The Global Revolt and Its Discontents

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The Bolshevik leader, Vladimir Lenin, famously described the symptoms of what he called a revolutionary situation: 1) when there is a crisis in the prevailing system and it is impossible for the ruling classes to rule in the old way; 2) when the want and suffering of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual, and; 3) when as a consequence the masses increase their historical action. These symptoms are clearly upon us as the crisis of global capitalism deepens. This crisis is an economic, or structural, one of overaccumulation and chronic stagnation. But it is also a political crisis, one of state legitimacy and capitalist hegemony.[1] The Ukraine conflict is not a cause but a consequence of this crisis. Here we want to take a more historical and global perspective, moving beyond the "noise" of current headlines.

Capitalist states face spiraling crises of legitimacy after decades of hardship and social decay wrought by neoliberalism, aggravated by these states' inability to manage the coronavirus health emergency, and the economic collapse it triggered. Global inequalities had already reached unprecedented levels prior to the outbreak. The extent of polarization of wealth and power, of deprivation and misery among the world's poor majority, already defied belief prior to the outbreak. In 2018, just seventeen global financial conglomerates collectively managed $41.1 trillion dollars, more than half the GDP of the entire planet. That same year, the richest 1 percent of humanity led by 36 million millionaires and 2,400 billionaires controlled more than half of the world's wealth while the bottom 80 percent – nearly six billion people – had to make do with just 5 percent of this wealth.[2]

The global revolt has been underway for some years now. In the months prior to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic a "global spring" of mass struggles broke out all around the world.[3] However, the 2019 spring was but a peak moment in popular insurgencies that spread in the wake of the 2008 Great Depression; a veritable tsunami of mass rebellion not seen since at least 1968. After the initial worldwide wave in the years immediately following, the protests ebbed and flowed but did not die down, with a fresh wave breaking out in 2017. In the two years leading up to the pandemic more than 100 major anti-government protests swept the world, in rich and poor countries alike, toppling some thirty governments or leaders and sparking an escalation of state violence against protesters.[4] These protests involved students, workers, and often migrant workers, farmers, indigenous communities, anti-racists, prisoners and activists against mass incarceration, democracy and anti-corruption activists, those struggling for autonomy or independence, anti-austerity campaigners, environmental advocates, and so on.

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From Chile to Lebanon, Iraq to India, France to the United States, Haiti to Nigeria, and South Africa to Colombia, mass struggles appeared in many instances to be acquiring a radical anti-capitalist character before the pandemic lockdown pushed protesters off the streets in early 2020. But the lull was momentarily. Within weeks of the lockdown protesters were out in force again despite the quarantine and the dangers of public congregation.[5] Whether mass mobilization from below effects a fundamental change in the system of global capitalism cannot be predicted beforehand. What *is* clear is that mass popular struggles against the depredations of global capitalism are now conjoined with those around the fallout from the pandemic and escalating international political and military tensions. Capitalist crises are times of rapid social change precisely because they generate intense social and class conflict from below and from above.

Will the global revolt develop into a struggle to overthrow the capitalist system once and for all? Masses of people engaged in revolt are, for the most part, struggling not in pursuit of a larger political agenda of transformation, much less one that is guided by a theoretical understanding of global capitalism, but to resolve their most pressing problems of survival. The urgent challenge for emancipatory struggles in our view is how to translate mass revolt into a project that can challenge the power of global capital. Lenin was clear that the jump from a "revolutionary situation" to a revolutionary process requires other conditions not yet present, including a widespread belief that system change is attainable and worth fighting for, having a revolutionary ideology and program, and also organizations capable of leading the struggle. For this to take place, the mass movements and organic intellectuals who identify with them must resolve a number of weaknesses and limitations that threaten to undermine the potential for revolt. In what follows, we discuss four of these quandaries. Far from being mutually exclusive, they are interwoven and should best be seen as forming a larger unity in relation to the global class struggle. In particular, we will take the case of the Black Lives Matter-led mass anti-racist protests of 2020 in the United States as illustrative of these quandaries.

