queen [ . . . ]

Look for a *temba* so that you can keep up  
with what you enjoy, so that you have [ . . . ]

So that you have what you had to have,  
A sugar-daddy with all the money. (author's trans.)

Repeated multiple times for emphasis, the second last line of the song "So that you have, what you had to have" stems from a line in the poem "Tengo" (To have) written by the Afro-Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén. David Calzado thus draws a comparison between the satisfaction of needs described in Guillén's poetry to the failure of the Cuban man to meet the needs of a woman as described in the song. In this sense *jineterismo* becomes justified, even encouraged, by the conditions of poverty and ignores the cultural damages that it invokes.

The real difficulty of *jineterismo* lies in the tension incurred between the "performance" of the *jinetera* or *pinguero* and the "gaze" of the tourist. Tourism is the greatest provision of *tembas* to the island, tempting numerous young women and men to prostitute themselves in order to make money greater than the general Cuban salary, or in hopes of marrying a foreigner and getting a pass to escape the island. This perspective represents the "gaze" of Stephano, a gaze motivated by erotic desire and fantasy that tempts Cubans with visions of wealth. The flip side is the "performance" of Caliban, the *jineteras* and *pingueros* who see their activity in *jineterismo* as a resistant stance to their economic scarcity and to Socialist ideology. They are the ones who "search to have what they had to have." They are entrepreneurs who have found ways to "*resolver*" (resolve) their difficult economic circumstances, *resolver* being a common expression that arose in Cuban culture during the economic crisis of the Special Period. In this way sex tourism is used to demonstrate agency; it becomes an instrument, for *jineteras*, of feminine volition. *Jineterismo* is then considered as an economic strategy of Cubans utilizing whatever means available to them to capitalize on— bodies included. Their resistance becomes based on strategic entrepreneurship utilizing the capital industry available to them in the informal market rather than a political resistance against capitalism conducted in the formal market. For *jineteras* and *pingueros* such a perspective claims a *bodily subversion* of power rather than a *colonization of bodies*. One can see how this perspective

complicates the nature of sex tourism which, for the most part and rightly so, is considered to have an incredibly negative impact on culture and identity. As it is, a truly biopolitical event is always controversial and convoluted like *jineterismo* because when people become valued economically and structured politically their agency carries an agenda of resistance. Ironically, in the case of Cuba's informal sector, this resistance is corporeal rather than material. Resistance is shrouded "under" the island where bodies themselves become the armaments against socialism locked and loaded in a market economy otherwise unavailable "on top."

### **Conclusion: Caliban's Conundrum**

Cuba, Caliban, and *clandestinidad*. All three are interconnected throughout every inch o' th' island. Caliban walks Stephano off of the plane, onto Cuban shores, and within the urban clandestine shadows. It is a mutual encounter. Stephano's tour throughout the island sustains Caliban's existence while Caliban's existence attracts Stephano's presence. The relationship, although mutually beneficial at times, is unstable. Stephano arrives by ship, Caliban greets him in rags. Tourism is birthed out of the economic disparities that echo the prejudices, exploitation, and injustices of colonialism. This makes tourism and colonialism an easy comparison due to the clear examples of how tourism exploits the lower socioeconomic class, maintaining a system where one's demand of pleasure becomes the supply of another. That said, we must of course recall that in the context of "Caliban" we are referencing a socioeconomic discourse by using metaphors. Furthermore, we are using metaphors that are already charged with the notion of hegemony. Caliban has, since Rodo's discussion of *Ariel* in 1900, been synonymous with colonized subjectivities. As such, Caliban as a metaphor has been used as a way to highlight the exploitative practices against postcolonial cultures. Our metaphorical reference of "Caliban" has inevitably rooted our discussion in the postcolonial contexts of hegemony and power. Consequently, the temptation is to scoop the metaphor "Caliban" out of a postcolonial and literary history and spoon-feed it to readers as proof of the continued existence of neocolonial practices. On the contrary, I have emphasized that Caliban ought to be considered as something different, as a symbol that goes beyond Fernández Retamar's metaphor of a revolutionary people and represents the act of resistance itself. That is, Caliban is not the successor against postcolonial exploitation, nor the helpless victim of it. He is the struggle, the tension, that runs somewhere in the middle. There are too many metaphorical generalizations to cross over should we denote Caliban as a "neocolonial" subject in today's globalized world. For that reason, I have emphasized that he should be interpreted as the general metaphor of resistance, something that imitates Federici's reflection of Caliban as a *terrain* of resistance. In a manner of speaking Fernández Retamar was right in declaring Cuba to represent Caliban,

however only if Cuba is understood as a place rather than a *pueblo*, a transcultural "terrain" that has historically represented the meeting point of cultural, social, racial, gender, political, and economic conflict in the Caribbean.

How, therefore, do we map out this "terrain" in the context of tourism? It is a rocky terrain that provides easy routes into the island, but no easy routes throughout the island. Caliban's tour is no easy feat. He leaves us no easy answers, only more questions: Under the scope of a global tourist industry, how can Caliban possibly show Stephano the island without evoking some form of postcolonial exploitation? How can tourism possibly operate within Cuban culture in a way that avoids demeaning practices such as sex-tourism? How can the Cuban economy grow internally and, at the same time, be dependent externally? How can Cuba continue to promote Communism while relying on Capitalism? These are the questions that Caliban's encounter with Stephano leaves us with, questions that, for the most part are more complicated than the conclusions of Caliban's victory or defeat. These questions also remind us of Caliban's greatest challenge: to show the island to a stranger who has already imagined the *pueblo*. The greatest issues of tourism stem from this conundrum. Questions of cultural authenticity, sex-tourism, race, gender, and social prejudice are fuelled by imagined perceptions of Cubans that exist outside of Cuba itself. They are fuelled by the denotations of difference and diversity that are inevitably evoked through the many cultural and globalized contact zones of tourism. They are promoted by the labels that keep being stuck on them, those monstrous labels of cannibals and Caribs.

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Article

## **CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT, POLICY, AND POWER IN A PERIOD OF CONTESTED NEOLIBERALISM: THE CASE OF EVERGREEN CO-OPERATIVE CORPORATION IN CLEVELAND, OHIO**

**JAMES K. ROWE, ANA MARIA PEREDO, MEGAN SULLIVAN,  
JOHN RESTAKIS**

### **Abstract**

After the financial crisis in 2008 and amid growing concerns about climate change, interest in systemic alternatives to neoliberal capitalism is growing. This cultural shift helps explain the enthusiasm from political elites, media, and academics that greeted the launch of Evergreen Co-operative Corporation in 2009. Based in Cleveland Ohio, Evergreen is a network of worker-owned co-operatives with scalability and replicability woven into its design. But how warranted is the broad-based enthusiasm around Evergreen? Is this a model that can be replicated across North America as its founders suggest? Based on site visits and stakeholder interviews, we argue that there are important limits on desires to reproduce the “Cleveland Model.” However, its ambitions for scalability and replicability position it to contribute to the important project of movement building that can facilitate the policy change needed to scale up the co-operative alternative.

### **Keywords**

Co-operative movement, co-operative policy, alternatives to capitalism, Evergreen, worker-cooperatives

### **Introduction**

Since its launch in 2009, Evergreen Co-operative Corporation, a network of worker-owned co-operatives in Cleveland Ohio, has magnetized media, political elite, and academic attention. Evergreen has garnered supportive coverage in the *Economist*, *Harper’s*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times*, *Fast Company*, *Time*, and *Business Week*. Sarah Raskin lauded the initiative in 2013 while she was serving on the Board of Governors for the Federal Reserve System (Raskin, 2013).<sup>1</sup> Ron Sims, then Deputy Secretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, referred to the

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<sup>1</sup> Raskin is now Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

Evergreen network as “brilliant” during a 2011 interview (Axel-Lute, Hersh, & Simon, 2011). Intellectuals on the Left have also been attracted to the initiative: Noam Chomsky has celebrated Evergreen in interviews and public talks, and the initiative has been cited by numerous academics as a hopeful alternative to the capitalist firm and its social and environmental externalities (Maheshvarananda, 2012; Wolff, 2012a; Gibson-Graham, 2014).

Evergreen is currently comprised of three worker-owned co-operative enterprises: Evergreen Laundry (offering sustainable and large-scale laundry service), Evergreen Energy Solutions (designing, installing, and developing PV solar panel arrays), and Green City Growers (a 3.25-acre hydroponic greenhouse that grows and sells leafy greens). Evergreen was designed to capture procurement flows from area “anchor” institutions: large hospitals and universities that are unlikely to leave the community, have a general commitment to improving it, and can do so by leveraging their purchasing power in support of local economic development (Wang & Filion, 2011).

While Evergreen currently employs approximately 120 people, the vision is that it will become a large network of worker co-operatives that can rejuvenate the depressed regional economy in Cuyahoga County and inspire replications in other regions across the United States. Evergreen’s key features are ensuring worker ownership, harnessing the local wealth of anchor institutions, and prioritizing sustainable service delivery. The initiative is designed with both scalability and replicability at its heart. Supporters refer to Evergreen as the “Cleveland Model,” an approach that can be pursued in communities across the country (Alperovitz et al., 2010). According to leaders with Evergreen, “What’s especially promising about the Cleveland model is that it could be applied in hard-hit industries and working-class communities around the nation” (Ibid).

Despite all of the (mostly laudatory) attention, the Evergreen case has not yet been studied in a sustained way. Furthermore, there is a dearth of literature on co-operative development in general (see Adeler, 2014; US Overseas Co-operative Development Council, 2007). With this article we aim to contribute to the collective learning that can happen from successful and failed co-op development experiments. Building this knowledge is especially important at a time when heightened contestation over neoliberal capitalism has intensified interest in the co-operative model (Restakis, 2010; Harrison, 2013; Cheney, Cruz, Peredo, & Nazareno, 2014).

Our primary finding is that Evergreen’s development depended on contextual factors that might not be replicable: a supportive and wealthy community foundation and champions within local government. The post-2008 period of contested neoliberalism in which Evergreen emerged (discussed in the “context” section, below) created opportunities for new alliances, as diverse actors were willing to consider alternative economic models. These alliances were critical to Evergreen’s emergence, but similar connections might not be available elsewhere. The fact that Evergreen’s start-up relied so heavily on context-specific private and ad hoc arrangements suggests that more

systematic, government-supported programs of financing and technical support are needed if worker co-operatives are to thrive in North America. We conclude that bottom-up, movement-driven action often precedes – and creates a climate for – policy change. Our analysis therefore falls within the social movement approach to co-operative development, which argues that robust popular movements are integral to successful development of co-operatives and often predicate policy breakthroughs (Develtere, 1996; Fairbairn, 2001; Diamantopoulos, 2012). While Evergreen’s replicability may be limited, its social movement orientation and ambition to scale up the co-operative alternative to neoliberal capitalism position it as a contributor to the important project of movement building that can facilitate the policy change needed to grow the co-operative economy.

### **Methodology: “movement-relevant research”**

To contextualize our case study we conducted an extensive literature review on co-operative policy, focused specifically on co-op dense regions (see table 1). Our research team then visited Cleveland in May 2013. We did site visits to Green City Growers and Evergreen Laundry, interviewing management and speaking with employees at each location. We also conducted semi-structured interviews with key actors involved in the conception and implementation of the project. We sought from the outset to make our findings relevant not only to academics, but also to practitioners in the co-operative movement.<sup>2</sup>

We thus undertook this project as a form of “movement-relevant” research (Flacks, 2004; Bevington & Dixon, 2005; Dixon, 2014). According to Bevington and Dixon, movement-relevant research “emerges out of a dynamic and reciprocal engagement with the movements themselves. This engagement not only informs the scholarship but also provides ... accountability” (Ibid, p. 190). Our research team would like to see Evergreen and the co-operative movement in general thrive, and this article is an effort to understand the conditions that might enable this success. We believe, following Bevington and Dixon, that this commitment to the co-operative movement does not lead to bias, but instead adds incentive to provide the “best possible information” (Ibid, p. 192) to movement participants and supporters.

### **Context: Co-op development in a period of contested neoliberalism**

Interest in the “Cleveland Model” has cut across the political spectrum, coming not only from progressive media and academics on the Left, but also from conservative venues like the *Economist* and the Federal Reserve Board. Evergreen emerged one year

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<sup>2</sup> A member of our research team, John Restakis, is a leader in the international co-operative movement and he helped shape our research design, interview questions, and analysis of findings.

after the 2008 financial crisis, during heightened contestation over the philosophy and policy mix that has guided political economic affairs for the past forty years: neoliberalism. Neoliberalism involves a significant reduction in the state's social and environmental welfare role coupled with an expansion in the state's facilitation of private capital accumulation (Harvey, 2005; Collard et al., 2016). While neoliberalism has been consistently challenged since it arose in the late 1970s, contestation became mainstream after 2008, as the financial crisis raised questions about the viability of under-regulated financial markets and the growing inequality that helped fuel increased consumer reliance on credit (Piketty, 2014). During this period, too, climate change moved into the mainstream of political debate: in 2007 Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth* won an Academy Award, and Gore shared the Nobel Peace Prize with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. As Gore himself articulates, neoliberal philosophy and policy has been a significant impediment to strong government action on climate change (Gore, 2010; Klein 2014).

This more mainstream contestation of neoliberalism – fuelled by economic crisis, rising inequality, and climate change – has not facilitated the emergence of broadly accepted alternatives, leading some critics to worry about a “zombie neoliberalism” that will not die (Peck, 2010). While the post-2008 period of contestation has not enabled a consensus solution to neoliberal capitalism's contradictions, it has powered the search for alternatives (Wright, 2010). Ideological perspective necessarily conditions the kinds of solutions different actors seek and support. American political elites like Sarah Raskin and Ron Sims, for example, are interested in innovative ways of addressing inequality and ecological strain that leave in place the fundamentals of capitalism (e.g. private ownership of key productive assets and the profit motive). Radical critics like Chomsky are interested in systemic alternatives to not only neoliberalism but also capitalism itself (Flanders, 2012). Co-operatives, Evergreen founders note, provide alternative economic models that “cut across ideological lines – especially at the local level, where practicality, not rhetoric, is what counts in distressed communities” (Alperovitz et al., 2010). Evergreen, then, is an ideologically flexible initiative: an innovative market-based poverty alleviation strategy or the germ of capitalism's successor, depending on one's point of view.

While Evergreen has benefitted from the surge of interest in economic alternatives post-2008, the whole co-operative movement is experiencing resurgence. The General Assembly of the United Nations declared 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives. The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), an organization representing the global co-operative movement, recently reflected that “rarely has the argument in favor of co-operatives looked stronger” (2013, p. 2). Co-ops can be read as either an ethical supplement to neoliberal capitalism, one that evens out its contradictions in distressed communities, or they can be read as the basis for a systemic alternative. Leaders of the

Cleveland Model explicitly subscribe to the latter, more radical view, even as they strategically benefit from the former.

Evergreen is modeled after the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation (MC) in Spain, which has long been a model for large-scale co-operative development worldwide. Founded in 1956, MC is now a conglomerate including 110 worker co-operatives, and employing more than 80,000 workers (Abell, 2014, p. 16). Mondragon does business in manufacturing, retail, finance, and knowledge (research and development). As a worker owned co-operative system, Mondragon has several features that distinguish it from traditional capitalist firms: for example, a pay cap specifies that top earners with MC can only earn six times the pay of those in the bottom bracket (Mondragon, 2015). By comparison, CEOs for US corporations regularly make 400 times an average worker's salary – a rate that has increased twenty fold since 1965 (Wolff, 2012c).

Mondragon is one of the largest employers in the Basque region of Spain where it is centered (Dewan, 2014). The Mondragon model is not without its challenges, including the recent bankruptcy of Fagor, one of its larger companies (Alperovitz & Hanna, 2014), but it remains an example of how co-operatives can operate on a large scale, produce considerable wealth, share it equitably, and promote relative worker satisfaction. As such, Mondragon is a longstanding inspiration for movements and intellectuals interested in alternatives to the capitalist firm and economy (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Wright, 2010; Wolff, 2012b). Replicating Mondragon's successes, however, is no easy task. The region's political culture is an enabling factor: Basque country is home to a robust nationalist and separatist movement, and considerable associational energy is generated from feelings of marginalization at the hands of a dominant majority (Beland & Lecours, 2008).<sup>3</sup> Political culture supportive of co-operative development is not easily replicated, a fact that limits the ability of the co-operative movement to transplant successes from one region to another (see Corcoran & Wilson, 2012; Logue, 2006; Logue, 2009).

Evergreen has generated popular and movement excitement partly because it appears to have successfully adapted the Mondragon model for North America. Northeast Ohio is not home to a political culture distinctively supportive of co-operatives. As Ted Howard, one of Evergreen's leaders, told us, "Some people think there must have been something about the Cleveland community that would welcome this co-operative development, but it was a foreign concept" (T. Howard, interview, May 29, 2013). As we learned, however, key supports were available in Cleveland – mainly a wealthy

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<sup>3</sup> The three regions with the highest levels of co-operative enterprise in the global north are all home to influential nationalist movements: the province of Quebec in Canada, the region of Emilia-Romagna in Italy, and Basque country in Spain. In these regions, a whole complex of factors have contributed to political cultures amenable to co-operative enterprise, nationalist sentiment being one (MacPherson, n.d.). Emilia-Romagna's political culture, in particular, is more shaped by a history of strong leftist political movements.

community foundation and champions in local government – that might not exist in other North American communities.

### **The case of Evergreen Co-operative Corporation in Cleveland, Ohio**

Cleveland is still struggling to recover from the economic decline that began in the late 1960s. Once the fifth-largest city in the US and a center for manufacturing, Cleveland was hit hard by forces of economic globalization and the deindustrialization they brought. Plant closures, unemployment, and out-migration contributed to a depressed urban economy. Between 1970 and 1980, the city lost 24 percent of its population, one of the steepest drops in US urban history (Warf & Holly, 1997, p. 212). Those who left generally had the means to do so, “with the poor, elderly, structurally unemployed, or marginally unemployed remaining behind” (Ibid). White flight, the large-scale migration of whites from racially mixed urban neighborhoods to more suburban regions, was also a factor in the hollowing out of Cleveland (Song, 2014).

In the 1990s Cleveland began to slowly recover economically, and the city is currently a hub for health care services, biotech, and polymer manufacturing (Kaplan, 1999, p. 192). The two largest employers in the region are the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals, together employing 46,000 people (Suttell, 2014). Both institutions are located in the Greater University Circle (GUC), an area four miles east of downtown that is also home to Case Western University, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art. While the GUC is an economic and cultural engine, it is surrounded by seven low income and racially segregated (predominantly Black) neighborhoods. The median income for households in these communities is \$18,500; it is \$47,626 in the rest of the city (Cleveland Foundation, 2013). Unemployment sits at 24 percent, nearly three times the rate for the city at large (Ibid). The asymmetry between the economic dynamism of GUC and the racialized poverty of its adjacent neighborhoods points towards the unevenness of Cleveland’s economic recovery.

Evergreen finds one of its origin points in a larger effort undertaken by the Cleveland Foundation (CF), a local community foundation, to harness the wealth of the GUC for the economic benefit of the neighborhoods surrounding it. A product of Cleveland’s wealthy past, the Cleveland Foundation is one of America’s largest foundations, with an endowment of \$1.8 billion. In 2005 it launched the Greater University Circle Initiative, which sought to capture some of the \$3 billion dollars spent by GUC institutions each year for the purposes of local economic development (Ibid).

In 2006, India Pierce Lee, a program director with CF, heard Ted Howard from the Democracy Collaborative (DC) give a presentation on his vision of community wealth building. The Democracy Collaborative is a leader in the growing “new economy movement,” which seeks systemic change by challenging the imperative for constant

economic growth and by promoting economic equality and democracy (Alperovitz, 2011). The Collaborative defines community wealth building as “improving the ability of communities and individuals to increase asset ownership, anchor jobs locally, expand the provision of public services, and ensure local economic stability” (DC, 2015). A key part of DC’s community wealth-building strategy is harnessing procurement flows from anchor institutions whose deep rootedness in a community creates an incentive to prioritize local economic development.

Ted Howard’s strategy for community wealth building mirrored priorities of the Cleveland Foundation’s recent GUC initiative. Shortly after hearing his presentation, India Pierce Lee invited him and DC to do a feasibility study for enacting their community wealth-building strategies in Cleveland. The initial plan was to encourage pre-existing Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to incubate new social enterprises that could harness procurement flows, but no takers could be found. The plan was too risky for local CDCs whose expertise was rooted in affordable housing development (T. Howard, interview, May 29, 2013).

The worker-run co-operative model was a secondary plan that developed through conversations between Howard (from DC) and John Logue from the Ohio Employee Ownership Center (OEOC). Logue was a leading figure in co-operative studies and the employee ownership movement. He had written on the successful models in Mondragon (2009), Emilia Romagna (2006), and Quebec (Dubb, 2008); Evergreen was designed with these models in mind, especially Mondragon. The final plan was for a network of worker-owned co-operatives designed to capture procurement flows from anchor institutions, especially strategic opportunities in the emerging green economy.

It is important to understand Evergreen in the context of the Democracy Collaborative’s larger vision and work. The DC describes their mission as the pursuit of “a new economic system where shared ownership and control creates more equitable and inclusive outcomes, fosters ecological sustainability, and promotes flourishing democratic and community life” (Democracy Collaborative, 2016). In 2015, DC launched the “Next System Project,” (NSP) an initiative seeking to “launch a national debate on the nature of ‘the next system’ ... to refine and publicize comprehensive alternative political-economic system models that are different in fundamental ways from the failed systems of the past and capable of delivering superior social, economic and ecological outcomes” (Alperovitz, Speth, & Guinan, 2015). The NSP includes a statement signed by a broad assemblage of the political left (e.g. John Bellamy Foster, Van Jones, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz). Position papers on eco-socialism, commoning, and solidarity economics have been forwarded as part of the effort to debate and actualize the “next system” (Next System Project, 2016). Evergreen, then, should be understood as a local experiment in next system design. As we unpack below, there are limits to Evergreen’s nationwide replication. But the movement-building and systemic thinking that it is part of are crucial to the growth of the co-operative economy, and the transformation of neoliberal capitalism.

Given Evergreen's roots in the "next system" vision of the Democracy Collaborative, it is surprising that it would attract support from the Cleveland Foundation, a wealthy charitable foundation established by a banker and governed by members of Cleveland's economic elite. Indeed, once the plan for Evergreen was finalized, the CF pledged \$3 million of seed funding to the project (T. Howard, interview, May 29, 2013). The Foundation's support for a network of worker-owned co-operatives reveals some openness among local higher-ups to the idea of systemic reform. India Pierce Lee, for example, had previously held a post as a Director of the Empowerment Zone with the City of Cleveland's Department of Economic Development. Empowerment zones are federally designated high-distress communities eligible for a combination of tax credits, loans, grants, and other publicly funded benefits. At this post, Pierce Lee saw millions of public dollars being spent on economic development – all of it directed to employers – with minimal to zero effect: few new businesses, few new jobs created (Ibid). Brenner and Theodore have described empowerment zones as "neoliberal policy experiments" (2010, p. 413). Pierce Lee had experienced these experiments as failures, and was keen to try the alternative that Evergreen represented. Similarly, Howard told us how some CF board members raised ideological concerns over worker ownership, but that a willingness to try alternatives prevailed (interview, May 29, 2013). Cleveland's painful history of de-industrialization, out-migration, and persistent racialized poverty likely facilitated elite openness to new forms of economic development.

The Cleveland Foundation provided Evergreen with crucial seed funding and technical support. "I cannot stress enough that without the people at the Cleveland Foundation, Evergreen would not have happened," noted Candi Clouse from Cleveland State University's Center for Economic Development during our interview (May 28, 2013). Replicating the "Cleveland Model" is challenging when an integral piece is a supportive and wealthy community foundation. The current conjuncture of "contested neoliberalism," however, does make the availability of this support more probable. Research by DC on foundations experimenting with funding alternative economic development strategies (including support for co-operatives and employee-owned enterprises) found examples in Atlanta, Denver, and Washington, D.C. (Kelly & Duncan, 2014). But the authors also note how "many community foundation leaders talked about conservative boards, isolated from new ideas, who were reluctant to take up seemingly risky new ways" (Ibid, p. 29). Popular and elite frustration with neoliberalism means that foundation support for co-operative development is more possible than in previous eras, but this support remains contingent on local circumstance.

Elite frustration with mainstream economic development mechanisms also played a key role in the city's support of Evergreen. While the Cleveland Foundation provided seed funding and technical assistance, the city played a key role by helping to secure financing. Tracy Nichols, Director of Cleveland's Department of Economic Development, had seen the plans for Evergreen and wanted to help finance it. Evergreen lost a bank loan

in the 2008 financial crisis and having the City's support in securing financing was a big step towards actualizing their plan. For Nichols, the fact that the Cleveland Foundation was providing seed funding and logistical support helped legitimate Evergreen as a safe bet for municipal resources. But what really attracted Nichols, she said, "was the fact that they expected to hire people who were formerly incarcerated" (T. Nichols, interview, May 30, 2013). Indeed 62 percent of the workers for Evergreen Co-operative Laundry were formerly in jail (Ibid).<sup>4</sup> Nichols noted:

We have a huge issue in Cleveland, in regard to both poverty and returning convicted felons to our community. When these people are unemployed you have high amounts of recidivism and you are spending taxpayer dollars for prisons and drug treatment or Medicaid. Or you can spend a smaller amount up front to help a worker-owned business get started that will employ and train those people with prison records. (Capital Institute, 2011, p.7).

For Nichols, a project like Evergreen fulfills an important social function by providing livelihood opportunities for the hard to employ, but can also save public money by reducing outlays caused by recidivism. Like Pierce Lee of the Cleveland Foundation, Nichols was frustrated by neoliberal forms of economic development focused on attracting employers with tax breaks and other incentives, only to see them leave when a better deal was offered elsewhere. As Nichols explained:

In economic development you create jobs by offering incentives to companies to relocate and a company is here for 10 years and then moves away, and you have to ask yourself, are these people measurably better off? They had a low-paying job for ten years and they paid their bills but they didn't build equity ... In a worker-owned co-operative everybody has to agree to move the operations. And that's unlikely to happen. (Nichols, interview, May 30, 2013).

The frustration that both Nichols and Pierce Lee felt towards the economic development status quo was an important element in the vital support Evergreen received from the Cleveland Foundation and the City.

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<sup>4</sup> Once hired, Evergreen's workers undertake one year of probationary employment before the membership votes on their inclusion as worker-owners who will share in the co-operative's profits (Capital Institute, 2014).

### Accessing federal funds: The importance of alliances

All three Evergreen co-operatives are capital intensive. Without clear policy frameworks for funding (e.g. the co-op loan fund managed by Quebec's provincial government; see table 1), putting financing in place required ingenuity. Evergreen is almost entirely debt-financed. The majority of its funds have come from two federal social financing programs: Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 108 funds, and New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs). Of the nearly \$24 million that have been raised from federal sources for Evergreen's development, approximately \$11.5 million came from HUD section 108 loans and approximately \$9.5 million came from NMTCs (T. Howard, interview, May 29, 2013).

The HUD Section 108 funds were established to provide communities with a source of financing for "economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities, and large-scale physical development projects" (HUD, n.d.) The HUD low-interest loans were inaccessible without the City's sustained help; funds flow through state and local governments. Monies from HUD provided the core financing for the \$17 million, 3.25-acre greenhouse that now houses Green City Growers (Ibid). The greenhouse is located on land that included residential housing prior to Evergreen's development. Not only did Cleveland's Department of Economic Development play a central role in securing financing, but it also facilitated the purchase of homes that needed to be demolished before construction of the greenhouse could begin.

Unlike HUD Section 108 funds, New Market Tax Credits could be accessed directly by Evergreen's founders without the City serving as intermediary. But NMTCs are also complex and would have been very challenging to negotiate without the Cleveland Foundation's technical assistance. "We call the New Market Tax Credits a full employment program for lawyers and accountants," reflected Howard "because there are hundreds of thousands of dollars of fees" (Howard, interview, May 29, 2013). The Clinton Administration launched the NMTC program in 2000 as a for-profit community development tool. The goal of the program is to help revitalize low-income neighborhoods with private investment that is incentivized through federal income tax credits (CDFI Fund, n.d.).<sup>5</sup> The NMTC program is meant to be a "win-win" for investors and low-income communities, but investors win more, and at public expense (in the form of forgone tax revenue). The NMTC program is arguably an example of what Peck and Ticknell call "roll-out neoliberalism" (2002); they argue that the neoliberal agenda "has gradually moved from one preoccupied with the active

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<sup>5</sup> Investors make capital available for community economic development, and receive a tax credit worth nearly 40 percent of their investment over a seven year period (Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, n.d.). Since NMTCs operate as loans, investors earn interest on the capital they make available, in addition to the tax credits they receive (Ibid).

destruction and discreditation of Keynesian-welfarist and social-collectivist institutions (broadly defined) to one focused on the purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberalized state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations” (2002, p. 384). The NMTC program creates new profit opportunities for private investors at public expense: the privatization of gain and socialization of loss common to neoliberal economic policy. A framework that made federal loans available directly to community organizations would arguably be more efficient and less bureaucratic. Lacking this option, Evergreen’s founders pragmatically harnessed whatever resources they could access.

### **Policy support for co-operative development**

Evergreen’s emergence would have been greatly facilitated by policy mechanisms that made financing and technical assistance more readily available. The international co-operative movement has prioritized supportive legal frameworks as a key constituent of co-op growth (ICA, 2013), but there is not a robust literature on policy support for co-operatives. Supportive legal frameworks for co-operatives are a “deeply under-researched area” (Adeler, 2014, p. 50). Based on our review of existing literature, however, we found that there were six primary forms of policy support that have been successfully deployed internationally: co-op recognition, financing, sectoral financing, preferential taxation, supportive infrastructure, and preferential procurement. The most developed examples of these policies are found in areas of dense co-operative concentration: the Basque region of Spain, Emilia Romagna in Northern Italy, and Quebec, Canada.<sup>6</sup> Below is a table summarizing how these six policy forms are deployed in the co-op dense regions (table 1). The table is included to facilitate further research in the understudied area of co-operative policy, and to clarify policy successes for organizers in the co-operative movement interested in emulating them. In the next section we examine “private” or ad-hoc versions of the policy supports that Evergreen used and explore what these improvisations reveal about the legislative needs of the US co-op movement more broadly.

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<sup>6</sup> Venezuela, under the leadership of the late Hugo Chavez, has recently emerged as another key area of co-operative growth (Harnecker, 2009; Purcell, 2011). More research is needed on the Venezuelan experience and the key role the state has played in expanding the sector.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of enabling policy environments, by region

| <b>Policy Forms</b>  | <b>Spain</b>   | <b>Italy</b>   | <b>Quebec</b>   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>1. Governmental recognition:</b> acknowledgement of the economic development and social justice benefits of co-operatives.                | Constitution (1978) pledges to support co-op growth.   | Constitution (1947) recognizes the value of co-operatives.   | Co-operative Development Policy (2003) notes that co-operatives play a key role in the economy and affirms Quebec's aim to remain a leader in the sector. |
| <b>2. State Financing:</b> support in the form of grants and loans   | Not applicable   | Majorca Act (1985) set up two funds for financing co-op development.   | Government of Quebec maintains a robust low interest co-op loan fund for starts up and expansion.   |
| <b>3. Sectoral financing:</b> legislation that supports the development of financing mechanisms within the co-operative movement itself      | Federal Co-operatives Act mandates an indivisible reserve fund.<br><br>Capital can be re-invested or leveraged for loans.                                    | Solidarity Fund created in 1992. Co-operatives contribute 3 percent of their profits to co-op development funds used to support growth of the wider sector           | Co-operative Investment Plan (CIP) (1985) offers members a tax deduction of 125 percent for any capital invested in their co-op.                          |
| <b>4. Preferential taxation:</b> tax code changes that benefit cooperatives  | Corporate tax rate is 30 percent; co-ops pay 20 percent (or 10 percent, in the case of worker-coops).  | Basevi Law (1947) allows co-ops to assign all their surpluses to indivisible reserves with large tax exemptions.   | Not applicable. Canadian tax system does not distinguish between co-ops and other corporations.   |
| <b>5. Supportive infrastructure:</b> state-funded technical assistance (money ear-marked for the technical side of cooperative development). | Co-operatives Act requires that each co-op establish an education and promotion fund. At minimum, 5 per cent of profits are to be directed towards the fund. | Co-operatives are legally required to join a co-op federation. As such, federations are well resourced, politically strong, and a key support for co-op development. | Regional Development Cooperatives (RDCs), funded by the province, (formed in 1985) support co-op development.   |
| <b>6. Preferential procurement:</b> public   | Basque Cooperatives Act gives worker co-   | Many municipalities only accept bids from  | Under developed.  |

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| purchasing that privileges cooperative sellers. | ops preferential rights in the cases of tie bids. | organizations meeting minimum requirements of disadvantaged employees (co-ops more likely to meet criteria). |  |
|---|---|--|--|

Sources: Adeler, 2014; CCA, 2009; Corcoran & Wilson, 2010; Government of Quebec 2005; Labelle, 2001; Logue, 2006.

### Moving from private and ad-hoc to public and sustained

Of the six enabling policy forms, Evergreen has benefitted from private and ad-hoc versions of recognition, financing, supportive infrastructure, and procurement. The Mayor of Cleveland, Frank Jackson, and Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown spoke at the opening ceremonies of Green City Growers. These high-level endorsements, while not written into policy, conferred legitimacy and boosted media coverage. In terms of financing, having a wealthy foundation backstopping the initiative was a crucial first step. The Foundation’s support helped bring the City on board, giving the Department of Economic Development the confidence to access HUD 108 funds to support the co-op. As Nichols reflected: “the loans have some risk for us, but I know the Foundation is backing this initiative, and I know they don’t want it to fail. They have money. I don’t have to worry” (interview, May 30, 2013).

