

US-Led Capital Is the Only Imperialism

Imperialism generalises commercial exploitation to nations. Just as a slave is not paid for her labour, a nation is not paid for its human and natural resources. Imperialism carries exploitation to extreme ends by the industry of war. War-making, the mainstay of imperialism, dissolves, engages/disengages, or allocates resources under permanent conditions of overproduction. Imperialism is both a symptom of capital and capital's state of becoming as it auto-negates to obey its own laws of development, or ultimately to come undone. It is capital's evolution into a higher more condensed stage that mitigates as well as deepen crises. In other words, imperialism is a mutation of capital as the law of value presses down on labour by the practice of war to resolve the contradiction between the relations and forces of production of capital. Although wars existed in all class societies, their underlying reasons change depending on the material circumstances of social reproduction. In the monopoly-finance age, imperialist bellicosity counteracts overproduction by forcing people to consume waste, be consumed by waste, and by the intensification of waste production. This chapter re-theorises imperialism and the case that US-led imperialism remains the only imperialism pillaging the globe.

1 Re-theorising Imperialism

Capital is a social relationship for which the politics of cementing its class rule is a matter of primacy. It is neither the development in the productive forces nor the number of unemployed that define whether this or that country is a better modern capitalist or antiquated undemocratic capitalist. US-European centred capitalism is the universal condition, the class that subsumes the resultant of all classes to make history. Beneath the sparkle of its stock of material and spiritual attainment, its Western civilisation, with so many irreversibly lost humans and natural specie to its credit, had surfaced as waste. Relative to what the development of the productive forces could have improved versus what it has accomplished, this is the darkest period in history.

By the dominant stance, the Third World is responsible for its plight on account of its essentialist barbarity. Moreover, for much of Western scholarship, the developing world enters the value chain represented by its puny contribution in money to global GDP. Its income, capital flows, and or trade volumes are

insignificant vis-à-vis Western income and, automatically, its value contribution becomes insignificant. Put bluntly, because value is transfigured against its moneyed form realised in Western consumption, the equivalent of imperialist value transfer from the Third World in dollars appears low relative to the value produced in the West. This literally means that the Western working class produces its own income and does not depend on imperialist rents, or, implicatively, it has not developed into a systemic partner of capital. However, the development of the productive forces – of which labour is subject and technology is one component – does not account for the reasons of higher levels of income in the centre. Better productive forces are in unity with wealth and presuppose more wealth, but not variations in the distribution of income over time that pile up as wealth. The flows of income co-align with class power balances, or encounter obstacles that resolve in constant aggression to incapacitate the developing world. Fanon's (1967) point that 'wealth is not the fruit of labour but the result of organised, protected robbery' is a shortcut to the gist of imperialist power through the suppression and exploitation of developing social formations, which creates wealth.

To-repostulate, the political stabilisation payoff to the Northern working classes is not merely hush money, it is a rent component derived from the Northern working class partnering with imperialism in commercial exploitation. This fragmentation of labour is what Mészáros (1986) labels 'the most acute of Marx's theoretical difficulties.' To acknowledge the division of various groups of workers, inevitably asserted in the form of conflicting claims, is to undermine the transitional political form, or the international proletariat represented in global political forms and unionism (Mészáros 1986). He also notes two distinctive features of the social division of labour. First, the advanced capitalist countries are the beneficiaries of the global capitalist division of labour – against the differentially more exploited labour of the Third World. Secondly, divided and fragmented labour is at the mercy not only of the ruling class and its state, but also of the objective requirements of the prevailing social division of labour, or the problem that sections of labour share more with capital than they share with other labour; he says: 'labour happens to share with its adversary within the compass of the materially and institutionally enforced (and to a large extent self-enforcing) social metabolism' (Mészáros 1986). To address a possibly vexing question, the formation of revolutionary internationalism, Mészáros proposes that the conscious management of what capital unconsciously brought into being in the first place by the development of capitalism itself can realistically appeal to the increasing importance of a totalising social consciousness only by calling at the same time for the necessary material conditions – aimed at transcending the given fragmentation of labour – through which the development of this consciousness first becomes possible (Mészáros 1986). To elucidate Mészáros's

not so satisfactory answer, capital's anarchy and blindness to the dire social consequences of its actions, will eventually provoke the masses to reorganise and face its wrath. However, although the working class is universal (wage labour is phenomenal), the proletariat or the working class imbued with anti-imperialism is not a universal class. The wages of the North rooted in imperialist rents and their attendant modes of consciousness differ from the wages of anti-imperialist masses. Moreover, aside from the unconscious racism of liberalism, whose structural genocide, the premature death, has proven more deadly than the conscious racism of fascism, Mészáros's accentuation of the centre as holding potential for revolutionary transformation is misplaced. He also allots less than deserved attention to the leading role of anti-imperialist forms of organisation and armed struggle in the developing world.

Not long after, in 1995, Mészáros suggests that the system maintains cohesion by means of antagonistic *second-order mediations*, such as the nuclear family, alienated labour, civil society, and the state, generating various vicious circles.¹ He leaves out the point that national liberation struggles are ongoing despite the departure of the colonists because the comprador classes left behind, which identify with imperialism, continue to govern. In response, the ongoing national liberation struggles potentially realign the fragmented consciousness of labour since they undermine the imperialist class; the central financial class and its tail-ends in the periphery appear cohesive in their attendant ideological forms. By dialectical inversion, to weaken capital weakens the fragmenting identities from which it draws its strength; thence, the horizon for the realisation of the potentiality of internationalism draws nearer. The primary contradiction of capital is between North and South, or sub-laterally the forms of political representation of capital and labour. Although secondary, the second order mediations are designates of capitalism as a historical stage, or an epoch of waste potentiated by a Western Marxism that disembowels consciousness and relegates the primary contradiction to secondary position.

Disparate global wages justified by neoclassical 'marginal conditions' and the Western Marxist criterion of productive and unproductive labour are the pretence that additionally promotes the waste of the developing world. Often, one-sided abstractions of productive and unproductive labour unmediated from their initial state of concrete labour into the more universal category

1 A first order mediation is the ensemble of relations of production, which is equal to total social labour, within the economic base. It is a transhistorical ontological category; a very concrete abstraction that represents human nature and the harmony between man and nature through social labour. It is society reproducing itself. The lesser order mediations are the historically specific relations of production perpetuated by the superstructure, the repressive state and the dominant ideological institutions. In the context of capitalism, they include wage labour, private property, exchange, alienation, exploitation.

living/social labour also rationalise global wealth differences. Unequal wage structures based upon constructed skill and productivity differences, or undeveloped less-than holistic concepts of labour, are forms of inter-working-class divisions. The argument that sectarian struggles by Northern unions for higher wages, in due course, leads to an internationalist solidarity flies in the face of the facts. To date, the Western working classes unanimously put forth either the openly or the liberally imperialist positions. Western welfare reforms countered revolution. Such segmentation of labour is the pillar of capital. The point 'prioritising reform in the centre' heralds revolution only when anti-systemic opposition hinders imperialism's aggression by aggressing its strongest link, or the bourgeois democracy, which transmutes Northern labour into systemic capital. Historically, the Western Marxist adjoining point on low-South value transfers to the North may be that those who do not possess the better machines are an un-readied proletariat. Insofar as the realisation of revolutionary potential co-aligning with the development of the productive forces as a condition for transition to communism, Losurdo (1999) sardonically comments that by such definition, 'it would require that the productive capacities of communism be advanced so wonderfully that the problems and conflicts that are ordinarily connected to the measurement and regulation of the labour necessary for the production of social wealth and the distribution of this wealth would have disappeared.' Nothing of the sort could happen overnight. Under such utopian conditionality, labour, the state, and value theory would have altogether disappeared, and when such ideal is contrasted with the problems of real existing socialism, efforts of land reform and alleviation of poverty are delegitimised because they fall short of the imagined communist future. Logically, the masses of the developing world are to curtail their struggles and capture of power, all the while waiting for central bourgeois democratic reform with better machines to bear fruit. When the failures of twentieth-century democratic reform leading revolution in the centre are highlighted, Western Marxism retreats into the position that imperialism bears progress (Warren 1973). Other Western-Marxist derogatory labels of revolutions in the South include 'impure socialism,' working-class immaturity, imperialism got thinned down into some multitude such that revolution must be *a priori* global (Hardt and Negri 2005) or, lastly, the positivist positions that there cannot be a transition to socialism.

While being the pedestal and predicate of wealth, the billions of the un-sovereign masses in the Third World seize little of the moneyed form of value. As argued in the previous chapter, the lopsided class power structure is the historical agency of capital. However, with capital reasserting itself by the transference between the power of its guns and ideology, the prices

paid by capital to the direct producers of the South are the reverse image of their value contributions. Yet, the fruits of exploitation in moneyed form or, the unequal exchange between Southern wage labour and capital, emerge as exchange between equivalents. Little prices exchanged for lives appear equal by the machination of the law of value (drawing on Marx's point [1867] that the law of value manifests in the sham of value equivalence in exchange). Poverty, a by-product of the law of value, leaves workers the choice between starving slowly, killing themselves speedily, or taking what they need where they find it (Engels 1844). The act of socially induced self-destruction comes to a head under imperialism. The unequal power structure entails more than the symbolic and non-symbolic paraphernalia of power; it is also the internalised capital and capital-seeded methods of reasoning that double for science. Imperialism immiserates and imposes cultural surrender upon the South. Most peculiarly, no matter how one approaches the subject of inequality, mainstream theory turns out to be ahistorical. The phenomenal waste read historically, what we all see before us in death and pollution, which is best put as the product of capital in charge of history, will delegitimize capital.

The global commons have been desecrated, yet none researches history as history in the making, leave alone, as a phenomenon unfolding by the laws of capital. The ahistorical mainstream buries social-class memory alongside the concept of class. In its war against labour, capital presumes people are more like things propelled by laws similar to those of physics, in contrast to social laws. Although the past whose laws of development still lay out the conditions to recreate the present and the future, peoples are best turned into things with only a capital-selected recollection of their past. Such is ahistorical positivism. It is a philosophy that rationalises the reign of the commodity. What is given to the senses or experience is there by its own inertia and is truth as predicate of itself. It imprints itself on the mind as it is. There is a divine order to the way things are organised since they tend to equilibrium, just as there was a divine celestial order in the Newtonian solar system, which discloses divinity. The world is an order assembled by deductive reason and discoverable with mathematics. The same critiques that were levied against Newton by Kant (1781 [1999]), or that his (Newton's) argument was predicate without subject, still applies to contemporary positivism. In other words, Kant's forgotten point that things do not relay themselves as they are and that people explain things in relation to *a priori* space and time, as inborn intuitions, still holds. Although interesting, the transcendental-ontological notions of space and time, which colour our views of reality, are insignificant when compared to class biases. Kant's subject is abstract being, whereas real being is historical-social being grounded

in its material class-process. Thence, in much of received theory, the object before us has no social class or *historical reason cum* subject, it is either caused by concrete individualism or cause for itself – *causa sui*. *Prima facie*, these notions run counter to the dialectics of substance-subject. They are without social provenance (Lenin 1909).

In relation to the above, to define capital as a social relation, or subject, and to presume that value is correlated to the higher price of the product of the better machine, the substance, is to limit the definition of value to substance without subject. It does not account for the vested interest of capital, or the fact that capital would like to erase labour as subject altogether to pay nothing in wages. It may be as well to recall that value is not to be abstracted as only the machine or the object on its own. The machine as a thing is an 'empirically given to the senses' concept that accords with positivism, while the machine as some imperfect variation of the ideal form of the machine, is the metaphysical abstraction. In dialectics, however, the machine is the product of the relation of subject to object in their state of becoming. Similarly regarding the value associated with it. Value is both the commodity, object, and its subject, labour the relation class working for wages. When it assumes fetish status, value becomes the relation that governs the reproduction of society as it self-expands. It is the historical relationship that reconstitutes wealth. In the socially necessary labour time consumed at every stage of the production process, there are, in addition to human effort, human lives serving as inputs. In such a social cycle, the consumption/realisation of life is the final realisation stage. War or the war dead are then better suited to close the loop in a turnover cycle whose span is the lifetime of the worker in production rather than the year-end sale of commodities fetching a certain price on a certain market. War as a social production event presupposes and leads social production.

Wars visited upon the nations of the Third World are subject and predicates of value formation processes. It is not only they impart a decisive share of the global social product to the North; they are the preconditions without which surplus labour cannot be ripped away from the working classes. Contingently upon how the money form associates with the power of the subject, whether labour or capital, in the value relation, the shares of value accruing to various strata will get apportioned. At a rudimentary level, the structural genocides and other forms of imperialist aggression should not be discounted from production as power restructuring and value making processes that refound the totality of social production. They engage labour as subject and object, or the labourer expends his labour power on war machinery to produce the decimated labourers. Value-share assessment depends either on the power of the subject in the value relation or the way the money form is contorted to reflect value. More important, every novel commodity in its fetish state speaks for itself as a thing

but conceals its own historical production process. Where to draw the line in the appraisal of value depends on the ideological stance defining the mode of abstraction and categorisation, or on where to demarcate space, time and, ultimately, the power of capital's agencies over concept formation.

Accordingly, value appraisal is a class-biased act in which the money form of value departs from value by the ideological influence of the party judging value. Capital designs the accounting system to accord with its method of valuation, with the view that factor incomes, labour or capital, receive what they deserve based on their respective efforts. Prior to that, capital also designs the power platforms upon which outputs are money valued. It does not however mention that it had beaten the developing world into submission such that its moneyed-output is reduced to a picayune dollar amount. It then shows by foregone conclusion that the low moneyed share of the Third World correlates with its low machinery and low-value added activity. It does not show the sequence of wars that have vanquished the masses. Relatedly, it masks the genus of central wealth, which is its historical surplus value. Wealth is the product of *permanent* colonial and/or imperialist bellicosity, while the historical surplus value is the intellectual and manual labour of many generations, in addition to the relations of power, real as well as ideological/cultural, which compose the weight of history.

Capital also effaces the organic unity of labour. It plays off one section of labour against another and may share more of its wealth with its partnered working class, always with the view of maintaining the supremacy of its relationship. For instance, as neoliberalism bites in Europe, capital rationalises its outcome as a bout of madness in an otherwise pristine history. For instance, Bourdieu (1998) proceeds to correctly elaborate the strength of neoliberalism, however, in a text devoid of the word war or imperialism.

Theory that is de-socialised and de-historicised at its roots has, today more than ever, the means of making itself true and empirically verifiable. In effect, neoliberal discourse is not just one discourse among many. Rather, it is a strong discourse – the way psychiatric discourse is in an asylum ... It is so strong and so hard to combat only because it has on its side all of the forces of a world of relations of forces, a world that it contributes to making what it is. It does this most notably by orienting the economic choices of those who dominate economic relationships. It thus adds its own symbolic force to these relations of forces.

Although Bourdieu highlights the obvious or how capital moulds reality to its historical inclination, he fails to note how could neoliberalism, whose inane logic has more to do with fairy-tales than reality, grips the reason of history

and rises to the status of invincible dogma, all without the war against the Third World. He does not interrogate how could the neoliberal fantasy double for reality unless the threats of war and wars against the developing world are accounted for. While Europe was dizzy with success after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Muslim working classes abroad were 'Islamised' into sub-humans to be droned into defeat. The issue is not put that bourgeois democracy as an exercise of power is itself an intransigent form of capital. Neoliberalism ascends and squeezes the global wage share, including the rents to central working classes, as a result of central working classes integrating rather than collaborating with capital to demolish the peripheral masses, which invertedly reduces the central working classes share from the imperialist loot. This is not an issue of false consciousness on the part of central working classes. They are not credulous in the least. However, transformed into a sub-sphere of capital, they take a cut in pay to reassert the power of capital, its law of value and how it asserts itself in waste production. Just like capital of which they are an integral part, capital's politics holds sway over its economic concerns. Moreover, the white working class can no longer negotiate a higher share of imperialist rents with its partnered circles of capital since less of their services as foot soldiers of empire are required against the already conquered Third World.

All in all, social democracy's blindness to imperialism is not a gaffe, it is more the practical side of Western civilisation whose approach to humanising capital through constitutional welfarism, reinforces fascism. It is argumentatively possible to debate that the Northern working class is not a systemic partner of capital by the fact that it had not yet undertaken larger scale genocide against the 'superfluous' population of the South. However, leaving more or less of the masses alive is the sort of argument that socialist Francois Mitterrand could have signed off on the execution of more Algerians, but he did not. That capital can massacre more but it does not, has to do with '[t]he necessity of the distribution of social labour in definite proportions, which cannot possibly be done away with by a particular form of social production but can only change the mode of its appearance... What can change in historically different circumstances is only the form in which these laws assert themselves. And the form in which this proportional distribution of labour asserts itself' (Marx 1871). Then what follows in a state where the interconnection of social to abstract labour through exchange, the exchange of socially produced waste products, such as the number of dead Algerians, also occurs in definite quantities to reassert the rule of capital. Mitterrand just signed off on a sufficient numbers of executions to maintain colonial rule in Algeria. (see Malye and Stora [2010] for additional information about Mitterrand's role in occupied Algeria).

In addition to its more insidious assaults by its technocratic strata and Save the Children NGOs the Western working class engages in the wars as means of

social reproduction. Labour self-segments and integrates with its local capital through the institutionally self-enforcing social metabolism by which it reproduces (Mészáros 1986). What Mészáros does not mention is the implications of the organicity integrating the Western working class into central capital are such that unless the balance of forces tilts against Northern formations, just as it did against its Algerian and South African settler-colonial formation, these structures cannot come undone. Hitherto, social democratic critique has served as an intelligence gathering tool to re-embellish imperialist aggression rather than a revolutionary platform.

While capital bridges its differences in the universal money form or dollar, it also self-divides as the law of value openly reasserts itself as the law of waste. In capital's 'hierarchical complex ordered in dominance' (Bettelheim 1968), the expansion of waste forces the ruling classes to indulge in the literal consumption of lower-layer ruling-classes farther afield. Since various tiers of capital hold crosscutting as well as contradictory relationships, the rationale 'survival of the fittest' resolves in the consumption of the weakest capital. Reproduction by waste means that leading capital will expand not only by partnering with but also by wasting weaker capitalists along with their social formations.

Central capital wars against enfeebled developing formations and undermines their masses as well as their ruling classes. The anecdote that 'the US is the enemy you must have as a friend' foots the bill. It does so even if these formations are imperialist-friendly since central reproduction requires more socially necessary labour or lives, including those of its partners, snuffed in production. Whereas 'capitalist production squanders human lives, or living-labour, and not only blood and flesh' (Marx 1894), the transformation of waste into use value for the *extended* family of capitalist classes, steps up surplus value making from the industry of liquidating lives. Marx notes:

It is only by dint of the most extravagant waste of individual development that the development of the human race is at all safeguarded and maintained in the epoch of history immediately preceding the conscious reorganisation of society. Since all of the economising here discussed arises from the social nature of labour, it is indeed just this directly social nature of labour which causes the waste of life and health.

Socialisation by the deprivation of the working class of its means of subsistence registers breaking records as workers lose the right to air, water, and nature, the greater commons. Clubbed into submission, a working class that considered some consumables as anti-use value, reincorporates these waste commodities into its diet. Although to compress socially necessary labour time over a worker's life and at the same time augment surplus labour is to reduce

longevity, in times preceding the conscious reorganisation of society (planning), the act of life reduction itself has become the saleable commodity and the premise of the industry of capital.

In a world subjected to the rule of commodities, capital and its money form of value are false reality. It is the appearance that does not reveal the essence. It conceals the horrors of the law of value pressed upon the labour process from which a commodity arises. Essence, the latent ties, internal relations and laws of development that nest at the commodity level, its history, drive the whole system by mauling society, and it never coincides with its appearance. If it did, we would not need science because the appearance of things explains everything (Marx 1894). This progression of essence non-reconciling with appearance was initially Hegel's (1830): 'essence shining forth as appearance in endless intermediation, which is at the same time a unity of self-relation; and existence is developed into a totality, into a world of phenomena – of reflected finitude;' such is my slightly paraphrased caption of it for the purpose of illustration. However, Hegel in upholding the point made by Parmenides that truth must correspond to an unchanging, stable and recognisable identity, and while appeasing the Prussian court, would break rank with his own logic of constant change, or the law of contradiction. He for instance declares that the state as appearance is the consummation of the development of spirit in time, essence, or species being unfolding on its essence. Then again, Hegel's world remains a world of forms or a logical world *a priori* to actuality, he says: 'this identity of being and thought is not however to be taken in a concrete sense, as if we could say that a stone, so far as it has being, is the same as a thinking man. A concrete thing is always very different from the abstract category as such. And in the case of being, we are speaking of nothing concrete: for being is the utterly abstract.' Thence, the idealism of the two worlds: the world of essences constituted of forms that are unchanging and present themselves as truth, and a world of appearances that elides truth because it keeps changing.

Unless interfused in an argument for *a fortiori* purposes, Marx's materialism negates but never shuns the law of identity. It sticks to the law of contradiction as the dynamic of development. For methodological reasons or by the premise of materialist categorisation, which postulates that no concept is reason for itself or there is no given or indeterminate being – that is, no truth in *a priori* forms alone, Marx cannot ascertain that the form of the state is the essence of man; indeed, the state is man's yoke or the principal vehicle for commodifying man.

