

On Imperialism and the War on Gaza: Ali Kadri Interviewed

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QUESTION 1. The 15th of January commemorates the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in 1919. Does Rosa Luxemburg, do the German Communists have any meaning for international communist movements or parties today?

KADRI: Doubtless, the internationalism of Luxemburg provides a much-needed emphasis for guiding working class action today. Her emphases on capitalism's drive to integrate new markets in the South and on militarism as a domain of accumulation still inform us that the laws of capital will only intensify unless labour takes hold of history. Rosa Luxemburg's and Karl Liebknecht's martyrdom is a testimony to their unwavering internationalism. As to German communists, their struggle against fascism also stands as a lesson in commitment to the cause of emancipation. Although the Soviet Union may have, through direct military and other aid to the developing world or because of its weight in international relations, limited opportunities for imperialist aggression in the Third World, the communists of the GDR were at the forefront of developing avant-garde anti-imperialist policies. This history of struggle is not without meaning; however, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the crisis of communist ideology that followed placed communism in a position of revision and self-inspection. Revision of socialist practice centred around the interest of the working class, as opposed to revision that compromises socialist theory to capital, is a welcome attempt to keep track of changing realities with which thought, to use Lenin's point, often fails to catch up.

However, the condition of socialist defeat has since augmented the “global waste phenomenon.” What do I mean by “global waste phenomenon”? There are as we speak more prematurely wasted people and pollution in evidence today than all the commodity wealth on display. Capital has become manifest as a system of relations whose activities have placed the planet beyond the point of no return. Global society is repressed and made to pay for and consume the waste. Standard theory says that the use values of commodities are stripped away from their social producers and sold. Since the heap of harmful commodities, the waste, is way higher than the heap of useful or sane commodities, waste products are also stripped away from social producers and sold back to them. The term “value relation” resonates with the sense of something positive and of use value. To replace value relations with waste relations is closer to facts and delivers more meaning.

However, capitalism not only externalises its social and natural costs and, subsequently internalises them or sells them back to society. Such sequentiality or gradual progression in formal time is misleading. It only focuses on the recent natural degradation that capital forces society to consume and pay for. It does not however focus on the way capitalism has since its birth wasted people, well before their historically determined longevity, through its wars and commercial and super-exploitation activities. As production relations shift from production for use to production for exchange, the first products of capitalism were principally its victimised colonial subjects, which as humans are also part of nature, and whose premature demise was a commodity sold for a price. Capitalism does not externalise to internalise the waste; the wasting of human life and the sale thereof have been internal to it from the start. The proposition “internalise to externalise” could be turned around and still bear more relevance to the facts, since waste is predominant. Historical time is here cross- or circularly causal.

Unlike pollution products, war products, the pure waste products of militarism, have sold for a price since the onset of capitalism. To factor in the recent destruction of nature and trees in exchange relations but not the centuries old destruction of humans in the South is a position laden with bias. Although the bomb is the purest waste commodity, the productivity of which is number of slain persons, now nearly all commodities include a pollution and a prematurely wasted life component, which sell for profits. Every commodity is in part a bomb. It is no longer satisfying for capital to integrate peripheral economies with which it could buy and sell partially sane or useful commodities; there are profits to be made from the destruction of peripheral countries. The production of destroyed life and nature has surfaced as more foundational to profits (a predicate of) than the sale of commodities for everyday use. Over the social reproduction cycle, that is in social reproduction as distinct from one-time social production, there is more social/living labour consumed in the production of destroyed nature and the premature death of people than otherwise.

Capitalism as a relation in action beats the masses into submission. Once beaten into defeat or once defeat is internalised by the masses, the destruction and sale of social nature further reinforces capitalism’s position atop the social production pyramid – the social totality. Social nature is the unity of humanity and nature wherein humanity is the subject of the substance, nature. Creating demand for waste, particularly military products, is way more beneficial to capitalism than creating demand through a better paid and educated global working class. Historically, metabolising social nature in pro-

duction at higher frequencies, that is to economise the living conditions of labour over shorter lifespans, consumes more of the living labour and reduces its cost of social reproduction, leaving more for capitalism in surplus labour. Rationally, the latter channel of accumulation, i.e. rising global wages and effective demand, cuts the share of profits and re-empowers labour against capital, such that socialism becomes the logical end of capitalism. Even Keynes arrived at this point.

Sickened nature – through weather, drought and illness effects – acts like a machine that produces early death, albeit at a cost to society. New illnesses are additional commodities from which to profit. Sick nature also accelerates the dislocation of labour – it acts like primitive accumulation and turns private labour into a social labour deprived of its means of production. It taxes people for sickness and reduces the social cost of labour reproduction by shortening lives. It literally reduces the quality of life and longevity. In the financial age, it further compresses space and time, or the quality and length of life, to the requisites of the higher turnover rate of moneyed capital. The profits of finance capitalism endogenously roll over at fast rates without concern for real production conditions. Credit instruments like some US bonds are associated with positive returns and they can be redeemed at any time. Credit is inversely debt, and it is held against the future labour of society. The higher the frequency and amount of credit issued, the more it forces society to be subjected to a higher rate of exploitation to meet future returns. Lenin postulated that higher debt issuance by imperial powers signals war. Over the social reproduction cycle, distinctly from one-time production, a higher rate of exploitation is nothing else than a shorter and lower quality of life relative to what the abundance of science and technology can offer at the corresponding time.

Over a shorter life or longevity cycle relative to potential, society costs less to reproduce leaving more of its accumulated surplus labour to capitalism. Not only that, the process of immiserating society by austerity, militarism or natural degradation becomes an industry in itself, and one whose surplus value rises by how much capitalism wastes society. Capital hires people to conduct war and pollute, while people pay for war, pollution and the illnesses they incur therefrom. These wasteful activities, which constitute the gist of production, could not have been imagined in the late 19th or early 20th centuries. In fact, today's capitalism cannot function without waste. Furthermore, since value realises in its commodity forms, and since its commodity form is phenomenal waste, then there must be a call for rethinking capitalism as nothing other than barbaric. The question posed at the beginning of the last century – “barbarism or socialism” – is irrelevant because to discern value relations from the waste means that value was necessarily waste from its very beginning in the genocide of the natives, and it continues to be so until today. In relation to the potential it can achieve, capitalism has been anything but progressive, which has been a direct result of labour's retreat in the class struggle.