Without technical assistance from the Cleveland Foundation and the Ohio Employee Ownership Center (OEOC), securing New Market Tax Credit funds would have been even more of a byzantine process. Both the Foundation and the OEOC offered legal support and co-op training respectively. The OEOC has received both state and federal funding, but its state funding has been largely cut. Again, the technical support Evergreen received was ad-hoc and private. Regularization of public funding for co-operative development, as is the case in Northern Italy and Quebec, would greatly facilitate US co-op development.

Evergreen is premised on harnessing procurement flows from anchor institutions, but this approach relies on the enlightened leadership of the anchors – most of which are private institutions and not subject to any public procurement policy, were it to be instated. Fortunately anchor leaders in Cleveland support the plan to direct procurement flows towards community economic development: as well as their contract with Evergreen, they participate in a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) recently spearheaded by the City to promote local and diverse hiring in Cleveland construction projects (Atassi, 2013). Civic and anchor leaders are committed to community wealth building, but nurturing this support has been an ongoing process for representatives from the Cleveland Foundation and the Democracy Collaborative. In spite of these alliances,

capturing procurement flows has been a significant challenge for Evergreen. For example, until recently, Evergreen Laundry did not have a single contract with an anchor in Greater University Circle.<sup>7</sup> The anchor institutions are generally locked into long-term million dollar contracts with their laundry services. Evergreen plans to forward bids when contracts end, as was done with University Hospitals, but in the meantime has focused its efforts on nursing homes and hotels. “We still have a long way to go in terms of really capturing anchor supply chains,” said Howard during our interview (May 29, 2013).

The City of Cleveland has been supportive of Evergreen but has not yet directed procurement flows its way. The City’s charter requires competitive bidding for its contracts, with economic performance as the primary determinant for a successful bid. Recent efforts, however, have sought to heighten purchasing flexibility to support broader policy goals. For example, a 2010 ordinance gives a slight bidding advantage to local firms and to companies certified for their use of green business practices, such as reducing waste and energy consumption (Gillispie, 2010). Bidding advantages also exist for firms certified as a small business or as a female-owned or minority-owned enterprise. Evergreen is positioned to benefit from these procurement advantages in the future. Rules to facilitate competitive bidding are meant to forestall cronyism, but they can also be a barrier to social impact procurement efforts. Policy innovations that enable public bodies to responsibly direct purchasing power towards community wealth building would accelerate co-operative growth. Experiments by the City of Cleveland are promising in this regard, and may become important policy supports for Evergreen’s growth.<sup>8</sup>

Evergreen has benefitted from ad-hoc and private versions of co-op recognition, financing, infrastructure support, and preferential procurement. More regularized public support in all six policy areas (table 1) would have made Evergreen’s founding less dependent on contingencies and heroism and would smooth the way for replications in other regions. Co-operative policy in the US is underdeveloped, especially compared to the co-op dense regions. The US Department of Agriculture does offer grants to rural co-operatives for technical assistance and product development (though these grants are capped at between \$200,000 and \$275,000) (United States Department of Agriculture, 2015). A similar program focused on urban co-operatives would have been a helpful funding source for Evergreen.

The Cleveland Model was enabled by robust foundation support and champions in local government. There is evidence suggesting that in this period of contested neoliberalism similar alliances might be possible elsewhere. In 2014, local governments in New York City and Madison, Wisconsin approved initiatives aimed at financing the

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<sup>7</sup> University Hospitals recently signed a five-year laundry contract with the co-op (Friess, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> There is the looming danger, however, that preferential procurement policies will get overruled by international trade law. See McMurtry, 2014.

development of worker co-ops (Kerr, 2015).<sup>9</sup> These local measures offer co-operative recognition, financing, and technical assistance. At the state level, California has passed a bill that establishes a legal form for worker co-operatives (Democracy at Work Institute, 2015). The bill offers official recognition by explaining the purpose and benefits of worker co-operatives, and allows worker co-operatives to create voluntary indivisible reserve accounts (Indivisible reserves are legislated in Spain and help generate sectoral financing). According to Sushil Jacob of the Tuttle Law Group, who helped craft the legislation, the long-term goal is to get tax credits for monies invested in indivisible reserve funds, as is done in Italy (see table 1) (interview, November 17, 2014). Finally, the legislation allows worker co-operatives to raise capital from “community investors,” a new legal category of investor; worker cooperatives can raise up to \$1,000 per investor, without registering these investments with the state securities regulator (thereby substantially reducing legal fees).

Federally, the National Co-operative Business Association is spearheading an effort to pass legislation that would create a program within the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide capital and technical assistance to co-operatives. This program would be a much-expanded version of the USDA’s rural co-operative development program; it would help with financing, not just technical support, and urban co-operatives would be eligible. The bill has been introduced twice (in 2011 and 2013) but has not yet made it out of the House of Representatives (NCBA, 2013). This would be a breakthrough piece of legislation; it would greatly facilitate co-operative growth in the United States.

Mondragon, and the robust co-op sectors in Quebec and Emilia Romagna, have all benefitted from supportive policy. But a crucial point that became apparent during our literature review is that strong co-op sectors in these regions *all preceded the policy breakthroughs that enabled further sectoral growth*. Adeler writes: “In the Spanish, Italian, and Quebec examples, co-operative development was pursued by federations of co-operatives, and co-operative groups or alliances, initially with little or no state support, yet proved highly successful in producing an enabling environment for co-operative development” (2014, p. 51). Policy change played an important role in facilitating sectoral growth, but a robust sector was needed to win and keep these legislative victories in the first place. This finding is aligned with the social movement approach to co-operative development. According to Diamantopoulos (2011, p. 49), “Co-operative development may benefit from supportive public policy and sound management but it necessarily depends on concerted movement action to transform the field, periodically realigning movement frames and resources to effectively focus on new opportunities and drive new

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<sup>9</sup> The Madison plan is to create a co-operative loan fund that offers low to no-interest loans. Straightforward financing support like this would have made launching Evergreen easier (although its capital needs were more substantial than what recent allocations in New York and Madison could cover).

campaigns.” The political muscle needed to pass co-op-supporting legislation first requires a more robust national sector. Local policy change can precede vibrant co-op movements, but movement building will be needed to win the state and national legislation required to scale-up the co-operative economy. The Next System Project is hopeful in this regard. While still a young initiative, it is beginning to assemble the popular power required to push legislative and systemic changes that can facilitate the scaling up of the worker-cooperative alternative that Evergreen represents.

## Conclusion

Evergreen and its leaders have played a key role heightening the co-operative movements ambitions for growth and power in North America (Abell, 2014). There are efforts afoot to replicate Evergreen in Prince George’s County, MD; Rochester, NY; and Richmond, VA. There is also a related model being experimented with in Cincinnati and Denver: a partnership between Mondragon and the United Steel Workers (USW). This new “union Co-op” model allows for co-op developers to benefit from the expertise and capital of unions. New union co-ops being started in Cincinnati, for example, received financing from a variety of sources including USW and the Greater Cincinnati Foundation (Gilbert, 2015). Future research should track these cases of co-operative development, as insight into the successes and challenges of these initiatives can help facilitate sectoral growth.

Evergreen’s leaders are well aware of the challenges they face expanding the network in Cleveland and sparking copycat co-ops across the continent. The Democracy Collaborative hopes that publicity around the Evergreen story will increase popular interest in co-operatives and ultimately grow the sector. At the same time, Howard noted a disjuncture between attention Evergreen has received and the co-op’s actual growth: “In some ways,” he said, “the story around Evergreen is more robust than actual fact” (interview, May 29, 2013). Stabilizing the system in Cleveland is a crucial part of this movement-building effort, as is managing expectations around replicating the model. Evergreen CEO John McMicken recently said Evergreen has “closed the door down on some of the hype while we focused on our operations and our staff and the health and well-being of our business. We have to have a real story to tell, that we’ve launched ourselves into consistently successful businesses. That has to be the focus” (Friess, 2014).

Our argument is that replicating the “Cleveland Model” will be challenging given the serendipity that allowed for Evergreen’s emergence (the two central contingencies being backing from the Cleveland Foundation and the City). This said, the period of “contested neoliberalism” has increased popular and elite interest in economic alternatives. Evergreen benefitted from growing fatigue with neoliberal economic development in Cleveland, and co-op developers in other regions may find similar

openings. Evergreen's growth locally and ability to become a replicable model nationally faces significant challenges. Its efforts towards scalability and replicability, however, along with the Democracy Collaborative's larger effort to build popular power for systemic change, are precisely what the US co-operative movement needs to become a stronger political force, one capable of winning legislative change. For Howard:

It's been harder than I thought, but I'm heartened we're still here ... We've stabilized and we're back on a growth curve, and I think Evergreen ... represents a possibility or hope for people, in a field where so much of what people have tried has just hit a dead end. This has been a learning laboratory. It's been an experiment. I don't say Evergreen's the answer, but I think it's been able to unlock the imagination for people way beyond Cleveland (ibid).

Ambitious co-operative development initiatives like Evergreen, coupled with self-conscious efforts to strengthen the political power of the co-operative movement, are needed to make the co-operative economy a viable alternative to neoliberal capitalism.

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Article

## **MASTERING THE MYSTERIES OF DIPLOMACY: KARL MARX AS INTERNATIONAL THEORIST**

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### **Abstract**

The field of international relations is one of few corners of the social sciences in which it has been relatively easy to avoid an encounter with Karl Marx and Marxist thought. Arguably, the reverse has also been true. Whatever the reasons for that mutual ambivalence, this essay claims Marx as a serious theorist of the international, not just a pamphleteer or tactician. It does so primarily by rereading his response to the suppression of the Paris Commune, *The Civil War in France*. Marx's essay, lively and provocative, challenges the distinction between 'domestic politics' and 'international relations,' and suggests that the ontological building blocks of international theory - the state and war - are revealed as historically unstable by 'the most tremendous war of modern times.' While Marx later reconsidered some of his analysis, *The Civil War in France* retains its interrogatory power especially in relation to contemporary instances of international political violence.

### **Keywords**

Marx; international relations; Franco-Prussian War; Paris Commune

If the emancipation of the working classes requires their fraternal concurrence, how are they to fulfill that great mission with a foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs, playing upon national prejudices, and squandering in piratical wars the people's blood and treasure? It was not the wisdom of the ruling classes, but the heroic resistance to their criminal folly by the working classes of England that saved the West of Europe from plunging headlong into an infamous crusade for the perpetuation and propagation of slavery on the other side of the Atlantic. The shameless approval, mock sympathy, or idiotic indifference, with which the upper classes of Europe have witnessed the mountain fortress of the Caucasus falling prey to, and heroic Poland being assassinated by, Russia; the immense and unresisted encroachments of that barbarous power, whose head is at St. Petersburg, and whose hands are in every cabinet of Europe, have taught the working classes the duty to master the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective Governments; to counteract them, if

necessary, by all means in their power; when unable to prevent, to combine in simultaneous denunciations; and to vindicate the simple laws of morals and justice, which ought to govern the relations of private individuals, as the rules paramount of the intercourse of nations.

- *Karl Marx (1864, 519)*

A generation ago, Vendulka Kubalkova and Albert Cruickshank (1989) began their enigmatic book, *Marxism and International Relations*, with an understated claim that the two elements of the title ‘do not blend easily.’ If there was a distinct Marxist tradition of theorizing about international relations, a tradition for which they were prepared to make a case, its main feature was an ambivalence about the state-system that otherwise is the unquestioned core reality of the field (see also Berki 1984). More recently, Benno Teschke, whose work represents a rare and significant theoretical challenge to international relations from within Marxism, has pressed the claim further. On the one hand, he argues, the Marxist tradition from the start left the international and the geopolitical under-theorized. In Marx’s *Capital*, ‘the problem as to *why* political power constitutes itself territorially in the shape of a world system of politically sovereign states, whilst the world market as the sphere of private exchange assumes a universal form, is not even formulated as a research desideratum’; and, while Marx and Engels showed an increasing awareness of international relations in their later work, their interest was still closer to journalism and political tactics than it was theoretical (2006, 331, 332). On the other hand, Teschke acknowledges the considerable gap between his own work – in which ‘the economic and the political, the domestic and the international, are never constituted independently of each other,’ but are interrelated in a historically unstable dynamic of property relations – and much of mainstream international relations. Yet the subject itself, he writes, must be critically engaged. It is too important to be left to the dominant paradigm, neo-realism, which he describes as a ‘science of domination,’ a ‘technology of state power pervaded by instrumental rationality,’ and a ‘siren song for all undergraduates’ – one that ‘obscures more than it reveals and compresses the rich history of human development into a repetitive calculus of power’ (Teschke 2003, 272, 274).

Evidently ambivalence and neglect continue to cut both ways. International relations is still one of the few subfields within the study of politics, indeed the social sciences generally, in which it is possible in the Anglo-American world to avoid any encounter with Marx, though a generic Marxism – highlighting, say, neo-Gramscian hegemony or world-systems theory<sup>1</sup> – is now the subject of a standard chapter at least in

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<sup>1</sup> A fuller contemporary survey of the field would note, in addition to Teschke’s work, the recent emergence in the UK of a position which claims a lineage through Trotsky and which engages the field of international

textbooks generated outside of the United States. Even among those who are inclined to concur with Martin Wight (1987, 1991) that theory in international relations is, in a fundamental sense, to be found in the dialogue among historically-embedded traditions of ideas and practices, or in the contested terrain of ideas, there is no rush to give Marx a seat at the table alongside such more familiar philosophical personages as Machiavelli, Grotius, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Kant. He is typically absent, for example, from the anthologies of ‘classic’ texts (e.g., Forsythe *et al* 1970; Wright 1976; Williams 1998), or the collections of interpretive essays on ‘classic’ thinkers (e.g., Jahn 2006), both of which have been compiled in the construction of a kind of history of international political thought.<sup>2</sup>

The general neglect of Marx has been explained on ontological, political, and sociological grounds which do not need lengthy repetition here. They include the difficulty of reconciling a class-centred analysis and historical materialism with the common assumptions of academic international relations; the primacy of ‘social’ over ‘international’ conflict in Marx’s own day; and the coincidence of the Cold War with the emergence of international relations as a subject of inquiry especially in the US (e.g., Thorndike 1978; Halliday 1987; Kubalkova and Cruickshank 1989, 11-13; Lynch 1987). Perhaps the weakest explanation is that Marx, together with Engels, gave no sustained attention to international relations either because they considered the state-system epiphenomenal or because they lived in a world made orderly by the Concert of Europe’s balance-of-power diplomacy. The fact remains that Marx was, if not a systematic theorist, then certainly a prolific and prescient commentator on the international politics of his day. The essays and pamphlets he wrote in response to European events, especially after the failed revolutions of 1848, suggest a preoccupation with such ‘conventional’ subjects as war and the balance of power – not for their own sake, of course, or as scholarly puzzles, but for the success of a future socialist revolution.

The purpose of this article is to read Marx as an international theorist. Modest in scope, it offers no synthetic reading of his entire corpus – least of all *Capital* – as it might be applied to international politics. Instead, its focus is a solitary text: *The Civil War in France*, ‘the most brilliant of Marx’s polemics’ (McLellan 1973, 400). Written in 1871, in English, the text is a lively, sardonic analysis of what it called the international character of class rule revealed in the smashing of the Paris Commune earlier that same year. It was Marx’s first popular success, though it quickly proved divisive on the left (Anderson 2010,

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relations through the lens of ‘uneven and combined development.’ See, e.g., Rosenberg (2010 and 2013). I would also note Radhika Desai’s work on what she calls geopolitical economy (2013).

<sup>2</sup> There is a brief excerpt from *The Communist Manifesto* in Brown *et al* (2002) and from both *The German Ideology* and *The Communist Manifesto* in Williams *et al* (1993), whose intent is to transcend distinctions between ‘political’ and ‘international’ theory. See also Boucher (1998), who treats Marx as a political theorist of international relations. But this all amounts to limited engagement on what is the periphery of the field, though Marx’s influence is much more evident in the international political economy literature, for example, the contributions of important scholars such as Robert Cox.

152-53). Widely circulated in translation, it also solidified his notoriety as a dangerous, influential radical for European governments, security services, and editorialists.

My interest here is as much pedagogical as it is theoretical or explanatory – a response to the problem of how to present and represent the subject of international relations in the classroom. My retrieval of Marx and a particular text is rooted in the understanding, first, that the intellectual positions, world-images, and historical trajectories offered to students to make sense of the international have arisen themselves out of specific social-political contexts and lived experiences; and, second, that when those perspectives are put into critical conversation, not just placed end to end, they can help to interrogate common-sense assumptions about the contemporary world. The Paris Commune is a particularly rich example in those respects. Though it may have represented only a short-lived political eruption, suppressed after 72 days in a shockingly brutal show of force, it stands out sharply against comfortable depictions of the ‘long peace’ of post-Napoleonic Europe; and it challenges the teleology of the ‘modern’ nation-state and state-system with the reality of an alternative political form – ‘at once smaller and more expansive,’ more local and more international (Ross 2015, 5). The Paris Commune was a surprise even to those who built it. It puzzled Marx, too, even as it demanded a position from him.

### **‘The Most Tremendous War of Modern Times’**

Marx’s admonition, cited at the outset of this paper, to master the mysteries of international politics was made in his inaugural address to the International Working-Men’s Association (IWMA). This compact passage reflects his political thinking at several levels as it had congealed in the post-1848 period. Most obvious is his obsession with tsarist Russia, whose intervention against the short-lived Hungarian republic in 1849 was crucial to the restoration of conservative monarchy in Central Europe, and whose expansionist policies in the Crimea and Poland, he wrote, had to be checked. In an essay for the *New York Herald-Tribune*, Marx warned of the ‘Russian dream of conquest once more revealed to the world,’ and made possible by Europe’s economic crisis and political disarray (1853, 333). In 1863 Marx issued a proclamation attacking the betrayal of Poland, which ‘alone continues to protect Germany from the Muscovite deluge’; the cause of German unity and independence from Russian domination required a Polish buffer (1863, 354). A second theme is the distrust of foreign policymakers as much for recklessness with ‘people’s blood and treasure’ as for the clear-sighted pursuit of class interests. In a similar vein, Marx in the middle of the Crimean War had charged the British government for the amateurish state of helplessness that put the constitution at risk while 40,000 lay dead on the shores of the Black Sea (1855, 281-84). A third theme concerns the reliable political timidity of the bourgeoisie. A fourth, intriguingly – and

perhaps it was only meant to be read rhetorically – is the acknowledgement not just of the reality of distinct nationalities but also of the ‘simple laws’ by which to judge the relations between them. This deference to the law of nations, however, and indeed all of the above themes, must be set within the context of Marx’s fundamental commitments to proletarian internationalism and emancipation. His internationalism had been introduced in the slogans of the *Communist Manifesto*, which were repeated in the inaugural address (‘Proletarians of all countries, Unite!’). But, as Alan Gilbert writes, it was actual revolutionary experience that made internationalism so central and that gave it substance:

This solidarity did not depend on an advanced level of productive forces within countries, let alone a great degree of capitalist penetration into a foreign economy. Instead, this internationalism derived mainly from a political fact: the likelihood of a common response by European exploiting classes, bourgeois and aristocratic, to a revolutionary threat affecting any one of them. (Gilbert 1981, 149)

Marx’s deliberate turn to the study of political economy after 1848, Gilbert argues, was scarcely a renunciation of revolutionary strategizing. While the general theory of capital that resulted has been interpreted as a shift towards economic determinism, it cannot be extricated from its location in a dialectical relationship with Marx’s more explicitly political writings and activity during the same time – that is, as a framework that permitted the contradictions of capitalist expansion to be grasped but that needed to be rethought constantly out of a willingness to learn from experience. Out of that theoretical framework of a materialist conception of history, Marx made practical journalistic judgments: on British rule in India, on the American civil war, on Bismarck’s wars of unification. His lengthier essays on the spectacular events of French politics – the Bonapartist coup, the suppression of the Commune – were also general theoretical exercises in the face of apparent novelty. Thus *The Civil War in France* in particular is the occasion for the claim that ‘class rule is no longer able to disguise itself in a national uniform,’ that national governments ‘are one as against the proletariat’ (Marx 1871a, 80).

The military-diplomatic circumstances of the Franco-Prussian War and the sequence of events resulting in the declaration of the Commune cannot be recounted here in any length. For my more limited purposes, the place to begin is Marx’s initial welcome of the French declaration of war on the basis that Napoleon III’s defeat could provoke revolution and, as he wrote to Engels, shift the centre of the working-class movement and socialist theory to Germany (McLellan 1973, 389-90). In an address drafted for the General Council of the London-based IWMA, Marx described the war as a defensive one on the German side, nonetheless noting that Bismarck had conspired formerly with Louis Bonaparte to crush popular opposition and that the ‘governments and ruling classes of

Europe' had allowed the emperor to 'play during eighteen years the ferocious farce of the Restored Empire.' The address made two other important points. First, Marx urged the German working class not to let the war lose its limited and defensive character and, in particular, not to let their government accept Russian offers of support. Second, Marx took encouragement from the 'unparalleled' exchanges of goodwill between French and German working-class organizations, while their governments rushed into a 'fratricidal feud.' They were the signs of a 'new society,' one whose '[i]nternational rule shall be peace, because its national ruler will be everywhere the same – Labour!' (Marx 1870a, 25-27 *passim*).

Marx's cheery proclamation can be read, alternatively, as a piece of pamphleteering meant to strengthen working-class resolve. Napoleon III's rapid surrender and Bismarck's occupation of Alsace-Lorraine, if anything, demonstrated the relative powerlessness of those confidently entrusted with the task of restraining Germany. Some who appealed for an honorable peace were jailed. Marx, in a second address, challenged both those who claimed the captured territory as historically German – by that reasoning, Brandenburg should be returned to Poland – and those 'more knowing patriots' who insisted only that it was necessary as a guarantee against future French aggression. The 'lesson of all history,' Marx argued, was that attempts to impose borders on the basis of the conqueror's military interest 'carry within them the seed of fresh wars' (1870b, 3). Again, he urged restraint so that the victory gained by the sacrifices of German workers would not be turned into their defeat:

[A]utocratic Russia must think herself endangered by a German under Prussian leadership. Such is the law of the old political system. Within its pale the gain of one state is the loss of the other. The tsar's paramount influence over Europe roots in his traditional hold on Germany. At a moment when in Russia herself volcanic social agencies threaten to shake the very base of autocracy, could the tsar afford to bear with such a loss of foreign prestige? . . . Do the Teuton patriots really believe that liberty and the peace will be guaranteed to Germany by forcing France into the arms of Russia? If the fortune of her arms, the arrogance of success, and dynastic intrigue lead Germany to a spoliation of French territory, there will then only remain two courses open to her. She must at all risks become the avowed tool of Russian aggrandisement, or, after some short respite, make again ready for another 'defensive' war, not one of those new-fangled 'localised' wars, but a *war of races*—a war with the combined Slavonian and Roman races (Marx 1870b, 32-33).

For the time being, Marx wrote, the politics of the 'old system' would require gestures towards an honourable peace – at least the restoration of a modicum of continental

equilibrium – and the recognition of the new French republic despite the dubious composition of its coalition government.

These short addresses made at the beginning and end of the six-week war form the background for *The Civil War in France*. The Commune itself was declared in March 1871, six months after the emperor's surrender, in the sudden vacuum created by the coalition's capitulation to the Prussian siege and its departure for Versailles. As recent interpreters have noted, the turn of events surprised even those who had made revolution their life's ambition (e.g., Merriman 2014; Ross 2015; Gluckstein 2011).

The Commune was not the work of any one party or faction; it did not issue from a coherent, unifying manifesto. It was marked from the start, not surprisingly, both by personal rivalries and by disagreement over goals, tactics, and political authority. Its political meaning and historical significance have been debated ever since. The Commune might plausibly and minimally be described as a broad-based exercise in popular republican democracy and social reform under extreme conditions. It moved quickly to dismantle the organs of the centralized French state that was built under absolutism and then transformed, as Marx described it, into the corrupt, bloated Bonapartist parasite but also into the 'engine of class despotism' under conditions of industrialization that freed the fearful bourgeoisie from politics to concentrate on capital accumulation. The Commune abolished the standing army in favour of a citizen militia. It curbed police powers, cut public officials' salaries, disestablished the Catholic Church, opened the schools and required the election of judges.<sup>3</sup> While the Commune did not abolish private property, and while it kept the national bank intact, Marx was prepared to recognize it in *The Civil War in France* as the 'political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour' (1871a, 60).

Nonetheless, the Commune was embattled throughout its brief lifespan. The initial shots of the civil war were fired in an attempt by the Versailles government to reclaim artillery from the city. Parts of Paris were subject to sustained artillery bombardment. Finally, the Commune was defeated in a bloodbath – 17,000 dead, by Versailles estimates – soon after a deal was cut with Bismarck, accepting his peace terms, including prompt payment of heavy reparations, in exchange for the release of prisoners and the active assistance of German troops (Merriman 2014; Hobsbawm 1975, 200-202).

Marx, as is well known, was more equivocal towards the Commune than is apparent by the passionate tone of his essay issued in the heat of the moment (McLellan 1973). His protest of the previous September against the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine had also counselled working-class restraint in France in the difficult

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<sup>3</sup> While the Commune inherited a longer struggle over the length of the working day and is credited famously with having abolished night-work for bakers, 'Parisians still demanded warm croissants first thing in the morning, . . . making it difficult for the Commune to enforce the measure' (Merriman 2014, 64).

circumstances presented by the siege and bourgeois control of the army and police (Marx 1870b, 34). Marx did not discount the opportunity created by an ‘accident’ of history. But the Commune was not directly aligned with the radical politics of the International. It drew most of its inspiration and most of the members of its governing council from other branches of socialism (Proudhonist, Blanquist), as well as republican, liberal, and anarchist tendencies. The International’s Paris section had been handicapped by arrests just prior to the Franco-Prussian War. Marx, further, was critical of the Commune’s tactics – its too-scrupulous reluctance to take the offensive, its hasty devolution of power – even as he admired its ‘glorious deed’ of ‘storming heaven’ (1871b, 85). Marx and Engels did amend an 1872 edition of the Manifesto to account for the political achievement of the Commune (Gilbert 1981, 161). But the *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875) declined to mention its example, and Marx later told a journalist that the Commune could have achieved a more helpful compromise with the Versailles government had common sense prevailed (Lichtheim 1964, 120-21). By that point, the International had been identified as being responsible for the Commune’s crimes, vilified by the European press, targeted by governments, and torn apart by its own factionalism. It proved too fragile to endure the political currents unleashed by the Franco-Prussian War (McLellan 1973, 388, 401-402).

Typically, the import of *The Civil War in France* has been found in its approving description of the Commune’s decentralized political form – the antithesis of the state, whose machinery could not simply have been seized and wielded for the purposes of the working class; instead, it had to be smashed. Read from the perspective of international relations, however, other parts of the essay gain in significance for their treatment of the cross-pressures of war, diplomacy and revolution. In Part I, Marx represents the coalition Government of National Defence as realizing that Paris in the new republic could not be armed without arming the working class and thereby making revolution possible in the event that the siege could be withstood. Capitulation to Prussia therefore was the one means of escape, though this option came with its own serious drawbacks. While the Second Empire had doubled the national debt and ravaged the country’s resources, Bismarck (the ‘Prussian Shylock’) now waited on French soil with a bill for the support of one-half million German troops, reparations, and interest:

Who was to pay the bill? It was only by the violent overthrow of the republic that the appropriators of wealth could hope to shift onto the shoulders of its producers the cost of a war which they, the appropriators, had themselves originated. Thus, the immense ruin of France spurred on these patriotic representatives of land and capital, under the very eyes and patronage of the Invader, to graft upon the foreign war a civil war – a slaveholders’ rebellion (Marx 1871a, 45).

The success of that rebellion would require the disarming and defeat of Paris.

Part IV begins with Bismarck's machinations. He returned a slow stream of captured imperial soldiers 'in numbers just sufficient to keep the civil war going, and keep the Versailles government in abject dependence' (Marx 1871a, 69-70). Then he summoned its representatives to dictate peace terms. The balance of this concluding part has two principal themes. One is the hypocrisy of committing vengeful savagery in the name of civilization and justice<sup>4</sup>: 'The civilization and justice of bourgeois order comes out in its lurid light whenever the slaves and drudges of that order rise against their masters....A glorious civilization, indeed, the great problem of which is how to get rid of the heaps of corpses it made after the battle was over' (Marx 1871a, 74-75).

Against the world-wide 'calumny' that the government of Paris had been usurped by criminals, Marx pointed to the willingness of its people – women as well as men – to die willingly, and 'in numbers unequalled in any battle known to history' (Marx 1871a, 76). Against the charge of incendiarism hurled by those who tore the proletariat apart, but could no longer return to 'the intact architecture of their abodes,' Marx responded that fire was a legitimate means of war. British forces, after all, had burned the Capitol in Washington and the Chinese emperor's summer palace; Paris itself had been bombarded during the siege:

To be burned down has always been the inevitable fate of all buildings situated in the front of battle of all the regular armies in the world. But in the war of the enslaved against their enslavers, the only justifiable war in history, this is by no means to hold good! (Marx, 1871a, 77).

Finally, against the charge of shooting its hostages, the Archbishop of Paris among them, the Commune had done no more, Marx argued, than those European armies which had resurrected the practice on the continent and in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the case of the Commune, hostages had been taken in self-defence, and offers to trade them for one man – Blanqui – were refused, when the Versailles government apparently calculated that the Archbishop was most useful in 'the shape of a corpse' (Marx 1871a, 79).

The second, and more fundamental, theme in this final section concerns the discerning of a new period of world history – the internationalization of class conflict – which remained hidden to Bismarck while he gloated over the ruins of Paris. As Marx writes in two sharp paragraphs, which deserve full quotation despite their length because they show him at his full rhetorical powers:

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<sup>4</sup> The reference to the language of civilization is significant. The late 19<sup>th</sup>-century saw the introduction of a diplomatic discourse, in the age of empire, that determined the 'standard of civilization' to which non-European polities, especially in Asia, were expected to conform in order to be admitted as fully recognized members of international society. Gong (1984) is one early exploration of this discourse.

For him this is not only the extermination of revolution, but the extinction of France, now decapitated in reality, and by the French government itself. With the shallowness characteristic of all successful statesmen, he sees but the surface of this tremendous historic event. Whenever before has history exhibited the spectacle of a conqueror crowning his victory by turning into, not only the gendarme, but the hired bravo of the conquered government? There existed no war between Prussia and the Commune of Paris. On the contrary, the Commune had accepted the peace preliminaries, and Prussia had announced her neutrality. Prussia was, therefore, no belligerent. She acted the part of a bravo, a cowardly bravo, because incurring no danger; a hired bravo, because stipulating beforehand the payment of her blood-money of 500 millions on the fall of Paris. And thus, at last, came out the true character of the war, ordained by Providence as a chastisement of godless and debauched France by pious and moral Germany! And this unparalleled breach of the law of nations, even as understood by the old-world lawyers, instead of arousing the 'civilized' governments of Europe to declare the felonious Prussian government, the mere tool of the St. Petersburg Cabinet, an outlaw amongst nations, only incites them to consider whether the few victims who escape the double cordon around Paris are not to be given up to the hangman of Versailles!

That after the most tremendous war of modern times, the conquering and the conquered hosts should fraternize for the common massacre of the proletariat – this unparalleled event does indicate, not, as Bismarck thinks, the final repression of a new society upheaving, but the crumbling into dust of bourgeois society. The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war; and this is now proved to be a mere governmental humbug, intended to defer the struggle of classes, and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts into civil war. Class rule is no longer able to disguise itself in a national uniform; the national governments are *one* as against the proletariat (Marx 1871a, 79-80).

By their actions, Marx wrote, European governments testify to 'the international character of class rule' while they denounce the IWMA – the counter-organization to 'the cosmopolitan conspiracy of capital.' What united workers across state borders could not be stamped out 'by any amount of carnage,' but only by governments stamping out the 'despotism of capital over labour – the condition of their own parasitical existence' (Marx 1871a, 81).

## Marx as International Theorist

Marx emerges from *The Civil War in France* as a theorist engaged both within and against the 'old system' of international relations, mastering its mysteries with the purpose of transforming it. He is neither an abstract nor a romantic internationalist. As he subsequently wrote in the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, the pro-Bismarck press was right to observe that the German Social Democrats had 'sworn off internationalism.' They had borrowed slogans of 'brotherhood' from the bourgeoisie, whose internationalism was tangible in the form of trade, but had lost any idea of the international dimensions of their challenges to the German bourgeoisie or to Bismarck's foreign policy. The class struggle, Marx wrote, was national in form but not in substance; for Germany itself was situated economically within the world market and politically within the 'system of states' (Marx 1875, 533-34). The world-image most appropriate to Marx's analysis is not that of simple conflict between states but rather, to follow Fred Halliday (1990, 221), social conflict increasingly on an international scale, mediated and fragmented by states. Thus the Franco-Prussian War, the Commune, and its suppression constitute a single event – this in contrast to more conventional diplomatic-military histories that consider the Commune as a sideshow, a complication in the peace negotiations (e.g., Howard 1961). Marx makes no sharp distinction between international and civil wars. This is the future anticipated in *The Civil War in France*, with its juxtaposition of old and new worlds. While Bismarck annexed parts of two provinces – the old territorial impetus – 'the Commune annexed to France the working people all over the world' (Marx 1871a, 65). The reaction from the 'bloodhounds of order,' moreover, constituted in itself an *unparalleled fraternization* of conquering and conquered armies, and an *unparalleled breach* of international law.

Marx's own response to this event straddles the two worlds. For all his revolutionary bravado, the rhetorical purposes of which should not be dismissed in relation to a rather demoralized movement, he was remarkably willing to appeal to international law, to conventional moral categories of self-defence and proportionality, and to a standard of international legitimacy by which Germany should be declared an outlaw. He pressed at an earlier stage for formal British diplomatic recognition of the French republic. He worried about old-fashioned gains for the tsarist state and about the threat of another, much larger war created by the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, if France was driven 'into the arms of Russia.' In this way, Marx was attentive to what can be called the traditional dynamics of the European balance of power and to the effects – whether stabilizing or destabilizing – of German unification and Prussian militarism.

