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## Globalized Class Struggles: A Marxist Approach to Contemporary Geopolitics

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**Abstract.** In this paper, I argue that Marxism offers the most appropriate paradigm for analysing and shaping contemporary geopolitics. The advantage of a Marxist approach is that it goes beyond merely descriptive analysis and can suggest and achieve long-term, effective solutions to the problems considered. I start by highlighting the adequacy of the Marxist paradigm for addressing the challenges of geopolitics and International Relations (IR), and I critically discuss two misinterpretations of Marxist theory: the claim that it neglects either the national or the international level. Then, I proceed to introduce the conception of Globalized Class Struggles (GCS). Against the view that takes class struggle (in singular) to refer only to the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, I maintain that class struggles (in plural) are not reducible to that essential form, and that they include a wide range of further multisided confrontations between various antagonist actors. After pointing out what can be considered as the economic foundation of (GCS), I identify the main involved classes on the basis of the centre / periphery dichotomy, and I briefly illustrate the usefulness of (GCS) through selected examples. Further, I examine the Marxist principle of Proletarian Internationalism (PI) by developing an interpretation of it as grounded in the dialectic between the local and the global levels. Indeed, I claim that such an understanding of (PI) can appropriately address both intrastate and interstate geopolitical challenges. The analysis finally focuses on the normative potential of Marxism in general and (PI) in particular. The suggested Marxist approach to contemporary geopolitics is, admittedly, on the side of the working classes worldwide, especially in the peripheries, where they are engaged in fierce anti-imperialist struggles.

**Keywords:** Marxism, internationalism, bourgeoisie, proletariat, centre, periphery, dialectic, anti-imperialism

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## Глобальная классовая борьба: марксистский подход к современной геополитике

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**Аннотация.** Утверждается, что марксизм предлагает наиболее подходящую парадигму для анализа и формирования современной геополитики. Преимущество марксистского подхода заключается в том, что он выходит за рамки простого описательного анализа и может предлагать и достигать долгосрочные, эффективные решения рассматриваемых проблем. Подчеркнута адекватность марксистской парадигмы для решения проблем геополитики и международных отношений и критически рассматриваются два неверных толкования марксистской теории: утверждение о том, что она игнорирует либо национальный, либо международный уровень. Изложены концепции глобальной классовой борьбы. Вопреки мнению, согласно которому классовая борьба (в единственном числе) относится только к борьбе между буржуазией и пролетариатом, утверждается, что классовая борьба (во множественном числе) не сводится к этой существенной форме и что она включает в себя широкий спектр дальнейших многосторонних столкновений между различными противоборствующими субъектами. После указания на то, что можно рассматривать как экономическую основу, определены основные задействованные классы на основе дихотомии центр / периферия и кратко проиллюстрированы полезность глобальной классовой борьбы выбранными примерами. Далее исследуется марксистский принцип пролетарского интернационализма с развитием его интерпретации, основанной на диалектике между локальным и глобальным уровнями. Утверждается, что такое понимание пролетарского интернационализма может адекватно решать как внутригосударственные, так и межгосударственные геополитические задачи. Наконец, анализ фокусируется на нормативном потенциале марксизма в целом и пролетарского интернационализма в частности. Предлагаемый марксистский подход к современной геополитике, по общему признанию, — на стороне рабочего класса во всем мире, особенно на периферии, где он ведет ожесточенную антиимпериалистическую борьбу.

**Ключевые слова:** марксизм, интернационализм, буржуазия, пролетариат, центр, периферия, диалектика, антиимпериализм

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## Introduction

The current situation in international politics is characterised by an increasing number of crises and conflicts. All around the globe, old and new problems related to economic development, health care, education, ecology, etc., are getting worse in a world that seems increasingly incapable of achieving sustainable solutions. As for armed conflicts and wars, the past few years have been the worst since the end of the Cold War. In fact, “2023 was the third most violent year since 1989, only surpassed by 2021 and 2022” [1. P. 7]. In search of global domination, Western imperialism is both directly and indirectly involved in the recently launched and still ongoing wars, as the two examples of the NATO aggression against Russia and the Zionist genocide in Palestine clearly illustrate. These cases — along with further bellicose confrontations such as in Sudan and in Ethiopia — showcase the helplessness of the so-called international community to put an end to those bloody human-made disasters and their horrifying consequences. In fact, the wars cause the suffering of hundreds of millions of human beings, since they are responsible for the spread of diseases, famine, forced displacement, etc.