QUESTION 2. In April 1915, one year into the First World War, Rosa Luxemburg wrote in “Crisis of Social Democracy” about German bourgeois society: “Violated, dishonored, wading in blood, dripping filth – there stands bourgeois society. This is it [in reality]. Not all spic and span and moral, with pretense to culture, philosophy, ethics, order, peace, and the rule of law – but the ravening beast, the witches' sabbath of anarchy, a plague to culture and humanity. Thus it reveals itself in its true, its naked

form.” “Wading in blood, a raging beast” – sounds as if she were writing about Gaza today?

KADRI: Of late we have seen the mounting aggression of imperialism further integrating the Global South into a position of mere slave nations to be wasted or turning the Third World into a repository of resource depletion. The string of destroyed states in the Middle East and Africa is there to see. Meanwhile, militarism has swelled out of its military spending straitjacket to encompass the whole social order of the Global North. The social structure of the Global North has become a militaristic edifice in which not only spending on industrial military complexes, but also spending on knowledge production and social welfare, are geared to enhance the side of social capacity that bolsters militarism. In a two-tiered global structure, in which the Global North plunders the Global South, to produce better and healthier soldiers or people who support the imperialist war is the objective of social spending in the Global North.

Not to forget: imperialist war has become more and more the primary means to resolve the contradictions of financial capitalism. That is the principal point in Lenin’s analysis of imperialism. Given the phenomenon of waste, we know for a fact that capitalism commodifies all forms of life, like water, trash, and even human lives. With so many wasted lives, people dying before their time, and wasted nature being produced, commodified and priced, and also sold for profits in their own market gestation time, the militarism as a domain of accumulation of which Luxemburg spoke has evolved into the primary domain for the whole capitalist system. While Luxemburg postulated that capitalism hits a limit when it integrates the world, no one could have imagined that the capitalist system could begin to make money from the very dissolution of social nature. To destroy life and nature, in particular through war, has come to represent an end in itself. Profits rise not only as a result of the resources employed or captured in or through war, but the profits of militarism also rise with the destruction of social nature through war, which is sold for a price at one time or another. War produces prematurely dead people and nature, and these are sold, or at least, they will have a price tag and will relate to the system of exchange and prices at one point or another.

The production of everyday commodities also requires more oppression of labour accompanied by more pollution. As with the commodities of militarism, the everyday commodity is partially a bomb that worsens the condition of social life. In an already highly entropic or wasteful social order, profits rise as society pays for the current and future natural and social costs that capitalism has created. When labour is absent politically, every commodity will contain more waste at a cost to society. In formulaic terms, capitalism shifts the costs of production upon the shoulders of society to reduce its costs and raise profits. The novelty here is that as waste takes hold of social life, the premature death of humanity and nature are additional products that are either sold or earmarked for sale. The defeat of the international working class resolves into an act of autophagia or wasteful auto-consumption. So far, to restate the obvious, there is more waste in the form of pollution and premature death of humans stocked up than all of the useful wealth that has been created under capitalism. Western civilisation, the civilisation of capitalism represented in its spiritual and material achievements, is manifest in some one billion dead in colonial and imperialist wars since 1500 and a planet damaged be-

yond repair. There is nothing to boast about in Western civilisation and everything of which to be ashamed.

Often political explanations, as in Northern democratic forms of government, of how well and how long people live in the developing world vis-à-vis the developed world are presented as reasons for underdevelopment. In a system politically structured so that the Global North lives off the underdevelopment of the Global South, democratic forms of government turn out to be the consensus needed in the Global North to share in the booty of imperialism between its various circles of capital. Historically, the social democracy of the Global North is just as imperialist as its conservative counterpart. Other explanations of underdevelopment such as work ethic, traditions, and folklore, also serve the purpose of attributing the wealth of the Global North to the labour of the Global North, but not to colonialism. If one considers that colonial wars are social processes of production that require socially necessary labour time to produce value, then the wealth of the Global North is truly the product of Northern labour engaged in continuous wars of aggression against the Global South. Culture reduced to traditions, however, doubles up for the cultural assumption of racial superiority in the ideological war of capital against labour. In particular, the Muslim nations, although proletarian nations, have been heavily targeted as cultural underlings. Yet, culture is the store of knowledge of humanity and cannot be reduced to national traditions. Accordingly, there are no such things as cultural clashes of civilizations; there are the cross-cutting civilizations of labour and capital, which must assume differing cultural forms in the class struggle.

Western civilisation amounts to a culture of reproduction by the systemic death of social nature for profits. In measurement terms, the gap in life expectancy and quality relative to existing potential between the Global North and the Global South is possibly the only adequate measure of the rate of surplus value, which is the social foundation of the profit rate. Relatedly, the most advanced social forms of capitalism, the historical period governed by the capital-relation, is not Germany or Denmark with their many credit unions financing the small and medium enterprises whose growth imparts some welfare; the most advanced capitalism is rather in the most war-devastated areas of the globe whose defeat and destruction is an act of exploitation that re-asserts NATO's power or the most pronounced exemplification of the power of capitalism. Capitalism is by definition a relation that grows through violent expropriation of socially produced wealth. The imperially generated power mesh is the power of the capitalist class that expropriates the Third World and from which Germany draws its share of the imperialist-generated wealth. Warmongers understand such relations more so than some Marxists. Tony Blair said in an interview regarding the rise of China that if the US loses to China, the UK loses too because people in the UK draw their share from the US-led power structure. After all, it is capitalist class power, or the primacy of politics, which guarantees higher rates of exploitation, and down the line through the mediatory machinations of the superstructure, higher profit rates. Reduced to an illustrative statement, capitalism realises it must be powerful first so as to profit later.

Accordingly, the war on Gaza must be seen from the perspective of ratcheting up imperialist power in a strategic region. The whole history of colonising Palestine is an aggression aimed at severing Asiatic from African masses, leaving the spoils to Europe.