While on the subject, non-reconciling essence/appearance, or essence as in the laws guiding the development of substance, obviously takes on many forms. It is an appearance or phenomenon of daily life philosophised in different ways in many cultures. Aristotle observed that 'the most distinctive mark of

substance appears to be that, while remaining numerically one and the same, it is capable of admitting contrary qualities. But one and the self-same substance, while retaining its identity, is yet capable of admitting contrary qualities. The same individual person is at one time white, at another black, at one time warm, at another cold, at one time good, at another bad.² Yet just like Hegel, he also strayed from the logic of a self-differencing reality into metaphysical determinedness or that no two contradictory attributes can appertain to the same object. He did so for the same reason that for truth to exist, the subject must be itself, an identity of itself (determination), and like no other. It also must be unchanging, as opposed to a world in a constant state of flux in which reality remains unknown (Heraclitus). For Marx, the dichotomy of 'fixed versus changing' is illusory because the process is a state of becoming in which finitude and infinitude are indistinguishable, while truth is also an iterative process of knowability rising from unknowing to knowing – processual truth. The pragmatists also adhere to processual truth, but the ideological bent there is for truth to be a matter of social consent in regard to a changing reality that could never be fully grasped (Rorty 1998). And just as every philosophy is the ideology of the times, American pragmatism appoints its imperialist society, purportedly with its independent journalism, judiciary, etc., as the jury that deliberates on the truth of the disasters it visits upon the developing world. As ludicrous as this may seem, given that truth is what the mob makes of it, justice can wait until the Western educated class clasps the reins of power and halts the imperialist aggression. Niebyl (no date) remarked that pragmatism was 'thus the proper form in which the intelligentsia in this part of the world (the US) reflected a then still expanding American imperialism,' – a cursory reading of the pragmatic position follows in section 3 below. By pragmatic arbitrations, the wars of the US abroad, just like outlawing abortion in Texas or supporting its capital punishment, are all truth of the times, and they are so just by the 'democratic' consensus of the dominant ideology.

2 Value Reconsidered

The concept value or something is of value or 'worth' something bears a constructive connotation. However, value realises as waste and is falsely perceived to be of use value. It erodes life. Unrestrained surplus value making, or rather waste making, has become the substance of social production. Value is a

2 Categories, Aristotle (c. 350 BCE), <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/categories.1.1.html>.

class-to-class relationship whose war, austerity and pollution or the full gamut of natural degradation, hold fetish dominion over all other social endeavours. War, a pure waste industry, is the building block in the totality of social production. Unchecked, the value relation concretising by the law of value, especially, in its absolute surplus value form, extinguishes life prematurely.

Once society becomes replete with commodification, the labourer and her labour power fuse into one and the same commodified social labour. Lengthening labour time on the factory floor, the prolonging of surplus labour time, would cumulatively require the shortening of the lifetime of labour. Conversely, necessary labour shrinks by the diminution of longevity.

To understand the dynamic of social progress is to understand not only the labour stored in the commodity, which is spent and consumed by society, but also the social forces that set the system's motion in one direction or another. Figuratively, the energy of the system proxying the labour encased as value in the commodities that society consumes fuels it. The apportioning of social labour to this or that activity is subject to the value relation that propels society in time. The gyroscope of the substance of value, whether it is waste or useful, is the balance of the class struggle whose genesis is the value relation. Of concern here is value as the value relation and, subordinately, the object representative of value. Although through its feedback loop, the objects or reified labour inform society on a course of action, the dynamic of society does not depend on the material substance of the commodity *per se*, it rather depends on the social forces abiding by social laws that shape the development of society. There could be an immense number of waste commodities about, but the balance of the class struggle is such that the working class is so defeated that it eats waste. Thence, value is defined as a value relation or a set of contradictions in which, value (socially necessary labour time) or value proper contradicts the use value, while this contradiction of value with use value resolves in exchange value. Privately expropriated from social labour by capital, exchange value in the guise of the universal commodity or the money form signals to society what labour to engage and what commodity to produce in the future, only after the worth of current commodities has been deliberated by the market. Whatever earns profits now, mostly waste, will draw less labour time in the future; the war machines using little labour is a case in point.

Capital, the totality of social production, follows the roadmap handed down by the value contradiction at the heart of the commodity. Each moment of the value relation, from regimenting labour, to cutting lives short, to choosing the appropriate labourers whose wage bill is cheap, to wresting their products from them, to grabbing more of the money form arising upon exchange value, involves coercion by ideological and violent means. All these measures are

overdetermined, that is, they follow no sequential causal order, and occur subject to abstract time, the time at the command of markets, or more protrusively, the social time that annihilates the chronological time available for labour.

In relation to imperialism, the denial of development in resource-abundant and defenceless states crushes the negotiating power of the masses, releases cheapened value for low price. Money, the social convention, reflects the complexity of society. Just as exchange value resolves the initial value contradiction at the core of the commodity, money in its undulating forms and financial instruments absorbs but never resolves the mounting crises of the real economy. It is the form of value designated by capital to correspond to the mass of labour power expended in production and the fetish whose mass of debt holds the future labour of society in bondage. Money's mainstream definition as a unit of account and a store of value must be qualified by its origins in capital constructed accounting systems, and that the value it speaks of is at source the premature death of the working class. Money's fetish status signifies the degree of power capital exercises over labour in the process of expanding value. As such money as a relation that equalises the commodity-object against a money form in order to store value under capital is a negative sum arrangement in which wastefulness eclipses usefulness. The creation of money and its extension in fictional capital co-align with the machination of the law of value, which under the ascendancy of finance spawns imperialism. It specifically lays the groundwork and the trigger for future wars.

The commodity form is the objectified value relation reconstituted by the absolute law of surplus value. This very law is central amongst the laws comprising the essence of the commodity, impelling it to self-expand and conform to its appearance in the money form. What is realistically impossible, the reconciliation of essence and appearance, becomes a possibility by the mysterious force of commodity fetishism acted out by the agencies of dominant ideology. However, the more unequal exchange between wage labour and capital obeys the *diktat* of the law of value, that is by the strength of the chimera of the *apparent* exchange of equivalents, the more the rate of exploitation rises (Marx 1867; Vygotsky no date).

What capitalists in control do to price their products, the mark-downs, and mark-ups, etc., is a resolution of value contradictions mediated by various shades of violence or war and finance, *principally*, imperialism. Even if all values are said to match the total product measured in prices as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross Product (GP) in some chronological timeframe, the latter accounts for capital's consumption during successive stages of production, this would still be erroneous because the GDP or GP, like any other mainstream concept is capital-class constructed, while what is value is class

defined. Additionally, even if the class-conscious Kalecki system of accounts, which considers the incomes of the separate departments and classes (Sawyer 1985), is used to tap into the history of consumption, it would still not be possible to derive an equivalent money form of value or distinguish where in the value process is the share of working class or that of the Southern formation without being subjective and arbitrary. That is not only because the GDP and GPs moneyed measures consider financial operations or at times depreciation as value-added (Hudson 2018a), so they are counted as part of new output when they are not supposed to – or any other run of the mill critique of utilitarian accounts, like total consumption may be a revealing of preferences, when the working class cannot choose what it consumes. The discrepancy is rather at an *ontological* level since the symbolic structure of prices cannot coincide with concrete labour just like any symbol of an object cannot capture the fullness of the object; however, add to that the bias of each class that claims the value is its product. At this stage in history and with so much waste, capital may shift blame and claim that labour had created the mess. Although questions of degree matter, price and value are two different substances and time contingent historical processes, which cannot add or agree with the law of identity and non-contradiction.³

Smith (2017) argued that under recent globalisation a higher share of value was contributed by low-waged Southern workers subjected to super-exploitation employment. As argued in chapter one, salient economic data are hypostatized utilitarian forms. Moreover, why is it super-exploitation with the better machine rather than colonial genocide or the commercial exploitation, which is the source of more value. Implicitly, this approach still pins value on the quality of the machine and the usefulness of the commodity. Is it not the case that the structurally genocided with high-tech machinery of more use-value to capital?

Prices that figure in the system of national accounts, whose utilitarian value concepts *become* value added, are themselves prices circularly determined within a specific power balance and chronologically truncated time span. They are values conceived of one-sidedly. Instead of defining a social turnover cycle by society's social reproduction time, capital chooses its calendar dates for the turnover cycle. At every stage in capital's cycle, the price system is

3 Posited as such, the law of identity is taken to mean A is A, which is an understanding proposed by Aristotle. What Aristotle meant by that law of identity and non-contradiction then was that while thinking, every term must retain the same meaning, or be univocal, which was part of his metaphysics or the assertion that truth despite drawing on experience to remould the form, would still be defined by determinate forms of objects not shared with or in contradiction to any other object.

doctored or auto-doctors by construction, to conceal the value it has deducted from the social costs of labour reproduction. More important, even in an earnest endeavour to assess value capture from the Third World and shed the falsity of national accounts systems, assessing the power of the subject in the value relation, which has *ex-ante* pre-set the grounds for the appearance of the money form of value, would still distort value expressed in price. Apart from the identities that all that is sane in wealth is the product of labour and all that is waste is the product of capital, the money form in wages or profits mirrors the power and the vested interest of the corresponding subject, either labour or capital. While the price to power relation is circuitous – price morphs into power and power morphs into price – it is the weaker or stronger (the strength of) subject in value that has already pre-figured the basis of price formation. Thence, before testing for the provenance and magnitude of value in price, the strength of subject ought to be investigated.

Although Sraffa (1960) addresses profit rates measured by a price assessment tracing the history of the capital stock, the problem of aggregation (adding up different type of physical capitals) remains conceptually challenging. It may be recalled that in price terms the profit rate is the ratio of profits to the capital stock, and while the capital stock determines the profit rate, the profit rate *circularly* determines the capital stock. Moreover, since capital's instruments and machines are different and composed of different types of labour inputs across their production histories, Sraffa suggests that it is plausible to date the labour inputs that went into the making of differing capital instruments to better their aggregated estimates, and subsequently, assess profit rates. However, profits as well as capital stocks are denominated in moneyed terms, which are *ex-ante* prefigured by capital or the history of power relations, or power over the market, that lay out the foundation for price formation. From a Marxian position, the Sraffa-mechanism would still be *insufficient* because although circularity is inevitable in thought, the more appropriate point would be to assess the weight of the historical forces behind the recurrence of a phenomenon. The commodities owned by labour go for cheap prices, while capital's are dear. Past prices of inputs are not to be confused with natural prices, prices of production or the long-term average costs. These are sub-categories of prices in various schools of classical political economy toward which ordinary prices gravitate over the long run. The Marxian price of production is distinct from market price, since the latter contains profits, which are the mediated surplus labour swindled during production.

Capital, like everything else, is dead by its intrinsic inclinations in the long term, and it does all it can to avoid the long term. In point of fact, what capital does to avoid the long term is the circumstance upon which Marx establishes the laws of capital. The prices used to date inputs are spur of the moment

instantiations of class power translated into market power. They are the prices on offer in the market at the time of purchase. Thus, dating inputs by past prices of labour bereft of capital's history of repression and its market agencies, which formulates the basis of price formation, reduces Sraffa's approach to a substantive intermediation of value to prices (Ricardian concrete value without social subject); that is, prices in the past are assumed to contain all the information required about the history of repression behind their appearance, when in fact the role of instantaneous price is to hide the continuum of repression and unequal exchange across time. Each price was a coverup for the repression that resulted in a related rate of exploitation, which in turn determined the departure of value from price. The labourer is paid little because he is bombed into submission. It is impossible in thought not to be tautological to some degree; however, Sraffa's prices are the realisations of commodities/things trading in a supply and demand framework, as opposed to being the realisations of historical social subjects in the act of social reproduction. In vivid contrast to such *Ricardian* position, the Marxian point that capital prices its capital stock as well the conditions for the prices of labour and its products requires a dating of the balance of power of the class struggle mapped against past market powers that define the prices of inputs and outputs at every stage of production. What is chosen from the past to explain the present is best done when it de-mystifies the conditions of the past that appear in the present – the de-reification. Every past input as value is integratedly object/subject, which means it is the dynamics of class subjects, or the category of history sub-defined as a social class, which furnishes the social platforms for objects/commodities to be priced at any point in time.

For capital to be properly aggregated, the power of the capital class must be aggregated first. For instance, the wage shares, or the amalgamated prices of labour power, are derived *after* the decision to invest for profits; hence, it is not only the cheapness of labour in wages that informs capital's decision to invest for profits, it is primarily the class power of capital over labour. The ratio of labour to capital's power presenting itself foremost in imperialist aggression, wars, sanctions, etc., and its spinoff as ideological hegemony lays down the social conditions for the formation of prices, which beforehand also prepares the grounds for the profit rates to rise.

What Sraffa and his debaters do not admit is that every past labour input is in principal part a war or a structural genocide that was a value relation in itself and a value relation to other processes by its relationship to other production/value relationships reconstituting the historical surplus value. As such, it is this acknowledgement of changes in the stock of historical surplus value, the power structure that preconfigures the historical imperatives and rules into

which every other player must reflexively react and/or adapt to, which is the requisite for the quantitative analysis of the intermediation between prices summed into profits and surplus value. The historical surplus value may be rethought of as capital-imposed predestination similar in structure to an ideological railroad that has been laid out for developing countries to roll onto leaving them no other alternatives.

Illustratively, the US at the time of writing scrambles to contain China, but not out of some psychosis reflecting its recurrent mass shootings, it does so because its ratcheted power lays out the policy frames, which usurp more value for price from across the world. To Marxian, in contrast to Sraffian method, to 'date' the labour inputs that make up the capital stock and commodities is to first develop a proxy-measure for the speed at which the world surrenders and unconsciously kowtows the policies of the US without adopting social alternatives. Although non-synchronously, the rate of profit rises with the rate of imperialist aggression, which raises imperialist power and its attendant value usurpation. Relatedly, the rate of value transfer to empire in the post-Soviet collapse period and its neoliberalism is set to be higher for instance than the rate when China begins to represent an alternative model. Goldman (2020) notes that China's strategic investment in digital and physical infrastructure and, its economic outreach to the developing world, has nearly doubled in recent years, which makes US's efforts to extricate it from the Third World rather futile. China linked, created a world dependent on its commodity, and thusly eased the costs of de-linking. China's belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is anathema to imperialism.

Without consideration of imperialist aggression as an industry on its own and as relative surplus value through its power reconfiguration, value transfers from the Third world will be small. *A fortiori*, Western value equivalations in dollars are faulty because the historical surplus value is also the store of knowledge from which the conceptual frameworks employed in quantification are built. Equally important, the Western concept of value drops the interface of imperialist class power with the Southern commodity as substance and its money form. It omits the surplus value, which emerges from the realisation of the decimated Southern labour, as well as the power captured by that very decimation. In social reproduction, wars against the South, hunger, etc., are moments of social production as well as final realisation stages. They are the phenomena whose reasons require understanding before one engages in an academic debate on the extent of the disaster. As phenomena, they are the demonstration that class is the existential condition of the masses or their state of being. Suffice it to say that because class is the social relation that organises social reproduction or de-reproduction, then it is value as the phenomenal

waste, which must be re-interpreted as a value relation. By the identity value is waste, society transforms into a waste producing and consuming totality. Against this reality, pedantic empiricists seek statistical evidence whether the death toll of their wars and austerity policies, *viz.*, the crushing weight of their ideology in structural genocide, is at ten or twenty million lives in a year, or whether the planet ceases to support much life in 30 or 50 years. Such questions are superfluous when it is the *essence* of capital as waste that must be adequately conceptualised before measurements. One cannot posit that capital brings forth progress by innate dynamics and then assess its death toll as some unwanted consequence or externality that could be minimised with some tax or technical casuistry – the meliorism.

At this barbaric historical stage relative to the availability of resources across time (past and future), it is pellucidly clear that capitalism is not an ascendant stage in history. What is misconceived, or to see only the good side of capital, cannot be adequately measured. One cannot name a monkey a giraffe and weigh the monkey as if one is weighing a giraffe. Such is the senselessness of Western Marxism. Additionally, what is misconceived, the ideologically construed conceptual framework, which has become second nature to ‘non-organic’ intellectuals, propels the pro-systemic currents of history. Discerning the ideas that counter the dominant current is the differentiating quality of organic intellectuality (Gramsci 1971). Brun and Hersch (1976) were off the mark when they wrote ‘Western intellectuals may be advanced in academic knowledge, but they are somewhat retarded in ideological and political consciousness,’ since without recognising the overbearing weight of history, academic standards no matter how neutral they seem, are simply ideological. Accordingly, the mainstream debate based on capital-concocted data, positioned within the avalanche of capital’s ideology, serves as additional prompts for Western war machines or as supplementary information for the ‘efficient market hypothesis’ to digest.

However, inasmuch as the numbers produced by capital obfuscate, they also serve a functional purpose. They meter the effectiveness of marginal returns on militarism and neoliberalism. The lesser the death tolls or the higher longevity nudge capital to heighten its aggressiveness. That the Western moral jury is out to lunch by pragmatic philosophy stipulations proves the dictum that philosophers express the class conditions of their times. In post-modern as well as pragmatist philosophical interpretations of twentieth century events, truth cannot correspond to the real world because there are no strict laws of the mind that mental events can be explained with as do laws of nature to events in nature (Pragmatism). Truth belongs to the way meaning is constructed in sentences (semantics) while correspondence to objective reality is severed. The rejection of the notion that social construction corresponds to shifting objective facts leads to the ridiculous position that most beliefs must be true

because people have rationalised their beliefs and thus provided enough predicates for what they utter (Davidson 2005). As such, the case may be that some widely held superstitions establish truth. Better yet, by some class-dominant resource allocation mechanism, these very superstitions could improve the lot of those who count as more relevant humans because they convinced the rest that they are superior or *uber-mensch*. If not by logical or mathematical forms, truth for the mainstream holds by pragmatic convention and by the reality that they need to bomb the Third World to establish their wealth. In a world wholly fathomed by a human mind, which references its previous class-bound knowledge, truth becomes a class construct or what the thingified people make of it by consensus. Tainted by preconceived class prejudices, pragmatic truth is the bourgeois position against the correspondence theory of truth, or the Hegelian knowability thesis which posits that processually things are true relative to a future knowledge of these things.

By such class rationale or 'do what you can as you go' criterion of truth, imperialist wars proceed by Western democratic consensus and are *just and true* until 'voted' otherwise by the democratic citizens of the West. Although recognised as real, the colonial or imperialist wars are posited as not yet available to sense experience or much of which is unknown (noumenal), and it is this lacuna, which postpones judgment on when to stop the aggression or until more is known about the reasons for their wars of aggression. Wars are out of sight, out of mind. They are not the objective fact perpetuated by the fetishes of the imperialist class to serve its vested interest; they are events, imposed upon the mind, whose truth is not fully discoverable. Accordingly, they are the necessary evil to which the collection of data, which enquires into whether ten or twenty million people perished under imperialist assault, possibly serves to insulate the English academic from guilt when the numbers of their victims are lower by a million or two. To boot, these gradational estimates enhance *utilitarian welfare*. The point that nine million instead of ten million are structurally mowed down means that less are harmed and more are happier; hence, more welfare. Realistically, however, and by what capital unconsciously brings into being as it ruthlessly totalises by reified feedback from capital-unwanted consequences (Mészáros [1995] – the invisible capital making its appearance according to Marx [1867]), or as the data on the number of imperialism's victims fall, which is the unwanted consequence of capital, the imperialist class re-composes itself for a new round of war and austerity.

While the rate of structural genocide is the basis for the rate of surplus value, for the Eurocentric forces enthralled with pragmatism, partial facts correspond to reality as truth, and by inference, only class-desirable facts press society to act morally. The erasure of the categorical imperative because its

universality does not fit ruling-class particularities, leads to shortcuts (heuristics/eclecticisms) of all sorts to de-generalise ethical conduct. Morality may then be brought down to the level of lifeboat ethics, in which the gunning down of refugees at sea to keep Europe safe or deliver welfare for the majority whites is ethical (Hardin 1968); actually, Hardin subtitles his paper with the caption 'the population problem has no technical solution, it requires a fundamental extension in morality.' Another twisted imperialist moralisation may be observed in the speeches of US presidents justifying war on the basis of protecting our way of life (this catchphrase is referred back to Walzer [1977], but many pundits have since adopted this thesis). Notice it is not life that a *just* class war must protect, but the way of life, meaning the continuity of rising profits rates and central wages by imperialist looting.

3 Pragmatism *contra* Value

Although Aristotle posited that 'experience is almost identified with science and art, but really science and art come to men through experience; for experience made art ... and when from many notions gained by experience one universal judgement about a class of objects is produced' (Aristotle's *Metaphysics*),⁴ the point that progress is driven by developments in objective knowledge is something of an observable occurrence. The then debate with Plato is to argue that what is knowable is not only an attribute of unchanging *a priori* forms, it could also arise from what practice imparts. For both metaphysicians, however, truth was in thought or a mental image about the definition of the object as it is and nothing else. Yet for an empiricist tradition of pragmatism whose reality is presumed impenetrable by thought because knowledge *absolutely* fails to catch up with its developments, what is knowable cannot be given to the senses. The unknown pollutes what is known leaving no room for the certainty required to establish truth. At a preliminary level, the absence of forms accounts for the absence of truth. Since no form could fully correspond to an object in such inter-penetrating reality, or because no object is determinate being on its own, truth is set by convention.

Despite pragmatism's adherence to process, the infinitude of the whole colours its approach to truth. However, process-wise, the whole is the mediation of parts, which becomes itself a knowable part – knowable not known.

4 Art is not art in the modern-day sense, but the Greek *technē* or expertise in any profession gained by experience. Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.html>

The forgotten whole is a small planet peppered with the tombs of fallen French and English colonial soldiers. This part *becomes* planet 'is only what it is' (determinate being) and is *knowable* just as any other of its constituent parts. Epistemology since Hegel is about knowability rather than knowing, and what is knowable now remains true relative to a better future understanding of it.

The pragmatists adhere to process philosophy and recognise the constancy of change but still impose upon it a static formal notion, the absolute unknowability. Not much has improved since pre-Socratic philosophy, for something to be known with certainty as truth, it must be known in its unchanging form. Although, such is inconsistent with pragmatism's processual precepts, its reflection of reality is tailored in thought to produce a philosophy in line with an imperialist class position, as noted by Niebyl above. As such, the value contribution of the South to the North is known to be denominated in dollars despite the uncertainty of knowledge, and it is gauged as minimally significant despite the labour of death. Moreover, the North is said to exploit the South to bring it progress. Again, Robinson's chestnut that 'it is better to be exploited by capitalism than otherwise' connotes that the unexploited developing world will be stuck in its impoverished position or barbarism and not become as the 'well to do' and civilised but exploited English workers. These are positions that parallel the Eurocentrism, which omit wars as value processes or cohere with the advance of imperialism.

