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## *The unbearable Manichaeism of the "anti-imperialist" left*



Sources: Rebellion

*German socialist August Bebel once remarked that anti-Semitism is "fool's socialism" because anti-Semites recognize capitalist exploitation only if the exploiter was Jewish, but would otherwise turn a blind eye to exploitation emanating from other sectors.*

More than a century later, that socialism of fools has been resurrected by a self-proclaimed "anti-imperialist" left that condemns capitalist exploitation and repression around the world when perpetrated by the United States and other Western powers or the governments these powers support, but turns a blind eye to or even defends repressive

states. authoritarian, and dictatorial simply because these states face hostility from Washington.

The politics of exploitation Capitalist and social control around the world are shaped fundamentally because of the contradiction between an economy Globally integrated alongside a system of political domination based on the nation-state. Economic globalization and Transnational capital integration provides a centripetal boost to global capitalism, while political fragmentation It provides a powerful centrifugal counter-impulse that is resulting in an escalation of the geopolitical conflict. The abyss is expanding rapidly among the economic unit of global capital and political competition between dominant groups that must seek legitimacy and prevent the internal social order of their The respective nations will break up in the face of the growing crisis of the Global capitalism. This global conjuncture is the backdrop to the Contemporary "socialism of fools".

I will discuss here the cases of China, Nicaragua, the BRICS, and multipolarity as they bring out the convoluted logic and backward politics of this "anti-imperialist" left.

### **China and Development Capitalist**

Capitalism with Chinese peculiarities have implied the rise of powerful Chinese transnational capitalists fused with an elite of the Party-State dependent on the reproduction of capital and middle strata of high consumption, fed by a [devastating wave](#) of primitive accumulation in the countryside and the exploitation of hundreds of thousands of Chinese workers. Chinese is now one of the [most unequal](#) of the world. Strikes and independent unions are not legal in China. The Chinese Communist Party has long been He abandoned any reference to the class struggle or the power of the workers. As Labor Struggles Continue Increasing in the country, so does [repression state](#) against them.

It is true that capitalist development has lifted millions of people out of extreme poverty – at least according to the World Bank's narrow poverty measures below \$785 in annual income – and brought about rapid industrialization, technological progress, and advanced infrastructure. It is equally true that the central countries of North America and Western

Europe experienced these achievements during their periods of rapid capitalist development from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The left never saw this capitalist development in the West as a victory for the working class nor did it lose sight of the link between this development and the law of unequal and combined accumulation in the world capitalist system. China is "catching up."

The Chinese model is based on a Complex of state and private enterprises in which capital Private represents all [three one-fifths](#) of output and four-fifths of urban employment. China has not followed the neoliberal path to integration transnational capitalist. The State plays a key role in the financial system, in the regulation of private capital, in the public spending, especially on infrastructure, and planning. This may be a different model of development capitalist than the Western neoliberal variant, but still obeying the laws of capital accumulation. After the Opening to global capitalism in the 1980s, China became became a marketplace for transnational corporations and a sink of accumulated surplus capital capable of harnessing a vast Supply of cheap labour controlled by a surveillance state omnipresent and repressive. But at the turn of the century they were accumulating pressures to find outlets abroad for the Surplus Chinese capital accumulated over years of development intensive capitalist.

Sustaining this development went on to now depend on the export of capital abroad. In both In the first decades of the twenty-first century, China led the world in a wave of foreign direct investment (FDI) to countries of the South and the Global North alike, deepening transnational integration of capital and accelerating capitalist transformation in the countries in which it invests. Between 1991 and 2003, investment China's foreign direct [is multiplied by 10](#) and then multiplied by 13.7 between 2004 and 2013, from 45 billion from dollars to 613 billion dollars. By 2015, China will had become the [third Largest foreign investor](#) in the world. Outward FDI began to outpace inward FDI and country became net creditor. What happens when this FDI China abroad lands in the former Third World?

### **Dispossession and Extraction Become "South-South Cooperation"**

The indigenous communities of the Apurimac department, in Peru's highlands, has waged [struggles bloody](#) in recent years against the open-pit copper mine Las Bambas,

owned and operated in China, one of the largest in the world. world, which have left dozens dead and injured. In fact, the Peruvian State Legally Sells Police Services to Companies mining companies, allowing China's MMG to buy physical strength of the police to advance copper extraction by means Violent. While this Chinese-Peruvian extractivist space and others Similar ones are promoted by "anti-imperialists" as a model of South-South cooperation and post-Western modernization, the Sharp observers will immediately recognize the classical structure of imperialist extraction, through which capital transnational displaces communities and appropriates resources under the political and military protection of local States responsible for the Violent repression of resistance to expulsion and exploitation.