Disjuncture and Fragmentation

First, there is an evident disjuncture between the proliferation of mass movements and popular uprisings around the world and an organized, and socialist-oriented left, that could serve as a rudder to help steer these struggles into a larger transformative project. The institutional and party left has steadily lost power and influence in recent decades, in part due to its own internal weaknesses, and in part due to the centrifugal forces of capitalist globalization itself, insofar as it disaggregates and atomizes the exploited classes and their social and political spaces. The existing fragmentation and sectarianism that all too often pervades the left debilitates popular struggles at a time of planetary crisis. If the left is to going to be in a position to intervene effectively in the upheavals that are upon us, it must undertake the task of criticism and must urgently renovate a revolutionary project and a plan for refounding the state. At the same time as the socialist left is so weak, global union membership has steadily declined, notwithstanding the current uptick in unioniziation drives in the United States and elsewhere, so that even as working people everywhere rise up the majority of workers remain largely unorganized.

To effectively fight back against global capitalism as the ultimate cause of the problems they seek to address, disjointed movements must find ways to come together into a larger emancipatory project, and develop a strategy to push such a project forward. This requires political organizations capable of articulating such a project in a double sense: articulate as in link together, and as in give

voice to it. To take the case of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) led civic uprising in the United States that again took off in spring and summer 2020, millions of mostly young people yearning for radical change risked life and limb to participate. We took part in the protests in the greater Los Angeles area. The energy and commitment of the protesters was overwhelming. Yet the protests showed a very low level of political development, with an organized left that could give it a more coherent anti-capitalist direction virtually nowhere to be seen and the politics of these courageous youth lacking clarity, cohesion, and direction.

The BLM movement became easy-and for middle-class elements among it, willing-prey for cooptation by the powers that be, as we discuss below. In the absence of a larger critique of the capitalist state the movement died down as repression, cooptation, and fatigue took their toll. Without political organizations and a program-without the unity of the spontaneous with organization-movements and mass actions over specific demands cannot be sustained and cannot mount a challenge to the system itself. "Neglecting, or worse still despising, so-called 'spontaneous' movements, i.e., failing to give them a conscious leadership or to raise them to a higher plane by inserting them into politics, may often have extremely serious consequences," noted Italian communist Antonio Gramsci. "It is almost always the case that a spontaneous movement of the subaltern classes is accompanied by a reactionary movement of the right-wing of the dominant class, for concomitant reasons." Indeed, to the extent that the left is unable to provide leadership around a transformative project the far-right is gaining ground rapidly.

The Straight-Jacket of the Nation-State

Second, economic globalization takes place within a nation-state-based system of political authority; transnational state apparatuses are unable to exercise any real political authority over the global system.[6] This gives transnational capital enormous structural power over individual nation-states and the global economy. The impossibility of socialism in one country, already evident in the twentieth century, has been made all the clearer in this age of capitalist globalization. This is not to say that struggles at the nation-state level are futile. Since mass struggles unfold at the level of each nation-state, the only state power the masses can seize is that of the nation-state. As many have noted, however, these struggles must be part of a more expansive transnational counter-hegemonic project, including trade unionism, social movements, and political organizations that put forth a transnational and transformative project. Emancipatory struggles in the age of global capitalism thus must be simultaneously national and transnational. They must identify and prioritize the class antagonisms within and across countries and regions.

The national state is the point of condensation for tensions and contradictions in the social order and the political economy. This situation presents the left and popular forces with another set of challenges. Popular struggles that target the state run the risk of dissolving class-based demands into more abstract demands for democratization of the state. This often involves mere representation in public institutions along with an end to corruption. (To be sure, of course, demands for democratization and accountability are in the interest of the working class and the oppressed. It is when calls for citizen rights replace class demands that challenges from below set themselves up for cooptation.) Radical mobilizations too often become channeled into the state's institutional processes, coopted into an agenda of liberal reform that does little to challenge the social order. In these circumstances the class identity of movements of the working and popular classes become abstract designations, such as "people" or "citizens," because under capital-

ism citizens enjoy political equality even as they experience explicit economic inequality. The paradox of the capitalist system under formally democratic arrangements is just that: political equality before the state and socioeconomic dictatorship in the economy. Yet masses of people are able to see the state more easily than they see capital, as the state becomes the point of condensation for social and economic grievances, and at a time when the capitalist state has a radically diminished capacity to meet the demands from below in the face of crisis.