However, theory is also about adequacy in the process of conceptualisation. To avoid ludicrousness or too much detail, just enough has to be carved out of the sediments of thought and the rubble of formalisations, to convey a meaningful picture of the object in motion. Conversely, when the concept is class constructed and precludes significant details or dynamics from objective reality, it tends to run a course separate from the real development of the object under consideration. Consider the omission of imperialist wars as value processes and predicates of other value processes. That is, wars are not considered as production processes, and constituents of other production processes. The lopped off concept of value, or value relations without wars, does not adequately transfigure against the fullness of production relations. Since it ignores war and repression as an enterprise uniting both aggressor and aggressed, it reduces the value contribution of the South to its GDP or to the puny money transfers via Third World trade or capital accounts. Not to forget, wars visited upon the developing world also integrate them with capital, and as a form of exploitation it supposedly civilises them. The social processes that primarily caused these developing nations moneyed amounts representative of value to be small relative to Western incomes are exactly the social value relations of

war, colonialism, austerity, etc. Conversely, the reality and the causes of the imperialist wars cannot be rationalised on the basis of the representative dollar amounts that the developing world transfers to empire. Such position begs the question why NATO should bomb anywhere or even engage with the developing world when its moneyed and value contributions to the West count for so little. Why bomb for insignificant moneyed rents is the issue that demonstrates the point about theory tailored to class interest. When the value transfers in moneyed forms to empire are insignificant, what is adduced *for the sake of convenience* is that the West does not bomb for profits. It does so to assist victims at a cost to itself with its R2P. One arrives at this result in a roundabout way from the class-influenced construction of concepts, or by intellectual corruption acted out as science. Either Third-World value is immaterial to the US or NATO bombs to save respectively.

At a further remove, correspondence truth is not about thought *absolutely* catching up with real developments. That is both impossible and absurd. Just like there is knowledge whose development is subjective, there is also knowledge whose content is objective, whose truth is objective, and whose substance is practice determined (Lenin 1909). Lange (1945) sees that although ideology is inescapable, 'ideologies have no interpersonal validity,' while appeal to facts reconfirms 'the objective validity of scientific statements.' The verdict on adequacy/validity for him rests on the basis that facts are interpersonal or available to everyone and subjected to the rules of scientific procedure. From an analytical angle (Lange's lens), it is still possible despite the falsehood of ideology, or equally despite some form of pragmatic consensus, to account for an objective truth by mere consideration of the role of practice in re-categorising theoretical concepts. Interpersonal comparison ferrets out truth in ideology or, similarly, out of some fantastical self-sufficient act, neither in excess or deficiency, unfolding in reality as truth – the pragmatist position.

In the above, the consensus of pragmatism as predicate of truth is also the consensus fashioned by the dominant ideological proclivities. However, truth may be put as a moment of the false (Debord [1967] – Debord rephrases Hegel [1807]), or to rectify Aristotle's reversion to forms with Engels (1886) position: bettering the arts is a continuously recorrected process in which truth is objective, concrete, and time and space determined. The pragmatist self-fulfilment or self-sufficiency of the act in objective reality as truth is judged against a rather unrealisable congruence of an idea with its practice. They infer their consensual truth from the untenable position that logical truth is factual truth. To re-elucidate the pragmatic position, because truth is altogether tenuous, then what is truth is simply what people approve as true (Rorty 1998; Davidson 2005). Oddly, the permanent uncertainty associated with the search for truth

around which there is consensus is itself a truth. The pragmatists unknowingly observe that the theories borne out by capital are falsities just as capital itself is a fiction hypostasised by the divisiveness of the working class. However, they do not observe that instance when the working-class critique of capital reappears as truth, or a critique spinning off the new event (the newness) that breaks the monotony of received theory (Badiou 2005).

All the same, Lange's analytical approach misses the intermediation of events from concrete to abstract through class activity as opposed to atomistic practice or deliberations – it is not abstract individuals who are at work verifying theories, it is social individuals or classes. Lange distinguishes individual scientists outside of class who are capable of denying capital's enforced truth, which capital thrusts upon society, or those who refuse to take orders. Indeed, there are many such heroic persons in the graveyard of history. Nothing of individual relevance is above class or history. Emancipation is a class act and not about Hollywood-like stars appreciating the necessity of shorter working days or the laws of transformation to communism. It is not about reducing the working day to six hours in Denmark, while such shortening of the workday necessarily shortens life in the South. The apprehension of necessity must extend past the immediately apparent if it is to broach freedom and the commensurate infrastructure that supports freedom (Nimtz 2000). Exemplified in revolutionary consciousness and organisation, it is the class personifying social man that appreciates the historical necessity. Such necessity must overturn private property in wealth and knowledge. The idea lost in Lange's, capital levels the particular conditions by totalising them through violent class mediatory frameworks. In contradistinction to psychological individuality, the social class, with its sub-categorical social man, is the historically relevant social being.

Not to dwell on the inexhaustible truth debate, correspondence *cum* processual truth is the state of becoming of practice reflected in thought, or the fusion of the abstract with the concrete in the *law* prefiguring their state of becoming, which is itself informed by the history of the object under consideration. History here denudates the social conditions totalised by the reified signals of capital. Laws of thought capture the systemic necessity, or the process knowable.

Since no idea can be fully borne out in practice, measurements are therefore not about proving the isomorphism of thought with fact. Truth is concrete and, once more, it is space and time specific (Engels 1886). It also corresponds to reality depending on the definition of the law governing the development of the object, or the mode of abstraction carried out to include and exclude certain characteristics in the development of the object captured in a concept.

Karl Niebyl (1946) had singled out the incompleteness associated with projecting one-sided abstractions such as marginal utility and productivity, concepts erected upon the notion of abstract as opposed to social man, onto the whole of society. He warned that as 'mathematical tools used *pragmatically* for the direct purposes of special-interest groups ... they veiled the increase in the margin of error if applied to the whole of economic society, and actually emphasised the character of this procedure as one of rationalisation or of ideology formation' (Niebyl 1946). Anticipating Badiou's 'newness or the new event', Niebyl understood that uncovering truth in dynamic processes must overcome the motionlessness of received theory, or its conservatism, which is recreated by dominant ideology (Niebyl 1940b).

By reducing social man to one-sided abstract man, the mainstream is then capable through propaganda to even cut down abstract man form a category that includes all humans to only Western white man. That is not so because logic, or any mode of thinking, hinders the universal consideration of man. After the statutory end of slavery, no philosophy can dare say that it only deals with a certain phenotypical group of people and not others. However, *the objective class reality to which bourgeois theory must adhere blocks such universal representation of man*. There are by the identities instituted and gradationally empowered by capital a novel category of the natural slave of Hellenistic times resurrected in modern times. The veiled Arab women and Africans are examples of such compartmentalisations. By the class divide, the Third World and its power – whatever is left of that – is partly represented in any Western concepts of man to count as real lives. Wasted lives that significantly contribute to value formation are completely unaccounted for. That is not so by the pejorative tones of Orientalist discourse. Such is just icing on the cake. The real schism begins with the definition of the concept of man as white man nesting in value, which metastasises in the class divide, which excludes the Third World by outright devastation from the process of wealth making.

4 The Time in Value

Western accounting systems that designate the ratio of price to value are solipsistic exercises. They concoct Third World value in the mind and disregard it in the real world. An equally demanding work effort in the South would be priced or waged at several folds less than its comparable activity in the North. The worth of human life in terms of life insurance payoff matches the stock of wealth per capita or, adjacently, the dollar-worth of lives is as disparate as the North-South wage divide. By faux intellectualism, capital distinguishes the South as a

separate and unrelated entity, despite the fact that the North has anteriorly formulated Southern policies, typically under the watchful eye of US military bases.

Through the medium of indebting the developing nation, the financial containment, the centre controls a nation's monetary policy and, at once, its product market. Additionally, by pricing the ravaged nation's real output in relation to its dollar through the exchange rate peg, the imperialist influences local wages. Altogether, by setting the class-power terms of trade – not only the barter or the price terms of trade but what precedes them in terms of social power, the centre determines a lower wage per value of labour power, or the same effort delivered at work. Although developing nations may hunger for food by IFI austerity or are NATO-bombed on TV screens, they are perceived as insignificant/unrelated to the totality of social production. To argue the misperception because white classes are incapable of parting with strongly held beliefs when confronted with the facts, or to speak of cognitive dissonance, is misleading. As organic partners of capital, the white classes determine that the process of Third World preclusion is a natural order, just as slavery was in Hellenistic times. At a foundational level, the class reason for the perpetuation of such process is the social consciousness of the North rearticulated with its social being through the de-reproduction of the South.

In parallel to the unfeasible essence appearance identity, prices proportionate value, or prices coincide with values, only in the impossible state when subject collapses into object. In the phantasmal condition, or as people become things and fully internalise capital, prices become equal to values – not that there will be any surplus labour left, since there is no labour to squeeze. In an idealised world, or when price and value are equal, essence, the constituting laws behind price formation, is also appearance. For something to be only itself is a state of the world that makes science redundant. How unrealistic is that: in the example of Hegel's definition of the state as the realisation of the ethical idea, state and the individual coincide as essence-appearance, subject or man matches object or state– both content and form whose structure is the state. Such is the murkiness of Hegelian thought because even in Western bourgeois democracies where most have introjected capital as natural, there are minority-strata that seriously oppose the imperialism of their central state. In Marxian terms, the realisation of man as species-being in the state is a continuous process of restructuring society through class-power balances that broker the function of the state even under socialism. Thus, in a world structured around class relations, subject and object, 'the socially organised workers regimented by a labour process and producing the commodity' and 'the commodity itself' respectively, depart from each other by the mutually reinforcing ideological and material powers of

ruling classes. The latter powers dictate the degree of alienation. In the Third World, the power form is the synergy between imperialist ideology and guns.

Correspondingly, a price measure of value is biased. The relationship of value to price, or the magnitude of value represented in the price that earmarks the rate of exploitation and value transfers to empire, is not a stable rule or some positive correlation of value with price across time. Fully conceptualised, price as the magnitude of value is a relation defined by the specific balance of class forces in a specific time and space.

To identify the real worth of commodities or the developing world's contribution to value, one ought to probe beyond appearances and assess the social forces that mediate the actuality before us, or the social class hard at work to midwife the present as history. In pre-capitalist trade devoid of the fetishism that stands between the act and its outcome, it was straightforward to spot that a saddle took as many hours to produce as two picks; such transparency is no longer so under capital (Engels 1847). Under capitalism, what the working class does, and the outcome of its activity are determined by a market for exchange between things, whose profit-making purpose, rather than the betterment of society, self-realises as it camouflages the actual labour that went into the making of its products. Mészáros (1995) characterises the charade as 'beyond the immediate existence of things' is beyond the false reality put forth by capital. With that in mind, research in political economy becomes a process of de-mystification.

Is there more to capital than the contradiction attendant upon the private expropriation of socially produced wealth? At an elementary level, capital is an abstract but real social/class relation, totalising social production in the historical stage of capitalism. By way of functionality, capital is a social relationship that self-perpetuates by cementing its class rule; hence, power politics takes precedence over economics. Once capitalism sets in as the universal state, it is neither the development in the productive forces nor the number of unemployed, which define whether a mode of production is modern capitalist or antiquated pre-capitalist. A mode of production is the unity of a historically determined level of development in the productive forces whose subject is a set of production relations appertaining to that specific level of development in the productive forces – save the case of rupture (Marx 1867). As the development of the productive forces attains a level to which the out-dated relations of production no longer correspond, the tendency is for such relations of production to change in order to reflect or deny, contingently upon the state of revolutionary consciousness, the expropriation of the surplus associated with the newly formed productive forces. The expropriation is carried out by war, which as a power exercise imbricates social production. The central class formation enforces

and universalises the laws of capital. It is also the class structure that subsumes all labouring classes to command history. Its objective undercurrents homogenise labour, or thrust a unity upon the diversity of the division of labour, while its subjective policies go to extremes in order to widen the gaps between global labour. Amin (2010) argues the universality of capitalism in reference to Emmanuel (1972) as follows.

Still, despite this permanent asymmetry, capitalism is one and indivisible. Capitalism is not the United States and Germany, with India and Ethiopia only 'halfway' capitalist. Capitalism is the United States and India, Germany and Ethiopia, taken together. This means that labour-power has but a single value, that which is associated with the level of development of the productive forces taken globally (the General Intellect on that scale). In answer to the polemical argument that had been put against him – how can one compare the value of an hour of work in Congo to that of a labour-hour in the United States? – Arghiri Emmanuel wrote: just as one compares the value of an hour's work by a New York hairdresser to that of an hour's labour by a worker in Detroit. You have to be consistent. You cannot invoke 'inescapable' globalization when it suits you and refuse to consider it when you find it troublesome!

A more concrete way of putting the universalism of capital across is to recall the point made in chapter two that nothing escapes the guns of capital. Capital's global reach is its universalism. As capital unconsciously operates by atomistic totalisation, it commodifies and homogenises all it reaches (Lukács 1919). Although to expand commodification in scope is to lay claim to all human and natural resources, the process of auto-commodification, that people willingly engage in reproducing capital through its wage system, is a matter of scale that visibly protrudes in the deracination/waste of labour. Once people are refugees or on the verge of hunger to be wasted, the commodification becomes a matter of scale or gains in depth.

Some wages may appear as zero or, to put it differently, some labour may appear as unpaid, however, all labour is paid differentially as the residual of the surplus forming the wage bill is redistributed amongst members of the working class. Through power and market signals, the ruling class decides the share of living wages out of the social product and the time for production, the time to engage and act subject to its minimum socially necessary labour time requirements. It outlines the policy whose interface decides whether two or three family members will have to work for below-subsistence wages. It may also deem that the life expectancy of the majority in Africa and the Arab World

will have to be cut down by some 30 or 40 years to satisfy a specific output of prematurely wasted humans. Perlman (1969) concludes that surplus time is the time of life exchanged for survival; however, as theorised so far, surplus time is the time of life deducted from historically determined survivability.

The duration and the intensity of the social activity that people experience in chronological time to produce commodities, is expropriated, socialised, commanded by capital, alienated and/or is independent of the direct producers or society. Capital commodifies nearly everything and what appears as un-commodified in the present is a commodity cross-realised in its organic interrelatedness to other commodities and their corresponding money form. Any commodity by its very state of being gestates or is in waiting to be realised. Although a price associated with it at an exact point in time looms on the horizon, its implicit price either through the venue of social reproduction or financialisation cross-realises with the prices of all other commodities. Consider air pollution paid for at this time in terms of tonnage per dollar and paid for before the current time in medical bills as an example. Although outside the scope of this work, the complexity is not easily reducible to a deductive procedure, but a systems approach may formalise or model the process.

Capital disciplines people and tables their lives into its time and price records. It decides the duration of the turnover cycle. It may report the profits from a car it sold in quarterly intervals, while the much greater wasted lives and nature it has used to produce the car, were each a production sphere whose waste products gestate and are realised. All the while, capital rewires the working class into competing to be wasted or into paying for the waste. The money and time accounting books of capital veneer the value books or the lifetime reproduction events of society.

Under profit motives buoyed by commodification, the real purpose of production would be more about the enlargement of the waste industry and the waste commodity rather than halting the degradation of the environment. For capital, the issue of war and austerity that waste human lives differs from the case of pollutants as waste. Capital flaunts its bogus admiration for nature but is reluctant to do so for the human lives it extinguishes in the Third World. It is less willing to openly exchange these wasted lives for an amount in compensation as it does the CO₂. Canada and Australia have provided some token reimbursement for their genocides of the natives, while France has just recently (2021) toyed with an apology for massacring Algerians.⁵ The political right as

5 The Algerian state estimates the death toll in Algeria between 1830 and 1961 at nearly seven million people to ten million people, see <https://elhiwar.dz/event/213168/>. Such is tantamount to a depopulation strategy. However, in 'No repentance nor apologies for colonial abuses in In

the emphatic expression of history in the centre is aware that imperialism is a power play in which innocent lives in the South must be prematurely ended. It calls to openly disavow the human rights rhetoric because at times the US might have to bomb for national interests. Beneath the jingoism, it does not see the dead are the desired output of their bombing, or the commodity for which a price markup per scalp enters their accounts as corporate profits.⁶ All in all, capital designated indemnification of victims of genocide serves as a demand-pull stimulus that counteracts the downside of capital's business cycle. Just like the welfare payments to Native Indians or Aborigines, which raise morbidity or boost demand for drugs and alcohol on reservations. Recollecting, redistribution by tapping into the circulation sphere is rent fallout from imperialist wars for the Northern classes to partner with capital. Token reparation to Aborigines boils down to an advertisement that beautifies capital such that it may continue to massacre more Muslims abroad instead of natives. Adequate reparations occur when capital ceases to aver to its crimes because it is too weak to call for reconciliation and whitewash its history.

As proposed above, to do political economy is to demystify the value relations covered up by capital's system of prices and accounts. Pollution and the wasted lives were never free of charge. In past imperialist wars or during the emission of pollutants in the last century, a price tag per human being or per ton of CO₂ did not register in capital's accounts, but it had certainly been incurred as lesser moneyed costs covering social reproduction and as a reduction in necessary labour. Waste was respectively exhibited in price or value forms. As explained in the previous chapter, this lower necessary labour occurs by the production of the immediate death of social nature and the lesser longevity or with fewer people surviving over the social turnover cycle or the time it takes to reproduce society. The knock-on effect of the death of social nature and the defeat of the masses rebalances the power platform that ship value via

Algeria, says Macron the issue becomes a Pandora's box given the genocides of France in West Africa and farther afield. Although, in times of strength, imperialism admits its crimes because it is in a position to water down the impact by placating the minority's living descendants (as Canada did with native Indians), reconciliation with a strong Algeria is unlikely. The words of president Houari Boumedienne, 'there are mountains of skulls between us and France' are daily re-invoked by the state to rekindles popular memory. Canada's genocide policy, to leave but a small percentage of natives alive, is a more efficient imperial strategy than France's. <https://www.france24.com/en/france/20210120-no-repentance-nor-apologies-for-colonial-abuses-in-algeria-says-macron>

- 6 Scalping was an incentive to recruit settler-fighters. Colonial authorities introduced a program of scalp hunting that became a permanent and long-lasting element of settler warfare against indigenous nations in the US (Dunbar-Ortiz 2015).

financial channels to empire. As a part of society dies off in waste production for a cost-price, or in the industry by which society earns less to reproduce, the industry of dying itself is labour time that regenerates surplus value. The diminished population count over the turnover cycle relative to its longevity potential is the output and a barometer of the intensity of the rate of surplus value.

Unless capital kills for sports, capital-liquidated or auto-liquidated society at the behest of capital is a source of surplus value and profits. Air and lives were not free then, but they were used for free in industry, realised for a zero price on the then accounts of the owners of the means of production, while at the same time being continuously realised for a positive price/cost incurred by society. In the countless acts of production that comprise social reproduction, every capital-unpaid-for social natural input is a commodity whose cost to society re-enters the market and exchanges for a price. Seen from the vantage point of social reproduction, the exponential death of social nature contributed to profits then and will contribute again. The moneyed form of wasted social nature is implicit in the prevailing credit and it signals value by the degree to which development in the South departs from its potential. Relatedly, an inverse signifier of lost development and indicator of surplus value in money form is the estimated price for the wasted social nature, including the irreversible damage incurred by the planet. Now these in view of current planetary conditions are phantasmagorical.

The commodification of the planet means that most of what exists is subject to a value relation whose actualisation as a commodity enters the market and exchanges for an equivalent in money form. By bending chronological time to its demands (e.g., nine to five workdays or longevity), capital, or the social relation reconstituting society, organises the time of the social order and foreshadows the time of realisation. Whether the concrete labour time of the production of commodities is compressed or relaxed in chronological time, it will *ex post facto* obey the demands of minimum socially necessary labour time. Ideally for capital, optimal labour conditions are those that squeeze effort and life out of labour in the shortest chronological time to meet competitive pressures (production prices) and float above average profits. Through market deliberations/mediations, the concrete labour becomes the abstract labour time. It sells for a wage in the case of the labour power commodity, or price in the case of the salient commodity. Put differently, the logically preferred conditions of production or the consumption of labour power in production referenced in chronological time is literally how fast human life expires at work to meet the requisites of social/abstract time. Historically, capital balances its inherent/logical proclivities with its political requisites for resilience.

Just to be sure, the abstract or real social time of which I speak is the time of impersonal history or history whose genome is the capital relation. This concrete become abstract time commanded by history serves to rearrange labour conditions for maximum surplus value. It manifests in the degree of misery experienced by society in concrete time. Abstract time is the essence of time whose appearance is concrete time. The latter is subordinate to the former by the *rapport de force* between capital and labour. Just like conventional time, abstract time has a past, present and a future, however, these co-determine each other because the signals of the market for the consumption of time in social reproduction condition the quality of life. For instance, there are profits to be made from the stock of future pollution, as such, capital pollutes more in the present to cram people's lives in time and space at a future date. Abstract time does not tick like a clock at equally spaced intervals. It is the intensity of hardship at work, or the event time of life squeezed out of labour at different rates between the seconds of the clock. Socially-lived or abstract time defines the discomfort of the monotonous routine on assembly lines, the humiliation in the food bank queues or the horror of the Iraqis under US bombs. True to form, this social time feels like it lasts longer in the chronological time spent toiling at work; however, it is more than just a feeling, it is also the time encapsulated in products alienated from workers. Time lost to work instead of leisure and years of life lost. Abstract time is not the existentialist angst related to the arbitrary existence of being human. On account of class repression, abstract time becomes the social time that lasts long for everyone because working classes lose the leisure hours or the time of life that they can spend on their own. It is event time, or anecdotally, it is travelling from California to New Zealand and arriving a day later, which does not mean that the person had skipped a day of life. Society loses the free time in which revolutionary intellectuals may write about the conditions of the working class rather than a fascist strolling outside his cottage in the German countryside to contemplate the vapid thrownness of existence (in reference to Martin Heidegger's German man who ponders his own death after a long life in contrast to a Yemeni man to whom death is salvation from the hunger and war during his life).