The pattern is the same throughout Latin America. Chinese banks have granted more than \$137,2022 million in loans to finance infrastructure projects, Energy and mining. A [report Nov 26](#) of A coalition of environmental and human rights groups analyzed <> projects in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. Found widespread violations of rights human rights, displacement of local communities, devastation environmental and violent conflicts wherever they took place Chinese investments in mines and megaprojects. The defenders of the China's lending practices claim that these loans are different from those that come from the West because they do not impose conditions as Western lenders do. This is not [entirely Truth](#). But even if it were, what difference does that make for the workers, peasants and indigenous communities resisting exploitation, repression and environmental destruction associated with Chinese capital in collaboration with transnational investors from other places and local capitalist states?

The point is not that capital China is worse or better than capital originating from other countries. Capital is capital independent of national or ethnic identity of its carriers. However, when a capitalist state The West and a capitalist state in the Global South cooperate to impose megaprojects on local communities or to facilitate transnational corporate plunder in extraction or industry, This cooperation is condemned (correctly) as exploitation by part of imperialism and the local ruling classes. When two Capitalist states of the Global South cooperate for the same megaprojects and corporate exploitation, this is praised as a progressive and anti-imperialist "South-South cooperation" and "that It brings development."

Organizations such as the Tricontinental, headed by Vijay Prashad, [praise spurting](#) this Chinese role in the former Third World as "mutually beneficial", "helping development" and "winner-winner" for China and the countries in which their corporations invest. Are we really to believe that Chinese investors are Expanding export processing zones and relocating production China's labor-intensive industrial to wage zones more low in Ethiopia, Vietnam and other places, not to get profit but to "help these countries develop"? No is that the same legitimizing discourse of the World Bank? Repeating the legitimizing discourse of the Chinese Party-State elite, the Tricontinental [has also insisted](#) that "the peaceful rise of socialism with particularities China" provides an alternative to Western imperialism. Well, it does. But not an alternative to dispossession and exploitation capitalist. Capitalist development is not a neutral process in the face of class antagonisms. It is *because Definition A* class project of the bourgeoisie. Capitalist development, now whether from the West or the East, it is a question of expanding the frontiers of the accumulation.

### **The Misuse of Sovereignty and Solidarity**

The "anti-imperialist" left Legitimately condemns Western propaganda, but seems incapable to denounce or even acknowledge non-Western propaganda in everything The world, or worse, repeats that same propaganda as a camera for echo.

Nicaragua provides a [case manual](#). The Ortega regime has proven to be adept at using a Radical-sounding language and anti-imperialist rhetoric for Playing a supportive reflexive support string between the left international. Ortega returned to power in 2007 through a pact With the country's traditional right-wing oligarchy, former members of the armed counterrevolution and the conservative hierarchy of the Catholic Church and evangelical sects. Promising respect absolute for private property and unrestricted freedom for the capital, proceeded to co-govern until 2018 with the capitalist class, granting transnational capital 10 years of tax exemptions, deregulation, unrestricted freedom to repatriate profits and Repression of striking workers. 96 percent of the Country ownership remains in the hands of the private sector. The dictatorship has suppressed all dissent and shut down more than 3,500 Civil society organizations since 2018, this in a country of only six million inhabitants, because it considers that any Civic life outside one's own is a threat.

Many progressives may be genuinely confused because of the deserved support that the revolution Sandinista from 1979-1990 collected worldwide and the history of the Ruthless U.S. intervention against the country. That Revolution died in 1990 and what came to power in 2007 under Ortega was anything but revolution. However, the left "Anti-imperialist" has chosen to warmly embrace the dictatorship, justified by the alleged attempts of the United States of destabilizing the regime and in the name of "sovereignty." But the evidence does not support the claim of these detractors of that the U.S. is pushing for "regime change" counterrevolutionary" against Ortega, despite rhetoric of noise from Washington sabers.