Regarding this situation of generalized deadlock on the international level, in which agreements and arrangements are difficult to reach, and decision implementation has no guarantee, there is an urgent need for rethinking international relations (IR) and geopolitics. This need concerns both the analysis tools and the concrete measures that should be taken. In the present paper, I argue that Marxism, as a scientific worldview and a multidisciplinary, systemic mode of thought that equally considers theory and practice, can offer an appropriate approach to comprehending the ambiguities of contemporary geopolitics and responding to them accordingly. This claim rests upon two fundamental ideas: (1) the conception of class struggles, central to Marxism, is a key explanatory factor within the complex constellation of phenomena, events and processes on the global arena. (2) Internationalism, also a core doctrine in Marxism, has a normative potential, which is indispensable to cope with the challenges of today’s geopolitics. I will focus on these two pillars of the suggested Marxist approach, namely class struggles and internationalism, in a manner that highlights their potentialities not only as explication tools, but also as necessary foundations for revolutionary change. To do so, I will introduce the concept of Globalized Class Struggles (GCS) and tackle certain aspects of the notion of Proletarian Internationalism (PI). This will occur on the basis of determined contributions from Marxist and non-Marxist authors, as well as the interpretation of selected writings of Marx and Engels. Throughout the analysis, I endeavour to underline the ability of Marxist thought to address current challenges. Marxism might indeed shed new light on how we think about today’s social, economic, political, and geopolitical problems. To say it in the

words of Immanuel Wallerstein: “Marx and his ideas are flourishing, stand up better today than those of any other nineteenth-century analyst, and promise to remain central to social life in the world-system in the twenty-first century” [2. P. 84].

### **Marxism, Geopolitics and International Relations**

To validate the general adequateness of Marxist theory in analysing the current geopolitical situation, I suggest beginning with the following brief conceptual clarification. As far as the relationships between the research fields of (IR) and geopolitics are concerned, I content myself with recalling two worth noting differences. (1) (IR) tend to neglect the “territorially embedded factors”, the consideration of which makes the particularity of geopolitics. (2) In addition, geopolitics attempts “to create a more holistic picture of world affairs” and goes beyond the more restricted issues (IR) focus on [3. P. X–XI]. On the basis of these points, one can maintain that a basic understanding of geopolitics can be expressed as the formula of adding *geography* to the plurality of disciplines with which the study of (IR) is concerned. Nevertheless, geography should not be understood as the mere study of static figures of territoriality, but rather as the dynamic interactions between studies of spatiality and social, political, and economic categories. In fact, “geography is important not just because of its relative stability, but also because of its role in shaping the dynamics of opportunities and risks” [4. P. 7]. The importance of this spatial foundation for the movements pursuing contradictory interests is precisely what the history of human societies, with its wide variety of struggle constellations, constantly confirms. Marxist theory, in particular in its existence mode as *historical materialism*, assumes the primacy of the material basis, which is often mistakenly interpreted as purely economic, over the components of the so-called superstructure (politics, laws, religion, philosophy, etc.). This scheme of explanation seems to fit the very concept of *geo-politics*. In fact, it is this primacy of geography that obviously speaks for the fundamental status of materiality inherent to all geopolitical developments.

The relationship between Marxism and (IR) is a controversial topic, and its assessment gives rise to antagonist positions. There is a widespread thesis according to which Marx and Engels were not interested in (IR) because the situation in the nineteenth century did not urge them to do so, and they consequently must conceive a theoretical work that cannot go beyond the level of the nation-state [5. P. 27–29]. Against this reading, I argue that the works of Marx and Engels, along with their focus on the *national level*, manifest a distinctive awareness of the crucial role of the *international dimension*, both within the economic analysis of capitalist society and within the network of relations among the intervening agents.