Social or real time is quite different from Heidegger's personal time which springs from personal despair, the remorseless baring on the individual's inner nothingness (Heidegger 1927). Lukács notes that such time (Heidegger's) is associated with pseudo-objectivism. He says: 'in Heidegger's *diseased philosophy*, however, real time is de-secularized and becomes devoid of content, theological, concentrated purely on the element of personal decision. So the whole pretentious point of Heidegger's philosophy of time and history does not go beyond his ontology of everyday life. For its content is still merely the inner

life of the modern philistine frightened to death by nothingness, a nonentity in himself, and gradually becoming aware of his nothingness' my emphasis (Lukács 1980). The decisions and practice of dominant capital/impersonal history create the ideological context and supersede personal time. They create the intellectual whose *diseased* philosophy says 'pay attention elsewhere' or look into yourself instead of looking at what the imperialist class is visiting upon the developing world.

The market derived time or *abstract* time is elevated into a fetish of 'dollars per hours of work' that dominates social activities (Lukács 1919; Ilyenkov 1961). How then does this abstract time concretise as the depredation of human lives? To demonstrate, a diversion into the origins of abstractness is required. Abstract in Marxian thought is not an object of the mind or an idea unrelated to the world. It is a concept that separates and captures in thought an actual side of phenomena. In its historical development, the abstract is a specific relationship whose process matures into a concrete, or the many sided developed whole. This definition originates with Hegel (1831), although its development there is about spiritual ascent in contrast to the Marx's primacy of materialist conditions. In skeletal form, the abstract is a moment of the concrete, whereas the concrete is the dialectic interrelatedness of dismembered wholeness (Ilyenkov 1961). For Marx, the abstract as well as the concrete, are dialectical categories reconstituted in thought by scrutinising the systemic dynamics at the heart of the object, albeit contingently upon its own materialist circumstances. Unlike the ahistorical neoclassical method of 'add new info' from newly observed phenomena, or from the immediacy that has not been explained, to check a model's theoretical stability, the concrete is the abstract historically unfolding by its inner contradictions. In contradistinction to empiricism's selective observations from facts instantaneously overturning past theories (critical rationalism), Marxian theory is the systemisation of the transformation of the abstract into the concrete by its inherent laws of development. Every concept refers to an aspect of reality whose history has been explored. It is mediated and not immediate or 'given.' Whereas vulgar economics bases much of its findings on given this and given that, like given competitive prices, Marxian science is exactly about explaining the 'given.'

In the critical rationalist approach, knowledge develops faced with the inapposite question that reality remains an unknown, instead of reality becoming progressively knowable relative to the even more progressively knowable. This epistemological score has long been settled when Hegel debunked Kant's unknowable noumena. All one can add is the social forces commanding the development of science through transformative iterations and ruptures are possible because as Althusser (1976) points out ideology is not the utter

falsity that falsifies everything. It is the imaginary, which may or may not correspond to a relation posited by science. When critiqued from a working-class perspective, or stripped of mystification, ideology ceases to block the development of truth. The metaphysical proposition that things are unknowable contrasts with theological omniscience or truth as an attribute of changeless forms. Using noumena, or things that hypothetically cannot be experienced, to examine whether ideologically commanded science elicits the development of knowledge runs counter to the factual developments already observed.

For Ilyenkov (1961), the ascent from the abstract to the concrete connects analytically developed concepts in a system, which answers the objective dismemberment of the object as well as the unity of all its aspects. The ascendance from part to whole presupposes the ascension from the concrete perceived by contemplation to the abstract (the holistic or universal quality). Separate aspects of the object are understood as they are regarded as parts of the whole or only in relation to the independent movement of the whole (Ilyenkov 1961). Analysis begins with the sensed object, the actuality fully developed, and works its way to a mental concept, or concrete, of the object. Relative to actuality, the intermediation of the abstract and the concrete is real, but in thought it belongs to subjective dialectics; obviously, it cannot be fully mapped against the observable phenomenon. Althusser and Balibar (1970) posit that the real is one thing while thought about the real is another because of 'the primacy of the real over thought about the real, since thought about the real presupposes the existence of the real independent of that thought; and two, the materialist thesis of the specificity of thought, and of the thought process, with respect to the real and the real process.' The former point may be illustrated with reality being ahead of theory, while the latter point implies that a fuller understanding of reality must not pass final judgment with metaphysical forms on a rather dynamic reality. The abstract has an actual referent in history, which is not just the object but also by the fact that thought about the object is itself presupposed by the existence the very object under consideration. This circularity, thought predicated by material being, is the unity of theory and practice.

With the above detour in mind, abstract time is the time that society condenses in social production per money wages. This exploitation writ large expands the production of waste as it reduces the longevity of people situated within a social turnover time whose compression leaves more surplus labour to capital. Since value realised as material substance is concrete labour time embodied in commodities conditioned by abstract time, the struggle for time is a struggle to regulate the reproduction of labour. Moreover, since labour-power has a value associated with the global level of development of the productive forces (Amin 2010; Emmanuel 1972), the struggle to minimise

labour time per moneyed unit concretises in the industry of thinning the stock of labourers and labour power available to society.

Capital ratchets its control of the labour process by its intertwined domination of space and time. While imperialist wars extend hegemony over the South, they also reduce the outlays on real wages per unit of time delivered in production. The time targeted for regulation includes the time encapsulated as value invested in human lives – the reduction of the social cost of the reproduction of labour. Not only human effort but also human lives are used as inputs/outputs in civilian-end use commodity production, waste commodities or military-end use commodities – more generally, waste accumulation. Labour's struggle to control time, equally, the struggle to repossess time, is also a struggle to re-appropriate its social product as in working shorter working days or living longer relative to the times. The grounds upon which labour struggles are defined by the social nature of the wage system, which makes the wage bill the equivalent of the wages of the global working class whose labour has across time created wealth. Perlman (1969) designates the contributions of many peoples throughout history to social production processes, which culminate in the current conditions of social reproduction, as follows.

In the capitalist process of production, the worker embodies or materialises his alienated living energy in an inert object by using instruments which are embodiments of other people's activity. Sophisticated industrial instruments embody the intellectual and manual activity of countless generations of inventors, improvers and producers from all corners of the globe and from varied forms of society. The instruments in themselves are inert objects; they are material embodiments of living activity, but are not themselves alive. The only active agent in the production process is the living labourer.

The living labourers of today build upon the labour of the past. Furthermore, the social nature of wages and production imply that all social resources are engaged in production and reproduction even if they appear to be passive and waiting to be deployed. After all, people and nature are commodities self-expanding to the demands of social or abstract time, which realise by the biased bent of imperialism. In the North, shorter workdays become an asset to capital and its adjunct classes as they implicate longer days and realise the shorter lives elsewhere in the developing world. An anti-systemic struggle in the North would be a struggle for the homogenisation of labour, bridging wage gaps and working conditions across the globe; not just 'let us get more at the expense of others.' A larger portion of wages in the North should not mean a lower wage share altogether in the South.

5 The Struggle for Time

To put things in perspective, the categories of Marx's capital undergo a process of ascent from abstract to concrete. Labour is said to be abstract or concrete, social or private depending on how the concept of labour is situated within historical developments, or the aspects chosen out of the conditions of the labour process. Each abstraction belongs to a specific moment of historical development captured in thought as capitalism moves from simple to mature stages. Wage labour itself is a social relationship that develops only in relation to its capitalist context. To expand the point above, unlike the metaphysical notion the abstract is not an *a priori* 'form' of which the real object is some deviant representation, while the concrete is not the fullness of the sensory perceived object. Both abstract and concrete are logical or mental categories dissected from a multifarious phenomenon (Ilyenkov 1977). To abstract or to select what is relevant to forge the building block of a system of thought is to designate the principal relationship that defines the *modus operandi* of the objective system. As is well known, for Adam Smith, the central concept was the division of labour. For the neoclassicals, it is subjective utility. For Marx, it is the commodity *qua* value, alienated and objective.

Another issue defining conceptual relevance is historical determination. For example, the concept market under capitalism wholly differs from a pre-capitalist market – since much of life nowadays depends on markets and it did not then, similarly for the concepts money, labour, rents, interest rates, etc. What is crucial for social reproduction, such as wage labour or its product, the commodity, or the division of labour, any of these may be picked as a starting abstraction/concept for analysing a system. Whichever concept is chosen, its content must be historically specific. It must appertain to a determined period in history whose laws differ from those of previous phases. The concept market must then be qualified with the adjective capitalist such that it becomes a capitalist market. In other words, the concept/abstraction relating to the object of investigation cannot be for reasons of adequacy transhistorical, or that which refers to the same unchanging thing at all times.

Furthermore, labour's characterisation as abstract or concrete is a reflection upon its real development in time. Concrete labour, the actual personal effort afforded to production becomes abstract after market-deliberations. Similarly, for concrete and abstract time. Both categories, abstract and concrete, are an intermediation of one another depending on how time is consumed to the demands of production and/or as guided by markets. The state of becoming of abstract and concrete time is their measure or historical time. Together they represent the process by which capital socialises labour time in production to be alienated and expropriated.

Capital's socialisation *qua* commodification is totalising, and so is the time in which it operates. Abstract time is by definition social and totalising (Lukács 1919; Ilyenkov 1961). For capital to preserve its rate of exploitation, more leisure time in the North must imply less leisure and longevity in the South – always, it must be recalled in period specific to available capacity and not in relation to ancient times. Abstract time, the time that derives from the exigencies of exchange, dictates concrete time, the chronological time it takes to produce commodities. Such time is not only the hours on the clock in a factory. It is also the time of the labour process as a whole or the time in which the working class, with all its elements, productive and unproductive, including the time of mothers raising children, get consumed subject to the pressures of minimum socially necessary labour time. Abstract time, a subdivision of capital, also signals the optimal rate for the transformation of use into exchange value or the frequency of realisation – how capital reduces the time between the production of the commodity and its sale.

However, as a conceptual moment in capital or social production, abstract time is not at the origin of capital's command system. It is, as everything else under capitalism, a derivative or a secondary moment of fetishism or the rule of commodities. Although the real agent of history is the social class, in relation to its forms of consciousness subsumed in the class struggle, the fetish of the commodity is the surrogate of the capital class in command. At a broader level, the real agent of history is history itself auto-differentiating under the spell of the commodity. Such is a variation upon the Althusserian position that the agent is the motor class struggle not an isolated/analysed stratum in the class struggle. For Althusser (1964), it is futile to distinguish from within the heap of class relations, the overdetermined history, couched within the class struggle a specific class as historical subject. In a restless and overdetermined process, to designate a specific form of the social class as subject is undue reductivism. That is, to assign a subject of history from time independent and still moments, when the very interaction of the system or its dynamic already instantiates in the outcomes given in the structures of the class struggle before us, is sophistry. Since the results of the class struggle reveal its class composition, to define with precision the leading class by mentally dismembering the class struggle to its components is superfluous speculation. Developments, national security or insecurity, incomes are all outcomes of the class struggle *qua* history. For the South to develop to one degree or another is to overturn capital to one degree or another. In the order of determination within the totality, capital the leading relation and resultant of the class struggle in correspondence to the dominance of the rule of commodities, is the kernel relation; subordinately, in equation-like precision, the more alienated the working class becomes from its social product, the more the rule of commodities.

The regulation of concrete time is the regulation of the reproduction of the working class and its associated costs. Such regulation unfolds in the wars, slavery, union busting, etc., or history as it happens. Reading the position above inversely, history subservient to the reason of the commodity is the dialectical measure or the mediated contradiction between abstract and concrete time tempered by the power balance of the class struggle. Events such as how many people are put to work, for how much time, how many are shed as unemployed, what conditions force them to work for almost nothing, or literally killed, are the 'wanted consequences' of capital. The frequency of the dislocations and their magnitudes are the consequences of the law of value as it extirpates labour to allocate resources. The law of value subjugated to the fetishism of commodities operates under the onus of the submission of concrete to abstract time, or how much of life should be compressed between the hourly intervals of conventional or chronological time. Such collapse of abstract into concrete time rolls out in social time, the quality of life.

Fetishism, itself an attendant moment upon alienation, cloaks the social-class agency. Colloquially, things or market signals did what went wrong not people. Uninhibited fetishism is the substratum of the logical precepts that pollutes perception. Man begins to perceive and process reality subject to the given without a horizon of change made possible by revolutionary alternatives. Labour fails to recognise itself as a commodity and lives the illusion of capital (Lukács 1919). It reasserts the fictitiousness of capital. Alienation, fetishism and reification are moments of capital's dynamics, reciprocally reconditioning each other to reproduce dominant ideology. Fetishism occupies a distinct position in Marx's logical ordering because it 'clings to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities and which is therefore inseparable from commodity-production' (Marx 1867). It is there from the start, and with it comes the promotion of false reality via the production of ideology.

The fetishism of late capitalism has reinforced waste production and consumption such that the wasting of man as a commodity has come to stand atop the pinnacle of the 'divine' fetishist order. Bombing the poor spectacularised on TV screens is a high rating show. The obfuscation is more than just the dulling of the working class. It has become the near complete severance of social consciousness from social being. This has occurred because reification, the thingification of subject as a mode of thought, penetrated the deeper layers of knowledge acquisition, seized the structure and process of thought, such that to play on David Bohm's implicate order, people end up not thinking, but reorganising their prejudices.

For example, wars and pollution are said to be ephemeral conditions that technological advance will redress. However, more than a century of

technological advance has cost hundreds of millions of lives in wars and war-related deaths, not to mention the calamity of the environment. Positive tech-determinism and meliorism are the reification or the attribution of causality to things. Worse yet, it is the very people that have incurred the tragedy that actually reify the subject. Machines are said to be the salvation of man. To reiterate, it is not the thing or the commodity, or the metaphysically abstract idea of time, which triggers the march of history, it is the ruling class in relation to other classes, or the class struggle. History takes its cue from mystified market operations in which 'the worker denies himself ... does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind' in return for a wage (Marx 1844).

Yet despite the obviousness that to control time, labour must own the real and ideological means of production, the concussion sustained by the beaten masses had resulted in loss of vision. Labour has been commodified and its struggle to de-commodify itself remains short of target. The de-alienation of labour is its reclamation not only the commodities it produces, but also the environment, and altogether the means of social reproduction expropriated by capital. The time that labour struggles for is a time structured around its control of production, or one derived from asserting its historical role as subject in the value relation projected onto the class struggle.

6 Abstract Time Mis-defined

As defined above, abstract time is a secondary moment of the value relation associated with the phase in which the commodity restructures the social-time resolution of its value versus use-value contradiction by the signals of exchange value. The concrete time society spends in production or in an interval of chronological time contributes to social reproduction or de-reproduction by how markets price the life/effort of labour expended in an hour or a lifetime work. Abstract time, abstract labour or social labour are subdivisions of the value relation whose equivalent is the universal commodity or the money form. Abstract time is also society's effort spent in the making of all commodities including labour power. The time it takes to produce commodities is deliberated *ex-post* by market instituted exchange, or the price/wage informs society and producers how much effort should be squeezed from labour in an hour of work to stay competitive and above average profits. It is the concrete labour time condensed in chronological time, which obliges the law of value as it minimises necessary labour or the social wage bill. The abstract and the concrete side of time cross-condition each other and manifest in the changes

to the conditions of livelihood associated with the necessity to reduce socially necessary labour time. Getting more out of labour for less in the shortest period may be a partial caption of the abstract time relation. Saying it is the social relation of capital, which reconstitutes society and organises the time of social labour in line with the production of surplus value is a wider understanding of abstract time.

As to the falsification of abstract time, Postone's (1995) work is exemplary and a more emphatic pro-imperialist version of Western Marxism. He epitomises the liberal stance that both socialism and imperialism are wrong, however, the socialist states are more pernicious and deserve the aggression they sustain at the hands of the Western world. He prioritises the role of abstract time in an 'abstract' or rather metaphysical fashion within historical development. Instead of laying the accent on a capital class represented in dominant/class ideology as the motor of history, Postone lets stand reified social time for capital itself – capital as *a posteriori* resultant of class activity. It is his European space and time delimited concept of capital, which delimits and corrupts all other conceptual subdivisions. Like Western Marxism, he theorises the European space of capital, but not capital the totality. To be specific regarding capital's subdivisions, he poses time as a concept sectioned from a process (the transition) and assumes all that dynamic thereafter must be assessed by reference to that fixed form. His abstract time, like a supernatural force, is a priori form of society yet runs the affairs of society. As such, the historical subject transmutes into the form of the ticking clock. With the class struggle gone missing, totality, the interconnections of the whole, also goes missing.

Whereas the abstract and the concrete are categories of subjective dialectics, Postone treats these as I mentioned earlier in the manner non-sensed (unseen) and sensed (seen) respectively. He further splits abstract from concrete time in an undialectical way. He says that the 'historical transition from a mode of time reckoning based on variable hours to one based on constant hours implicitly marks the emergence of abstract time, of *time as an independent variable*' (my emphasis). He then declares relatedly in the same text that 'abstract time, on the other hand, by which I mean uniform, continuous, homogeneous, empty time, is independent of events.' How could abstract time be dependent on the transition, which is a series of events, and then become an independent variable and independent of the events that followed – abstract time becomes a 'so be it' divine fiat or a form unrelated to further events and experience.

Postone also failed to reference the part to the whole or the concrete back to the abstract or even notice the continuum of ascent from the abstract to the concrete. His remark that 'concrete time as any sort of time that is a *dependent variable* – a function of events or actions,' is qualified elsewhere in the text as

'the amount of time that determines a single commodity's magnitude of value, which is *a dependent variable*. The time itself, however, has become independent of activity-whether individual, social, or natural. It has become *an independent variable*, measured in constant continuous, commensurable, and interchangeable conventional units (hours, minutes, seconds), which serves as absolute measure of motion and of labour *qua* expenditure' (my emphasis). If such relation was to hold, that is if abstract time acted as an independent variable in an equation that influences the dependent variable, concrete time, without addressing the unity of abstract and concrete (the parts) and their qualitative change represented in historical relationship (the totality), capital would have long perished as result of excessive myopia. Capital would be guiding its activity more so with regression analysis upon stationary data series and less so with intelligence agencies, NGO's and Think Tanks to shape/tap into the temperament of the masses in order to abort their potential revolts – the dependent and independent variable terms arise from confounding econometric analysis with history. Similar statistical causality, often modelled upon a stationary series, predicts the risks within some margin of error but not the historical uncertainty or structural changes. With a formalised sketch of dynamic processes, the historical uncertainty ceases to be, and revolts against imperialism in places like Palestine become of the same quality as capital as opposed to being the negation of capital.

Abstract and concrete times reinforce each other and sustain capital by balancing the degree to which exploitation physically and spiritually grinds down labour along with its potential for anti-systemic consciousness/practice. Unlike Postone's metaphysical abstract, abstract time is a dialectical universal, or the generalised material circumstance, constantly re-manifest in the universal equivalent, or the money form. Money or credit are underwritten by the time of labour of society or longevity and are related to value forming processes such as wars, sweatshops, and union crushing, etc., which are the concrete labour conditions and their concrete time. Recalling, there is a relentless and qualitatively shifting interface between the fetish-commanded dynamic of capital and its realisation in real outcomes that ought to be demystified for a sounder understating of social processes. All the same, Postone's statistical-like concepts of abstract and/or concrete time, or independent and dependent variables respectively, are removed from continuous social activity. By substituting historical causation with statistical causation, or by conscripting reality into mathematical language (dependent or independent variables), such logicism precludes a revolutionary consciousness attendant upon a negation of the reason of a history soaked with the auto-expansion dynamic of the commodity.

Postone further criticises Lukacs (1919) 'who (Lukacs) equates capitalism with static bourgeois relations and posits the dynamic totality, the historical dialectic, as the standpoint of the critique of capitalism.' He elaborates his (Postone's) position on 'the structure of social relations characteristic of capitalism takes the form of a quasi-natural opposition between an abstract universal dimension and one of thingly nature ...' accordingly, and this is the gist of what he aims at, 'the temporal moment of that structure also has the form of an apparently non-social and nonhistorical opposition between an abstract formal dimension and one of concrete process. These oppositions, however, are not between capitalist and non-capitalist moments, but, like the related opposition between positive-rational and romantic forms of thought, they remain entirely within the framework of capitalist relations.' Oddly he labels Lukacs' approach static, yet he employs statistical jargon, such that he considers his position on history as an 'automatic historical flow related intrinsically to the social domination of abstract time.' Notice the resemblance of 'automatic flow' with the flow of a stationary time series. The endogeneity of fixed abstract time causing concrete time is a relation of independent to dependent variables in a stochastic process. In such formal approach, structure, quality and historical types must be the same across chronological time. As such, opposition to capital will never be anti-systemic and, structurally as a result of the uniformity of elements in content, Cuba will be as repressive as the US.

For Postone, however, there is no immediacy (the given phenomenon) because he tailored in thought a part of reality that he would like to see and assumed that such was all there is out there. His processing (rationalisation) of events is about idea deviating from an idea. That is why in such world of removed from events, it is possible to posit that the left, which supported Vietnam when it was aggressed and divided the world into camps was wrong because such is a deviation from the pure idea of non-aggression. He notes that the left 'too often found itself in the position of being the mirror image of Western nationalists' (Postone 2010). Along the same lines, he also stresses that people who regard the struggle against Israel as progressive are taking something reactionary and regarding it as progressive. The violence of imperialism spearheaded by Zionism abroad, which is the thrust of global capital accumulation by means of waste, fades from the picture (Kadri 2020). In his totality of pure ideas, he could equate imperialism with socialism. Labour, time, society, etc. as ideas are only formal notions of their forms without palpable being. If in the odd case any of his concepts designate something real, they do so in reference to Western democracy, cultural or psychological traits of the more advanced countries – the Achilles heel of the Frankfurt School. In relation to the Frankfurt school and broader Western Marxism, Rockhill (2022) aptly notes that

such Marxism bereft of class struggle 'can thereby be redefined as a kind of anti-communist critical theory that is not directly connected to class struggle from below but rather freely criticises all forms of domination, and which ultimately sides with capitalist control societies over and against the purported fascist horrors of powerful socialist states.' He further adds that 'their criticisms of capitalism pale in comparison to their uncompromising condemnation of socialism. Their brand of critical theory ultimately leads to an acceptance of the capitalist order since socialism is judged to be far worse. Not unlike most of the other fashionable discourses in the capitalist academy, they proffer a critical theory that we might call ABS theory: Anything but Socialism.'