The case of the 2020 anti-racist uprising in United States is illustrative of the dilemma. The movement targeted the police as the source of violence afflicting Black and poor people and consequently called for its defunding. This is understandable; after all, it was the police who carried out the extra-judicial execution of George Floyd. It is the police who come into direct contact with those dispossessed and marginalized and who are responsible for controlling them. However, the police are only the visible frontline of the capitalist state. They are a coercive instrument to control surplus labor, the poor, and the working class, disproportionately drawn in the United States from racially oppressed groups. Capitalists and elites whose wealth and power are protected by the police do not go into the streets to confront poor Black people and workers; they command quietly from corporate boardrooms, foundations, and government offices. We cannot do away with police violence and mass incarceration without doing away with surplus labor; that is, doing away with the system that relegates tens of millions in the United States (and several billion worldwide) to the margins as surplus humanity.

The Dead End of Identitarianism

The two quandaries discussed so far form a unity. Mass movements generated by the very contradictions and deprivations of the capitalist system target the state as it becomes the point of condensation for social and economic grievances. The absence of radical political organizations and an organized left makes it difficult for these movements to move from a struggle for democratization and redistributional demands to a larger attack on capitalist relations of production. But there is more at work here. Why is the potentially catalytic language of class so absent? The two previous quandaries cannot be separated from the third: the influence, and perhaps even the hegemony, over mass struggles of identitarian paradigms that, rather than enhance, have eclipsed the language of class and critiques of capital.[7] These paradigms did not develop in a vacuum. They emerged in the late twentieth century out of the collapse of the old Soviet bloc, the defeat of the left, the demise of Third World nationalist and revolutionary projects, and accompanying repression of radical working-class and popular struggles. The triumph of neoliberalism found its philosophical alter-ego in a post-modernism that undermined ideas of broad solidarity, working class struggle, and socialist projects.[8]

A key part of the story here in our view is the betrayal of the intellectuals, for no struggle of the oppressed can be without its organic intellectuals and the battles to come are as much theoretical and ideological as they are political. Many intellectuals who previously identified with anti-capitalist movements and emancipatory projects withdrew into an identitarian politics of reform and inclusion, a set of political and cultural practices, radical only in language, that are at best liberal and that end up shoring up the hegemony of capital. It was the mass struggles of the 1960s and 1970s themselves that helped representatives from the oppressed groups to join the ranks of the professional strata and elite. In academia, it opened up space for a new intellectual petty-bourgeoisie whose class aspirations became expressed in post-modern narratives and identitarian politics, while in the larger society it found resonance among

aspiring middle-class and professional/managerial elements that sprung from the mass movements.

As these narratives became hegemonic in the academy and bled into broader society, they shaped the common sense understanding of racial, gender, and other forms of oppression. Identitarian politics should not be confused with struggles against particular forms of exploitation and oppression that different groups face. Ethnic, racial, gender, and sexual oppression are not tangential but constitutive of capitalism. There can be no general emancipation without liberation from these forms of oppression. But just as critically, all the particular forms of oppression are grounded in the larger social order of global capitalism that perpetually regenerates them. In these narratives, Marxism and class analysis were increasingly deemed "Eurocentric/Western ideology" and by extension, any universalist emancipatory project was rejected. In its place was a universe of particulars and the celebration of "differences" and fragmentation (into essencialized identities and single-issue social movements) so that there is no underlying principle of human social existence, no collective subject capable of social transformation, indeed no emancipatory project that could unite a majority of humanity. Any understanding of exploitation requires the tools of Marxist political economy, yet this approach was maligned as "class reductionism" so that any underlying structural causes of oppression could not be identified.

