### Part 1 is the Impacts

#### All Capitalism is Racial Capitalism – the modern system of labor can only sustain itself through parasitic governance which produce disposable populations and black death

Wang 18 [Jackie, PhD African-American Studies @ Harvard, “Carceral Capitalism” p. 63-85//ak47]

Mass Incarceration, the Debt Economy, and the Post-Work Society The purpose of the above summary of the Black Panther Party’s analysis of prisons and how technological innovation could lead to the lumpenization of the working class is to draw attention to the possibility that labor-saving technologies will not necessarily liberate humans from work as we move toward a post-scarcity and post-work society, but can lead to the creation of surplus populations that are housed—and generate value—in prison or are folded into the economy as debtors. Although Cleaver hypothesized that the welfare state would prop up consumption as more people were shunted from the production process, in the decades since he published his essay, the welfare state has contracted while the debt economy has ballooned. Maurizio Lazzarato, in The Making of the Indebted Man, analyzes the significance of this transition from social right to social debt: “When social rights (unemployment insurance, the minimum wage, health care, etc.) are transformed into social debt and private debt, and beneficiaries into debtors whose repayment means adopting prescribed behavior, subjective relations between ‘creditor’ institutions, which allocate rights, and ‘debtors,’ who benefit from assistance or services, begin to function in a radically different way, just as Marx foresaw.”³¹ For Lazzarato, debt should be conceptualized not only in terms of money and repayment, but also in terms of the disciplinary function of debt and the docile subjectivities produced by indebtedness. He writes: Unlike what happens on financial markets, the beneficiary as “debtor” is not expected to reimburse in actual money but rather in conduct, attitudes, ways of behaving, plans, subjective commitments, the time devoted to finding a job, the time used for conforming oneself to the criteria dictated by the market and business, etc. Debt directly entails life discipline and a way of life that requires “work on the self,” a permanent negotiation with oneself, a specific form of subjectivity: that of the indebted man. In other words, debt reconfigures biopolitical power by demanding a production of subjectivity specific to indebted man.³² Thus, as more people join the ranks of the lumpen or the precariat, and as production migrates around the globe or becomes more efficient, we have witnessed the expansion of the debt economy. Debt not only means that the creditor essentially owns the future of the debt (which would unconsciously and consciously affect the life choices made by the debtor), but that debt actually produces a specific kind of subjectivity. In Humans Need Not Apply, Jerry Kaplan—a futurist, entrepreneur, and fellow at the Stanford Center for Legal Informatics—predicts that 90 percent of the jobs that exist now will eventually be automated. While some post-Marxist tech critics hypothesize that automation will inevitably lead to guaranteed basic income, the monetization of the social value of our participation as users, and the creation of a post-work society, it seems just as plausible—given recent trends—that the social and economic crisis of unemployment caused by automation will lead to the creation of new debt and credit regimes. Such innovations are already incubating in Silicon Valley. In his book Humans Need Not Apply: A Guide to Wealth and Work in the Age of Artificial Intelligence, Kaplan proposes job mortgages as a way to weather what he believes will be an economic transitional phase: I will propose an approach to this problem in the form of a new type of financial instrument, the “job mortgage,” secured exclusively by your future labor (earned income) similar to the way your home mortgage is secured exclusively by your property. Out of work? Payments are suspended for some reasonable grace period, until you find another job. In the proposed system, employers and schools will have incentives to collaborate in a new way. Employers will issue nonbinding letters of intent to hire you if you acquire specified skills, and they will get certain payroll tax breaks if they ultimately follow through. These letters of intent will serve the same purpose for job mortgage lenders as an appraisal serves for a home mortgage lender. Training institutions will have to craft their curricula around the specific skills required by sponsoring employers in order to meet the requirements of the loans, or else students won’t enroll. You won’t be committed in advance to accepting a particular position if someone else makes you a better offer, but at least you have the comfort of knowing that you are acquiring the skills valued by the marketplace. In effect, this scheme introduces a new form of feedback and liquidity into labor markets, enforced through the discipline of the free market.³³ Far from inaugurating the communist utopia many of us wish for, technological innovations that reduce the need for human labor may just become an opportunity for financial institutions to have broader ownership of our futures through the creation of new credit instruments. Such an instrument as the job mortgage would not merely be a way to inject liquidity into labor markets, it would be a disciplinary apparatus that comes with a set of terms and requirements. Although the job mortgage would make lending institutions entitled to a percentage of borrowers’ future income, if borrowers don’t find a job, they would still have to pay back a portion of the loan. But questions remain about how borrowers would be punished if they failed to meet the requirements of the job mortgage. What if a borrower takes out a loan and decides to switch career paths? What if the debtor drops out and decides to live in a punk house and hitchhike across the country? What if, after learning how to program the software for selfdriving cars, a borrower decides it’s not for them and instead gets into producing electronic music? Will we even be able to imagine such futures for ourselves as the credit system colonizes all areas of our lives and constrains our futures? Will these credit instruments and the “discipline of the free market” reduce our lives to the acquisition of “marketable skills” and make it impossible to explore, wander, create, invent, learn (as opposed to “acquiring skills”), relax, form non-instrumentalized social bonds, loaf, and daydream? Without a revolution or a social movement to overturn or counter the direction of the debt economy and techno-capitalism, we might be catapulted into a future where our lives are disciplined and determined by our dependency on credit. The New Racial Capitalism The essays included in this book—which are more suggestive than they are conclusive—attempt to update the analytic of racial capitalism for a contemporary context. Rather than focusing on the axis of production by analyzing how racism operates via wage differentials, this work attempts to identify and analyze what I consider the two main modalities of contemporary racial capitalism: predatory lending and parasitic governance. These racialized economic practices and modes of governance are linked insofar as they both emerge to temporarily stave off crises generated by finance capital. By titling this book Carceral Capitalism, I hope to draw attention to the ways in which the carceral techniques of the state are shaped by— and work in tandem with—the imperatives of global capitalism. Predatory lending is a form of bad-faith lending that uses the extension of credit as a method of dispossession. When analyzing contemporary economic practices, a distinction can be made between good-faith and bad-faith forms of credit. Good-faith lending might have a fixed interest rate and be designed such that there is a possibility of the loan being paid. It enables borrowers to accumulate wealth, though as the debt economy expands, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to ever get out of debt. Bad-faith lending might be a high-interest or free-floating interest rate loan (often offered with a “hook” rate that eventually expires) and is designed such that the borrowers will likely default and thus their property will be taken away (their goods repossessed, their homes foreclosed, etc.). In the United States, the kind of credit a borrower has access to depends in part on the race of the borrower. Today, before working on this introduction, I read an article in The New York Times about how the largest bank in the U.S.—JP Morgan—will pay $55 million in damages for discriminatory lending practices that targeted blacks and Latinxs for higher-interest mortgage loans than whites of the same income bracket (Wells Fargo also had to pay $175 million for engaging in the same practices). As predatory lending systematically prevents mostly poor black Americans from accumulating wealth or private property, it is a form of social exclusion that operates via the inclusion of marginalized populations as borrowers. For it is as borrowers that they are eventually marked for further social exclusion (through credit and e-scores). Predatory lending exists in many forms, including subprime mortgage loans, student loans for sham for-profit colleges (which Obama attempted to regulate, but may be revived by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos), car loans, and so forth. Predatory lending practices also have a decidedly spatialized character. In impoverished urban areas, predatory lending exists in the form of rent-to-own scams, payday loans, commercial bail bonds, and other practices. Overall, predatory lending enables profit maximization when growth is stagnant, but this form of credit will always be plagued by realization problems, which are sometimes resolved using state force. Parasitic forms of governance—which have intensified in the wake of the 2008 crash—are actually rooted in decades-old problems that are coming to a head only now. Beginning in the 1970s, there was a revolt in the capitalist class that undermined the tax state and led to the transformation of public finance. During the subsequent decades the tax state was gradually transformed into the debt state—“that is, a state which covers a large, possibly rising, part of its expenditure through borrowing rather than taxation, thereby accumulating a debt mountain that it has to finance with an ever greater share of its revenue.”³⁴ This model of public finance creates a situation where creditors, rather than the public, become the privileged constituency of governments. The hegemony of finance is antidemocratic not only because financial institutions are opaque and can influence finance through their ownership of the public debt, but also because fiscal crises (which can be induced by the financial sector) authorize the use of state power to extract from the public. Parasitic governance, as a modality of the new racial capitalism, uses five primary techniques: 1) financial states of exception, 2) automated processing, 3) extraction and looting, 4) confinement, and 5) gratuitous violence (with execution as an extreme manifestation of this technique). The Financial State of Exception Perhaps what I would call a financial state of exception would be best exemplified by the recent cases of the Flint water crisis and the Puerto Rican fiscal crisis. They both entail a suspension of the so-called normal democratic modes of governance (where decisions are made by elected officials) and the implementation of rule by emergency managers (EMs) who represent the interests of the financial sector. Usually it is a state, municipal, or sovereign debt crisis that authorizes the financial takeover of governance (but it can also be a “natural” disaster, as we saw in New Orleans with Hurricane Katrina). A financial state of emergency can also be induced when banks create a liquidity shortage by abruptly refusing to lend money to government bodies (which is what occurred in the 1975 bankruptcy of New York City). Flint, Michigan, is a perfect example of how a financial state of exception can produce a nightmarish outcome. As I write this, it has been more than a thousand days since Flint had clean water—but what does this have to do with the financial and government processes I have described above? In 2011, Governor Rick Snyder appointed emergency managers to seize control of the financial affairs of the city in the name of the public good. Like many other ailing postindustrial cities in Michigan that have experienced depopulation and the collapse of the tax base, Flint was facing a fiscal crisis. In 2014, to cut costs, the city switched its water source from Detroit’s Lake Huron system to the Flint River. Officials—including the emergency financial managers—did this knowing that the city did not have the infrastructure to properly treat the water. The untreated water corroded the pipes, and high levels of lead leaked into the water, poisoning the primarily black residents of the city. To give you a sense of how toxic the water was, consider that at five thousand parts per billion of lead, water is regarded as hazardous waste. When the Flint resident LeeAnne Walters had her water tested, the lead level was at 13,200 ppb. Like many of the children and infants exposed to the contaminated water, Walters’s son Gavin was diagnosed with lead poisoning. In short, the financial state of exception created by the budget crisis authorized the implementation of emergency financial managers whose primary goal was to make Flint solvent by any means necessary, even if it meant endangering the health of the residents. Under the auspices of the EMs, Flint was barred from borrowing money or issuing bonds. Given that, under the current fiscal paradigm, the federal government no longer provides significant funds to cities, the residents were left to suffer the consequences of the dramatic spending cuts. As dry and technical and boring as the topic of municipal finance and fiscal retrenchment is, we see in the case of the Flint water crisis that these matters form the invisible backdrop of our lives: they directly determine our quality of life and even our health outcomes. We cannot, even on a bodily level, flourish under these conditions. But it should be emphasized that vulnerability to parasitic government practices is not equally distributed in the country. The practices you are exposed to depend on where you live (which, given how segregated our country is, is determined in large part by your race and class). Automation The second technique of the parasitic governance model I am outlining is automation. In Weapons of Math Destruction, Cathy O’Neil points out that “The privileged, we’ll see time and again, are processed more by people, the masses by machines.”³⁵ When government bodies are strapped for cash, they can raise revenue by implementing software that automates the process of fining people; garnishing wages, Social Security, and tax returns; ticketing people; and extracting wealth—all while avoiding the cost of hiring personnel to individually file cases against people. To cite a common example: tickets for traffic violations such as running a red light can be issued by mail when sensors and cameras are affixed to traffic lights. Though this practice seems benign, it can become a nightmarish scenario when a person (perhaps because they have moved) never receives the ticket and thus has a warrant out for their arrest. But perhaps the most paradigmatic example of this practice is a situation that recently came to light in—again—Michigan. In 2013—during the peak of the same fiscal crisis that led to the bankruptcy of Detroit and the Flint water crisis—the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) implemented a system that automatically issued more than twenty thousand accusations of fraud against people who were applying for unemployment benefits. After a class-action lawsuit was filed, a review of the cases found that 93 percent of the fraud claims issued by the Michigan Integrated Data Automated System (Midas) were false. After the implementation of Midas, the balance of the UIA’s contingent fund (which consists mostly of funds generated from fraud fines) ballooned from $3.1 million to $155 million. Just a week before the report was released, Michigan passed legislation that enabled the state to use money from the UIA’s contingent fund to balance the state budget. As the attorney David Blanchard put it, “It’s literally balancing the books on the backs of Michigan’s poorest and jobless.”³⁶ Unfortunately, because the social consequences of automated processing are difficult to make legible and identify, cases such as the Midas case often fail to register as scandals. Extraction and Looting Racialized expropriation, as a tool of both finance capital and the parasitic state, is discussed in greater depth in my chapters on the debt economy and municipal finance. While extraction and looting are the lifeblood of global capitalism, it occurs domestically in the public sphere when government bodies—out of pressure to satisfy their private creditors—harm the public not only by gutting social services, but also by looting the public through regressive taxation, fee and fine farming, offender-funded criminal justice “services” such as private probation services, and so forth. While in the private sector the extension of subprime credit is often deployed as a racialized form of expropriation, in the public sector municipal governments (in tandem with or on behalf of financial institutions) use the police and the criminal justice system to loot black jurisdictions. Many Marxist and post- Marxist thinkers, including David Harvey, have analyzed how the advanced global economies— and the U.S. in particular—use their military, economic, and political might to secure access to natural resources and cheap labor, whether it is through lending, military force, brokering deals with corrupt autocrats, sponsoring coups, or international trade agreements made on the terms of the Global North. Some have argued that the expansion of capitalism necessitates the use of force to expropriate wealth from areas “outside” its formal sphere. Harvey has called this dynamic of late capitalism the “new imperialism.” In a postcolonial world, expropriation must proceed along lines other than brute territorial expansion. I will return to this theoretical debate in my chapter on the debt economy, but first I would like to briefly turn to Brandon Terry’s analysis of what could be described as a domestic staging of a similar process: the expropriation of wealth from black America. In “Insurgency and Imagination in an Age of Debt,” Terry uses Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton’s conceptualization of black America as an “internal colony” to elucidate finance capital’s predatory relationship to black America. Since the neoliberalization of the U.S. economy, household debt has ballooned, and this debt load is disproportionately borne by black Americans and the poor. Between 1980 and 2006, “household debt as a percentage of disposable personal income has grown from 72.1% to 139.7%.”³⁷ Given this unequal debt load among urbanized black Americans who have lost access to secure employment (owing to the loss of unionized manufacturing jobs and the scaling back of the public sector), Terry is justified in his centering of “debt and financialization” over “labor and production” as his main axis of analysis. This debt regime operates not only through categorizing and targeting certain racialized subjects for loans that are essentially scams—it is also territorializing insofar as it relies on spatialized segregation in order to function. In his description of the “consumer life of the ghetto,” Terry provides a number of examples of predatory scams that are only possible vis-à-vis the ghetto as a spatial configuration: a Playstation 4 console bundle, as of the writing of this essay, costs $299.99 from the electronics retailer, Best Buy. From the rent-to-own retailer, Rent-A-Center in Dorchester, Massachusetts, the same electronics bundle costs $122 per month, with insurance charges, over a term of sixteen months—amounting to $1,952—an over 650% price increase. When consumers fall short—even if many hundreds of dollars have already been paid—late fees are charged, the police may be called, and goods can be repossessed and resold again for the same exorbitant price. Such profits are parasitic on many of the conditions constitutive of ghettoization—precarious employment, inherited and cumulative disadvantages in wealth, inferior education, information asymmetries rooted in discrimination and social marginalization, and lack of mobility and access to commerce. Where these phenomena do not exist, rent-to-own is a negligible feature of consumer life.³⁸ In urban ghettos, ethically dubious extractive methods prevail because residents are spatially exposed to predation. Terry suggests that, given the territorializing and expropriative character of capital’s relation to black America, the colonial analogy in Carmichael and Hamilton’s conceptualization of black America as an internal colony is apt in the domains of geography and economics (precisely where the analogy seems “ill-fitting”).³⁹ Some theorists—and particularly Afro-pessimists such as Jared Sexton—would likely cavil at the use of colonialism as an analytic to understand antiblack social dynamics, as black racialization historically occurred on the axis of enslavement (by associating blackness with the transferrable condition of enslavement) and not colonization or territorial conquest. Nonetheless, Terry’s analysis is convincing insofar as it shows how racial segregation and the spatial concentration of poverty essentially create zones that are marked lootable. The looting persists because residents in these zones have access to neither “good-faith” credit nor the material means to escape spatial exposure to predation. Confinement While the first three categories (of financialization, automation, and looting) represent exclusionary processes that proceed by way of inclusion (subjectivation as citizen debtors, incorporation through the extension of credit), confinement and gratuitous violence are examples of exclusionary processes that result in civic and actual death. In other words, in the first three instances the parasitic state and predatory credit system must keep people alive in order to extract from them; in the latter two instances it must confine and kill to maintain the current racial order. As we move to the fourth and fifth techniques of parasitic governance—confinement and gratuitous violence—we reach the point at which political economy fails as a lens through which to analyze racial dynamics in the United States. Although the concept of the prison-industrial complex draws attention to the industries that benefit from the prison boom of the last several decades—including the construction companies contracted to build the prisons, the companies contracted to supply food and commissary items, the predatory phone and video companies contracted to provide communication services, and private prison companies such as GEO Group and the Corrections Corporation of America (which has recently rebranded itself as CoreCivic)—the profit motive itself is not sufficient in explaining the phenomenon of racialized mass incarceration. Nonetheless, an economic analysis of prisons should not be wholly abandoned. In addition to drawing attention to the private companies that benefit from the existence of prisons, there is much that political economy can tell us about prisons in the U.S.: it can elucidate how the economies of rural white America were revived through the construction of prisons and the employment of displaced white workers as prison guards; it can explain how deindustrialization and the migration of jobs to the suburbs and abroad created zones of concentrated black urban poverty; and it can show how the expansion of prisons “solved” the surplus population crisis caused by the wave of unemployment that followed the restructuring of the U.S. economy. Political economy also gives us a way to understand the growth of private prisons in the last several decades (particularly in the arena of juvenile detention) and the use of prison labor to produce goods at an average cost of 93 cents per hour.⁴⁰ The lens of political economy can even shed light on why there has been a marginal decrease in the prison population in the wake of the 2008 financial crash, which led to revenue shortfalls that left many states desperate to slash public spending. Yet to reduce mass incarceration to the profit motive would be misleading, considering that most inmates are held in publicly operated state and federal facilities as well as public local jails. Though as many as seven hundred thousand prisoners are employed in a variety of jobs (ranging from facility maintenance to manufacturing jobs in industries such as furniture production), the majority of those in prisons and jails don’t work. At the end of the day, the cost of housing prisoners is high, and the public bears the burden of the cost. A question that a purely economistic view fails to address is why, when the welfare state was being dismantled and there was an ideological pivot away from “big government,” was the public induced to believe that a prison binge was legitimate while spending on social services, education, and job creation was not? Is it possible that, as the government withdrew from the arena of social welfare and the revolt among those in the capitalist class reorganized politics such that the government was no longer allowed to regulate the economy, the only remaining social entitlement—the entitlement that has come to give the state as an entity its coherence—is the entitlement of security? As President Lyndon B. Johnson said in his March 8, 1965, speech to Congress on the eve of the era of mass incarceration, “No right is more elemental to our society than the right to personal security and no right needs more urgent protection. Our streets must be safe. Our homes and places of business must be secure. Experience and wisdom dictate that one of the most legitimate functions of government is the preservation of law and order.”⁴¹ This evolution in the social function of the state from provider of social services to provider of security also represented an evolution in how racialized populations in the United States would be managed. The project of dismantling the welfare state gained legitimacy through the association of social entitlements with blackness. If black Americans were seen as the primary beneficiaries of social programs (whether affirmative action, Medicaid, or food stamps), then the post–civil rights era conservative view that black Americans were getting ahead at the expense of white Americans would conveniently delegitimize the welfare function of the state as a whole. This is perhaps why many poor and workingclass Americans can rail against welfare and “greedy minorities” while not even being aware that they are beneficiaries of the very services and programs undermined by their sentiments. It is hardly surprising that today, a survey found that 43 percent of Republicans said that whites, rather than blacks, experience a lot of discrimination, while only 27 percent of Republicans believed that blacks experience a lot of discrimination.⁴² Given that white conservatives feel that blacks have a social advantage over whites, and that this “unfair advantage” is, in their view, facilitated by the state, it follows that gutting social entitlements will bring about their warped version of “equality.” All this is to say that antiblack racism is at the core of mass incarceration and the transformation of the welfare state not only into the (neoliberal) debt state, but into the penal state as well. At the dawn of the carceral era, the United States chose the path of divestment in social entitlements and investment in prisons and police. There was nothing inevitable about this policy path, as Elizabeth Hinton captures in her brilliant book From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America. The project of dismantling the welfare state was intimately tied to constructing urban black Americans trapped in zones of concentrated poverty as deserving of their situation. Coded racism was used to construct poverty as a personal moral failure. A structural analysis of urban poverty was set aside, and a racialized narrative of cultural pathology was taken up. In holding those hit hardest by cataclysmic changes in the economy responsible for their suffering (attributing their situation to laziness, criminal proclivities, and cultural inferiority), black Americans were simultaneously constructed as deserving of punishment. The conversion of poverty into a personal moral failure was intimately tied to the construction of black Americans as disposable and subject to mass incarceration. Antiblack racism, and not merely the profit motive, is at the heart of mass incarceration. Thus, the title of this book, Carceral Capitalism, is not an attempt to posit carcerality as an effect of capitalism, but to think about the carceral continuum alongside and in conjunction with the dynamics of late capitalism.