A slew of remarks from Hertzl and Jabotinsky posit that the Jewish state will advance the “superior Western civilisation” and must always be in a state of war to bring the Arab masses into submission. To recall Liebknecht, the very process of war was and remains the big industry of capitalism. Israeli aggression is itself a rudimentary step in global capital accumulation, that is, it adds to accumulation by militarism on a global scale; it will not cease. On the contrary, Israeli aggression must always rise to raise the power of the global capitalist class that imposes exploitation for higher profits. The devastation of Africa and the Arab world owes much to the greater military power of Israel, its wars and threats of war, which divert resources away from development and leave these regions up for grab. Nonetheless, it is not likely that all the Arab or African masses can be beaten into submission since the fight against Zionism-imperialism is a class-ontological fight, a fight for survival to regain a few more years of decent life, which can come about only from the sovereignty of the masses and sovereign development.

The idea that there could be peace or an unpolluted world, when capital grows by war and by shifting the social costs of production upon the shoulders of society, is ludicrous. Similarly, the idea that the Palestinians will forget their national home in Palestine is also facetious, since Israel must always engage in aggression against them. It is like going to work in a factory to produce more cars for sale every morning – Israel must engage in aggression with comparable regularity. Israel is a war economy, and the war economy is the predicate of capital vis-à-vis the non-war economy. Without war, there cannot be profits because war’s rate of exploitation, its consumption of social labour in shorter life spans, albeit in an integrated global economy, represents the lowest benchmark of necessary labour (it pays a little share to labour in wages out of the total product because war ends life quickly). War designates the minimal socially necessary labour time for all other industries to follow if they are to remain above average profits. It also re-calibrates the power balances in a two-tier segmented world, which ensures that the higher tier consumes the lower tier.

In terms of social reproduction on a global scale, the whole world is a factory and all of global society produces as one or as social labour. The part of global society that perishes prematurely in war or misery costs less over its shorter lifetime and leaves more of the wealth created to capital. What is not observed is that war leaves the corpses of the dead as commodities. These are of value since an effort has been made to produce the dead people; they are the priced output of war or the institutions of capital peddling austerity. Imperialism does not pay an F16 pilot to shoot a hut and produce the death of people whose prices amass in the financial rents of war. The premature death of humanity and nature are commodities, and as such they are designated by prices, implicit or explicit, and are either market integrated and realised/sold or await realisation in some future time. In such a process, nature is mined in destructive ways, but since humanity and nature are in unity, the destruction of nature must be undertaken to undermine humanity as social subject. After all, it is humanity/labour that negotiates prices and not nature or dead trees. War targets labour to obstruct its potential, or to arrest its ascent to command social reproduction.

In a social metabolic order that grows by wasting humans, Israel and its Western allies have contributed to the death of around four million people in the war on terror. To count the spinoffs of imperialist power arising from warring against the Arabs on a glob-

al scale in the deaths of structural genocide (the premature deaths from misery) would add tens of millions to that figure. That is why the struggle of Palestinians to return to their homeland bears more significance to the global class struggle than other regions: because Israel, like Taiwan island, is one of two principal imperialist military outposts. In the case of Israel: to dismantle such a settler colonial project is to dismantle the weight of settler colonialism, which is not only Israel's ideology, but also the dominant reason governing the US and Europe. To destroy in order to create in production is normal up to the point where the production restores the destruction. Settler colonialism is exactly the ideology become practice that destroys way beyond what is needed to maintain a sane social system. Its genocides are the historical surplus value, or the weight of history, which is heavy enough to force people to line up automatically, without questioning the status quo, to be wasted. For instance, although the debts of International Institutions such as the IMF are meant to subdue the working classes by robbing it of its later products, many around the world believe that these debts must be serviced at any cost to themselves, thus blindly adhering to the lenders' policies. As such, the struggle for Palestinian liberation is exactly the lining up of the international proletariat to overturn the weight of history, to overturn the accumulated capacity of capital by which people do exactly what capital wants even when capital refrains from asking them to do so.

Settler colonialism as the ideology of the centre comes apart by pressure from the outside, from the shift in the balance of power against US-led imperialism, rather than the pressure of the progressive-protesting minority of the centre. The struggle for Palestine is a principal vector of power that coheres with the necessities of the international class struggle. The notion that Palestinians draw on an Islamic or Arab identity and history in the struggle is an inevitability since no class exists independently of its memory and cultural symbols. In a national liberation movement that coheres with anti-imperialism, all forces must coalesce in the struggle for the land. However, a victory against Zionist imperialism will by dialectical inversion defeat the symbols of power and identities that capital had created to divide the working class. Imperialism imposes the divisive working-class identities, while its retreat brings down the symbolic identities it has erected to further its powers.

QUESTION 3. In the preface to your latest book *Accumulation of Waste*, you write that “imperialist war in particular, the purest form of waste, is seen as a value-creating activity... whose saleable product is the premature death of labour.” The cannibalistic classes (in the Global North) consume the cannibalised masses of the Global South. You describe a “raging beast”, evoking Luxemburg. However, your analysis has appeared more than 100 years later. What has changed, or rather, what has become clearer than it was 100 years ago?

KADRI: War, as Marx pointed out, is utter waste. Nations invest in machines, people and know-how that they cast away or destroy. In war, like in any polluting activity aggressing social nature, there are waged soldiers employed with machines that produce the wasted lives, the lives cut short before their historically determined time. We should note as an aside that time is qualitative, the age to which one can live to now is not the same time the age to which one could live to a thousand years ago, given the growth of productive forces and scientific advances. Thus, to say that capitalism lets people live

longer than previously is deceptive, since people in earlier times lived subject to hunger and disease. Now the possibility of a good life is far greater, yet the masses die way before average achievable longevity.

Wars are cornerstones of the capitalist production order. The twin of accumulation by war is a Western working class integrated with capitalism, a personification of capital, with tentacles in the Global South that cannibalises the Southern masses. The consumption of the Global North that extends life in the North is based on the consumption of life before its due time in the Global South. The potential of this Northern working class is the potential of capital, or fascism. Unless by an act of class suicide, it cannot become revolutionary. In a class cannibalistic order, the planet altogether fares worse since it auto-consumes by overconsuming/wasting social nature for higher profits; however, in such a profit-run order, the Western classes and their adjuncts reproduce through wars and austerity against the Global South. Their union is just another investment bank, or their unity-derived consciousness is divorced from socialist practice – as mentioned by Lenin in *What Is to be Done?* In doing so, these mainly phenotypically white working classes have adopted the dynamic of capital or the rationale of the commodity in command of history, which is to do anything for profits no matter the social costs. Like capitalists, the commodity-for-profit path becomes the white class's own historical trajectory and potential – “white” here is used as an ideological descriptor of but not exclusively phenotypically white people born into the structure of powers that reproduces via imperialism. In structural form, the white class manifests in the institution of power that constitutes the organised dimension of capital; put differently, they are people committed to capital by their personification of capital's *raison d'être*.