The most identitarian politics can aspire to is symbolic vindication, diversity (often meaning diversity in the ruling bloc), and equitable inclusion and representation within global capitalism. It is no wonder that alongside the economic restructuring of capitalist globalization since the 1980s, the emerging Transnational Capitalist Class (TCC)[9] responded at the cultural level to the popular and revolutionary uprisings of the 1960s and the 1970s by embracing "diversity" and "multiculturalism" as a strategy to channel the struggle for social justice and anti-capitalist transformation into non-threatening demands for inclusion if not outright cooptation, and in this way to reconstruct capitalist hegemony. The ruling classes managed to accommodate what contentious politics flowed from the identitarian paradigm, neutering through cooptation the demands for social justice and anti-capitalist transformation. Dominant groups would now welcome representation in the institutions of capital and power while continuing to suppress (violently, if necessary) struggles to challenge capitalist imperatives.

To return to the matter of the 2020 anti-racism protests in the United States, the Black proletariat that launched the rebellion had to be contained.[10] There was a felicitous meeting of aspiring professional/managerial and middle-class elements from below with the ruling groups from above around the new "racial justice" agenda. The dominant groups now funded and championed the conception of racism put forth by a new "anti-racist" politics as bias, personal aggression, racial disproportionality in the distribution of rewards and penalties, and a lack of inclusion and representation.[11] Opposition to racism as personal injury and "micro-aggression" eclipsed any critique of the macro-aggressions of capitalism and the link between class exploitation and racial, gender, and other forms of oppression.[12] Devoid of any critique of capitalist exploitation that linked race to class, the 2020 anti-racist uprising was swiftly coopted from above and from within. The protesters focused on disproportionate police violence against racially oppressed communities and called for defunding police departments. Yet racist police are an extension of the capitalist state. They exist to defend property from the propertyless and dispossessed who in the United States come disproportionately from racially oppressed communities. In the big picture, the solution is not to reform law enforcement since this means enforcing a legal system that under capitalism is intended

to protect the rich from the poor and dispossessed through criminalization.

Beyond the demand for police reform (and in the absence of an organized left that could channel discontent towards a sustained challenge of the capitalist system), young people in the streets came to center their participation on little else than eradicating the *symbols* of racism and oppression. They upturned statues and monuments of historical figures and cultural icons associated with the history of racism. Upturning monuments is an act of symbolic or discursive justice that by itself is not a fundamental threat to the system, so long as these acts can be isolated from demands for more fundamental social and economic transformation, which is why they were quickly embraced by many political and corporate elites. Changing the names of military bases that are often named after racist historical figures as the protesters demanded may have been satisfying in terms of symbolic justice. Yet it did not change the fact that these bases housed military forces that exist to intervene around the world on behalf of capital and empire, and that Black people are overrepresented in the military because they are overrepresented in the ranks of surplus labor and enjoy the least opportunity for satisfying employment in the civilian economy.

The powers that be embraced the language of struggle against "systemic racism" as the phrase became emptied of any real substance. Political and economic elites touted their commitment to "racial justice." CEOs of major global banks and corporations whose policies perpetuate racial inequality "took the knee" and declared their "solidarity" with aggrieved communities, as did Democratic and Republican Party stalwarts, as they attempted to commodify and convert "Black Lives Matter" into a corporate logo.[13] "Racial justice" now became big business. In the wake of the mass uprising state, corporate, and foundation donors and rich individuals committed a mind-boggling $10 billion to BLM-related causes.[14] The campaign from above and from within aimed to marginalize the radical anti-capitalist impulse and to promote Black capitalism and professional development, to channel the uprising away from working-class struggle and into lobbying, electoral demands, professional development, and inclusion.[15] This is a textbook case of Gramsci's concept of passive revolution: efforts by dominant groups to bring about mild change from above in order to defuse mobilization from below for more far-reaching transformation. Integral to this strategy is the cooptation of leadership from below and the integration of that leadership into the dominant project.[16] Passive revolution comes into play whenever the hegemony of the bourgeoisie begins to disintegrate and a period of organic crisis develops.