The claim that “it is not at all surprising that international relations did not particularly interest the two founders of Marxism” [5. P. 27], rests upon the two following premises. First, this view considers — wrongly as I will show — that imperialism began with the twentieth century, so that it leads to the opinion that “neither Marx nor Engels lived long enough to witness the onset of imperialism”

[5. P. 28]. Secondly, the protagonists of that view argue that “to Marx, capitalism was not yet a global mode of production but remained still a closed and homogeneous economy with no room within the theory for any difference in economic conditions between different countries” [5. P. 28]. Further, the same critique asserts that because of their reading of the situation in which “the dynamic of capitalism and that of the international system were completely unconnected, Marx and Engels misread the future course of both: and particularly was this true of their reading of the international system” [5. P. 28]. This misinterpretation of Marxism, to which we will return, simply ignores the writings of Marx and Engels on numerous issues, varying from the international dimension of political economy to the different forms of struggles on the global level, which drew the attention of the two founders of Marxism. The cases treated include not only European countries and Russia, but also the United States and Asia [6], so that Marx and Engels were even able to predict — one century in advance — “the biggest transformation in international relations, namely the shift of their centre of gravity from the Atlantic to the Pacific” [6. P. 315–316].

In addition to this type of alleged critique, i.e. the reproach of having nothing to say on (IR), there is the opposite distortion of the Marxist position, namely the interpretation of the abstract character of the critique of capitalism as a neglect of the specificities of national economies and the adoption of a cosmopolitan view. In a noteworthy compact analysis, the Indian political scientist Radhika Desai observes that “contrary to the widespread tendency to take Marx as a theorist of ‘globalization’, Marx actually took the existence of national economies seriously and conceived of their interrelations as arising from the contradictions of capitalism” [7. P. 3]. Indeed, in the final pages of the *Grundrisse*, while dealing with the economists Bastiat and Carey, Marx speaks about “the relations of producing nations” as the development of bourgeois relations and underlines the contradiction — not grasped by Carey — between a harmony on the national level and a disharmony on the world-market level. Desai expresses the main point of the Marxian analysis by maintaining that “the international relations of the capitalist world are essentially bourgeois relations” [7. P. 7]. It is striking to find a very similar formulation, although in a different context, in a passage from the *German Ideology* (1845–1846), where Marx and Engels associate the moment when the interests of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie “came into conflict, when trade between the European countries began to be important” with the observation that “international relations themselves assumed a *bourgeois* character” [8. P. 343]. I would elevate Desai’s salient assertion to the rank of a central principle within my suggested Marxist approach, since it allows us to distinguish between the Marxist and the bourgeois paradigms of analysis.

As an overall assessment of the Marxist position and as a response to both types of reproach mentioned above, I argue that Marx and Engels equally consider the internal and external spheres of capitalist political economy, foregrounding the necessary connection between the national and international levels in their critique.

There are at least two reasons why this connection must emerge from the factual state of affairs in the nineteenth century. Firstly, both Western colonialism and the rivalry between capitalist nation-states attest to the unmistakable presence of the international dimension, in general, and the phenomenon of imperialism, in particular. Here, I follow the Arab Marxist economist Samir Amin, who argues that the imperialist dimension was always present within the capitalist system, even from the very beginning of the process leading to its emergence. In fact, while Lenin famously calls imperialism “the highest stage of capitalism”, Amin describes it “as a ‘permanent phase of capitalism’ in the sense that globalized historical capitalism has built up and never ceases from reproducing and deepening the center / periphery polarization” [9. P. 112].

Secondly, from a Marxist viewpoint, the very notion of *inter-state* relations calls for an inevitable consideration of the central category of “social class”. In the capitalist system, the nation-state is not a class-independent construction but a bourgeois state, i.e. a representation of the interests of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class in every society. “In this sense, the foreign policy is not meant to represent a general interest [of a given nation] but only the interests of the dominant national bourgeois class” [10. P. 382]. Thus, the Marxist perspective understands the realm of geopolitics within capitalism as being primarily dependent on the class character of its societies. The analysis of contemporary geopolitics must therefore rest upon the fundamental notion of class struggles, and its dynamics at both the national and international levels.