Tangentially, some may say that lacking in revolutionary theory or organisation can be the condition of the working class in the Global North just as much as in the Global South; however, the principal social form of class organisation, the state, is inseparable from class, and the state is the crucible of power and what assigns the distributional arrangements by class. Nevertheless, there are imperialist state constellations whose working classes cannot become proletariat, that is, working classes that adopt a revolutionary ideology to realise a revolutionary potential, because to do so is to aggress their own imperialist states with which they engage in the same act of social reproduction through imperialism. These appear only as waged classes, whereas in reality they are the personified armies of imperialism. To say they are waged labour whose potential is to become labour as the subject of history is not a valid argument. This is so not only because the capitalists also work and give themselves wages, but also because capitalism cannot exist as some metaphysical social relation without an actual body-politic that carries out its mandate. At any rate, it is not the kinetic energy dispensed in work for a moneyed income that marks off a social class under capitalism. Across the ages, human beings, the subject, must work on nature, the object, to survive. Under capitalism, however, it is rather imperialism, which is the subject of productivity that translates into higher income by the mediation of capitalism's superstructural-power edifices. Imperialism blocks development in the Global South, making it possible for science and productivity to flourish only in the Global North. As such, the Northern waged class improves its lot by the exploitation of the Global South. It collects its share of imperial rents by raising the tempo of exploitation from super- or commercial exploitation to exploitation by the

wasting of Southern humanity outright. With production relations based on production for exchange as opposed to production for social use, the principal contradiction, the capital-labour contradiction, becomes a contradiction between the personified members of the extended capitalist class, namely the waged white labour of the Global North constituting its armies and the social forms of organisation that undergird imperialism, against the prematurely dying masses of the Global South. The social basis for consistent pro-imperialist white working-class consciousness is its social reproduction predicated upon imperialist aggression. It is not its higher share of income realised in the Global North that corroborates or nullifies the point that white working classes are integral to capital. Shares given in moneyed prices are statistical measures that the powerful may make significant or not depending on how the money form acts as a fetish to drain more value from the Global South. It is therefore the practice of imperialism itself which forms the building block of capital's production and reproduction of the social order. Without bombing or the imposition of austerity upon the Global South, there will not be living labour extinguished at a young age relative to life expectancy in global social production to leave much surplus labour to capital.

In fact, the white working classes of the North defended imperialism to a degree that harmed themselves in the First World War, and today they defend imperialism as it wastes people and nature in the Global South to its own detriment, since the planet has altogether slipped into disrepair. As for recent examples, the fact that the European working class engages in a proxy war against Russia when such a war causes a recession in Europe implies that the working class acts exactly like capital: it prioritises politics and the power arising thereupon for immediate economic gains. Like capitalism, this working class says to itself, "we will suffer a bit, but it is better for Germany/Europe to be more powerful against the rest of the world, since our future income depends on this power." Such a primacy of politics, the course of action followed by historically powerful nations that sit atop the capitalist hierarchical order and pillage the Third World, only refortifies the capital-relation across the globe, from which there derives the rents to imperialist capitalism and its personified classes in the Global North.

In terms of logic, this is not to say that only because of how events transpired, or because successful revolutions occurred in the East but not in the West, that one arrives at the definition of a waged Northern working class twinned with capital. In other words, it is not because things occurred as such that they are as such, and not otherwise. The reason why contingency (chance) identifies with necessity in this case is because we are dealing with one social form or creature, capital entwined with its waged army, which reproduces by the commercial activity or slave-like labour, along with waste exploitation of the Global South. Capital and its waged army may have quarrels about the division of shares from the dividends of imperialism, say between owners of capital, managers and the working class that ontologically reproduces as capital, or workers whose productivity and higher income are the result of imperialist practice. These entities are circles of capital that disagree on the shares of income, but never on the fact that they should rally around the flag to protect their way of life. The contingency that mediates their differences over shares can only resolve in further imperialist aggression (their potential is aggression). In other words, these circles of capital do not auto-negate into an act of auto-resolution or a rupture that leads to their own dissolution. They do not rebel against

themselves. The white working class, which supported and supports NATO against Libya and Russia is the same working class that voted for war credits and assassinated Rosa Luxemburg, as well as holding memorials and establishing foundations in her name. Such a class was from the start of capitalism the logical and historical instantiation of capital, its ideology and army at the same time.

Capitalism does not simply pay one half of the working class to fight the other half. There is a working class that is inherently a form of capital with which it shares the surplus product, while at the same time it may pay this or that identity group in the Global South to engage in auto-destructive wars. Since its birth, capitalism has been presupposed by a section of the working class that exemplifies it and with which it shares the rents. Under a new set of production relations, specifically as exchange value superseded use value, capital as a social relation came to be and was represented/personified by its waged seafaring soldiers whose wages were the colonial loot it shared with capital (a point made by Engels). Capital as a social relation instantiates not as workers in the abstract against capital. A working class devoid of revolutionary consciousness is a form of capital. It reproduces capital. However, working classes are expressed in political forms of organisation, like the institutions of the Global North versus those of the Global South. North and South are cross-cutting class formations, with the North situated atop a hierarchical totality of social production structured in dominance. The revolutionary potential of labour only exists within the bounds of this North-South contradiction. It exists for those suffering imperialist aggression, or those whose lives must be cut short relative to their potential life expectancy. Their struggle to survive is akin to the defeat of capital or as they cease to adhere to the rule of the commodity as self-expanding value. Relatedly, the Northern armies, the NATO bases, and the NGOs abroad are the Northerners that migrate South to extract the Southern private worker from her land to later become a wage slave. One implication of such a proposition becomes: halt the migration of military and ideological European waged soldiers to the South if you want to stop migration to the North.