The Threat of Fascism and Global Police State

The fourth quandary that mass struggles from below face is the threat presented by far-right strongmen and authoritarian projects that, animated by the ongoing crisis, compete for support among the popular and working classes. There has been a rapid political polarization in global society since the 2008 global crisis between an insurgent far-right and an insurgent left. Yet the far-right has proven more effective in mobilizing disaffected populations and has made significant political and institutional inroads. There is a paradox here in need of explanation. Many of the fascist-leaning leaders, such as Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte or Indian prime minister Narendra Modi, enjoyed high approval ratings at the same time as they pushed forward policies that hurt workers and the poor and unleashed repression against opposition forces.[17] Charismatic fascists such as former U.S. president Donald Trump and Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro garnered genuine mass support. This paradox reflects, in part, the polarization between the left and the far-right.

But there is a larger story at play. The key to authoritarian and neo-fascist appeal is the promise to avert or reverse downward mobility and social decay; to restore some sense of stability and security in the face of escalating capitalist crisis. As popular discontent has spread, far-right and neo-fascist mobilizations play a critical role in the effort by dominant groups to channel mass discontent away from a critique of global capitalism and towards support for the TCC agenda dressed in populist rhetoric. Fascism seeks to rescue capitalism from its organic crisis, that is, to violently restore capital accumulation, establish new forms of state legitimacy and suppress threats from below unencumbered by democratic constraints. As with its twentieth century predecessor, the project hinges on the psychosocial mechanism of displacing mass fear and anxiety towards scapegoated communities and often contrived external enemies. Its discursive and ideological repertoire involves extreme nationalism and the promise of national regeneration, xenophobia, doctrines of race/culture supremacy, alongside violent racist or ethnic mobilizations, martial masculinity, millennialism, militarization of civic and political life, and the normalization, even glorification, of war, social violence, and domination.[18]

The appeal to fascism offers people from the dominant racial, ethnic, religious, or national group an imaginary solution to real preoccupations; even though its a false one. In this age of globalized capitalism there is little possibility to provide real solutions, so that the "wages of fascism" appear to be entirely psychological. The destabilization of those sectors of the working classes that had previously enjoyed some stability, and the precarious condition that a majority of workers now share, is a powerful structural shift that exercises a newfound centripetal pull on working class unity, cutting across racial, ethnic, and national divisions. However, the centrifugal forces militating against that unity are numerous, including racist and national chauvinist manipulation from above, the relative absence of a socialist left that could provide an alternative, and liberal identitarian politics that eschews the language of class and a critique of capitalism.

The United States provides a case study in these contradictory dynamics. The conditions of unemployment, the dismantling of the social safety net, deteriorating living standards, and social decay generate anger and despair that that have helped fuel fascist politics. These politics express in distorted form this despair and contempt, and touch a raw nerve among significant numbers of white workers by acknowledging and validating their economic and social anxieties. While the Democratic Party cast itself during the Trump years as the defender of democracy against fascism, the Democrats have in fact played a major role in bringing about the conditions for fascism. They have done this through three decades of neoliberalism at home and wars abroad, along with an opportunistic embrace of identity and representational politics. It is telling that in the areas abandoned by capitalist investment, especially the agricultural breadbaskets and the deindustrialized rust belt of the Midwest, many counties switched from Obama in the 2012 presidential elections to Trump in 2016. Yet neither does the identitarian left offer anything to white sectors of the working class. To the contrary, these workers are written off as racists that are simply lashing out to defend their "white privilege" or, in the now infamous words of the 2016 Democratic presendential candidate Hillary Clinton, as "baskets of deplorables."

The identitarian left encourages these working class sectors to identify only with their white identity, rather than with their interest as workers, and thus end up stoking white nationalism, thus making them more susceptible to fascist appeals. The problem here is not a struggle against racism, for that must be front and center of any emancipatory project. Rather, it is the separation of race

from class, the substitution of working-class politics for one based on essentialized identities, in which everyone belongs to one or another identity group in which all members are assumed to share the same interests. Yet the only chance that popular resistance forces have to beat back the threat of fascism is to put forward an alternative interpretation of the crisis based on working-class politics that can win over the would-be social bases of fascism.