### **The Geopolitics of Class Struggles**

In this section, I start by clarifying in which sense I am using the term “class struggles”, and what exactly is meant by Globalized Class Struggles (GCS). Then, I briefly outline the economic basis of this theoretical conception and outline some of its benefits in analysing selected issues in contemporary geopolitics.

For Marx and Engels, the term “class struggle” had several applications and “covered a variety of phenomena”, which range from the “struggle by force of arms and open physical combat between the working class and its opponents” to the struggle “taking place in a parliamentary setting” [11. P. 90–91]. However, these two examples, which share the idea of antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, represent only a part of the broader range of meanings the term conveys. In fact, in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels famously declare that “[t]he history of the hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” [12. P. 482]. The Italian Marxist philosopher Domenico Losurdo observes that the usage of the plural form, i.e. “class struggles” (*klassenkämpfe*) and not “class struggle” (*Klassenkampf*) is an indication of the existence of several types of confrontations that can be designated as class struggle: “The plural is not employed to denote repetition of the identical, the continual recurrence of the same class struggle in the same form. It refers to the multiplicity of shapes and forms that class struggle can assume” [13. P. 15]. Losurdo provides an analysis of those types and

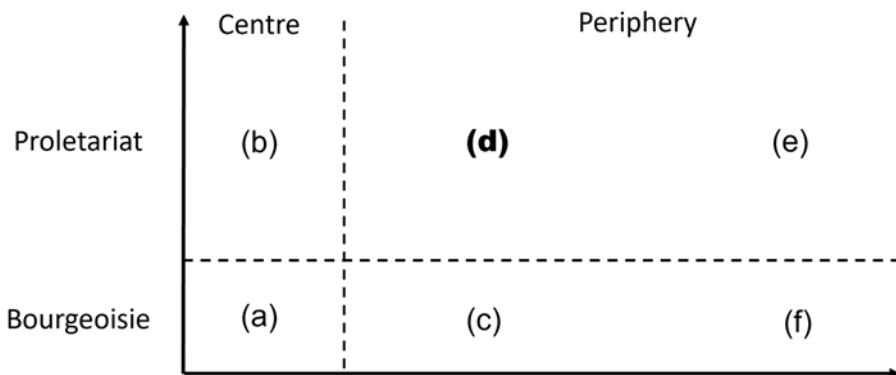
identifies “three major emancipatory class struggles, which are set to radically alter the division of labor and the relations of exploitation and oppression that obtain internationally, in a single country, and within the family” [13. P. 18]. These are: (i) “the conflict between bourgeoisie and proletariat” as the form that most theoreticians take to be the unique form of class struggle; (ii) “The struggle for the liberation of oppressed nations”, i.e. the confrontation between oppressing and oppressed nations, and (iii) the emancipation of women from domestic oppression [13]. Regarding the first form of class struggle, Losurdo criticizes Dahrendorf, Habermas, Ferguson, and others for whom “class struggle refers exclusively to the conflict between proletariat and bourgeoisie” [13. P. 4]. Losurdo refers further to the writings of Marx and Engels on Ireland and Poland to maintain that “the struggle for the liberation of oppressed nations is no less important than the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. The two struggles were followed and promoted with the self-same passion” [13. P. 8]. Finally, the identification of the third form of class struggle rests not only on Engels’ affirmations in his *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* of 1884, but also on various other works of both Marx and Engels [13. P. 15–18].

While these three forms of class struggle seem to follow the distinction between three different levels, namely the local, the national, and the international, it is plausible to assume a higher degree of complexity that the interrelations between the three struggles might manifest. In fact, the internationally organized actions of workers across different countries — or the actions of a progressive social movement on a global level — are examples of the interconnections within a general, multisided conception of class struggles. I refer to this conception as Globalized Class Struggles (GCS).