The point is not that Marx merits consideration as an international theorist because, and insofar as, he finally pays homage to the timeless and essential principle of the balance of power. There is no advance in admitting Marx to the canon only where he

addresses some pre-established set of problems or intersects with the vocabularies of other traditions (Thorndike 1978, 58).<sup>5</sup> When answers are squeezed out of him to questions he does not pose in any direct way – the cause of war and the condition of peace, for example, to take one standard attempt at disciplinary delimitation – the effect is to abstract his thought from the historical context from which it arose and to which it was, in the first instance, addressed. Marx is preoccupied with the changing character of capital, class, and the state. His rough identification of new forces at work in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, jostling with the old, corresponds in a striking way with Karl Polanyi's account of the great transformation behind the outward appearance of the one hundred years' peace sustained by the balance-of-power system. Polanyi (1957) concedes that the system was one of the institutions on which the peace rested, but argues that the ideological basis of its cohesion changed markedly in relation to economic changes. The first half-century was dominated by the Holy Alliance's suppression of constitutionalism; the second half, at least after the 'confused and crowded' period of upheaval from 1846 to 1871, saw peace moderated by high finance, which foisted constitutions on despots and made access to credit contingent upon good behaviour. The chief danger for European capitalists was general war between great powers; for trade depended on a stable international monetary system that could not operate in such a war. Marx, in retrospect, might have been overly fixated upon Russia and the Holy Alliance. But his writing is alert to the implications of a continent made increasingly interdependent by processes of accumulation.

Marx's response to the Franco-Prussian War – 'the most tremendous of modern times' – also contains within it the suggestion that the nature of war itself was undergoing a transformation. His confidence at the outset that Napoleon would be defeated, when the French army was widely considered the best in Europe, reflects not only his famous scorn for the Bonapartist state but also the important influence of Engels' considerable interest in military affairs. It was Engels who had anticipated in print the nature of the successful Prussian strategy and the significance of advances in artillery, troop movement and supply (Neumann and van Hagen 1986, 273). War in an age when the requirement of mass mobilization conflicted with working-class organization and popular discontent meant opportunity but also risk. Marx could welcome the French declaration of war because it would expose the weakness of the state, teach the proletariat to handle guns, and make revolution a distinct possibility. But war also brought the immediate risk that Europe's two largest working-class movements would be divided against each other by rival patriotic appeals. The influence of Clausewitz's despairing analysis of modern war as

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<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, Thorndike's account of a revolutionary-Marxist tradition makes no reference to *The Civil War in France* or the Commune, which are not mentioned at all in Kubalkova and Cruickshank (1989) and only peripherally in Teschke (2003, 2006).

possessing a logic of its own, of the difficulty of reconciling political direction with mass mobilization, might have informed Marx's passionate protest against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine.<sup>6</sup> His concern that the old system was incapable of saving itself from military disaster – and that the proletariat would be insufficient to the task – was amplified by Engels in an introduction to *The Civil War in France* written in 1891 to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commune:

[I]s there not every day hanging over our heads the Damocles' sword of war, on the first day of which all the chartered covenants of princes will be scattered like chaff; a war of which nothing is certain but the absolute uncertainty of its outcome; a race war which will subject the whole of Europe to devastation by fifteen or twenty million armed men, and is only not already raging because even the strongest of the great military states shrinks before the absolute incalculability of its final outcome? All the more is it our duty to make again accessible to the German workers these brilliant proofs now half-forgotten... (Engels 1891, 10).

In this light, Marx's reported allusion to revolution as the sixth great power, waiting to sweep aside the pentarchic order of Europe (Halliday 1990, 212; also 1999) yields a conservative as well as a radical reading. The threat of revolution made tangible in the Commune helped to reinforce at least a fragile sense of common interest and geopolitical discipline – if not political-doctrinal unity – among European states. It restrained war between them, even as it afforded the bloodbath of Paris. It arguably helped carry them through the Berlin Conference and the imperial remapping of Africa in 1884-85. Once the threat of revolution had evidently evaporated, however, and the weaknesses of proletarian internationalism were revealed, European diplomats, generals, and monarchs were again vulnerable to the possibility of 'sleepwalking' (Clark 2012), as they did, into a war which validated Marx's and Engels' fears.

The retrieval of *The Civil War in France* as a pedagogical tool has a number of merits related to the above interpretation. First, the text is a narrative of considerable power, however contingent and contestable some of its judgments about the Commune might be. It helps remove the imposing image of arid abstraction that surrounds Marx's analysis of capital and situates him as a participant-observer within a particular time and place. It is part of the event it describes. Even its real-time exaggerations and especially its errors are themselves of theoretical interest. Its narrative invites rough comparisons to contemporary conflicts.

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<sup>6</sup> Clausewitz's influence on Engels and secondarily on Marx is a subject of considerable attention in Gallie (1978), ch. 4.

Second, the text challenges lazy theoretical commonplaces in the field of international relations about the unitary, territorial, and sovereign state as representative of an undivided community. The subject of *The Civil War in France* is nothing like this. The politics of the Commune spill over state boundaries and confound commonplace distinctions between international relations and domestic politics. The communards imagined in words a shared political subjectivity, but one that involved citizens, or the people – not France or Empire; their space-time register was that of a city, and a city of migrants, rather than the nation-state (Ross 2015, 17).<sup>7</sup> For that matter, the restoration of France after May 1871 was not a mere coming to national senses after a time of excess – the work of too many foreign radicals. It was not a matter of communal healing or purification or repentance. It began with summary mass executions in the streets, among other brutalities. With its regained coercive powers, the French state then imposed long prison sentences or forced exile to its South Pacific colonies for the surviving communards who had not escaped to more hospitable oases in Europe. Restoration also required that great monuments be built by state and church, that political authority be redistributed, and that certain memories be erased from public discourse. Marx's text pries some of this open. Herein lies its interrogative power. It requires that what is merely assumed be articulated and defended.

Third, and finally, the text snaps the spell of timelessness about the modern state and state-system that describes a good deal of international theory. It falls on the side of the historicists against the dull weight of ahistorical, structuralist, neo-realist argument. It recalls two worthy and elemental claims, often overlooked, that Martin Wight once made in *Power Politics*: first, that the state-system is 'not the rule in history, despite the illusion that it is normal,' so that its attendant revolution in loyalties begs inquiry; and, second, that its actual history over the past several centuries is divided about equally between what he called 'normal' and 'revolutionary' periods – the former denoting a settled political-ideological consensus, the latter closer to international civil war. By that division, Wight suggested, it could reasonably be asked why the former should be called normal at all (1978, quotations at 2, 87, 92).<sup>8</sup> Marx's *The Civil War in France* is attentive, of course,

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<sup>7</sup> Magnussen (2011) makes the case that the city, typically assumed to be a 'lower' and mostly instrumental order of government, with less authority to act, in fact represents a different ontology of the political – one that involves the everyday experience of multiple authorities. It stands over against the 'illusion' or the imposition of state sovereignty, law, stability, and order – the focus of so much political theory, and international theory too. Magnusson's general claim for the city as much more than a limited legislated creation of so-called higher authorities – more political, more enduring – pairs interestingly with Marx's temporary interest in the Commune as the revealing of a new, emancipatory political form, whose urban setting, we might assume, was not accidental.

<sup>8</sup> I will leave for another occasion a proper defense of what may seem an oddly hospitable reading of Wight in relation to Marx, especially in those circles where Wight is typecast – if not much read – as a straightforwardly conservative or 'realist' British scholar in international relations in the 1950s and 1960s. My limited defense would start by placing Wight on the historicist side of what became an important divide

to the interplay of revolution and intervention in international relations, but also to the possibility of the new, the contingent, in the living spaces that people were making for themselves. His essay does not start from world-weariness about the world as it is and therefore must be. It represents one version of human beings making history, dramatically, in circumstances they did not choose.

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in the field. Wight (1991) did not regard Marx as having made a systematic contribution to international theory, though he was not sure that many fit that category (1966), but in his lectures he treated Marxism as a form of revolutionism that was committed to a transformation of the state-system, which put it inside the subject as he constructed it dialectically.

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Article

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGES: UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DECOLONISING AND INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

There is conceptual confusion in academic scholarship regarding Indigenous research methodologies and decolonising research methodologies. Scholars view these paradigms as similar yet distinct, but very few seek to define that distinction. In this article, I explore the relationship between these approaches to academic research. Both paradigms emphasise the need to transform the academy because of its tendency to marginalise non-Western epistemologies. Transformation requires the interconnection and co-ordination of many paradigms including Indigenous, feminist, and antiracist approaches to research. I propose viewing Indigenous and decolonising research methodologies as a relationship, and suggest both are dynamic practices that do not exist outside of the people who use them. What they look like and how they relate to one another will depend upon who uses them, why they are used, and where they are practiced.

### Keywords

Methodologies; decolonisation; place-based research; critical university studies; sociology of knowledge

There is conceptual confusion in academic literature regarding the distinction between Indigenous research methodologies and decolonising research methodologies. At the very least, the distinction between decolonising and Indigenous research is undefined. A chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research* on 'Decolonizing Research Practice: Indigenous Methodologies, Aboriginal Methods, and Knowledge/Knowing' (Evans et al. 2014) appears to tackle this question. The authors argue that Indigenous methodologies are an important pathway towards decolonisation,

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although Indigenous research exceeds decolonising research in that it contains a ‘revitalizing’ impulse (Evans et al. 2014, 3). While acknowledging that decolonising and Indigenous research are ‘closely related topics,’ the authors focus primarily on Indigenous methodologies and do not explore decolonisation in a substantial way (Evans et al. 2014, 1). George Sefa Dei (2013, 29) situates Indigenous research under the umbrella of decolonisation, which he views as a ‘broader, transformative project.’ For him, Indigenous research is therefore one element in a much larger program to decolonise all facets of life. Aman Sium, Chandni Desai, and Eric Ritskes (2012) share this perspective and suggest that decolonisation is a multidimensional project consisting of many diverse goals and possible pathways, but they also insist that Indigenous knowledges are central to this project because of their place-based awareness (Sium et al. 2012, ii). Sium et al. (2012, ii) ultimately confront the same dilemma as me: that Indigenous knowledges are diverse and ‘decolonization is a messy, dynamic, and a contradictory process.’ Margaret Kovach (2009) highlights one of its messiest contradictions. She suggests that Indigenous methodologies are rooted in ‘tribal’ epistemologies while decolonising methodologies derive from Western critical theory (Kovach 2009, 80). If this is so, then Indigenous and decolonising methodologies are radically different from one another and may at times be epistemologically incompatible.

The distinction between Indigenous and decolonising methodologies has significant implications for the way one conducts research because methodologies, as distinct from methods, constitute a paradigm or worldview. Whereas ‘method’ refers to a particular mode of data collection and analysis, ‘methodology’ refers to a broader set of assumptions about the nature of reality, what constitutes knowledge, and how knowledge is acquired. Methodology is the framework that sets the parameters of research and guides the entire research process: it determines the purpose of research, the research question, and one’s approach to it (Kovach 2009, 122; Tuck and McKenzie 2015, 76; Smith 2012, 144). Some researchers refer to Indigenous methodologies in the plural to distinguish between Indigenous and Western frameworks (Kovach 2009, 20-21), although I do so primarily to emphasise the diversity of Indigenous and decolonising methodologies (Absolon 2011, 118-120).

This article attempts to understand the distinction between Indigenous research methodologies and decolonising research methodologies. It draws on the academic literature and seeks to weave together disparate and contradictory ideas about research into a coherent narrative. I use Indigenous and decolonising approaches to research to illuminate one another, and consider that each methodological approach is in some way a reflection of the other and thus contains the other within itself. I begin by addressing how Indigenous perspectives of place help to understand knowledge production within the university. Dominant forms of knowledge produced in the academy reproduce Eurocentric and colonial orders while marginalising non-Western epistemologies. If non-Western researchers are to conduct non-Western research within the academy, there is

need for radical transformation of this institution. Decolonising the academy will require a concerted effort from Indigenous, feminist, antiracist, and other researchers, for each one has a unique perspective of colonialism. Indigenous methodologies offer particular insight because they help researchers view colonialism as a complex, multidimensional, and interrelated system, and they therefore emphasise the need for decolonising practices to be equally layered. A relational approach helps to understand not just the colonial mesh, but also the interaction between decolonising and Indigenous methodologies themselves. By viewing Indigenous and decolonising research as a relationship, I suggest that both are dynamic practices that do not exist outside of the people who use them. What these methodologies look like and how they relate to one another will ultimately depend upon who uses them, why they are used, and where they are practiced.

It is therefore important to address my own position as a researcher. I am a settler Canadian who grew up in rural Ontario and currently lives on Treaty 6 land in Edmonton, Alberta. On my father's side, I descend primarily from Scottish ancestors who settled along the St. Lawrence seaway several generations ago. On my mother's side, I descend from Polish Jewry who came to Canada as refugees after the Second World War. I do research in the field of genocide studies, and my personal history shapes my relationship to genocide in multiple ways: as a settler, I am in some ways implicated in the ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island; both maternal grandparents are Holocaust survivors, and my grandmother has always encouraged my study of the Holocaust; furthermore, the Holocaust is sometimes used to justify ongoing settler colonial (and arguably genocidal) practices in Israel/Palestine. I want to conduct research that challenges settler colonialism – or at the very least does not reproduce it – but also need to avoid appropriating Indigenous ideas and practices. To do this, it is necessary to distinguish between Indigenous and decolonising approaches to research, explore my relationship to each, and consider how I might appropriately use these methodologies to resist genocide and colonialism.

### **Place, knowledge, and the university**

A basic principle of Indigenous epistemologies and research methodologies is that knowledge exists within a set of relationships rooted in place or land.<sup>2</sup> Indigenous understandings of place differ radically from dominant Western, in particular settler colonial, conceptions which view place as a geographically bounded and unchanging

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<sup>2</sup> The relationship between place and knowledge is not exclusive to Indigenous research. Positivist and universalist Western scientific practices deny that knowledge is situated in place and insist that research extracts universal truths that can be applied to other contexts. However, Western science's denial of this relationship does not actually erase it. Like Indigenous knowledge, positivist Western knowledge is also situated in place. As I suggest in this paper, what is useful about Indigenous methodologies is that they acknowledge this relationship.

physical landscape (Tuck and McKenzie 2015, 59-67). According to Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie (2015, 31-43), place is rather constituted by a network of lived relationships between land, human persons, and other-than-human persons such as animals, plants, and climate. Its relational nature means that place is uneven, undergoing continual change, does not distinguish between insiders and outsiders, and is inextricably grounded in material, emotional, and spiritual reality (Tuck and McKenzie 2015, 29-46). All people exist within these relational networks and what one knows is produced in the encounter between person and place. To demonstrate the interdependence of knowledge and place, Herman Michell (2009) uses the practice of gathering berries as a metaphor for research. Like those gathering berries, researchers must go on a journey in search of something they need. Before gathering berries they must learn from elders where and when berries can be found, and then listen and respond to the land as they journey to and collect those berries. Within an Indigenous conception of place, however, it seems that place-based metaphors are not really metaphors at all. Knowledge literally does depend upon one's relationship to the land and is exercised through encounters with the land, and berries are no less substantive (or useful) than statistics or discourse.

It is difficult to distinguish between place and land because both constitute – and are constituted by – a network of human and other-than-human relationships. Tuck and McKenzie (2015) suggest that the distinction is largely conceptual. Place is anthropocentric in that it emphasises the human component of these relationships while land is topocentric and views humans as peripheral. From an Indigenous perspective, 'land' may therefore be preferable to 'place' (Tuck and McKenzie 2015, 54-57). Still, the horizons of place and person are blurry. Joe Sheridan and Roronhiakewen Dan Longboat (2006) demonstrate that land and mind are inseparable. On one hand, an individual's psychology and identity originate in a way of life determined by their relationship to the land; on the other hand, one's mind reproduces the myths that transform place into Creation. In other words, land creates people while people sustain Creation, and 'where one *is* has everything to do with *who one is*' (Sheridan and Longboat 2006, 369). Land is always present but always changing, humans (and non-humans) exist in a dynamic relation with it, and what one knows emerges from these perpetually shifting networks. In regards to colonialism, settler societies use colonial violence to impose buildings and other structures on the land, and this imposition shapes the settler's knowledge and relationship to land. But from an Indigenous perspective the land will always remain beyond these structures and, when the settler stops imposing them, the land will always emerge to reconstitute and reclaim its relationships.

The academy is itself a place that produces knowledge based on relationships. In a conversation with Coyote about graduate research, Raven asks whether 'normalised knowledges and practices have an origin or did they just pop out of the ether fully writ?' (Cole and O'Riley 2010, 324). Coyote answers by suggesting that knowledges, like words, contain etymologies that 'do not evolve themselves outside of human power relations and

connotations' (Cole and O'Riley 2010, 324). These power relations are obvious to university researchers observing the dynamics among faculties and disciplines, or within the hierarchies of studentship and professorship. Academic actors compete for funding from state and other corporate institutions, and those who produce knowledge that most privileges these institutions are most likely to receive funding (Cole 2004, 13-14). In Tuck and McKenzie's (2015) description of place as an uneven network of power relations, the academy is certainly place. But even more concretely, they observe that 'research is always situated physically...[and] is always undertaken by researchers and participants embedded in *places*' (Tuck and McKenzie 2015, 1).

Academic research has historically privileged Western epistemologies, value systems, and institutions while marginalising Indigenous ones. Margaret Kovach (2009, 29) explains how academics 'have become formidable gatekeepers of [knowledge systems] by objectifying knowledge into criterion-defined models, paradigms, and "truth" as a means to regulate 'legitimate knowledge.' That is, the academy determines 'what does and does not count as knowledge' (Kovach 2009, 29). The modern academy has evolved within a Cartesian intellectual tradition that views the mind and body as separate and privileges the former (Tuck and McKenzie 2015, 53-54, 151-152). Mind/body dualism posits that researchers can (and should) achieve intellectual neutrality through the objective measurement of physical reality, and favours knowledge produced through logic, abstract reason, and measurement (Harvey 2003, 125-126). Academic research therefore privileges those values and institutions that emerged from Enlightenment thinking such as individualism, private property, and capitalism (see Smith 2012, 61-62). This means that the academy actively marginalises ways of knowing that are non-objective and non-dualist, such as embodied or emplaced forms of knowledge. Specifically, it requires the marginalisation of Indigenous knowledges that view land, body, mind, and spirit as interconnected. The result is to force Indigenous researchers to 'the borders of the vast and expanding territory that is the margin, that exists "outside" the security zone, outside the gated and fortified community' (Smith 2012, 199). To consider this metaphor in a somewhat more literal sense, the academy becomes a geometrical plane<sup>3</sup> with European epistemology positioned at the centre, Indigenous knowledges in the margins, and with the flow of power moving from the centre outwards.

In other words, positivist scientific research is the dominant intellectual tradition in the university, and other practices may exist but remain in the periphery. The modern academy emerged from a tradition of Western science that is positivist and universalist, and this remains a dominant form of knowledge production in the university. In recent decades, other perspectives have emerged from the Western tradition that do not reproduce positivist or universalist assumptions, such as some feminist or antiracist paradigms. Some scholars also conceive of decolonising research as a Western paradigm

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<sup>3</sup> And here I intentionally invoke the idea of a Cartesian plane.

(Kovach 2009, 80). I discuss some non-positivist Western methodologies in the following sections and consider their usefulness within (or as) a decolonising paradigm.

Scholars argue that research ethics boards are extensions of academic institutions that function to reproduce Eurocentrism. University ethics boards promote a form of ethical practice that is unethical from an Indigenous perspective (Chilisa and Ntseane 2010; Cole 2004; Kovach 2009, 141-155; Weber-Pillwax 2004; Wilson and Restoule 2010). Ethics boards often rely on positivist approaches to ethics which privilege neutrality and seek to maintain distance between the researcher and researched. In contrast, Indigenous approaches to ethics emphasise that the researcher is accountable and must give back to the community involved with their research (Weber-Pillwax 2004, 79-81). Whereas Western ethics boards ask the researcher to be uninterested and uninvolved, Indigenous ethics require one who is deeply interested and involved. Applying positivist Western ethics within an Indigenous context can be harmful to the community (Kovach 2009, 141-155). Cole explains that the role of university ethics boards is to ensure that Indigenous peoples remain marginalised:

what coyote's trying to say says raven is that ethics reviews  
are about ethics review boards  
full stop end of conversation they are not about being ethical  
universities and funding councils and the government which fund them  
have too much invested in appropriating or silencing nonwestern voices  
especially first nations' voices (Cole 2004, 7).

For Cole, ethics boards promote positivism and Eurocentrism in academic research rather than ethical research practices.

Decolonising research methodologies challenge Eurocentrism by de-centring Western epistemologies and re-centring marginalised ones. If the problem with the academy is that it is Eurocentric, then decolonisation can be achieved by enabling non-Western peoples to step into its centre. This is the solution that Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) proposes. Academic space<sup>4</sup> has been historically colonised by white men, although feminist, Indigenous, and other critical theorists are creating space for formerly marginalised peoples to step inside (Smith 2012, 165-169). Instead of privileging Western interests and practices, decolonising methodologies enable Indigenous researchers, for example, to 'privilege indigenous concerns, indigenous practices and indigenous participation as researchers and researched' (Smith 2012, 111). She does not challenge the basic framework of the academy, such as 'privilege' or the researcher/researched binary, and suggests that a re-orientation is sufficient. Nado Aveling (2013) argues that

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<sup>4</sup> When referring to 'space,' I mean 'place' in the aforementioned sense. I use 'space' only when it is the specific language of the cited author.

researchers should not ‘talk about what they don’t know,’ and she considers the role of an ally in decolonising research. She says that ‘the positionality of an ally is invariably tenuous and often accompanied by discomfort. It is a discomfort that is grounded in not being an expert and not being centre stage’ (Aveling 2013, 209). An ally is someone who steps to the side to make room for multiple voices, or even steps entirely aside if necessary. To decolonise research, positivist Western researchers must relinquish their monopoly on the academy – whether voluntarily or through force – so that marginalised voices can place their own needs and knowledge at the centre of research. While a re-centring approach does not require a significant transformation of the academy, it does mean that research is no longer guided by Western interests and suggests the potential for more radical change.

Within this framework, Indigenous methodologies are just one of many possible approaches to decolonising research. On the surface, Indigenous methodologies may appear to do little more than fill a void left by Western epistemologies pushed from the centre. This ostensibly appears to be what Dei suggests when he says:

Indigenous research works with the ‘epistemic saliency’ (i.e., acknowledging the relevance, authenticity and primacy of local claims of knowing) of marginalized voices in accounting for their own experiences of oppression and colonization...it rests on the important recognition of the centrality of such voice in a researcher coming to know and understand the lived experiences of the researched. Indigenous research foregrounds such voice, as well as the personal, experiential and a political subject in search for social change (Dei 2013, 34).

This agenda is not unique to Indigenous research for it can be said of other antiracist and anticolonialist approaches (Dei 2013, 29). Yet Dei also suggests that ‘Indigenous research is just one aspect of a much broader, transformative project of Indigenous resistance (and decolonization) in all spheres of life’ (Dei 2013, 29). Indigenous research is indeed one of many forces that can de- and re-centre the academic field, but that process ultimately opens the possibility for more significant transformations. Cora Weber-Pillwax (1999) argues that Indigenous peoples, meaning both researchers and communities, will be the ‘active-centre’ that shapes the values and intentions of Indigenous research methodologies. She also declares that this new approach ‘must inevitably lead to the dismantling of research structures based on western notions of scientific and intellectual hegemony’ (Weber-Pillwax 1999, 39). Indigenous methodologies are one of many forces that can aid in the decolonisation of the academy, and are also one of many practices that can flourish through decolonisation. But the de- and re-centring of the academy is only one step in a much larger decolonising project.

Feminist and Indigenous methodologies are similar in that researchers can use both for the purpose of decolonising research. Decolonisation of the academy is a broad project that generally entails the perpetual de- and re-centring of academic place, with this process opening up the possibility for more significant transformations. Anyone can work towards wresting Western epistemologies from their position of privilege, and in the wake of this coup anyone should be able to conduct research in which their own values and practices are central. That is, decolonising methodologies enable and require a refocusing on marginalised voices. Women and Indigenous peoples face similar struggles in the university and throughout society as marginalised peoples, so may have something to learn from one another (Million 2009). Indigenous women and girls are particularly susceptible to oppression, but this means they may be particularly effective at developing anticolonial and transformative approaches to research (Arvin et al. 2013; Chilisa and Ntseane 2010; Million 2009). Aveling's (2013, 204-205) argument that researchers should not 'talk about what they don't know' resonates with feminist themes of felt experience, and she acknowledges that her own approach to Indigenous research is embedded in her feminist roots. Lester-Irabinna Rigney (1999) explicitly points out that feminist research can be used as a model for developing an Indigenous research methodology. He argues that 'Indigenist' methodologies must be a form of 'liberation epistemology' – which is roughly synonymous with what I refer to as decolonising methodologies – and develops a framework based on this premise. Rigney views feminism, along with antiracism, as one of the first liberation epistemologies to take root in the academy, and notes how it resisted academic objectivity by showing that knowledge is entwined with power relations. The feminist concern with lived experience is particularly useful to Indigenous researchers because it is in experience where one determines whether practices are oppressive or liberatory (Rigney 1999, 114-115). For Rigney, feminism in the university is a sort of intellectual predecessor to Indigenous research methodologies.

### **Transforming the academy**

Decolonising researchers do not intend simply to replace Western epistemologies with marginalised ones, for the very distinction between centre and margin is itself problematic. A key feature of both colonialism and the Western academy is an emphasis on oppositional binaries: between centre and margin, researcher and researched, subject and object, victim and perpetrator. Frantz Fanon (1963, 38) argues that the essential structure of colonialism is binary, describing colonised places as 'a world cut in two... The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed.' The colonial system uses violence to maintain inequalities between coloniser and colonised, but also produces a colonised subject who views this opposition, as well as its own oppression, as natural (Fanon 1963, 35-106). Within the

academy, binarism is embedded in the concept of the ‘other.’ For Cole and O’Riley (2010), ‘the other/ed’ is constructed in contradistinction to the dominant culture and always represented as being less than, never equal to, mainstream society. This binary between normal and other, along with the structural inequalities within, results in the erasure of the latter: academic researchers erase the voice of the other, the colonised, or the object of research (Cole and O’Riley 2010, 331). A primary goal of decolonising research methodologies is to deconstruct binaries in academic thought and practice (Blix 2015; Harvey 2003; Kaomoa 2013; Kovach 2009, 156-173). For example, Julie Kaomea (2013) argues that scholars can decolonise educational research by discarding the ‘researcher as scientist’ paradigm and replacing it with a ‘researcher as detective’ paradigm. Conceptualising research as a ‘private investigation’ requires the researcher to consider the larger context of an ‘educational crime.’ Instead of addressing who was wronged and who wronged them, an investigative approach challenges victim/perpetrator binaries by showing that many people are implicated in many ways in these ‘educational crimes’ (Kaomea 2013). By focusing on the symptoms of colonialism, such as inequalities between victims and perpetrators, researchers may actually reinscribe these inequalities. Decolonising research methodologies address colonialism itself as a complex social system that produces both these categories and the inequalities inherent to them.

The aim of decolonising research methodologies is radical transformation of the academy. It is not enough simply to replace one epistemological order with another, nor to extract and integrate elements of Indigenous knowledge into the university, nor to allow Indigenous researchers to work amongst positivist Western-trained ones. Decolonising methodologies seek to transform the foundation upon which the academy operates – binarism, neutrality, and the concepts of ownership, objectivity, and knowledge. According to Fanon (1963, 246), decolonisation entails ‘not only the disappearance of colonialism but also the disappearance of the colonized man.’ If decolonisation in general is ‘the veritable creation of a new man’ (Fanon 1963, 36) then decolonising methodologies are the veritable creation of a new research/er. But what this research/er will look like is still undefined, and the path to get there is neither certain nor singular. In the words of Sium et al. (2012), decolonisation is a ‘tangible unknown.’ It is a multidimensional process that requires many different people with many different practices working together to transform power dynamics. Indigenous research subsequently may or may not be part of this project, depending on the intentions of the researcher. If research is the search for and transmission of knowledge, as Dei (2013, 28-29) suggests, then Indigenous research can and will happen regardless of colonial, pre- or post-colonial, or any other context. Many researchers express how Indigenous methodologies can be used to transform the academy in radical ways (Chilisa and Ntseane 2010; Million 2009; Million 2011; Pio et al. 2014; Rigney 1999), though others are less overtly revolutionary and instead present Indigenous methodologies as one more

way(s) to understand the world (Debassige 2010; Michell 2009; Michell 2012; Wilson and Restoule 2010).

Decolonisation requires not just the transformation of intellectual thought, but a radical reconceptualisation of the place where research occurs. An academic environment that accommodates Indigenous research in a non-oppressive way will necessarily reflect this in its physical design, for land and place is the source of Indigenous knowledge. Red Crow Community College, located on the Kainai reserve in southern Alberta, is a diploma and degree granting college that teaches traditional Indigenous knowledge. Particularly notable about place is that its main building was the former St. Mary's Residential School.<sup>5</sup> Transformation of this building from an assimilationist instrument of the state into a First Nations run college reflects a radical reclamation of Indigenous knowledge, experience, and place. Not every class is taught in the building, however, and courses in Kainai Studies may be taught out-of-doors and in relation to the land (Mandel et al. 2015). Herman Michell (2012) demonstrates other ways that place can reflect Indigenous epistemologies. He presents the *migawap*, a traditional dwelling of the Woodlands Cree, as a conceptual framework through which to teach Cree 'science.' Michell (2012) describes how its foundation, covering, fire, binding, and each of its thirteen poles represent a component of traditional Cree knowledge or values. Although a teacher may articulate each element separately, it is only through their relationships to one another that the *migawap* can stand. It is critical that researchers work towards decolonising both the type of knowledge they produce as well as the concrete places in which they conduct research.

It is necessary to confront research at multiple sites because colonialism is a complex system comprising many interrelated domains. Colonialism is more than the European governance of non-European peoples and territories. For colonialism to take root, people must adopt a particular set of assumptions about who qualifies as a person, what society should look like, and what constitutes place. This means that colonialism penetrates nearly every facet of reality. One particular point of intersection is between colonialism and patriarchy (Arvin et al. 2013; Chilisa and Ntseane 2010; Million 2009). Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill (2013) demonstrate some of the ways that settler colonialism is a highly gendered process. The nation-state relies upon the nuclear family with its particular construction of sexuality and gender, and a settler state must therefore reproduce this social order. To establish a new state, a settler society will impose particular conceptions of family and gender while simultaneously erasing opposing models, such as traditional Indigenous social structures based on kinship. In other words, settler colonialism requires the imposition of heteropatriarchy and heteropaternalism – social systems that reproduce hierarchy, white-male superiority, and sexualised violence

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<sup>5</sup> The building was lost due to fire in 2015. Some survivors of St. Mary's see its destruction as a healing experience, although the loss of college resources is understandably devastating (Saskiw, 2015).

(Arvin et al. 2013, 14-17). But gender and sexuality are only two dimensions. Linda Smith (2012) points to a half dozen more sites where colonialism intersects: capitalism, models of race and humanity, the relationship between individuals and communities, conceptions of space and time, historical writing, and scientific rationalism (see chapters 1-4). Each of these sites functions to produce colonial knowledges and social systems, and any effective challenge to colonialism must be a concerted effort against them all.

Thus, decolonising methodologies are multidimensional practices that resist the various sites at which colonialism operates. This helps to understand why both Indigenous and feminist practices can be used as decolonising methodologies. Each challenges a different facet of colonialism: Indigenous researchers resist the way colonialism transforms land while feminist researchers combat sexual violence. Arvin et al. (2013, 14) argue that ‘there cannot be feminist thought and theory without Native feminist theory’ because patriarchy and colonialism are mutually reinforcing. Similarly, Dian Million (2009, 55) observes that ‘To “decolonize” means to understand as fully as possible the forms colonialism takes in our own times,’ which she does by exploring the intersection of race, sex, and gender and their mutual implication in colonialism. To decolonise means to simultaneously resist colonialism, patriarchy, race, as well as other oppressive structures such as capitalism and positivist science. Indigenous research methodologies are an absolutely essential part of this process, although they cannot accomplish it alone. Decolonising methodologies are like Michell’s (2012) metaphorical migawap: Indigenous research is one pole, feminism is another, antiracism another, and so on. Each may appear separate, but it is not until every element comes together in its proper relation that decolonising methodologies can stand and provide shelter for us.

### **Research in relational terms**

Relationality is a particularly useful lens with which to consider colonialism and decolonisation. Shawn Wilson (2008, 7) argues that it is a defining feature of Indigenous life. He explains that

Identity for Indigenous peoples is grounded in their relationships with the land, with their ancestors who have returned to the land and with future generations who will come into being on the land. Rather than viewing ourselves as being *in* relationship with other people or things, we *are* the relationships that we hold and are part of (Wilson 2008, 80).

This perspective reflects the way that all things are interconnected – people, land, cosmos – and that one is responsible to those relationships, and one’s location within place and social reality defines their responsibilities. Indigenous research methodologies must

support reality by treating knowledge, being, and ethics as interconnected (Wilson 2008, 69-71). Relationality is an underlying theme in the academic literature on Indigenous and decolonising research, and researchers acknowledge it in many ways: the way knowledge emerges from place; the interwoven threads between decolonising, Indigenous, feminist, and antiracist research; that colonialism is inseparable from patriarchy, race, capitalism, and Western science. Indigenous knowledge is particularly useful to the decolonising project because of its attention to the relationships that compose reality: it enables one to see and understand the ways in which the university, knowledge production, and oppression are bound up with one another. And these perspectives show us that decolonisation must be a concerted effort amongst everyone working together to transform not just the academy, but also the economy and business, family and gender, the nation-state, and more.