**Resource competition and wealth extraction under Racial Capitalism produces fascism, endless war and environmental destruction**

Robinson 14(William I., Prof. of Sociology, Global and International Studies, and Latin American Studies, @ UC-Santa Barbara, “Global Capitalism: Crisis of Humanity and the Specter of 21st Century Fascism” The World Financial Review)

Cyclical, Structural, and Systemic Crises Most commentators on the contemporary crisis refer to the “Great Recession” of 2008 and its aftermath. Yet the causal origins of global crisis are to be found in over-accumulation and also in contradictions of state power, or in what Marxists call the internal contradictions of the capitalist system. Moreover, because the system is now global, crisis in any one place tends to represent crisis for the system as a whole. The system cannot expand because the marginalisation of a significant portion of humanity from direct productive participation, the downward pressure on wages and popular consumption worldwide, and the polarisation of income, has reduced the ability of the world market to absorb world output. At the same time, given the particular configuration of social and class forces and the correlation of these forces worldwide, national states are hard-pressed to regulate transnational circuits of accumulation and offset the explosive contradictions built into the system. Is this crisis cyclical, structural, or systemic? Cyclical crises are recurrent to capitalism about once every 10 years and involve recessions that act as self-correcting mechanisms without any major restructuring of the system. The recessions of the early 1980s, the early 1990s, and of 2001 were cyclical crises. In contrast, the 2008 crisis signaled the slide into a structural crisis. Structural crises reflect deeper contra- dictions that can only be resolved by a major restructuring of the system. The structural crisis of the 1970s was resolved through capitalist globalisation. Prior to that, the structural crisis of the 1930s was resolved through the creation of a new model of redistributive capitalism, and prior to that the struc- tural crisis of the 1870s resulted in the development of corpo- rate capitalism. A systemic crisis involves the replacement of a system by an entirely new system or by an outright collapse. A structural crisis opens up the possibility for a systemic crisis. But if it actually snowballs into a systemic crisis – in this case, if it gives way either to capitalism being superseded or to a breakdown of global civilisation – is not predetermined and depends entirely on the response of social and political forces to the crisis and on historical contingencies that are not easy to forecast. This is an historic moment of extreme uncertainty, in which collective responses from distinct social and class forces to the crisis are in great flux. Hence my concept of global crisis is broader than financial. There are multiple and mutually constitutive dimensions – economic, social, political, cultural, ideological and ecological, not to mention the existential crisis of our consciousness, values and very being. There is a crisis of social polarisation, that is, of social reproduction. The system cannot meet the needs or assure the survival of millions of people, perhaps a majority of humanity. There are crises of state legitimacy and political authority, or of hegemony and domination. National states face spiraling crises of legitimacy as they fail to meet the social grievances of local working and popular classes experiencing downward mobility, unemployment, heightened insecurity and greater hardships. The legitimacy of the system has increasingly been called into question by millions, perhaps even billions, of people around the world, and is facing expanded counter-hegemonic challenges. Global elites have been unable counter this erosion of the system’s authority in the face of worldwide pressures for a global moral economy. And a canopy that envelops all these dimensions is a crisis of sustainability rooted in an ecological holocaust that has already begun, expressed in climate change and the impending collapse of centralised agricultural systems in several regions of the world, among other indicators. By a crisis of humanity I mean a crisis that is approaching systemic proportions, threatening the ability of billions of people to survive, and raising the specter of a collapse of world civilisation and degeneration into a new “Dark Ages.”2 This crisis of humanity shares a number of aspects with earlier structural crises but there are also several features unique to the present: 1. The system is fast reaching the ecological limits of its reproduction. Global capitalism now couples human and natural history in such a way as to threaten to bring about what would be the sixth mass extinction in the known history of life on earth.3 This mass extinction would be caused not by a natural catastrophe such as a meteor impact or by evolutionary changes such as the end of an ice age but by purposive human activity. According to leading environmental scientists there are nine “planetary boundaries” crucial to maintaining an earth system environment in which humans can exist, four of which are experiencing at this time the onset of irreversible environmental degradation and three of which (climate change, the nitrogen cycle, and biodiversity loss) are at “tipping points,” meaning that these processes have already crossed their planetary boundaries. 2. The magnitude of the means of violence and social control is unprecedented, as is the concentration of the means of global communication and symbolic production and circulation in the hands of a very few powerful groups. Computerised wars, drones, bunker-buster bombs, star wars, and so forth, have changed the face of warfare. Warfare has become normalised and sanitised for those not directly at the receiving end of armed aggression. At the same time we have arrived at the panoptical surveillance society and the age of thought control by those who control global flows of communication, images and symbolic production. The world of Edward Snowden is the world of George Orwell; 1984 has arrived; 3. Capitalism is reaching apparent limits to its extensive expansion. There are no longer any new territories of significance that can be integrated into world capitalism, de-ruralisation is now well advanced, and the commodification of the countryside and of pre- and non-capitalist spaces has intensified, that is, converted in hot-house fashion into spaces of capital, so that intensive expansion is reaching depths never before seen. Capitalism must continually expand or collapse. How or where will it now expand? 4. There is the rise of a vast surplus population inhabiting a “planet of slums,”4 alienated from the productive economy, thrown into the margins, and subject to sophisticated systems of social control and to destruction - to a mortal cycle of dispossession-exploitation-exclusion. This includes prison-industrial and immigrant-detention complexes, omnipresent policing, militarised gentrification, and so on; 5. There is a disjuncture between a globalising economy and a nation-state based system of political authority. Transnational state apparatuses are incipient and have not been able to play the role of what social scientists refer to as a “hegemon,” or a leading nation-state that has enough power and authority to organise and stabilise the system. The spread of weapons of mass destruction and the unprecedented militarisation of social life and conflict across the globe makes it hard to imagine that the system can come under any stable political authority that assures its reproduction. Global Police State How have social and political forces worldwide responded to crisis? The crisis has resulted in a rapid political polarisation in global society. Both right and left-wing forces are ascendant. Three responses seem to be in dispute. One is what we could call “reformism from above.” This elite reformism is aimed at stabilising the system, at saving the system from itself and from more radical re- sponses from below. Nonetheless, in the years following the 2008 collapse of the global financial system it seems these reformers are unable (or unwilling) to prevail over the power of transnational financial capital. A second response is popular, grassroots and leftist resistance from below. As social and political conflict escalates around the world there appears to be a mounting global revolt. While such resistance appears insurgent in the wake of 2008 it is spread very unevenly across countries and regions and facing many problems and challenges. Yet another response is that I term 21st century fascism.5 The ultra-right is an insurgent force in many countries. In broad strokes, this project seeks to fuse reactionary political power with transnational capital and to organise a mass base among historically privileged sectors of the global working class – such as white workers in the North and middle layers in the South – that are now experiencing heightened insecurity and the specter of downward mobility. It involves militarism, extreme masculinisation, homophobia, racism and racist mobilisations, including the search for scapegoats, such as immigrant workers and, in the West, Muslims. Twenty-first century fascism evokes mystifying ideologies, often involving race/culture supremacy and xenophobia, embracing an idealised and mythical past. Neo-fascist culture normalises and glamorises warfare and social violence, indeed, generates a fascination with domination that is portrayed even as heroic.

#### Independently, Black Ball technology produced by capitalism produces extinction – try or die for Leninist tech regulation

Bostrom 19 [Nick Bostrom (philosopher at Oxford and founding director of the Future of Humanity Institute). The Vulnerable World Hypothesis”. Global Policy Volume 10. Issue 4. November 2019. Accessed 11/1/8/21. <https://www.nickbostrom.com/papers/vulnerable.pdf> //Recut Xu from EM]