Nicaragua does not face sanctions commercial or investment. The United States is the main partner trade of the country ([the trade bilateral](#) exceeded \$8.3 billion in 2022) and corporate investment transnational continues to arrive, as do loans multilateral to the Central Bank. There is no military intervention or U.S. paramilitary. However, none of these facts have prevented the American organization Code Pink, among others, affirm that Ortega's is a "socialist government" under the Pressure of "devastating sanctions" and facing "violent coup attempts."

Washington does undertake campaigns of full-blown destabilization, not against Ortega, but against Iran, Venezuela and other countries. Such crimes have nothing to do with the interests of the working and popular masses in these countries and must be condemned for vehemence by any leftist worthy of the name. But this does not absolve the Left of the commitment to internationalism and solidarity with prints only because we resist imperial pretensions of the United States around the world. The "anti-imperialist" left, However, it will tell you otherwise. Pay attention to the [Journalist's warning Caitlin Johnstone](#): If you live in a Western country, "it's just not possible for Lend your voice to the cause of protesters in the nations attacked by the empire without facilitating the propaganda campaigns of the empire over those protests. Or you have a responsible relationship with either it is done or it is irresponsible." It's that simple. Proletarians of only a few countries unite!

The "anti-imperialists" have Return to a conception of sovereignty, not of the people or classes workers, but of the governments in the countries they defend. The anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggles of the twentieth century They defended national, not state,

sovereignty against the interference by imperial powers. The capitalist states They use this claim to sovereignty as a "right" to exploit and oppressing within national borders free from interference external. We the left have no qualms about "violating the national sovereignty" to condemn rights abuses human rights on the part of pro-Western regimes, and neither We should have them in defense of human rights in those regimes not favored by Washington.

Proletarian internationalism calls on the working and oppressed classes of one country to extend solidarity not to states but to the struggles of the working and oppressed classes of other countries. States deserve the support of the left to the extent – and only to the extent – that they promote the emancipatory struggles of the popular and working classes, that promote, or are forced to promote, policies that favor these classes. "Anti-imperialists" confuse the state with the nation, the country, and the people, generally lacking any theoretical conception of these categories and advancing the populist police orientation over the class one. We on the left condemn the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq earlier this century. We did so not because we supported Saddam Hussein's regime – only a fool could have done so – but because we stood in solidarity with the Iraqi people and because the entire imperial project for the Middle East amounted to an attack on the poor and oppressed everywhere.

### **BRICS: Replacing the Capital-Labour Contradiction for a North-South Contradiction**

The "anti-imperialists" [applaud to the BRICS](#) as a Southern challenge to global capitalism, a choice progressive, even anti-imperialist, for humanity. Alone They can make such a claim by reducing capitalism and imperialism to Western supremacy in the international system. At the height of colonialism and its immediate aftermath, classes Local leaders were at best anti-imperialist, but not anti-capitalist. His nationalism erased the divisions of class by proclaiming an identity of interests among the citizens of a particular country.

This nationalism had an aspect progressive and sometimes to the extent that all members of the The country in question was oppressed by colonial domination, the caste systems he imposed and the suppression of endogenous capital. Today's "anti-imperialists" enthuse



about the BRICS as a "Third World project" revived, in Prashad's words, An old-fashioned nostalgia for that anti-colonial moment in the mid-colonial period. twentieth century that obscures the internal class contradictions along with the network of transnational class relations in which they are Entangled. Two references will suffice to illustrate how much Disconnected is that thought from the reality of the twenty-first century.

Several years ago I had the opportunity to give a talk in Manila to a group of activists Filipino revolutionaries. A woman present, originally from the India, opposed my analysis of the emergence of a class. transnational capitalist who incorporated contingents from the old Third World. He told me that in India "we are fighting against the imperialism and for national liberation." I asked him what I meant by this. The central capitalists were exploiting Indian workers and transferring the surplus to the imperialist countries along the lines analyzed by Lenin, she replied.

It was pure coincidence that in the Same week of my talk, the global corporate conglomerate with headquartered in India, Tata Group, which operates in more than 100 countries in six continents, had acquired a number of corporate icons of his former British colonial master, including Land Rover, Jaguar, Tetley Tea, British Steel, and the supermarket chain Tesco, which made Tata the largest employer in the Kingdom United. So, these India-based capitalists had become the largest individual exploiters of the British workers. According to this woman's own logic, the UK was now a victim of Indian imperialism!