Relationality can be useful to non-Indigenous researchers engaging in decolonising research. Non-Indigenous academics, such as myself, may question whether it is appropriate to use a principle so deeply embedded in Indigenous perspectives. However, relations exist whether or not one acknowledges them, and Western researchers are particularly bad at acknowledge and respecting them. A first step for non-Indigenous researchers is simply to acknowledge the networks we are woven into. By understanding the extent and limits of these relations, researchers will understand the need to relinquish control over those domains to which they are not related. That is, researchers must stop doing research on ‘the other’ (Cole and O’Riley 2010). In particular, this means respecting the self-determination of Indigenous peoples:

let *aboriginal* scholars and community members have control of evaluating all *aboriginal* sshrc funding from aboriginal and nonaboriginal applicants through an aboriginal designed and controlled *national aboriginal council*  
let us be strong too in holding aboriginal scholars to the red path  
to doing things in a good way honouring our ancestors our elders our children our women our men our methodologies epistemologies protocols practices let us be accountable to our communities and let us demonstrate that accountability (Cole 2004, 27).

Beyond this, academics can conduct research that highlights relationships instead of differences or categories. Dwayne Donald (2012) develops a decolonising approach, Indigenous Métissage, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. In this methodology, the researcher uses artifacts to examine cultural encounters in colonial contexts, recognising Aboriginal and Western cultures as distinct yet interconnected. The role of the researcher is to unravel and then re-braid these relations (Donald 2012). In general, a relational turn in research may appear as a refocusing on the uses of knowledge. For the decolonising researcher, this means addressing how knowledge is

used to reproduce colonial order and the way one can use knowledge to challenge this order.

Colonialism is a force that severs, or attempts to sever, the interwoven webs that compose reality. It transforms us into individuals disconnected from any larger community, and demands that we carry around knowledge that has nothing to do with the land on which we walk. Only by severing the bonds between people, land, and knowledge can it transform us into labour, property, and resources. But Indigenous knowledges help us to see that these networks continue to exist, whether or not we choose to recognise them. Colonialism denies them, or transforms harmonious relations into oppressive ones, though they always remain to be reclaimed.

It may be useful to view decolonising and Indigenous research methodologies in relational terms. When I first set out to distinguish between decolonising and Indigenous research, my immediate impulse was to treat them as categories: How can I classify them into a typology? What qualities characterise each category? Are these separate categories, or subcategories? Linda Smith was the first to chasten me (though only because I read *Decolonizing Methodologies* first). She pointed out that the aim of dominant Western research to measure, classify, and compare (in other words, to objectify) is the basis of racism, and continues to be the process through which many people, Indigenous and otherwise, are oppressed (Smith 2012, 44-47). But beyond that, it became clear to me that the answer was not categorically black and white. Indigenous and decolonising methodologies seem to intersect at some points while diverging at others, weaving themselves into a complex braid. They are clearly not the same thing, but neither are they entirely separate. Rather, they appear to have a living relationship with one another. Before concluding, I want to consider briefly some forms that this relationship can take and try to observe some points of intersection and contradiction.

Indigenous research is both the stimulus behind and desired outcome of decolonising methodologies. Dominant Western academic practices actively marginalise Indigenous epistemologies by treating Indigenous peoples as the objects of research. Researchers in the university have begun to seek more respectful ways to conduct research with, rather than on, Indigenous communities (Smith 2012, 4-5). If researchers are to conduct respectful research, they must be able to do so in a way that reflects Indigenous forms of knowledge and ethics. Thus, the need to legitimise Indigenous knowledge within the university created a need to decolonise the academy, while the ability to conduct Indigenous research is the desired outcome of decolonisation. In this way, decolonising methodologies are a necessary but temporary step on the path to Indigenous research, sandwiched between the desire and ability to conduct Indigenous research. Kovach (2009, 85) is explicit that ‘The purpose of decolonization is to create space in everyday life, research, academia, and society for an Indigenous perspective without it being neglected, shunted aside, mocked, or dismissed.’ However, she also suggests that decolonising theory corresponds more to critical research than Indigenous,

thereby rooting it in the Western intellectual tradition (Kovach 2009, 80). This suggests that decolonising methodologies might ultimately be self-destructing. If decolonising methodologies effectively transform the academy into a non-Western institution, some Western paradigms may be discarded: <sup>6</sup> decolonisation theory may prove itself to be irrelevant.

Yet Indigenous research practices can themselves become a decolonising force, for their very presence within the academy is an act of resistance. Its marginalisation within the academy means that Indigenous research has the potential to challenge dominant practices, and Indigenous research can therefore be an empowering and liberatory practice, particularly for Indigenous peoples (Fredericks 2007, 15; Million 2009; Rigney 1999; Sheridan and Longboat 2006, 378-379). Though not intrinsically decolonising, when used in a certain way Indigenous research can have a decolonising effect. For example, Dian Million (2011) and Gladys Rowe (2014) consider the transformative power of dreaming. Dreaming is important for Indigenous knowledge systems because it functions to illuminate relationships between personal identity, community, and land. Through the process of dreaming, the dreamer conceptualises and understands the relationships between the many components of reality and develops a narrative based on these connections. In other words, dreaming is a mythic process that creates the world and transforms reality into Creation. Yet these relations and narratives are not fixed, so the dreamer must engage in the ongoing imagination and re-imagination of reality. In Million's (2011, 321-322) words, dreaming is an act of 'theorizing' through which one can 'reorganize boundaries' of reality. Colonial relations are not fixed and so it is possible to re-imagine them through dreaming – to redraw the structure of colonialism so that it is no longer colonial. The purpose of dreaming may not be to deconstruct the colonial order, although it can certainly be used to that effect.

On one hand, Indigenous and decolonising methodologies are intended specifically for Indigenous peoples. Robert Lovelace (2004) makes this suggestion through dialogue with Peter Cole's 'trick(ster)s of aboriginal research.' Cole (2004) is concerned with both Indigenous and decolonising research: his primary concern is the ability to conduct research in an Indigenous way, but recognises that decolonisation is necessary to achieve this. Lovelace's (2004) review of Cole's article enacts a conversation between several parties – Indigenous and non-Indigenous, academic and non-academic, Greek philosophers and cartoon characters – who inspect Cole's argument (represented as a rock, grandfather, or Platonic truth depending on one's position). Blondie, from the comic strip, desperately tries to understand what Cole's message is for her:

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<sup>6</sup> I would argue that Western paradigms assume Western superiority. If one discards the idea of Western superiority, they rupture the very foundation of Western knowledge.

Mìno. ...Peter Cole doesn't want you to do anything. It's not about you. He's not talking to you, but you're hearing what he has to say because you're listening in. You think he is talking to you because along with being eurocentric you're egocentric.

Blondie. You don't have to hurt my feelings.

Mìno. You're right. Then again, I could just leave you guessing.

Blondie. It's so unfair! What does he want anyway? Who is he talking to?

Kiwèkì. To us. (*Kiwèkì brushes back her hair from her forehead with two hands in one long motion*) He wants us to be brave so he is showing how the words that are used like poison to enslave us can be made into jokes. It is not meant to hurt you, it is meant to free us from letting those words control us (Lovelace 2004, 34).

Indigenous and decolonising research is intended as a liberatory tool for Indigenous peoples and has little to do with Westerners. The idea that Indigenous research has anything to do with white people is just a Eurocentric reinscription of Western superiority.

On the other hand, the development of Indigenous methodologies can be particularly useful for non-Indigenous researchers seeking to decolonise their research. In an early exploration of Indigenous research methodologies, Weber-Pillwax (1999) considers how researchers might begin to develop them and identifies some possible characteristics. She is certain that Indigenous research must be conducted by Indigenous peoples and from an Indigenous perspective, but the development of these methodologies specifically within the university is a different matter. She suggests that:

If appropriate preparation of non-indigenous researchers for work with indigenous communities were the only result of an academic focus on indigenous research methodology, I believe that would be enough to justify the work... an academic focus on indigenous research methodology would move scholars toward a stronger sense of professional and ethical accountability (Weber-Pillwax 1999, 37-38).

Indigenous peoples do not need to outline their own unique research methodologies because, as Dei (2013) also notes, they always have and always will conduct Indigenous research. Indigenous research is marginalised in the academy, however, which results in unethical practices by university researchers. Training non-Indigenous researchers in Indigenous research can encourage accountability to various communities – including Indigenous and scholarly communities – and in this way Indigenous research may be an effective way to decolonise the non-Indigenous academe.

There may appear to be contradictions with the relationship between Indigenous and decolonising research methodologies. One might confusedly ask based on the preceding paragraphs: So decolonising methodologies are intended for Indigenous peoples while Indigenous methodologies are for non-Indigenous peoples? It would be easy to attribute this ostensible paradox to a conceptual ambiguity between these approaches: the two concepts are blurred because researchers do not define Indigenous and decolonising methodologies consistently. But there seems a better way to understand this. A crucial point for Weber-Pillwax (1999; 2004), which is also a major theme throughout the literature, is that research depends upon one's position. Methodologies will look radically different depending on whether the researcher is Indigenous, an Indigenous person in diaspora, non-Indigenous, from a marginalised group, a settler, and so on. Whether one conducts Indigenous or decolonising research depends upon who and where they are, what they study, and what are their intentions.

### **Relating Indigenous and decolonising research methodologies**

Viewing Indigenous and decolonising research methodologies as a relationship illuminates their dynamic and contextual natures. It is difficult to say 'decolonising research is this' or 'Indigenous research is that' because relationships are perpetually in flux – these are approaches to research that breathe. They are practices that exist in action and will therefore depend on their position with the researcher: they will actualise differently based on their location in time and place, and the intentions of the researcher. They may be of use to certain people at certain moments, but not necessarily others.

Colonialism is a multidimensional process and decolonisation must respond to it as such. Colonisation has transformed the land, the way we produce knowledge, the ways we build families and operate businesses, and the very way we define humanity. We all perpetuate colonialism as people of gender, family status, race or normalised whiteness, consumers, and inhabitants of place. Everyone is enmeshed in the colonial fabric and we must all work to unravel it,<sup>7</sup> but we must all do so based on who we are and how we are twisted into its netting. Indigenous research is, without a doubt, crucial for decolonisation of the academy, though this alone is not enough. Others must respond as feminist or antiracist researchers, but only so long as they recognise their struggle is not confined by disciplinary boundaries. Disciplinarity suggests that the struggle is narrow, and this sense of boundedness may create a false sense of comfort. We all struggle against different aspects of colonialism from very different positions, so we cannot privilege one practice more than any other. Disciplinary boundaries must dissolve, though each distinct perspective should remain: we should feminise native studies, nativise feminist studies, genderfuck economics, racialise environmental studies, environmentalise film studies,

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<sup>7</sup> I borrow this metaphor from Andrew Woolford (Woolford, 2014).

and so on. This will dissolve institutional hierarchies and help transform the academy into an institution that resists colonial order. Yet if such a transformation is effective there may ultimately be no such categories as Western research, Indigenous research, or decolonising research. This is not to say that all research should be the same. Academic disciplines should not be boundaries that separate us, but should rather be the basis for building relationships between people from different positions and perspectives.

The same transformation must be applied to the boundaries of academia itself because, just as each person is entwined in the mesh of colonialism, so too is each institution. It is crucial that researchers work towards decolonising the academy, but must remain aware that this is only a small part of the larger battle. Decolonisation of the academy is only possible insofar as we also decolonise the land, the city, the stock exchange, the state. If such a project is successful, these institutions may be so radically transformed as to be unrecognisable. As a university researcher, this is the approach I take. Colonisation tears things apart and has fragmented the world into discrete little pieces, and it is now a collective effort to put it back together.

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Article

## **STUART HALL'S LEGACY: THATCHERISM, CULTURAL STUDIES AND 'THE BATTLE FOR SOCIALIST IDEAS' DURING THE 1980S**

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### **Abstract**

While few analyses of leading cultural thinkers and scholars, such as Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, consider their roles as socialist public intellectuals, engaged in the on-the-ground debates around party and/or movement strategy and tactics for the Left, such involvement can contribute to making their work more influential as scholars and their work as scholars can contribute to making their political interventions more efficacious. This paper focuses on Stuart Hall's role as a socialist public intellectual and his 'Thatcherism' thesis during the 1980s and argues that part of the latter's success was not necessarily due to the veracity of its analysis so much as the position of the author and the production and distribution of the ideas.

### **Keywords**

Stuart Hall; Thatcherism; Public Intellectual; alternative media; Raymond Williams; Cultural Studies; socialism

*There is a spectre haunting the Left, the spectre of the 1983 election.*

In paraphrasing the opening line of *The Communist Manifesto* in light of the media and pundit 'panic' around the unexpected rise and election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in September 2015, I want to draw attention to the legacy of an interpretation of the 1983 general election, which continues to haunt many in the Labour establishment.<sup>1</sup> These reactions highlight how far the Labour Party has moved to the right, as any attempt to re-assert a connection with reforming the system in favour of the working class, who have been on the wrong side of the growing inequality gap, is viewed with anathema. The attacks on Corbyn, whether explicitly or implicitly, use the spectre of Labour's 1983 defeat to keep 'social democracy', let alone 'socialism', at bay.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This article was completed in December 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Labour narrowly escaped being relegated to third party status in the 1983 election with just 28 percent of the vote versus the combined 26 percent share of the Social Democratic Party and Liberal Alliance together.

Labour's 'wilderness years' are attributed to the 1983 election, despite its ongoing shift to the right afterwards, starting with Neil Kinnock's election as leader at Labour's October 1983 conference, and the subsequent 'rejection' of the party by voters in the subsequent 1987 and 1992 elections, as it kept shifting to the right after each defeat. The Conservative Party's 18-year rule, from 1979 to 1997, established under Margaret Thatcher's prime ministership (1979-90), was ended with Labour's landslide win in the 1997 general election. Whether this was attributable to Labour's shift to the right and transformation into 'New Labour', and/or to the support of Rupert Murdoch's media empire, including the best-selling tabloid, *The Sun*, and/or whether it was the electorate sick of an ailing government beset with internal squabbles and scandals, which was increasingly out of touch with the public, 'New Labour' under Tony Blair reaped the rewards.

The dominance of New Labour and the Labour Right has meant that the dominant understanding of Labour's 1983 general election defeat, can be summarized in then Labour MP Gerald Kaufman's quip that Labour's election manifesto was the 'longest suicide note in history': its demands were seen as 'too left-wing', including unilateral nuclear disarmament, re-nationalisation of particular industries and withdrawal from the European Economic Community. This interpretation became a dividing line across the Left and its memory has been used against attempts to shift Labour back towards the centre-left.<sup>3</sup> For example, Ed Miliband's half-hearted, slight move 'leftwards' in the 2015 election was claimed by Labour's Right as the reason why Labour lost that election. The dominance of the Labour Right can in part be attributed to the 'fear' of ending up again in that 'wilderness', which no doubt helped to militate against the survival of all but a handful of MPs on the Labour Left, out of which Corbyn reluctantly put his name forward for leader of the Labour Party.<sup>4</sup> Unlike 1983, the momentum pushing Labour is one in which the party is being influenced by a broad stretch of the public outside Labour, possibly more than it ever was in the 1980s, as tens of thousands are also (re) joining Labour because of its decisive shift away from New Labour.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Of course, there are differing opinions on what the 1983 defeat meant and so for a recent perspective from the right of the party, see Francis Beckett (2015) 'Lessons from Labour's Wilderness Years', TotalPolitics.com (<http://www.totalpolitics.com/print/4358/lessons-from-labours-wilderness-years.html> accessed: 17 November 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Point made at the panel, 'Beyond Parliamentary Socialism? Corbyn's Labour Party', with Hilary Wainwright, Jon Lansman and Andrew Murray, Historical Materialism London Conference, 7 November 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Corbyn received 59.5 percent of votes in the first round of voting and thereby won the leadership of Labour. This amounted to more than 251,000 out of 422,664 votes cast (of a total electorate of 554,272). Rowena Mason (12 September 2015) 'Labour Leadership: Jeremy Corbyn Elected with Huge Mandate', *The Guardian* (<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/sep/12/jeremy-corbyn-wins-labour-party-leadership-election> accessed 17 November 2015).

Notably, the 1983 general election defeat is the point at which the split of the Left into so-called 'hard' and 'soft' Lefts really begins to take shape. That same year Stuart Hall's 'Thatcherism' thesis was revised from its initial publication in the January 1979 issue of *Marxism Today*, 'the theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party of Great Britain' (CPGB), and published in a collection with a range of responses, marking its growing prominence as a topic for debate and discussion across the Left and within the academy (Hall and Jacques 1983). That same year, the split in cultural studies between 'cultural populism' and 'political economy' can be seen in the debate in *Screen* between Ian Connell and Nicholas Garnham over public service broadcasting (McGuigan 1992, pp.163-67). This split in both the political Left and the cultural studies Left is a legacy, in part, of the struggles that took place over the meaning and significance of Thatcherism in which Stuart Hall played a central role, as both a socialist public intellectual committed to the Left's 'war of position' and a socialist scholar contributing to cultural studies's 'political project'. Both roles included the promotion of his Thatcherism thesis that ensured its dominant influence on the academic and cultural Lefts. I want to focus in this essay on how his Thatcherism thesis came to be the dominant interpretation on the Left. It has remained an important contribution to the Left's thinking of how to develop a counter-hegemonic strategy to oust the New Right.

However, there were limits to Hall's Thatcherism thesis that were not fully understood at the time. Some of these critiques identify issues to do with the translation of Gramsci's ideas into English, drawn upon by Hall and others, alongside substantial criticisms of the discursive understanding of power that leaves out the material connections to people's consciousness, such as cultural and social practices, ways of life as well as political and economic factors, including institutions and workplaces. Finally, I do want to make it clear that my critique of aspects of Hall's thinking is done in a collegial manner, both as someone who drew inspiration and encouragement from his work during this period, as I felt part of the same broad social formation to which his ideas appealed,<sup>6</sup> and out of a deep and abiding respect for Stuart Hall, the person and his character and intelligence.<sup>7</sup>

One of Stuart Hall's most important contributions, of course, was to popularize cultural studies as an important *political* project. This dovetailed nicely between his work in academia and his work as a socialist public intellectual during the 1980s, contributing to a range of political and cultural publications, such as *New Socialist* (NS) and *New*

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<sup>6</sup> Alternative and oppositional cultural and intellectual formations, as defined by Raymond Williams, play an important part in bringing about social and political change (Williams 1977, pp. 118-120; see Pimlott 2014b).

<sup>7</sup> For a more personal and reflective piece about Hall in an earlier issue of *Socialist Studies*, see Pimlott (2014a).

*Society*, as well as his more significant and collaborative work with Martin Jacques and *Marxism Today* (MT). The period of Hall's greatest influence as a socialist public intellectual really begins with his collaboratively researched and co-authored, 400-plus-page *Policing the Crisis*, which helped to launch his role in public debates on the Left during the 1980s and 1990s (Hall et al. 1978).

The legacy of Stuart Hall's influence is in part related to a general shift that took place in the aftermath of '1968', as the Left shifted from a strategy of 'frontal assaults' on dominant institutions during the upheavals of '1968', to one of the 'long march through the institutions' in its aftermath, which emphasized the importance, even necessity, of joining and shaping institutions from within. By the start of the 1980s, however, a new imperative and *modus operandi* for the Left made its appearance: Antonio Gramsci's 'war of position'. To engage in a 'war of position', Hall stressed the importance of the *ideological-political* dimension of struggles in 'civil society', rather than workplace struggles or 'frontal assaults' on the state (ie Gramsci's 'war of manoeuvre', equated with the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917), before being able to establish the moral and intellectual leadership of a (counter-hegemonic) social-historical bloc. Under Hall's influence, via cultural studies and the Left's counter-public sphere, his Thatcherism thesis emphasized engagement in ideological struggle over 'common sense' and public discourses, which justified the focus on mainstream media and popular culture rather than factory struggles and political economy.

A key emphasis of this approach to (counter) hegemony included a focus on 'organic' versus 'traditional' intellectuals, which did draw attention to the role that such agents play in securing hegemony. Many of us were receptive to this message of focusing on the 'ideological-political dimension' of struggles and those of us who were engaged as 'grassroots advocates, agitators and organizers' could see ourselves as aspiring 'organic intellectuals', who Antonio Gramsci described as 'leaders', who combine the functions of 'specialists + politicians', and who are 'permanently active persuaders', whether or not we were closely connected to a political organisation or social movement, or chose to engage in the 'war of position' through other forms of cultural politics.<sup>8</sup> Part of Thatcherism's appeal was the promise of a 'frontline' commitment of *participation* in 'ideological struggle' for erstwhile 'organic intellectuals' rather than waiting to see how one might be called upon to *support* industrial or workplace struggles, especially if one was not actually employed in one of the 'productive worker' occupations. This engaged audience was constituted and addressed as part of a 'political-cultural formation', by such periodicals as *Marxism Today*, *New Socialist*, *New Society*, *New Statesman* and *City Limits*, and it was through these media that our engagement in the 'war of position' via 'ideological-political

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<sup>8</sup> Antonio Gramsci quoted in Thomas (2009, p. 416): "The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, exterior and momentary mover of affections and passions, but in joining in actively in practical life, as constructor, organiser, 'permanently active persuader' because not pure orator..."

struggle' was expressed. For cultural studies students and lecturers, these political, alternative and oppositional media articulated critiques of mainstream media and popular culture from vaguely 'left socialist' or 'libertarian socialist' perspectives. At times, this perspective could be read or understood implicitly as in essence the Labour Party or even the Labour Left, since for so many socialists in the UK, there is a sense of ownership or attachment to the 'broad church' of Labour regardless of membership,<sup>9</sup> and at other times as something more politically radical, if only vaguely defined. This vague understanding or articulation of 'radical' politics did not offer any explicit commitment to a particular organisation or ideology, although some became involved in small, far-Left groups, while others joined the Labour Party; for many others, radical politics were defined through 'single issue' movements, such as squatting, AIDS and peace activism, or 'identity politics', such as feminist and black activism.

Although Stuart Hall came to be seen as closely associated with *Marxism Today* and its political project, which increasingly through the 1980s pushed for the abandonment of key tenets of traditional Labour Party commitments, he was also important in popularizing areas that had traditionally been neglected because they were not seen as very important to the class struggle until the 1980s: popular culture, media, ideology (eg Pimlott forthcoming). The emphasis that Hall and others placed on what was understood as the war of position through 'civil society' ensured an important role for the intellectual in whatever way she might be defined. Yet, despite Hall's exhortations, a form of academic cultural politics became the defining element around *Marxism Today's* political project in part because of the lack of a connection to any kind of institution or organisation that could enact its politics, beyond discussion groups and conferences (as with the first New Left), and exhortations to the Labour Party leadership to make changes (eg Chun 1993; Pimlott forthcoming).

Part of the appeal of Hall's Thatcherism thesis was that it offered a means to understand how unemployed and working class people could end up supporting the Tories against Labour and 'social democratic' policies that protected or supported their own material interests. This in turn meant that as activist scholars, or organic intellectuals, we sought to uncover the means by which Thatcherism had successfully re-articulated aspects of popular belief and values to neoliberal policies so that we might contribute to the counter-hegemonic project of the Left that could win moral and intellectual leadership to establish a counter-hegemonic social bloc. It gave a seemingly *political* purpose to what would become the dominance of 'resistant readings' of mainstream media and popular cultural texts by 'active audiences', to which Hall's 'encoding/decoding' model contributed, and which rejected such concepts as 'false

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<sup>9</sup> This is most notable in the attempts of the CPGB to affiliate to the Labour Party almost from its inception in 1920, despite clear and ostensible differences between a pro-Soviet Communism and a loosely defined 'democratic socialism' under a commitment to parliamentary democracy (eg Callaghan 2005).

consciousness' and the negative definition of ideology (eg Miller 2002).

At least since the early 1960s, Hall participated in or contributed to a number of studies, commissions and other projects of civil society organisations, from local and national immigrant and anti-poverty groups, such as the National Committee of Commonwealth Immigrants and the Joseph Rowntree Social Services Trust, to national and international organisations, such as the Runnymede Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain and the United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organisation. A good example of his participation in extra-academic commitments was Hall's involvement in co-presenting the 30-minute video, *It Ain't Half Racist, Mum*, broadcast (1 March 1979) on BBC 2, produced by the Campaign Against Racism in Media with the BBC's Open Door Community Unit. It examined the racism in popular television programming and took its name from a then popular situation comedy broadcast on the BBC. In its attempt to reach beyond the narrower audiences of political periodicals and academic courses, the programme's focus was not just educational but also *political* because of street demonstrations against the National Front and the rise of 'Rock Against Racism', and Margaret Thatcher's incorporation of aspects of popular racism into her speeches (e.g. her infamous comments about being 'swamped by people with a different culture') (Schofield 2012, p.106).<sup>10</sup>

In 1979, Stuart Hall took up the position of Professor of Sociology at the Open University (OU), which he held until his retirement in 1997, and during this time he worked on broadcast and educational documentaries at the OU, which included helping to organise and run courses on popular culture, representation and related topics, presenting TV programmes, and editing and writing textbooks. All of this work, no doubt, contributed to extending his influence via media and cultural studies programmes in the (former) polytechnic sector where these texts were frequently used in teaching. While these texts reached a student cohort, some of whom would become further and higher education lecturers, Hall's other academic contributions via debates, conferences and articles promoted his Thatcherism thesis amongst faculty within the academy, which also contributed to his growing influence and public profile.<sup>11</sup> These academic contributions also helped to popularise and extend his influence beyond his political contributions in the Left's counter-public sphere.

However, I would make the case that any understanding of the success and pervasiveness of Hall's Thatcherism thesis, on the Left and within the academic fields of communication, media and cultural studies, cannot be explained by claiming its success

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<sup>10</sup> For an account of Enoch Powell's influence on Thatcher's speech, see Schofield 2012, pp. 302-03, footnote 61.

<sup>11</sup> For example, many of Hall's (1982, 1988a, 1988b) talks and essays were responses to debates on the Left and in the academy, including beyond the UK.

based upon the veracity of his analysis, since that would be a tautological explanation. That is, if Hall's Thatcherism is 'successful' because it is the most widely accepted account, such a claim provides no means by which one can ascertain the veracity of its ideas *per se*, but whether they are dominant because of the available means of communication for their reproduction and distribution.

Interestingly, a comparison between Stuart Hall and another founding member of cultural studies, Raymond Williams, raises the question of why did one particular socialist public intellectual become more influential than the other. Since the late 1950s, Williams and Hall had collaborated as leading intellectuals of the first New Left, including working on *New Left Review*, where Hall became its first editor (1960-62), and two editions of the *May Day Manifesto* in 1967 and 1968, and were part of the same broad social formation on the Left of the Labour Party. Both contributed to the two leading discussion magazines during the 1980s: *New Socialist* and *Marxism Today*. Although differences between these two leading socialist public intellectuals did already exist in terms of their approaches to cultural studies, it was only on the political front from 1979 that their differences over working-class and socialist politics began to emerge more concretely, including over Hall's Thatcherism thesis and the trajectory of cultural studies (Milner 2002: 115-18).

Raymond Williams had had a greater public profile than Stuart Hall on the Left at least until the late 1970s. Terry Eagleton has noted, for example, that by 1979 Williams's books had sold more than 750,000 copies, but because the UK during the 1970s and early 1980s lacked an organised counter-public sphere comparable to that of the German Left during the Weimar Republic, with its vast range of organisations and groups which composed a dynamic counter-public sphere, there was no space within which his writing could be taken up and debated (Eagleton 1984). It is important to note that the number of copies of Williams's books that were sold by 1979 would have extended far beyond the 'ivory tower', since some of his contributions were built around communications policy or commentary on technology and since universities in the 1970s had much smaller cohorts of students, who would have only accounted for some of the sales of his books. Eagleton's contention also needs to be qualified by the recognition that there was a counter-public sphere or spheres on the Left, but that the Left was - and is still - fractured by (sectarian) divisions. Williams's critiques, of both Eric Hobsbawm's 'Forward March of Labour Halted?' (FMLH?) and Hall's 'Thatcherism', offered different ways of interpreting these twin themes of the 'crisis of the Left' and the 'rise of the (New) Right' respectively to the then better known, or popularized, counter arguments on the Left, but they were sidelined or overlooked. Both Hobsbawm's FMLH? and Hall's Thatcherism benefitted from the platforms provided via MT's conferences and discussion groups, and sympathetic CPGB branches and journals.

It is important to note, however, that Stuart Hall wielded considerable influence

over how Raymond Williams was received, read and interpreted, in part because Stuart Hall was in a considerably more influential position vis-à-vis cultural studies than Williams, since he was employed as associate director (1964-69) at the newly established Birmingham University Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) and then as director (1969-79), with its graduate students, many of whom also went on to teach in academia. Hall also wrote key accounts of cultural studies's development, such as the essay that identified the 'two paradigms' and in which Williams (and E.P. Thompson) was (were) labelled as 'culturalists' (Hall 1980). Such labelling in some ways served to limit Williams's influence at a time when structuralism and other theoretical approaches were considered much more sophisticated approaches to culture than 'humanism'.<sup>12</sup> Equally disappointing is the failure of other socialist scholars to take up Williams's cultural materialism via his 1977 book, *Marxism and Literature* and 1981 book, *Culture*, or even his prescient account of neoliberalism (aka 'Plan X') in *Towards 2000* (McGuigan 2014). Williams's position as a professor of drama at Cambridge University did not give him the same kind of position to wield influence over the newly emerging field of media and cultural studies, despite being employed at one of the two top elite universities in the UK.

The classic 1970s collaborative project, *Policing the Crisis: 'Mugging', the State and Law and Order*, based upon Stuart Hall's and four graduate students' involvement in a community support campaign, which resulted in their 'multilayered' analysis of the state, media and crime, formed the basis from which Hall produced his analysis of Thatcherism; it remained an exemplar of cultural studies as political engagement for Hall (Pimlott 2014a: 193). It also helped to raise Hall's profile from work he presented in other fora beyond the academy. For example, during the second half of the 1970s he attended the annual Communist University of London (CUL), which had evolved from its initial incarnation as an orthodox party school in 1969 into a forum of heterodox ideas. Two presentations of his were included in CUL collections published by the CPGB, including the widely reproduced article, 'The Whites of Their Eyes' (Hall 1981a). It was not just the CUL, however, that enabled this annual intellectual engagement to take place. The CPGB itself had expanded its range of journals and other serial publications, which focussed upon various specialist topics, such as *Red Letters*, a literary journal, and *Euro-Red*, which provided a critical, 'unofficial' perspective on the 'existing socialist' states of Eastern Europe. The proliferation of journals represented a fermentation of ideas alongside the development of two broad tendencies and some smaller factional groupings within the CPGB, at a time when the CUL in the late 1970s was bringing in more than 1,500 attendees at its peak, including many cultural studies graduate students and lecturers, not all of whom were CPGB members or sympathizers.

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<sup>12</sup> Jones (2004) and Milner (2002) point to some serious misinterpretations or misunderstandings of Williams.

It was at the Communist University of London that Martin Jacques, the last editor of *Marxism Today*, encountered Stuart Hall and asked him to write for the journal. The result was Hall's classic January 1979 MT article, 'The Great Moving Right Show', in which he identifies and names 'Thatcherism' five months before Margaret Thatcher's first general election victory as Conservative Party leader on 3 May 1979. This marked the beginning of the collaboration between Hall and Jacques on MT's political project, although Hall also contributed to *New Socialist*, Labour's version of MT, and remained a member of the Labour Party.

It is the twin critiques of the 'crisis of the Left' and the 'rise of the (New) Right' by Eric Hobsbawm and Stuart Hall which helped to propel *Marxism Today*, via its diligent, relentless self-promotion into the centre of debate on the Left and which spurred on the introduction of the Labour Party's first ever 'theoretical' journal, *New Socialist*, in the autumn of 1981, when MT moved to national newsagent distribution (Pimlott forthcoming). Initially, however, Hobsbawm's 'Forward March' argument dominated debates on the Left while Hall's 'Thatcherism' received much less attention from readers, although four features that were published in MT in the year after 'The Great Moving Right Show', drew upon or responded to Hall's analysis.

During this period of the late 1970s, there was a general expectation on the Left that 'History' was moving inexorably towards 'Socialism'. Thus, when Hobsbawm's and Hall's critiques first appeared in the late 1970s, they challenged long-held beliefs on the Left. As part of the ideological struggle over the future trajectory of the Left by the mid-1980s, Hall and other critics in MT referred to these beliefs as 'shibboleths', and invoked other negative religious connotations of 'unshakeable faith' held by 'true believers', to characterise the traditional Left of both the Labour and Communist parties in a particularly unflattering manner.

In the three years between the first publication of the 'Forward March of Labour Halted?' in *Marxism Today* and the 1981 anthology of responses from across the Left (Jacques and Mulhern 1981), Eric Hobsbawm's analysis became part of a new orthodoxy on the Left that Hall's Thatcherism thesis complemented. The period between the 1979 and 1983 general elections, though, was a time when many left activists joined the Labour Party, just as at present Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader has encouraged others to join the party. It was also a time when political periodicals, such as the CPGB's *Marxism Today* and Labour's *New Socialist*, worked together to promote debate and discussion on the Left, particularly around Tony Benn and his campaign for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party, around which the Left had united.

Hall's analysis, however, had been mostly neglected or overlooked until 1983, when a collection was published by Lawrence & Wishart, the CPGB's publisher, which included a substantially revised chapter of his Thatcherism thesis and responses to it (Hall and Jacques 1983). More significantly, Labour's disastrous showing in the June 1983

general election, when its share of the popular vote fell by nearly 10 percent to 28 percent, barely two percent more than the Liberal and Social Democratic (SDP) parties' combined share of the popular vote, helped push Hall's analysis to the forefront of debate on the Left. The Tory share of votes declined by almost 700,000 while Labour's declined by three million, most of which appear to have gone to the Liberals and SDP; thus, the split on the Left, in a first-past-the-post parliamentary electoral system, enabled the Conservatives to gain nearly all 60 seats lost by Labour. This latter interpretation also explained the divisions which were not so much the result of Thatcherism's resonance with the population as a divided Centre-Left and Left. The debate over the impact of Thatcherism often revolved around the psephology of the 1983 general election, as if a one-day snapshot of votes cast in a general election provides an adequate account of competing ideologies, motivations of voters or any number of other factors, such as the rise in patriotic nationalism as a result of the military victory over the Argentinians in the Falklands/Malvinas War of 1982, which contributed to making a then deeply unpopular government popular.