In addition to animating the senses-wise concrete vis-à-vis the metaphysical abstract, which erases process and qualitative differences, Postone reduces abstract time to the time that 'productive labour' imparts to production. As time to produce becomes shorter with technological progress or with higher productivity, less labour is demanded, and class struggle is no longer consigned to labour versus capital but between that time which reduces the demand for labour and labour (Postone 1995). This removes capital and its class agencies from the scene. Employment cannot be explained with the fact that machines may assimilate less labour as they improve over time. Had this been the case and on account of improving technology, much of the world's workforce would be unemployed, when in fact, all must work to reproduce even for below-subsistence wages. Postone adopts an arithmetic definition of unemployment, which is '[t]he use of machinery at less than full capacity results in the unemployment of thousands of workers' (Postone 2005). Anyways, such is not an argument since employment and wages are political stabilisation measures or punitive policies that discipline the working class (Kalecki 1943). His is a statement of form but not fact, which is trite and outside the context of value relations or the relation by which capital stabilises through its employment strategies.

Aside from the truism that better machines shed labour, elsewhere, he argues that socialist nations replace the market by the state and that 'means that mass unemployment immediately would entail a political crisis, one that would call the system into question. State capitalism necessarily requires full employment to legitimate itself.' State capitalism is another hollow concept, for all states in the era of capitalism must be capitalist. Not that this only implies that full employment in aggressed socialist countries is undesired because it legitimates the capitalism of the state, it also errs on the side of the free market, its price system and abstract time as inescapable realities. The firm may create employment per machine to produce, but capital creates employment primarily for political stabilisation purposes (Kalecki 1943). In

the interface between the individual capitalist and capital, it is capital that lays down the rules. Developing nations are confronted with the problems of building capacity, which requires the full mobilisation of resources in price systems independent of imperialist meddling. Society is all productive in social reproduction *contra* the putative one man to one machine productivity. The only reality one is sure of is the one man behind the machine is a social labourer – as opposed to an abstract labourer – predicated by society. However, Postone's productivity is only the abstract man to machine ratio in still time. Observably so, defeated labour personifies capital and pits itself against the labour-saving machine – his labour is a multitude of abstract labourers; however, that is not a theory about anything. It is a narrowly selected observation, which does not account for time (history) or space, and therefore, a fiction amongst other fictions of capital adopted by a commodified intellectual. Set against the development of labour in time and space, the discovery of the laws which make the very participation of labour in the wage system a form that recreates capital amounts to a picture of reality consistent with the law of value.

However, Postone's 'man to machine ratio' criterion is typical of Western Marxism's. Only the US General-Motors type of worker is productive, while the mothers dying under US bombs in the developing world are unproductive. Instead of theory detailing how the absolute law of surplus value requires imperialist massacres to create the wealth that Northern nations, wealth appears as *deus ex machina* outside the mediation of earlier than historically determined deaths. Theory would address the law of movement or capital's knack to safeguard its rule by means of employing some of its adjunct working class in the industry of crushing other working classes. It would look into how in the imperialist centre, the whole welfare structure produces more educated and healthier workers, or rather fitter soldiers of empire, as subsidiaries of militarism.

7 Productivity and Productive Labour

The productivity of the masses in the developing world is real and measurable in the growth of global output set against the abjection of the South. As posulated so far, the dollar productivity of the South depends on who counts the dollars, why dollars worth is less in the South, and the timeframe of accounts. To just focus on GM type Workers with machines that reduce labour time per unit of output voids the purpose of science, which is to state in space and time terms 'what is' (Dunham 1947). 'What is' in Dunham's conceptual frame of reference, are the working people organised in working classes against capitalists

organised in ruling classes and their representative institutions that own the machines, which is a contradiction that must be maintained over time for surplus value to be created. To express a different reality, or '*what is not*' and conceal the interest and advantage of powerful groups is social mythology, a theory that reduces reality to meaningless verbal acrobatics (my emphasis as a re-interpretation of Dunham [1947]).

The ratio of abstract man to physical machine is partially referenced in reality. However, neither abstract man nor physical machines exist independently of the organising social relation. The productive labour of which Western Marxism speaks is just the one-man hours of work per machine denominated in dollars. Such man is ahistorical. Not that symbolising a thing without history is unfeasible, but man without history is man without society or a mother and father, which cannot be. Such unreal man incurs imaginary drudgery in theoretical time and produces hypothetical commodities. His productive labour is no different than the neoclassical measure of effective labour hours-input into production. The hours of labour are calculated for the US factory without calculating the time of their navy pilots and their victims on the grounds abroad fetching the dead and the raw materials for the factory of the North at a convenable price to work with. To slightly reword Kafka, it is only such illusory concept of time that makes it possible for us to speak of the day of judgment by that name; in reality it is a summary court in perpetual session. The real workers are subjected to the labour process, or the process whose purpose is to cut the costs of social reproduction. The real man on the job is the man forcefully socialised by deracination, alienated from his society and who delivers at work what society has invested in him and, by implication, productivity is social productivity. Of all the realised products, the thrust of the absolute law of surplus value is for waste products to sell and be regarded as necessarily useful either on their own or by absence of alternatives to society.

Western Marxism's totality of social production is also a set of relations between atomised/unmediated people. It is not class relations ordered in hierarchical dominance, which determine the movement of the whole, it is the resultant matrix of individualistic volitions situated outside history. Instead of the historical forces, it treats the reified forms of capital that imperialism has created as its starting point of analysis; thence, the absence of the historical surplus value.

Totality as the concrete conception of history, or capitalism in its current phase, is capital metamorphosed into the imperialist class as the decisive link that leads the whole social structure. Capital through imperialist practice rearticulates other modes of production, with the centre remaining in control. The resources of the developing world underwritten against the dollar are the

property of that central capital, and these are either used, slaughtered or put on hold to be engaged in some variant of the business of slaughter. To recollect, the act of imperialist war or the killing itself, the premature extinguishing of life in structural genocide, is a production activity that over the lifetime of the worker leaves more surplus labour to turn into capital.

Moreover, to identify the idea of 'machines reducing employment' with the dynamic of capital, is to substitute a formal equation depicting the impact of capital for the web of class relation to which the capital relation is central. The development of the machine-thing is its depreciation as it occupies various spaces. Such is not the development of capital, the social relation in time, which is the subject of machines and other things capital produces. While reductionism elucidates thought, reduction-wise one may pick the relation of capital to machine that is best illustrated as Northern weaponry engages the South. Moreover, the collapse of capital into machine would reflect the development of capital by the narrow benchmark of depreciation or appreciation of physical capital. Ludicrously, if followed through, the social totality becomes a totality of various machines determined by their rates of depreciation. However, capital totalises by class relations that dominate to organise the social conditions to ensure its continuity. By the nonsensical identity of capital with machine spun into totality, the reasons for underdevelopment in the South would be the lack of better machines, not imperialism.

Doubtless, better machines associate with higher productivity. Productivity accounts for higher value-added stages of production. Incidentally, value added, or better put waste-added, is the additional tech-know how step in the processing of a product in production, which is a different category from surplus value. The latter is the relation that morphs surplus labour into capital (Marx 1867). The concept of productive labour may be mentally isolated, interred in thought to designate a moment of social production. For instance, a worker on the assembly line is productive, while the secretary is unproductive, and so on. As such, it is a dismembered relation of a production process captured in thought. As a one-sided concept, productive labour can be chopped off from the more mature concept of living labour to elucidate the mediatory relations that underlie production. In isolation, it may explain a particular process of production, but it cannot explain the fullness of reality or reproduction. In social labour, the labour of social reproduction, which brings to life both productive and unproductive labour, productive labour alone is nowhere to be seen in immediacy, but somewhere to be detected in the mediated actuality, the concreteness perceived by the mind that occurs as result of necessary laws. What is before us in mature form (immediacy) is the working class whose members by their very coming into existence are interrelatedly productive and altogether

earn the social wage to reproduce. In Western Marxist vernacular, the productive labour associated with better machines is not the global working class *qua* living labour, which is the producer of surplus value, it is rather white labour, integrated into capital, which most adds to the heap of commodities. From an optic rooted in reality, however, it is not the workers in Northern factories that account for the making of sane wealth because they run the better machines in some moment of time-asymmetric reproduction, on the contrary, because white classes are part of capital, which together with capital, sway the content of wealth toward waste, which as it (the waste) turns into dead labour, enhances the productivity of the premature death of labourers as commodities.

To build an argument for wealth based on the category productive labour is a thought exercise that exaggerates a specific activity from living labour for the sake of analysis. In its abstract state, productive labour as a concept and as used by Marx is a relationship to itself and to its environment. It is a one-sided view of the real, in contrast to being only the form of 'productive labour,' whose material instantiation is some deviation from its logical being. The Marxian category of productive labour exists in a state of flux with its counter image, unproductive labour, re-actualised in living labour. Labour altogether is re-engaged, disengaged, wasted, or commodified by capital. Drawing on Ilyenkov (1974), productive and unproductive labour are subdivisions of the broader measure living labour. For Marx, dialectical categories are not self-reasoned ideas whose intermediation is actuality, like Hegel's (1807 and 1857) categories of being and nothingness, for that is metaphysics with a dialectical twist. Marx's category is not *cause for itself or indeterminate being*. Each concept is simultaneously determined in itself *and as* a relationship to its material circumstances. The ideas as forms in Marx differed from Hegel because although both reason from appearance to essence, Hegel's phenomenology was the result of inherent tensions within the spirit proper, as opposed to materialist circumstances reconditioning states of consciousness. In the former (Hegel), the immanence of the logic determines the path of development, in the latter (Marx) the logic is unearthed from the development of material conditions. Marxian logic is contingent upon the state of becoming of each object in relation to itself and other objects in its course of development.

Once removed from their historical contexts, notions such as productive/unproductive labour become self-contained and cannot be reassembled to reconstitute the totality form which they were derived. Productive labour is not additive, and naturally, the social product as an incremental build-up of value flows cannot be adequately inferred from it. The market-deliberations reference value to abstract labour, which is the social labour of the working class as a whole entombed in the abstract moneyed form. The determination

of value flows rests in the conditions of the labour process. A more divided labour leaves more to capital in surplus labour. To say there is more or less productive labour does not determine the rate of surplus value. Productivity will remain dependent upon the independent developments of the productive forces, while the rate of surplus value will depend on the degree of capital's repression emergent in the exploitation of labour.

The one-sided categories of productive and unproductive labour ascend from their particular conditions to their general condition, which is social labour, and as always by the mediation of the market and the response of labour to the operations of the law of value. Productive and unproductive labour are historically specific processes and are not apart or sequential in time. They are concomitant and relations within the totality of capital. They are both activities of commodified waged and unwaged social labour. The Eurocentric accent on productive labour being responsible for wealth falsely projects that one-sided particular onto the whole. Such biased induction purports that the social labour of society is only that of the 'more productive' Western class. However, to recognise social class is to recognise its cross-border and organic ties. A class in relation to other classes is history, while history's historical surplus value fates the developing world to produce a wealth to which it is not entitled.

The law of value devolved in the aggressions of capital exemplifies abstract time dictated as concrete time. It will regiment the working class to fit its life's length and quality of life into capital's chronological time. Abstract time is the product and instigator of the coercion exercised to produce with minimum necessary labour. Although dubbed abstract, abstract time is social time, and it is as real and felt as the coercion exercised. However, in a totality of pure ideas, imperialism as the practice of the law of value does not coerce real people, it represses the forms of these people. As such, real but abstract time should cease to evolve into a real possibility, or the abstract time resulting from coercion, because the events and subjects that presuppose it, are only formal. Accordingly, the interaction of the abstract and the concrete in thought resolves to become possible and actual solely by logical necessity, in contrast, to necessity borne out by a unity of logic and history. For instance, Hegel (1831) speaking of real possibility, typically considers immediate actuality to be a variation upon the forms. True to his idealism, he posits the primacy of real possibility in forms as predicates of actual objects or events rather than as the synergy of thought with material circumstances.

When this externality (of actuality) is thus developed into a circle of the two categories of possibility and immediate actuality, showing the intermediation of the one by the other, it is what is called real possibility.

Being such a circle, further, it is the totality, and thus the content, the actual fact or affair in its all-round definiteness. While in like manner, if we look at the distinction between the two characteristics in this unity, it realises the concrete totality of the form, the immediate self-translation of inner into outer, and of outer into inner... . Developed actuality, as the coincident alternation of inner and outer, the alternation of their opposite motions combined into a single motion, is necessity.

Although it is rather difficult to cite Hegel without seeming to quote out of context, here he says, albeit in caricature form, that ideas necessarily bear what is real into existence; however, the argument is without recourse to material-historical periodisation. Consistent with idealism, he does not allude to forms reshaped by actual circumstance, which would circularly alter the essence of the form – to illustrate Hegel's point, it is only man that makes labour, but labour does not remake man. For Marx and Engels, labour remakes man not only in thought, but also physiologically. The conceptual structure of Hegel, no matter the phenomenon, rests upon the absolute idea or a self-consciousness that identifies with freedom. In any case, the above quote is worthy if only because it is indicative of logical *immanence*.

Nevertheless, reality is not a sideshow to *a priori* ideas. Abstract time's functional quality resolved in its twin other concrete time is about the time in which capital usurps most out of people in the shortest chronological time for the least cost. While Hegelians and post-modernists alike assess their cultural phenomenon of time repression with sullen dispositions, toiling peoples of the Third World, to borrow the expression of Palestinian novelist M. Abdel-Al, 'are being saved from their lives by their early deaths.'

Furthermore, by restricting abstract time to the time of productive labour, only the time squeezed out of labour in factories that produce a supposed final stage commodity, the interconnectedness of production or things disappears. To produce anything, a colonial or an imperialist war is a must, because encroachment wars reduce the costs of items used to support labour and production. However, to produce waste, to cakewalk into Iraq as the US did in 2003 and create a trail of hundreds of thousands of lost lives whose concrete time squeezed to almost nothing by abstract time, is mainstream-wise not considered a factory with productive labourers. The US jet fighter pilots are not productive labour generating the surplus time assessed against the lives of their forcefully engaged victims in the industry of war. That interrelatedness, the fact that war as an accumulation process and an event restructures global accumulation, is lost.

Definitions unsituated within laws fall short of encompassing multifarious situations. Redefined from a social reproduction scope, productive labour is

all the global labour employed and subjected to the immiserating force that compresses the social cost of labour reproduction. Relatedly, abstract time is the concept that captures the degree to which global society's time – not the European only factory-labour clock – is to be controlled. That is more than just the working hours spent in the factories. It is about lessening the stock of potential labour time, or the shortening of lives way before their historically determined expectancy. The conjoint impetus of the primacy of politics and the absolute law of surplus value is the historical imperative by which capital depopulates. Apart from capital's war and its neoliberal austerity, examples of structural genocide include the unnecessary daily deaths of children under the age of 5, around 25,000 each day, mostly from causes preventable with low-cost (UNICEF 2010).⁷ Another blatant example of depopulation by imperialist war is the Congo, since 1961, it lost anywhere between 15 and 25 million people as a result of imperialist assaults (Pan African Alliance 2017).⁸ These estimates vary, but they always rotate in the ghastly sphere.

The countervailing impact of struggle against the tide of history is contingent upon the forms of anti-imperialist social organisations. It may be as well to mention that capital, the impersonal force unbound by ethical standards, cannot be adduced from its appearances, its prices or its high-end commodity glitter. Behind the spectacularised reality, capital or the real social force driving things effaces itself. By scratching the surface of things, one sees the objective developments of capital, the way it imposes dividedness amongst the working class or, closer to the topic, through the reduction of longevity over the social reproduction cycle. It is this latter process of waste *qua* relative depopulation whose marketed products are the mediated dead that counters capital's permanent crisis.

In relation to capital effacing itself, the case may be that the auto-development of the productive forces and, technology in particular, may create the conditions where people conflate the physical assets of capital with the capital class itself. Consider automations or robotization such as an Uber–Google self-driving car, the AI drone or, the more ubiquitous automated teller machine (ATM). The rapport between the individual and the machine is an immediate contact between worker/social man and physical capital without intermediate labourers representing capital or without the bank teller. In the

7 UNICEF (2010) 25,000: The average number of children dying each day is 25,000, UNICEF, April 2010, available at https://www.unicef.org/factoftheweek/index_53356.html.

8 The Pan-African Alliance (2017) 'A Nightmare in Heaven' – Why Nobody Is Talking About The Holocaust in Congo, Medium, 11 April 2017, available at <https://medium.com/@PanAfricanUnity/a-nightmare-in-heaven-why-nobody-is-talking-about-the-holocaust-in-congo-53f8ab27fb97>.

case of the ATM, the customer is dealing with the Bank and its managerial class, stockholders and trust board, its leverage over the state, its ideological apparatuses in universities and media outlets, its financial arms, etc. through interface with the machine. However, such contact is with the thingified features of an already thingified ruling social class. Capitalists as well as workers immersed in the commodity form and its dynamic are commodities as well, since the phenomenon of relation between people is a relation between things (Marx 1844). The point to discover is not that a machine and its reduction of labour time are against working classes, and only so by the rule of capital, for such is facticity. The concern here is how capital has commodified social being and through its co-optation of Marxism in the West aborted revolutionary consciousness.

Under capital, the embodiment of the labour of the working class in things and machines reworks the other way around to implant the dynamic of the commodity in the mind of labour. True enough, capital's twin, its pervasive fetishism muddles the image of reality, however that wears away at intermittent intervals or as the unconscious anti-social development of capital de-reifies reality. Labour-saving mechanisation not only sheds labour, it also blurs the human intermediation between machine and man. However, confronting the machine or thing is a confrontation with capital and its capitalists who have also been thingified. To replace the US military-drone (thing-machine) introducing societies to US-style democracy by firing the ideas of George Soros or his NGO's at the masses, the deadly impact upon the masses may remain the same - the thingified human resembles the bomb.

8 The Positivist/Pragmatic Method as Rationale for Imperialism

Niebyl (no date) observed that to ignore the labour process is to ignore the source of change in capitalist development. To extend this proposition is to include imperialist practice, or the submission of developing-world labour to the central gun, as the source of change. Niebyl adds that 'without accounting theoretically, and that means at the same time concretely, for the source of the structural changes, these changes, and indeed the economy as such, appear accessible to analysis only in quantitative terms. And it is then from such quantitative data that inferences as to possible meaning have to be made. What we have as a result is the pragmatic method.' As such, the quantitative expression of the concept of surplus value given in profit or economic surplus becomes its definition. However, profits and surplus value are incomparables, and to derive surplus value from a capital-constructed quantitative assessment means that beneath the quantification both the theory of surplus value and the laws of capital are lost (Niebyl no date).

An example of capital constructed data obscuring social dynamics is degrowth theory. Positioned within the barrage of imperialist ideological offensives, the only countries to de-grow will be the weaker ones in the South. Elliptically, the approach is a spinoff on the Club of Rome's systemic projections on the over-use of natural resources by Meadows *et al* (1972). Account rendered of changing income distribution, the economic growth rate is indicative of the profit rate (when all the value added goes to capital in a stretch of time, the profit rate equals the growth rate). However, to limit growth in a developing formation aggressed by imperialism and experiencing demographic expansion at the same time is to mangle the masses. The Third World requires significant growth, savings and investment in lockstep that internally circulate to guard the economic surplus within the nation state. It also requires the mobilisation of idle resources to lift its people out of poverty. The crucial point of developing world growth is to strengthen national defences against a Western capital that expands by militarism.

Profits do not grow *on their own* because the momentum of the quantity of past profits positively impacts future profits. Of note, lagging variables like the growth level or its subcomponents to determine their future quantities does not seize the dynamics of an exploitative system, it merely projects capital's assembled data onto some other point in algebraic time. Corporate profits grow because militarism voids the development of the South and pounds the working classes into surrendering their resources. One is sure that a whole gamut of other social measures also contributes to cutting costs and raising profits, but here the key moment of militarism around which all other tributaries coalesce is considered. As argued in chapter two, the leading link of capital accumulation is capital's war of encroachment, which principally halts competing development from emerging in the Third World. Instead of making the case to arrest militarism and imperialism, the mainstream hides the imperialism behind the sugar-coated language of rationing the use of natural resources, degrowth, or green growth.

Also lost in the pragmatist-positivist misinterpretation is the principal idea that 'it is not the individual labourer whose labour constitutes labour value, so it is not the particular industrial worker, or a particular group of industrial workers, or the industrial workers of a particular nationality that represent the industrial proletariat or what Marx meant by that term' (Niebyl no date). Value is constituted by global social labour. Concepts formalised by capital, like the growth rate of GDP, whose quantity cloaks capital's class affiliation, appear 'so real to be the incarnation of the abstract and theoretical and its transformation into the concrete and practical all in one' (Niebyl no date).

The straitjacket of paradigmatic social science starts with assumptions symbolising selective and history-independent facts, which become ideologically

and ethically neutral ideological tools that masquerade as theory. These forms of thought hammered as theory are not only one-sided abstractions, they are formal (metaphysical) typically of quantity. It is because of quantification that the possibility of comparability exists to serve as an instrument for the organised dimension of capital. The things quantified by capital bear little reference to interdependent reality.

Since markets and wars must expand to expand wealth, mainstream concepts develop as beacons of capital and in ways that pave the way for further capital expansion. Their inner logic is structured to parallel such expansion. The predisposition for quantification mimics settler colonialism. With theory tailored to isolated facts on a one-to-one basis, the newly created facts or white settlements become self-reasoned and ahistorical concepts. They become the starting posts of analysis shifting through time as settlements expand to erase the previous devastation of snuffed natives. With memories and histories deleted, the newly formed facts or new settlements become the new benchmark for comparison. The natives who owned their homelands but are losing with the advance of time will be portrayed as having little in terms of wealth and ownership before the arrival of the white man.