Shortly after your first shot of possession, in 2003, and then again in 2010 during his second Presidential mandate, Brazilian President Lula loaded a plane of the government with Brazilian corporate executives and addressed Africa. The presidential-corporate entourage pressured Mozambique and other African countries to open up to investment in abundant mineral resources of the continent by the Brazil-based transnational mining corporation, Vale, which It also operates on six continents, under the rhetoric of the "South-South solidarity". It's not clear what was wrong with anti-imperialist, let alone anti-capitalist, on safaris Lula's African corporate affairs and, by extension, on the agenda of "South-South cooperation" that personifies, or because the left should applaud the expansion of Brazil-based capital in Africa, capital based in China in Latin America,



capital with headquarters in Russia in Central Asia or capital based in India in the Kingdom United.

We can support policies (slightly) redistributive at the domestic and political level The dynamic foreign affairs of governments like Lula's. All capitalist states are not equal and it is very important Who is in government. But a "progressive" government does not is necessarily socialist, nor is it necessarily socialist. Imperialist. For the nearsighted, outward expansion of Chinese, Indian or Brazilian capital is seen as a kind of liberation from imperialism. What can you do with the [strange affirmation](#) of the Geopolitical Economy Research Group (Geopolitical Economy) based in Canada and the International Manifesto Group which sponsors, for whom ideological commitment trumps facts, that the BRICS are "among the best-known successes" in Efforts to promote "national development and industrialization" autonomous and egalitarian to break the imperialist chains"?

While the BRICS do not represent An alternative to global capitalism and the domination of capital Transnational, does signal the shift to an interstate system more multipolar and balanced within the global capitalist order. But such a multipolar interstate system is still part of a world. Brutal and exploitative global capitalist in which capitalists and BRICS states are so committed to control and exploitation of the global working and popular classes as their Northern counterparts. As the membership of the BRICS, new candidates to join the bloc in 2023 include States so magnificently "autonomous and egalitarian" that fight against "imperialist chains" like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Kazakhstan.

### **Multipolarity: The New Albatross**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the radical political, military and economic response of The West can signal the stroke of a byss of an order decadent post-World War II interstate. One Increasingly integrated global capitalism is incompatible with a International political order and a financial architecture controlled by the United States and the West, and with an economy global denominated exclusively in dollars. We are at the beginning of A radical reconfiguration of geopolitical alignments Global at the pace of growing economic turbulence and chaos politician. However, the crisis of hegemony in

the order International takes place within this unique global economy and Integrated. Emerging global capitalist pluralism can offer greater room for manoeuvre for popular struggles throughout the world But a politically multipolar world does not mean that Emerging poles of global capitalism are less exploitative or oppressors than the established centers.

By contrast, the West established and emerging centers in this polycentric world are converging in turn to "Great Power" tropes Remarkably similar, especially jingoistic nationalism, to Ethnic often, and nostalgia for a "glorious civilization" mythologized that must now be recovered. Spenglerian narratives differ from country to country according to histories and cultures individuals, namely:

In China, hyper-nationalism combines with Confucian obedience to authority, Han ethnic supremacy, and a new Long March to regain great-power status. For Putin they are the glory days of a "Great Russia" empire anchored in Eurasia, politically backed by an extreme patriarchal conservatism that [Putin calls](#) "traditional spiritual and moral values" that embody the "spiritual essence of the Russian nation over the decadent West." In America, it is the hyper-imperial bravado of a dwindling Pax Americana, legitimized by the doctrine of "American exceptionalism" and the bombast of "democracy and freedom," on the fringes of which has always been white supremacy, now embodied in a rising fascist movement as "replacement theory." To these we might add pan-Turkism, Hindu nationalism and other quasi-fascist ideologies in this rising polycentric world. Make America Great Again! Make China Great Again! Make Russia Great Again!

The United States may be the most dangerous boss and criminal among the cartels of competing criminal states. We must condemn Washington for instigating a New Cold War and for pushing Russia through an aggressive NATO expansion to invade Ukraine. However, the "anti-imperialist" left insists that there is only one enemy, the United States and its allies. This is a Manichean tale of the "West and the rest." Such a metaphysical *Star Wars* narrative about the virtuous struggle against the singular Evil Empire ends up legitimizing the Russian invasion of Ukraine. And like *Star Wars*, it becomes difficult to distinguish the fantastic babble of a fantasy world from the babble of the "anti-imperialist" left.

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Translated by the Author

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