After 1983, however, divisions on the Left grew over the interpretation of Labour's general election defeat. What *Marxism Today* called the 'realignment of the Left' was the process whereby both Labour and the CPGB were involved in more intense internecine strife: Labour faced internal fracturing and the leadership ousted Trotskyist 'entryists' and other 'hard' leftists, while MT, as part of the 'Eurocommunist' and 'Gramscian' wing of the CPGB, manoeuvred increasingly for a position from which to outflank internal opponents on the 'traditionalist' wing, while allying with CPGB loyalists.<sup>13</sup> This internal fight absorbed Jacques's energy and some of the limited resources available to *Marxism Today*, although it did lead to the eventual expulsion of many traditionalists, while others left out of frustration. Yet, the expulsion of the traditional left or 'hardliners' ensured that the CPGB's financial lifeline for MT was much more secure.

These critiques by Eric Hobsbawm and Stuart Hall gained in authority and credibility as Thatcherism maintained its hold on government and the media and increasingly undermined the post-war social-democratic consensus to which all parties had adhered after 1945. Both Hobsbawm and Hall helped to establish a basis for proclaiming a new, 'realistic Marxism' to counter the 'hard Left', as it cleared the path for 'New Labour' in the 1990s (e.g. Pimlott 2005, forthcoming).

In this period, Hall became more popular, reaching out increasingly through various publications, albeit primarily associated politically with *Marxism Today*, and via the growth in cultural studies across the UK and internationally. The 1983 election results

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<sup>13</sup> These broad categories of 'Eurocommunist', 'Gramscian', 'traditionalist', 'hardliner' and 'loyalist' are only meant to capture general differences to communicate a sense of the deep divisions within the CPGB and not the nuances that existed within and between the party's two 'wings' or 'tendencies' (eg Pimlott forthcoming).

provided ammunition for Hall's critique of the Left's 'economism', the reading off of ideological-cultural 'superstructure' as a result of the economic 'base'; the related promotion of the 'political-ideological' was in contrast to the dominance of the idea of the working class as the revolutionary agency for overthrowing capitalism, especially as many working-class voters supported Thatcher despite three million unemployed, that many on the Left did not appear to recognise. Nor did Hall argue that this was necessarily false consciousness, but the Conservatives' successful re-articulation of ideas to their ideology that appealed to certain groups of workers.

Hall's argument for learning from Thatcherism or 'authoritarian populism' was able to win consent by detaching ideas normally associated with the Left or social democracy and re-articulating them to Conservative ideology. In many ways, Hall's Thatcherism thesis was an important and necessary development in, and provocation to, the conventional thinking on the Left because there was the long standing expectation of reading off people's allegiances based upon their place or role in the capitalist mode of production: that working-class voters would vote Labour, while the middle class would vote Conservative.

In contrast, however, Raymond Williams pointed out that since the advent of mass democracy, the Tories have attempted to secure the support of the rural (and sometimes urban) working class, and that there were always working-class people who supported the Tories and the Establishment (Williams 1983, pp.157-174). Against Hall's 'authoritarian populism', Williams argued that it would be more accurate for it to be understood as 'constitutional authoritarianism' (Williams 1979). This argument has been substantiated by the degree to which there was considerable opposition to Thatcher and her government throughout the 1980s and her government made considerable use of repressive state apparatuses, whether around the black uprisings or the miners' strikes or other forms of industrial, social and political unrest. However, Williams's concept did not get the exposure that Hall's did nor did it appear to have much influence, perhaps, in part because he was not closely affiliated to such a well organised grouping as that around *Marxism Today* and therefore it did not get any of the assiduous promotion that MT provided for Hall's Thatcherism thesis.

One other aspect of Stuart Hall's contributions as a socialist public intellectual was his focus on popular culture, especially his 1981 intervention, 'Deconstructing the Popular', and his January 1984 article for *Marxism Today*, 'The Culture Gap', which raised the importance for the Left of attending to culture and especially popular culture (Hall 1981, 1984). Whereas it is virtually unheard of today that radical, alternative and oppositional media would not analyse or otherwise cover 'culture' in its myriad forms, back in the early 1980s, it was still a struggle to get regular ongoing coverage of popular culture in a way where it was taken seriously and not thought of as secondary or simply read off of the economic base or mode of production: i.e. a capitalist mode of production

produces a capitalist culture. First, *Comment*, the CPGB's fortnightly party review, as edited by Sarah Benton (1978-80), had a regular 'TV column' written alternately by three cultural studies lecturers and then *Marxism Today* began to expand its regular coverage of culture to more than book reviews as MT recognised the importance of popular culture, not only in terms of political issues, but also as a means to both attract readers and advertisers (Pimlott forthcoming).

Of course, an important part of this gradual shift on the Left was the development of cultural studies and its focus on the popular and other forms that were not considered traditional high art or 'great' literature. Soap operas, television shows and romance novels, for example, became topics for what was to become dominant in cultural studies: the focus on the mundane, everyday, the seemingly mass or popular media forms or 'debased' cultural products and programming. There was also the emphasis on 'active audiences' and 'resistant readings', which Hall's 'encoding/decoding' model enabled with its emphasis on the reader-listener-viewer to determine whether she would accept (wholly or partially) or reject the messages being offered through various media (Hall 1980). Although there is not the space to go into the problems with this approach, Greg Philo (2008) identifies some significant problems with it and its contribution to the 'active audience' approach in cultural studies.

The focus on popular culture was part of what was a general sense at the time of being part of movement to establish a counter-hegemonic bloc on the Left. That is, there was a sense by which if we (aspiring organic and traditional intellectuals) could develop an analysis of how common sense worked by analysing forms of popular culture that appeared to resonate with people, then perhaps we could help contribute to developing a more effective counter-hegemonic politics via the 'war of position'. There was this sense that it was an increasingly important part of developing a strategy to oppose Thatcherism, particularly after the 1983 general election. This was part of Stuart Hall's appeal and that of *Marxism Today*. They focused upon the political aspects of popular culture as well as the more obviously 'political' issues and they offered a way of thinking about them that offered some kind of promise of an eventual victory if we could just somehow learn from Thatcherism or aspects of its popular and common sense appeal.

Over the last decade or so, a number of articles and books have identified aspects related to what might be categorised as key weaknesses in Stuart Hall's Thatcherism thesis. One overlooked critique of Hall's work points out that Hall himself was guilty of 'economism', albeit different from the 'economism' for which he critiqued the Left, because in avoiding the economic, capitalism is treated as a 'force of nature', 'external and prior to thought, discourse, practices, and social relations' (Peck 2001: 236-38). There was little focus on *how* and in what ways Thatcherism was articulated and reproduced during the 1980s, with the exception of just one article: Alan O'Shea (1984) identifies a few key

metaphors and phrases used in some of Thatcher's speeches and circulated through the media. Hall's analysis moves from including a significant focus on mainstream media in *Policing The Crisis* to a much more limited analysis in the inaugural article on Thatcherism. Hall provided plausible descriptions of Thatcherism, albeit largely at an abstract, macro level of social and political developments. Although the mainstream media get mentioned, or 'leader writers' at least, the idea of the media remains largely an abstract part of understanding Thatcherism.

Yet, this is an important part of understanding the degree to which Thatcherism was, or was not, successful. It is about the role that the social production of ideologies play in the development and obtaining of both hegemony and counter-hegemony. It is also closely related to a key aspect of Gramsci's theory of hegemony which has largely been overlooked in the Anglophone world but which is crucial to the theory: the 'concrete hegemonic apparatus' (eg Thomas 2009, pp.224-28).

What is most important is a recognition of the role of grassroots alternative and radical media and cultural production play in being able to construct a counter-public sphere and, ideally, operate as part of the concrete (counter) hegemonic apparatus. This was a particularly fecund period, between the mid-1970s and the 1980s, when there was an expansion of the means of media and cultural production for the lower middle and working classes due to greater accessibility from lower costs and less complex skills required for the technologies that had been made generally available (eg Pimlott 2014b).

Stuart Hall's Thatcherism also based its idea of 'counter-hegemonic' strategy upon a 'mirror image' of Gramsci's 'passive revolution' and '*trasformismo*'; that is, 'revolution from above' became the model, rather than revolution from below, which would have required a different strategy. For example, Thatcherites had been able to effect considerable change via corporate organisations, including think tanks and newspapers, and state institutions, via policy changes to industry and the use of 'Repressive State Apparatuses' (RSAs) against the organized working class. A key element here is also the role of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) in Althusserian structuralist Marxism, such as the media, which are not likely to be available as part of any counter-hegemonic apparatus, which means there is not really any equivalent of the passive revolution or *trasformismo* for oppositional groups. Thatcherism, on the other hand, could rely on its domination of the ISAs, including support from mainstream media, including the popular press that had made the greatest shift to the political Right since the 1920s (including the pro-Labour *Daily Mirror*) (Williams 1978, pp. 20-21).

## Conclusion

Stuart Hall made many important contributions to both left politics and cultural studies during the 1970s and 1980s. First of all, both he and his analysis of Thatcherism

stressed the importance of paying attention to ideology, media and popular culture, including the ways in which the Right attempted to re-articulate concepts, ideas and phrases from the Left or the 'national interest' to its own particular ideology as part of its attempt to organise a cross-class social-historical bloc to secure hegemony. Hall's approach also stressed the importance of the role of intellectuals in a 'war of position' for civil society and ultimately for leadership of a social-historical bloc that could bring about a counter-hegemonic transformation. Finally, by rightly emphasizing areas that had been neglected, ignored or overlooked, Hall encouraged hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of organic and traditional intellectuals, as 'permanent persuader-organisers' in civic society and social movement organisations, and graduate students and lecturers to engage with a political project of countering the rise of neoliberalism and seeking the transformation of society. The degree to which we have been unsuccessful does not reflect directly upon Hall so much as upon ourselves and our failure to shape or find a political instrument to help make a counter-hegemonic strategy viable.

On the other hand, Stuart Hall's Thatcherism also failed to provide an adequate model for developing a counter-hegemonic strategy, in part because of its particular configuration and means of producing ideology via its hegemonic apparatus of newspapers, think tanks and other entities, in addition to Thatcher's control of government and its agencies. This was a consequence of the neglect or omission of Gramsci's key concept of the hegemonic apparatus from using his theory of hegemony.

It is also interesting to note the differences between Hall's influence via an overview of his academic positions and political contributions, particularly in his role as a socialist public intellectual and scholar, versus Raymond Williams, whose contributions were neglected in part due to his own marginalization within academia and on the Left during the 1980s. This can be explained in part, not by the veracity of Hall's Thatcherism thesis per se, but by its promotion and circulation via *Marxism Today* and through post-secondary institutions where cultural studies was taught (which might also account, in part, for its emphasis on cultural politics over political economy). Williams's account of Thatcherism was neglected in part because he was not in the same position as Hall, who had established a particularly influential position in terms of his public profile across a number of areas, including cultural studies, which no doubt contributed to his greater influence on the Left compared to Williams. That is, the influence of Hall's Thatcherism thesis can be attributed not so much to the veracity of its ideas but to his position as a socialist public intellectual and the means of the production and distribution of his ideas.

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Reviews & Debates

**CASTING OFF THE CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY  
TRADITION: COMMENTS ON PAUL KELLOGG'S ESCAPE FROM  
THE STAPLE TRAP: CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY AFTER  
LEFT NATIONALISM**

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Kellogg, Paul. 2015. *Escape from the Staple Trap: Canadian Political Economy After Left Nationalism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. ISBN 978-0-8020-9654-8

As the suggestive title of the book indicates, this is a story of “escape” – responding on the one side to a sort of craving to move beyond the immuring constraints of an intellectual discourse and seeking, on the other side, a newer, more enriching program of analysis and commentary. *Escape from the Staples Trap* responds to the immuring intellectual discourse in the Canadian Political Economy (CPE) tradition. Since so much ancient and modern philosophy has been premised upon this idea of casting off the smothering or suffocating intellectual paradigms of the past it is appropriate to linger on this notion of “escape” for a moment. For Plato it was the epistemological and ethical relativism of the sophists, for the 17<sup>th</sup> century philosophers the challenge was to “throw off” the Aristotelean-inspired schools, for Enlightenment thinkers the game was on to sweep away tradition as it was manifested in the authority of the church and the privilege of the aristocracy, and for Marx it was Hegelian-inspired “idealism” in its various forms. Perhaps nowhere was this notion of escape more forcefully pressed than in the American pragmatic tradition of the last 150 years – beginning with John Dewey’s attack on the “philosophical fallacy” at the center of the Western philosophical tradition, an attack which later manifested itself in the wholesale postmodern repudiation of the appearance/reality distinction and its corresponding celebration of life’s patently evident vistas.

Although its horizons are more modest, *Escape from the Staples Trap* conforms in significant respects to such noble intellectual endeavours. The book unfolds simultaneously on two dimensions – an empirical argument about the maturation of

Canada as a capitalist social formation, and an analysis of the evolving theoretical discourse of CPE among scholars and commentators, especially as this discourse has been affected by “left nationalism.” In a truly critical spirit, *Escape from the Staples Trap* advises that we should not assume that the CPE tradition is self-explanatory. It gently implores scholars to account for the rise of the field itself and, therewith, to give the Nietzschean aphorism that “good theory knows bad theory” its full due. Perhaps most importantly, *Escape from the Staples Trap* suggests that the commonplace CPE assumption that Canada is somehow unique, exceptional, or distinguished — as opposed to being a mainstream capitalist social formation, a bit pedestrian or even a tad nondescript — is fundamentally flawed. It implicitly invites a new generation of critical scholars to retire the “Canadian” part of CPE – reducing it to a largely inconsequential adjective – and leaving only the notion of a capitalist social formation to be explored in a less arrogating manner.

The conclusion of *Escape from the Staples Trap* is telling: “We need a clear understanding that Canada is an *advanced capitalist country* whose *government* protects the wealth and power of dominant corporations through public policy at home and imperialism abroad” (my emphasis). Here we have two crucial analytical invitations. The first underscores the invitation that Canada — once it matured as a capitalist social formation in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century — should be seen as having ordinary trajectories, standard crisis tendencies, run-of-the-mill unemployment and everyday poverty. The second invitation underscores that fact that the Canadian federal state is a rather ordinary state that preserves the social relations of capitalist coercion at any and all costs. This is the state understood as an array of institutions which seek to optimize the conditions of capitalist accumulation, and a state which accordingly plays a significant role in helping the community of imperialists shore up their global ambitions. These analytical invitations demand that scholars in the political economy tradition shed the oft-implicit narrative of a benevolent Canada by bluntly confronting both the country’s genocidal past and its oppressive imperialist present.

And with this decisive intellectual enticement we are transported necessarily to the question of the heretofore circumscribed relationship between the CPE and the varying Marxist tradition. The old encrusted CPE tradition was wedded to paradigms that tended to avoid Marxist analytical categories altogether, while the new CPE tradition tends to reduce class and class struggle to variables in an overarching eclectic paradigm of liberal political economy complete with naturalized concepts, fetishized categories, leading and largely inconsequential statistical homilies, and nomothetic explanations of causality largely bereft of an adequate sensitivity to the stratified ontology of capitalist social formations. *Escape from the Staples Trap* has the feel of giving a new generation of scholars the permission to embark on an analytical journey that explicitly engages Marxian political economy. It will be a rewarding journey if it ever gets off the ground—

broadly framed by the historical materialist tradition and its sensitivity to the social relations of gender, racial and class power, especially as each are affected and contoured by the “dull compulsion” of capital’s inner logics and its hegemonic institutional configurations. It will be inevitably drawn into the various attempts within the Marxist tradition to account for capitalism’s immanent tendencies toward crises, engaging the three leading Marxist theories of crisis including *i)* the falling rate of profit thesis as labour-saving technologies introduced in the context of destructive competition drags down the rate of profit and therewith corporate investment *ii)* the various underconsumptionist traditions centering monopolization, the lack of effective demand and the inevitable drift towards stagnation and *iii)* the profit-squeeze theories emphasizing the consequences of rising real wages on corporate profitability. A new periodization of Canada’s past will emerge as the global economic crises of the late 1890s, the early 1930s, the early 1970s and the late 2000s are centered. A more suspecting view of the Canadian state is bound to emerge as its singular determination to preserve and advance optimal conditions of capital accumulation is brought into focus. And a more profitable paradigm for measuring the historical evolution and trajectory of Canada’s left in all of its guises will be forged, especially the left’s ambivalence on the basic question of capitalism.

*Escape from the Staples* trap is an important turning point in the CPE tradition. This is one of the more important scholarly contributions to the CPE field to have come along over the decades. It deserves to be read and debated as widely as possible.

Reviews & Debates

**CANADA AS AN ORDINARY IMPERIALIST COUNTRY:  
COMMENTS ON PAUL KELLOGG'S ESCAPE FROM THE STAPLE  
TRAP: CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY AFTER LEFT  
NATIONALISM**

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Kellogg, Paul. 2015. *Escape from the Staple Trap: Canadian Political Economy After Left Nationalism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. ISBN 978-0-8020-9654-8

Generally speaking, more is written about the Left than the Right. On the one hand, the Right is not particularly cerebral (in one of the rare unequivocal statements he made, John Stuart Mill called the Tories the 'stupid party') or politically ambitious. The politics of 'easy as she goes' is unlikely to yield much in the way of profound cogitation. By contrast, the history of all Left parties is that of internal political struggles over the right organizational strategy and tactics, the right analyses of political situations, domestically and internationally, and the right policies to adopt and advocate in pursuit of goals that aspire and threaten to change society quite radically, even when they pursue reforms and not revolutions. So, the self-generated literature of the Left is, unsurprisingly, far more voluminous than that of the Right. On the other hand, the established ruling classes typically scrutinize the Left, like all else they find troublesome, inconvenient and threatening, quite closely. So to the literature of debate and self-analysis is added that of inquisition.

It is a sign of the decline of the Western Left over the decades of neoliberalism that its self-reflection and self-examination, as well as the scrutiny of the mainstream, have ebbed. Little has been written about its trajectory since the 1970s. Even a relatively full account, if it were to be written, would discover major changes: *inter alia*, the advent of a Marxism without Marx (Freeman 2010), the elimination of the notion of 'economic' contradiction and the rise of a 'political Marxism.' Equally important is the undoing of the close relation of national and class politics. At one time they were discussed in the same breath in terms of a wider geopolitical economy of the capitalist world. As equally material precipitates of the operation of capitalism, nation and class were viewed in a single frame by Marx and Engels in their analyses of the political events of their time, by

the classical theorists of imperialism and by the Bolsheviks making sense of their revolution in the idea of uneven and combined development, and by postwar Marxists seeking to understand Third World revolutions (Desai 2013).

However, more or less in tandem with the rise of neoliberalism, this close bond has been broken. The nation-state and its economic role have been erased from the realm of legitimate Marxist or left scholarship which now focuses narrowly on class politics, confining the nation to an exclusively cultural existence (Anderson (1983) can be said to be the definitive text of this move) and handing it over to often anti-Marxist postmodern and postcolonial writing. One of its earliest works to strike out in this direction was Robert Brenner's 1977 engagement with dependency and world system theorists.<sup>1</sup>

The results have been paradoxical. The Western Left has gone from being internationalist to being cosmopolitan (to deploy Gramsci's very acute distinction), i.e. from attempting to understand the national as well as class divisions created by capitalism in order to overcome them, to assuming that the former are irrelevant in a single and unified world economy. This erasure of the 'materiality of nations' has created an 'economic cosmopolitanism' which has taken two forms. There has been the discourse of US hegemony and empire, originally rooted on the Left in World Systems analysis which, as I show (Desai 2013), was in its turn derived from writers such as Charles Kindleberger who were sublimating the desires of the US ruling classes for a unified world economy under their control into a scholarly 'theory' where it appeared as accomplished fact. In it only one nation mattered and guaranteed the unity of the world economy. And, in the 1990s there was the discourse of 'globalization.' Also originating in US ruling class impulses at a time when, notwithstanding the triumphalism of the end of the Cold War, the US economy was quite weak, it was designed to disown responsibility for the health of the national economy so that US corporations could pursue their interests all over the world all the more effectively (I explore the reasons for this in Desai 2015 and 2016). In 'globalization' no nation mattered economically and market forces alone unified the world economy.

In the discourse of the Western Left in the neoliberal decades, nations either do not matter or are undesirable even as the objective nationalism and imperialism of western countries and the 'machinery of world political economy' (Nairn 1977) they operate (but only partially control) managed to impose not just low growth but actual economic retrogression on so many Third World countries around the world. Just when the international contradictions were becoming more acute and consequential than ever before, the Left was busy denying them. The hapless inhabitants of the Third World were to give up the narrow nationalisms that had hitherto allowed them to achieve some modicum of development and join 'global' movements against capitalism alongside far more prosperous Western workers as if their interests were unproblematically aligned.

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<sup>1</sup> Desai, forthcoming, assesses its effects on Western Marxism's relation with the Third World.

## Left Nationalism as a version of Economic Cosmopolitanism

However, ignoring elephants in rooms never made them disappear. Even the cosmopolitan pretensions of the neoliberal Western Left take national forms. Paul Kellogg's *Escape from the Staple Trap: Canadian Political Economy after Left Nationalism* (hereinafter EST) takes aim at Canada's own version of this deformation, Left Nationalism, the theoretical paradigm that has dominated Canadian Political Economy (CPE) since the 1970s. Emerging in tandem with the rise of world systems and dependency theory and, one might add, in a mirror image of theories of US hegemony which began to appear at the same time, Left Nationalism has claimed that Canada is 'weak' and 'lives in the shadow of its much richer, much more powerful and much more developed southern neighbour' and as such is a 'dependency,' part of the 'semi-periphery' and even a 'neo-colony' (Kellogg 2015, 6). The effect has not only been to vastly exaggerate the power of the US in the work of major representatives of CPE but, equally importantly, to blunt the critique of Canada's domestic and foreign policies. If Canada is constrained by its semi-colonial status, the real critique must surely be aimed at the real imperialist, the US.

In taking on Left Nationalism clearly, thoroughly and credibly as he has, Paul Kellogg has done CPE yeoman service. EST aims to 'establish Canada's place in the world system' (xvii) and show that it is 'an imperialist nation, not an oppressed one – a member of the core economies of the world system, not on the semi-periphery' (Kellogg 2015, 8). In this review, I highlight what I take to be the signal moments in Kellogg's critique. Since I am convinced by so much of it, my review will be not be enlivened by direct critique except on a couple of occasions. Rather, I propose to point to the many avenues which EST, like all really substantial and lasting works, opens up for further research and analysis. The avenues I pick will naturally reflect my own preoccupations as a critic of economic cosmopolitanisms, of US hegemony, globalization or earlier versions and a votary of historical understanding more generally.

Kellogg opens with his bewilderment, as a young scholar, at the hot new account of Canada's 'dependent' status which contrasted so starkly to its actual prosperity and to its internal colonialism over its aboriginal peoples. He traces the development of Left Nationalism through three moments: the classic moment of the 'Waffle' of the 1960s and 1970s, the opposition to the Canada-US Free Trade deal in the late 1980s and 1990s and the more general opposition to globalization, a moment which clearly reveals to me the preference of leading Canadian CPE writers for the older cosmopolitanism of US 'hegemony' over the new fangled one, 'globalization' (Kellogg 2015, 7).

The substance of Kellogg's critique proceeds through a succession of hard-hitting chapters, brimming over with useful graphs and charts on various widely-used metrics of

Canada's economy and social structures in relation to other major economies, and many inventive new ones (Kellogg has a knack for measuring the hitherto unmeasured) such as the relative weight of the top 100 and the top 500 corporations in national economies (Kellogg 2015, 51-52). Through these he argues that Canada is not only rich and highly productive but also, notwithstanding the shadow cast by an economy ten times its size next door, an autonomous national economy with its own 'very Canadian bourgeoisie,' a thesis which, post-Harper, should go down more easily than it might have done before.

One might imagine that the folly of 'using the criteria useful for understanding the dynamics of the global South and transpose them to Canada' would be obvious to everyone. Well, it clearly was not to generations of Left Nationalists and Kellogg's meticulous demonstration, narratively and statistically, of this folly in a key chapter is an important reminder of how scholars can wander, and have wandered, off course in droves. This chapter is critical because the all-pervasiveness of the Left Nationalist case means that it likely lurks in the less examined parts of all our brains.

So powerful is Kellogg's case against Left Nationalism that he inadvertently reveals a limitation of his own. When ideas that are so obviously wrong (as Kellogg proves) become so powerful (in this case powerful enough to be shared across most of the political spectrum, as he also shows), the reader is left wondering why they did so. Kellogg does not ask the question and treats what is an ideology as a mere error, a politically necessary error as any old error. While giving this question the full treatment it deserves would have lengthened the book too much, it should at least have been posed, and its corollaries noted – among them, whose interests does it serve? When did it become necessary? When and how did it emerge (for necessity does not always suffice its own fulfillment)? Ideology, in other words is no mere error.

Kellogg's chief accomplishment is that he forces us, to adapt the title of Richard Rosecrance's 1976 work on the US, to think about 'Canada as an ordinary [first-world] country.' It may seem surprising or paradoxical that while *America as an Ordinary Country* was written to announce the end of the US's (inevitably temporary and radically partial) dominance in the postwar world, to wit the US's weakness, Kellogg's work announces Canada's strength. Such a sense of paradox can be easily dispelled: the thesis of Canadian weakness is simply the reflection in the Canadian mirror of that of US strength, 'hegemony' and 'empire.' Both are equally ideological.

### **Multinationals in and from Canada**

Kellogg refutes the Left Nationalism argument by providing evidence against its chief claims: that Canada is home to very few multinationals, that it is dominated by foreign capital and that that it is a raw materials exporter. Against these theses, Kellogg marshals veritable armies of data. He argues, firstly that Canada is home to more top 100

and top 500 corporations relative to its population than most core countries and secondly that foreign and US control may have risen until the end of the 1960s but have been broadly falling since then. While these statistics are arresting enough, the qualitative stories they tell are even more noteworthy and would have strengthened Kellogg's case, giving it historical bottom in addition to its impressively broad statistical one. Let me explain.

To take the matter of the number of large corporations in Canada, not only has the Canadian economy become home to some pretty big corporations for its size in recent decades, as Kellogg documents, they have emerged disproportionately in the western mining sector and, as they sought political influence, they brought us the disastrous Harper decade. Kellogg's work opens up the path towards a fuller account of the development of the 'very Canadian bourgeoisie' which would stretch back further into history and locate the sectoral (agriculture, manufacturing, resources) and geographical (east to west, which then 'wanted in') centre of gravity of the Canadian economy as it shifted and document how it altered the character and motivations of Canada's ruling classes, the policies and policy-paradigms they supported and the successive articulations these shifts produced of the Canadian to the world economy.

The second point about foreign ownership in the Canadian economy is also not just factually wrong, as Kellogg amply shows. The whole question of foreign ownership and Multinational Corporations (MNCs) is vexed with more misunderstandings than Kellogg has space to indicate. While Kellogg does note how, while it may be harmful in the Third World context, foreign ownership is not necessarily so in First World ones, the larger story reinforces his point in ways that deserve exploration in new works.

In the field of international political economy (IPE) and CPE, both dominated by economic cosmopolitanisms, the role of MNCs is, in the first place, highly exaggerated (see Hirst, Thompson and Bromley 2009 for a thorough critique). Statements such as 'Today 50 of the largest 100 economies in the world are run by multinationals, not by countries. Mitsubishi is bigger than Saudi Arabia, General Motors is larger than either Greece, Norway or South Africa' (Ellwood, 2001, p. 55) abound and need to be corrected by the more scrupulous folks such as those at UNCTAD who point out that these are based on comparing MNCs sales to countries' GDP when the proper comparator to GDP would be value added, not sales. When value added is taken as the comparator instead, there were no corporations in the top 50 (UNCTAD 2002) and their presence lower down the scale is as much a sign of the presence of a large number of small and even tiny countries as it is of the size of corporations.

Moreover, few accounts of the role of MNCs in the world economy note that through most of the post war period until very recently MNCs were not only overwhelmingly based in the first world and in the US, contrary to the 'jobs going south' and 'corporations search for low wages' story, they tended, in fact, to invest overwhelmingly in other First World countries chiefly because their real need was for

markets, which are not large in low wage countries. This pattern of FDI flows among first world countries reflected neither the integration of western economies nor US domination of them. It was set off in the postwar period thanks to other western economies protecting themselves against exports from a war-swollen US economy and insisting that if US corporations wished to sell goods in their markets, they would have to produce those goods there. Thus, faced with barriers to exporting goods, US corporations exported capital and became MNCs. Rather than seeing them as instruments of US power, many saw them as sapping it (Gilpin 1975).

Canada had its own version of such protectionism against US exports: the Auto-pact. While Kellogg (2015) is absolutely right in emphasizing how the Left Nationalist case rested on factoring it out of their analyses, he terms the resulting pattern of investment flows an 'integration' of western economies (101). However, whether that is what it was, rather than the playing out of antagonisms between western nations and the assertion of Western European nations and Canada against US power at its height, forcing the US to export capital, is a question that deserves further investigation. If such an investigation decides in favour of the latter alternative, it will bolster Kellogg's case against Left Nationalism on the matter of foreign ownership while also questioning cosmopolitan paradigms like US hegemony and globalization and re-introducing the issue of inter-imperialist antagonism.

### **What Staple Trap?**

Finally, there is the matter of Canada's primary commodity exports, its 'staple trap.' Kellogg rightly points out that primary commodities in Canada are produced in agriculture and mining sectors which are vastly different from any real 'dependency' or 'semi-colony.' Like in any First World country, agriculture and mining production is capital intensive, not labour intensive. What matters, Kellogg points out, is not the production and export of primary commodities per se, or Canada's reliance on their export, but the organic composition of the capital which is high in capital intensive and low in labour intensive production.

However, the historical role of primary commodity production and export from white-settler colonies such as Canada in the world economy would have bolstered Kellogg's case even more. The capital intensive production of primary commodities in these countries and the US was a world changing development. Beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it depressed world prices of these goods for the peasant populations of the non-settler colonies. In the postwar period, the subsidies which such production received not only kept international prices depressed but also provided the material basis of the food aid that destroyed entire agricultural sectors in the Third World. Moreover, the investments that made primary production in the white settler colonies so capital

intensive, and those that increased the total factor productivity by investing in the infrastructure such as roads, railways and electricity, without which these primary goods could not have reached the world market from these remote territories, was made possible because Britain extracted vast surpluses from her non-settler colonies, preeminently India and the Caribbean, and invested these funds in her white settler colonies (De Cecco 1984). This drain of surplus contributed to their near stagnation under colonialism and deepening poverty while bringing these primary producing economies to levels of prosperity equal to the world's industrial and imperial economies.

Incidentally, it was this flow of funds from non-settler to settler colonies via London that formed the basis of the mis-named 'gold standard.' Gold played no role beyond providing a benchmark for the value of the pound sterling. It should have been called the colonial standard because it was the colonial surpluses that made it possible for Britain to export capital on the scale required to provision the world economy with liquidity (Desai 2013). In this sense, too, Canada was historically part of the core and not the periphery.

### **The Home Market**

Contrary to certain types of brash scholarly aggrandizement, new arguments typically rest on old and neglected ones. Indeed the real credit of a scrupulous scholar lies not in claiming originality on the basis of a cursory survey of the existing literature (the more cursory the more effective in this self-serving exercise), but in unearthing the currents of thought and opinion that had emerged and had to be suppressed before (ideological) error could prevail. EST performs another critical service by unearthing arguments about the development of Canada's national economy on the basis of the construction of a national or home market first made by H. Claire Pentland. In doing so, Kellogg has demonstrated Canada's normality as a capitalist nation with a home market which provides the basis of the formation and expansion of capitalism.

What Kellogg fails to note, however, is that while the plenitude of the home market permits the development of capitalism, its simultaneous inadequacy for both commodities and capital impels imperial expansion, with or without a formal territorial empire. Rosa Luxemburg was the first to note how the Russian legal Marxists' critique of the Narodniks' argument that Russia was incapable of developing capitalism for lack of a home market was surplus to requirements: they should have demonstrated only that a home market was formed, not that it sufficed, and would always suffice, the commodities produced and the capital accumulated. For that would be a version of the Say's Law that Marx so vehemently criticized and which became the basis of anti-Marxist neoclassical economics and, for all Luxemburg's efforts and notwithstanding its anti-Marxism, also of much of what today passes for 'Marxist economics' (Desai 2016). It is incapable of

explaining the dynamics of capitalism and the causes of its crises because it rules out gluts of capital and commodities and crises in general. For the same reason, it also cannot explain imperialism but, contrary to all Marx wrote and said, assumes a national, self-sufficient, capitalism (I deal with these problems in my Desai 2010, 2013 and 2016). Canada's normality as a first world capitalism consists of both its home market and its imperialism and working out of the political and geopolitical economy of the latter is another task which Kellogg's work lays the ground for and invites.

### **And finally, Imperial and National Economies**

That is also why ideas about Canada's 'subcontracted sovereignty' from Britain have to be contested. While Canada may have been a formatively loyalist construction, such loyalty did not preclude the assertion of local control that made the British North America Act necessary or the opposition to imperial preference, a system which would have stalled, if not reversed British relative decline. The real history of Canada and its capitalist class would probably find that it has ploughed its own furrow and often opportunistically played off the US and the UK against each other.