Through the subordination of science to the privatisation of ideas, capital intellectually corrupts its concepts. Its apparatuses popularise its faux science. The concept paradigm, which levels time, motion, and quality to that which is quantitatively additive, becomes the symbol used loosely to draw inferences about all sorts of situation – even Kim Kardashian's new dress design revealing more of her posterior becomes a paradigm shift that receives a billion likes on social media. Like the settler colonies that eradicate natives, the vocabulary of capital becomes a power fact that strips peoples from the right to revolutionary consciousness. It gains a transcendental quality and engraves itself in the mind to distort perception. It could only do so because the defeated working classes accustom themselves to the crushing power balance and shift their customs to abide by the terms of defeat.

Capital's manufactured statistics, which are more numerology than science, are the dogma by default since there is either no one left alive or no one powerful enough to question their validity. Whereas 'correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice' (Mao 1963), the formalism of positivism, or of facts in the mind, which could be developed independently of the real development of the facts, amounts to hallucination. The absence of the class subject in their modes of abstraction omits the fundamental premise of existence, interconnectedness. To put it in Marx (1859) words, the ties of 'the

independent, autonomous neighbours' extrinsically or accidentally related, and their elements, which all form the members of a totality are nowhere to be found. As such, the distinctions within unity evaporate (to gauge Marx's thought upon the paradigmatic approach). The crude empiricism of positivism splits the real object from its interconnected self and with it also 'the organic interconnection of parts' (Marx 1859); or while on the same issue, the totality that Lenin (1914) described as 'the universal, all-sided, vital connection of everything with everything.' In its false *concreteness*, and in discarding the contradictions within the object and reference to how the whole bears upon the different parts in its development, the laws of capital can also be partitioned – as opposed to being universal. Although the interface of geopolitics with imperialism adheres to capital's laws, in a world segmented in the mind, the politics of imperialism appear unrelated to central accumulation.

9 Value and the National Boundary

Neoliberalism brought more wealth laden with waste. With geopolitics holding sway over geography, the planet has long been a single factory in which the frequency of the waste cycle is undercurrent to profits. The co-existence of war and waste alongside wealth is not a hypothesis waiting to be proven, it is the phenomenon that calls for an explanation. The source of that alleged wealth, since it is mostly waste, is not Northern relative surplus value or its better machines. The social relation responsible for the wealth in command of the productive forces is the imperialist class, which may be defined as the principal waste relationship that de-reproduces global society. Furthermore, understanding how much relative to absolute surplus value there is in a commodity by national origin amounts to quantification by whim. The absolute and relative components of surplus value in their immediate state are indistinguishable. Capital's interpretation of value by its money form magnitude veils the exploitative process. The US issues the world reserve currency, not so much to meet transaction demands and lubricate the wheels of development, but to own and control the means of value making and value transfer.

Although abstract and relative surplus values are not in a race with each other, by the sheer size and misery of the Southern sections of the planet, it is the South whose contribution to wealth is highest – in line with the already developed standard that the rate of exploitation mirrors the rate of repression and with that the rate of premature death incurred in wasteful social reproduction. Globalisation may be at least five centuries old (Frank and Gills 1996; Wallerstein 2004); however, rarely does colonial war and genocide figure as

early *production sharing* measures similar to the current phase of the international division of labour. And just like productive labour, relative surplus value counts only as a one-sided abstraction – thought demands one-sided abstractions; however, these are impertinent only when they originate in logical forms or are metaphysical. As a concept, it should not be confined to national boundary or a modern-type factory. Furthermore, to categorise relative surplus value is to acknowledge its ascendance into the more general concept of the social product, of which it is a mentally parcelled-out historical element. As posited above, defining the contribution of relative surplus value to the social product by machine quality in the North, while ignoring the efficiency of military machine quality in the South, is a class biased exercise.

To consider a dollar-price share of Northern income as proportionate to the magnitude of relative surplus value is also misleading. The industry of the destruction of the South does more to raise relative surplus value than a machine producing cheaper consumption items in the North or in the Sweatshops of the South. The South is both subject and object of value. In the South, militarism realises wasted lives for a price while the living labour wasting away contributes to its value forming processes. Militarism involves the highest technology, is undertaken to arrest the development of revolutionary consciousness, and reduces the costs of the necessary consumption bundle for global labour by the rate to which it wastes and de-subjectifies the working class, including no less, the demand for cheaper wasted lives. The latter demand derives from the unconscious side of capital, and while submersed within dominant culture, it is practiced in plain sight as a justification for survival in a world of scarcity. Militarism, a subdomain of waste, is thence more cost or scale efficient and remains the gyroscope that steadies the capitalist system.

At a more foundational level, prices do not just signify the item on sale in the here and now. Prices are composite significations of past and future costs/realisations regulated by the exercise of class power. Every price is influenced and influences its corresponding price system. A waste product or a valuable input realised in the past will tie into the entire cost structure and, depending on market moderation, it may appear in the future as a standalone product with its own price (there is a price for a ton of CO₂), or it may be latent or implicit in other prices. Save the chimeras of moneyed capital, a single commodity's price networked into the price system forbids by complexity-recursiveness the identification of a single commodity value with its single price. A non-composite price may exist as falsity in the hypothetical here and now because capital deems it so; however, actual prices, composite and complex, are what exists in real time and space. The money form or measure *cum* magnitude of value signifies the whole of the social product of labour without accounting for

the power exercised behind the formation of prices. It is possible to abide by capital's time and accounts and set the sum of the prices as the sum of values; however, for that to make sense as a comparative benchmark, the static notion that unproductive labour does not add to value has to be dropped and the premature liquidation of life as a surplus value making activity must figure within – unwaged mothers spend and death sells amongst many other calibrations. In social reproduction, value, or socially necessary labour time, is refracted by the machinations of the market into its money form. Accordingly, value cannot only be gauged by the hours it takes to make a gadget in some factory on a given day. Even when everything else is held constant, that would still be too difficult since the commodity is realisable in many past and future forms and for many interconnected past and future prices. Value is better gauged by the socially necessary labour time harnessed in the process of social reproduction, say over the lifetime of a worker. The image of value is not what new cars look like. It is what the money form of value inflicts upon the lives of people. The true image of value is waste.

In a system of thought whose cultural frame is Eurocentrism, truth fleetingly transpires as the resultant of working-class symbols that confront the symbols of capital. Sorel (1908) realising the difficulty in comprehending the intricacies of value in political economy, rethought Marx (1845) 'ideology as a material force' by suggesting that the class struggle transforms into a mythological battle of good versus evil, or capital's signs against labour's signs (Sorel 1908). Whence the sectarian activity of making value or the production of the single nation in the North signified in its symbolic money form is referred back to the whole and to accumulation via imperialism, there surfaces the social production totality, which is a product of the global working-class. The moneyed symbols which should designate that product would be assessed by proletarian internationalist rather than nationalism. In this war of symbols, transient truth emerges as anti-systemic ideology that co-aligns with Marxism-Leninism. Thus, where one situates the source of surplus value, in the national or international structure, is the barometer of scientific method. After all, social production is the totality scaffolded by the labour process in the act of social reproduction. In social reproduction, not only workers operating machines, but all workers are productive and living labour at once. As discussed in the previous chapter, the labour of the South wasting away as it de-reproduces to restrengthen value is the *raison d'être* of capital. It is not a question that it produces more or less things than the North, especially as the North is in the South and *vice versa*.

The broader picture, inclusive of the South, observed in its state of motion, is history. The absolute general law of capitalist accumulation (AGLCA) intensifying the value relation is the rationale of such history. Capital's dominant culture, the biasedly selected precepts from the stock of human knowledge

parading as knowledge, pave the way for its essence to unravel as waste. Effective anti-systemic struggle coincides with the scientific method by demystifying capital's symbols. Left unchecked, capital's command of the ideological channels would determine the resolution of the real against the false and systemically reaffirm, as opposed to negate, capital's growth by waste. So far, value flows incarnate in an amalgam of pollutants, bombs and other waste-laced commodities emerge as the social product. Sane commodities useful to labour are the alienated products of labour consumed by the capital class in organic-food like fads. Waste commodities, however, return to labour in order re-alienate the lives of labour from labour. Since waste sells, however, useful and dis-useful commodities become, they rolled into one stock of wealth.

Of the wealth, the waste is consumed and the act of consumption itself demonstrates that labour reproduces capital through its mode of auto-consumption. In such an order, it is capital's production, which 'does not simply produce man as a commodity, the human commodity, man in the role of commodity; it produces him in keeping with this role as a mentally and physically dehumanised being' (Marx 1844). Marx reaffirms the commodification of man in the symptoms of 'immorality, deformity, and dulling of the workers and the capitalists. – Its product is the self-conscious and self-acting commodity ... *the human commodity*' (my emphasis). He critiques the classical political economists for not asking 'how many workers are maintained by a given capital, but rather how much interest it brings in, the sum-total of the annual savings,' which is to them 'the true purpose of production' (Marx 1844). Such is an affirmation of the rule of the capital class commodifying man to be wasted, to be the consumer of waste, and most of all, a man whose waste is the annual savings or, better yet, the reduction in necessary labour.

10 Class Institutions and Waste

Bourgeois classes gel in forms of social organisation such as the national state, or supra-national forms, such as NATO, EU, etc. These are forms and means of capital, which preside over the complex and interrelated social order. In a vertically ordered power structure in which wealth is dollar denominated, the degree of sovereignty enjoyed by weaker states shows up in how much of their wealth they can retain and recirculate nationally. The principal constituent of sovereignty is working class security, or what filters from it as the embodiment of labour in the state. Compared to others, for instance, it is the sovereignty of Cuba or China, which permits them to retain more of their wealth in physical assets or national financial means.

The state in the imperialist centre is commandeered by capital, while its adjunct, the white working class, is an organic extension thereof. The long-standing imperial armies and much of the social structures geared to bolster militarism are white working-class forms of social organisation. Though there are strata of the Northern working class, in addition to Native Indians, Hispanics, African Americans, and immigrants from the Arab/African regions in Europe, which comprise a potential proletariat, the balancing act of capital between empire and republic has ensured that the white class reproduces itself just as capital does through the practice of structural racism, the discrimination inbuilt into the power structure, as a value forming activity. This US-European two-tier class system shadows the North-South divide. Central social inequality redevelops under the cover of the *de jure* rubric of political equality. All are equal under the law, but the weight of white historical surplus value relegates the majority of non-whites to inferior social positions.

In retrospect, the white working-class struggle for higher wages was not only the economism of a class co-opted by the labour aristocracy. Its rising incomes may have appeared as a bribe by petty bourgeois elements to stymie labour's historical agency (Marx 1850); however, the decisiveness of the imperialist value usurpation component from the South was missing from such analysis. Also, such is not only a case where the left fails to explain to workers that trade unionism and economic pursuits splinters them and subordinates them to capital (Lenin 1902). Although Lenin suggests the way out is to prioritise political struggle, the situation a century later informs of a different picture. The spur of white classes is their settler-colonial culture continuously reinjected with colonial-imperialist booty. Their reproduction is the reproduction of capital. An example of the futility associated with the rehabilitation of such classes, is the case of white Rhodesia; white class formations must be defeated for a modicum of liberation to avail.

Within the Northern welfare state, an organic bond has been established between the state and white workers whose imperialist-currency-denominated wages follow imperialist-currency-denominated growth in productivity – they just follow capital-constructed productivity and are not caused by it. Recalling, the mainstream story of productivity is null and void as historical subject, and wages emerge as the appearance of the rate of slaughter in the South. Productivity associates with scale and cheaper commodities whose subject is the capital relation at work. Two points must be re-emphasised. First, the wealth is mostly waste; and, secondly, the shares of incomes that constitute wealth over time are reassigned by class power. As argued above, the imperialist-currency denominated wages are usurped from a global social production process whose subject is the wasted South (capital at work), in contradistinction from the productivity

of the better Northern machines. Machines-technologies are subjects only in an objectified or non-human world. As it were, Northern wages are connected to the imperialistically snatched value transfers because the wage bill is the residual of the social product minus the share of profits – profits grow by the decimation of the South, the value activity. Meanwhile, class power resulting from global conquests furnishes the financial channels for the flow of the value transfers assuming the form of imperialist rents.

Rewording the productivity argument: for the substance of the surplus value (the expropriated products) arising from better technology to revitalise the value relation, that is for things to roll over into more things, the subject labour, namely in the South, must be wasted by destructive wars or other waste industries. Rigour in the analysis of historical causation requires that before one observes the statistics that more wealth leads preceding wealth, one must observe how the social agency of labour or how the crushing of labour in relation to capital is the subject of social production, and its object in waste accumulation.

In relation to class composition in the centre, US Median real wages stagnated since 1980,⁹ while revolving debt over the same period has increased by more than fivefold. Cheap credit steadied consumption growth, while the burden of debt further let fall more of the marginalised ethnic groups into the poorest income echelons. At the time of the great financial recession in 2008–09, the blame fell on mostly defaulting African American homeowners when their debts, compared to the debts of the corporate sector, were insignificant. The decline of socialist ideology meant that the share of Northern marginalised classes would mirror the share of labour in the South and its decline relative to that of the white class. The literature brims with evidence of declining minority wealth – Baptiste (2014) described it as ‘the staggering loss of black wealth due to the subprime scandal.’ At any rate, variations in income do not define class, or social being reproduced by forms of social consciousness and organisation. The white class does not earn a wage, it collects rents through its social democratic representation in the state vis-à-vis other circles of capital. A white working class smug with the bombing Gaza because its fighter jets are manned by Zionist settlers is the same class whose militarised police reduces the life expectancy of African Americans.

The growth of the financial class has undermined the US industrial structure and employment in manufacturing as a share of total employment

9 The real median weekly wage has remained steady at around 700 US\$ until 2012. It then started rising, albeit, at low rate until the Covid-19 recession beginning in 1919 brought it down again. Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, weekly hourly earnings from the current population survey, BEA (various years).

fell.¹⁰ Recent globalisation and automation are history's realisations when it is subjected to finance. With the onset of deindustrialisation, Harvey (2003) described the parting of national capital with its working class as 'traumatic, if not catastrophic' – a position shared by a slew of Post-Keynesians. Worried about the health of empire, Harvey also noted that the US 'was complicit in undermining its dominance in manufacturing by unleashing the powers of finance throughout the globe' (Harvey 2003). Others (Rowthorn and Ramaswami 1997) maintained that deindustrialisation is principally the result of higher productivity in manufacturing and that that advances in the central service sector, rather than in the manufacturing sector, are likely to encourage the growth of living standards in the advanced economies. The reification of machines is not innocuous, it reeks of the chauvinism that justifies the structural genocide of the South.

These accounts appeared around the time the US embargo and invasion of Iraq. With militarism duly considered, embargos and wars are also an outsourcing enterprise of US capital, which in-source better industrialisation and rent-related employment in the US and Europe. This sort of market exchange does not feature in neo-Keynesian accounts. Keynes's catchphrase 'the euthanasia of the rentier' was a critique of the rentier of the republic but not the rentier of imperialist rents. The contribution of war to value is unheard of. In terms of productivity rates laced with imperialist rents, militarism overtakes the much-flaunted garment factories of super-exploitation in Bangladesh or anywhere else. History reined in by the US is neither irrational to harm its adjunct working class by de-industrialising, nor shrewd enough to permit a trade-off between productivity gains in manufacturing and services to better the living standards of the North. History is objective and impersonal. It actualises by its own reason, the reason of the commodity transfigured in dominant ideology. It is incongruous to juxtapose personal rationality upon the course of historical development. For the US capital class to undermine its minorities is consistent with its course of history. However, it is not the higher value-added steps in production migrating to the developing world in run of the mill outsourcing, which enhance the service sector and the living standards of capital's white class partners, it is the imperialist war and hegemony, which predicate the totality of social production.

The US is heir to the European stock of culture – culture as a store of knowledge. It is this five centuries old 'kill for profit class culture,' which for reasons

10 Roughly, employment in manufacturing went from 16 million to 12 million, while the number of establishments declined from 350,000 to 275,000 between 2000 and 2016, US Bureau of Economic Analysis and the Census Bureau's Business Dynamics Statistics respectively (various years).

based in materialist reproduction cannot be unlearned. Resistance to that capital and its modern imperialism is meaningless in economistic unions and demands for more Northern state welfarism. Consider white class participation in the many imperialist wars – participation either directly or indirectly because many of the developing states are products of imperialism. Western war machinery is bombing and starving millions, yet the argument to counter war is discussed in terms of the illegitimacy of profits of arms sales to the United Arab Emirates when it bombs Yemen. The argument rests on delusionary grounds: either the US is not to blame because it only sells them the guns, but they kill each other, or it should not sell them the weapons to kill each other. The issue is not framed in terms of its two primary constituents, first, the death of many in Yemen and elsewhere is the product of Western war machinery realised in Western markets; and secondly, US control of Yemen's Bab Al-Mandeb strait, a strategic chokepoint, props up US global hegemony and completes capital by ensuring control over the sphere of circulation. While the Yemeni people conduct anti-imperialist armed struggle, the war is analysed as a tribal tendency intrinsic in Arab culture.

11 Dollar Hegemony and War

Financial and industrial capital were never far apart, and both benefited from colonial and imperialist plunder. Both were part of the same global value-extraction process (Amin 2012). With the onset of the current age of financialisation they further fused together with industrial capital transmuting into financial capital (Patnaik P 2008). Patnaik posits that in the latest phase of finance, industrialists, issue debt, speculate on and buy back their own stocks with lesser emphasis on production as a source of profit. In the order of determination, the imperialist class is first a financial class, with industry tailing fluctuations in its moneyed market. Out of pervasive finance, the financialisation of commodities, especially oil, partially relegates much of the pressure on commodity prices to the purview of the Federal Reserve in the US. As commodity-contracts *become* financial instruments, they face off, not only against the pressures of production and demand, but also against the fluctuations in the price of competing financial securities and equity market. Such may be evinced on the basis of prices of food-staples around the world, which partially fluctuate with US interest rates. With higher turnovers and quicker returns in finance, the industrialist *become* financier submits global labour to the exigencies of financial cycles. Accordingly, imperialist aggression to stake territory and resources underwrites the additional credit that steadies the financial profits

rates. Debts, it may be recalled, are underwritten by future labour and imperialist loot. As debt-supported profits rise without a foundation in current production-demand conditions, and with increasing bad debts (components of fictitious capital) bundled up in all sorts of financial instruments, the necessity to expand by militarism to undergird finance gathers momentum.

Not that the gold-standard was holding prior to 1971, however, war industry spending and imperialist wars, the Korean and Vietnam wars, in particular, played a crucial role in fully detaching the dollar from such commodity. However, the dollar did not gain confidence out of thin air because of its debt-tradability/futurity, it remained grounded in all sorts of commodities, principally oil (Patnaik P 2008). The expansion of credit is both an objective process (independent of capital) and a thermometer of the health of capital. To recall, Minsky (1992) presented a case in which a dizzy-with-success capital borrows over and above the rate of the expansion in the real economy, such that as the real economy slows down, the huge debts bust the economy. Beneath the mathematical curves, excessive borrowing in boom times illustrates the zeal of credit for high returns throughout history (Hudson 2018b). In sociological terms, and that is what matters, the dynamics under capital, as distinct from other phases of history, are such that the more labour accedes to the bondage of debt, the surer of itself capital becomes.

At any rate, the unchecked expansion of the commodity as value must be preceded by unchecked credit. Drawing a graph of GDP levels against credit/debt levels is not much of a theory. Moreover, that a social or physical system erodes by some increasing entropy or loss of energy over time and, similarly, investment euphoria recedes is also not theory. These may be stylised facts. Theory is to explain *why* capital, the leading relation of an impersonal history, catharises itself by using the financial crisis to purge underperforming industries, while keeping labour at bay. Relatedly, theory ought to query *why* capital does so as it monopolises credit and concentrates wealth while the starving masses acquiesce to their premature death. Such may be a partial list of the many '*whys*' of theory that require, not a detailed list of all the related and missing facts, but of a law whose systemicity bears scrutiny against objective developments.

Nonetheless, the fiat of the state as a moral authority in the composite but oxymoronic term 'fiat money' is not the true backer of the dollar. Had this been the case, the US would not need to intervene in the developing world to impose its terms of trade and cultural values. Its fiat is its capacity to destroy. Patnaik P. (2008 and 2009) argues that the oil shock of 1973 was hyped, while its concurrent spike in the interest rate represented the opportunity to ditch post-war demand policies and the pretext that introduced more austerity and the

control of private finance over public spending. Since then, capital increased its rate of credit issuance. As the supply of money rose, the US's chiefly-controlled strategic commodity against the large digital sums of dollars became oil. However, it is not oil *per se*, which is the collateral against US debt. Oil, the thing, does not act and it does since it does not exist in uninhabited lands – as discussed in an earlier work (Kadri 2016), the control of oil is the relation that holds together by waste, which underwrites the dollar. Substance-wise, the labour and the war-consumed lives of many in the weakly secure states where oil is found became the future guarantees of the dollar debt. When credit is underwritten by the future value that labour produces, it is the wasted lives of Arabs and Africans, among others, which are the future value that backs the dollar.

The organised dimension of capital, through its state or state-like institutions, allocates real and moneyed resources in compliance with the law of value. Through the state it rearticulates social classes as it intervenes in production/ownership relations, the social division of labour, the distribution of social wealth/revenue to each class, including the standards of living of the members of each class. It does so in a manner that satisfies the profit rate of a whole capital class, as opposed to the narrow interest of the single producer whose micro-accounting books instruct that zero wages imply maximum profits. Very low wages would sink capital altogether and the state as capital's form and functional/distributional tool navigates the competing stresses between its hold on power through demand management and maximisation of profits through wage-share compression. To deliver an optimal result, capital's groundwork entails the violent splintering of labour and systemic depopulation or lowering average longevity relative to the historical standard. By doing so, capital redresses its political insecurity, while reducing necessary labour vis-à-vis surplus labour.