Polluted nature causing droughts works to the same end of socialising labour by displacing labour. However, unlike the time of colonial primitive accumulation, at the current juncture, and as people consume waste, the wage slave, unlike chattel slavery, is worth more dead than alive. The state of defeat of labour is such that capital cares not to produce useful things for which demand may exist. In this age, even wasted social nature, including the dead of war, sell for a profit or integrate into the value chain of production to sell as un-useful but still demanded and consumed commodities. What has become clearer with time is that capitalism totalises and commodifies everything, including waste, and beats labour into a consciousness of submission to consume this waste. The produced waste may be the war dead in wars of extractivism, it may be the medical bills resulting from pollution, etc. Waste may be costed as all the costs that capital should bear, but instead such costs have been borne by society. Waste sells, at times for a positive price and others for a negative price (like paying someone to take your trash). Since commodification is pervasive, the price system associated with it must be pervasive; like a quantum field, it is everywhere. The costs to capital must impute as higher costs to society for profits to be made. Imagine: if Coca-Cola paid the costs of the wars to get cheap tin for its cans, or covered the medical bills that its chemicals cause, it

would not make a profit unless it charges a high and uncompetitive price for its product. It may be as well to note that it is living labour short-changed over its lifespan that generates surplus value and not nature *per se* or dead trees. Nature is destroyed to re-strengthen capital's laws into condensing socially necessary labour time in shorter life intervals. Mind you, the time intervals of social reproduction are not the chimerical constructs of capital, like the national accounting and price systems, whose time and space are assigned by capital to conceal value relations, or the social cost of labour reproduction. The time and space of social reproduction are real social time and the accounts of what it takes in value to sustain society over its life cycle.

QUESTION 4. In any case, the European, the German Communist movement and parties failed to slay the monster of which Luxemburg and you speak. Why? What did they do wrong or rather, what did they fail to do?

KADRI: Where there is leisure time to theorise the social conditions, that is in the Western hemisphere, the organised dimension of capital, its institutions, have taken notice of the importance of the war of ideas and harnessed a twisted form of Marxism the purpose of which is to mis-theorise reality and abort potential revolutionary activity. In such misconceptions, workers and capitalists are idealised outside the culture and memory of nations. The world is envisaged without political class structures representing social formations of Global North and South, or without the imperialism and fascism that are the condensed forms of capitalism. In mainstream discourse, there is no NATO attacking Libya or Iraq to destroy them. For the mainstream, this is nothing else than a case of Iraqis/Libyans being ruled by fascism, while NATO's imperialism intervenes to save them. The measure of intervention is gauged by the criterion of Western democracy, which is no other than the form of bourgeois power exercised by capitalism that has thus far taken global society to the brink. Moreover, the world is perceived to be a world in which the moneyed incomes of nations rightly represent their shares of value contributions, while the premature war dead and pollution produced by capitalism at the expense of society are discounted as marginal activity, or externalities that carry no value forward. In terms of productivity, capital has produced more waste and death than any other system thus far. It is in the production of waste that capitalism's economics of scale proves superior. The efficiency observed per unit of waste is such that capital produces pollution for nothing, and yet earns by the commodification of pollutants and their after-effects.

Moreover, the subject of the productivity of the Global North is not the better machine of the North. Machines do not make things without the social relations or subjects that made the machines. It is the denial of development of the Global South as a value usurpation relation which makes sure that scientific and technological development can only take place in the Global North. Thence, the slaughter of the Global South is the historical subject of the productivity, wealth and leisure time of the North. The class of hired intellectuals in the Global North that speaks in the Marxist vernacular does so only to provide a veneer for the oneness of global production; it also wants to hide the fact that the dollar hegemony rests not on US production capabilities, but rather on US imperialist hegemony. Unusually in history, the wealth of the USA rises by its capacity to

borrow from the rest of the world. It has been able to do so because its superior weapons synergising with its ideology impose the resource control mechanisms that underwrite its issuance of dollar debt.

Capitalism's salaried intelligentsia is a beneficiary of its class order. It hides the fact that capital as a historical relation is the subject of productivity and wealth by idealising nationality and raising it to the status of historical subject. It reifies or attributes the rise in productivity to the machines, which have been invented only within a Western state borders because the Global South is too clobbered to produce any machines itself. Such modes of reasoning are ahistorical, or without an understanding of the progression of the social subject through time, and therefore unreal. For productivity to develop only in the West is not something that drops from the sky. Capitalism's intellectuals either utilise or forget that capital's system of accounts and prices are the fetishes by which it masks the reality of exploitation, and through which it usurps the masses of the Global South. Capital-constructed time and accounts, like quarterly profits and GDP, are not haphazard. They stem from vested class interests re-erected by the system's ideological apparatuses, which have taken on fantastical powers of their own. To revert to our Coke can example, a person not only pays a dollar for a can of Coke, she also ends up paying for the wars to subdue labour and the pollution impact on health of the Coke can. A Western economic crisis, for instance, is defined by the decline of the GDP for two consecutive terms; but when millions of Congolese died in wars between 1990 and 2016, this was attributed to "tribal" warring over resources – by contrast, tribes are more cohesive and socially supportive systems of social relations than anything under capitalism. In past times, tribal wars were instigated by underproduction and under-consumption crises. The bourgeois nation-state of the Global North engages in wars because of its crisis in overproduction, a crisis that depends on upon the fact that the commodity as a self-expanding value is beyond social control. Or the crisis is resolved by imposing under-consumption upon the Global South. The fact that there is plenty of food leads to the imposition of the policies of hunger. What better channel exists for creating under-consumption by imperialism than to create penury in food and resources in the Global South and erect social identities that fight amongst themselves for the crumbs of capital.

However, with the phenomenon of environmental waste, the accent in the Global North has shifted towards protecting abstract nature as opposed to social nature or human beings in the Global South. They have isolated nature from its human or social subject. However, since surplus value rises by metabolising more of living labour as subject of nature in production, the case may be that the calls to recycle or to cut down fewer trees while maintaining positive rates of accumulation with better oxygen in the Global North effectively means that more people in the Global South must be slaughtered before their life potential is realised. In social reproduction, wherein society produces to survive over a generation or two, living labour must be consumed in a more form of absolute surplus value activity like waste or wars. The ultimate forms of waste seek to redress the decline in profits, which means that, since profits cannot rise by reworking cheaply priced nature, then profits must rise by humanity accelerating the wasting of humanity itself.