Conclusion: Seizing the Crisis

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the crisis of capitalist rule more that anyone could have predicted. This generates enormous political tensions that must be managed by ruling groups in the face of societal disintegration and political collapse in many countries. It animates geopolitical conflict as states seek to externalize social and political tensions and accelerates the breakdown of the post-WWII international order, increasing the danger of international military conflagration. The Russian invasion of the Ukraine has paved the way for a more sweeping militarization of what was already a global war economy. Geopolitical tensions and international conflicts are tragic for those caught up in them. But they also legitimate expanding military and security budgets and open up new opportunities for capitalist profit making through war, political strife, and repression. Almost overnight following the Russian invasion, the U.S., EU and other governments around the world allocated billions of dollars in additional military spending and sent streams of military hardware and private military contractors into Ukraine.[19] The Russian invasion has provided the ruling groups, especially those of the core Western states but also from those countries whose governments have not condemned Russia, to ratchet up the global police state, waging permanent low-intensity warfare to disarticulate popular insurgency from below.[20]

The TCC and its state agents are acutely aware the humanity is now entering a state of de facto civil war. "The convergence of more information and more people with fewer state resources will constrain governments' efforts to address rampant poverty, violence, and pollution, and create a breeding ground for dissatisfaction among increasingly aware, yet still disempowered populations," stated a 2019 U.S. Army report. "A global populace that is increasingly attuned and sensitive to disparities in economic resources and the diffusion of social influence will lead to further challenges to the status quo and lead to system rattling events." These "system rattling events," include "the Arab Spring, the Color Revolutions of Eastern Europe, the Greek monetary crisis, BREXIT, and the mass migrations to Europe from the Middle East and North Africa."[21]

We are clearly before the type of revolutionary situation described by Lenin, in which the prevailing system is in crisis, the suffering of the oppressed has grown more acute, and the masses are stepping up their historic action. As the crisis deepens, the poor and dispossessed will continue to rise up in countless struggles. But in the absence of a clear program that targets the system, or a left that could help channel uprisings against the underlying causes of distress and deprivation, we are likely to see desperation erupt into racial, ethnic, religious, and other forms of aggression, as well as increasing social violence among the oppressed themselves. Fueled by the anomie and nihilism of global capitalist culture and a gangster capitalism from above, people whose very existence is at risk will develop survival strategies that put them in a position to be criminalized by a capitalist state.

On the other hand, it is during moments of crisis that working-class agency can be most effective in bringing about structural change. Crises are key conjunctures when significant structural-and in rare historic moments, systemic-change becomes possible.

Short of revolution, the popular classes must struggle now to prevent the ruling groups from turning the crisis into an opportunity for them to resuscitate and deepen the neoliberal order and reconstruct their hegemony once the dust from the pandemic settles. Despite our sobering discussion on the challenges that emancipatory projects face, the crisis of ruling class hegemony opens up enormous prospects for a viable counter-hegemonic project. The struggle from below is to push for something along the lines of a global Green New Deal as an interim program alongside an accumulation of forces for more radical system change.[22]

A Green New Deal, a call first put out in the United States, proposes combining sweeping green policies, including an end to fossil fuels, with a social welfare and pro-worker economy that would include mass employment opportunities in green energy and other technologies. A global Green New Deal may help lift the world out of economic depression as it simultaneously addresses the climate emergency and generates favorable conditions for an accumulation of counter-hegemonic forces. But a global Green New Deal is not enough. As ecological collapse continues, the corporate and political elite have already set about to appropriate the very concept in order to legitimate the oxymoron of "green capitalism" and the dangerous illusion that capitalism can be made ecofriendly and "sustainable."[23] If humanity is to survive, global capitalism must ultimately be overthrown and replaced by ecosocialism.

Capitalist crises may originate at the deepest level as a structural contradiction, but they are played out in the terrain of politics, culture, and ideology. A counter-hegemony depends in part on how the crisis is understood and interpreted by masses of people. This in turn depends, in significant part, on a *systemic* critique of global capitalism and on organic intellectuals, in the Gramscian sense: intellectuals who attach themselves to and serve the emancipatory struggles of the popular classes, and who are committed to putting forth a critique of capitalism as part of the larger effort to overcome the quandaries we have discussed.