Indeed, a fuller critique of Left Nationalism would be not only to refute their claim that Canada is a semi-peripheral country but question the very basis of World Systems analysis from which it springs (as I do in Desai 2013) with the attendant assumption of a succession of hegemonies as the narrative spine of their history of capitalism (rather than a spread of productive capacity which progressively weakens imperial control) and that of the non-antagonistic integration of all 'core' economies, rather than erasing the inter-imperial antagonisms that gave rise of the Thirty Years' Crisis (1914-45) of imperialism which consisted of two World Wars and a Great Depression. The rise of China and other emerging economies has swelled the ranks of productive and powerful economies too much to leave any credibility sticking to the idea of a succession of hegemonies. And emerging antagonisms between major centres of productive power – as represented by contemporary flashpoints in Ukraine, Syria and the South China Seas – are too many to support any notion of an easy integration of core economies.

In light of this, one may demur, finally, with a key conclusion Kellogg (2015) comes to: that for the Left 'in an imperialist nation, it is impossible to combine 'left' with 'nationalist' (8). Here, Kellogg's analysis and critique of Canadian imperialism overshoots its target: the answer to Canadian imperialism is precisely its reduction to the status of a mere 'nation,' like all others, such that the left's programme too, as Marx and Engels long ago pointed out, must in the first instance be national. All other roads lead to Left versions of imperialism.

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Reviews & Debates

**CANADA AS CHURKENDOOSE:  
A RESPONSE TO PAUL KELLOGG, ESCAPE FROM THE STAPLE TRAP**

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I'd like to begin by thanking Paul Kellogg, tongue-in-cheek, for destroying so many tenets of my intellectual history. *Escape's* wrecking job is admirable! It contributes to a larger trend that may rival the former ascendancy of the "New Canadian Political Economy's" (NCPE), while also rejecting the mainstream critiques of NCPE.<sup>1</sup> I retain some doubts: perhaps Paul can set me straight on them. However, I deeply value this book and the conversation and I happily anticipate the promised companion volume. I thank fellow panelists for their own engagement, as we advance historical materialist scholarship together.

*Escape* has notable virtues:

- Discerning use of evidence and definitions. Kellogg makes his case. But he also shows the benefits and limitations of existing statistics and labels for the Left. Unpacking, re-packing, and choosing available data is acutely needed among Left scholars: most available statistics were gathered without critical scholarship in mind.
- Linking winning arguments to theoretical advancement. For decades, for instance, scholars have produced evidence against careless accounts of Canadian staples dominance. We knew, for instance, that direct staples workers are few (e.g., Howlett 1996). Kellogg goes further, linking these workforce figures to capitalists' successful quest for relative surplus value, to high Global-North pay rates, and to the analytical centrality of a robust home market.
- Linking Canadian capital's internal sovereignty to imperialism abroad (compare Deneault and Sacher 2012; Klassen 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> Two other works in this movement have recently impressed me: Greg McCormack and Thomas Workman's *Servant State*, and Jerome Klassen's *Joining Empire*.

- A call to responsibility. Left-nationalism has too often treated this country's capitalists and political elites, quite capable of autonomous action, as victims, puppets, or side stories. But notwithstanding real limitations on their actions, the latter bespeak the Global North's imperialist capitalism; the Left should make them answer for it.
- Recognition of his adversaries' contributions to the Canadian and international Left.

### Canada as Churkendoose: Something like a Simile

My more critical reflections begin with an old children's book (Berenberg and Cunningham 1946). In somebody's barnyard, a bird hatches from an odd-looking egg. Its various body parts suggest a chicken, turkey, duck, or goose: "it depends on how you look at things." The "churkendoose" is an awkward little thing, a bit lame with just one ear. For its sheer weirdness, the other animals argue over it, then ostracize it. But the churkendoose knows what it is, and it wants out of perspectivism and out of the category game:

Must I be a chicken or a goose?  
Can't I be a churkendoose?

When the other animals discover that his appearance scares off predators, they welcome him back. (That is an odd life lesson for a bed-time story, but the ending might save parents from a child's sleepless night. So we will let it pass for now.)

But metaphorically speaking, must *Canada* be "a chicken or a goose"? Kellogg has convinced me that the Global South "chicken" mostly won't do. But is the "goose" category (top-tier status in the Global North) sufficient for the "churkendoose" at hand? Doesn't this itself risk one-sidedness, an abstraction that becomes misleading? Kellogg rightly remarked at the panel that while Canada does have unique features, having unique features is not unique. Still, if the unique features become politically salient in this top-tier country, can *Escape* address them?

My discomfort is partly about the categories used and partly about categorization as such. Here, I have debts to history and the humanities. We social scientists often turn irony, paradox, and catachresis in everyday labels into self-consistent (ideally, testable) categories. But many humanists use such labels directly as learning tools, and allow their meanings to shift according to context. Historians are famously cautious about abstract theorization in general, preferring to work the case more than the categories. I sit mostly on the social-scientific side, but I often worry we overlook the fundamental slipperiness and internal contradictions of the realities we study.

This has consequences that are not always welcome. For instance, facing a paradoxical category like “rich dependency,” Kellogg (2015) objects: Canada’s wealth, class structure, and stability are too unlike the Global South to mark a dependency (23-56). He also shows this matters, politically and analytically. But a “churkendoose” category is not overcome by stressing one half of the paradox against the other (“Canada cannot be x, because we associate x with y, and Canada is not y”). Left-nationalists did say “rich dependency,” after all.

Not all paradoxical categories work -- and indeed “rich dependency” might not -- but their strength lies *in the space between their parts*. For instance, I’m still partial to Harold Innis’ “margin of western civilization” ((1930) 1970, 385). Later left-nationalists re-read this as “world periphery” or “semi-periphery.” But read the original again. Canada is part of the *West*, wealthy and high-ranking in racialized and imperial world hierarchies. But still at the *margin*: not one of the “big boys” who call the shots. Increasingly at the top meetings, but typically still “holding the bully’s coat” there (McQuaig 2007), Canada’s elites usually contribute to empire, assuming they benefit from it. But Canada was never the *centre* of a world empire – and is not today. Toronto has grown in world importance, and the relationship has changed in character, but the Canadian equivalents of Washington, New York, and London are still Washington, New York, and London.

Kellogg also notes the shifting categories that Left-nationalists have used. What to make of the shifting? Kellogg seems to suggest this is desperate and loose thinking. But what about experimental or rhetorical thinking -- way-stations through shifting case evidence and historical-geographic contexts, or political stakes? I can’t reject that out of hand: even historical-materialist theoretical concepts are tools of praxis, with intentionally demarcated shelf-lives.

Furthering the point about time-bound concepts, two cases could be made against Left-nationalist claims. I am unsure which one Kellogg supports. One is that Left-nationalists never had the right questions or the right answers. The second is that they recognized something real in the 1960s, but that the facts later changed. Kellogg’s book and his panel presentation generally favour the former, but sometimes favour the latter. Thus, he says several Left-nationalist bugbears, such as high US Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), were empirically plausible when Left-nationalism took off in the late 1960s (121-122). Does his approach explain why, more robustly than Left-nationalists did?

We could read these concepts more strategically and situationally. If one is comparing how capital accumulates and what Canadian and American capitalists will do to workers, focussing on “the colour of the cats” (Gillis and Douglas 1961) is indeed unhelpful: the trouble really is that they are “cats.” But perhaps the issue is Canada’s malingering on climate change mitigation; the recent RCMP and CRA surveillance of

Indigenous people and environmentalists, or Canada weathering the 2007-2008 crisis relatively well, but falling back later. Can Canada's G7 membership or comparisons with Germany, Japan, or the UK address these problems alone? Wouldn't comparisons with Australia serve us better?

### **Spectral Remnants?**

Some elements of the staples Left-nationalist line seem to retain a ghostly presence in Kellogg's arguments. I would like to hear more about the rationale. First, as a critic of Innis's "staples mentality" Kellogg nonetheless argues that "Canada is addicted to the only somewhat less wasteful economy of non-renewable extractivism" (20, cf. 226). Kellogg could now show more clearly how a staples "addiction" differs from a staples "trap." Further, if staples-based Left-nationalist arguments are ideological, a historical-materialist reading of ideology should include the identification of the material bases for recurring commitment to them.

Second, some parts of Kellogg's argument still suggest some kind of Canadian "dependence." Kellogg plans to argue that Canada's imperial privilege includes its "military parasitism" on other countries (19-21). But parasitism only works as privilege if the results reliably favour the parasite, *and* if the host would have things otherwise. But when Canada has wandered militarily while upping arms spending (Avro Arrow, toying with the idea of robust Arctic patrols, non-US military contracts), the big boys grumbled. Privileged military free-ridership can look a lot like "doing what you are told" and "being quiet while at the table", not least when one's free-ridership is called out: Canadian veterans from Vimy Ridge (including Innis) to Afghanistan paid for this in a hard coin.

### **For a Fractal Geography of Exploitation and National Identity**

*Escape* shows many Left-nationalist categories are unwise. This is amply worth reading. The original "comprador capitalist" category does not apply (Kellogg 2015, 169-175). Canada is not semi-peripheral, at least not like Mexico, Nigeria, or Indonesia (Kellogg 2015, 38).<sup>2</sup> Kellogg convinces me, with Klassen (2014), that the Canadian capitalist class has become relatively autonomous and self-sustaining (Kellogg 2015, 175-85).

But then I wish that Kellogg had explored categories such "new country" (Innis), "white settler colony," or "white dominions." The countries involved – Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay – stimulated comparative historical research during Canadian Left-nationalist ascendancy (Abele and Stasiulus 1989, esp. 243-45).

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<sup>2</sup> Whether they are all "petro-state" may be a more complicated case: Karl's original work, while restricted to developing countries, was partly a most-different small-n case study (Karl 1997, 17, 19, Chapter 9).

They also informed a research tradition allied with the left-nationalist configuration that Kellogg contests.

I say this, convinced the critiques of these racializing and colonizing labels make essential reading (e.g., Abele and Stasiulus 1989). But reading those labels in inverted commas, alongside that critical scholarship, speaks to key political-economic patterns in these countries, including systemic violence towards Indigenous peoples and settlers of colour. Canada and the others certainly organized themselves *as if* starting from scratch, *as if* only whites and their institutions mattered.

Whether or not these are the right names, that “sin” of race-based colonial settlement and its consequences need a name and good theoretical backing. Certainly, they are modes of imperialism, in venality or severity no different from what (say) the French did on either French *or* Algerian soil. But what settlers in “white settler colonies” did – those whose ancestors stayed and dominated, but did not found a world empire -- does stand apart in kind, in particular consequence, and in necessary restitution.

*Escape* comes close to this in portraying Canada as a settlement colony with an internal empire attached: “a hybrid, but not in the way much of Canadian political economy suggests” (Kellogg 2015, 165). I like this. *Pace* Obama and Bono, some places have had quite enough “Canada,” and these include large swathes of Turtle Island. Kellogg concludes that subjected collectivities within Canada -- Québécois, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (one might add Newfoundlanders and Acadians) -- can be Left-nationalist with moral and analytical integrity. “Canadians” as such cannot (Kellogg 2015, 10-11).

Any progressive politics in Canada must not miss these internal realities, and they do go to Canadian national identity. A falsely monolithic, benevolent national image has provided ideological cover for myriad oppressions. But in the first place, the Eeyou and Inuit within Québec and the Beothuk’s memory within Newfoundland might cause us to pause. Haven’t subordinated settler nations -- whose Left-nationalism Kellogg respects – also operated imperially? This question might undermine the case for making Left-nationalist exceptions. Or it might undermine Kellogg’s case that Canadian Left-nationalism stands apart from them.

At least two more questions follow. First, which Left-nationalists actually missed internal colonialism? Some have – Kellogg (2015) often stresses the Liberal Party’s role (e.g., 223-227). But as Kellogg knows and honours, Left-nationalist Mel Watkins (1977) headed up anti-colonial research for the Dené Nation. Naylor (1972) considered Confederation the “Third Empire of the St. Lawrence” -- no compliment. And alongside their flaws, the precursor staple classics and *dependentista* traditions certainly understood multi-layered exploitation (Fowke 1946; Frank 1969).

Second, does the bare category of Global North nationalism *logically* require blindness to internal oppression? Sometimes Kellogg appears to think so. But when

Maude Barlow works more on transnational issues, for instance, is her remaining Left-nationalism untidy left-over thinking (one way of reading Kellogg's remarks on page 213) or an integral feature of a maturing position? Kellogg also emphasizes that David Orchard's nationalism went rightward just as Barlow's views were changing. But Orchard's Tory manoeuvrings also failed badly.

So, I hesitate at Kellogg being this categorical:

Progressive resistance to neoliberalism and globalization will take many forms in the states that provide the frameworks in which principal economies develop. Nationalism – whether German, French, or Canadian – *will not be one of those forms* (Kellogg 2015, 166, emphasis added)

Systematic anti-nationalism has honourable roots on Canada's radical Left (e.g., Bakan and Murton 2006). But there is at least an analytical question here. When Kellogg (2015, 8) opens his remarks, arguing that even progressive Global North national resistance *must* "open the door to the political right" and that we need only look to the twentieth century record, I felt that Norwegian, Dutch, Danish (*and* French) resistance to fascism deserved some mention. Similarly, while making excuses for the ruling classes is a key problem with some nationalisms, can we then be silent theoretically (as *Escape* seems to be) about Gramsci's counter-hegemonic national-popular, which addresses this problem with some sophistication?

Collective identities can go toxic. But consider some of the other collective identities. Socialist David McNally has nothing to answer for regarding Stalin. In my books, Christian Cornell West similarly owes us no apologies for the so-called Christian Coalition, let alone the Westboro Baptist Church. A non-rhetorical question for advancing Left research and politics, then: does Global North left-national identity present dangers that differ in kind from those of other Left collective identities. If so, what are they?

Amidst the thuggishness of xenophobic nationalisms today, caution about nationalism is understandable. But caution about abandoning it to the right is understandable, too. Progressives should certainly insist that any Global North collective identity incorporate a multi-layered understanding of internal oppression, responsibility, and solidarity. But precisely such a fractal sense of identity could knead a powerful leaven of maturity -- and responsibility -- into otherwise flat-bread, white-bread nationalism. Canadians desperately need to reckon collectively with their unearned structural privilege, with its roots in oppression and dispossession. As with whiteness, I'd suggest individuals' attempts to renounce their Canadian settler identity removes nothing of its privilege from the bearers. So: "I am Canadian," but this is no beer ad. What prevents the deep-set limitations, crimes, and failings of a nation from becoming core obligations of a

chastened, forward-looking, and open national citizenship to address? Perhaps something does. But in any case, socialists need to work, either on such a project, or on a more explicit case for its impossibility.

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Reviews & Debates

## **CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE ERA OF BREXIT AND TRUMP**

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Author's response to Socialist Studies Symposium on *Escape from the Staple Trap*.<sup>1</sup>

The structure of *Escape from the Staple Trap* (Kellogg 2015a) was consciously chosen. In the face of deeply held political economy epistemologies, it was important to first construct a strong empirical foundation – using data extensively, looking at that data from multiple sides, as well as questioning and critiquing certain key hegemonic interpretations of empirical data from earlier eras. This empirical work revealed clearly that Canada must be considered a Global North country at the core of the world system. Only with that empirical foundation constructed, did the book then draw some political conclusions. In this Global North, core country – as in Germany, France, the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan – nationalism cannot be an ideological vehicle for progressive politics.

I will not be able to address all the points made by my friends and colleagues at the two book launches – one at Historical Materialism in Toronto and the other at Socialist Studies in Calgary. The ones that are written up here are interesting and challenging articles which can be read in their own right. But in reflecting on these contributions, it seems to me it might be helpful to reverse the order, and begin rather than end with politics. Specifically – why should we be concerned with the question of progressive politics and nationalism in the context of Global North, core economies? Radhika Desai suggests that here my critique “overshoots its target” and reminds us of the admonition by Marx and Engels that any left program “must in the first instance be national.” James Lawson makes a similar point, suggesting the possibility of a “Global North collective identity” which incorporates “a multi-layered understanding of internal oppression.”

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to William Carroll, Radhika Desai, Jessica Evans, James Lawson, Sandra Rein and Thom Workman for their contributions to the book launches for *Escape from the Staple Trap* at Historical Materialism 2016 (Toronto) and Socialist Studies 2016 (Calgary).

A short article cannot fully address these important points. To help further the discussion, I will restrict myself to illustrative examples. The year 2016 has given us two. Both the June 23 BREXIT referendum in the United Kingdom and the November 9 election of Donald Trump in the United States reveal toxic Global North nationalisms – “the thuggishness of xenophobic nationalisms” in Lawson’s words – riven with anti-immigrant racism. Whether these examples are sufficient to fully categorize Global North nationalism, I will leave to the reader to decide. At the very least, they illustrate some of the problems with which we are going to have to deal.

The Trump phenomenon in the United States is the most straightforward. In the 10 days after Trump’s victory, the Southern Poverty Law Center counted 867 hate incidents “with many targeting immigrants, African Americans and Muslims.” Richard Cohen, president of the Center, called it a “barrage of hate” (Sidahmed 2016). Trump was elected through an explicit mobilization of white nationalist sentiment, an open appeal to anti-Mexican and anti-Muslim racism. Racialized people of colour overwhelmingly supported Clinton (Clinton winning 29 million racialized votes to Trump’s 8 million). But Trump matched this through massive support from non-racialized (white) voters, outpolling Clinton in this category by 20.2 million. It wasn’t enough to win the popular vote (trailing Clinton by almost three million), but it was enough to win the Electoral College.

Trump mixed his racism with populism, in particular campaigning against trade deals. There is a well-developed left critique of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). Literally hundreds of articles and books have been written to document the manner in which these two trade deals institutionalize neoliberal, anti-working class policies. The left for decades has been engaged in a campaign against these deals – as part of the campaign against neoliberalism. In Canada, campaigning against neoliberal trade deals has been one of the defining features of left politics.

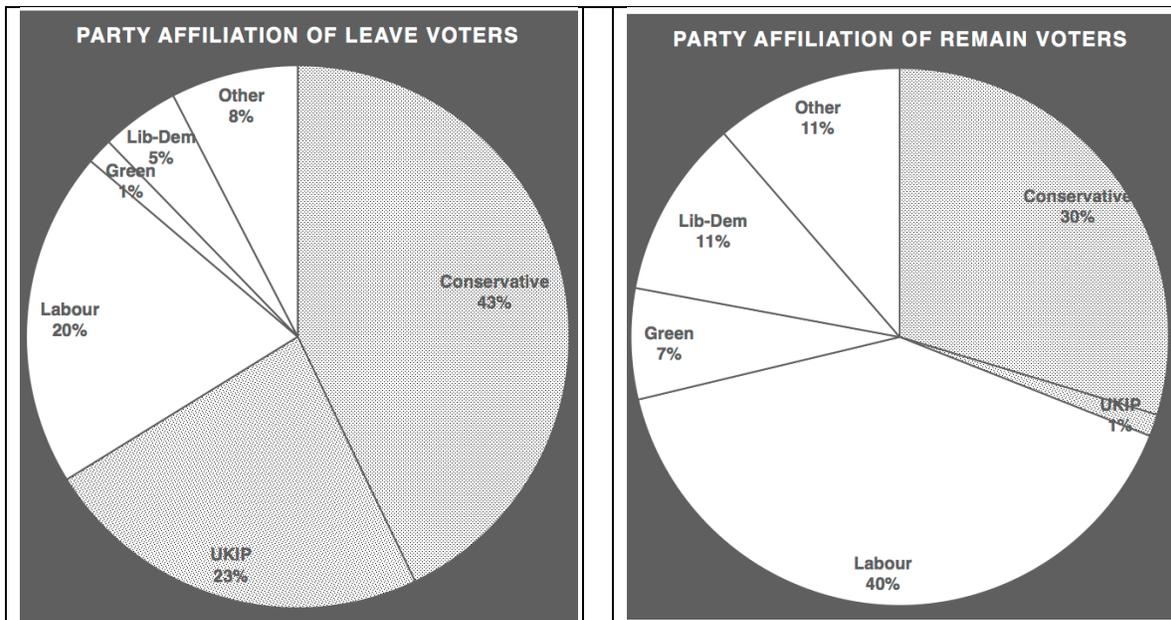
We are now confronted with this white nationalist President being the agent for the demise of the TPP, and quite possibly that of NAFTA. His racist nationalism split the working class. Union households by a small majority supported Clinton. But when unionists of colour are removed from the picture, the grim truth is that Trump won the support of almost 60% of non-racialized (white) union household voters (Election statistics are taken from Kellogg 2017). It should give us no comfort that these white trade unionists supported Trump because of his anti-TPP, anti-NAFTA message. It is actually a disaster that millions of trade unionists were willing to forgive the extreme racism and sexism emanating from Trump’s campaign, in exchange for an end to these trade deals. Racist white nationalism is now the public face of opposition to the TPP and NAFTA, and that is a move to the right.

What about BREXIT? The European Union, along with its predecessors, has been a subject of left critique for years. After the Second World War “the Labour Party

contained strong elements” that were suspicious of “the emerging institutional ideas about European economic integration. When the Treaty of Rome was finally signed in 1957 many believed the EEC to be a bosses’ cartel and wanted nothing to do with it” (Mayall 2015, 224). In the modern era, a very extensive literature emerged situating the institutions of European integration as core components of the framework of neoliberalism (Brenner 1999; Gill 1998; Hermann 2007; Mitchell 2006; Young 2000). The EU’s callous response to the unfolding crisis in Greece certainly provides contemporary evidence of this neoliberal orientation (Kellogg 2012). It was in this spirit that leading figures of the British left and workers’ movement – Tariq Ali, Lindsey German, John Rees, Mick Cash and others – argued that the “EU is irreversibly committed to privatization, welfare cuts, low wages and the erosion of trade union rights ... For these reasons we are committed to pressing for a vote to leave the EU in the forthcoming referendum on UK membership” (Cash, Hodgson, and Ali 2016).

However, when the vote came, these “LEXIT” voices were marginalized. It was the nationalist right, not the internationalist left, which dominated the victory of the “Leave” side. Figure 1 looks at support for both the “Leave” and “Remain” side by party affiliation (based on voting record from the national election in 2015).

Figure 1 – Party affiliation, Leave and Remain voters, ‘BREXIT’ referendum, June 23, 2016



Source: Author’s compilation from data available in YouGov (2016b)

Two-thirds of the Leave side was comprised of supporters of the Conservative Party (43%), and the ultra-nationalist U.K. Independence Party (23%). By contrast, these right-wing forces made up just 31% of the Remain side, whose largest component came from Labour (40%) followed by the Liberal-Democrats and “Other” (11% each) and the

Green Party (7%). Think of it this way: go to a mainstream “Leave” rally and you would be rubbing shoulders with Tories and white nationalists. Go to a mainstream “Remain” rally and you would be rubbing shoulders with Labour Party, Green and Liberal-Democrat supporters.

Focusing on just England (the dynamics in Scotland, and Northern Ireland were quite different), largely white areas voted to leave the EU, areas with concentrations of people of colour voted to stay. The population of London is 40% racialized. London voted overwhelmingly – 59.9% – to remain in the EU. In the North East of England, only 5% of the population is racialized. The North East voted overwhelmingly – 58% – to leave (Coles, Kirk, and Krol 2016; U.K. 2011). That pattern was repeated across the country.

In the last weeks of the campaign, then UKIP leader Nigel Farage unveiled a racist poster, picturing a “queue of mostly non-white migrants and refugees with the slogan ‘Breaking point: the EU has failed us all.’” Union leader Dave Prentis “described the UKIP poster as a ‘blatant attempt to incite racial hatred.’ He said: ‘This is scaremongering in its most extreme and vile form. Leave campaigners have descended into the gutter with their latest attempt to frighten working people into voting to leave the EU’ (Stewart and Mason 2016). But this scare-mongering worked. For “Remain” voters, concerns about immigration barely registered – just one percent saying it was a key to their position. For “Leave” voters, immigration was central – one-quarter saying it was “the most important” issue “in deciding how to vote in the referendum” (YouGov 2016a).

As in the United States, this racism has not remained at the level of scaremongering. July 2016 – the first full month after the referendum – saw a 41% spike in hate crimes, compared to the year previous (Forster 2016).

The U.S. and the U.K. are the two quintessentially Global North powers. In both, an upsurge of nationalism has pulled politics far to the right. That this nationalism has targeted institutions long critiqued by the left – the European Union, the TPP and NAFTA – can give us no comfort. German nationalism in the 1930s led to the dismantling of the Versailles Treaty – a treaty the left at the time clearly opposed. But when ripped up from the standpoint of Global North nationalism, we know with the benefit of hindsight, that this represented reactionary, not progressive politics.

Turn to Canada. The motivation to write *Escape from the Staple Trap* came from a long reluctance by the Canadian left to put ourselves and “our” nationalism in the category of Britain and the United States. Since the 1960s, there has been a constant attempt to a) deny Canada’s membership in the core of the world system; and b) on this basis, hope for a progressive Canadian nationalism. There will be little argument that Donald Trump’s nationalism is reactionary. The LEXIT campaign in Britain was at pains to separate itself from the reactionary nationalism driving the mainstream BREXIT campaign. But in Canada, many still live in the shadow of a left-nationalist movement which saw it as progressive to frame our opposition to capitalism in Canadian nationalist terms.

Thom Workman suggests that the “Escape” part of the book’s title evokes a “craving to move beyond the immuring constraints of an intellectual discourse.” It is a craving, and it is more – a desperate necessity. If we don’t escape the epistemologies of the past, we will be unable to confront capitalism not just in its Canadian, but in its Trump and BREXIT clothes. Thomas Walkom, for one, has not been able to make that escape. In the wake of the Trump victory, Walkom – trapped in the CPE discourse of an earlier era – kept his focus on our old target, NAFTA, refusing to see the problem of it being dismantled from the nationalist right. “We should relax. We should take a deep breath” he advises us. “Depending on how it’s done, getting rid of NAFTA could work for us” (Walkom 2016). We already know how it will be done. If NAFTA is dismantled in the next four years, it will be at the initiative of a white nationalist regime in the United States committed to extending the rule of Trump’s right wing politics for a generation. This article was not a one-off. The next month, he went even further, praising the president-elect for supposedly saving 1,000 jobs by staring down “corporate giant United Technologies” demonstrating apparently “that globalization is not inevitable ... that market forces, while powerful, need not always be supreme ... this big businessman has shown that it is possible to challenge big business” (Walkom 2016b). This is completely wrong. We cannot judge the racist right – whether that be Trump, Mussolini or Berlusconi – by their economic policies. Their agenda is not about aiding the working class as a whole, but aiding one section in order to demonize another. The point is not whether we are for or against NAFTA and globalization. The point is how we organize to oppose the shift right in continental politics represented by the Trump victory.

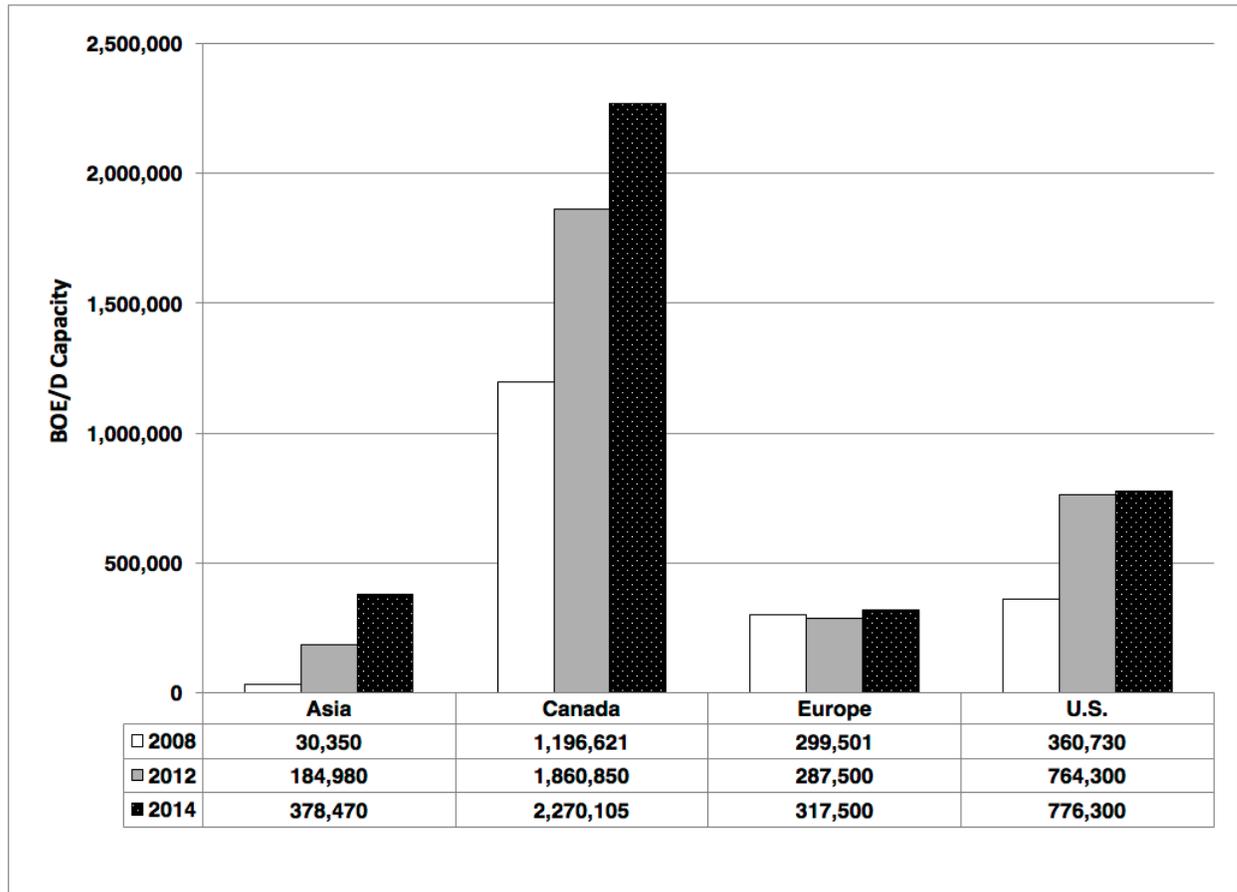
That is not to say that nationalism *per se* is reactionary. Lawson correctly remarks that I make “left-nationalist exceptions” for the nationally oppressed (although I prefer to think of this as acknowledging the right to resistance of the oppressed, whatever form that resistance takes). And Lawson is correct, key figures in the left-nationalist political economy tradition made exactly this point. Mel Watkins, of course, comes to mind. If this was not emphasized enough in the book, that should be corrected. Watkins and I will agree, that for indigenous peoples, for the countries of the former colonies in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa, nationalism is very often the political vehicle for progressive politics. But that is only because these peoples experience the oppression of imperialism. In economic terms, that means oppression carried out by the Global North, core countries – of which Canada is a fully paid-up member. Nationalism is often the ideological frame within which resistance to imperialism takes place. Canada cannot claim membership in the category of “oppressed country” and therefore cannot embrace nationalism as a vehicle for progressive change.

We have had three waves of left nationalism in Canada which have made the attempt to frame our opposition to capitalism in nationalist terms. The original Waffle moment was by far the strongest. The Free Trade nationalist moment was significant, if less powerful than its predecessor. The anti-globalization, semi-periphery nationalism of

the 21<sup>st</sup> century was an echo of the two earlier moments, a nationalist moment which stayed at the level of theory, having no associated political movement– except for a brief attempt by *Canadian Dimension* to launch what they called a nationalist resistance movement against corporate capitalism (Kellogg 2015a, 8 and 142).

But the habits of a nationalist epistemology have proven persistent. Since writing *Escape from the Escape from the Staple Trap*, I published in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, an article on the tar sands, which makes the simple point that the tar sands problem is a made in Canada problem. Calgary-based corporations are at the centre of tar sands exploitation. But the nationalist habit of offshoring problems in Canada, means that in much of the literature surrounding the tar sands, there is a concerted effort to prove that the tar sands are not actually Canadian, that in fact the tar sands are majority-controlled by non-Canadians. In its most unfortunate guise, this predilection has taken the form of an anti-Chinese discourse, proclaiming the risk of Canada becoming a “resource colony” of China. There is no basis for such a claim. Figure 2 shows the increase in tar sands exploitation capacity by country or region of control. There has been a significant increase in Asian corporate control, from 30,000 barrels a day capacity to almost 400,000. European tar sands production has stagnated at around 300,000 barrels a day, and U.S. capacity has more than doubled from around 360,000 BOE/D to almost 780,000. But all of this is in the shadow of the massive and steady increase of Canadian corporate tar sands exploitation capacity, from 1.2 million BOE/D in 2008 to 1.9 million in 2012 and 2.3 million in 2014.