Let us introduce the hypothesis that the urn of creativity contains at least one black ball. We can refer to this as the vulnerable world hypothesis (VWH). Intuitively, the hypothesis is that there is some level of technology at which civilization almost certainly gets destroyed unless quite extraordinary and historically unprecedented degrees of preventive policing and/or global governance are implemented. More precisely: VWH: If technological development continues then a set of capabilities will at some point be attained that make the devastation of civilization extremely likely, unless civilization sufficiently exits the semianarchic default condition. By the ‘semi-anarchic default condition’ I mean a world order characterized by three features12 : 1. Limited capacity for preventive policing. States do not have sufficiently reliable means of real-time surveillance and interception to make it virtually impossible for any individual or small group within their territory to carry out illegal actions – particularly actions that are very strongly disfavored by > 99 per cent of the population. 2. Limited capacity for global governance. There is no reliable mechanism for solving global coordination problems and protecting global commons – particularly in high-stakes situations where vital national security interests are involved. 3. Diverse motivations. There is a wide and recognizably human distribution of motives represented by a large population of actors (at both the individual and state level) – in particular, there are many actors motivated, to a substantial degree, by perceived self-interest (e.g. money, power, status, comfort and convenience) and there are some actors (‘the apocalyptic residual’) who would act in ways that destroy civilization even at high cost to themselves.3 The term ‘devastation of civilization’ in the above definition could be interpreted in various ways, yielding different versions of VWH. For example, one could define an existential-risk vulnerable world hypothesis (x-VWH), which would state that at some level of technology, by default, an existential catastrophe occurs, involving the extinction of Earth-originating intelligent life or the permanent blighting of our future potential for realizing value. However, here we will set the bar lower. A key concern in the present context is whether the consequences of civilization continuing in the current semi-anarchic default condition are catastrophic enough to outweigh reasonable objections to the drastic developments that would be required to exit this condition. If this is the criterion, then a threshold short of human extinction or existential catastrophe would appear sufficient. For instance, even those who are highly suspicious of government surveillance would presumably favour a large increase in such surveillance if it were truly necessary to prevent occasional region-wide destruction. Similarly, individuals who value living in a sovereign state may reasonably prefer to live under a world government given the assumption that the alternative would entail something as terrible as a nuclear holocaust. Therefore, we stipulate that the term ‘civilizational devastation’ in VWH refers (except where otherwise specified) to any destructive event that is at least as bad as the death of 15 per cent of the world population or a reduction of global GDP by > 50 per cent per cent lasting for more than a decade.13 It is not a primary purpose of this paper to argue that VWH is true. (I regard that as an open question, though it would seem to me unreasonable, given the available evidence, to be at all confident that VWH is false.) Instead, the chief contribution claimed here is that VWH, along with related concepts and explanations, is useful in helping us surface important considerations and possibilities regarding humanity’s macrostrategic situation. But those considerations and possibilities need to be further analyzed, and combined with other considerations that lie outside the scope of this paper, before they could deliver any definitive policy implications. A few more clarifications before we move on. This paper uses the word ‘technology’ in its broadest sense. Thus, in principle, we count not only machines and physical devices but also other kinds of instrumentally efficacious templates and procedures – including scientific ideas, institutional designs, organizational techniques, ideologies, concepts, and memes – as constituting potential technological black balls.14 We can speak of vulnerabilities opening and closing. In the ‘easy nukes’ scenario, the period of vulnerability begins when the easy way of producing nuclear explosions is discovered. It ends when some level of technology is attained that makes it reasonably affordable to stop nuclear explosions from causing unacceptable damage – or that again makes it infeasible to produce nuclear explosions (because of technological regress).15 If no protective technology is possible (as in, e.g., the case of nuclear weapons it may not be) and technological regress does not occur, then the world becomes permanently vulnerable. We can also speak of the world being stabilized (with respect to some vulnerability) if the semi-anarchic default condition is exited in such a way as to prevent the vulnerability from leading to an actual catastrophe. The ways in which the semi-anarchic default condition would have to be altered in order to achieve stabilization depend on the specifics of the vulnerability in question. In a later section, we will discuss possible means by which the world could be stabilized. For now, we simply note that VWH does not imply that civilization is doomed. Typology of vulnerabilities We can identify four types of civilizational vulnerability. Type-1 (‘easy nukes’) The first type is one where, as in the ‘easy nukes’ scenario, it becomes too easy for individuals or small groups to cause mass destruction: Type-1 vulnerability: There is some technology which is so destructive and so easy to use that, given the semi-anarchic default condition, the actions of actors in the apocalyptic residual make civilizational devastation extremely likely. Note that in determining whether a scenario presents a Type-1 vulnerability, there is an inverse relationship between the ease with which it becomes possible to cause an incident and the destructiveness of incident. The greater the destructiveness of a single incident, the less easy it needs to be to cause such an incident in order for us to diagnose the presence of a Type-1 vulnerability. Thus, consider a ‘very easy nukes’ scenario, in which any halfwit can create an easily portable thermonuclear weapon at the kitchen sink over the course of an afternoon: this would definitely qualify as a civilizational vulnerability. Contrast this with a ‘moderately easy nukes’ scenario, in which it takes a five-person team of semi-skilled individuals toiling for an entire year to produce a single bulky few-kiloton device: that might not quite rise to the level of a civilizational vulnerability. It seems possible, in the ‘moderately easy nukes’ scenario, that the great majority of cities would escape destruction, although the threat posed by a well- resourced terrorist organization, such as Aum Shinrikyo anno 1995 or Al-Qaeda anno 2001, would increase substantially. However, consider yet another scenario, ‘moderately easy bio-doom’, in which again it requires a semi-skilled five-person team working for a year to put the black-ball technology into effect, except that this time it is a biological agent, a single point release of which is sufficient to kill billions. In ‘moderately easy bio-doom’, the threshold for a Type-1 vulnerability would be reached. If destroying civilisation required only that a single group succeed with a task at the moderately-easy level, civilization would probably be destroyed within a few years in the semi-anarchic default condition. Indeed, both Aum Shinrikyo and Al-Qaeda sought to obtain nuclear and biological weapons, and would likely have chosen to use them (see e.g. Danzig et al., 2011; Olson, 1999; Mowatt-Larssen and Allison, 2010). So a Type-1 vulnerability exists if it is either extremely easy to cause a moderate amount of harm or moderately easy to cause an extreme amount of harm.16 The reason why a black-ball technology that enables only moderate amounts of harm per incident could count as a Type-1 vulnerability is that – if the technology is sufficiently easy to use – a large number of such incidents would be almost certain to occur. Take the scenario where it is easy for an average individual to make a metropolis-busting H-bomb. This is not necessarily a scenario in which a single individual could devastate civilization. Building hundreds of bombs and transporting them to hundreds of cities without getting caught would still be a formidable endeavor even if making a single bomb were fairly easy. The ‘easy nukes’ scenario nevertheless presents a civilizational vulnerability because it is plausible that there would in fact be hundreds of individuals who would each destroy at least one city under those circumstances. That this is so almost follows from the law of large numbers combined with the plausible assumption that for any randomly selected person there is some small but appreciable chance that they would be motivated to trigger this kind of destruction – whether out of ideological hatred, nihilistic destructiveness, revenge for perceived injustices, as part of some extortion plot, or because of delusions or mental illness, or perhaps even just to see what would happen. Given the diversity of human character and circumstance, for any ever so imprudent, immoral, or self-defeating action, there is some residual fraction of humans who would choose to take that action. This is especially plausible if the action in question represents a culturally salient affordance – as it everywhere would after one such nuke attack had taken place. In other words, ‘easy nukes’ is an illustration of a vulnerable world because it looks like the apocalyptic residual has a large enough intersection with the set of empowered actors that one would expect a civilization-devastating amount of destruction to result. Type-2a (‘safe first strike’) A technology that ‘democratizes’ mass destruction is not the only kind of black ball that could be hoisted out of the urn. Another kind would be a technology that strongly incentivizes powerful actors to use their powers to cause mass destruction. Again we can turn to nuclear history for illustration. After the invention of the atomic bomb and a short-lived American nuclear monopoly, an arms race ensued between the US and the USSR. The rival superpowers amassed staggering arsenals, topping out at 70,000 nuclear warheads in 1986, more than enough to devastate civilization (Norris and Kristensen, 2010). While public awareness of the perils of the Cold War seems to have faded since its peaceful conclusion in 1991, the academic community – benefiting from the opening of formerly classified archives and the testimony of retired policy makers, officers, and analysts – has uncovered a disconcerting array of practices and incidents which seem to have repeatedly brought the world to the brink.17 Just how close we came remains a topic of dispute. Some scholars have argued that it was only thanks to a good deal of luck that nuclear holocaust was avoided.18 Whether surviving the Cold War required much luck or just a little, we can easily imagine a counterfactual in which the odds of avoiding a nuclear conflagration would be substantially worse. This holds even if we assume that nuclear weapons can be produced only by large technologically advanced states (thus distinguishing the case from the type1 vulnerability of ‘easy nukes’). The counterfactual could involve changes in the technological possibility frontier that would have made the arms race less stable. For example, it is widely believed among nuclear strategists that the development of a reasonably secure secondstrike capability by both superpowers by the mid-1960s created the conditions for ‘strategic stability’ (Colby and Gerson, 2013). Prior to this period, American war plans reflected a much greater inclination, in any crisis situation, to launch a preemptive nuclear strike against the Soviet Union’s nuclear arsenal. The introduction of nuclear submarinebased ICBMs was thought to be particularly helpful for ensuring second-strike capabilities (and thus ‘mutually assured destruction’) since it was widely believed to be practically impossible for an aggressor to eliminate the adversary’s boomer fleet in the initial attack.19 Other strategies for ensuring a second-strike capability could also be employed, but they had drawbacks. For example, one option, briefly used by the United States, was to have a contingent of long-range nuclear bombers on continuous airborne alert (Sagan, 1995). This program was very costly and increased the risk of accidental or unauthorized attacks. Another option was to build hardened land-based missile silos: in sufficient numbers, these could in principle provide the assurance of a second-strike capability to one side; however, such a large arsenal would then threaten to provide the capacity of a safe first strike against the other side, thus again destabilizing any crisis. Road-mobile ICBM launchers, which are harder to attack than silo-based missiles, eventually provided some stabilization when they were deployed by the Soviet Union in 1985, a few years before the end of Cold War (Brower, 1989). So consider a counterfactual in which a preemptive counterforce strike is more feasible. Imagine some technology that makes it easy to track ballistic missile submarines. We can also imagine that nuclear weapons were a bit more fragile, so that the radius within which a nuclear weapon would be destroyed by the detonation of another nuclear weapon was substantially larger than it actually is.20 Under those circumstances, it might have been impossible to ensure a second-strike capability. Suppose, further, that technology had been such as to make it very hard to detect missile launches, rendering a launch-on-warning strategy completely unworkable. The crisis instability of the Cold War would then have been greatly amplified. Whichever side struck first would survive relatively unscathed (or might at least have believed that it would, since the possibility of a nuclear winter was largely ignored by war planners at the time; Badash, 2001; Ellsberg, 2017).21 The less aggressive side would be utterly destroyed. In such a situation, mutual fear could easily trigger a dash to all-out war (Schelling, 1960). Other technological parameter changes could similarly increase the probability of attacks. In the real world, the main ‘attraction’ of a nuclear first strike is that it would alleviate the fear that one might otherwise oneself become the victim of such a strike; but we can imagine a counterfactual in which there are also benefits to nuclear aggression, beyond the removal of a negative. Suppose it were somehow possible to derive great economic gains from initiating a large-scale nuclear assault.22 It might be hard to see how this could be the case, yet one can imagine some automated manufacturing technology or energy technology making physical resources more valuable; or technology-enabled population growth could again make agricultural land a more vital resource (Drexler, 1986)). Some international relations scholars believe that the net economic benefits of conquest have declined substantially in the post-industrial era and that this decline has been a major contributor to peace.23 If powerful national economic motives were again added to other causes for war (such as concern for one’s own security, disputes over non-economic values, maintenance of national reputation, influence of particularly bellicose special interest groups, inter alia) then armed conflicts might become more common and large-scale nuclear war more likely. In these examples, the vulnerability arises not from destruction getting easier, but from the actions leading to destruction coming to be supported by stronger incentives. We shall call these Type-2 vulnerabilities. Specifically, a scenario like ‘safe first strike’, in which some enormously destructive action becomes incentivized, we shall refer to as Type-2a: Type-2a vulnerability: There is some level of technology at which powerful actors have the ability to produce civilization-devastating harms and, in the semi-anarchic default condition, face incentives to use that ability. We will see some more examples of Type-2a vulnerabilities below, where the ‘civilization-devastating harms’ take the form of risk externalities. Type-2b (‘worse global warming’) There is yet another way in which the world could be vulnerable; one that we can illustrate with a counterfactual related to climate change. In the real world, we observe a secular rise in global mean temperature, widely believed to be driven primarily by human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide (Stocker et al., 2014).Projections vary, depending on the emissions scenario and modelling assumptions, but forecasts that imply an average temperature rise of between 3o C and 4.5o C in 2100 (compared to 2000), in the absence of any significant action to reduce emissions, are quite typical (See Stocker et al. (2014, table 12.2)). The effects of such warming – on sea levels, weather patterns, ecosystems, and agriculture – are usually expected to be net negative for human welfare (See Field et al. (2014, figure 10-1)). Greenhouse gases are emitted by wide range of activities, including in industry, transport, agriculture, and electricity production, and from all around the world, though especially from industrialized or industrializing countries. Efforts to curb emissions have so far failed to achieve much global-scale impact (Friedlingstein et al., 2014)). Now, we could imagine a situation in which the problem of global warming would be far more dire than it actually seems to be. For example, the transient climate sensitivity (a measure of the medium-term change in mean global surface temperature of the Earth that results from some kind of forcing, such as a doubling of atmospheric CO2) could have turned out to be much greater than it is (Shindell, 2014). If it had been several times larger than its actual value, we would have been in for a temperature rise of, say, 15o or 20o C instead of 3o – a prospect with far greater civilization-destroying potential than the actual expectation.24 We can also imagine other deviations from reality that would have made global warming a worse problem. Fossil fuels could have been even more abundant than they are, and available in more cheaply exploitable deposits, which would have encouraged greater consumption. At the same time, clean energy alternatives could have been more expensive and technologically challenging. Global warming could also have been a worse problem if there were stronger positive feedback loops and nonlinearities, such as an initial phase in which the atmosphere is gradually loaded up with greenhouse gases without much observable or detrimental effect, followed by a second phase in which temperatures shoot up abruptly. To get a truly civilizational threat from global warming, it may also be necessary to stipulate, counterfactually, that mitigation through geoengineering is infeasible. The vulnerability illustrated by such a ‘worse global warming’ scenario is different from that of a Type-2a scenario like ‘safe first strike’. In a Type-2a vulnerability, some actor has the ability to take some action – such as launching a nuclear first strike – that is destructive enough to devastate civilization. In the ‘worse global warming’ scenario, no such actor need exist. Instead, in what we will call a Type-2b vulnerability, there is a large number of individually insignificant actors who is each incentivized (under the semianarchic default condition) to take some action that contributes slightly to what cumulatively becomes a civilizationdevastating problem: Type-2b vulnerability: There is some level of technology at which, in the semi-anarchic default condition, a great many actors face incentives to take some slightly damaging action such that the combined effect of those actions is civilizational devastation. What Type-2a and Type-2b have in common is that, in both cases, the damage-capable actors face incentives that would encourage a wide range of normally motivated actors in their situation to pursue the course of action that leads to damage. Global warming would not be a problem if only some small fraction of those actors who can drive cars or chop down a few trees chose to do so; the problem arises only because many actors make these choices. And in order for many actors to make those choices, the choices must be supported by incentives that have wide appeal (such as money, status, and convenience). Similarly, if only one in a million actors who could launch a nuclear first strike would actually choose to do so, then it would not be so alarming if there are a handful of actors possessing that capability; but it does get worrisome if launching a nuclear strike is strongly supported by incentives that appeal to normally-motivated actors (such as the motive of preempting a strike by one’s adversary). This is in contrast to a Type-1 vulnerability, where the problem arises from the very widespread proliferation of destructive capability. Only an actor with quite unusual values would choose, at great cost and risk to himself, to blow up a city or unleash a doomsday pathogen; the trouble in that case is that if sufficiently many actors possess such a capability, then the subset of them who also have apocalyptic motives is not empty. Type-0 (‘surprising strangelets’) In 1942, it occurred to Edward Teller, one of the Manhattan scientists, that a nuclear explosion would create a temperature unprecedented in Earth’s history, producing conditions similar to those in the center of the sun, and that this could conceivably trigger a self-sustaining thermonuclear reaction in the surrounding air or water Rhodes, 1986). The importance of Teller’s concern was immediately recognized by Robert Oppenheimer, the head of the Los Alamos lab. Oppenheimer notified his superior and ordered further calculations to investigate the possibility. These calculations indicated that atmospheric ignition would not occur. This prediction was confirmed in 1945 by the Trinity test, which involved the detonation of the world’s first nuclear explosive.25 In 1954, the US carried out another nuclear test, the Castle Bravo test, which was planned as a secret experiment with an early lithium-based thermonuclear bomb design. Lithium, like uranium, has two important isotopes: lithium-6 and lithium-7. Ahead of the test, the nuclear scientists calculated the yield to be 6 megatons (with an uncertainty range of 4–8 megatons). They assumed that only the lithium-6 would contribute to the reaction, but they were wrong. The lithium-7 contributed more energy than the lithium-6, and the bomb detonated with a yield of 15 megaton – more than double of what they had calculated (and equivalent to about 1,000 Hiroshimas). The unexpectedly powerful blast destroyed much of the test equipment. Radioactive fallout poisoned the inhabitants of downwind islands and the crew of a Japanese fishing boat, causing an international incident. We may regard it at as lucky that it was the Castle Bravo calculation that was incorrect, and not the calculation of whether the Trinity test would ignite the atmosphere. Counterfactually, if the atmosphere had been susceptible to ignition by a nuclear detonation, and if this fact had been relatively easy to overlook – let us say as easy as it was to overlook the contribution of the lithium-7 in the Castle Bravo test – then the human story (and that of all terrestrial life) would have come to an end in 1945. We can call this scenario ‘Castle Bravissimo’. Whenever we pull a ball from the urn of invention, there could conceivably be a possibility of accidental devastation. Usually, this risk is negligible; but in some cases it could be significant, especially when the technology in question generates some kind of novel perturbation of nature or introduces historically unprecedented conditions. This suggests that we should add to our typology one more category, that of technology-fated accidental civilizational devastation: Type-0 vulnerability: There is some technology that carries a hidden risk such that the default outcome when it is discovered is inadvertent civilizational devastation.26 It is instructive to note, however, that ‘Castle Bravissimo’ is not a perfect illustration of a Type-0 vulnerability. Suppose that careful calculations had shown that there was a 1 per cent probability that a nuclear detonation would ignite the atmosphere and the oceans and thereby extinguish life on Earth. Suppose, further, that it had been known that to resolve the matter further and prove that the chance was zero (or alternatively, that the chance was one) would take another 10 years of meticulous study. It is unclear, under those circumstances, what the leaders of the Manhattan project would have decided. They would presumably have thought it greatly desirable that humanity hold off on developing nuclear weapons for at least another 10 years.27 On the other hand, they would have feared that Germany might have an advanced bomb project and that Hitler maybe would not pull the breaks because of a 1 per cent risk of destroying the world.28 They might have concluded that the risk of testing a nuclear bomb was worth taking in order to reduce the probability of Nazi Germany ending up with a nuclear monopoly. In this version of ‘Castle Bravissimo’, civilization gets blown up by accident: nobody sought to cause a destructive event. Yet the key actors were locked in a strategic situation that incentivized them to proceed despite the risk. In this respect, the scenario fits as a Type-2a vulnerability; only, the civilization-devastating harm it involves is probabilistic. When nuclear technology becomes possible, powerful actors face incentives, in the semi-anarchic default condition, to use that technology in ways that produce civilization-destroying harms (which here take the form of risk externalities).29 Accordingly, in order for us to diagnose a Type-0 vulnerability, we require that a stronger condition be met than merely that the key actors did not intend destruction. We stipulate that ‘inadvertent’ should here mean that the adverse outcome sprang from bad luck, not coordination failure. In a Type-0 vulnerability, the key actors would, even if they were adequately coordinated, decide to proceed with using the technology, in the belief that the benefits would outweigh costs – but they would be wrong, and the costs would be larger than expected, enough so as to cause civilizational devastation.30 Since ‘Castle Bravissimo’ only ambiguously satisfies this criterion (it being unclear in the original counterfactual to what extent the disaster would have resulted from coordination failure and to what extent from miscalculation/bad luck), it may be useful to introduce a cleaner example of a Type-0 vulnerability. Thus, consider a ‘surprising strangelets’ scenario in which some modern high-energy physics experiment turns out to initiate a self-catalyzing process in which ordinary matter gets converted into strange matter, with the result that our planet is destroyed. This scenario, and variations thereof in which accelerator experiments generate stable black holes or trigger the decay of a metastable vacuum state, have been analyzed in the literature (Jaffe et al., 2000; Tegmark and Bostrom, 2005). Such outcomes would indeed be very surprising, since analysis indicates that they have a completely negligible chance of occurring. Of course, with sufficiently bad luck, a negligiblechance event could occur. But alternatively (and far more likely in this case), the analysis could have a hidden flaw, like the Castle Bravo calculations did; in which case the chance might not be so negligible after all (Ord et al., 2010).31 Achieving stabilization The truth of VWH would be bad news. But it would not imply that civilization will be devastated. In principle at least, there are several responses that could stabilize the world even if vulnerability exists. Recall that we defined the hypothesis in terms of a black-ball technology making civilizational devastation extremely likely conditional on technological development continuing and the semi-anarchic default condition persisting. Thus we can theoretically consider the following possibilities for achieving stabilization: 1. Restrict technological development. 2. Ensure that there does not exist a large population of actors representing a wide and recognizably human distribution of motives. 3. Establish extremely effective preventive policing. 4. Establish effective global governance. We will discuss (3) and (4) in subsequent sections. Here we consider (1) and (2). We will argue they hold only limited promise as ways of protecting against potential civilizational vulnerabilities. Technological relinquishment In its general form, technological relinquishment looks exceedingly unpromising. Recall that we construed the word ‘technology’ broadly; so that completely stopping technological development would require something close to a cessation of inventive activity everywhere in the world. That is hardly realistic; and if it could be done, it would be extremely costly – to the point of constituting an existential catastrophe in its own right (Namely, ‘permanent stagnation’ (Bostrom, 2013)). That general relinquishment of scientific and technological research is a non-starter does not, however, imply that limited curtailments of inventive activities could not be a good idea. It can make sense to forego particularly perilous directions of advancement. For instance, recalling our ‘easy nukes’ scenario, it would be sensible to discourage research into laser isotope separation for uranium enrichment (Kemp, 2012). Any technology that makes it possible to produce weapons-grade fissile material using less energy or with a smaller industrial footprint would erode important barriers to proliferation. It is hard to see how a slight reduction in the price of nuclear energy would compensate. On the contrary, the world would probably be better off if it somehow became harder and more expensive to enrich uranium. What we would ideally want in this area is not technological progress but technological regress. While targeted regress might not be in the cards, we could aim to slow the rate of advancement towards risk-increasing technologies relative to the rate of advancement in protective technologies. This is the idea expressed by the principle of differential technological development. In its original formulation, the principle focuses on existential risk; but we can apply it more broadly to also encompass technologies with ‘merely’ devastational potential: Principle of Differential Technological Development. Retard the development of dangerous and harmful technologies, especially ones that raise the level of existential risk; and accelerate the development of beneficial technologies, especially those that reduce the existential risks posed by nature or by other technologies Bostrom, 2002). The principle of differential technological development is compatible with plausible forms of technological determinism. For example, even if it were ordained that all technologies that can be developed will be developed, it can still matter when they are developed. The order in which they arrive can make an important difference – ideally, protective technologies should come before the destructive technologies against which they protect; or, if that is not possible, then it is desirable that the gap be minimized so that other countermeasures (or luck) may tide us over until robust protection become available. The timing of an invention also influences what sociopolitical context the technology is born into. For example, if we believe that there is a secular trend toward civilization becoming more capable of handling black balls, then we may want to delay the most risky technological developments, or at least abstain from accelerating them. Even if we suppose that civilizational devastation is unavoidable, many would prefer it to take place further into the future, at a time when maybe they and their loved ones are no longer alive anyway.32 Differential technological development doesn’t really make sense in the original urn-of-creativity model, where the color of each ball comes as a complete surprise. If we want to use the urn model in this context, we must modify it. We could stipulate, for example, that the balls have different textures and that there is a correlation between texture and color, so that we get clues about the color of a ball before we extract it. Another way to make the metaphor more realistic is to imagine that there are strings or elastic bands between some of the balls, so that when we pull on one of them we drag along several others to which it is linked. Presumably the urn is highly tubular, since certain technologies must emerge before others can be reached (we are not likely to find a society that uses jet planes and flint axes). The metaphor would also become more realistic if we imagine that there is not just one hand daintily exploring the urn: instead, picture a throng of scuffling prospectors reaching in their arms in hopes of gold and glory, and citations. Correctly implementing differential technological development is clearly a difficult strategic task (Cf. Collingridge, 1980). Nevertheless, for an actor who cares altruistically about long-term outcomes and who is involved in some inventive enterprise (e.g. as a researcher, funder, entrepreneur, regulator, or legislator) it is worth making the attempt. Some implications, at any rate, seem fairly obvious: for instance, don’t work on laser isotope separation, don’t work on bioweapons, and don’t develop forms of geoengineering that would empower random individuals to unilaterally make drastic alterations to the Earth’s climate. Think twice before accelerating enabling technologies – such as DNA synthesis machines – that would directly facilitate such ominous developments.33 But boost technologies that are predominantly protective; for instance, ones that enable more efficient monitoring of disease outbreaks or that make it easier to detect covert WMD programs. Even if it is the case that all possible ‘bad’ technologies are bound to be developed eventually, it can still be helpful to buy a little time.34 However, differential technological development does not on its own offer a solution for vulnerabilities that persist over long periods – ones where adequately protective technologies are much harder to develop than their destructive counterparts, or where destruction has the advantage even at technological maturity.35 Preference modification Another theoretically possible way of achieving civilizational stabilization would be to change the fact that there exists a large population of actors representing a wide and recognizably human distribution of motives. We reserve for later discussion of interventions that would reduce the effective number of independent actors by increasing various forms of coordination. Here we consider the possibility of modifying the distribution of preferences (within a more or less constant population of actors). The degree to which this approach holds promise depends on which type of vulnerability we have in mind. In the case of a Type-1 vulnerability, preference modification does not look promising, at least in the absence of extremely effective means for doing so. Consider that some Type-1 vulnerabilities would result in civilizational devastation if there is even a single empowered person anywhere in the world who is motivated to pursue the destructive outcome. With that kind of vulnerability, reducing the number of people in the apocalyptic residual would do nothing to forestall devastation unless the number could be reduced all the way to zero, which may be completely infeasible. It is true that there are other possible Type-1 vulnerabilities that would require a somewhat larger apocalyptic residual in order for civilizational devastation to occur: for example, in a scenario like ‘easy nukes’, maybe there would have to be somebody from the apocalyptic residual in each of several hundred cities. But this is still a very low bar. It is difficult to imagine an intervention – short of radically re-engineering human nature on a fully global scale – that would sufficiently deplete the apocalyptic residual to entirely eliminate or even greatly reduce the threat of Type-1 vulnerabilities. Note that an intervention that halves the size of the apocalyptic residual would not (at least not through any firstorder effect) reduce the expected risk from Type-1 vulnerabilities by anywhere near as much. A reduction of 5 per cent or 10 per cent of Type-1 risk from halving the apocalyptic residual would be more plausible. The reason is that there is wide uncertainty about how destructive some new blackball technology would be, and we should arguably use a fairly uniform prior in log space (over several orders of magnitude) over the size of apocalyptic residual that would be required in order for civilizational devastation to occur conditional on a Type-1 vulnerability arising. In other words, conditional on some new technology being developed that makes it easy for an average individual to kill at least one million people, it may be (roughly) as likely that the technology would enable the average individual to kill one million people, ten million people, a hundred million people, a billion people, or every human alive. These considerations notwithstanding, preference modification could be helpful in scenarios in which the set of empowered actors is initially limited to some small definable subpopulation. Some black-ball technologies, when they first emerge from the urn, might be difficult to use and require specialized equipment. There could be a period of several years before such a technology has been perfected to the point where an average individual could master it. During this early period, the set of empowered actors could be quite limited; for example, it might consist exclusively of individuals with bioscience expertise working in a particular type of lab. Closer screening of applicants to positions in such labs could then make a meaningful dent in the risk that a destructive individual gains access to the biotech black ball within the first few years of its emergence.36 And that reprieve may offer an opportunity to introduce other countermeasures to provide more lasting stabilization, in anticipation of the time when the technology gets easy enough to use that it diffuses to a wider population. For Type-2a vulnerabilities, the set of empowered actors is much smaller. Typically what we are dealing with here are states, perhaps alongside a few especially powerful nonstate actors. In some Type-2a scenarios, the set might consist exclusively of two superpowers, or a handful of states with special capabilities (as is currently the case with nuclear weapons). It could thus be very helpful if the preferences of even a few powerful states were shifted in a more peaceloving direction. The ‘safe first strike’ scenario would be a lot less alarming if the actors facing the security dilemma had attitudes towards one another similar to those prevailing between Finland and Sweden. For many plausible sets of incentives that could arise for powerful actors as a consequence of some technological breakthrough, the prospects for a non-devastational outcome would be significantly brightened if the actors in question had more irenic dispositions. Although this seems difficult to achieve, it is not as difficult as persuading almost all the members in the apocalyptic residual to alter their dispositions. Lastly, consider Type-2b. Recall that such a vulnerability entails that ‘by default’ a great many actors face incentives to take some damaging action, such that the combined effects add up to civilizational devastation. The incentives for using the black-ball technology must therefore be ones that have a grip on a substantial fraction of the world population – economic gain being perhaps being the prime example of such a near-universal motivation. So imagine some private action, available to almost every individual, which saves each person who takes it a fraction X of his or her annual income, while producing a negative externality such that if half the world’s population takes the action then civilization gets devastated. At X = 0, we can assume that few people would take the antisocial action. But the greater X is, the larger the fraction of the population that would succumb to temptation. Unfortunately, it is plausible that the value of X that would induce at least half of the population to take the action is small, perhaps less than 1 per cent.37 While it would be desirable to change the distribution of global preferences so as to make people more altruistic and raise the value of X, this seems difficult to achieve. (Consider the many strong forces already competing for hearts and minds – corporate advertisers, religious organizations, social movements, education systems, and so on.) Even a dramatic increase in the amount of altruism in the world – corresponding, let us say, to a doubling of X from 1 per cent to 2 per cent – would prevent calamity only in a relatively narrow band of scenarios, namely those in which the private benefit of using the destructive technology is in the 1–2 per cent range. Scenarios in which the private gain exceeds 2 per cent would still result in civilizational devastation. In sum, modifying the distribution of preferences within the set of actors that would be destructively empowered by a black-ball discovery could be a useful adjunct to other means of stabilization, but it can be difficult to implement and would at best offer only very partial protection (unless we assume extreme forms of worldwide re-engineering of human nature).38 Some specific countermeasures and their limitations Beside influencing the direction of scientific and technological progress, or altering destruction-related preferences, there are a variety of other possible countermeasures that could mitigate a civilizational vulnerability. For example, one could try to: • prevent the dangerous information from spreading; • restrict access to requisite materials, instruments, and infrastructure; • deter potential evildoers by increasing the chance of their getting caught; • be more cautious and do more risk assessment work; and • establish some kind of surveillance and enforcement mechanism that would make it possible to interdict attempts to carry out a destructive act It should be clear from our earlier discussion and examples that the first four of these are not general solutions. Preventing information from spreading could easily be infeasible. Even if it could be done, it would not prevent the dangerous information from being independently rediscovered. Censorship seems to be at best a stopgap measure.39 Restricting access to materials, instruments, and infrastructure is a great way to mitigate some kinds of (gray-ball) threats, but it is unavailing for other kinds of threats – such as ones in which the requisite ingredients are needed in too many places in the economy or are already ubiquitously available when the dangerous idea is discovered (such as glass, metal, and batteries in the ‘easy nukes’ scenario). Deterring potential evildoers makes good sense; but for sufficiently destructive technologies, the existence of an apocalyptic residual renders deterrence inadequate even if every perpetrator were certain to get caught. Exercising more caution and doing more risk assessment is also a weak and limited strategy. One actor unilaterally deciding to be more cautious may not help much with respect to a Type-2a vulnerability, and would do basically nothing for one of Type-2b or Type-1. In the case of a Type0 vulnerability, it could help if the pivotal actor were more cautious – though only if the first cautiously tiptoeing actor were not followed by an onrush of incautious actors getting access to the same risky technology (unless the world had somehow, in the interim, been stabilized by other means).40 And as for risk assessment, it could lower the risk only if it led to some other countermeasure being implemented.41 The last countermeasure in the list – surveillance – does point towards a more general solution. We will discuss it in the next section under the heading of ‘preventive policing’. But we can already note that on its own it is not sufficient. For example, consider a Type-2b vulnerability such as ‘worse global warming’. Even if surveillance made it possible for a state to perfectly enforce any environmental regulation it chooses to impose, there is still the problem of getting a sufficient plurality of states to agree to adopt the requisite regulation – something which could easily fail to happen. The limitations of surveillance are even more evident in the case of Type-2a vulnerability, such as ‘safe first strike’, where the problem is that states (or other powerful actors) are strongly incentivized to perform destructive acts. The ability of those states to perfectly control what goes on within their own borders does not solve this problem. What is needed to reliably solve problems that involve challenges of international coordination, is effective global governance. Governance gaps The limitations of technological relinquishment, preference modification, and various specific countermeasures as responses to a potential civilizational vulnerability should now be clear. To the extent, therefore, that we are concerned that VWH may be true, we must consider the remaining two possible ways of achieving stabilization: 1. Create the capacity for extremely effective preventive policing. Develop the intra-state governance capacity needed to prevent, with extremely high reliability, any individual or small group – including ones that cannot be deterred – from carrying out any action that is highly illegal; and 2. Create the capacity for strong global governance. Develop the inter-state governance capacity needed to reliably solve the most serious global commons problems and ensure robust cooperation between states (and other strong organizations) wherever vital security interests are at stake – even where there are very strong incentives to defect from agreements or refuse to sign on in the first place.