In any case, paying for pollution as provisioned in COP-28 only recirculates dollars back to the Global North, where it is safer to keep dollars. What is also clear is that when

the world is perceived to have scarce resources and carrying capacity (not enough for everyone to survive), then the ethic of the “lifeboat” takes hold: “lifeboat” in the sense that the world is drowning, and Europe cannot take everyone on board. The underlying policy of capitalism becomes a policy of depopulation by direct or structural genocide. In structural genocides people die too early of starvation and misery to release the pressure upon a system of supposed scarce resources. Such structural genocide, the irreversible death of human beings in under-developing states becomes a constructed fact of power, to which people must accommodate themselves, as opposed to a real or accomplished fact, or the fact that there is enough produced to go around for everyone. The fact of power is like the constructed Israeli “settler” colonies. Zionist capital constructed the settlements and negotiations begin from the fact that they are already there. Not much can be done to reverse them, while the logical end of such a process is the annihilation of the masses. Under permanent overproduction, as the proletariat accedes to the facts of power or does not rebel against its exclusion from its social product, the imposition of irreversible poverty under alleged scarcity (the power fact) paves the way for the next power fact, which is more poverty managed as a permanent crisis under circumstances of the imposition of rising penuries. However, the real or the accomplished fact, the fact that the masses must survive by the decimation of the relation that excludes them, the private property relation, will not go away since capitalism insatiably accumulates and forces the masses into a position of self-defence.

QUESTION 5. There is a chapter in your book, *Accumulation of Waste*, about the “Western Marxist Position on War” and you speak of “dominant currents of Western Marxism, aligned with NATO”. Who are these Marxists who are aligned with NATO?

KADRI: Aside from non-white minorities of the Global North turning the violence of the system against themselves, Western societies have been so much of the same mindset to the point that there need not be prisons for prisoners of conscience. Such is a higher degree of bourgeois dictatorship through the democratic form of government. Bourgeois democracy amounts to a political mechanism that serves as a platform for sharing the dividends of imperialism. However, the Northern consensus around issues such as “let us bomb Africans or Arabs in the Third World,” the recurrent aggression by a roughly homogenised mindset rarely calls into question the mode by which classes of the Global North reproduce themselves. In other words, few in the Global North ask about how they live the way they live, or which is to say, “what is the definition of social class”? As discussed, the northern classes reproduce by acquiring a wage whose *predicate* is imperialist war, a wage that is proportional to their class or imperialist power in the international division of labour. Such a wage is in reality a dividend of imperialist rents. By *predicate* I mean the imperialist dividend component in the wage share of the Northern class is determined by value usurpation from the Global South. Wealth is created by disempowering the Global South, while the distribution of the wealth is attendant upon the power of each stratum within the social formation and the function of the state in mediating their differences via power-proportionate distributional arrangements.

Value is a social relation of exploitation. It is the main link in a system of social reproduction commanded by the Global North. The masses of the Global South fight to regain

some of their lives, while the working class of the Global North reproduces by the relation of imperialist aggression *cum* dispossession. As I mentioned, Northern working-class disputes with the imperialist class of the North amount to inter-capitalist disputes over dividend sharing, as opposed to a working class whose survival rests on destroying the capitalist conditions of production. The latter class of the Global South is ontologically the class that holds the revolutionary potential because to live longer or better it must fight imperialism. Historically, the unionism of the Global North has targeted disagreements over “wages” rather than equalisation of production conditions. The targeting of higher wages does not alarm capital since it lies within the sphere of circulation and, in the final analysis, it is an issue of money creation underwritten by the power of capital. Both the immediate imperialist war booty and the imperialist-based productivity of the Global North, are shared between capital and its personified working class. Further aggression against the Global South will only increase the booty from which they both loot, and the Northern working-class emphasis on the sphere of circulation is *ex-post facto* evidence that such a class is an organic partner of capital. To aim at the sphere of production, or to demand that equal working conditions in Global North and South be equally remunerated on the basis of the political control of international labour over the reproduction cycle, would corrode the power of capitalism. Focusing on the sphere of production proves that the working class is strategically committed to the disbanding of capital and its private property. Western Marxism, however, is stuck in the former rubric (recirculation), and it continues to work hand in glove to bolster imperialist expansion. In a recent interview in *Monthly Review*, Gabriel Rockhill (2023) has demonstrated the extent to which Western Marxism has been participating in imperial war mongering.¹ The consistency of such a practice, the succession of historic pro-imperialist positions, the chain of actions and reactions which created and continue to create these positions, show that this is not a short-lived case in which Marxist scholars were hoodwinked into such action, but rather, it is a consistency attendant upon furthering bourgeois class interest.

QUESTION 6. You also refer to Lenin, who said that the victory of the revolution in Western Europe depended on its close contact with the liberation movement against imperialism in enslaved colonies and with the national question. Considering this perspective – the cooperation and solidarity with colonised peoples – how has Western European Communism failed?

KADRI: The remark in your question was made by Torkil Lauesen when he commented on the work of Arghiri Emmanuel. Imperialism splits the world into a subduing and a subdued structure, with the latter drained by a necrotrophic relationship exercised as imperialism. Anti-imperialist struggle is specifically about building capacity and auto-defence in the Global South and, subsequently, by bridging working-class differences through mediatory resolutions that set the struggle on an anti-systemic path. The working classes personifying capital in the Global North and their associates in the Global South have absorbed the capital-reason and have become as reified as the capitalists of

¹ *Imperialist Propaganda and the Ideology of the Western Left Intelligentsia: From Anticommunism and Identity Politics to Democratic Illusions and Fascism*, <https://monthlyreview.org/2023/12/01/imperialist-propaganda-and-the-ideology-of-the-western-left-intelligentsia/>.

which Marx spoke. Such is the class balance and the institutions that are the basis for the resilience of the rule of capital. People copy the dynamic of the commodity as expanding value in the thought that directs their actions and, as such, become like things.