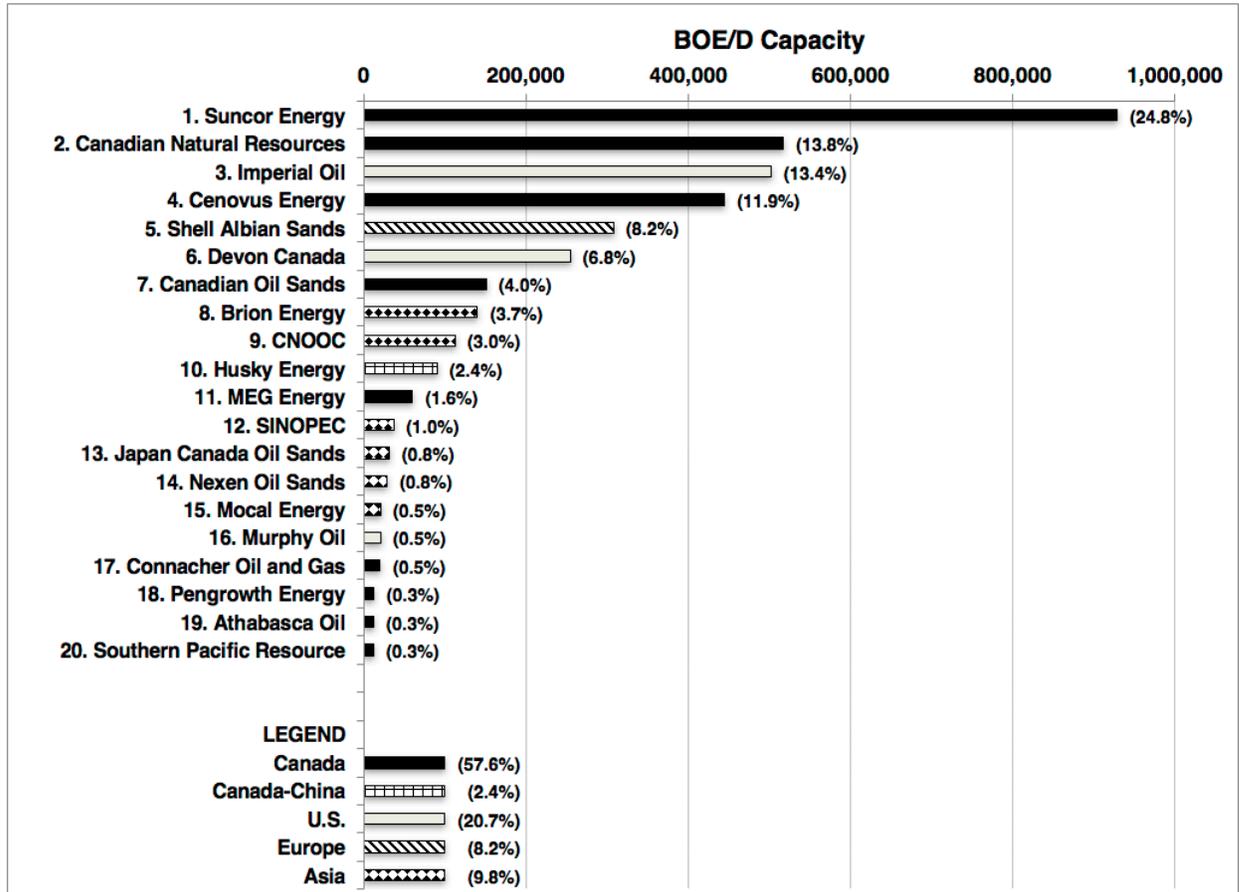
Figure 2 – Country or region of control: Alberta bitumen sands, BOE/D (Operating or Under Construction), 2008, 2012 and 2014



Source: Kellogg (2015b, 238)

Figure 3 takes a snapshot of corporate control of the tar sands in Alberta for the year 2014. The list is dominated by Calgary-based corporations – Suncor Energy and Canadian Natural Resources taking the first two spots, Cenovus Energy the fourth, Canadian Oil Sands the seventh. The U.S. has the most non-Canadian presence at over 20%, followed by Asian and European based corporations at just under 10 percent. There is a small “Canada-China” category at under three percent. That is a one corporation category for Husky Oil, because of controversy over whether it should be called a Canadian or a Chinese corporation. However, even without Husky Oil, Canada dominates the Alberta tar sands picture with 57.6% of BOE/D capacity.

Figure 3 – Top 20 Bitumen Extracting Corporations (Operating and Under Construction), BOE/D – Alberta 2014



Source: Kellogg (2015b, 239)

The tar sands economy in Alberta is the clearest example of what I refer to in the book as Canada’s addiction to extractivism. Lawson suggests that I should “show more clearly how a staples “addiction” differs from a staples ‘trap.’” This is a good point, and anticipates an argument that will be developed at length in *Arms and the Nation* (Kellogg In progress). In brief – the claim of the staple trap framework is that staple addiction would hold back industrial development in other areas. *Escape from the Staple Trap* tried to show that while that was the experience for many ex-colonies, it was not for Canada. Desai summarizes the point well, saying that the book demonstrates “Canada’s normality as a capitalist nation with a home market which provides the basis of the formation and expansion of capitalism.” An addiction to extractivism is something different. It is exactly parallel to the addiction to military production in the United States. A prejudice towards extractivism – just as with a prejudice towards industrial militarism – does not hold back the development of industrial capitalism. Both Canada and the United States are firm members of the advanced capitalist club. But – it massively distorts the *kind* of

development that takes place, and unnecessarily diverts huge amounts of society's surplus towards activities that are, in the end, completely wasteful.

"Ideology is no mere error" as Desai rightly says, and her question is a good one – why should such a wrong paradigm have proven so tenacious? The political economy evidence is relentless. There is overwhelming evidence to demonstrate that Canada needs to be conceived as an advanced capitalist economy at the core of the world system. Epistemologies seem, however, to be more powerful than political economy.

- Canada has experienced manufacturing decline relative to the U.S. – if you exclude the auto sector. Why? It exists. Oshawa exists. Windsor exists. St. Catharines exists. Excluding them makes no sense.
- Canada has a weak manufacturing sector if you make a hard distinction between a factory which produces needles (an end-product) and one which produces nails (an input, not an end-product). Why? Isn't the key question labour, capital and exchange value, not the use-value of the product created?
- Canada processes bitumen sands for export. Venezuela processes bitumen sands for export. But contrast the mild slowdown in Canada associated with the 2014 crash in the price of oil, with the catastrophic situation in Venezuela. Canada's is a core economy with high-productivity and a high and rising organic composition of capital. It is not a petro state, unless we make that phrase meaningless. It cannot in any way be put in any category alongside Venezuela (Chase-Dunn 1998; McNally 1981; Kellogg 2015c).

In the face of overwhelming evidence, a paradigm's epistemological hold proves sticky. In part that is bound up with a key corollary to Canadian left nationalism, rightly emphasized by Desai – an exaggeration of the power of U.S. imperialism. Never more clearly outlined than in the path-breaking analysis of Kari Levitt (1970), the two were always seen together – a declining Canadian capitalism subordinate to an ever-more powerful U.S. capitalism – in spite of the fact that the evidence for secular U.S. decline in the world system is overwhelming (Kellogg 2015d). So – I will address the question on ideology by asking another one – why is there such a predilection to exaggerating the role of the U.S. in the world system? I think if we answer that one, the answers about Canada will follow rather quickly.

Why does this matter? Because false theories can lead to dead-end strategies. In the 1980s, the left identified the main enemy as U.S. imperialism, and in Canada the key was to combat CUFTA (the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement) and then NAFTA. Fair enough. But, with a perspective that sees Canada as oppressed, sections of the left had no trouble seeking alliances on a nationalist basis to prosecute that campaign – specifically with the Liberal Party of Canada – the party which in 1994, implemented NAFTA.

Today we have a critique of the TPP. But we can't just oppose it in any fashion. Donald Trump is its most vocal opponent, and a TPP death at his hands will not benefit the progressive movements. We have a critique of the European Union. But we can't just oppose it in any fashion. George Galloway created confusion and disgust when he appeared on a platform with Nigel Farage to oppose the EU (Kaide Wolf 2016). We combat the tar sands, but understand that this puts us up not principally against the U.S. or China, but rather against Calgary, Canada and our own corporate capitalism. We cannot offshore the specific problem of the tar sands, nor the more general problem of capitalism.

One side of the politics flowing from this is restrictive, just as it was for the anti-war movement in Karl Liebknecht's time when he argued that "the main enemy is at home" (Liebknecht 1915). This restricts those to whom we can look to for alliances. Justin Trudeau has just taught us again the bitter lesson that the Liberal Party of Canada will not be one of those allies when it comes to combatting the tar sands.

But the other side of the politics flowing from this is expansive. Once we stop looking to false friends such as the Liberals, we might be better able to see true friends with whom we can link arms across all borders, including the one between Canada and the U.S. We won't get climate justice from Trudeau and the Liberals. But we might just take a step towards it with the Standing Rock Sioux in their just struggle against the Dakota Access pipeline.

Economics dictates that we will need these allies. Desai reminds us of the trenchant political economy of Rosa Luxemburg, who insisted on a sober examination of the real dynamics of capitalism and its recurring "gluts of capital and commodities and crises." We can usefully study the writings of this great political economist to get a sense of the crises to come in the BREXIT / Trump era (Luxemburg 1910). We can also usefully study Nikolai Bukharin (1915), who more than any other political economist sketched a framework which explains the drive towards phenomena like the TPP and NAFTA – the tendency of capitalism to transcend its national boundaries, to cartelize production relations, part of which takes the form of regional trade and investment blocs – NAFTA, TPP etc. We do need to combat these, not on a nationalist basis, but with an eye to regional solidarity, political and economic.

Politics also dictates that we will need these allies. Lawson provocatively raises the figure of Gramsci and his concept of a counter-hegemonic national-popular bloc (Gramsci 1971). Without getting into a long discussion, let me just say that this is a very helpful framework, and one which does not in any way contradict a critique of Global North nationalism. We can also usefully study Leon Trotsky's concept of the United States of Europe (Trotsky 1923) – ridiculed in its time by Lenin, but helpful I think in a) recognizing the material pressures determining regionalization, but b) insisting that this be organized on the basis of solidarity, democracy, openness and accountability. We can also usefully study the noble experiment of ALBA, in difficulty today, but from its

announcement in 2004, putting on the table the possibility of a solidaristic, not neoliberal, regional alliance (Kellogg 2007).

But that is getting ahead of ourselves. We will debate over time the manner in which to develop left policies to counter neoliberalism and capitalist cartelization. A preliminary step is to develop a coherent explanation of the contours of our system – and Canada’s place in it. *Escape from the Staple Trap* is one attempt to advance this discussion.

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Review Article

## **COALITION BUILDING, CAPITALISM AND WAR-OF JOHN RIDDELL'S, TO THE MASSES: PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, 1921<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

We are entering the centenary of the revolutionary upheavals which convulsed Europe and Asia in the wake of the First World War. Sustained by those upheavals, a new left emerged grappling with the daunting challenges of trying to create an alternative to capitalism and war. John Riddell's three decades of effort to publish the proceedings of the First Four Congresses of the Communist International (Comintern) are part of a new generation working to make available to an English speaking audience some of the key discussions and deliberations of the left in that era. His latest volume - "To the Masses" - surveying the discussions of the Third Comintern Congress completes this work. Focussing on the united front - what a contemporary left would call "coalition building" - the book is an invaluable resource both to our understanding of this period, and to the challenges our new left faces in the still ongoing struggle against capitalism and war.

### **Keywords**

Russia; Germany; Levi; Luxemburg; Levi

European civilization degenerated into horrifying violence during the "Great War" of 1914-1918. In the wake of that war, upheavals shook old empires to their foundations, as literally millions of peasants and workers rejected old patterns of life and rule, and sought out new ways of organizing society freed from the barbarism of war and capitalism. A vigorous left wing developed in many countries on the backs of this revolutionary upheaval, but only a fraction of the writings and discussions of this left have been available to an English-speaking audience. That is beginning to change. Ten years ago, Ian Birchall translated Pierre Broué's classic *The German Revolution, 1917-1923* (2006). Peter Hudis is spearheading the preparation into English of the

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Abbie Bakan for organizing a book launch of *To the Masses* at Historical Materialism Toronto, May 2016, and to Radhika Desai, David McNally, John Riddell and Mike Taber for their contributions. This text is based on my contribution to that panel.

indispensable works of Rosa Luxemburg (Luxemburg 2004; Luxemburg 2013; Luxemburg 2015). And since the 1980s, John Riddell has been translating, editing and publishing the key documents and discussions of the Communist International (or Comintern). *To the Masses* (Riddell 2015)<sup>2</sup> – whose subject matter is the Third Congress – completes the record of the first four congresses of the Comintern, congresses identified by Leon Trotsky as important events where key questions of the day had “been subjected ... to a principled analysis that has remain unsurpassed until now” (Trotsky 1933, 40). Riddell’s books will serve as a resource for years. By allowing an English-speaking audience access to the unfiltered words of the congress participants, the books allow a new generation to assess for themselves the merits of their theories, strategies and practices.

The central question confronting participants at the Third Congress – the subject of this latest volume – was the complicated situation in Germany. It is in the cauldron of the German Revolutionary years, running roughly from 1917 to 1923, that the tactic of the United Front crystallized, the central theme of both the Third and the Fourth Congresses. The United Front method is one by which minority currents of politicized activists – around a defined set of demands – seek unity in action with those who hold a different set of politics. To use contemporary language, we might call this “coalition-building”. One of the key events of the German revolutionary years, what came to be known as the March Action of 1921, brought into sharp relief the catastrophic consequences of not engaging in serious and sincere coalition building.

At the time of the March Action, the KPD (German Communist Party) while a mass party, nonetheless represented a small minority of the working class, far smaller and less influential than the traditional party of German labour, the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Nonetheless, the KPD tried, in its own name, to call a general strike. Predictably, the strike failed miserably, tens of millions ignoring the call. Pierre Broué says that perhaps 200,000 – at most 500,000 workers chose to participate (Broué 2006, 501). We read in *To the Masses* that, tragically, it is likely the former figure that is more accurate. “In Session 5, Heinrich Malzahn of the German opposition estimated that strikers totalled only two hundred thousand – just over half the party’s pre-March membership – a figure not challenged in the congress” (20). Worse, the March Action was associated with numerous acts of violence by the small minority supporting the strike, violence directed against the vast majority who had chosen not to follow the KPD. “[T]he strike took on the character of a fratricidal struggle. Indeed, in many instances, Communists battled non-Communists among the workforce; in some cases workers were cleared out of the workplace by force” (20). The repression which followed saw 400 KPD members “sentenced to some 1,500 years hard labour, and 500 to 800 years in jail, eight to life imprisonment and four to death” something like 200,000 leaving the party in disgust and demoralization (Broué 2006, 505).

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<sup>2</sup> Further references to this text are made with only the page number in parentheses.

The tragedy of the March Action was shaped by what came to be known as the Theory of the Offensive. This theory asserted that “offensive”, sometimes insurrectionary tactics are appropriate, even when communists are a small minority of the working class and the oppressed. It was at the root of not just the 1921 political catastrophe in Germany, but a 1920 military catastrophe for the Russian state in its war with Poland (Kellogg 2013). *To the Masses* early on links these two episodes, saying:

... the Red Army’s Polish offensive inspired an article by Nikolai Bukharin in the Comintern’s world journal, headlined “The Policy of the Offensive,” which drew on precedents from the French revolutionary wars of the 1790s to make the case that Soviet military advances could spark revolution beyond Soviet borders. In the run-up to the Third Congress, Bukharin’s formula was born to a new life in the theory developed by the German party’s majority leadership to justify its adventurist policy” (6–7).

So dangerous was this theory, that critiques of it ran “like a red thread through” Leon Trotsky’s “writings and speeches of this period” (Deutscher 1954, 1:473). Trotsky called the Theory of the Offensive “a very great and criminal heresy, which cost the German proletariat needless bloodshed and which did not bring victory, and were this tactic to be followed in the future it would bring about the ruin of the revolutionary movement in Germany” (1981, 5:306; quoted in Kellogg 2013, 185).

There is today, much agreement, that the March Action was an irresponsible adventure, shattering the party and isolating it from the mass of the German working class. However, around one key aspect of this experience – the role of KPD leader Paul Levi – there is little unanimity. Levi opposed the March Action. He was clearly correct in this. Yet he ended up outside the ranks of the party in its wake. The late Chris Harman characterized this as his “departure from the party”, a “resignation barely a week before the [March] Action” (1982, 211). This is wrong and misleading. Harman is here conflating two quite different episodes. The first was in February 22, when Levi, Zetkin and three others resigned – not from the party, but from the party’s leading body (Fernbach 2011, 17). His “departure” from the party came April 15, and it was not voluntary. Levi was expelled from the party by the very leading body he had left just weeks before (Broué 2006, 516). The verbal move from the highly charged (and accurate) term “expulsion” to the neutral and ambiguous term “departure”, has the effect of minimizing the error of the KPD leadership. It also disarms the reader who, if they choose to examine the career and role of Paul Levi, will inevitably encounter “the traditional epithets and insults of ‘traitor’ and ‘renegade’” ... which comprise the bulk of the Stalinist-influenced scholarship on this period, a line of argument which shamefully and inaccurately portrays Levi “as no more than a ‘class enemy’ and a potential traitor, even when he was a leader of the KPD” (Broué 2006, 875).

*To the Masses* gives us ammunition to correct the historical record. Levi's "crime", for which he was expelled, was to have published in the non-party press a pamphlet critical of the party's role in the March Action (Levi 1921) – a pamphlet whose essential analysis has stood the test of time. Chris Harman's co-thinker, Ian Birchall, unhelpfully calls Levi's action "political scabbing" (Birchall 2006, 266), something which only serves to heighten the emotion around the issue, and lessen the chance of reasoned, political inquiry. The expulsion of Levi for the publication of a pamphlet was a sign of the degeneration – not of Levi – but of the KPD.

Levi, being an expelled member, was not present at the Third Congress. But in Riddell's book, almost 100 years later, he returns in spirit. Some of the most exciting aspects of *To the Masses* can be found in the appendices, one of which is entitled "Paul Levi Appeals to Third Congress, 31 May" (1090–97), a closely worded condemnation of the tactics of the KPD leadership, and an indictment of the actions of the Comintern representative in Germany (the Hungarian Béla Kun). We also have the "Resolution by Clara Zetkin on March Action" (1079–86) a cogent defence of the "to the masses" united front approach. Making these texts available is a huge contribution.

We can also hear in the appendices, in a letter to Lenin, the chilling voice of this same Béla Kun unapologetically defending the March Action. "Beyond any question, the March Action has brought us great political and organisational successes and will bring us many more in the future", an absurd statement which flies in the face of the historical record. We also have, in his own words, insights into his unsavoury methods. "Levi and Zetkin are utter hysterics" he says "and what they are saying in the German party right now consists of nothing but lying gossip. No one can believe it contains even a grain of truth". Kun proclaims that Paul Levi is "universally recognised as dangerous". On one occasion, says Kun "Levi tried to conceal his swinishness and stupidity behind Radek's authority". But his worst venom is reserved for Levi's close comrade, Clara Zetkin. "As for the statements of the aged comrade Zetkin, I would like to say only this: the old woman is suffering from senile dementia. She provides a living proof that Lafargue and his wife acted entirely correctly" referring to the suicide of Paul Lafargue and Laura Marx (1088–90).

These words – appropriate, not to a serious activist, but rather to a petty, personalistic, bureaucrat – come from what was meant as a private letter to Lenin. Its preservation and publication give us an insight into the character and methods of one of the key figures of the era. The impression formed is not flattering. Worse, we now know that in slandering and denouncing Levi and Zetkin, he was slandering and denouncing the two figures most closely associated with developing the United Front / coalition-building method which is the chief contribution of these congresses to the contemporary left. Levi, Clara Zetkin and others developed their politics in that section of the German Left influenced by the politics of Rosa Luxemburg. Luxemburg – from a position of deep respect for the Russian revolutionaries – knew that Bolshevik methods could not be

adapted without amendment to the very different circumstances of Germany. The Luxemburgist current in the German left insisted that strategy and tactics shaped by the experience of the revolution in Russia – a country with pockets of industry surrounded by a sea of peasants – had to be radically modified in order to fit the extremely different conditions prevailing in urban, industrialized Germany (Kellogg and Riddell 2013; Kellogg 2012).

One example can illustrate why we should study Levi's section of the left and its unique approach to strategies and tactics. An early and important moment in the development of the United Front method began with the metalworkers' union in Stuttgart and its 1920 call for a local "joint struggle" uniting the minority current of communist with the mass of non-communist workers, a joint struggle "for concrete improvement in the workers' living conditions" (Riddell 2011, 6). This initiative inspired the issuing of an *Open Letter* from the KPD, calling for the same approach on a national scale.

*To the Masses* makes available the full text of the Open Letter, indicating that "the drafters appear to have been Paul Levi and Karl Radek". The letter calls for workers' organizations to work together and "begin unified struggles for higher wages ... raise all payments to victims of the War and pensioners in line with the demanded wage increases ... grant the unemployed across the whole country uniform payments ... distribute foodstuffs at reduced prices to all wage earners and those with low incomes ... confiscate immediately all available habitable spaces" and other very practical, very realizable immediate reforms to improve the conditions of the poor and working class population of post-war Germany (1061–63).

The origins of the Open Letter in Stuttgart, shows the importance of developments in Germany. "Late in 1920, a meeting representing 26,000 Stuttgart metalworkers called for joint struggle for a list of basic demands; the appeal was published 10 December 1920. It was the first formulation of the united front policy that the Comintern was to adopt a year and eight days later" (15). It also highlights the central role of Levi and Zetkin. Stuttgart was not just any city. Levi, on returning from the war to Germany in 1918 made his centre of work Berlin, but "maintained his connections with Stuttgart where Clara Zetkin lived, where the Spartacists had a majority among the local Independent Socialists (USPD), and where Levi helped organize deserters from the armed forces" (Fernbach 2011, 5–6), the Spartacists being the group around Luxemburg which became the core of the KPD.

The Open Letter's sensible, careful call for united action – for coalition building – was unfortunately rejected by the leadership of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the party to which adhered the vast majority of German workers. However, it was also met with derision from the "left" section of the communists in Germany who denounced it as reformist – this being the section that was to shortly displace Levi and Zetkin and take the KPD into the catastrophe of the March Action.

But, if rejected by the SPD leaders and the communist left, The Open Letter was greeted with enthusiasm at the base of the workers' movement. Zetkin is quoted in *To the Masses* about the impact of the Open Letter. "The demands of the Open Letter had as their result that the masses organised in trade unions drove the union bureaucracy forward" (1080). Revolutionary shop steward and KPD member Heinrich Malzahn said that the Open Letter allowed the KPD to "win a powerful influence before the March Action"

This Open Letter, together with the slogan of a workers' and employees' united front against the employers' general offensive, won for us the trust of the working class. The best measure of the extent of our trade-union influence is the fact that the union bureaucrats felt that their power was threatened and responded by dismissing union staffers and expelling Communists. That did not harm us, but rather contributed to increasing the party's reputation and influence. (501)

It could have this impact because, after its publication, in January of 1921, meeting after meeting took place endorsing the letter's call for unity in struggle.

The KPD... called on the workers to organise democratic assemblies in order to impose their demands on their leaders, and to declare their will to undertake a general struggle to win them. Such meetings took place, and the Communist proposals were approved by workers who were either not in parties or were members of one or other of the Social-Democratic Parties.

On 11 January 1921, the delegate meeting of the workers in the Vulkan naval shipyard in Stettin took place, on 17 January, that of the production workers and office staff at Siemens in Berlin, in the Busch Circus, on the 19<sup>th</sup> that of the railwaymen in Munich, and in the days which followed, meetings of the metalworkers in Danzig, Leipzig, Halle and Essen, of the railwaymen in Leipzig, Schwerin, Brandenburg and Berlin, the national congresses of the saddle-makers and the carpet weavers, the meetings of the miners in Dorstfeld, and a large workers' gathering in Jena, all fully endorsed the Open Letter, and called for a struggle to be organised around its demands. (Broué 2006, 471–72)

*To the Masses* reveals the unevenness in response from leading Russian communists to this very fine initiative. Zinoviev called it "quite artificial ... I do not believe that one can call on the workers to form an alliance with other workers' parties" (1064). Bukharin agreed. The Open Letter approach he said "is not revolutionary. After all, we want communism; we want the dictatorship of the proletariat ... But what the

letter says is that we want the proletariat to live. That is bizarre. Are we living for a new capitalism? ... The [Open Letter] programme does not correspond at all to Communist demands” (1064).

So – an inability to understand the need for coalition-building was not the preserve of irresponsible elements in the German party, or bureaucratic figures like Béla Kun, but went right to the top of the Russian party, in historic figures such as Zinoviev and Bukharin. We also learn that Lenin completely sided with Zetkin and Levi and the Open Letter approach, putting himself in opposition to the German “lefts” and to Zinoviev and Bukharin. In a letter to Zetkin and Levi he called it “*an entirely correct policy* (I have condemned the contrary opinion of our “Lefts” who were opposed to the letter)” (1087). *To the Masses* also makes available the text of Trotsky’s hour-long speech on strategy and tactics, a brilliant refutation of the ultra-left position, and a defence of the united-front / coalition-building approach (571–83). Even today, almost 100 years later, it retains its relevance.

So, there is much to learn from in *To The Masses* in a positive sense. There are also many negative lessons. Levi had been expelled before the Congress and before the debate. A vote to endorse this expulsion was pushed through *before* the debate on the March Action. “Levi’s appeal to the congress demanding reversal of his expulsion (Appendix 2f, 1090–97) was apparently not made available to the delegates”. Levi stayed outside the KPD and the Comintern, even though his political positions were endorsed. And Kun – whose political positions were thoroughly demolished and discredited – remained a treasured member of the movement’s leadership. This juxtaposition alone – the baning of Levi and the protection of Kun – indicates deep problems in the Comintern project. One year later, at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, back to back speeches were made to mark the fifth anniversary of the Russian Revolution – one by Zetkin, one by Kun (Riddell 2011, 305–45). One can only imagine what Zetkin thought of the twinning of herself with that of Kun.

There is much, much more in this rich, detailed, careful documentation of an extraordinary moment in the history of the workers’ movement. Riddell and his collaborators have done us the service of presenting these proceedings in an extremely scholarly fashion, putting them in context with a comprehensive 50-page introductory essay. There are short biographies of each of the participants, a carefully prepared index without which the 1200 pages would be much harder to navigate, and footnotes throughout to clarify points that will be obscure to a 21<sup>st</sup> century reader. In the spirit of the Comintern – where lively debates were daily fare – a survey of some of these footnotes might suggest areas where further discussion is warranted. Here I will highlight three.

The KPD in Germany became a mass party through its fusion, in 1920, with the left-wing of the USPD. About this we learn the following. “At the Halle Congress of the USPD ... held 12-17 October, 1920, a majority of the delegates voted to accept the

Twenty-One Conditions and join the Comintern ... Zinoviev gave the main speech in support of Comintern affiliation” (204 note 42). This is true, but incomplete. What we can now add is that the key legwork had been done in the years preceding the Halle Congress by the KPD leadership under Levi. The party he inherited after the assassination of Luxemburg was a party riven with ultraleft “March Action” style politics. In 1919, he succeeded in separating from these elements, an expulsion which reduced the party from about 100,000 members to about 50,000. But liberated from the “March Action” section of the party, he was able to begin negotiations with the left-wing of the massive USPD and its 800,000 members (Lewis 2011, 22 note 38). “Levi approached the leaders of its left wing, who agreed to co-operate on a unifying tactic” (Fernbach 2011, 10). Zinoviev might have given a great speech, a speech which we now have in English along with the riveting counter-position put by the Russian anti-war revolutionary Julius Martov (Zinoviev and Martov 2011). Ben Lewis says that “the long hard work of Zinoviev and [the] Comintern yielded a good harvest” (Lewis 2011, 31). This minimizes the role of the soon-to-be expelled Levi. Zinoviev’s speech would never have had an audience without the careful organizing of Levi in the preceding years.

Béla Kun was shaped by his experience in the Hungarian Revolution of 1918-1919. About this we learn that: “A soviet republic was established in Hungary 21 March 1919 ... The new government adopted a number of revolutionary measures ... It also implemented a series of utraleft measures that increasingly isolated it, such as refusing to give expropriated land to poor peasants and overhasty collectivisation” (276 note 3). We now have new resources in English to add to this, specifically Paul Levi’s brilliant critique of the Hungarian events, written just days after the Communists took power. Levi warned that the Hungarian soviet republic came not from proletarian strength, but from capitalist weakness and that “the possibility for the dictatorship of the proletariat exists not when the bourgeoisie collapses but when the proletariat rises” (Levi 1920, 71–72). He reminded readers of the program of the Spartacists. “The Spartacus League will never take over governmental power except in response to the clear, unambiguous will of the great majority of the proletarian mass of all of Germany” (Luxemburg 1918, 356–57). Tragically, 133 days later, Levi’s warnings about substitutionist methods – the left taking power without basing itself on the mass self-activity of the working class – proved correct, when the now completely isolated communists had to flee for their lives, ushering in years of right-wing dictatorship.

Finally, we also have new resources to help understand the origins of the catastrophic “Theory of the Offensive,” one of the recurring themes of the book. “The ‘theory of the offensive’ was advanced by majority leaders in the KPD after the 1921 March Action to justify their policies in launching the action and their proposal that such policies continue. It was rooted in previous texts by Béla Kun ... and, in another context, by Bukharin ...” (208 note 49). We have multiple examples in the Third Congress and at the Fourth Congress of this offensive being brilliantly critiqued by Trotsky and Lenin. But

these men were not all-seeing. Lenin, for instance, while a critic of the theory of the offensive by the time of the Third Congress, the year previous had practiced it – with disastrous consequences – in the invasion of Poland. “In April 1920 Polish troops launched an offensive in soviet Ukraine. The Red Army was able to push them back into Polish territory and then continued its advance toward Warsaw, where it was stopped. Soviet troops were then forced to retreat. An armistice ending the war was signed in October” (90 note 29). This is true but incomplete. The decision to move from a defensive war to an offensive one – meaning an invasion of Poland by Russian troops – was hotly contested in the Bolshevik Party. In the aftermath, in a speech to communist party members, a speech which Lenin insisted not be made public (“I request that less be taken down, this must not get into the newspapers”), Lenin explained the thinking of his wing of the party, which had argued for the invasion, saying that “the defensive war with imperialism had ended ... and we could and must make use of the military situation to begin an offensive war. We had beaten them when they attacked us. Now we would try to attack them, so as to help sovietise Poland. We would help to sovietise Lithuania and Poland ... amongst ourselves we said that we must probe with bayonets to discover whether the social revolution of the proletariat was ripe in Poland” (Lenin 1920, 140–41). Not only did this result in a catastrophe – “a huge defeat” in Lenin’s words – it also runs completely counter to the self-emancipation politics outlined by Levi and the Spartacists. A country will only be “sovietised” by the “will of the great majority” through the self-activity and self-organization of the vast majority of the oppressed and exploited. It will certainly not be sovietised through the grotesque “probing with bayonets” by an invading army as suggested by Lenin.

There are other areas opened by *To the Masses*, where discussion and debate are warranted. The suppression of the 1921 Kronstadt revolt (213 note 61), the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly (470 note 18), the Theses on the Organisational Question (810 note 1) and the 1905 Revolution (475 note 24) are all subjects, briefly touched on in the book, which hopefully – in this the centenary of the 1917 revolution – will be taken up and discussed by others. Here, all we can do is insert a bookmark, and indicate they are subjects around which more discussion will be required.

Speaking about an earlier volume in this series, Abbie Bakan cautioned that we must not approach it as “a textbook, but a history book” (Riddell 2012). This is as true for *To the Masses* as it is for the other books in the series. This is not a text book. There are not formulae here which we can automatically apply to our own conditions. In Canada, we don’t live in a sea of peasants, as they did in Russia. In Canada, we aren’t just emerging into parliamentary democracy after the fall of a Kaiser, as they were in Germany. In Canada, we are not organizing in the shadow of a Great War which killed millions of our youth, as they were in Germany and Russia. In Canada we have decades of experience of mass social movements against oppression – Idle No More, Black Lives Matter, the Quebec Student strike – on terrain very different from the terrain of Russia and Germany

of 1920. We have decades of experience with legal trade union work, we have decades of experience with mass access to the school system. None of these conditions prevailed in Germany and Russia of the time. We will have to develop our own strategies and tactics in our own quite different conditions.

*To the Masses* is not a text book – but it is a magnificent history book. It is a resource to use as we try to properly understand the momentous upheavals which shook empires after the catastrophe of the so-called “Great War”. Buy this book. The long labours of John Riddell, Mike Taber and their collaborators have given us a real resource to allow us to properly assess the lessons from a revolution that next year will be 100 years old. The publishing efforts of Haymarket Press (Riddell 2016) mean that it is accessible at a reasonable price. It is a resource that will be used for decades.

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Comment

**RETHINKING MARX FOR TODAY: A RESPONSE TO PAUL  
KELLOGG'S AND IAN ANGUS'S REVIEWS OF MARX'S CONCEPT  
OF THE ALTERNATIVE TO CAPITALISM**

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The thoughtful commentaries by Paul Kellogg and Ian Angus on *Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism* provide a welcome opportunity to further discuss the conception of a post-capitalist society. Kellogg acutely captures the spirit of my work in writing, "Historical materialism is inconceivable without a human subject...the solution to the objective contradictions of capitalism lies in the subjective actions of the laborers." This infers that historical materialism is inconceivable without responding to the specific questions posed by these subjects. Those I call "objectivists" may not be interested in such an endeavor, since, as Kellogg notes, they tend to "bury the subjective under the fictive self-movement of structures"—which he rightly says is "intimately linked to Stalinism's long shadow." But are those who stress spontaneity and self-activity any more successful in connecting to the subject if they refrain from responding to its questions concerning alternatives to capitalism? While it true that the *actions* of subjects of revolt are key to transcending capitalism, that is just as true of the *theoretical* questions posed by them. These include: "What happens after a revolution? Is it inevitable that a new bureaucracy or ruling class will take over afterwards? Is freedom truly possible in a world in which no viable alternative to capitalism appears anywhere in sight?"

Of course, there are still those who contend that it is utopian and futile to delineate a post-capitalist society, since Marxism commands us to critique the existing conditions from which it can immanently emerge. But the argument is inherently self-refuting, for two reasons. First, if the analysis of present-day conditions is of such overriding importance, why act as if we are still living in the mid-nineteenth century, when Marxism took shape as a reaction against "utopianism"? If it is imperative to delineate political perspectives on the basis of present-day realities, why repeat the truths of a different era? Is it really self-evident that traditional objections to envisioning a new society retain their validity today, after almost 100 years of Stalinism and failed revolutions? Second, if the task of Marxist theory is to critique material realities, why presume that a comprehensive discussion of a post-capitalist future is out of order? If the future is immanent within the present, one must be logically consistent enough to

acknowledge the need to articulate what that future is. Since dialectical thought teaches us that the object generates its own categories of knowledge, the critical analysis of capital, the object of Marx's entire body of work, cannot help but illuminate aspects of its alternative.