### Part 2 is the Solvency

#### I affirm Resolved: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

#### “Government” means **What is GOVERNMENT**? 1. **The regulation**, restraint, supervision, **or control which is exercised upon** the individual members of an organized jural **society by those** invested **with** the **supreme political authority, for the good** and welfare of **the body politic; or the act of exercising supreme political power or control.**

That’s Black Law Dictionary ND [Black’s Law Dictionary. What is GOVERNMENT?”. No Date. Accessed 11/19/21. https://thelawdictionary.org/government/ //Xu]

#### That includes a revolutionary vanguard

Britannica ND [Encyclopædia Britannica, No Date, Encyclopædia Britannica is a general knowledge English-language encyclopaedia which is now published exclusively as an online encyclopedia, https://www.britannica.com/topic/vanguard-of-the-proletariat //WFU Partner Majed]

In Vladimir Lenin: Formation of a revolutionary party of Vladimir Lenin …the party as the “vanguard of the proletariat.” He conceived of the vanguard as a highly disciplined, centralized party that would work unremittingly to suffuse the proletariat with Socialist consciousness and serve as mentor, leader, and guide, constantly showing the proletariat where its true class interests lie.

#### “Ought” denotes futurity

English Grammar 10 [“Must and Ought to”; English Grammar; August 16, 2010; <https://www.englishgrammar.org/must-and-ought-to/> //BWSWJ]

Ought expresses ideas such as duty, necessity and moral obligation. It is not as forceful as must, but it is stronger than should. You ought to be punctual. We ought to help the poor. You ought to visit your friends once in a while. Ought generally points to present and future time. It can point to past time when it is followed by the perfect infinitive (have + past participle).

#### The plan solves – a future Vanguard party recognizing an unconditional right to strike is key to resist bourgeois consciousness and organize against Racial Capitalism

COFI 93 [COFI (Communist Organization for the Fourth International). Notes from the article – “The following is an article written by a former COFI supporter in Australia in 1993. The references to the WRT within the article refer to a former internal tendency within the Workers Revolution Group of Australia at that time. The article takes up in depth our understanding of the relationship between the task of building the proletarian revolutionary party and the development of working class consciousness.” “Excerpted—with slight editing—from the major Resolution passed at the WRG Conference, moved by the Revolutionary Party Faction.” “The Leninist Concept of the Revolutionary Vanguard Party”. Marxists.org. 1993. Accessed 11/7/21. <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/socialistvoice/partyPR46.html> //Xu]

Communist Strike Leadership Necessary The basic concept of the party advanced by the Menshevik WRT is that “spontaneous militancy needs to be organised in a conscious Leninist revolutionary workers party” (Internal Bulletin No. 22). The essence of the WRT position is the refusal to counterpose revolutionary communist leadership to militant reformist consciousness. That is why the WRT exclaims with horror, “spontaneity is to be built on, consciously, not opposed” at the suggestion of the need to counterpose revolutionary leadership to all forms of militant reformist misleadership. Spontaneous militancy will always mature into a form of bourgeois consciousness and be defeated without the revolutionary vanguard party. The WRT’s view is that rank and file reformists can win real strike victories and that therefore the Marxist position of the need for communist strike leadership is “sectarian ultimatism”. This bears witness to the fact that the WRT’s semi-spontaneist views are a remnant of the post-war prosperity bubble and an expression of profound demoralisation. The revolutionary potential of spontaneous militancy was able to force the reformists to lead partial victories during the period of post-war prosperity. The worldwide defeat of the working class created the conditions of capitalist boom and defeat of the revolutionary party leadership that enabled the capitalists to grant temporary concessions, and the reformists to lead limited mobilisations. This period is now over. Already, strikes under the leadership of traitors can result only in semi-strikes and semi-victories—at best. This does not rule out a temporary period of wage militancy in an economic upturn or exceptional strike victories under the leadership of rank and file militants. These are exceptional cases. They do not apply under the current capitalist offensive. The general rule is that as the crisis of capitalism deepens, conscious revolutionary intervention will be necessary for even partial victories. For the WRT, it is no longer Marxism to consider revolutionary communist strike leadership an immediate practical necessity. To consider that as the historical crisis of capitalism deepens, “not a single workers’ industrial dispute can be won without Marxist leadership” will become increasingly the case is now for the Menshevik tendency simply “sectarian”. The Marxists have always considered the reformists to be a brake on the workers’ movement. For the centrists, reformism represents a partial movement forward, even despite the reformist leadership. The centrists consider the reformist leadership to be a blunt instrument to be driven forward by the “historical process” and the workers’ “spontaneous struggles”. Communists fight against reformism on the basis of the understanding that reformism is counterrevolutionary. Reformism leads not to strike victories, but to counterrevolution and fascism. That is why the world capitalist crisis reduces immediately to the crisis of workers’ leadership—because the betrayals of the reformists lead inevitably to the catastrophe of world war and fascism. The disastrous record of the last ten years in Australia alone is a forceful argument for the need for the revolutionary party. The labour bureaucracy has systematically isolated and betrayed every strike for the last decade. Since 1983, the bourgeoisie has relied upon their Labor lackeys to implement the mounting capitalist offensive. Without exception, the union bureaucracy has sabotaged and sold-out every one of the bitter strike struggles for the last ten years. Raising the illusion that strikes can win real victories under reformist leadership at present only weakens the resolve of the class to shrug the Labor Party monkey off its back and prepares fresh defeats. At the same time the opportunist tendency maintains that a general strike is necessary! For the last few years, the Workers Revolution Group has stressed again and again: isolation is fatal. A general strike is necessary to defeat the capitalist offensive and begin a workers’ fightback. But the need for revolutionary leadership only rises sharply with the escalation of the struggle. The general strike above all needs revolutionary leadership. If isolation is fatal and the general strike is necessary, why then is communist strike leadership suddenly not absolutely necessary? To raise the slogan of the general strike and fail to raise the need for revolutionary strike leadership means that the WRT has gone over to the manipulative politics of the middle class socialists. To call for more militancy as the way to win the needs of workers is fundamentally false. The reality is that it is a deception to pretend that militancy alone can win strikes and defend workers from the capitalist offensive. To pretend that militant rank and file action can win real strike victories despite the sell-out leadership union bureaucracy and the Labor Party means attempting to manipulate the rank and file into militant struggle in spite of the traitors. The fact is that the capitalist offensive can only be fought successfully by revolutionary workers, who understand that the capitalist system is incapable of maintaining generalised reforms and must be overthrown to defend workers’ living standards. Only conscious revolutionary workers, who understand that the sell-out role of the union bureaucracy and the Labor Party flows from the labour bureaucracy’s defence of capitalism, and who fight for the revolutionary program capable of uniting the whole working class and winning the rest of the class to the revolutionary party, can possibly lead victorious strike struggles under today’s conditions. The leadership of honest rank and file militants is not enough. In the epoch of capitalist decay, generally only revolutionary political struggle—a conscious revolutionary assault on the capitalist system—can win economic and industrial demands. This is doubly true now that the whole capitalist system worldwide is plunging towards depression and the capitalist class is on the offensive. Revolutionaries tell the truth to our class. Only the leadership of the revolutionary party, the re-created Fourth International, can lead today’s struggles to victory. Strikes under the leadership of traitors can at best be only semi-strikes and semi-victories when they do not lead to outright betrayal. Isolated strikes are doomed. Only generalised action offers any prospect of victory under conditions of mounting capitalist offensive. Even general strike action cannot permanently defend workers or win anything more than partial and temporary gains, without a revolutionary leadership. This is the essence of Trotsky’s point that: The general Marxist thesis “social reforms are only the by-product of revolutionary struggle” has, in the epoch of the decline of capitalism, the most immediate and burning importance. The capitalists are capable of ceding something only if they are threatened with losing everything. (Leon Trotsky on France, p. 79.) Revolutionary Leadership and the General Strike The deepening crisis of capitalism accelerates the tendency in all of the imperialist countries towards Bonapartism and military dictatorship, as the prosperity required to sustain parliamentary democracy runs into conflict with the need of the capitalist classes to deepen the exploitation of the working class. The historical laws of the decay of capitalism drive spontaneous militancy and “the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus” (Trotsky). That is the sense of understanding that the potential for general strikes, uprisings and revolutions matures “spontaneously” and with “historical inevitability”. The masses at all times try to blast a way forward onto the revolutionary road. This potentially revolutionary pressure increases as the crisis of capitalism deepens. But the key to unlocking this revolutionary potential remains in the hands of the leadership of the workers’ movement. Reliance on spontaneous militancy means only fatalism and abstention from the struggle to develop the revolutionary leadership necessary to challenge the reformists for hegemony in the international workers’ movement. It is not necessary to have revolutionary consciousness to begin a general strike: that is why the general strike is a united front demand. It is necessary to have revolutionary party leadership to win it. And it is generally necessary to have the revolutionary party to force the reformists to call the general strike. The reformists retreat from the general strike because the general strike raises the question of state power in its starkest form. When forced into action by mass pressure, the reformists fight to control the movement and contain the general strike to a bureaucratic semi-strike. Then they generally organise the betrayal. This was the case of the British general strike of 1926. The WRT disagrees. The Mensheviks believe that a real general strike (not a bureaucratic semi-strike like 1926 in Britain) is possible under reformist leadership. The WRT angrily challenges: “ Any comrade who wants to categorically deny that a general strike was possible [in 1975] (because there was no mass revolutionary party)”. As evidence that a general strike was possible, the WRT cites the “spontaneous mass movement” and the “spontaneous dynamic towards a general strike”. No communist denies that the potential for a general strike existed. The whole point is that the spontaneous movement lacked a conscious revolutionary leadership and so potential was never transformed into actuality. The WRT’s example of spontaneous militancy is in fact a perfect illustration of the need for the revolutionary party. The example of the general strike movement in 1975 is an example of the crisis of revolutionary leadership. It was not the fault of the working class that the general strike movement in 1975 was defused. It was not for lack of spontaneous militancy. It was because of the treachery of the Laborites and because the organised forces fighting for the general strike proved too small. Only the revolutionary party will fight consistently for the general strike: the middle class radicals and centrists will vacillate. It is for this reason that the revolutionary party must be built right now. In the context of a polemic in defence of the “spontaneous” revolutionary socialist consciousness of the working class, the clear logic of this position is to substitute agitation for the general strike for the fight for revolutionary leadership. Stimulating militancy and not the fight for class consciousness is the best way to form the revolutionary party. After all, the general strike is expected to “spontaneously” produce many workers who have been “made into revolutionary socialists”, which the revolutionary organisation can simply soak up by means of “recruiting workers revolutionised by objective circumstances”. This turns the world completely on its head. The revolutionary party is not built in anticipation of the general strike but in order to fight for the revolutionary tactics as the basis for the fight for revolutionary leadership. Without revolutionary party leadership, the probability of general strike action decreases dramatically. The task of the communists is not to “spark” actions like the general strike and then fight for leadership. No: the task of the revolutionaries is to fight for revolutionary leadership from the start, by exposing the reformists and at the same time proposing practical action based on the actual needs of the working class. The lack of revolutionary leadership “would pose very serious problems” states the WRT, tacking on the need for the revolutionary party to the argument for spontaneity. “Very serious problems” like … certain defeat! Trotsky was absolutely categorical on this question: A general strike is the sharpest form of class struggle. It is only one step from the general strike to armed insurrection. This is precisely why the general strike, more than any other form of class struggle requires a clear, distinct, resolute and therefore revolutionary leadership. In the current strike of the British proletariat there is not the ghost of such a leadership, and it is not to be expected that it can be conjured out of the ground … The fundamental importance of the general strike is that it poses the question of power point blank. A real victory for the General Strike lies only in the winning of power by the proletariat and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. (Leon Trotsky’s Writings on Britain) For this reason, it is sheer deception to raise the slogan of an indefinite general strike without carefully explaining to the advanced workers the revolutionary implications of the struggle, the possibility of betrayal contained in reformism, and the urgent need for a revolutionary party. Nevertheless, as Trotsky says, this party cannot be simply conjured up. That doesn’t mean that an indefinite general strike is futile. On the contrary, even an indefinite general strike that is defeated through betrayal by the VTHC leadership and the ACTU will have the invaluable effect of temporarily throwing back the bosses offensive. A tremendous radicalisation would begin in the working class. Many advanced workers would come to the conclusion that a new leadership of the working class is necessary. The general strike clears the ground for the formation of the revolutionary party. But the revolutionary party cannot be “conjured out of the ground” by producing “spontaneously revolutionary socialist” workers. This is metaphysics, not Marxism.

### Part 3 is the Method

#### The plan is a good idea but isn’t separate from the broader framework – justifications are a prior question to imagining specific mechanisms because they answer when, why and how that action takes place.

Our scenario analysis of the plan develops the political grammar for revolution – before we can discuss how to get there, we first must theorize what exact future we are fighting for

**Mass base cultivation must start through utopic communist demands like the aff that prophesize the end of Capitalism**

**Tonstad 16** (Professor Tonstad is a constructive theologian working at the intersection of systematic theology with feminist and queer theory. Her first book, God and Difference: The Trinity, Sexuality, and the Transformation of Finitude, was published by Routledge in 2016 and was named both as a best new book in ethics and a best new book in theology in Christian Century in the spring of 2017. “Debt Time is Straight Time” political theology, Vol. 17 No. 5, September 2016, 434–448, Edited for ableist language – “visible” changed to “recognizable” )

If debt time, as I have argued, is straight time, can other temporal modes of production and affiliation be imagined? If debt time depends on promises made in the past to subjugate the present and future, might other promising pasts (made available through the non-limitative, intergenerational relations that “homosexual production” sometimes promotes) redirect us toward other futures — futures located in queer time? Dreaming and day-dreaming allow for Kathi Weeks’s “utopian demand” that can teach us what a “different world” in which our dreams would come to life would look like.45 To reeducate our temporal desires, we need to “affirm what we are and will it, because it is also the constitutive basis from which we can struggle to become otherwise.”46 This affirmation is no mere acceptance of the past as it is enforced on us by the moral couplings effort-reward or debt-obligation. Rather, it is “an active intervention into our ways of inhabiting the past.” The utopic demand affirms a future in which the demand would no longer be utopic, while also estranging us from the ethos that there is no alternative.47Guy Hocquenghem writes, “Homosexual production takes place according to a mode of non-limitative horizontal relations, heterosexual reproduction according to one of hierarchical succession … another possible social relation … is not vertical but horizontal.”48 Horizontal temporal relations can join with new spatial orders to constitute a we. Franco Berardi notes that one of the reasons workers’ struggles have tended to disappear historically (as exceptions rather than lasting coalitions) is that “for struggles to form a cycle there must be a spatial proximity of laboring bodies and an existential temporal continuity. Without this proximity and this continuity, we lack the conditions for cellularized bodies to become a community.”49 Spatial proximity is not enough by itself — antiblackness in the United States is but one example proving the point — but it is essential to the formation of coalitions and new forms of solidarity. Without side-by-side relationships, spatial and symbolic, and without creating and becoming a we, we can neither understand “our” time aright to diagnose it, nor shift the future into a direction other than the one marked out by the insistence that there is no alternative. With such relationships, the door is open for possibilities for redirecting the trajectory of debt time that do not require “distance from dominant culture,” but instead can take their own “imbrication with contemporary socioeconomic forces”50 as a point of departure. The first step is to name the powers and in so naming call them up and make them visible [recognizeable]— materialization of the demons that ride and haunt us, seeking to destroy us. The next step is to reorder our temporal and spatial relations to each other to create a we that does not yet exist.The promise of queer prophetic performance Sleeping and waking cross each other: for we must wake from our dreams of dust and ashes in order to read the signs of the times, and we must sleep so that we can learn to dream new dreams. Between the space of sleep and waking, we encounter the memory of other times, a memory that may become grounds for a future that is no future. Naming the signs of the times (knowing the time in order to escape its grasp, refusing the future in order to redirect it) is a prophetic practice. Althaus-Reid says, “[I]f God is to be found in human relationships of economic and loving orders, it is obvious that the right not to be straight in a capitalist society and church has the goal of liberating God.”51 And who can set God free? We need a prophetic52 bodily reordering in which the untimely one will arrive and tell us, or better show us, the series of negations, intentional relations, and world-making activities that are our best hope for living love in a time of capital. These hopes weigh less than the Spirit of Gravity does on our shoulders (that always-already that the history of Christian capitalism imposes on us); with them we may hope for an easier yoke that would allow us to replenish our relations to ourselves and others. Prophets dream for us and against us; they sound the alarm and they fall into trances in which revelations are given to them. Prophets use speech, performance, visions, dreams, and bodies to shift the relations between structures of authority and embedded hierarchicalizations. Those manipulations, those reorderings of apparently fixed elements of the world, reproduce but can also reconfigure visions of orders of power.53 Most importantly, prophets contend with other prophets in inexplicable bodied acts,54 and prophets contend with the prophets of other gods.55 Prophetic contestation breaks open the “monopoly of actuality” that insists “there is no alternative.” “Blow the trumpet … sound the alarm!” “Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days.”56 The passage from Joel points to the transgenerational and transgendered aspects of prophecy, and to the importance of dreams. Late capitalism denies us dreams, and late capitalism monetizes even our dreams. But prophets dream the dreams that the rest of us are denied. Prophecies “have been a means by which the “poor” have externalized their desires, given legitimacy to their plans, and have been spurred to action.” For this reason, prophecy had to be “replaced with the calculation of probabilities” — a calculation that depends on the postulate that “the future will be like the past.”57 We are seeking a future that is not like the past. Prophecy opens the possibility of the impossible beyond calculation and prediction. Prophecy can connect the partially open future with the overdetermined present to suggest strategies for redirection and recreation. Kirk Fuoss argues that performance always involves contestation; if he is right, the same would apply to prophetic performances.58 Prophetic performances may contribute to the development of what Valerie Rohy understands as queer non-causality: a temporality “whose beginnings are found in the future.”59 Rohy describes the way becoming gay may involve a circular causality that escapes linear historical determination. In the case of Oscar Wilde, for instance, “Wilde’s homosexuality both causes the gay male identity of the future and is caused by it.”60 Such alternative causalities may break the effort-reward, promise-fault couplings of determinate historical time — of debt time. If we become what is not yet possible, our becoming escapes the past’s determination without negating it. Queer performances that embody impossible futures may have the capacity to vivify and illuminate extant alternative imaginaries while challenging the “monopoly of actuality” exercised by debt time, especially if these queer prophetic performances distinguish themselves from capital not by their freedom from it61 but by practicing in relation to it. Performance can reeducate our imaginations (our dreams) in ways that do not pretend — as attenuated or homonormative gay culture sometimes does — that no other economic order is possible. We need to relearn the connections between sexuality and the economic order that lesbian feminists and black feminists recognized from the very beginning.62 We must enter desire’s school for reeducation so we may learn to name the present for the sake of a redirected future. In order to change our futures (to make them no future for the time of financialized capitalism and hetero-same reproduction), we need — as I have argued — spatial and symbolic side-by-side relations, we need to learn the nature of our time (and times), and we need to create the worlds that we need to learn to want through institution-building and the generation of publics.

#### Debate is a valuable pedagogical space for material analysis and scientific planning – our form of study uses historical synthesis to avoid error replication and catalyze a mass base transition.