What is much discussed is that the victory of the Global North in imperialist wars, the devastations of states in the Global South, reduces the prices of resources to low levels that impute as lower costs in the highly priced consumption items of the North. Exponentially expanding accumulation requires continuous lowering of costs and, therefore, wars. This war process, in addition to the cultural expropriation and associated denial of development in the Global South, automatically moves resources, including knowledge production, to the North. What is rarely discussed, however, is that the social process of aggressing the Global South for cheap resources requires the extraction of human lives before the extraction of resources. There is rarely nature alone without humanity as social subject. As such, the extraction of human lives in the Global South becomes the building block of the capitalist reproduction process.

This is not, however, a question of whether the Global South contributes this or that percentage of wealth to global wealth. The term “building block or predicate” means that without the Global South no wealth exists; while in terms of percentages of contribution to wealth or symbols of wealth, whichever class is more powerful entitles itself to more wealth and designs the symbols of that wealth. One can assign a percentage to this or that country’s contribution to value-making commensurate with their incomes in moneyed form. One can posit that Togo or Benin ship a billion dollar to the USA in capital flight, and, hence, their usurped value contribution is something around a billion dollars or say 1 percent of total value transfers. Nothing can be further from the truth since the law of value is subservient to class power and it mediates value into price proportionately to class power and the edifices of capitalism’s superstructure. Value as a social category is a social activity and it is best measured against the rate of devastation that cuts down living labour in social production. With so much power amassed in the Global North, the tiny prices or percentages of the South indicate the presence of high rates of exploitation.

Percentages based on moneyed forms are signifiers of wealth designated by the more powerful. For instance, as the terms of power change in favour of the Global South as a result of China’s rejuvenation, the conditions for the evolution of favourable prices in the terms of trade biasing the Global South will also change. Developing nations can begin to negotiate better price terms for their products. Money, after all, is a social convention. In the hands of the powerful, the moneyed form of value serves as a weapon to extract more value from the working class. For instance, there are better machines in the USA and their products sell for more in terms of prices; however, for a similar process to take root in the Global South, or for the South to valorise its resources on its terms, it must prevent the wars visited upon it by the Global North that prohibit it from building similar machines. The ingenuity of the Global North is not in its capacity to build better machines and to declare, “this is German or US engineering,” which incidentally become grounds for a culture of national chauvinism. The real ingenuity of the Global North is in its capacity to win wars that arrest the development of machinery in the South. Imperialist wars translate into the expropriation and monopolisation of scientific development, the privatisation of knowledge, which co-relatedly buttress the superiority of Northern weaponry.

The platitude “we are smarter because we have the better machines” confuses the subject of history, the imperialist war relation that excludes the Global South as a competitor against the cultural and perceived racial superiority of the Global North. It neglects a global production activity whose initial link in the supply chain began with structural or direct genocides. Intelligence, as Fanon says, never saved anyone, and the West is better off because it continuously wars against the Global South to extract increasing value determined by expending the life of social labour in the shortest possible time span. Yet, with so much destruction on a planetary scale, the explanation of which is overdetermined by all the social activities preceding the devastation, every scientific discovery in the North was decidedly an additional weapon against the South. Every Nobel prize that Benjamin Netanyahu attributes to the superiority of the Jews was, from a class perspective, a pay-off to win wars or produce pollutants. When the whole is the organising principle for the parts, every symbol of alleged superior knowledge, every name tag such as Harvard, becomes a symbol of war against the working class.

Capitalism as a historical stage resembles a raft on a river heading towards a cliff, yet some upon the raft enjoy the ride and extol the system as progressive. Profits are derived from shifting the cost of production to labour, from the wasted people and nature that sell to the detriment of global society. As the production of waste, wasted people and nature, reduces the social cost of the reproduction of the global working class, compliance with the profit-making mandate becomes a class ethic. Whatever rationalises further destruction is construed as ethical. With such a falsified reality, the maxim “there is no alternative to the market” becomes a system of belief, while an artifice like “Stalin was a tyrant” represents the centrepiece around which the class struggle revolves. The concocted “crime” of Stalin is foisted upon us to undermine the alternative to the anarchy of the market, which is planning, or the necessity to re-organise of the relation between humanity and nature. The benchmark of capital’s rationality is survival in a world of fabricated scarcity when its lingering crises remain crises of overproduction. As absurd as the case of falsifying reality may be, such a globally degenerative state of affairs cannot be recognised by capitalism because it reproduces by the accumulation of waste. Its social circumstances, or social being, define its social consciousness. To recognise that capitalism flourishes as it sells harmful things, whose value is the premature death of social humanity, in order to profit, is an improbable act of class suicide.

QUESTION 7. If we look at Europe and the destruction of the Middle East/Gaza, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, would you agree that the Communists in Europe have no idea what is happening there?

KADRI: It is not only the Middle East, but also the waste phenomenon, which is a daily structural genocide, that escapes serious analysis. Yet, having ideas about what is happening is straightforward. That Palestine was colonised and ethnically cleansed, and that Zionism is a state of constant war to reproduce capital, is pellucid. It is also clear that countries are assaulted for their resources. How to formulate an understanding of this situation has to do with the dominant method of thought that adheres to the dominant ideology. There is no theory independent of ideology, although in a moment of critique of dominant thought theoretical work advances on its own. The dominant method of

thought that blunts reality may be summarised by Margaret Thatcher's remark, "there is no such thing as society," which clearly means that the whole or history does not exist, and what exists is an abstract individual seeking her own welfare, albeit bereft of society and history. Even though the global accumulation process is interconnected in the multi-national production sphere and dollar-dominated spaces, such that the slightest movement in the US interest rate may trigger a crisis of hunger far afield in the developing world, the whole as a totality of social relations progressing through time as history is purposely omitted in mainstream thought. For instance, lowering US-Federal Reserve interest rates in mid-2000 steered speculative investments towards the commodity market, raising food prices and causing hunger, yet the mainstream explanation for such events focused only on the mismanagement of fiscal spending in the developing world that hindered optimal free market operations, which in turn mis-allocates resources rather than otherwise. As such, the problem of a specific developing country exists in isolation from the history of imperialist aggressions that have relegated that country to inferior status. In that sense, thought settles on a series of partial truths and unrelated observations, which can be assembled in any order as one-sided facts to serve an imperialist class position.