To be sure, Marx refrained from making this the focal point of his work—largely because his commitment to proletarian revolution required *separating* himself from utopian blueprints that were developed irrespective of a materialist analysis of existing conditions. He bent the stick, *as he had to given the realities of his time*, away from any detailed discussion of the future. But we face a different set of realities today, when “the long shadow cast by Stalinism” and failed revolutions pose the gravest barrier in the way of effective anti-capitalist action.

Ian Angus's concerns tend to be of a somewhat different order, in that he notes (correctly) that I place more emphasis on the *form* of value than the *quantity* of value in discussing how Marx's critique of capitalism is premised upon a specific understanding of the transcendence of value production. Post-Marx Marxists have largely failed to grasp the radical implications of Marx's critique of value because they emphasized the quantitative side. But as Marx writes in *Capital*, there is nothing mysterious about the quantitative determination of value by labor-time:

It does not occur to the economists that a purely quantitative distinction between the kinds of labor presupposes their qualitative unity, or equality, and therefore their reduction to abstract human labor... It is one of the chief failings of classical political economy that it has never succeeded, by means of its analysis of commodities, and in particular their value, in discovering the form of value which turns value into exchange-value (Marx 1976, 173, 174).

Marx extended this critique to the “socialist” neo-Ricardians, who stressed the quantitative determination of value as a way to more equitably “organize exchange.” He was unequivocal in his critique, as seen in his interminable battles with Proudhon. And as I show in my book (Hudis 2012, 93-99), the infatuation with the quantitative determination of value was taken up, in modified form, by twentieth century orthodox Marxists who tried to determine how it could be utilized as a planning coordinate either for a “socialist” society or the transition to one. But since my argument is that such approaches, whether pursued by figures such as Paul Sweezy or Ernest Mandel, is completely wrongheaded, there was no reason for me to make the quantitative determination of labor time my focus.

This is mere background to Angus's broader concern regarding the relation of value and price. If the latter is the form of appearance of the former, and the former is

abolished, what is the *measure* that governs social relations in a post-capitalist society? Marx clearly addresses this in the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, in stating that in the “lower” phase of socialism or communism *actual labor time is the measure* for distributing the elements of production. Individuals obtain from the common storehouse a given amount of goods and services that correspond to the *actual* amount of labor time they contribute to the cooperative or community. This marks a radical break from capitalism, since living labor is no longer reduced to an abstraction through the power of socially necessary time. Production for the sake of value and exchange value comes to an end, but exchange based on an “equal standard” or *measure—actual amounts* of labor time—persists. Since some may work longer hours than others there will be inequities in the amount of remuneration. This is inevitable, since “Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development which this determines” (Marx 1989, 86). In contrast, when we reach a higher phase of communism, a different principle prevails—“From each according to their ability, to each according to their need” (Marx 1989, 87). No longer is remuneration based on the amount of labor time contributed by the individual. Actual labor time ceases to be a measure of social relations. *No “equal standard” or measure of any sort applies in a higher phase.* The producers simply withdraw from the common storehouse what they need, and they give to society what they can, based on their natural and acquired abilities.

Such a future seems unimaginable—to those raised in a society based on value production. It seems inconceivable that people would freely give to society without any measure that determines their “just” compensation. Would not some hierarchical or legal authority be *impelled* to decide that for them? But that is Marx’s exact point in discussing the lower phase of communism: “Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development which this determines.” Only when we have learned to relate to one another based on a measure intrinsic to our subjectivity, actual labor time, is it possible to develop to the point where we can abolish social relations based on measure altogether.

Angus remains unconvinced, as seen in his concern over what measure would govern relations between cooperatives. This is an important issue, since Marx was aware that national coordinating bodies between them would be needed. He stated in his Inaugural Address to the Working Men’s International Association in 1864,

We speak of the cooperative movement, especially the cooperative factories raised by the unassisted efforts of a few bold “hands.” The value of these great social experiments cannot be overrated... At the same time, the experience of the period 1848 to 1864 has proved beyond doubt that, however in principle, and however useful in practice ... cooperative labor

ought to be developed to national dimensions, and, consequently, to be fostered by national means (Marx 1985, 11-12).

He does not go in detail into how to achieve this; nor does he spell out the principle that would govern exchanges between the communities. But given his many discussions of a post-capitalist society, this much is clear: he does not envision any kind of formal (quantitative) pricing mechanism to serve as the measure. It is here where Angus goes astray, writing “But if the products of one cooperative are to be exchanged, bartered, or passed on to another, some method of reckoning of the labor of one cooperative with another is implied.” A big “if,” mon frère! Marx states very clearly in the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, “Within the collective society based on common ownership of the means of production, *the producers do not exchange their product*” (Marx 1989, 85). Marx is insistent that even in the most initial phase of a new society, no standard or measure that is independent of the self-activity of the subject is permissible. Democratically elected planning bodies would of course discuss whether the amount of time taken in creating a given product in a cooperative was injurious to the health or condition of laborers and/or the natural environment and make proposals according. But this is to be determined by the subjects themselves, through *an exchange of ideas and activities*—not through a material force (either the state or market) that exists independently of them.

Angus, however, is undeterred: he wants not only a pricing system but “a *totalizing* pricing system” in a post-capitalist society. He goes so far as to write, “If there were such an identity between the totality of value and totality of prices, then the totality of prices might in principle be organized on some other basis than value.” This, I must confess, is rather odd. Marx never ceases to remind us that the totality of values equals the totality of prices, but never once does he suggest “the totality of prices might in principle be organized on some other basis than value.” The reason is rather basic: a totalized price system can exist only in the presence of the money-form, which is the universal generalization of abstract, alienated labor. It is of course possible to have some kind of pricing system prior to the capitalist emergence of a universal equivalent, but a “totalizing” price system can only exist if there is a totalized system of value production. What kind of “totalizing pricing system” without value does Angus actually have in mind? He doesn’t say, and I doubt that the logic of his argument will permit him to say it.

Which brings us to the question of *system*. Angus is right that a totalizing system presumes a common measure. Capitalism is the first totalizing system, since it is completely governed by the drive to augment value. It is therefore no accident that it is only with capitalism that political economy emerges as a systematic theory. A systematic theory is possible only if its object presents itself in the form of a system. Socialism and communism, for Marx, represents a break from such a systemic totality in that human self-activity, and not its predicates, directs and governs social relations. The lower phase

can be viewed as a kind of system (though a de-totalized one), insofar as the distribution of the elements of production (and they alone!) are governed by a uniform measure—actual labor time. A higher phase, on the other hand, represents a transcendence of this transcendence. With the separation between individual self-activity and social existence overcome, society does not present itself to its members as a separate system. If it did, we would still be living in the “pre-history” of humanity. This is why the very last thing that “communism seems to require [is] some equivalent for value.”

Though space limits prevent me from giving this issue its due, what grounds much of Angus’s discussion is the claim that “the ‘transformation of value into price is a problem that *in principle* cannot be resolved.” This is a surprising declaration, given that it was solved long ago—as seen in the work of the Temporal Single-System Interpretation of Marx’s value theory (see Kliman 2007). The more recent work of Fred Mosely (2016), coming from a different direction, has made a similar case. There is no logical contradiction between Marx’s discussion of value and price; nor are they what Angus calls “two systems.” Value-Price in Marx’s work is posited as a single system on different levels of abstraction. At issue is not Marx’s failure (contra von Bortkiewicz and his many “Marxist” followers) to convert to a system of values into a system of prices, but rather the failure of many commentators of Marx to grasp the logical consistency between the discussion of value in Volume One and price in Volume Three of *Capital*.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, while there is a difference between the “real” value of a commodity as determined by socially necessary labor time and its “apparent” value as designated in the arbitrary movements of prices, I argue that Marx’s critique of capitalism goes much deeper than this essence/appearance dichotomy. He takes issue with the social totality itself, both in its essence and forms of appearance. Marx is not trying to develop a better system of organizing exchange than provided by capitalism. He thinks the only way to exit capitalism is to uproot the social relations of production that make necessary this distinction between essence and appearance in the first place. As Kellogg indicates, Marx offers no *objectivist* solution to these issues. Instead of conceiving of an alternative form of subjective activity that remains dominated by objective forms of its own making, Marx envisions new subject-subject relations—that is, *new human relations*. It is about time that theoreticians got down to addressing this largely unthematized dimension of the revolutionary project.<sup>2</sup> We would do well to follow the implications of the comment Marx

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<sup>1</sup> See Roberts (2016): “There are not two ‘states of capitalism’ (one with values and one with money or prices). Marx’s view is a single state system. So there is no ‘mistake’ or logical contradiction in Marx’s explanation of the transformation of values into prices. The so-called transformation problem of values into prices and money does not exist.”

<sup>2</sup> For my most recent work that seeks to explore this in terms of the dialectic of race and racism, see Hudis 2015.

made in 1843, and which defined all his subsequent work: “All emancipation is a reduction of the human world and relationships to humanity itself” (Marx 1975, 168).

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## **ROSA LUXEMBURG: A LEGACY FOR FEMINISTS?**

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Certainly Rosa Luxemburg is a model for feminists of all times in her passionate commitment both to understanding the nature of our oppressive system and, most importantly, to changing it. She is also a model for feminists for pursuing her political and her personal life without concern for what women were and were not supposed to do.

But does Luxemburg leave feminists a theoretical and political legacy? That is, does she give us any theoretical guidance as to how to understand women's oppression? If so, what is it? What would she have to say about theoretical debates among socialist feminists today? Was she even a feminist in this sense? Was her position on women's oppression similar to her position on national oppression? And on the practical political questions facing feminists today, does Luxemburg's work give us any guidance?

Luxemburg wrote next to nothing about women and was not active in the women's movement. Some have inferred from this that she was not a feminist, or in any case, that she was not interested in women's issues. Obviously they were not her primary area of interest, but why should they have to be? We can have a division of labor.

### **Rosa as Socialist Feminist**

Clara Zetkin, Luxemburg's close comrade and friend, is well known for her work with working-class women, including forming groups, similar to the consciousness-raising groups of the 1970s, which made Lenin distinctly uneasy. I know of no evidence that Luxemburg disagreed with her work. On the contrary, in some of her last letters of November 1918, she asks Zetkin for an article on women—"which is so important now, and none of us here understand anything about it." She then invites her to edit a women's section of the Spartacus paper, saying "It is such an urgent matter! Every day lost is a sin."

Based on this correspondence and on her short writings on women's issues, it should be abundantly clear that Luxemburg was a Marxist feminist, or a socialist feminist as we use the terms today. First I will say very briefly how I characterize a socialist feminist, some of whom are Marxists, and some are not, and then try to say where Luxemburg would stand on the debates among us.

All socialist feminists see class as central to women's lives, yet at the same time none would reduce sex or race oppression to economic exploitation. And all of us see these aspects of our lives as inseparably and systematically related. In other words, class is always gendered and raced. The term "intersectionality" has come to be used for this position. Luxemburg certainly held to this perspective in her recognition of some kinds of oppression as common to all women and others varying by class and by nation.

While the special needs of working women were Luxemburg's priority, she also supported positions some might see as merely bourgeois demands, viz., the end to all laws that discriminated against women and women's suffrage, which she advocated both as a matter of principle and for pragmatic political reasons. Bringing women into politics would help combat what she called "the suffocating air of the philistine family" that affected even socialist men and would build the ranks of the social democratic forces. These positions were actually in advance of the bourgeois women's organizations of the time. On one occasion, she critiqued social democrats willing to compromise on women's suffrage to make an electoral alliance with liberals. The most radical of socialists were oftentimes also the best feminists.

### **In Defense of the One-System Theory**

Within the broad definition of intersectionality, however, there are differences regarding how we should understand these kinds of oppression and how they are related. Some socialist feminists see capitalism and sexism (usually called "patriarchy") as two distinct, though intersecting, systems with equal explanatory importance. (Other systems to account for race/ethnic oppression are usually part of the picture, but I will ignore that here). Just as capitalism is constituted by relations of oppression and exploitation between capitalists and workers, patriarchy is a system in which men oppress women. Some also say men exploit women, which they explain in different ways. This is known as a dual systems position. On the other hand, some Marxist/socialist feminists believe there is only one kind of oppression and exploitation, in the current period, that actually constitutes a system with full explanatory powers—and that is capitalism. However, other distinct kinds of oppression, like sexism, play more or less important roles within the framework of that system at different times and places.

One system or two—or more—is a highly abstract theoretical question. But it is often connected to a practical political one: What kind of political organizing should take priority? Should it always be class issues, labor struggles, and other economic issues not

differentiated along gender lines? Or is it legitimate from a socialist point of view to give equal importance to distinctly women's issues? Dual systems theorists will invariably give equal political importance to organizing around class or sex (or race) issues. Why would they not?

But what political implications should be drawn from the one-system theoretical position, which I accept? In my opinion—and I want to stress this—it does not follow that struggles around sex (or race) oppression should necessarily have a lower political priority. Socialist feminists try to integrate the two, whatever their views on the abstract question of one or two systems. For example, contemporary socialist feminists support the legal right to abortion, like liberal feminists, but they combine that with the right to birth control, medical care, childcare, better and equal pay (certainly more than \$15/hour)—all the things necessary to give working-class women a genuine choice over their reproduction.

Luxemburg, I am pretty sure, assumed the one-system position, giving theoretical primacy to capitalism as a framework in which other kinds of oppression operate. On the practical political question, I can't say for sure, but I would like to think she would hold the flexible position regarding political priorities (perhaps because that is my view).

### **Women's Suffrage and Class Struggle**

In “Women's Suffrage and Class Struggle” of 1912, Luxemburg makes an important theoretical argument relevant to current debates. She writes the following:

Only that work is productive which produces surplus value and yields capitalist profit—as long as the rule of capital and the wage system still exists. From this standpoint the dancer in a café, who makes a profit for her employer with her legs, is a productive working woman, while all the toil of the woman and mothers of the proletariat within the four walls of the home is considered unproductive work. This sounds crude and crazy, but it is an accurate expression of the crudeness and craziness of today's capitalist economic order.

I have used this quote more than once to clarify the meaning of (un)productive work in capitalism and to distinguish oppression from capitalist exploitation. Some feminists are very offended by the Marxist position that housework is unproductive labor, and some argue for “wages for housework.” But as the quote from Luxemburg makes clear, designating housework as unproductive is hardly an insult, nor is it sexist. A carpenter who works for the government is equally unproductive in capitalist terms, though both, obviously—and very importantly—are productive in a general sense. It's crucial to understand what “productive” means in capitalist terms, viz., the production of surplus

value, because it is this that makes the capitalist system tick. There is more to be said about the domestic labor debate, but one important point is that even in 1912, as Luxemburg wrote, “millions of proletarian women [ . . . ] produce capitalist profit just like men—in factories, workshops, agriculture, homework industries, offices and stores. They are productive therefore in the strictest economic sense of society today. Luxemburg used this as an argument for suffrage; it showed that patriarchal conceptions of women’s proper role had simply become ridiculous.

I agree with Luxemburg on this theoretical point and on its importance. However, I think we must be careful not to overstate its political importance. Even if housework were productive of surplus value it wouldn’t follow that organizing housewives should be a priority for socialists. Compare guards in private prisons who produce surplus value. Though exploited by capital, they certainly would not be promising candidates for socialist organizing. On the other hand, while public sector workers are not productive in this sense, they are a key sector for labor organizing today and should be, given the attacks on the public sector. Where socialists should put their best energies depends on many factors and we need to be alert to changing conditions.

Luxemburg’s stress on the meaning of “productive” labor in this crazy capitalist system also helps to explain why capitalism is leading to the destruction of our planet and why we need to build a society based on production for human needs, not profit. Organizing around this issue has to be central to everyone today.

Luxemburg argued for a working women’s organization independent of the bourgeois women’s movement, so they could better fight for their specific needs, while at the same time supporting universal women’s interests. More controversially, she also supported independent self-organization within the working class and even among socialists, encouraging Zetkin to found a women’s section of the Spartacus League. This position, I would point out, is ahead of many Marxists today.

So in conclusion there is much that Luxemburg’s life and work can offer to contemporary socialist feminists. We need not look to her for all the answers, and we might find some areas of disagreement, but no more than we would likely find among the contributors to this volume.

Evans, Kate. 2015. *Red Rosa: A Graphic Biography of Rosa Luxembourg*.  
New York: Verso. ISBN: 13: 978-1-78478-099-9. Pages: 220.

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In the graphic novel *Red Rosa: A Graphic Biography of Rosa Luxembourg* Kate Evans tells a captivating and accessible narrative of Rosa Luxembourg's life and work. While keeping the storyline grounded in quotes from Luxembourg's letters and other pieces of writing, Evans takes some creative license when it comes to several of the events and characters mentioned. However, she makes it clear that it is her intention to give an accurate, while also engaging, account of Luxembourg's life and she is careful to point out any instances where she has deviated from the historical narrative. Through this graphic novel Evans creatively and successfully makes the work and life of a radical, intellectual woman available to a wide audience.

The novel begins in Poland in 1871 with the birth of Rosa Luxembourg to Lina and Edward Luxembourg. Evans outlines Luxembourg's childhood, her family's move to Warsaw, her childhood illness, and her close relationship with her brothers. Because of anti-Semitic legislation, the family struggled with poverty and yet they always encouraged learning and education. Evans describes Luxembourg's adolescence and her first exposure to socialism and the ideas of Karl Marx through clever interactions among members of the Luxembourg family. Using Luxembourg's family as a backdrop for an intellectual discussion of *Das Kapital*, Evans outlines the fundamentals of Marx's work in a creative and easy to understand manner. In this way Evans sets the stage for the rest of novel. She demonstrates from the very beginning her ability to engage a wide audience and to make complex economic and social theories accessible to the general public.

Evans goes on to trace Luxembourg's journey from her home in Poland to Switzerland in 1889. In Zurich Luxembourg attends university to study philosophy, history, economics and politics. She becomes involved in the Socialist International and writes articles and speaks at conferences. She also falls in love. Evans describes Luxembourg's passionate relationship with Leo Jogiches vividly and in a such a way that humanizes Luxembourg and makes her more and more relatable to the reader.

Moving to Berlin in 1898, Luxembourg finds her home in Germany and even fakes a marriage with a German man in order to obtain German citizenship. She is invested in the socialist movement and is able to engage both intellectuals and the working class through her speeches and articles. When the Russian revolution breaks out in 1905 Luxembourg cannot resist the action and she leaves Germany for her childhood home. Once back in Warsaw, Luxembourg begins producing illegal newspapers and learning from those on the ground, the working class who have been organizing strikes,

struggling with unemployment, and achieving small victories. In this environment Luxembourg forms a new revolutionary theory, before her and Leo are arrested and thrown in jail. After she is bailed out by her supporters, who lavishly bribe the Russian authorities, Luxembourg returns to Germany alone in September of 1906. She struggles with the leadership of the German Social Democratic (SPD) party, as she continues to argue for revolution, not reform, and equal suffrage.

Throughout the narrative it is clear that, for Evans, Luxembourg's personal life and story cannot be told without the inclusion of her scholarly work and ideas. As such, there are various points at which Evans discusses Luxembourg's intellectual and theoretical work in depth, through the use of ordinary events in Luxembourg's life. For example, Evans uses Luxembourg's role as a teacher in the SPD party school in the fall of 1907 to further explain Luxembourg's thoughts and theories on political economy. In a classroom setting Luxembourg explains historical materialism, urkommunism, labour power, production and profit. At this point in the novel, Evans steps in and draws herself into the narrative in order to discuss and point out the relevance and significance of Luxembourg's work in our modern, capitalist world. In this way Evans successfully explains complicated theories in an easy to understand format without deviating from the storyline.

In the last half of the novel Evans demonstrates Luxembourg's fearlessness when it came to challenging the status quo, questioning everything, and continuing to stand up for what is right. Luxembourg is adamant that only a revolution will free the masses, and she splits with Karl Kautsky, a respected Marxist theoretician in the SPD, over her call for a republic. As the threat of a world war looms closer in 1913 Luxembourg begins speaking out publically against military violence and sending troops into war. She is arrested for her actions and she uses her trial as a podium to speak to the people about the barbaric nature of warfare. For Luxembourg, the act of war goes against the interests of the masses who are the ones sent off to die in the battlefields. When the SPD unanimously votes in favour of going to war in August of 1914, Luxembourg is not deterred and she continues to speak out against the war.

By 1918 the German public are tired of fighting and many take to the streets to protest the ongoing war. While Germany is declared a republic in November, it is not a republic of the people and Luxembourg's outspoken attitude against the SPD leadership eventually results in her assassination. On January 15, 1919 Luxembourg was shot and killed by the SPD Reichstag Regiment. Evans concludes her novel with a sketch of Luxembourg's final moments, alongside a retelling of her life. The final pages contain some of Luxembourg's quotes and a few sketches of modern uprisings and revolutions. Evans brings her novel to a close with a final representation of Luxembourg's continued relevance in today's society.

Through her use of captivating dialogue and creative drawings, Evans tells a story of a radical woman who was incredibly intelligent, courageous, and human. Evans not only explores Luxembourg's scholarly work in an easy to understand manner, she also demonstrates the relevance of Luxembourg's thoughts and ideas today. By doing this Evans is, in a way, continuing the work of Luxembourg by making her thoughts and ideas easily accessible to the public, the very working class to whom Luxembourg devoted her life to. In her storytelling, Evans also makes a point of humanizing Luxembourg. She does not describe Luxembourg as a saint or super woman, rather Evans points out Luxembourg's human experiences with love, illness, tragedy, and adversity. In this way Evans not only makes Luxembourg relatable, she also shows how one, seemingly ordinary and unimportant, individual can make a difference and become a leader. As someone who believed in the power of the masses and the necessity of revolution, Luxembourg, I think, would appreciate and value Evans representation of her life, work and legacy.

Coburn, Elaine, ed. 2015. *More Will Sing Their Way to Freedom: Indigenous Resistance and Resurgence*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing. ISBN: 9781552667804. Pages: 264.

**Reviewed by Roxanne Harde**  
**University of Alberta**

As they work to trace Indigenous resistance and resurgence in Canada and to argue that colonial-capitalism is a fact but not an inevitability, the dozen chapters in this carefully edited volume make a significant contribution to the Canadian socio-political landscape. As the collection's editor, Elaine Coburn, makes clear in her preface, the issues the contributors consider—politics, economics, culture, technology, activism, research—are treated as personal, political, and practical matters, and “all the chapters emphasize Indigenous voices and perspectives ... whether written by Indigenous or non-Indigenous scholars” (3). While the contributions are not evenly excellent, from Emma LaRocque's (Cree/Métis) foreword to Alex Wilson's (Cree) afterword, there is something to be commended in each of them. If there is a mild critique to be offered, it is that the publisher chose not to include an index, a trend that one sadly observes among other academic publishers.

As it traces the ethical impulse in Indigenous research and pedagogy, LaRocque's introduction is a reflection on the core of her work, “resistance writing and teaching,” and stands as an apt summary of her long and stellar career. Her scholarship forms a cornerstone of Native Studies in Canada, as have her steady moves to deconstruct colonialism in its myriad forms and establish Indigenous presence. I would counter LaRocque's objections to the use of “settler”: on the one hand, she is correct in pointing out that “Indigenous peoples were the original settlers of the Americas” (11). On the other hand, Indigenous peoples uniformly connect their origins to the origin of this land itself; oral traditions consistently depict both land and people coming into being at or near the same time. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes the oldest meaning of the word settler as “one who settles in a new country; a colonist,” and dates it to 1696, just when Europeans were beginning to colonize the Americas. To my mind, one is either indigenous to or settler of a territory or nation; you can't have it both ways. Overall, there is no way to overstate LaRocque's contributions. If Native Studies came into being because of oppression, LaRocque's strategies have been as much about rebuilding Indigenous cultures and establishing new intellectual traditions even as she has challenged those systems of oppression. “Resistance scholarship,” as she points out, “requires ethical and critical study, engaged research, and intellectual freedom,” characteristics of all the essays in this collection (13). She has lived her mandate that

scholarship must be rigorous but never aloof, and her work has inspired the many scholars who follow her, including those contributing to this collection.

Elaine Coburn provides both the introduction to the book and coauthors a chapter. In the former she traces movements of Indigenous resistance and resurgence, the governing theme for the collection. In the latter and in keeping with the theme, she and Doulas Durst offer a sensitive study of Aboriginal persons with disabilities, setting out the research and realities, and then strategies for change. The rest of the chapters each respond to this theme in meaningful and intersecting ways.

I find those chapters that analyze First Nations cultural responses among the most compelling. In terms of Indigenous oral traditions, Hayden King (Anishinaabe) works to resist generalizations and looks towards specific tribal traditions and stories to revitalize and reimagine healthy Indigenous relationships. As King puts it, the pursuit of Indigenous reconceptualization “might offer Indigenous peoples diverse, unique, but very old renewed visions of emancipation and political relationships” (181). In terms of Indigenous visual arts, Jennifer Adese (Oitpemisiwak/Métis) traces the ways in which Indigenous artists challenge colonial visual imperialism and stereotyping with work that is highly politicized and personal (and varying from the intensely joyful to the heatedly radical). As Adese argues, “If we are pictured as no more than grotesque caricatures ... our earth, air, water and animal relations as less deserving of respect and substantively equal treatment than peoples of European descent, we can be violated, discounted, ignored, commodified and consumed” (131). And, in terms of First Nations writing, Christine Walsh (settler) and Shirley Aarrestad (Cree) offer a poignant portrait of Aboriginal women who have faced incarceration. Through various poems and personal narratives, these collaborators share stories that delineate struggle and resilience in the face of nearly overwhelming disadvantages.

Other notable contributions focus on the socio-political. James (Sa’ke’j) Youngblood Henderson (Chickasaw) traces the experiences of his generation of “the sons and daughters of World War II warriors,” calling them “split headed” people who lived with dual cognitive, language and cultural systems who learned to combat oppression and reclaim seemingly lost rights (53, 50). Other chapters study various First Nations “resistance events” as processes of decolonization, examine the Nuuchahnulth peoples’ political economies and Aboriginal economic development trends more widely, trace the Idle No More movement in the light of political theory and decolonizing consciousness, and consider Chief Theresa Spence’s hunger strike as a resonating moment of self-determination. All of them conclude that these developments are only beginnings; much has been done in terms of resistance and resurgence; much remains to be done. Drawing on Lee Maracle, Coburn affirms that we all “have responsibilities for healing relationships with all our relations in the human, animal, natural and spirit worlds. This means that justice is not conceived in the mainstream language of autonomous liberal individual (or

human) rights” (44). This collection of essays goes some distance in reconceiving justice in the light of Indigenous experiences and traditions.

Lebowitz, Michael. 2015. *The Socialist Imperative: From Gotha to Now*. New York: Monthly Review Press. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-5836754-6-5. Pages: 224.

Mészáros, István. 2015. *The Necessity of Social Control*, New York: Monthly Review Press. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-5836753-8-0. Pages: 328.

### **Reviewed by Ken Collier**

Monthly Review's six decades of publishing remains dedicated to placing before us practice and theory that are not divorced from each other as in the liberal fashion. In true exercises of Marxian praxis, recent books by István Mészáros and Michael Lebowitz help readers to take up theory as it is exercised and practice as it delivers data and lessons on working toward a socialist alternative. These authors deliver on the tasks of thinking and doing, each in their own spheres. They are complementary treatments of the overarching and the specific.

István Mészáros's *The Necessity of Social Control* and Michael Lebowitz's *The Socialist Imperative: From Gotha to Now* share a dedication to practical application to real-world political and economic problems. They also share an advantage most activists don't have – arenas in which to exercise their ideas – arenas they helped to build themselves, and into which they were invited. Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez, as one example, read their materials, questioned them on theory and use of concepts, and in fact contributed details and aspects to arguments in these two books.

While both authors have histories and publishing lists spanning decades, these publications are not merely rehashes or compilations of previous material. They are both examples of summing up, drawing threads together and responding to arguments and criticisms. Both make efforts to focus and specify ideas and examples drawn from experience as well as exchange with other authors. In some cases, they engage with political parties and movement organizations. Audiences they wish to address are sought out and identified, knowing that other readers will benefit from the mutuality of the process of writing, acting and problem-solving.

Lebowitz's chapter 7 is about the working class as a revolutionary subject, and is new text. It may sound like an old idea well covered. But Lebowitz combs over grounds that he opens to new interpretations. He also takes care to look at the working class in agriculture under landed aristocracies, then explores its reshaping as industrial capital transformed class relations. Finance capital rising to dominance brings us to current conditions, and Lebowitz lays on the table the sometimes eroding, sometimes shattering conditions workers face. The rest of the book takes us to different urban and rural locales where class struggle is a reality, not just a concept and idea for intellectual ferment.

Valuable additions are made by including commentary about conferences where he presented papers or sat on panels. Contexts for the presentations and themes that grew out of them tell readers where avenues are now open and forces at work can be identified.

It is a source of wonderment that Mészáros took up his theme more than four decades ago. “The Necessity of Social Control” was the title of his Isaac Deutscher Memorial Lecture in January, 1971. That early in the game, he laid out ideas springing from his earlier book, *Marx’s Theory of Alienation*. Most Marxists took the collapse of capitalism more or less on faith, thinking that downfall would occur of its own accord, or with a push from revolutionary forces. Mészáros presented evidence that structural features press relentlessly toward disintegration of the capital order. He firmed up the argument by showing that capital is not just a set of ideas and beliefs – an “ism,” as in capitalism – but is a structure known as capital that can be examined and analyzed. Flaws and gaps can be discovered, and perhaps hastened by political activity if progressive forces are ready, alert and prepared to take action.

Mészáros resolutely researched, wrote, argued, campaigned and published through to the present. Most of his writing is rather academic, as it must be to marshal the evidence and support his arguments. As a result, this book (*Social Control*) is an effort to draw his themes and evidence together in a more popular and readable form, without losing the persuasive thread. This was a conscious decision, based on a discussion he had with John Bellamy Foster, editor of *Monthly Review* in 2013. Mészáros was already recognized as the “pathfinder of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Socialism” by Hugo Chavez, president of Venezuela. Chávez consulted Mészáros and Lebowitz about socialist philosophy, strategy, tactics, and sheer political direction. Sometimes Chávez assigned tasks or asked them to answer questions about their own work, or that of Marx, Engels and other socialists, with the aim of applying the answers to issues at hand.

Here is where the connection is made. Lebowitz and Mészáros draw on each other. They know each other’s work. They supply ideological fuel to Chávez, the Castros, Morales, Correa and other progressive leaders of the Americas, as well as to their officials, their publics, and their communities. But the influence does not stop there. They are both listened to at European and Asian conferences and in political halls of decision. They are both read by those on the face of the globe who want to contest the capital class.

States and their roles are treated in different ways by these two authors. Lebowitz draws on innovative writers and experiences to lay out a type of state that grows from the local realities and people. That kind of state is not an elected (or selected) elite citizens must approach as supplicants. Instead, it is a series of layers and mechanisms of response to needs identified, negotiated and discussed with neighbours. That kind of state almost certainly has a pinnacle, but there we find those pushed to that level by their abilities and trust, not those who have sold themselves to us or to other invisible powers.

Mészáros comes at state role from another direction. His book title about the Necessity of Social Control might easily lead one to conclude it is the state that does this. However, he is too canny an analyst to just assume the state should be wielded for that purpose. Instead, he pries open the actual control mechanisms now in use pretty much around the globe and shows that many of them are in fact operating within corporate structures and through media outlets to get results in the social sphere. In his book he lays out the state as conductor of a more or less single ideology across the world's governments.

As Lebowitz says, that kind of state is familiar to us. The kinds posed as alternatives open the way for us to no longer be “trapped by the categories of old societies.” They both examine how the political party could take shape in new circumstances. Carbon copies of political parties of the past will not serve.

What are the key ideas that connect these two writers? The “structural crisis of capital” is one, in which they describe the niches into which levers can be inserted to pry apart the power centers of oppression. Instruments that can take up those levers are the non-owning class, the workers; women; youth and students (of any age); ethnic groups; anti-imperialist and some nationalist groups and organizations; and certain formations that arise in unique circumstances where avenues open to those specific gatherings. Social forces that can be exercised in the pursuit of socialism are described by both authors, though it is understandable that their intellectual tasks in these two books are not the same. Philosophical underpinnings form the foundations for their arguments, and they are offered in accessible language not aimed at specialists.

Tuck these facts into the broader arena of Marxist and more general progressive theoretical and practical work and there is discovered the breadth of ideas represented by such key activists and writers as Walden Bello, Marta Harnecker and Martin Hart-Landsberg. Naturally, a longer list would gather up others known for their contributions to Marxist and socialist theory, but the point is made that these are people in a context, one we all know and appreciate.

These books are tools. They can be used. By us.

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## **Instructions to Authors**

*Socialist Studies: the Journal of the Society for Socialist Studies* is an interdisciplinary journal with a focus on describing and analyzing social, economic or political injustice, and practices of struggle, transformation, and liberation across the world. The Journal seeks to make a major contribution to scholarly and political debates among the progressive left in academic, policy and movement circles by publishing original research of high standards.

The Journal's scope is intentionally wide-ranging, inviting submissions from varied disciplinary perspectives. The Journal includes core theoretical and empirical research papers, with occasional special issues principally devoted to particular themes. In addition, the Journal publishes shorter notes and comments, as well as book reviews.

The aim of the Journal is to publish original research and contributions. Manuscripts will be considered only if they have not already been published, and are not currently under consideration for publications, elsewhere.

Manuscripts should not contain substantial elements of material published or accepted for publication elsewhere. If an article has an ISBN or ISSN number it is considered to have been published, regardless of where it has been published.

If considered suitable by the editors, the manuscript will be refereed by two anonymous referees. The review process is 'blind': authors and referees do not know the identities of the others. In the event of disagreement amongst referees, the manuscript will be sent to a third referee. As a result of the peer review process, the editors may recommend revisions.

Authors will be notified that a submission is being sent out for review within two weeks of receipt. Normally, the first round of review will take one month. In exceptional cases, this process may take longer if there are difficulties identifying potential reviewers. Reviewers are recruited by the editorial board based upon their familiarity with the topic at hand.

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