Williams 18 [Carine, 7/30/18, “Why Black People Need Maoism in 2018”, *The Hampton Institute*, <http://www.hamptoninstitution.org/why-black-people-need-maoism.html#.XWwv7ZNKh0s> // KZaidi]

When they hear Maoism, many people think of China, Peru, and the Philippines. They picture peasants "surrounding the cities from the countryside." This is, of course, understandable, but a mistake. Maoism is not simply "everything that Mao did," or "everything that happened in China between 1949 and now." I have spent a great deal of my time writing working to dispel these sorts of myths, some peddled in an unprincipled fashion by anti-Maoists. Maoism is a living, breathing science. By science we mean something with universal principles that can be taken and applied by all who have a material interest in making revolution. In the United States, this is Black people, or the New Afrikan nation. It was not by accident that the original Black Panther Party (BPP) developed close relations with the revolutionary leadership of the People's Republic of China. Huey didn't go to China to play; he went to study and learn things that could be applied back home. Of course, he eventually degenerated in political line and practice, taking a right opportunist course along with Bobby Seale (always a centrist) and Elaine Brown (who guided the party, in his absence, into a mainstream political force that led into the arms of the Democratic Party). This opportunism in the highest expression of revolutionary sentiment, practice, and force in this country to date needs to be studied and ruthlessly criticized, yet we should be careful. We must place things in their historical context and ensure that we are able to divide one into two, meaning see the beneficial as well as the negative aspects of a thing but also realize that one aspect must be primary. The BPP was destroyed by a combination of factors: lack of a really scientific method of analysis and cohesive program of political education, failure to promote and apply the Marxist-Leninist principle of Democratic Centralism (debate inside the party, formation of a political line through this debate, and the upholding of this decision by all party members and organs), and a culture of liberalism that ended with comrades fighting comrades, thus opening the door for external factors (the FBI and other LE agencies) to play havoc and get cadre railroaded into prison and killed. We must study and learn all of these lessons, because when we develop another organization with the prestige, mass base, and power that the Panthers had, and we will, they will come for us all again. So, why do we need Maoism? Because we are against the most brutal, bloody, and vicious empire known to humankind. This country is looting and enslaving our class siblings all over the world. To overturn this order of things, to smash it and rebuild it in the interests of the revolutionary proletariat of the entire world, we must apply the synthesis of 200 years of systematic, organized class struggle, which is Marxism-Leninism-Maoism: the continuity of the revolutionary project that was Marxism-Leninism, with a rupture from the dogmatism and revisionism. Maoists do not uphold "Actually Existing Socialism" because a scientific analysis rooted in the principles laid down by the revolutionary movements and projects that gave us Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao would demonstrate that stealing food from Filipino fisherfolk, like the People's Republic of China (PRC) has been doing, is 100% non-Marxist. This is in disagreement with many Marxist-Leninist organizations today, which uphold these things and other imperialist depredations carried out under the faded red banner of China. The Maoist argument is that Marxist-Leninist terrain has been spent, and the 21st century must learn from Maoism. "You haven't seized state power yet!" others cry. Indeed, and there has never been a truly Maoist party that has initiated armed struggle in the imperialist metro poles. This doesn't mean that Maoist principles cannot be applied to these countries, this means that we must be ever more creative in our application and ever more disciplined in our party-building efforts. Party building in the USA requires the careful and thorough cultivation of a mass base. Tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of people must depend on and follow this party and participate in mass organizations before it can even begin to call itself a vanguard. This is what many who came out of the New Communist Movement of the mid-late 1970s failed to realize. The days of endless squabbling sects that fight over "mass bases" of a handful of other activists must be put to an end, and we must have a truly mass perspective. There is optimism in the spread of For the People (FTP) organizations and the development of the Organizing Committee for a Maoist Communist Party (MCP-OC) which has a more mass orientation and places primacy on the development of a class analysis and political line in the USA that is based in painstaking investigation and rooted in the aspirations and struggles of the most oppressed, along with a record of seeking to develop international solidarity and prison work. This, I believe, is the best hope for New Afrikan Maoists in the United States and I wholeheartedly encourage Black comrades to develop FTP-type organizations in their own communities under OC guidance. Even if this isn't done, at the very least studies in Maoism, studies in Maoist revolutions, and studies in Maoist theory are beneficial. After and during these studies, think about how it can be applied on your block and in your community. Learn about and be like Fred Hampton. Time is up for spinning our wheels; we must get together, unite on a principled and unshakeable basis, and mount a formidable resistance against decades and centuries-old oppression based in capitalism and white supremacy. I also encourage support and donation to the Hampton Institute as an invaluable resource in promoting revolutionary ideology and practice in the finest Marxist tradition.

#### The aff forwards a model of debate where iterative ballots over a season help us determine what a future communist world would look like - Academic debate and knowledge production is key to establish the conditions that makes revolution possible

Southall 10 (Nicholas Southall, doctoral student, University of Wollongong. “A Multitude of Possibilities: The Strategic Vision of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt,” School of History and Politics and Sociology, 2010, <http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4274&context=theses> )

Communism will remain associated with many of the horrors of the twentieth century. Yet the term is still used and understood as a name for the continuing proletarian revolution. A 'communist revival' in the English speaking academy has been indicated by the manifesto of students who occupied the University of California, Santa Cruz last year (Communique from an Absent Future: 2009) and the thousand participants in 2009 who paid to attend the 'Idea of Communism' conference at the University of London. My use of the word 'communism' is influenced and inspired by such actions as well as by Hardt and Negri's commitment to struggle over the meaning of words that have a powerful heritage and profound significance to the proletariat. Of course, the word is often linked to previous or existing 'communist states' and 'communist parties'. However, I agree with Hardt and Negri that these states and parties are generally manifestations of state capitalism rather than of communism. The errors and defeats of previous communist experiments and the dead hand of capitalist forms of praxes calling themselves communist continue to weigh heavily on the proletariat, making it difficult to speak of communism without 'corpses in our mouths'. Reclaiming and speaking of communism in a positive sense recognises the genuine communist heritage, which opposes authoritarianism, repression, war and terror, and illuminates its praxes of freedom, democracy, peace and love. Communism has been the enemy common to many neo-liberal, social democratic, fascist and socialist regimes and those identified as communists have been targeted and murdered in their millions during the global class war to break proletarian power. Today these communist victims and the victims of 'communism' 'haunt the world'. But communism is not a ghost, not even "a positive ghost" (Negri in Casarino and Negri: 2008: 200), rather communism is a movement, or movement of movements, and is very much alive. It is this living movement of movements that continues to threaten, challenge and go beyond capital. When I began this thesis, the world was at war and the people of the globe had been told: "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists" (Bush: 2003). As terror and fear spread, there were growing threats to 'academic freedom' and 'freedom of speech' from those backing the Bush administration's agenda. When Negri was invited to speak at an academic conference in Sydney in 2005 he was publicly denounced as a terrorist in and by major media outlets and the event was cancelled (see Chapter One). Just as Negri was dragged in I977 from the academy in a previous 'state of emergency', to rot in jail under preventative detention for alleged terrorist activity, in the current global 'war on terror' others have fallen victim to a continuous 'strategy of tension'. Dr Andrej Holm and Dr Matthias B were arrested in Berlin in 2007 under anti-terrorist laws and alleged by police to have written, in academic publications, 'phrases and key words' also used by a militant group and of being intellectually capable of authoring the group's 'sophisticated texts'. Liliany Oblando, a Colombian sociologist, was charged in 2008 with 'rebellion' and 'managing resources related to terrorist activities' while investigating right-wing death squads. Both within the academy and outside it, this is a dangerous time to choose the latter option of 'either with us or against us' and to challenge those who seek to silence dissent, curtail critical debate and label opponents of capital, war and repression as 'traitors' and 'terrorists', while they defend an established order that is in fact terroristic. Hardt and Negri (2004: 33) assert that today "the majority of political scientists are merely technicians working to resolve the quantative problems of maintaining order, and the rest wander the corridors from their universities to the courts of power, attempting to get the ear of the sovereign and whisper advice"- Negri has also argued that "it is more interesting and more useful to make revolution than to write about it" (quoted in Hardt: 2005b: 29). Yet Hardt and Negri (2009: 127) are interested in the kind of academic strategic investigations that have "been forged by professors and students who take their work outside the universities both to put their expertise at the service of the social movements and to enrich their research by learning from the movements and participating in the production of knowledge developed there". In order to learn from proletarian theory and practice, throughout this thesis I provide in-depth analysis of Hardt and Negri's writings and discussions about real world politics, while testing their ideas out on various case studies. The thesis maps the development of Hardt and Negri's thought by offering a historical analysis that locates their writings in relation to class struggle and provides contextual analyses of their key ideas. To avoid becoming fixated on the power of capital requires a focus on how the proletariat's agency is a constituent element of social processes. Helping me to resist becoming a technician of social order or an adviser to the sovereign, I embark on this project as an active militant involved in class struggle. Since "it is not feasible to keep the values that a researcher holds totally in check", Bryman (2004: 21) argues that a researcher's politics will influence a whole variety of presuppositions that in turn have implications for the conduct of the research. Accordingly, Mies (1993: 68) advocates a "conscious partiality" in conducting research, while Mitropoulos and Neilson (2005) argue against "the apparently objective space of an ivory tower-whose recourse to a de-politicisation of knowledge marks the concealment of a politics". Proletarian politics is compelled to an incessant process of polemic, critique and intervention in social relations (Thobum: 2002: 453) and my politics have, to a certain extent, determined and will determine, my choice of research areas, choice of method, the analysis and interpretation of data and the conclusions of the thesis. My work is strongly inï¬‚uenced by my values, beliefs, experiences and the methodological assumption that the proletariat must free itself by collectively breaking with capital- Assisting this process, I believe, requires a mode of enquiry that promotes proletarian subjectivities, constructed on the multitude's movements of self-valorisation. The role of the communist intellectual is to embark "on the project of co-research aimed at making the multitude. The intellectual is thus not 'out in front' to determine the movements of history or 'on the sidelines' to critique them but rather completely 'inside"' where strategic investigation can be "a form of militancy" (Hardt and Negri: 2009: H8, 125). Marx's conception of proletarian praxis, that is the relation of theory and practice, explains how change comes about as people act and learn by taking action. "Struggles are the great teachers" about social developments, the "engines of revolutionary theory" (Negri: 2005b: xiii) and Hardt and Negri (2009: I28) advocate the "strategic production of knowledge" through a variety of routes as an "active engagement with the production of subjectivity in order to transform reality, which ultimately involves the production of new truths". They use the ideas of Raniero Panzieri and Cornelius Castoriadis (in Hardt and Negri: 2009: 24) to explain that "although Marxism is born as sociology, the fundamental task is to translate that sociological perspective into not just political science but really the science of revolution" and "revolutionary research constantly has to follow and be redefined by the forms of social movements". Following this advice, I look to the social movements of the multitude, to a wide variety of praxis as well as to theory, to understand Hardt and Negri's strategic vision, interweaving communist hypotheses with the proletariat's multitudinous struggles.

### Part 4 is the Cold War

#### Central Planning solves everything –

#### 1] Red Innovation –

Nieto & Mateo 20 [Maxi Nieto is a PhD is sociology from the University of Elche and writer for Ciber Comunismo and Juan Pablo Mateo is a visiting scholar in the department of Economics at The New School, New York and economics professor at the University of Valladolid (Spain). January 2020, “Dynamic Efficiency in a Planned Economy: Innovation and Entrepreneurship Without Markets”, Science & Society, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338327276\_Dynamic\_Efficiency\_in\_a\_Planned\_Economy\_Innovation\_and\_Entrepreneurship\_Without\_Markets //](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338327276_Dynamic_Efficiency_in_a_Planned_Economy_Innovation_and_Entrepreneurship_Without_Markets%20//)gbs jacobs & majeed]

4.1. Innovation and social property. Innovation occurs as a result of a long and complex accumulation process of knowledge and creativity, where very rarely is a single individual solely responsible. This is an essentially social process in which a plurality of actors and institutions contribute in very different spheres and circumstances. The Austrian School presents an idealized image of innovation in capitalist economies, attributing it exclusively to the figure of the enterprising entrepreneur — whether in a disruptive sense (Schumpeter), or in a strictly coordinating sense (Kirzner). In fact, the entrepreneurial function develops within specific institutional frameworks and organized structures, both at the micro and macro levels. In this sense, a socialist economy has significant advantages for developing technological and business innovation, as opposed to a capitalist economy: i) socialism allows for greater and more efficient allocation of resources to R&D&I activities, thanks to centralized control of the surplus and the absence of sumptuous consumption and a rentier population; ii) there are no obstacles (property rights) to the free dissemination of new products and techniques; iii) the equal distribution of resources (which guarantees that no basic needs go unmet) allows for discovery and fuller development of talent, which likewise occurs when work is undertaken through tasks that are more balanced for the majority and less routine; iv) in allocating investment, more information is available and the criteria are more varied than mere expectation of profit; v) social ownership is more inclusive and participatory than capitalist enterprise in terms of generating and mobilizing knowledge (tacit or not) and encouraging innovation; vi) socialism does not impose short-term innovation cycles looking to generate products that can be commercialized in, say, four to six months, as is typical in capitalist economies. Under these favorable general conditions, the development of innovation in a socialist economy would unfold in three fundamental areas: i) Strategic planning: this traces the main lines of scientific, technological, and innovation research. Here would enter programs for the development of new technologies and infrastructures, as well as visionary projects that explore eventualities and future scenarios. This sort of research is carried out in universities, scientific academies, technological institutes, and other specialized centers in coordination with the business world. The process would consist in testing different alternative productive projects or techniques in order to verify results, in connection with the companies and sectors being served. ii) Companies: research, design, and innovation departments. iii) Business entrepreneurship: individuals and teams put forward proposals in hopes of securing financing. For any of these three areas, material incentives would exist that reward the degree to which the freely programmed objectives are achieved, in addition to purely social or moral incentives such as social recognition or professional and personal fulfilment. In the next section, we focus on how socialist entrepreneurship — something that the Austrian School considers impossible — would ostensibly work. 4.2. Ecosystems for innovation and entrepreneurship. In today’s most dynamic capitalist economies, entrepreneurship and business innovation are developed mainly in the so-called innovation ecosystems, which are institutional environments dedicated to promoting symbiotic interaction among the different actors involved in the process of creating and transforming companies and industries. This sort of institutional framework represents the antithesis of the liberal mythology where the individual capitalist–entrepreneur operates in a purely commercial environment, since these ecosystems are based on public institutions and resources as well as procedures that are not strictly mercantile.9 An efficient and dynamic socialist economy needs institutional environments capable of fostering and channeling the initiative of individuals with special talents to translate innovative ideas into business projects. It must be clear that an ecosystem of socialist innovation does not substitute for, but instead complements, the innovations developed by particular state institutions and programs (such as the transition to a new source of energy, new materials, etc.) as well 9 In the case of Spain, think tanks and capitalist consultants openly admit that “there is not enough private capital to invest in new companies, either through individual investment or through venture capital funds” (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2015, 32). as innovations taking place in the industrial design departments of businesses. The actors involved in such an ecosystem are essentially the same as those participating in the equivalent ecosystems of the current capitalist economies. Principal differences would lie in the form of interaction among them (in the absence of mercantile links), their decision-making capacity (since no private property rights adhere), and the types of rules in force (including the incentive system). Among the main actors would be the following:

#### 2] Ecological Leninism –

Malm 20 [Andreas Malm is associate senior lecturer in human ecology at Lund University. He is author of Fossil Capital: The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming and Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency: War Communism in the Twenty-First Century. September 2020, “Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency: War Communism in the Twenty-First Century”, Verso Books //GBS Majeed & Jacobs]