Hegemonising culture and managing resources to pre-empt a global solidarity and revolutionary convergence is a principal aim of aristocratic nations (Emmanuel 1970). Emmanuel was speaking before the onset of neoliberalism. Since then, weaker countries compete for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by compromising their living wages and environment. With the retreat of socialist ideology, this also led their respective working classes to inter-compete in a race to the bottom. At a metric level, inter working-class dividedness is proportionate to capital's strength. Accordingly, in imperialism capital realises its ultimate form. With its supremacist liberalism, control of the bureaucracy, the apparatuses of the deep state or, more appropriately, the deep capital, in addition to militarism as the chief accumulation domain, the US is probably in excess of the fascist mark. In parallel to this basic schema, the rate of exploitation, which under

fascism reduces to the dictum cut short the life of inferior classes typified by some racial construct, positively responds to the rate at which imperialism meets fascism.

To draw on recent events for illustration, the central working classes' acquiescence to their countries' provision of weapons, participation and alliance with Israel or the US as they bomb Gaza and Iraq respectively is a stark case of some ethnicities being expendable. To wit, there are nations whose human losses are irrelevant to Western civilisation. In quasi-equation form, since the rate of exploitation rises with the repression exerted upon the labour process, then the most repressive state of capital, fascism, is its logical end. Dimitrov (1935) suggests that the imperialist circles shift the burden of the crisis onto working people, especially, the masses of the weaker nation, while paradoxically capital's permanent crisis becomes its historical predisposition to fascism. With waste maturing in finance, Western social democracy is the bargain capital strikes with central labour as it inevitably circumnavigates history towards fascism.

Although many central manufacturing jobs went South since 1980, the academic question that may be asked, would international solidarity rise if the jobs come back to the North? Obviously, not so, because internationalism was absent before the recent bout of globalisation, while in the centre internationalism requires a re-theorisation of value consistent with the phenomenon that it is the lives of peoples in the developing world spent in waste industries, which are the reified form of socially necessary labour time or the substance of wealth. Correspondingly, the politics of central class struggle would be to fuse the tactic of the violent demolishment of the central institutions, which had prolonged imperialism within its strategy. For long, the false credo of social democratic reform, which would supposedly advance revolution through increasing labour's autonomy, had created many of the Northern jobs and a welfare state, but these all the same did the opposite. Western Marxism with its 'the West is ready for socialism, but the East is not' motto de-prioritised armed struggle in the North and South. At the time of writing and with the hold of neoliberal ideology and the rise of the central far right, it is no longer the prospect of socialist revolutions in Europe being pondered, it is fascism. While central capital creates service jobs at home to shift income from the Southern national space to the North, it also draws value through the sphere of moneyed-circulation in the form of imperialist rent. Together, the parasitic jobs and the wage tainted with rents restructure the power base of the North for further aggression.

Circulation is not secondary to production. For Marx (1863), 'circulation is a moment of production, since capital becomes capital only through circulation,' which implies that the process of turning M , the initial money invested by capital into more money, M' , through exchange is also a class governed process.

Just like the labour process, which is required to produce a commodity, control of circulation channels is a global power play governed by the US financial class. Confining class struggle to the fight over shares of wages and rents (money circulation) from the social product is a game used by capital to re-bolster its political and then its economic standing and, to simultaneously realise itself. The globalisation associated with neoliberalism may have been a way to cut the costs by moving certain steps of production to the South and raise profits, but it is also about relaxing the restriction on wealth flows, the capital and trade accounts, for capital to complete itself.

Neoliberal relations of production overcome production-related constraints and ensure a rising rate of exploitation. By the unconscious side of capital, extending production to the periphery homogenises production conditions and puts upward pressure on the Southern wages. Such outcome is often associated with civilian-end use commodity production. As productivity and wealth grow, their spill-over onto welfare will be class power determined. The same could not be said of the war industry. The presence of Western occupation forces on the grounds in some Third World nation like Iraq along with their better war machines also bring in moneyed wealth. As is well known, the US loaded planes with cash to buy off the resistance. War related redistribution may momentarily raise the standard of living of a narrow strip of Iraqis, at least those remaining alive; however, over the course of time, capital's knack for waste kicks in to siphon more of the national wealth.

Chossudovsky (2006) argues that the increase in productivity that followed neoliberalism has resulted in an increase of global unemployment and poverty. However, job creation under capitalism goes further than the putative rising productivity sheds jobs. Employment is development-derived, however, the development required to create demand is an outcome of class struggle. Relatedly, the pressure to keep FDI recipient country wages low meant further pressure to decapitalise the countryside to eject the excess labourers. While there were more manufacturing jobs, the dislocation imposed on the countryside has contributed to a rise in unemployment and a fall in farmers' incomes, which when waste is added becomes altogether a negative sum game for the host country. While global unemployment was a lever that influences labour costs globally, either because of the rising unemployment rate or low-wage employment, living wages and standards of living were squashed.

12 The War Terrain

The US's belligerence transfigures as command of the real and financial value creation and value transfer chains. The US's historical trajectory is war-riddled,

and it requires more encroachment wars for its wealth to grow. At the current historical conjuncture, in between the choices on offer for the US to aggress places like North Korea, the world braces itself for the sort of accidental US incursion on Russian forces in Syria, Ukraine, the Baltic states, or Central Asia, which may spark a nuclear conflagration. Although sending in soldiers to fully occupy a state may no longer be in the offing, as was the case in colonial days or in Iraq, the US-Euro sponsored NGO's, their foreign aid and lending institutions persist as novel soldiers of empire. These supplant the role of public sector services, hollow national defence, and minimise the expression of the working class in the state. Considered as activities in social reproduction, drones and uranium bombs, aid and NGO activity are value processes that further accomplish the waste processes of capital. Lenin's (1916) imperialist scramble for the redivision of territory between competing capitals has morphed into a redivision of peripheral-state governance between the US-led financial class ruling from a distance and surrendering national classes.

With the financialisation epiphenomenon, some in the Hardt and Negri (2005) tradition call to chuck away Lenin's theory of imperialism. However, to re-theorise imperialism as some multitude of hegemonic forms of similar content is also to hypothesise that a new theory of imperialism should appear as a more comprehensive and concrete theoretical expression of the essence of the new facts (Ilyenkov 1961). It is to say that the rational kernel of the previous theoretical version (Lenin's theory of imperialism), welded to the reinterpretation of modern imperialism as its universalising component, is so surpassed by novel circumstances such that the structural change warrants a theoretical change. Things do change; and although receding, the omnipotence of US imperialism, whose militarisation and finance continue to usurp world resources, implies that the change was merely formal rather than of. The synergy configuring militarism, finance and imperialist rents, characteristics of the US-led financial class, continues to funnel value to empire, which implies that the theoretical kernel of Lenin's approach still applies. The essence of such remains the law of value as guiding current of empire. It intensifies or decelerates the apportioning of socially necessary labour time in relation to anti-imperialist forces. Equally important, the class in charge of empire reproduces by militarism and, insofar as social type, the US financial class is heir to past European imperialism.

Under neoliberalism, the lesser sovereignty of developing nations eases value transfers to the North. More waste activity, state enfeeblement and disengagement of useful assets are also characteristics of a social order governed by the capital process *metamorphosed* into imperialism. Meanwhile, the ascendancy of finance strengthens the imperialist rentier and, interrelatedly, war whose potential is constrained by the nuclear deterrent. As in Lenin (2016), war continues to be the chief mechanism that resolves capital's outstanding

contradiction – the contradiction between the development of the productive forces and production relations.

To consider only higher rates of financial expansion that fulfil the inbuilt drive of commodity expansion is not grounds to throw out the essence (its laws) of Lenin's theory of imperialism. The 'kernel,' or the seminal relationship of imperialism is its class type attendant upon its class relation, which is its rentier-financier. Finance has grown and its class category heads history. The word of the federal Reserve of the US partnered with the city in London reshuffles global transfers and production processes. Unless China qualifies as an imperialist formation, which deconcentrates and decentralises capital to the point when imperialism thins down to hegemonic clusters in which the financial class no longer wields power, recent developments can be slotted under the genus of variations around the same essence that do not qualify as structural shifts requiring the abandonment of Lenin.

To suggest that China extends beyond its borders by the pressure of finance resolved in war, and hence it is imperialist, is to assume that it has been presided upon by an imperialist-class type or a culture of imperialism. Contrariwise, China wards off US-led intimidation and, as such, it impedes the law of value to operate freely in favour of capital, or to realise more waste. To consciously overlook a history of European and US-led aggressions, to drop the fact that imperialist formations accumulate by war and are war-dependent formations, is faux history. To overlook the fact that China's trade surplus, the value of its wasted lives and resources, is stored in US dollars, is also faux history. As to US-European dependency on wars of aggression, van Zwanenberg (2022) indicates that the 'the countries of the European continent had been at war either within Europe or in India, North America and across the seas for over 450 years.' At this juncture, to nurture its war addiction, the US-led imperialist class oversees the ideology and function of every international institution and apparatus of cultural production, foremost, its breeding of Western Marxism. In between the Rambo of Hollywood and the star academic whose definition of imperialism co-aligns with the US's strategic interests; the latter is a more efficacious imperialist tool.

Imperialism according to Patnaik and Patnaik (2017) partitions into three phases. First, the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century mutated into the imperialism of finance-monopoly capital (up to the point of the Second Great War). Secondly, in its post-war phase, capital disciplined the avarice of financial imperialism to re-asertain its rule as a result of competition with the Soviet socialist model. In the third and current phase of *fiat* dollar hegemony and financialisation, neoliberalism and wanton interventions rise in inverse proportion to the organisational and ideological defeat of socialism. Catchy

acronyms like TINA (there is no alternative) and R2P are examples of what was borrowed from the dominant discourse to shape the present as history. Other important landmarks include the further truncation of the debate spectrum to the desires of capital, especially, the derogation of contrarian theory. Public debate is confined to capital's playing field, and labels like fake news and conspiracy abound to stigmatise critics. The edifice of received science evinced in planetary decline, is way stranger than the flat earth theory. The conspiracy inherent to dominant ideology, which convinces people to make history in ways contrary to their wishes, is rather the emperor's new clothes. With revolutionary consciousness slumbering, and with an inundation of access to social media by the corporate-plugged clones of capital trivialising knowledge, critique of the system also registers as delusional utopia. Any method of thought other than regnant positivism or metaphysics is eschewed as nonsense.

The state of socialist ideological retreat may be exposed in the way Western Marxists transplant historical agency from US-led imperialist class to some vassal state leader in the South. In relation to the example of Yemen above, the UAE, whose rulers are guardians of 'US oil under their sands' and whose assets are dollarized, that is, effectively not theirs, are not autonomous. US-led capital is their protector and sovereign. Seen from that angle, US-led imperialism is liberal and selectively democratic at home and a practitioner of reinvented versions of obscurantism abroad. To be sure, the US dollars of the Gulf or any other state parked in US treasuries are *de-facto* those of the US treasury. Gulf dollars simultaneously funded Islamic Salafism and the Western educational institutions that sub-humanise Muslims as justification for the expansion of war. As opposed to being associated with the imperialism that reformulated it, Sharia law a vast and diverse body of knowledge reflecting the complexity of social life for centuries has been reduced to the selected brutalities associated with modern-day Salafists. A Gulf US-dollar worth of food in an Islamic world exposed to war and austerity buys the allegiance of many hungry folks.

In the 'blame game' of liberalism, capital reduces peripheral subjects to few traits of tradition from their multifarious culture. It lumps together diverse conventions into a single heading such as the Muslim, the African, the Arab. Not long ago, platitudes of this genre were the logic of fascism. It then politically and constitutionally empowers the select 'identarian' whose jostling for rents tallies with imperialism's strategic goals. The capital in capitalism, unlike preceding historical stages, also commodifies everything in its way, and to do so it must homogenise the cultures of consumption. It requires a culturally differentiated but commodified sub-human to bomb, while at the same time, it requires of that sub-human to adore its line of latest luxury consumption items. For that goal, it melts the old boundaries between the old feudal-like

social divisions of labour, igniting intercommunal wars (Marx 1845). Only under capital, massacres that impose cultural homogenisation become standard practice. Since the accumulation of wealth by the bourgeois in each vertically structured identity group must expand by undermining the group's own working class as well as the working classes of the other groups, the fuelling of identity politics supressing class politics becomes the permanent inter-working-class war.

13 China Is Not Imperialist

To define imperialism by some of its symptoms rather than its dynamic is often the method used to characterise China as imperialist. However, the notion that China engages in FDI, lends, or sets up industry abroad, and therefore, it is imperialist, are characteristics equally shared by grocery-store chains. To flush out the true imperialist, one must associate control over space and time and capital flows or value transfers to the centre with military aggression. Imperialism as posited above is about the metamorphosed social type in the social relation of capital from the industrial class in the lead to finance in the lead.

Capturing a symptom from diverse phenomena that accords with one of Lenin's characterisations of imperialism, as in the concentration of capital, is not the same as defining imperialism by the intensifying dislocation attendant upon the law of value. Whether by citing the export of capital or the space upon which wealth concentrates, a definition of imperialism is lacking if it does not expound the determination of the class subject. The imperialist class mode of auto-reproduction is war centred. In imperialism, US military spending becomes an investment in aggression crucial to global accumulation and imperialist rents since it disarms the masses of the Third World. Contrariwise, setting up industry and infrastructure in the developing world, as China does, builds the host-country's productive capacity and empowers their masses. As such, China as historical subject is anathema to monopoly-finance imperialism. Comparing empirics with empirics, does not designate a threshold for the admission of new imperialists into the US-led club of imperialism. Wealth concentration flowing from imperialist aggression is the litmus test of the who's who of imperialism.

Imperialism accentuates the alienation of the social product from the social labour of Southern formations. More and more, the contradiction between value (socially necessary labour time) and use value, which resolves in exchange value, plays out as war. In imperialism, the transition from the social to the private, or from social wealth into private wealth is a condition of permanent war. The logic of war for profits corresponds to the observed

constancy of war. Although splicing the historical with the rational is cumbersome because the historical is more difficult to pin down than the logical (Ilyenkov (1961), the preponderant waste and war of Western civilisation facilitates the proof for the unity of the rational with the historical. With greater concentration and centralisation of capital, the objective commodity whose substance is objectified labour and whose governing relation is the law value magnifies into the waste. The delegated agent of the class hiding behind the commodity is the US–European coalition whose recent function is developing-state decapitation.

Against this tide, China remains in a position of self-defence. The encirclement of China culminating in the pivot to Asia and the hundreds of military bases ready to disrupt trade flows to China are afoot. In everyday practice, the US aggresses China: economically (tariffs and other measures), diplomatically (relations with Taiwan), politically (propaganda war) and geopolitically (China is said to be a national security threat). The propaganda war, especially the false human rights accusations that China abuses Muslims, is the US's latest subterfuge; oddly this comes from a centre whose ideology of austerity and war kills thousands of Muslims daily. Reasonably however, there are two points to recall. First, China is unstoppable because its growth is autonomous. Secondly, it is absurd to propose that China is imperialist when it supplements the capacity of peripheral formations and does not aggress the planet to drain its value through violently imposed unequal exchange.

Aside from Chinese debt held by foreigners being insignificant (Tsui et al. 2017; Wong et al 2017), China does not impose its currency as means of transaction to capture value through the barter or exchange terms of trade. China does exactly the opposite. At times, it is rather compelled to act against its own interest because as it circulates the dollar, it broadens the space in which the dollar trades, and with that the hegemony of the US in the sphere of finance. With the dollar being the world reserve currency and savings medium, China translates its trade surplus into physical assets fixated in the developing world, or it dumps its dollar surplus to avoid continued or abrupt US dollar-deflation. Just as it seized Russia's assets, the US could just confiscate China's dollar-savings with the stroke of a pen. Hakans and Hynes (2016) illustrate the concrete measures China takes to circumvent dollar risk, such as, buying gold, setting up alternative development banking and payment systems, and pricing trade in national currencies. Aside from the fact that the US may confiscate foreign reserves stored in its securities or deflate its dollar debts, based on a secular trend, holding a US currency to store wealth over the long term is irrational because on a secular trend the US dollar has been declining relative to other currencies.

The global money supply, with its fictitious capital component, namely dollar debt issued against the future that has yet to have a corresponding real

value, is mostly US debt. Only in the case of US imperial constellation does the dollar debt becomes the credit of the US-led capital class. Many currencies around the world are proxies of the US-dollar by their state of dependence. Furthermore, the astronomical rise in dollar supply (Hudson 2018; Tsui et al 2020) makes of it and its proxies the bulk of global fictitious capital and, at the same time, the outstanding money form of value. Despite China's ranking as the second biggest economy in nominal terms, it is overtaken money-wise by the combined dollar income sum of the US and its dependencies. Beside the dependencies, or countries too weak to issue sovereign currency, in the more developed world, the Europeans and the Japanese also lack sufficient sovereignty and shelter under the US security umbrella. Although Hudson (2022) thinks that 'what worries American diplomats is that Germany, other NATO nations and countries along the Belt and Road route understand the gains that can be made by opening up peaceful trade and investment,' impersonal capital, works otherwise – Europe shares in the power clout of the US and derive imperial rents thereof. It prioritises the politics of destruction or the domain of waste. Europe is a decisive constituent of impersonal capital. Its cultural heritage, namely the plunder driven by racism, is the crushing mass of history, is on loan to the US to lead. The dynamic of capital welded into its materially substantiated heritage is about the power to crush and grab. Without the primacy of power, none of the NATO ruling classes and their courtesans would be able to impose their terms upon the relations of global trade.

However, the strength of China is more significant than the sum of nominal dollar figures because as a production capable continent with improving standards of living registering higher purchasing power parity output than the US, its counterweight in the global balance structure acts as a centripetal force that undercuts the torrent of Western imperialism. China already lays control to the integrated production network and/or circuit of the commodity/use value chain, and it is inevitable that it will control the exchange value chain.¹¹ As argued in Kadri (2021), the reasons for China's inexorable rise lie in its freeing the value relation to increase productivity through assimilating the positive linkages of the global economy while keeping control of moneyed forms of value, technology repatriation and transfer channels. Most important to the success of China is the successful agricultural policy under Mao, which freed

11 Based on the relative weight of trading partner vis-a-vis trading partners, a recent paper using mathematical techniques concludes that countries around the world have an interest in trading in Chinese yuan instead of dollar. Such is rather self-evident since China has already become the major trading partner of most countries. See Dollar-Yuan Battle in the World Trade Network, Célestin Coquidé *et al*, (2022) Arxiv, Cornell University <https://arxiv.org/abs/2211.07180>.

the state to finance development. The retention of wealth and the continued improvements in living standards since 1949 represent *ex post facto* proof that the Communist Party of China (CPC) was the embodiment of the masses in power. For Losurdo (1999), China remains steadfastly socialist and its 'social order ... is currently considered valid and presents itself as a kind of gigantic and expanded New Economic Policy (NEP). This is an NEP that has become harder to achieve because of globalisation and power relationships worldwide. Nonetheless, the program is quite conscious of the necessity to connect continually socialism, democracy, and the market with one another, and to transcend the crudely simplified notion of the homogeneity of the society it is attempting to build.' The NEP was Lenin's response to muster national forces, including the bourgeoisie, to repair the damage of the war and the invasion of 1919 that backed the counter-revolutionary forces. There was little industry left in Russia in 1921 (the end of the war), while the Soviet nation needed to build capacity/national security to avert further aggression by imperialist forces. The same could be said of China's undercapitalised economy after the Soviet Union decided to drop China for entente with the US in 1961. Retrospectively, Mao's position that peaceful co-existence with imperialism was self-defeating has been vindicated since the Soviet Union lost the cold war. At this juncture, the success of China's NEP in building capacity had put it beyond the reach of US's first strike capability.

Acting out its internal drivers, imperialism must aggress developing or competing formations. In such an imperialistically overwhelming context, the rise of China appears to defy history, whereas in reality, it is an accommodation of history, or better yet, a satiation of capital's unconscious side or its unrestrained demand for cheaper inputs; US-Europe threaten with Taiwan but lead delegations of businessmen to retain their interest in China. The failure of the US's policy of crowding in a US style 'democracy' in China demonstrates the strength of the ruling masses. In China, the state was in command of market reforms calibrated to respond to development and security needs. Communist China was the US's enemy and two wars in Korea and Vietnam were fought to curtail its immanent rise. As the US became a principal economic trading partner of China, the US policy maker thought its emergent wealthier capitalists would constitute an organised class that would seep into the system and alter the class structure, and as such, dismantle the rule of the CPC. True, there arose many rich people in China, but not a capitalist class with its own forms of organisation. A class, as argued in chapter three, is a state of being that reproduces through control of the means of production and the political forms of power. The class and national struggles of China are *ipso facto* co-aligned with internationalism. As China does well for itself, it attenuates the weight of the historical surplus value upon the globe. The individual bourgeois in China is

sub-ordinated to the national objectives, which are working-class objectives, since national security pre-determines development. The sociological type of the rich industrialist in China and his historical end or function is *ex-ante* decided by the national position vis-à-vis imperialism.

In the US, policy makers abided by reason of the commodity. That same rationale, which required the Soviet Union and China go separate ways in the early 1960's, would later attempt a disintegration of China by integrating it into its economic cycle. It is not too smart to envisage victory by dividing the enemy. Nonetheless, the commodity's drive to expand, especially, the subconscious side of accumulation pursued by the capital class, also required that the US tap into China's wealth and exploit assets, especially labour's applicabilities built by socialism. China's nationalist defences coinciding with working class strategy seized the potential in the historical undercurrent and reciprocated with sloganeering that lured the commodified business class. While the quarterly time horizon of the commodity laid down the policy horizon of US policy, China's horizon was dictated by the longer term social horizon and the strategy to enhance national defence. With a giddy imperialism after the defeat of the Soviet Union, China attracted the commodity-minded capital class by making available its cheaper-cost side. The polluted cities of China in the 1990's, which are now clean, are testimonies to the waste effect. China did answer the demands of capital, which is the exploitation of its vast resources; however, it did so in a controlled manner and always with the rule of labour within the party unscathed. Now the rule of labour in China is not the facile economism of hiking wages per more productive worker, which eliminates class struggle; The concern for wages is secondary to national defence concerns. In a developing context, raising defence capabilities to raise the calculated risks of empire in case it attacks is commensurate with the principal development measure. Development after all is a residual of the class struggle, which tallies with the sovereignty of the Third World nation. Circularly, the security of the nation imparts the security of the masses, which re-imparts the security-sovereignty of the state. Since imperialism is war, not wages but the betterment of military technology is the primary objective of the masses.