NOTES

1. There is a significant literature on the crisis of global capitalism from multiple perspectives. For our approach, see, inter-alia, William I. Robinson, *Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Humanity* (Cambridge University Press, 2014); *The Global Police State* (London: Pluto, 2020).

2. Oxfam (London), *Wealth: Having it all and Wanting More*, on line report accessed on 4 March 2018 at the Oxfam website, http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/wealth-having-it-all-and-wanting-more-338125.

3. We would not normally cite *Wikipedia* but one entry has perhaps the most comprehensive list of major protests in the twenty-first century with links to original or other sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_protests_in_the_21st_century

4. "Global Protest Tracker, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, according to January 2020 data, accessed on 19 January 2020 at https://carnegieendowment.org/publications/interactive/protest-tracker. The tracker is interactive and regularly updated. Below we will compare this data with the 2020 year-end update.

5. Chris Zappone, "Wave of Strikes Ripples Across U.S. as Crisis Bites," *The Age*, September 30, 2020, accessed on January 8, 2021 at

https://www.theage.com.au/world/north-americ. Aaron Gordon, Lauren Gurley, Edward Ongweso Jr, and Jordan Pearson, "Coronavirus Is a Labor Crisis, and a General Strike May be Next," *Vice*, 2 April 2020, accessed on 3 April 2020 at https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/z3b9ny/coronavirus-general-strike?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=curated_vice_daily_1023202

a/wave-of-1000-strikes-ripples-across-the-us-as-crisis-bites-20200929-p5606t.html.

6. For discussion, see William I. Robinson, *Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Humanity* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), chapter two, "Notes on the Transnational State."

7. There is a substantial literature on this matter. For a summary see, inter-alia, the critique in William I. Robinson, "Marx After Post-Narratives: A Critical Reading of Ronaldo Munck's Critical Reading of Marx," *Global Discourse*, 7(4), 2017.

8. Postmodernism and the identitarian paradigm

may have originated in the West and in particular in the United States. However, the scholarly agenda set by universities and think tanks in the former First World is funded and shaped by foundations tied to transnational capital. Research agendas originating in the United States often become hegemonic globally, framing the university curriculum in the former Third World. See inter-alia: Michael Barker, *Under the Mask of Philanthropy* (Leicester, Hextall Press. 2017); William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, U.S. Intervention, and Hegemony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

9. On the TCC, see William I. Robinson, *A Theory of Global Capitalism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

10. See, inter-alia, Oscar Fabian Soto and Clint Terrell, "Can the Panthers Still Save Us? Street Actions, Non-Profit Factions and the Non-Violent Movement Against State Violence," *St. Anthony's International Review*, 16(2), June 2021.

11. The is a large and growing literature critical of the identitarian paradigm, the "diversity" agenda, and the "antiracist" politics that flow from them, way to vast to list here. Among them are works by political scientists Adolph Reed, Jr, and Cedric Johnson. For Reed, see inter-alia: "The Splendors and Miseries of the Anti-Racist 'Left'," *Nonsite*, 6 November 2016. For Johnson, see "The Triumph of Black Lives Matter and Neoliberal Redemption," *Nonsite*, June 9, 2020; "The Panthers Can't Save Us Now," *Catalyst*, 1(1), 2017. See also Touré F. Reed, *Toward Freedom: The Case Against Race Reductionism* (London: Verso, 2020). See also: William I. Robinson, "Marx After Post-Narratives: A Critical Reading of Ronaldo Munck's Critical Reading of Marx," *Global Discourse*, 7(4), 2017; Walter Benn Michaels and Adolph Reed, Jr., "The Trouble with Disparity," *Nonsite*, September 10, 2020; Barbara Foley, "Intersectionality: A Marxist Critique," *Black Agenda Report*, November 14, 2018.