The impending catastrophe and how to combat it In the second week of September 1917, Lenin penned a long text called The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It. ‘Unavoidable catastrophe is threatening Russia’, it begins; the breath of death is over the land and ‘everybody says this. Everybody admits it. Everybody has decided it is so. Yet nothing is being done.’ World War I, the Urcatastrophe of the century, had haemorrhaged Russia and the other belligerent countries and, so it seemed, put civilisation itself on the deathbed. ‘The war has created such an immense crisis, has so strained the material and moral forces of the people, has dealt such blows at the entire modern social organisation, that humanity must now choose between perishing’ or transitioning to ‘a superior mode of production’. Russia stood before the spectre of famine. The war had so torn apart the country that all production apparatuses and logistical structures that would normally ensure basic provisioning were out of commission and, for as long as the war went on, beyond repair. As if that were not enough, heavy floods in the spring of 1917 washed away roads and railway lines. The crisis took a new plunge in August, when grain prices suddenly doubled and Petrograd faced the challenge of surviving without flour. ‘Famine, genuine famine’, one government official complained, ‘has seized a series of towns and provinces – famines vividly expressed by an absolute insufficiency of objects of nutrition already leading to death’. It was in this situation that Lenin wrote his text. In the run-up to October, he and the Bolsheviks were suspended in a moment of abysmal emergency: war behind them, war to the side of them, famine advancing. Lenin obsessed over the breakdown. ‘We are nearing ruin with increasing speed’, he would write; ‘no progress is being made, chaos is spreading irresistibly’; ‘famine, accompanied by unprecedented catastrophe, is becoming a greater menace to the whole country week by week’. What could be done about it? Part of the answer had already been provided by the states fighting the war. To prevent their food systems from collapsing utterly, they had interfered in markets in a manner that pre-war liberal doctrines would never have licensed. Governments from Paris to Petrograd had ‘outlined, determined, applied and tested a whole series of control measures, which consist almost invariably in uniting the population and in setting up or encouraging unions’ and rationing and regulating consumption. The situation had itself ‘suggested the way out’ by calling forth ‘the most extreme practical measures; for without extreme measures, death – immediate and certain death from starvation – awaits millions of people’. But those measures had an obvious limitation: they dealt with symptoms. The drivers of catastrophe were left untouched. The inter-imperialist war and its primum mobile – simple ordinary capital accumulation – were kept going, leaving procurement systems on the edge or, as in Russia, over it. Here, then, was Lenin’s wager: to take measures of the kind already instituted by the warring states, step them up a notch and deploy them against the drivers of catastrophe. First was to end the war. Second was to get the grain supplies under control, seize stocks from rich landowners, nationalise banks and cartels, end private property in the key means of production – a revolution, as Lenin constantly agitated in these months, to stave off the worst catastrophe, which was why it must not be deferred. Against the Kerensky government’s feeble attempts to restore order, he railed that ‘it is unable to avoid collapse, because it is impossible to escape from the claws of the terrible monster of imperialist war and famine nurtured by world capitalism unless one renounces bourgeois relationships’ and ‘passes to revolutionary measures’. At the same time, his rhetorical gambit was to profess that the means for achieving this were at hand, almost uncontroversial. ‘All the state would have to do would be to draw freely on the rich store of control measures which are already known and have been used in the past.’ Indeed, he alleged that any government that wished to combat the impending catastrophe, whatever its affiliation, would have to take those radicalised measures. The objective logic of the situation left no other choice. Now, if we, for a moment, put aside the very considerable historical complications known to everyone, we can see that the logic of the present situation, mutatis mutandis, is not all that dissimilar. So what kind of control measures could be envisioned? Here we must again stay at the level of a rough sketch. Yes, this enemy can be deadly, but it is also beatable States in advanced capitalist countries could claim to have acted on the dangers of pandemics the moment they made the following announcement: today, we are launching a comprehensive audit of all supply chains and import flows running into our country. With our amazing capacity for surveillance and data collection, we’ll shift from citizens to companies, open their books, conduct thorough inputoutput analyses (of the kind scientists already excel at) and ascertain just how much land from the tropics they appropriate. We shall then terminate such appropriation, by cutting off chains that run into tropical forests and, insofar as any can be classified as ‘essential’, redirect them to other locations. Every Noranda, every Skanska and Engie will be withdrawn. The time has come to pull in the claws of unequal exchange, now a menace to all. We shall pay for tropical areas previously devoted to northern consumption to be reforested and rewilded. This will compensate for lost export revenues – not as charity or even a drain on our budgets, but as a running investment in the habitability of this planet, an establishment and maintenance of sanctuaries on which our health depends. We are here simply adhering to the categorical recommendations from scientists (whom we’ll put on the stage for regular briefings on national television): There is an urgent need to stop deforestation and invest in afforestation and reforestation globally. In response to the viral outbreaks, billions of dollars are spent on eradicating the infection, providing services to humans, and developing diagnostic, treatment and vaccination strategies. However, no or less attention is given to the primary level of prevention such as forestation and respecting wildlife habitats. The world should realize the importance of forests and the biodiversity carrying deadly viruses – this from four China-based scientists, venting some despair amid Covid-19. Similar advice has been given for years. ‘The most effective way to prevent viral zoonosis is to maintain the barriers between natural reservoirs and human society.’ Barriers? There is a force at work in human society that by its very nature cannot countenance such a thing. But again, the scientists: ‘The most effective place to address such zoonotic threats is at the wildlife-human interface. A key challenge in doing this is to simultaneously protect wildlife and their habitats’ – the most effective, and the most costefficient. ‘Allocation of global resources from high-income countries to pandemic mitigation programs in the most high-risk EID [emerging infectious disease] hotspot countries should be an urgent priority for global health security’, says the Pike paper. It estimates a tenfold return on such investment. Written six years before Covid-19, it speculates on the damage a zoonotic pandemic could wreak on the world economy and finds that mitigation at the source – reining in trade-driven plantations, livestock, timber, mining – would be a fantastically optimal way of saving money. This is evidently not a guarantee that it will happen. But the northern states of our fantasy have now committed themselves to reason and proclaim: this is the right and necessary thing to do, for us and everyone else on this planet. The immediate beneficiaries will be people living in or next to tropical forests, always first in line for spillover. But our control measures will also spare ourselves from living under this Damocles sword to the end of our days. So the war on wild nature starts to wind down. This begins with a ban on importing meat from countries in or bordering on the tropics. Can there be anything more nonessential? And yet beef is, as we have seen, the one commodity most destructive to these wonderlands of biodiversity. Meat consumption in general is the surest way to waste land, and any extensive reforestation – combined with a protein-needy human population of ten billion or more – presupposes its reduction. Mandatory global veganism would probably be the endpoint most salutary for all. It would give some room back to wild nature and disengage the human economy from the pathogen pools; increased meat consumption is the fastest way to dive deeper. But as economies are currently operating, neither vegans nor vegetarians in the North go (as we often like to think) free of guilt: soybean, palm oil, coffee, chocolate flow as much, or even more, into our stomachs. Control measures for addressing spillover should not follow dietary guidelines, but latitudinal gradients and ecological knowledge. Given what we know about bats, their habitats must have priority, be it steak or flapjacks that stream out of them. Clearly it would be the state that would have to do this. No mutual aid group in Bristol could even hypothetically initiate a programme of this kind. ‘We need (for a certain transitional period) a state. This is what distinguishes us from the anarchists’, with Lenin – or with Wallace: ‘In the face of the potential catastrophe, it would indeed seem most prudent to begin placing draconian restraints on existing plantation and animal monocultures, the driving forces behind present pandemic emergence.’ Note the word ‘draconian’. Progressives of all stripes might shudder at it, but they should return to the chapter on the working day in the first volume of Capital – the ten hours’ day being the original victory of the proletariat, realised when enforcement finally became a little harsh, after all the laxities and prevarication of the early factory legislation. One doesn’t curb capitalist exploitation by carrots. Tropical forests have a recent counterpart to the ten hours’ day: the tenure of Lula. Between 2004 and 2012, deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon underwent its most rapid reduction in modern times, all the more remarkable for running against the trends in the rest of Latin America and Southeast Asia. By what means did the Lula governments accomplish this? By turning some degree of hard power on land-hungry capital: expanding protected areas, registering land properties, monitoring rainforests via satellites, enforcing the forest code and actually punishing those responsible for illegal logging. In 2012, the rate of deforestation stood 84 per cent below its peak of eight years prior. The country that holds two million species, or one tenth of the earth’s total, gave its forests a reprieve, slashing CO 2 emissions by some 40 per cent – perhaps the most impressive mitigation of zoonotic and climatic disaster on record. It didn’t last, of course. ‘Rosa Luxemburg has a great line about revolution being like a locomotive going uphill: if it’s not kept moving, it slides back, and reaction wins. The same can be said of reform. Lula’s two terms could have been a good first act in a transition toward something else; but there was no plan for a second act’, as one scholar of Brazil has noted. Instead came the far right and the abolition of every traffic light ever installed in the Amazon. What should really make one shudder is to think of the zoonotic and climatic legacy of Bolsonaro. Then what of China? After SARS, the state took some perfunctory measures to stem the wildlife trade, promulgating laws with loopholes big enough for rhinoceroses to walk through. It allowed for wild animals to be bred on farms (the Huanong Brothers). The protected species list was last updated in 1990 and omitted at least one thousand native species – including bats – the consumption of which was thereby unregulated, regardless of the public health consequences. Penalties were paltry, enforcement lax, ‘high profits and mild punishment driving the dealers’ to continue accumulating capital – until SARSCoV-2 prodded the state to ban the consumption of any wildlife, from freedom or captivity. Scientists and others worried that the legislation would fray this time too. One team from China writing in Science urged a permanent ban on consumption as well as possession, backed up by stiff penalties; Jingjing Yuan and colleagues went a step further and called for ‘sentence to life prison’ for anyone eating wild. Processing, transporting, marketing wild animals should be similarly sanctioned, the state maintaining a list of species authorised for trade – a list that could be periodically shortened – and sending inspectors into the markets on the fly (recalling the factory inspectors). What could be said against such a tough line? It has been argued that the moral norms of consumers should instead be coaxed into sobriety. The argument ignores three factors. First, if SARS was not enough to scare the clientele away from wet markets – research indicates that awareness of the risks did little to put it off – and if SARS-CoV-2 could not be relied on to do the job either, as some signs suggested – online sellers touted medicines containing rhino horn and other rare animal parts as cures for corona – then apparently one cannot entrust this question to individual enlightenment. Second, enforced laws change norms. The prohibition of child labour in factories and slave labour on plantations clinched their status as unacceptable practices; without those laws, some callous exploiters might have continued to this day. The edification may outlast the laws themselves. One of the few success stories Felbab-Brown can relate in The Extinction Market concerns the use of rhino horn for the making of the Yemeni daggers known as jambiyas. When demand soared in the 1970s, this market became a prime culprit in dragging rhino populations to extinction. But then someone intervened. Interestingly enough, the communist government of South Yemen was far more effective in eliminating demand for rhino-horn jambiyas by eliminating the demand for all jambiyas. It banned the possession of all weapons and aggressively collected them. In 1972, the jambiya ban was thus accompanied by a massive campaign to rid the country of them, with even rich and influential families targeted and forced to sell their daggers. When Yemen was reunited under the capitalist north, the communist principle survived. The ban ‘was not only effectively enforced by the [southern] government but ultimately internalized by the country’s population’. Rhinohorn jambiya went out of fashion. This deep into the sixth mass extinction, some similar courage to wage ecological class war would not seem inappropriate. Third, if there is something the corona crisis has taught, it should be that nudging consumers to voluntarily mend their ways is a strategy of the past. The German state didn’t beg its citizens to please consider living differently: it ordered the malls of Steglitz closed and locked the playgrounds in Kreuzberg. When there is a threat to the health or even physical existence of a population, one doesn’t leave it to the least conscientious individuals to play with the fire as they want. One snatches the matches out of their hands. Some have argued that a blanket abolition of the wildlife trade in China would cause financial losses and make people unemployed – figures between 1 million and an improbable 14 million have been floated – which is, of course, the excuse for every facet of business-as-usual. It could carry us all the way to Venus. But ending the wildlife trade is a responsibility for very many more nations than China. Even Germany has been identified as a central transit point for the global trade in pangolins. States have to figure out a way to extirpate this department of capital accumulation in toto; they have repressive powers to reallocate. Barack Obama purported to make crackdowns on wildlife trafficking a priority. Yet at the end of his second term, there were no more than 130 federal wildlife inspectors in the nation; only 38 of 328 ports of entry had such staff on site; their total number of detector dogs amounted to three. Compare this – from benevolent times – to the apparatus for stopping migrants. Here’s another overdue conversion: open borders to people and close them to commodities from the wild; turn ICE and Frontex and other fortress guards into agencies for shutting down the extinction vortexes. But law enforcement would require more than seizures on the border, which can incite suppliers to compensatory killing sprees. It is the middlemen that need to be netted en bloc. The main alternative to such an approach is to legalise the wildlife trade and encourage the ordered establishment of farms (the Huanong Brothers), but the curtain should now be down on this idea. Wild animals shouldn’t sit in cages. Breeding them in captivity and selling them on markets only whets the appetite for their meat, and experience shows that it’s all but impossible to tell the wild from the farmed; the former leaks into the latter, as long as the suck is there. Demand itself will have to be neutralised. Insofar as ostentation – the open display of status before peers and subalterns – is the purpose of wildlife consumption, criminalisation and actual law enforcement should hit where it hurts. Under the ground, public swagger is harder. This doesn’t mean, as Felbab-Brown is keen to stress, that hard state power is a silver bullet. But it is needed, and fast, she points out. ‘Unlike in the case of drugs’ – and most other illicit activities, one may add – ‘time matters acutely, especially when animals are being poached at extinction rates.’ Some reprioritisation is needed for repressive state apparatuses around the world. And then there is the question of bushmeat, an especially difficult nut to crack, which deserves its own separate investigations. One would wish that lifting areas and countries out of poverty would of itself make bushmeat obsolete, but alas, it might have the opposite effect: affluence can set the extinction vortex spinning. It has, on the other hand, been vociferously argued that one shouldn’t even consider taking the wild food out of the mouth of poor people. Unfortunately, that argument is self-defeating, for in the same moment bushmeat starts to endanger animal populations, it ceases to be a prop of food security and turns into its opposite: an exceedingly undependable protein source. Extinction exhausts it forever. The most viable palette of measures probably includes laws and their enforcement, a rollback of deforestation and ‘incentives for communities to switch to traditionally grown protein-rich plant foods’, such as ‘soy, pulses, cereals and tubers’ – breaking, in other words, the association of meat with the good life. That break begins in the richest countries. If anyone has a duty to lead and assist a global turn to plantbased protein, it is them. Needless to say, such measures would just be starters – local drivers of deforestation, for instance, would still have to be dealt with – and if they were all rolled out next week, infectious diseases wouldn’t thereby vanish at the snap of a finger. The treatment of symptoms will never stop being essential. And so one could look to Cuba, which seems to have spare capacity for every eventuality and continues to serve the world as a subaltern ambulance crew, including in this pandemic: in March 2020, fifty-three professionals in a Cuban medical brigade landed in Lombardy. They came to assist the swamped hospitals of one of the richest provinces in Europe. Of the dozen brigades dispatched over that month, others went to Jamaica, Grenada, Suriname, Nicaragua, Andorra, while Cuba itself agreed to receive a corona-stricken cruise ship turned away from other Caribbean islands – all in line with a tradition of ‘medical internationalism’ that never ceases to confound foes and experts alike. In the 2010s, this poor little nation had more health care workers stationed on foreign soil than the G8; more than the Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières and UNICEF combined. When Ebola lacerated West Africa in 2014, hundreds of doctors and nurses dashed off to the miasmic front lines; when Hurricane Mitch tore through Central America and Haiti in 1999, not only did Cuban staff pour in, but Havana initiated a scholarship programme for medical students from the disaster zones; when an earthquake crushed Pakistan in 2005, Cuba sent 1,285 health workers for a year. Canada sent six. In a time of chronic emergency, the world should thank its lucky star there’s at least one state with a tenuous link to the communist ideal still around.‘If anything real is to be done, bureaucracy must be abandoned for democracy, and in a truly revolutionary way, i.e. war must be declared on the oil barons and shareholders’: Lenin. His casus belli was their refusal to produce enough oil and coal. He wanted a war on the barons and shareholders to force the pace of extraction – Russia ‘is one of the richest countries in the world in deposits of liquid fuel’ – having no inkling of any adverse effects. Fuel scarcity was part of his breakdown. Our breakdown has the opposite profile, and so, if anything real is to be done, there will have to be a war with another aim: putting this industry out of business for good. This begins with a nationalisation of all private companies extracting and processing and distributing fossil fuels. Corporations on the loose like ExxonMobil, BP, Shell, RWE, Lundin Energy and the rest of the pack will have to be reined in, and the safest way to do that is to put them under public ownership, either through acquisition or – more defensibly – confiscation without recompense. Then their endlessly burning furnaces can finally be switched off. But they should not simply be liquidated, as in dismantling every platform, sealing the holes, closing the offices, sacking the employees and throwing the lot of the technology on the scrap heap. To the contrary, these units have a constructive task ahead of them. It’s already too hot on earth, and it’s getting hotter by the year, and there’s no end in sight to the heating unless emissions are cut to zero – but even then, it will still be too hot plus residual, potentially self-reinforcing heating in the atmospheric pipeline (the more of it, the longer mitigation waits), and so a worldwide cessation of fossil fuel combustion would not be enough. CO 2 would also have to be drawn out of the air. This has been apparent for at least a decade: everybody says this. Everybody admits it. Everybody has decided it is so. Yet nothing is being done. Nothing at all? There are a bunch of start-ups developing machines for negative emissions. One of them, the Swiss-based Climeworks, might be the most valuable capitalist company on earth these days – valuable as in doing humanity what could eventually be a life-saving service. With machines that look like large fans in boxes, Climeworks sucks air – it could be any air, anywhere. The air is led into a filter that captures CO 2 . Once the filter is saturated, it is heated to 100 degrees Celsius, and the result is pure, concentrated carbon dioxide. The trick as such is no magic, as it has long been applied in airtight rooms – submarines, space stations – where CO 2 has to be scrubbed and flushed out for people to breathe. What Climeworks has just demonstrated, however, is that this is the most promising technology for taking CO 2 out of the earth’s atmosphere – far more so than ‘bioenergy carbon capture and storage’, or BECCS, the speculative solution most in vogue in the days of the Paris agreement. There the idea was to establish gargantuan plantations to cultivate fast-growing trees, harvest them, burn them as fuel, filter away the CO 2 and store it under the ground. But more plantations are not what we need. BECCS would devour such monstrous amounts of land – somewhere like the equivalent of all current cropland to stay below 2°C – that tropical forests might well have to be wiped out. Direct air capture needs no land to grow anything. The contraptions can be placed on roofs. The main inputs they crave are electricity and heat, and because they are small and easily switched on and off, they can be affixed to the grid and turned on when there is an excess of wind and sun (weather-determined moments of overproduction often regarded as a drawback of renewables) and use waste heat from any other process (no shortage of that in urban environs). The CO 2 can be mineralised. It can be buried under the ground in solid form; indeed, since 2017, Climeworks is doing just this in Iceland. As with other novel technologies – solar panels spring to mind – prices will nosedive with mass production. A capitalist solution to a problem made by capitalism? If only. A capitalist company has to have a commodity to sell. With the exception of the pilot plant in Iceland, Climeworks and the other start-ups are turning their concentrated CO 2 into goods with exchange-value. It can be gas sold to greenhouses or soft drink producers (Coca-Cola in the case of Climeworks in Zürich); it could go into microalgae or liquid fuel, possibly even for airplanes. Such commodities bury no CO 2 . They capture it and pass it on for release elsewhere, so that a profit can be made – or, as Nature reported regarding another start-up, Carbon Engineering, run by the famed scientist-cum-entrepreneur David Keith: ‘That CO 2 could then be pressurized, put into a pipeline and disposed of underground, but the company is planning instead to use it to make synthetic, low carbon fuels.’ And how could it plan otherwise? Just throwing the CO 2 away, locking it up in cellars where it must never again be touched, is no way to accumulate capital. It negates the logic of the commodity, because non-consumption would here be the innermost essence of the operation. As Holly Jean Buck shows in After Geoengineering: Climate Tragedy, Repair, and Restoration, a primer and clarion call that should be obligatory reading for anyone minimally concerned with planetary futures, this is the contradiction every direct air capture must run into: if it stays inside the commodity form, it cannot make good on its promise of negative emissions. It will recycle CO 2 , not tuck it away. To scale up these machines to the level where they would make their designated difference – supplementing zero emissions with drawdown – they would have to function as vacuum cleaners, sucking up carbon and putting it out of circulation, as a non- or even anti-commodity. How could such a decontamination of the biosphere run on profit? Where would the increment in exchange-value come from, in amounts sufficient to keep the clean-up going like any other department of accumulation? No one has yet come up with a plausible answer. Buck works through the logic and finds only one way out: the state. Other students of direct air capture have reached the same conclusion. It seems to inhere in it – if the Climeworks model turns out to have some unknown disadvantage, if something else comes to the fore as the superior tech, if there will ever be any negative emissions not growing from land, the same conundrum will reappear: resell the waste and forfeit the purpose, or respect the negative use-value. It’s the productive force or the property relations. And to scale up, one would need a lot of money. That money should come from those who carry historical responsibility for releasing the CO 2 in the first place. There would also need to be massive complexes of technical expertise, drilling and seismic skills, infrastructures for transporting concentrated CO 2 , empty holes in the ground for burial vaults, organisations of supranational size … Who has all these things in ample possession? The oil barons and shareholders, of course. Nationalise them, Buck proposes – not just for ‘getting rid of these corporations, as we might like to, but transforming them into companies that deliver a carbon removal service’. Make them public utilities for restabilising climate. In something of an understatement, Buck adds: ‘There will be a lot of struggles to engage in here.’ But now imagine that states were in fact determined not only to stop the drivers of catastrophe but to put them into reverse gear, and so they expropriated every single fossil fuel company and restructured them into waste disposers, while those already state-owned received the same directives – then we would really be on the way to zero emissions and further: towards 400 parts per million, 380, 350 … It would be some repair to match the tropical rewilding. The demand for nationalising fossil fuel companies and turning them into direct air capture utilities should be the central transitional demand for the coming years. But, needless to say, it would make no sense if CO 2 were still belching out into the atmosphere: emitting and capturing would be a bizarre dissipation of resources to no avail. Everything begins with draconian restraints and cuts. They alone could pave the way for actual drawdown; the sooner they start, the less need for a secondary mega-infrastructure of clean-up. The problem could also be attacked from another angle: not supply but demand, rather like in the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. Then it was demand, above all in the transport sector, that went off a cliff and pulled emissions along. In late April 2020, Scientific American publicised the forecast that total global emissions would fall by no more than 5 per cent during the year – in spite of the spring drop by one fourth in China and roughly one fifth in the US – as economies were expected to rebound in the summer and autumn. The journal noted that as record-breaking as a 5 per cent reduction would be, it would still fall short of ‘the 7.6 per cent decline that scientists say is needed every year over the next decade to stop global temperatures from rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius’. Nearly 8 per cent every year – a far cry indeed from the expected 2020 hiatus (if not from the initial months-long collapses). What would that require? Comprehensive, airtight planning. Everybody knows this. Few say it. One can obviously not rely on spontaneous cessation of demand, or on people just quitting travel; there would have to be a continuous substitution of one kind of energy for another over the transitional period – or, ‘a single economic plan covering the whole country and all branches of productive activity. This plan must be drawn up for a number of years, for the whole epoch that lies before us’, to cite Leon Trotsky. One can of course find this idea so repugnant that one would rather give up on the climate of the earth. And that is indeed the choice the dominant classes and their governments wake up to make every morning. Regardless of whether the problem is attacked from the supply or the demand side, the race to zero would have to be coordinated through control measures – rationing, reallocating, requisitioning, sanctioning, ordering … – so as to fill the gap after fossil fuels. The substitutes themselves are in no need of elaboration. The literature on the Green New Deal and renewable energy roll-out and climate wartime mobilisation is extensive enough to guide a transition several times over. Here we truly are in the situation of Lenin’s September text: everybody knows what measures need to be taken; everybody knows, on some level of their consciousness, that flights inside continents should stay grounded, private jets banned, cruise ships safely dismantled, turbines and panels mass produced – there’s a whole auto industry waiting for the order – subways and bus lines expanded, high-speed rail lines built, old houses refurbished and all the magnificent rest. ‘The ways of combating catastrophe and famine are available’, approaching common knowledge. ‘If our state really wanted to exercise control in a business-like and earnest fashion, if its institutions had not condemned themselves to “complete inactivity” by their servility to the capitalists, all the state would have to do’ would be to roll up the sleeves. Another part of Lenin’s logic applies too: any government that would ‘wish to save Russia from war and famine’ would have to get down to this kind of work. be the central transitional demand for the coming years. But, needless to say, it would make no sense if CO 2 were still belching out into the atmosphere: emitting and capturing would be a bizarre dissipation of resources to no avail. But the lingering conclusion from our initial comparison between corona and climate is that no capitalist state is likely ever to do anything like this of its own accord. It would have to be forced into doing it, through application of the whole spectrum of popular leverage, from electoral campaigns to mass sabotage. Left to its own devices, the capitalist state will continue to attend to symptoms, which, however, must eventually reach a boiling point. One can imagine that in the next years and decades, storms will bite into property, droughts tear apart supply chains, crop yields halve, heat waves enervate labour productivity to the extent that the timeline of victimhood catches up with the dominant classes. The second contradiction will then be upon them. States might no longer be able to just parry the impacts, but feel compelled to safeguard the background condition before it crashes irretrievably. Judging from the reaction to Covid-19, they will grasp for a control measure that can flatten the curve at once, and there is one such known in the libraries of science: solar geoengineering. Spraying sulphate aerosols into the atmosphere is the single kind of injection with a potential to instantly reduce planetary fever. However large in scale, direct air capture would need decades to bring temperatures down; sulphate aerosol injection can cut insolation from one month to the next. Year after year of business-as-usual, this is the pseudo-solution that sneaks up on us like a thief in the night.Indeed, under the cover of the pandemic, in mid-April 2020, one of the largest experiments in geoengineering so far was carried out on the Great Barrier Reef, then subject to the third outbreak of mass bleaching in five years (did anyone notice?). Scientists were authorised by the state to spray trillions of nano-sized ocean salt crystals into the air from the back of a barge. The hope was that these particles would make clouds brighter, so they would reflect more sunlight away from the ocean and shield the reef from the heat. The team told the Guardian they could see corals ‘bleaching around us’ as they bobbed over them. This is a technology distinct from sulphate aerosol injection, namely marine cloud brightening, potentially deployed on a local or regional scale by a state such as Australia, which, numerous monumental disasters notwithstanding, cannot bring itself to impose any control measures on coal extraction. The logic is robust. As one of the sharpest scholars in the field, Kevin Surprise, has argued, solar geoengineering might well be launched on a planetary scale as a fix against the second contradiction, because capitalist states appear constitutionally incapable of going after the drivers. It is fairly widely known that such intervention in the climate system could switch the planet onto another track towards catastrophe. Meanwhile, the corals keep bleaching, the swarms forming, the ice melting, the animals moving. A pestilential breath devastating humanity There has been a lot of talk about ecological Marxism in recent years, and with the chronic emergency over us, the time has come to also experiment with ecological Leninism. Three principles of that project seem decisive. First, and above all, ecological Leninism means turning the crises of symptoms into crises of the causes. From August 1914, this was, of course, the thrust of Leninist politics: converting the outbreak of war into a blow against the system that engendered it. Our Great War is not an actual war between armies, nor a singular event that can be concluded or paused after half a decade: this emergency is chronic, which means that crises of symptoms will ignite again and again, and every time they do, the strategic imperative must be to switch energies of the highest voltage against the drivers. It is difficult to see how else the conditions can ever be ameliorated. Has anybody got another idea? Oh yes: make clouds and invent vaccines; block solar radiation and track the movements of people. At their best, such proposals amount – to borrow from Greta Thunberg’s favourite metaphor – to surviving inside a burning house by drinking lots of cold water. Virtually by definition, the most classical Leninist gesture is the only one that can point to an emergency exit. It is worth re-emphasising just how central the category of catastrophe was to the evolution of revolutionary Marxism. In her polemics with Bernstein, Luxemburg never tired of stressing it. She has become most renowned for the sound bite ‘socialism or barbarism’ but, as Norman Geras has shown in a superb exegesis, that deep dichotomy structured her theory and praxis all the way from the battle with Bernstein to her death at the hands of the Freikorps. One year into the war, she warned that humanity faced a choice between ‘the destruction of all culture, and, as in ancient Rome, depopulation, desolation, degeneration, a vast cemetery’ – or victory for ‘the conscious struggle’ against the imperialism that drove the war. ‘Wading in blood and dripping in filth’, capitalist society has become ‘a pestilential breath, devastating culture and humanity’. That peculiar type of society now ‘endangers the very existence of society itself, by assembling a chain of devastating economic and political catastrophes’; in its present phase, the expansion inherent in capital ‘has adopted such an unbridled character that it puts the whole civilisation of mankind in question’. Luxemburg expected world war to become a ‘permanent’ state of affairs. It didn’t, and here the differentia specifica of the chronic emergency must again be underscored: it works itself out through biophysical processes that cannot be fought or negotiated to an end. One does not bomb out or bargain with the radiative forcing of CO 2 . That forcing is an immutable function of the quantity of the gas in the atmosphere, which means that this pestilential breath has another order of permanency and aggravation – until the moment of deliberate intercession, still only hypothetical. Following Geras’s reading of Luxemburg, we can then say that ‘barbarism’, depopulation, a vast cemetery really are the inevitable ends of a capitalism left to itself (here precluding the long-term effectiveness of solar geoengineering as a stand-alone measure). But writing in 1975, he recoiled from this conclusion as excessively apocalyptic. ‘Ecological catastrophe may, today, be invoked to lend that vision plausibility’, he noted in passing; half a century later, there is scant need for the caveat. This, then, is the syntax of revolutionary Marxism, present already in the first section of The Communist Manifesto: the fight ends ‘either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes’. There can be little doubt about which of the two outcomes is currently the more likely. Hence the accentuated ‘conditional mood of the probability of a catastrophe that there is still time to forestall. Things will end up badly, if … But they can (still) be sorted out …’, as another thinker from the same tradition, Daniel Bensaïd, distils the predicament. It was because Luxemburg threw herself into efforts to forestall further catastrophe that she, for all their disagreements, ended up on the same side as Lenin. A second principle for ecological Leninism can be extracted from their position: speed as paramount virtue. ‘Whether the probable disaster can be avoided depends on an acute sense of conjuncture’, writes Bensaïd, who reconstructs the crisis of September and observes that ‘waiting was becoming a crime’. Or, with Lenin himself: ‘delay is fatal’. It is necessary to act ‘this very evening, this very night’. The truth of these assertions has never been more patent. As anyone with the barest insight into the state of the planet knows, speed, very regrettably, because of the criminal waiting and delaying and dithering and denying of the dominant classes, has become a metric of meaning in politics. ‘Nothing can now be saved by halfmeasures.’ Third, ecological Leninism leaps at any opportunity to wrest the state in this direction, break with business-asusual as sharply as required and subject the regions of the economy working towards catastrophe to direct public control. It would mean that ‘one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part’, to speak with Engels. Nothing from the past decades of stalled transitions indicates that ExxonMobil would like to metamorphose into a cleaner and storekeeper of unsalable carbon, or that meat and palm oil companies would gladly let their pastures and plantations be rewilded. It appears tautologically true that an actual transition would require some coercive authority. If anarchists would ever wield influence in such a process, they would quickly discover this circumstance and, just like anybody else, have to avail themselves of the state. But what state? We have just argued that the capitalist state is constitutionally incapable of taking these steps. And yet there is no other form of state on offer. No workers’ state based on soviets will be miraculously born in the night. No dual power of the democratic organs of the proletariat seems likely to materialise anytime soon, if ever. Waiting for it would be both delusional and criminal, and so all we have to work with is the dreary bourgeois state, tethered to the circuits of capital as always. There would have to be popular pressure brought to bear on it, shifting the balance of forces condensed in it, forcing apparatuses to cut the tethers and begin to move, using the plurality of methods already hinted at (some further outlined by the present author in How to Blow Up a Pipeline: Learning to Fight in a World on Fire). But this would clearly be a departure from the classical programme of demolishing the state and building another – one of several elements of Leninism that seem ripe (or overripe) for their own obituaries. On the other hand, the chronic emergency can be expected to usher in pronounced political volatility. ‘The deeper the crisis, the more strata of society it involves, the more varied are the instinctive movements which crisscross in it, and the more confused and changeable will be the relationship of forces’, to quote Georg Lukács. The rather startling measures used to combat the spread of Covid-19 might have been a foretaste. Who knows what openings other moments of impact might bring. In some, popular initiatives may rise to prominence. The 2013 edition of the ‘worldwide threat assessment’ compiled by the US intelligence community warned that climate disasters risk ‘triggering riots, civil disobedience, and vandalism’; similar predictions are legion. If or when they are fulfilled, the mission of ecological Leninists is to raise consciousness in such spontaneous movements and reroute them towards the drivers of catastrophe. Hence the heightened relevance of the slogan that for Bensaïd ‘sums up Leninist politics: “Be ready!” Be ready for the improbable, for the unexpected, for what happens.’ It includes a readiness to, with Lenin’s own words, ‘set to work to stir up all and sundry, even the oldest, mustiest and seemingly hopeless spheres, for otherwise we shall not be able to cope with our tasks’. If the matter is exigent, the material at hand must be used. On this view, ecological Leninism is a lodestar of principles, not a party affiliation. It does not imply that there are any actual Leninist formations capable of seizing power and implementing the correct measures – the world has never been shorter on them, and most of the few that remain show overt signs of infirmity. The old Trotskyist formula ‘the crisis of humanity is the crisis of the revolutionary leadership’ must be updated. The crisis is the absence – the complete, gaping absence – of any leadership. The seed bank exists in an arid space approaching empty desert; anything brought out from it would have to be genetically modified to grow under the present sun and watered by subjects inventing themselves anew. Two elements do, however, as we have argued, appear essential. The basic make-up must harbour a predisposition for emergency action and an openness to some degree of hard power from the state. Anarchism detests the state; social democracy shrivels in catastrophe. But there is no reason not to experiment with ecological Luxemburgism, or ecological Blanquism, or Guevarism, or indeed Trotskyism … nor is there reason to give up on the sheer deductive force of revolutionary Marxism: ‘The inherent tendencies of capitalist development, at a certain point of their maturity, necessitate the transition to a planful mode of production, consciously organised by the entire working force of society – in order that all of society and human civilisation might not perish’, again with Luxemburg. But ‘necessitate’ does not mean ‘preordain’. Something can be necessary and yet never come about.