Once China dug its heels into the integrated production and trade networks of the global economy, the organised side of imperialism realised they reached the stage of no return. China is different from the Soviet Union because it is interwoven into the international basis of what it takes to reproduce humanity. It is not only because closing the technological gap in weaponization disconcerts US-led imperialism, but also because the West cannot easily rid itself of China, while China is its looming nemesis. Tracing the historical root of China's rise inevitably leads to Stalin's Eurasian project and his vision of a

Eurasian Soviet Union.¹² It was the impetus of arming the communist resistance, successful agriculture, and industrialising the early stages of China's revolution, as opposed to reified symptoms of neoliberal market reforms, which truly launched China.

The social economy of China, with its model of sovereignty and self-reliance in essentials has already propagated by role-model contagion. It has borne out Abdel-Malek's (1981) position that the national liberation movements remain the fundamental matrix of social dialectics, or the primary route out of dependency. Curiously, China's development backed by its sovereignty revalorises upward its assets. No longer are Chinese wages and resources cheap, which incidentally shows how the terms of power influence the price and barter terms of trade. The sheer size of China and its investments in real capital abroad through the BRI encroach upon a *de facto* US-led capital owned world. One is reminded that US world hegemony is a form of control of world assets; control is *de facto* ownership. Under the cover of its nuclear deterrent, every country trading with China on fairer terms or scurrying for ties with China that hedge against imperialist waste is partly being lost by the US to China. If only by the demonstration effect, its model of sovereign development tears down the mythological edifice of European civilisation. China augurs the rise of the civilisation of world labour, and it is the first serious opposition to five centuries of capital's civilisation centred in the Western hemisphere.

14 Reproduction by Waste

The question of whether the world is at the stage of barbarism or not depends on who is on the receiving-end of barbarism. To the battered masses, the glass may be half-full, but that half is full of waste, while the empty half is nothing. Nonetheless, the ongoing existential catastrophe leaves everyone on the receiving end, albeit, by the gradation of life-expectancy at birth. As pointed

¹² Stalin's objective was to connect Asia with the Soviet Union in a greater Soviet commonwealth. The early support of the Soviet Union to the CPC is well known, few interesting telegrams from Mao Tse-tung to Stalin requesting assistance are scanned at the Wilson Center: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/17634>. In one letter, the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) was responding to advice from the Soviet Union to quickly liberate Xin-jiang and pre-empt British counter-revolutionary activity in the region. Even Kraus (2018) who dubs the liberation of Xin-jiang an invasion, rather than liberation from pro-imperialist forces, could not but show that the assistance of the Soviet Union was crucial to the early defeat of nationalist forces allied to imperialism. In 'How Stalin Elevated the Chinese Communist Party to Power in Xinjiang in 1949,' he concludes that the PLA victory 'couldn't have happened without the aid of the Soviet Union.'

to chapter one, society as well as nature do not develop in a gradual manner across time. They auto-differentiate and may undergo ruptures or revolutions. The natural as well as the social system could be thrown off balance by the collusion of differing causes acting together at contingent moments. In social ruptures, the historical conjunction may occur when the proletariat reads its emancipatory politics outside the prism of 'better US-European culture and its value theory,' and enroots its praxis in internationalism and an understanding of surplus value reconstituted by waste relations.

For the time being, the time and space remaining under the command of US-led imperialism, shrink by the rise of China. Naturally, socialists who were ideologically weakened may awaken to novel forms of organisation. In a world that requires violence as means to reproduce life under capital (Fanon 1967), those resigned to non-violent struggle may reclaim armed struggle. Yet, capital is aware that imperialism is a power game. The mainstream channels are awash with war frenzy. Anecdotally, Tony Blair voices concern over the ascent of China and blatantly speaks of the antecedence of European power to wealth. Unlike many Western Marxists, he recognises the contribution of bombing defenceless nations to imperial rents. John Bolton, the U.S. national security advisor (2018–2019), is not far off the mark when he facetiously remarked that there is one super-power, the US, and everyone's role in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is to limit its advance. No matter what concession or compromise an aggressed nation like Libya or Syria makes, US empire cannot take yes for an answer; it will inevitably aggress them. Aggression is an industry interwoven with accumulation. The imperialist class fulfils the mandate of the commodity as self-expanding waste, which must culminate in the evisceration of peripheral states.

To Lenin in (1915), the experience of war should stun and break the working classes at first, while calling them to anti-war activism later. These were different times and Lenin was right in his optimism then. However, unlike 1915, and with so many wars stretching across the time spectrum since, there is less reason for optimism at the current historical intersection. War has proven to be of great value to the Northern working classes partaking in imperialist rents. Instead of the '*action directe*' required in support of the South, the modern US left critiques the Pentagon for its high spare parts/toilet costs. The Pentagon paid '\$640 for toilet seats and \$7,600 for coffee makers,' and, by implication, it is wasteful and inefficient.¹³ It escapes this 'left' that waste is the form of capital

13 Another Banner Year for the Military-Industrial Complex, The Nation, February 2022, https://www.thenation.com/article/world/weapons-spending-pentagon-2021/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Daily%62004.02.2022&utm_term=daily

and, at the same time, the purpose of capital. The efficiency of the Pentagon, its returns per unit of input/dollars poured in it are highest for finance, and the high price of toilet seats embeds within it a component of the under-priced wasted lives in the South. Since 1915 or, earlier in the sixteenth century, passing by the *déclassé* of Louis Bonaparte and the Chartists, the rents of imperialism have deepened the rifts of the working-class. The white class chiefly negotiates its shares from imperialist-rents which bears it as an organic constituent of capital; thence, the reasons for cautious optimism at this point of time.

The waste or, sub-categorically, the many years lost from potential longevity are, by extension, a structural genocide carried out by capital in command of history. The quantitative impact of the historically wired genocide may be gauged as a result of imperialistically imposed famine policies (Avramidis 2006). Its impact through underfunded health can also be assessed by extending Sutcliffe's (2006) measures of unnecessary deaths. The numbers of the victims crushed by the weight of history is in the millions every year. Still, this capital, of which one speaks, is a social class that cannot be sliced like a salami sausage in order to apportion moral condemnation to its various slivers. No class-independent ethical value-comparative judgment can be made about the parts while skipping the decisiveness of the whole. From a working-class angle, value *qua* capital as a totality is amoral (Lukács 1952), while from capital's angle, it is moral on account that it harms the least numbers when harm is inescapable.

What is often intended when the curtailment of civil liberties in a small dependent nation is flaunted by the mainstream media as unethical or *contra* human rights often develops into an excuse for the sacking of the smaller nation. However, whatever restrictions Libya imposed on political freedoms were in response to an impending assault by the US sixth fleet, or the US-sponsored Islamists inside its territory, yet these restrictions were considered as valid reasons for its destruction by NATO in 2011. In hindsight, the fact that the white working class supports such obvious lies does not stem from ignorance, it is rather a personification of a capital-class position. Even in utilitarian ethics, brakes upon Libyan civil liberties by the Qaddafi government were a more humane working-class standpoint than the destruction that followed and the contribution of the collapse of Libya to the power of imperialism. In any case, ethics based on statistics are a calculus of crime.

Similarly, it is theoretically salami-like to speak of this or that sub-imperialism as central capital's undelegated power. History identifying with capital is not a salad whose constituent forces are to be discerned by some probabilistic exercise. As one assigns subjective probabilities to several factors leading to an outcome, every epiphenomenon may be derived from lateral phenomenon. Again, appearances explain appearances without mediation or the who done it.

By means of statistical extrapolation as well, percentage shares of wealth concentration would logically and, albeit absurdly, turn anyone into a sub-imperialist. Any sizeable state in a given region becomes sub-imperialist. It all depends on the class bent in the mode of abstraction, the dynamic laws that relate the abstract state of a concept to its concrete state, and the accounting system with which it is quantified.

Contrariwise, capital incarnate in an imperialism, which commands history, is a totality. Since it is hierarchically structured in dominance, its lower suzerainties' exercise of power is made possible, though not necessarily certain, by the clout of US imperialism. It is specifically the crushing weight of this clout, the weapons of NATO backed by its propaganda apparatuses, which is not qualified as a weapon by Western Marxism; thence, the room that is available for academics to nuance an argument and discuss what the other side in the developing world is doing wrong while it is being butchered by the very dominant thought currents housing nuanced debates. Understanding the historical moment, the assessment of the actual balance of forces, has not been a strong point of Western Marxism (slightly rephrasing of Krupskaya's in the *Lessons of October* [1925]). The substance of the power of the ruling class or US-led imperialism is its capacity at ideological production, reformed by its strategic positioning and aggressions across the globe. Dominant thought is the differing currents that gravitate toward the reason of the commodity as self-expanding value. Putting structure to thought, the global stratum invested in dollars increases its wealth as the US-led class collateralises its dollar debts/credits with imperialist aggression/control, which is also its ability to recruit labour in bondage conditions and to further waste the future labour of the developing world.

The masses act via the agency of the social class and its corresponding state of consciousness. Social humans think for themselves but draw from a dominant ideology whose strength varies with class rule, before embarking on a course of action, whence the uncertainty in historical uncertainty. In parallel, the control of capital over the means of production establishes the objectivity of history. Determinably, historical events, objective and uncertain, lie beyond the reach of probability's guesswork. Yet this history cloned as capital, the product of organised social agency actualised in cultural and institutional practices, has its own dynamic or laws of development. The law of value, and its ascension into the AGLCA, is the principal mediatory frame by which global society reproduces. Such law allocates resources primarily by the practice of imperialist wars of encroachment. And, as argued so far, imperialist wars are a wage system in themselves and act as back-stoppers of the broader wage system. In comparison to Malthusian analysis, which speaks of overpopulation

in relation to welfarism leading to moral degeneracy and higher population pressure, the Marxian wage system is theoretically far more devastating in its impact upon society because population reduction is intrinsic to the system (Malthus was critical of policies that aided the poor). Marxism posits that an overproduction crisis characteristic of an objective history imposes the creation of the reserve army of labour as a condition of accumulation. The principal capital-labour contradiction appears as the capital-population contradiction, in which the winnowing of the population winnows the stock of labour power to the demands of accumulation. For Malthus, welfare could reverse to avert the excess population butchering itself, while for Marx, the butchery is itself the bedrock of accumulation.

Additionally, and as argued thus far, the industry of wasting the reserve army of labour ties into wage deflation and implies permanent depopulation. The upshot of that wage system or, when waste as production is taken into account, transpires in the fact that living labourers consume not only the objectified labour of other humans, but literally the wasted lives of other humans, as in war, or objectified in commodities. Accordingly, while classes are expressed in social structures, the structure of the North, always with the help of its lackeys down South, cannibalises the South.

The estrangement of history, its alienation from responsible social control, emerges in dominant cultural strands and resigned attitudes. One bogus explanation is the allegedly inherent psychological death drives of humanity, but that is too off the scale to ponder to the allegedly inherent psychological death drives of humanity. Under capital, the necessary law of destruction as value unleashed becomes reason for social reproduction and abounds as destruction for the sake of destruction. The only glimmer through the impending threat is as Ilyenkov theorised, and it arises *when reason appears in the universe as the inverse process to entropy, or as a challenge to doom*. The high social entropy setting on course a similarly high metabolic rate of social de-reproduction ought to spur the elimination of private property and reorganise man and nature. However, under the prevalence of meliorism, religious eschatology and despondency breeding the absurdities of bourgeois social psychoanalysis (like mass death-wish), the ongoing calamity may yet stun and break more people than those enlightened and tempered (the reverse of what Lenin expected in [1915]). That is so because history or the concomitant of the class struggle, with a US-led imperialist blind to the subconscious of the commodity, reproduces by exponential waste. As living labour produces itself as dead labour, the rate of exploitation associated with wasted living labour counteracts the tendency of falling profit rates. Consequently, capital requires more cheaper inputs of social nature per unit of output. By squashing nature and the lives of people

against its constructed market or identity subtended conflicts, capital interlaces waste processes with all the phases of global accumulation. To not raise to prominence to the issues of premature death by neoliberal austerity, or genocides in Rwanda, the Congo, Yemen and Iraq by militarism, and the destruction of states, is to presume that these states are failed projects whose output, principally their dead, fetch little prices as they are realised (sold and consumed in complex price systems and asymmetric time). The value of the dead cannot be construed on the basis of their puny money form at which their dollar-cheap labour power traded in their puny dollarised-economies. The contribution of structural genocide only appears cheap in money terms because, as per the run of the mill principle, money is the fetish that conceals their true value to capitalist profits. Millions of lives appear to have perished for picayune dollar amounts, when in actuality, it is the death as product of the sophisticated machines of war and their costs, which create much value; it is the value imparted by compression of life in death of living labour in the developing nation *bonded* to war industries that is the relation at the source of wealth. Labour, by the condition of its very demise in the industry of war, is both productive and the raw material/output of war production. War after all produces dead people for a price. As argued in chapter three, the high costs *become* revenues US militarism, which produces the dead with living labour, raises exploitation and counterbalances the dampening impact of the rising organic composition of capital upon the rates of surplus value – a time bound law conditional upon realisation. To add meaning to the previous proposition, the value relayed by living labour *transmuted* into the dead poor, the value reified in the corpses, like any commodity, realises in many implicit and explicit prices across the time spectrum. These implicit and explicit prices, past and future prices, *are the result of the social action* of waste and war, which add up as actual and potential moneyed wealth in the coffers of capital. The million dollar drone is not only killing an Arab whose income over his lifecycle is no more than 10,000 US dollars; here, the killing act itself is an activity that earns the financial class more than the one million invested in the drone. Value making is a social and historical activity and only after intermittent gestation periods an entry on the ledgers of finance. The legerdemain of wars as burden to empire persists only because broad strata in the North cannibalise the South.

As argued in the previous chapter, equating the sum of the values of commodities to the sum of the prices they command at any given point and in a given nation over a specific span of time is a faulty measure of total value. Such depends on the espoused system of accounts, which, under capital's utilitarian principles, amounts to something from nothing, or there is no social labour inputted in production across history behind the wealth. In such accounts, whatever one finds at the shelf in the storers is supply or production given in the

price of the item without a history of the item's making process. In relation to militarism, it would seem that the US military intervention abroad was unnecessary to reduce the price of the item by weakening its subject. Militarism does not seem to reduce the negotiating power of aggressed nations, and therewith the costs of capital to raise its profits. In utilitarian accounts, the pounding of a weaker nation, which in actuality registers as value and for a price, was not a pre-condition for profits to emerge. Sure enough, the industry of war integrates the different national spaces upon which it operates. It homogenises the level of development in the productive forces between aggressor and aggressed. In the case of the US, the factory space of the war industry is the globe. Without the outlays on war psychology, war preparedness and expenditure, which include social spending boosting national character at home and paying for paving the grounds for the engagement of a developing country in war abroad, the supply chain of war, and with it, the supply chain of all commodities, gets disrupted. That society is a war machine, as per the Deleuzian on position leaves out imperialist war as an industrial process. For Deleuze (2011) markets are universal but not universalising and through its many centres in many states, generate wealth and misery. There surface the rhizomic counter-image of diluted imperialism; there also surfaces the notion of the state as a form independent of periodised historical circumstances.¹⁴ Suffice it to say that Deleuze follows with a parochial indictment of states since 'there is no democratic state that is not compromised to the very core by its part in generating human misery.' Capitalist states organise markets and are instruments of markets. A capitalist market is universal; however, it is not states in charge of markets that generate 'both wealth and misery.' On the contrary, markets objectively homogenise labour, while the leading imperialist states counterbalance the objective tendency at the behest of capital, always by restructuring the power divide in their favour through war. Of note here: markets are never abstract. They are not formal markets that ideally equalise wages when they expand, since neo-classical economics also says that as a way to idolise markets. Markets as predicate institutions of the state institution are means of enrichment in which the rate of profit must exponentially undermine living conditions. The law of labour homogenisation equally exists in its inversion, or to counter the wage-equalising tendencies of the market that grind down profits. That all states are to blame because their practice is 'shameful' without defining the structure of power and the role of war in social reproduction misses the vertical decision making structure. States are forms of capital, which reflect the gradated power

14 Deleuze J (2011) Control and Becoming, The Funambulist, <https://thefunambulist.net/editorials/philosophy-control-and-becoming-a-conversation-between-toni-negri-and-gilles-deleuze>

of capital in the international division of labour, otherwise, with such Kantian moral equivalence, the enslaved nation becomes equally responsible with the enslaving nation. On the social reproduction side, war is the leading knowledge and production sharing economy. Just like the negotiations to set up a corporate factory abroad, the US war machine also sets up its downstream affiliates, the embassies that double for espionage stations, the NGO's, the Peace-Corps, etc., and the social divisions for its wars abroad. It must conscript willing and unwilling bonded-labour in its war projects. The predeterminate condition of global accumulation is war and the gearing for war.

However, what registers as war-abroad related income in US GDP is not the cascading prices of war related activities across the globe. What registers is only the amount of war-sale items, incomes of personnel affiliated with war, or the incomes with which these items were bought and sold in the US. US income from abroad is represented by the small share of incomes of US national from overseas activity, which are tabled in Gross National Income (GNI). With an accounting system tailored to let US income appear as if it is all of national origin by restrictions on time and spatial connections, the contribution of war and waste, more generally, to the interlocked system of waste production contribution to US income, disappears.

Moreover, the social activity of pounding labour is an historical event whose appearance in the money-form of capital registers by the coincidence of the uncertainty with the necessity of history (the event) rather than by some stationary time series with statistical lags. Waste output varies as if each event constituting waste as value-added activity in the past is independent of the previous level of output, whereas waste like any commodity is dependent upon the power of capital to exhume or bury the effects of past waste events. The necessary social labour time of waste events is reified/realised in waste commodities and hidden from view, until history or class struggle decides otherwise. The waste events are the successive poundings of labour determined by the prioritisation of politics, ensuring the rule of capital, set against short term profits. These waste production activities gel in prices or are implicit or non-synchronic in systems of interconnected prices across the spectrum of time. Like all other symbols, prices are diachronic and synchronic with the commodity as a self-differentiating continuum supporting social reproduction. For instance, the coke-can is a soft drink with a price at this point and medical bill down the line with another price. By the combined effects of overdetermination, uncertainty and recursiveness (the interdependency of factors), wars of past times and wars of the future (the pounding) are at play through the market to influence prices. Their products may be backgrounded but assume one money form or another. For instance, US GDP, tables the sale

and wages of an F35 jetfighter and its pilot at work engaging indigent labour on the ground who perish on the job of self-defence against a US war machine; however, that fighter sale and pilot wages are price mark-ups, which appear as such only because of the implicit presence of the input and output of wasted-life production. These inputs and outputs, the living labourers becoming dead labourers on the ground, are not on the invoice of final jet sale price and jet pilot wage although they are logical predicates and actual inputs in the making of value. In social reproduction terms, the impact of the cheap wage share of labouring victims on the ground over their shorter lifecycle is missing as value constituent in their contribution to output or GDP. Since US-European armies erect the power platforms behind trade, what is also missing are the structural pressures of the dead as under-priced commodities upon the prices of all other commodities. To re-value the dead, to price the necessary labour robbed by capital, and re-include that power as a symbolic money quantity in output, is to project a more complete picture of output.

The time-uncertain events of wasted social nature and their silenced contribution to output are what makes the difference in price mark-ups over prices of production and, therefore, the foundation of imperial rents. The waste events widen the gap between necessary and surplus labour. Liking price to value without assuming that value is a historical relationship in which the pounding of labour is the industry that forms the continuum of surplus value and by intermediation, its profit money form instantiations, elides concrete totality.

Recalling that because the terms of power set the terms of trade, capital freely reassesses the value magnitude in price of the commodity through the market platforms it designs to drain more value per price. The production of wasted humans occurs at the initial stage and at every stage in the production process. Wars or related labour coercion processes are what detaches the actual commodity, be it life of labour or the product of labour, from its historical subject, the working class. In the early stages of capitalism, the stage of colonial plunder and slavery, waste through commercial exploitation launches value out of the commodification and liquidation of life. In the imperialist stage, this negative dialectic persists as such and assumes phenomenal proportions relative to the times. The chimerical account of capital, a picture of things in still time, veils social de-reproduction. It more precisely inters in the rubble of its fetishes the social cost of labour's reproduction, or the value proper. Waste as a form of capital revitalises the relations necessary for the law of value to cut loose. Thence, the de-sovereignisation of developing nations, their cultural evisceration and de-subjectification, to relegate them to stone-age-like conditions by bombing

and sanctions, altogether minimise necessary labour and, conversely, raise the surplus value. These measures minimise an already minimal necessary labour time. Simultaneously, the generalisation of the waste activity, commodification and the mobilisation of idle people and assets to be wasted, broaden the scope to industrial scale waste and increase surplus labour.

In the absence of anti-systemic struggles, the waste form of value reinfuses the global value chain with the defeatism of labour. The ripple effect pressures the global wage-share downwards while augmenting the power gaps between the wasteful classes and those who are wasting away. The masses supposedly idle in some desert and unexploited by capital, but bombed, become the masses most exploited by capital. They are the labour whose minimal social cost of reproduction, which is of equivalent natural value in social reproduction across the globe, is borne out in minimal moneyed form by their national formations. They cost little to keep alive in their home countries, and such little cost pushes down the costs of labour everywhere. Their bondage to the waste industry consumes the value of their lives reduced to labour power in the shortest possible durations. Aside from their minimal moneyed costs that breed super profits, the value associated with the waste of life in the South is a peridacte of capital. Such logical and actual predication in an organic social production totality situates waste in the ontology of capital. Quantifying value in thousands or billion of dollars is just a side exercise to the fact that without the waste of life capital cannot exist. To theorise the value contributed by the Third World as low in money form because their wages in their homelands are cheap, or their products sell for low prices, is the sort of valuation that becomes received theory by the power of US aircraft carriers.

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