12. Azfar Shafi and Ilyas Nagdee, "Recovering Antiracism: Reflections on Collectivity and Solidarity in Antiracist Organizing," *Transnational Institute*, October 2020, pp. 8, accessed on January 17, 2021 at https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/antiracism online.pdf

13. See, for instance, Robert Reich, "Trump Stokes Division with Racism and Rage-and the American Oligarchy Purrs," *The Guardian*, June 14, 2020, accessed on January 16, 2021 at https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/14/donald-trump-racism-american-oligarchy

14. "Black Lives Matter: The George Floyd Effect," *The Economist*, 12 December 2020, pp. 29.

15. See sources above and also Shafi and Nagdee, "Recovering Antiracism." Cedric Johnson does not mince his words (and we concur with him): "Black Lives Matter sentiment is essentially a militant expression of racial liberalism," cited in Johnson, "The Triumph of Black Lives Matter and Neoliberal Redemption," *Nonsite*, June 9, 2020. In what was a fracturing of the BLM movement, at least ten local BLM chapters broke with the umbrella Black Lives Matter Global Network (BLMGN) in 2020 and 2021, denouncing its bureaucratic middle-class leadership. Calling themselves the BLM10, they denounced in a February 2021 statement that the Global Network "is a top-down dogmatic organization that promotes certain chapters that choose to align with their direction and sequester the ones that don't….in doing this, they received substantial donations and funding….[working] to undermine a grassroots movement by capitalizing on unpaid labor, suppressing any internal attempt at democracy, commodifying Black death, and profiting from the same pain and suffering inflicted on Black communities. The BLM name is now being used to sell products, acquire book deals, T.V. deals, and speaking engagements. We are opposed to the movement to substitute Black capitalism for white capitalism." The statement went on to denounce the close relationship between the BLMGN and the Democratic Party. See "'To Ally with the Democratic Party is to Ally Against Ourselves': BLM Inland Empire Breaks with BLM Global Network," published in Left Voice, 4 February 2021, accessed on 6 February 2021 at https://www.leftvoice.org/blm-inland-empire-breaks-with-black-lives-matter-global-network?fbclid=IwAR02mFxXAcGK7TNaVfB4GlJGr0aXD9nykbB9T_K-o0XVHsQMzDmmKQEGJNw

16. Among other places, Gramsci developed the notions of passive revolution and *transformismo*, and discussed fraud and corruption, in his various writings on Italian history. There is no one section in his *Selections from Prison Notebooks* (1972) but see in particular pp. 52-120.

17. For the Philippines, see "Philippines' Duterte Scores Record High Rating, Despite Virus Crisis," *Reuters*, 5 October 2020, accessed on 23 January 2021 at https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-duterte/philippines-duterte-scores-record-high-rating-despite-virus-crisis-idUSKBN26Q0YK. For India, see "PM Modi's High Approval Rating Among World Leaders Matter of Pride for Indians: JP Nadda," *Business Today*, January 2, 2021, accessed on January 23, 2021 at https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/pm-modi-high-approval-rating-among-world-leaders-matter-of-pride-for-indians-jp-nadda/

story/426778.html

18. For discussion on these matters, see inter-alia, William I. Robinson: "Global Capitalist Crisis and Twenty-First Century Fascism: Beyond the Trump Hype," *Science and Society*, 83(2), 2019, 481-509; *Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Humanity*, Op. Cit.

19. See William I. Robinson, "Global Capitalism Has Become Dependent on War-Making to Sustain Itself," *Truthout*, April 24, 2022, accessed on 6 May 2022 at https://truthout.org/articles/global-capitalism-has-become-dependent-on-war-making-to-sustain-itself/

20. See William I. Robinson, *The Global Police State* (London: Pluto, 2020); in press, *Global Civil War: Capitalism Post-Pandemic* (Oakland: PM Press).

21. United States Army, "The Operational Environment and the Changing Character of Future Warfare," October 7, 2019, accessed on January 23, 2021 at https://adminpubs.tradoc.army.mil/pamphlets/TP525-92.pdf

22. See Noam Chomsky and Robert Pollin, *Climate Crisis and the Global Green New Deal: The Political Economy of Saving the Planet* (London: Verso, 2020).

23. See Max Ajl, A People's Green New Deal (London: Pluto Press, 2021).