#### 3] Marxist Transhumanism –

Steinhoff 14 [James Steinhoff (postdoctoral fellow at the eScience Institute of the University of Washington, Ph.D., Media Studies, The University of Western Ontario, M.A., Philosophy, The University of Windsor, B.A., English Literature and Philosophy, The University of Windsor). “Transhumanism and Marxism: Philosophical Connections”. Journal of Evolution and Technology - Vol. 24 Issue 2 – May 2014. Accessed 11/5/21. <https://philpapers.org/archive/STETAM-4.pdf> //Xu]

The term “transhumanism” was coined by evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley in 1957. In a short paper bearing the same neologism as its title, he asserts that: The human species can, if it wishes, transcend itself – not just sporadically, an individual here in one way, an individual there in another way, but in its entirety, as humanity. We need a name for this new belief. Perhaps transhumanism will serve: man remaining man, but trans­cending himself, by realizing new possibilities of and for his human nature. (Huxley 1957) This early formulation contains the kernel of transhumanism, which is the desirability and feasibility of the self-directed evolution or transcendence of humanity beyond its current form or nature. Recently, philosopher Max More has offered this more precise definition: Transhumanism is both a reason-based philosophy and a cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally improving the human condition by means of science and technology. Transhumanists seek the continuation and acceleration of the evolution of intelligent life beyond its currently human form and human limitations by means of science and technology, guided by life-promoting principles and values. (More 2009) Transhumanism indicates a transitional state on the road to a posthuman state. This transition is to be accomplished primarily by technological means in a transfer of control over the process of evolution from natural selection to conscious human direction. The possibility of taking control of evolution is not a specifically transhumanist belief. Diverse non-transhumanist thinkers such as political scientist Francis Fukuyama and sociobiologist E.O. Wilson acknowledge the coming reality of “volitional evolution” or “a species deciding what to do about its own heredity,” as Wilson puts it (1998, 299). What is distinctly transhumanist is the optimism with which the prospects of volitional evolution are regarded. Fukuyama calls for “humility” regarding human nature and fears that transhumanists will “deface humanity with their genetic bulldozers and psychotropic shopping malls” (Fukuyama 2004). Transhumanists, by contrast, desire to use such new and emerging technologies as genetics, robotics, artificial intelligence, and nanotechnology to achieve ambitious goals: the elimination of disease; radical life extension (even immortality);1 the creation of substrate-independent minds (capable of being uploaded to non-biological systems);2 augmented or virtual realities; and enhanced intellectual, physical, aesthetic and ethical capabilities. Some transhumanists even aim at the abolition of all forms of suffering for all sentient life.3 This is not to say, as many critics have, that transhumanists blithely dismiss the prospects of technological advancements going horribly wrong. Nick Bostrom, in particular, has written much about “existential risks” or the possibilities that new technologies present for the extinction of life on earth (Bostrom 2002). Nonetheless, many transhumanists prefer a “Proactionary Principle” of rational risk-assessment, as More (2005) puts it, as opposed to a “Precautionary Principle” of excessive safeguarding regarding technological developments. Politically, transhumanists have covered the spectrum. Proto-transhumanists such as molecular biologist J.D. Bernal and geneticist/evolutionary biologist J.B.S. Haldane were Marxists, Bernal being a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, while Haldane was an external supporter of the Party. Riccardo Campa, chair of the Associazione Italiana Transumanisti (AIT), expresses “only conditional confidence” in the power of markets and asserts that if “market mechanisms do not deliver, we should have to consider socializing what are, from the transhumanist point of view, the key sectors” (Campa 2008). On a different note, Max More and most of those subscribing to his brand of transhumanism (known as Extropianism) originally espoused anarcho-capitalist views. However, in the past decade More has tended more toward liberal democracy. Ray Kurzweil has not written explicitly on his political stance, but one can safely assume that his views lie somewhere not far from liberal, capitalistic democracy, given his entrepreneurial career and frequent assertions of liberal democratic rights. H+ (formerly The World Transhumanist Association), of which Nick Bostrom is a co-founder, is explicitly a liberal democratic organization. In the past few years, rumors and accusations concerning transhumanist fascists have been buzzing about the Italian transhumanist community. The “overhumanists” or “sovrumanists” (from the Italian “sovrumanismo”), a group of members within the ITA, have been accused of fascist tendencies.4 As I have not been able to read any of the purportedly fascist texts (Stefano Vaj’s Biopolitica being the most prolifically accused), I leave this discussion untouched. Suffice to say that the allegations lend some support to an appearance that transhumanists range widely across the political spectrum. James Hughes (2001) suggests that leftist thought and transhumanist ideas parted ways after the experience of Nazi eugenics and that the two are only beginning to meet up again indirectly: through Donna Haraway’s cyborgology, speculative fiction, some radical green movements, and various other dispersed projects. Hughes, himself a transhumanist sociologist, argues for a “democratic transhumanism.” He writes: “For transhumanism to achieve its own goals it needs to distance itself from its anarcho-capitalist roots and its authoritarian mutations, clarify its commitments to liberal democratic institutions, values and public policies, and work to reassure skittish publics and inspire them with Big Projects” (Hughes 2001). Yet as the WTA survey shows, 47 per cent of transhumanists surveyed identify as “left,” so transhumanism and the left would seem to have already been reunited. Perhaps the pertinent thing to do now is to search around “inside” the left for useful political bits and pieces that do not originate from liberal democracy – particularly, Marxism. 2. Technological advancement and revolution 2.1 Marxism is a staunchly materialist philosophy. It rejects all notions of higher realms, “spirit,” and immaterial substance. Marx’s philosophy is an appropriation of the Hegelian dialectical form, but Marx rejected Hegel’s assertion that the subject of the dialectical movement is abstract spirit or mind that exists above humans and achieves its true form as Absolute Knowledge. For Marx, thought must begin with “real premises from which abstraction can only be made in imagination … [from] real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live” (Marx 1978, 149). “Life is not determined by consciousness,” says Marx, “but consciousness by life” (Marx 1978, 155). Marxism is concerned with the concrete, material details of the lives of individuals. The material conditions of the relations and means of production produce the situations and systems in which individuals live and by which their conceptions of reality are determined. The social problems of private property and alienation arise from the material reality of the means of production being owned by the capitalist class. Thus Marx’s projected socialist revolution has as a necessary condition a change in the material conditions of society. We can note two key aspects of revolution for Marx. First, revolution must be eminently practical and not merely theoretical. Marx writes: “all forms and products of consciousness cannot be dissolved by mental criticism … only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations ... that not criticism, but revolution is the driving force of history” (Marx 1973, 164). The socialist revolution will not occur because scathing critiques of capitalism are written, or even by widespread understanding of the contradictions of capitalism – the actual relations of production must be overturned by real people. Workers must seize the means of production. This, however, can only be achieved, Marx says, through the advancement of the productive forces. Thus the second key aspect: that technological advancement is a necessary precondition for revolution. Marx holds that to achieve a socialist society one of the first priorities of the revolutionary proletariat must be to “centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State … to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible” (Marx 1978, 490). Through automation and new technologies, the productive forces should be enhanced so that less and less actual human labor is required to produce the goods necessary for satisfying human needs. The idea is that humans need to have easy access to and abundant quantities of the necessities of life (including time itself) if they are to seek a way of life beyond mere survival. Marx holds: “slavery cannot be abolished without the steam-engine and the mule and spinning-jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture … people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity” (Marx 1978, 169). It is thus only in a society in which machines perform much of the labor required for human survival that humans can achieve revolutionarily new ways of living. 2.2 Most transhumanists are also materialists. The 2007 WTA Survey shows that 64 per cent of those surveyed identify as secular/atheist, while 31 per cent are spread widely across several subcategories of “Religious or spiritual” identifications and 5 per cent describe their beliefs as “Other.” Even the non-secular transhumanists agree that changes to the material conditions of the world are instrumental to the achievement of transhumanist revolution. Indeed, The Mormon Transhumanist Association (MTA) proclaims that humanity’s power over the material world is what will lead to a realization of the objects of traditionally spiritual yearning. The MTA website lists “affirmations” such as: We believe that scientific knowledge and technological power are among the means ordained of God to enable [the spiritual and physical] exaltation [of individuals and their anatomies, as well as their communities and environments] including realization of diverse prophetic visions of transfiguration, immortality, resurrection, renewal of this world, and the discovery and creation of worlds without end.5 It is therefore safe to say that all transhumanists agree that technological development is necessary for revolution, although it is true that for transhumanists what counts as advanced technology is considerably beyond anything imagined by Marx. Many transhumanists posit the technological Singularity as a necessary precondition for their sense of revolution, which is the transition to a posthuman state. On one popular interpretation, the Singularity is the projected moment in the future when artificial intelligence (AI) reaches human-level capabilities. Since technology evolves at an exponential rate far exceeding biological evolution, the theory is that AI will quickly outstrip human intelligence by several magnitudes and will continue to evolve at blinding speed. This explosion of intelligence will produce unimaginable change, advanced technologies, and ideas that will be essential in the creation of the posthuman. Ray Kurzweil calls the advent of human-level AI an event of importance equaling the advent of biology itself (2005, 296). While not all transhumanists are Singularitarians, it is always the prospects of advanced technology that make a transhumanist revolution feasible. Goals such as radical life extension, increased cognitive capacity, and increased well-being are generally not sought through spiritual or mystical means such as transcendental meditation, revelation, or divine communion, but through the increasing sophistication of technology. Thus transhumanists support research programs and/or business ventures they believe will advance the human ability to revolutionarily modify the material world. Nick Bostrom emphasizes the narrow locus of transhumanist change: As you advance, the horizon will recede. The transformation is profound, but it can be as gradual as the growth that made the baby you were into the adult you think you are. You will not achieve this through any magic trick or hokum, nor by the power of wishful thinking, nor by semantic acrobatics, meditation, affirmation, or incantation. And I do not presume to advise you on matters theological. I urge on you nothing more, nothing less, than reconfigured physical situation. (Bostrom 2010, 4) Also evident here is a call for practical, rather than merely theoretical, revolution in the transhumanist openness to synthetic augmentation of the biological body and brain. Nanotechnology, for example, is a commonly cited way of augmenting the material condition of the body: it has been suggested that digestion, healing, and synaptic processes will be augmented or taken over by nanobots that will perform these functions better. Says Bostrom: “The roots of suffering are planted deep in your brain. Weeding them out and replacing them with nutritious crops of well-being will require advanced skills and instruments for the cultivation of your neuronal soil” (2010, 6). The idea is that practical modification of the human condition at the bodily level is needed to produce social change – theorizing is not enough. We may have to download our consciousnesses to synthetic systems to conquer death. In Bostrom’s words: “Your body is a deathtrap … You are lucky to get seven decades of mobility; eight if you be Fortuna’s darling. That is not sufficient to get started in a serious way, much less to complete the journey. Maturity of the soul takes longer” (2010, 4). Ignoring the poeticism of “the soul” here, the notion is that augmented bodies that are less susceptible to disease, hunger, and decay could give people more time to concern themselves with their freely chosen life-activities instead of the vagaries of quotidian existence and the demands imposed by capitalism. Nanotechnology also presents the theoretical possibility of assemblers that can manipulate matter at the molecular and atomic levels to construct anything conceivable by the laws of physics.6 Such machines would need only a supply of raw materials to work with, coupled with a power supply and instructions, to produce all kinds of human needs and wants, ranging from computers to tools to the very Star Trek-esque possibility of food and drink. Echoing Marx, transhumanists might say that the abolition of (paid) slavery is impossible without a superabundance provided by molecular assemblers or that liberation from the bodily death trap is impossible without strong AI. 2.3 Here is the first point that Marxists should take note of: the extent of technological development required for a revolutionary shift in human existence might be much higher than merely the massive automation of labor. Advanced or theoretical technologies such as molecular assemblers might be required to wrest production from the hands of the capitalists. Molecular assemblers present the possibility of very cheap production of almost any product. It is surely too optimistic to say that molecular assemblers might lead to the total destruction of the commodity form, but it seems likely that even a moderately wide spread of such technology would seriously undermine the capitalist system.7 There would simply be no need for the industrial production of most products if families or communities were able to produce those products themselves. Advanced technological development not only presents the possibility of the elimination of dehumanizing labor. It presents more fundamental changes in the material basis of production – the potential elimination of the feasibility of large-scale centralized production and potentially the destruction of exchange-value. Marx understands exchange-value as an abstraction, determined solely by market forces, tacked onto an object that obscures its actual qualities or use-value (Marx 1978, 307). With widespread molecular assembling technology available, the cost of a product would be reduced almost to the cost of information – the instructions required for the assembler to build that product – since raw materials would be of minimal cost and the machine would perform the labor of assembling. Of course, if information remains commodified then a capitalist system could continue to thrive. However, we are currently witnessing the difficulties with commodifying information in the Global North’s “war on piracy.” It seems unlikely that anything short of an openly totalitarian regime could effectively stamp out information piracy. In short, transhumanism contains an exhortation to Marxists to keep abreast of the particulars of new technologies and to engage with them critically, looking for the unique revolutionary (and counter-revolutionary) potentials they hold. Transhumanists should here consider that Marx argues that the centralization of the productive apparatus by the revolutionary proletariat is of fundamental importance to the acceleration of productive capacity. This is because, for Marx, capitalist production divorces or alienates the worker from the activity she engages in, subjecting her instead to “alien” powers – her employer’s need for profit. Marx elaborates: the division of labour offers us the first example of how … as long as a cleavage exists between the particular and the common interest, as long, therefore, as activity is not voluntarily … divided, man’s own deed becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him. For as soon as the distribution of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. (Marx 1845) Her labor, which is all the worker owns, is divorced by capitalism from her interests and goals – she is alienated from herself and her essential ability of self-determination. Transhumanists, by leaving technological advancement in the hands of profit-driven capitalist enterprise, are analogously alienating the human that is to be transcended from itself. Capitalism enslaves humans to economically profitable, but, in terms of transhumanist goals, conservative or regressive endeavors. Think of the production of cheap, disposable dollar-store toys or the infinite cycle of the military-industrial complex. Centralization of production offers the prospect of stripping away those endeavors that do not serve to advance the technological apparatus necessary for transhumanist goals. In short, I suggest that the advance of technology, if divorced from human self-determination, may not present revolutionary opportunities, but rather the opposite. 3 Human nature 3.1 For Marx, humans have a dual nature: both active and passive. He offers this description: Man is directly a natural being. As a natural being and as a living natural being he is on the one hand furnished with natural powers of life – he is an active natural being. These forces exist in him as tendencies and abilities – as impulses. On the other hand, as a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being he is a suffering, conditioned and limited creature, like animals and plants. That is to say, the objects of his impulses exist outside him, as objects independent of him; yet these objects are objects of his need – essential objects, indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers. (Marx 1978, 115) We can note three important points in this passage: that humans are “natural,” that humans are active or determining – that we can change ourselves and the world, and that humans are also passive or determined by a particular biological nature. The passive aspect of human nature refers to the fact that humans do not exist purely of themselves like omnipotent deities. To exist, humans must fulfill certain needs that are external to their bodies and are not aspects of their selves. Obvious examples are food and drink, but as Herbert Marcuse notes: “‘need’ is not be understood only in the sense of physical neediness: man needs ‘a totality of human manifestations of life’” (1973, 23). For example, having all one’s physical needs met, but being completely isolated from all contact with other humans is not a situation in which human needs are being met. That humans are needy means that they are in a large sense passive beings. One is necessarily dependent on the water’s being there before one can drink it – and without it, death is certain. Thus, Marcuse holds that for Marx: “Distress and neediness here do not describe individual modes of man’s behavior at all: they are features of his whole existence” (Marcuse 1973, 21). Marx holds that since external objects are essential to life, they are actually parts of human life. The passivity of humans means that their lives are determined to the extent that they must meet certain needs to continue existing – there are certain constraints on human life. These limits constitute a fundamental connection to the natural. But as Marcuse noted above, human needs are not only physical needs. There are also what might be called social needs which constitute a fundamental connection between the individual and other individuals in society. Humans need other humans for non-material needs such as education, friendship, and culture. Uniquely human (as far as we can tell) qualities, such as culture, require human beings to be social beings; thus sociality is part of human nature. But humans are also active, self- and world-determining beings. Humans have the ability to relate to objects “universally,” through labor. Human labor produces objects: buildings, computers, medicines. All of these creations we regard as created by “us” – as humans – out of the raw materials found in nature. In producing such objects we constitute a world in which we see ourselves everywhere. Says Marx: “Man is a species being, not only because in practice and theory he adopts the species as his object (his own as well as those of other things), but – also because he treats himself as the actual, living species: because he treats himself as a universal and therefore a free being” (Marx 1978, 75). While animals produce nests and dams these are only for “immediate physical needs,” while “man produces universally … man produces even when he is free from immediate need and truly produces in freedom therefrom” (1978, 76). The endless creation of new objects and technologies supports Marx’s claim: we do not produce technologies solely for survival – we produce in an aesthetic mode, as well as a profiteering mode. Indeed, and this is Marx’s most important claim about human nature, we actually produce ourselves in other objects. Marx’s proclamation that “man produces man” does not refer solely to biological reproduction (Marcuse 1973, 25). Humans produce a world in which every object has some amount of human involvement in it – the human species becomes universally present. But what is the distinctive stamp of humanity, the “essence” that it imparts to objects? Marx’s sense of essence must be recognized as wholly material. He holds that what philosophers have called the substance or essence of the human is a “material result” ... [a] sum of productive forces, capital funds and social forms of intercourse, which every individual and generation finds in existence as something given” (Marx 1973, 165). At any moment how humans conceive of themselves is a product of the social and material conditions that previous generations of humans set up. Human “essence” is a historical phenomenon. But this does not mean that humans lack a true nature. Marx writes: “The animal is immediately identical with its life-activity. It is its life-activity. Man makes his life-activity the object of his will and of his consciousness. He has conscious life-activity … his own life is an object for him” (Marx 1978, 76). The “essence” of the human shifts over time because it is not a static form. It is, rather, a self-transformative function or an evolving process. The human is the animal whose nature is to change its own nature. We are thus led to another relevant aspect of Marxian human nature – its open-endedness. Marx describes the new kind of “wealth” that socialist society will produce as the “absolute working-out of [human] creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such, the end in itself, not as measured on a predetermined yardstick” because he is not committed to a particular form of human life or metric by which to judge it (Marx 1973, 488). István Mészáros elaborates, asserting that never “can there be a point in history at which we could say: ‘now the human substance has been fully realized.’ For such a fixing would deprive the human being of his essential attribute: his power of ‘self-mediation’ and ‘self-development’” (Mészáros 1970, 119). It is impossible to posit an ideal ending to the saga of human history as that would constrain the freedom of the human by not allowing her very nature of self-determination to be expressed. 3.2 Transhumanists generally agree with the natural being of the human but they tend to differ from Marx on the significance of humanity’s active and passive aspects, emphasizing the active nature of humans and downplaying the significance of the passive and needy aspect.8 Most transhumanists agree that humans are natural beings and are products of natural processes like natural selection. Humans are distinguished from other animals primarily by their level of complexity (biological and social) and ability to modify their own ways of living. It is material aspects that make humans different: our particular brains, bodies and technological capabilities. Transhumanists do not deny the passive and needy aspects of human nature, although they do question the permanence and desirability of human needs. Nick Bostrom argues that: “not just any aspect of present human nature ... is worth preserving. Rather it is especially those features which contribute to self-development and self-expression, to certain kinds of relationships, and to the development of our consciousness and understanding” that should be preserved (Bostrom 2005). Some human needs may be eliminated entirely through technology. The nutritive aspect of eating might, for example, be separated from the gustatory, just as the pleasurable aspect of sex has largely been separated from its reproductive function through contraceptive technologies. Nutrients and calories could be supplied through smart drugs, supplements, and nanotech delivery systems, and nanobots might filter out unwanted aspects of digested food, making eating a wholly aesthetic experience. The need for human social interaction is already being partially met through technological alternate-realities such as the online worlds Second Life and World of Warcraft and myriad social networking sites. Such virtual worlds, while currently primitive, are being increasingly seamlessly integrated with “real reality.” Courtship, funerals, marriages, and complex economies already occur in virtual worlds. Kurzweil suggests that we might find living in virtual worlds preferable once they reach a high level of sophistication (1995, 29). The idea is that human needs are subject to change and even disappearance as the human being develops. It is clear then that transhumanists generally give precedence to the active aspect of human nature. More invokes “Perpetual Progress” as a transhumanist tenet that “captures the way transhumanists challenge traditional assertions that we should leave human nature fundamentally unchanged in order to conform to ‘God’s will’ or to what is considered ‘natural’” (More 2009). Neither social institutions nor moral intuitions should be taken as reasons for not modifying human nature. Currently alien and even unimaginable forms of existence can all be stamped with the mark of humanity, or whatever it is that humanity will call itself in the transhuman and posthuman stages of its existence. The important point is that transhumanists consider some aspects of human nature to be of negative value and seek their elimination. Some transhumanists even cite an ethical duty to future generations of the species and hold that it is morally irresponsible not to alleviate suffering and death as much as possible for these future beings. But transhumanists do not seek only the alleviation of perceived lacks. They also aim for the expansion of human qualities and abilities and new levels of existence that are currently unavailable to humans. Bostrom (2001) speaks of new “modes of being” that cannot be imagined by current humans. Kurzweil holds that technology will allow us to map, extract and upload the patterns of energy that constitute our consciousnesses. Through this technique we will ultimately “transcend” the material nature of humanity: “We can ‘go beyond’ the ‘ordinary’ powers of the material world through the power of patterns ... It’s through the emergent powers of the pattern that we transcend. Since the material stuff of which we are made turns over quickly, it is the transcendent power of our patterns that persists” (Kurzweil 2005, 388). Despite this rather mystical language we can discern a concept of human nature not unlike the Marxian one. Human nature is not any set of limits, conditions or needs; rather, it is an evolving process that constantly breaks through perceived limits. Humans can perceive themselves in all kinds of alien objects and forms – humanity is “universal” in Marx’s sense. Kurzweil describes a transhumanist sense of human essence: “the essence of being human is not our limitations – although we do have many – it’s our ability to reach beyond our limitations” (Kurzweil 2005, 311). Mészáros echoes these sentiments in his reading of Marx: “Nothing is therefore ‘implanted in human nature.’ Human nature is not something fixed by nature, but, on the contrary, a ‘nature’ which is made by man in his acts of ‘self-transcendence’ as a natural being” (Mészáros 1970, 170). Humans are nature “coming out of itself” and transforming itself – a process. The transhumanist conception of human nature is also, like the Marxian conception, an open-ended one. Whether due to the unforeseeable ruptures with the past that the Singularity will produce, or more modestly, due to human beings’ abysmal track record at predicting the future, most transhumanists do not commit to hard and fast images of the future. Speaking as a hypothetical future self, Bostrom explains: “I can pass you no blueprint for Utopia, no timetable, no roadmap. All I can give you is my assurance that there is something here, the potential for a better life” (Bostrom 2010, 7). All that can be done is to fix what we know now is broken (e.g. short life spans, genetic disease) and envision, rationally, future possibilities. Despite frequent (and often understandable) accusations of utopianism, most transhumanists do not, in fact, aim for a technological heaven of perfection. While Kurzweil’s far-future projections do sometimes sound something like this, the practical import of the transhumanist project is about making human life better in ways that are possible and comprehensible to us now or in the near future. Thus Riccardo Campa holds that “only when a technology exists and is experimentally proved should it become part of immediate transhumanist policies and action programs aimed at obtaining their implementation and broad accessibility. Until then, it can only be a working hypothesis for scientists in their laboratories or of science fiction writers in their literary works” (Campa 2008). Projections should be recognized as being defeasible, though useful, ways for informing our current actions, which will undoubtedly lead to at least some unforeseeable consequences. The open-ended nature of human development means that qualitatively different forms of life lie in the future of our species. While the “meaning” of such a radically different life will no doubt be unlike that of our current lives, this is no call for alarm, transhumanists argue. It may not be possible to judge the “meaning” of transhuman or posthuman lives by the values we currently live by. As Bostrom holds: “Our own current mode of being … spans but a minute subspace of what is possible or permitted by the physical constraints of the universe … It is not farfetched to suppose that there are parts of this larger space that represent extremely valuable ways of living, relating, feeling, and thinking” (2001, 2). 3.3 We have seen that for both transhumanism and Marxism openness to redefinitions of the human are called for by human nature itself. The similarities are significant, but there is a striking difference between the two: sociality. Most transhumanist thought tends to place little emphasis on the social nature of the human – and this is where transhumanists should take a point from Marx. The transformation of the human seems to be regarded by most transhumanists as a process undergone by atomistic individuals who each exist in no more than a loose aggregate with others. Transformation is of the self, by the self, with social considerations tacked on afterwards – “technological self-transformation” (More 1993). While material conditions in the form of technological apparatuses are certainly an essential aspect of transhumanist revolution, the material aspects of social structures are not usually taken into account beyond assertions that the “freedom” of liberal democracy and/or capitalism provides optimal productivity. While Bostrom advocates equal or wide access to the trans and posthuman realm, he does not touch on the social hierarchy that underlies the current capitalist system and how it will impinge on such egalitarian access (Bostrom 2001, 7). Marx pointed out that in a capitalist society (and this applies now more than ever) individuals can be bestowed with formally equal rights while simultaneously being differentiated and stratified by the underlying economic structure (Marx 1978, 34). An impoverished fisherman in Newfoundland and a CEO of a multinational corporation formally have the same rights as citizens of Canada, yet it is practically true that the millionaire CEO is able to perform actions that the fisherman cannot, through the hierarchical powers inherent in the possession of the means of production.9 Now imagine that the fisherman and the CEO are both given, through an equal distribution of rights, radically extended lives. Would this in any way change the social asymmetry between them? It seems unlikely. The fisherman will still be dependent on dwindling fisheries for his livelihood while the CEO thrives on the extraction of surplus value. Technological developments occur in a society that has the power to determine to what end those technologies are used and to what extent their equal distribution benefits the transhumanist project. While some proposed technologies, such as molecular assemblers, do present possibilities of undermining or upsetting social structures, it is also possible that oppressive social structures will inhibit or corrupt the optimal utilization of new technologies. A recent (and depressing example) is the internet; the democratic potential of which is currently under sustained assault by governments and multinational corporations worldwide.10 There is also the suppression of the General Motors EV1 electric vehicle by a combination of corporate and governmental forces.11 Transhumanists should take note of Marx’s insistence on what is often recognized as the fundamental contradiction of capitalism, the contradiction between the forces of production and the social relations of production. Marx writes: At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production … with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. (Marx 1978, 4) The capitalist system of production’s sole aim is to extract ever greater surplus value from labor through the increasingly intense exploitation of workers, sophistication of machinery and lay-offs, but at a certain point, Marx holds, these techniques begin to turn back against production and inhibit it. A simple, abstract example: increasing productive efficiency through the use of the above-mentioned techniques means that more product is produced by less workers who receive less wages. Therefore there are less and/or poorer consumers to consume ever more product. With no one to buy up all of the product and thus produce a profit, the capitalist must develop his extraction of surplus value through the same techniques that further shrink the pool of potential consumers, producing a stagnant economy that is cured only when a new market is found or demand for the product resurfaces. The property relations of capitalism – the capitalist owns the means of production, while the worker owns only his labor power – become anti-productive once the productive forces are sufficiently developed. This ponderous method pays little heed to needs of the people in the society it exists within, operating solely by the capitalist directive of “maximizing shareholder profit,” to use contemporary terms. We are now well aware of stratagems such as planned obsolescence (automobiles) and novelty-mongering (Apple excels at this) that capitalist organizations deploy to keep consumption going. The question for transhumanists is whether they want revolutionarily life-changing technologies to be produced and distributed by the clumsy and brutal hand of capitalist production. Surely, we can only expect molecular assembling technology to come to the public, if it does, from the non-profit sector, because from a capitalist perspective, selling assemblers would be identical to selling off ownership of the means of production. In summary, transhumanists need to take into account the fact that, while technology does restructure society, the structures of society – which are social relations between humans – also influence the deployment of technologies. If the ultimate goal of transhumanism is the flourishing of the evolving being that is currently called “human,” current social relations between humans cannot be bracketed out. The “freedom” to compete and accumulate wealth under capitalism is not equivalent to the freedom to reach beyond limits for all individuals. From a Marxian angle: “What is to be avoided above all else is the re-establishing of ‘Society’ as an abstraction vis-à-vis the individual. The individual is the social being … Man’s individual life and social life are not different” (Marx 1978, 86). Society is an association of individuals, not just a neutral space in which technological development will bring about changes in the human condition. The transformation of the individual and the transformation of society are inseparable.

### Part 5 is Preempts

#### Governance is good and inevitable – the alt fails

Renaux 19 [Valarie, 5/29/19, Philosophy. Writing on Marxism, eliminativism in philosophy of mind and metaethics, suffering(-focused ethics), and philosophical pessimism, “Marxism and the State”, <https://medium.com/@valarierenaux/marxism-and-the-state-eeb6ceca4515> //GBS Majeed & Jacobs]

Here, perhaps, is a manifestation of one of the foundational flaws in anarchist theory: its veneration of human nature (as it understands it, at least). Bakunin claims that “human nature” makes corruption and counterrevolutionary, anti-proletarian actions inevitable once a section of the working class seizes power. Why does he say this? What proof does he have? In a word, none. ‘Human nature’ as it is predominantly understood is nothing more than our proclivity towards certain actions within specific material contexts, which are subject to change — and thus so are the proclivities. Even if it could be established that capitalist society generates some kind of fundamental proclivity among the working class and even humanity as a whole to act out of greed, selfishness and short-termism (which is practically speaking impossible to prove anyway), it does not follow that this is inherent and unavoidable in the human animal itself as some kind of abstract template for our actions. By elevating the human creature itself to the level of pseudoreligious ideology, anarchism practises exactly the same form of ideologising that the bourgeoisie and the feudal and even patrician classes before them have long done. Marxism rightfully does not concern itself with such sophistry, with such meaningless protestations against placing power in the hands of the working class and its party. “During its lifetime the working class state will continually evolve up to the point that it finally withers away: the nature of social organisation, of human association, will radically change according to the development of technology and the forces of production, and man’s nature will be equally subject to deep alterations always moving away more and more from the beast of burden and slave which he was.”²⁴ This links closely with the final problem with Bakunin and the anarchists’ position on the state that we shall address here. Bakunin describes his fictitious once-proletarians as “look[ing] down” on the workers from the “governing heights of the State.” What does this mean? It means, in one clear sense, that Bakunin sees the state as something distinct from society, something separate from and alien to it, something parasitical and detached from the productive elements of society. But never has or will the state be something “imposed on society from without,”²⁵ something that stands above class distinctions, or gendered divisions in labour, or religious and secular ideology alike, or indeed anything else. The state is not separate from society; it is society, it is the inevitable and necessary product of a society as it exists at certain stages of historical-economic development, and without it, the society would be reduced to utter barbarism, open, ubiquitous kinetic violence, a marked decline in living standards for all, both relative and actual, a severe degradation in the quality of goods, and so on. In a word, you would have social and even civilisational collapse. This is because ‘society’ is not one harmonious thing; rather, it is the aggregate of all human social and economic relations, and these humans and their socioeconomic situations are anything but uniform. Without the state, with its monopoly on violence and its often dominant role in the cultural narrative, these contradictions — irreconcilable contradictions — would be acted out through direct, physical struggle. There are but two outcomes to such a thing: either a state will be formed anew, but only after an extended period of acute crisis dealing devastating damage to all, and so the destruction of the state (and more precisely the failure to build a new state to replace it) was not only pointless but entirely undesirable to the society, or, worse still, the construction of a new state, for whatever reason, fails, and the population collapses into a regressed state of primitive-communism. History would have been reset. There does not exist some dichotomy of society and state, only the existence of a society with a state, and if a society has a state, it needs a state, and simply seeking its destruction is entirely misguided and naïve, springing from a fundamental misconstruing of what the state is, what society is, and what one’s own material interests are. In a word, it is idealism — it is utopianism. It should be evident from the rest of this essay that the state is not something that can be simply dismantled and destroyed by force and violence; it can only “wither away” when the material conditions are right. To attempt to act outside of history as anarchism does is dangerous to all, never mind arrogant and individualist. It is a position in absolute opposition to the interests of the workers. General remarks on the nature of class dictatorship Mao Zedong famously taught that “[p]olitical power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”²⁶ Truly there is no more succinct and accurate description of politics — which is, at its core, the systematised control and regulation of violence — than this. Anything that suggests otherwise is an obfuscation; such obfuscations serve an agenda, and all but always one of the ruling class. The class destined to vanquish class society itself has no need of the propaganda and sophistry of traditional class rule; we can, and should, state in no uncertain terms that the only rational expression of our political interests is a class dictatorship won and maintained by force of arms for the exclusive benefit of our economic class at the expense of all others. The proletarian state represents, for the first time in history, the material and thus socio-political interests of the vast majority of the people. From this simple fact an equally simple conclusion can be drawn: namely, that both when the working class is barred from power and when it holds it, it is only benefited by a frank and open understanding of the thoroughly class- and violence-based nature of state power. In the former situation, the proletarian is aware that society is organised upon his exploitation and that he has no material interest whatsoever in the preservation of the status quo, while in the latter, he sees that he should not be afraid of ‘tyranny,’ that the bourgeoisie are justly and necessarily without power and rights, and that should they be granted them, they will use them to undermine and overthrow the régime and institute terror of a previously unprecedented scale and harshness. In short, the stripping away of the pretensions and illusions of the state represent, and reinforce, heightened class consciousness. In terms of our interests, power is best manifested naked, and as proletarians, we have, unequivocally, a side on which to fall in the class struggle. As such, our political goals must include as a matter of necessity the seizure of state power. The lessons of the Paris Commune and of all revolutionary ventures throughout history is that the revolution that does not seize state power is thwarted. Never, in all human history, has this truth been countered. What’s more, the nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat is that it is exactly that: a dictatorship. All true communists know this to be so, and do not fear, but relish the opportunities that lie in controlling the state. The state is a tool — a weapon, and no weapon has morals in and of itself. Only when the sword is taken up and brandished in anger does it become an instrument of war and not simply a sliver of metal. The state is much the same. The anarchic view of the state is one of an enemy of ‘the people,’ one that is inherently undesirable and wretched, whoever straddles it. Marxism is not so naïve, not so utopian: the state serves her masters, and serves them well; when the working class reigns, the state delivers its Terror upon the counterrevolution and with it the socialist society can progress, in time, to a communist one. Without it, the working class movement is simply destroyed the instance the bourgeois reaction can organise itself anew. Marxism is scientific socialism; it is not utopianism. It would be false and misleading to claim that Marxism has ends; rather, it merely has analyses and observations. In their scientific study of the march of history and the intricacies of the capitalistic mode of production, the Marxists have discovered and laid out the series of progressions and laws that, hopefully, this essay has allowed the reader to understand, if only in brief: that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle,”²⁷ that the working class must smash the existing bourgeois state, that the working class must create its own state to serve its own needs, and that this state must inevitably be the last stage of the state in all history. Marxism does not talk of that which is impossible; only that which is possible. The triumphs of the working class movement during the twentieth century prove this to be so, but much that was won has since been lost. As the Great Acceleration of the Anthropocene deepens, the need to place power in the hands of the workers intensifies with every passing week towards a singularly apocalyptic zenith. In the past, Marxists have rightly given the slogan socialism or barbarism?, but today, that is no longer sufficient: today, it it must be socialism or extinction? In matters of war and revolution, liberalism’s façades are quick to fall from the eyes of the class conscious worker. The premier and central issue of working class politics must be the conquest of state power. Only then can we change the world.