For the Northern classes that grow by the accumulation of waste, by war and pollution on a global scale, history and interrelatedness begin at the point that criminalises the victim. An example of this is the question repeated *ad nauseam*, "do you condemn Hamas for its October 7 attack?" Related is the reduction of a national liberation struggle to a humanitarian question. In a capitalist dripping with blood, territorial disputes are irrelevant outside the prioritisation of the struggle against imperialism. There is no room for humanitarianism when capitalism amounts to a daily structural genocide. Although elements of the Northern class may see the broader history and the relation of Zionism to imperialism, that is the "waste and destruction for profit mode of accumulation," the criminalisation of the class that is wasted way before its due time, the people that live on average 50 years rather than 90, will remain the standard practice of mainstream analysis. The reason is straightforward. For a class represented in imperialist states, which reproduces on the basis that those in the Global South should live shorter lives, such class cannot struggle to save the others who are dying way before their due time since such a process is the source of its wealth.

To reverse this compartmentalised and ahistorical form of dominant thought, the working-class war of ideas must first turn the "abstract man" of mainstream analysis into a social human being, who happens to be a product of community and history. This social human being's work is the mediated effort of society, whose product is the social product of society, and whose society is the interconnected global society and not a society confined by an illusory state boundary. The definition of humanity, to see humanity as it really is, as a sub-division of the masses and a product of history, is foundational to changing the dominant modes of thought. However, progress in this area will not come about without turning the global balance of power against imperialism.

QUESTION 8. If we look at the wars today, in Gaza, Yemen, Syria, this is barbarism in full flow. What exactly do these wars tell us?

KADRI: Wherever there are natural resources, there are humans, and extractivism begins with extracting human lives. At this intersection, where waste is phenomenal and constitutes the bulk of wealth, where death and pollution transform into a moneyed form of wealth just as useful commodities do, the wasting of life in the Global South becomes a commodity and a form of wealth itself. Altogether, the wasted lives and nature are the larger heap of commodities denominated in a price or in a moneyed form of value. Waste products, including wasted human life, are integrated with the broader price system of capital. They are present within a recursive (inter-dependent prices where movement in a price influences other prices) and an interconnected price matrix either explicitly or implicitly, or are earmarked to sell in their own gestation time. The price system is all encompassing since very few items are left un-commodified. Everything is commodified means that everything is priced. The price of an item can represent various other prices, assume various forms, and be time coherent or incoherent. Spot prices and future prices of the same commodity are examples. Spot prices of resources now are affected by the higher future prices when production conditions become more difficult in the future as a result of natural disaster. As such, a devastated nature enhances the monopoly power of capital. Pollution sold and will sell in the future, while the deaths of war and austerity are also products of capital that have sold and synergise through their power derivatives within capitalist ideological production.

Moreover, the capitalist debt of the future is being tabled against the future premature loss of life by super-exploitation and wars. Capital gains in profits directly from the very process of war (demand generated by militarism), the power spinoffs of war, and also from the impact of war in the shortening of life expectancy relative to its potential. In a privatised economy, people dying early cost less to sustain over a shorter life and leave more of the social product to capital; people labour and pay the costs leading to their own early death. Over the time of social reproduction, the masses' premature death becomes the source of surplus value – not oil or copper, for these are inanimate matter that does is not an active component of production; they are passive and dead labour that does not speak to negotiate a price. Rather, it is the masses violently suppressed to reduce their wage and the price of resources that account for surplus labour. It is the shorter life expectancy of the South relative to the North, which becomes the benchmark that signifies the divergence between the moneyed form of Northern wealth relative to its Southern counterpart.

QUESTION 9. As I mentioned at the beginning, the 29th Rosa Luxemburg Conference will take in Berlin. In an invitation to the conference, the Editor-in-Chief referred Bertolt Brecht's solidarity song from 90 years ago and came up with the motto: "Whose tomorrow is tomorrow? Whose world is the world?" The question for you is: whose world is the world today? And whose world will it be tomorrow?

KADRI: Without a revolutionary consciousness springing upon the practice of anti-systemic struggle, the potential or historical end of capital is to auto-destruct and

take the planet with it. One observes broad sections of the working-class whose social consciousness drifts further away from their social being: masses live in dire conditions that to be overturned would require revolutionary organisation to wrest their social product from capital. Yet they seem to be fast asleep. Many willingly surrender not only their products but their lives to capital. Although crises of capital expose this rift so that revolutionary activity may bridge it, the current crisis of socialist ideology appears even deeper than the current social and environmental crisis. Such a bleak state is the result of successive working-class defeats alongside the twisting of revolutionary theory to become part of capital's ideological arsenal. However, the glitz of capital alone will not suffice to convince working people to work against their vested interests. Working masses lose potential years of life when they submit to capitalism, and to live longer, they must fight capitalism.

US-led imperialism controls the world and, therefore, owns much of the world. To own, the relation of private property, is to exclude the masses from their social product, just as the capital-relation does. The masses must continuously be beaten into submission to relinquish their commons and swallow the actual and ideological rubbish capitalism has created. However, the rejuvenation of China and the reassertion of Russia against NATO are creating a barrier that hampers wanton aggression by US imperialism. This is a historical turning point. China is a sovereign developing nation that has developed in strides since its war of independence. The East, with Laos, Cambodia, North Korea, and Vietnam, remains committed to the values of socialism. A major legacy of Marxism-Leninism, Stalin's vision for an Asian Soviet, is overturning history at this moment. China has moved from conducting its peoples' war with rifles to a new form of peoples' war. It entrenches itself deeply into the global economy, locks its capital account, rides on the success of its early agricultural revolution by which it feeds the population, and nationalises technology to defend itself against an aggressive hegemon, which has the weight of history behind it. Such is a more developed form of the people's war. China builds capacity in the developing world, whereas the USA destroys it. The role of the vanguard is to disclose the existential crisis of humanity as a crisis of capitalism's rule. According to Lenin, the perception that capitalism has a ruling crisis is the starting point of revolution. The communist vanguard must invoke and realign all the proletarian forces in anti-imperialist and anti-systemic struggles. Internationalist solidarity, the unmasking of the false theory created by capitalism, is the road to realise the potential of labour as the historical subject.