Like Losurdo, Samir Amin arrives at a similar conception, speaking of “social struggles, in the broadest sense,” and defines them as “the totality of social and political struggles and conflicts, national and international” [14. P. 46]. Amin mentions this understanding of the global dimension of class struggles within a larger economic analysis that introduces an innovative concept he calls “the law of globalized value”. I consider Amin’s analysis to be the appropriate economic foundation for the notion of (GCS), which, in turn, is the core of my suggested Marxist approach to contemporary geopolitics.

The starting point of Amin is Marx’s law of value in Volume I of *Capital* in general and the following “three stages of transformation of value” in particular: “(1) into ‘prices of production’; into ‘market prices’ (oligopolistic prices, in contemporary capitalism); and (3) into ‘globalized prices’ (in the globalized imperialist system)” [14. P. 12]. While the first transformation is treated by Marx in the first chapters of Volume III of *Capital*, and the second is only partially tackled there — but significantly further developed by Baran and Sweezy —, the third transformation, i.e. from market prices to globalized prices, is the main focus of Amin’s contribution. This contribution allows us to go from the law of value “in its highest abstraction” to the “law of globalized value” as it is deployed in the current

phase of capitalism that Amin calls “the later capitalism of the generalized, financialized, and globalized oligopolies” [14. P. 12–14]. Without discussing the details of the proposed model, “which continues to be economic in character”, I would like to merely pick up the second of the two aspects Amin mentions under the label of “going beyond the model”, namely: (i) “taking into account the historical origins of the system”, and, more importantly, (ii) “appreciating that there are no economic laws that are independent of the class struggle” [14. P. 90]. Amin identifies the following groups that I consider as the major players taking part in the (GCS): “(a) the imperialist bourgeoisie <...>; (b) the proletariat of the central countries <...>; (c) the dependent bourgeoisie of the periphery <...>; (d) the proletariat of the periphery <...>; (e) the exploited peasantries of the periphery <...>; and (f) the exploiting classes of the noncapitalist modes.” Amin comes to the crucial conclusion that “the principal contradiction <...>, is the one that counterposes the people of the periphery (the proletariat and the exploited peasantry) to imperialist capital, and not, of course, the periphery as a whole to the center as a whole” [14. P. 92–93]. One can illustrate the classes involved in (GCS) — as they are identified by Samir Amin — as follows:



**Figure 1. Class analysis at the global level**

*Source:* compiled by A. Remida on the basis of Samir Amin in [14].

The conception of (GCS) admits the fundamental observation that guides Amin’s work, namely, “the extraordinary fact that really existing capitalism, in its globalized extension, has produced, reproduced, and unceasingly deepened the centers-peripheries polarization. <...> this extraordinary fact governs all struggles and political and social conflicts, at every national scale and at the global scale” [14. P. 119]. If one recalls the three forms of class struggles mentioned by Losurdo ((i) the classical form of the confrontation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, (ii) the struggle of women against patriarchal oppression, and (iii) that of oppressed countries against the aggression of the imperialist countries), the analysis of Amin might appear as a generalization of the first form by taking into account the anti-imperialist dimension of the third form. However, the fact that both

contributions attempt to formulate suggestions to structure and categorize the ongoing struggles on the global level does not impede a wide range of possible instances from being integrated within the suggested framework. As far as the Marxist paradigm is concerned, and regarding the central notion of (GCS), one major advantage is not only that it goes beyond the framework imposed by the bourgeois mode of thought (geopolitics as study of interstate, i.e. bourgeois relations) but also considers a series of concrete challenges facing contemporary geopolitics with the explicit intention of finding radical solutions. It openly adopts a normative character that will be focused on in the last section of the present paper. In this sense, the Marxist approach is not a type of the so-called “critical geopolitics”, since this “critical geopolitics is not problem-solving geopolitics” but it differs from “classical geopolitics” by being merely “critical in the sense that it wants to analyze and challenge the prevailing order of things” [15. P. 85]. Marxism famously admits an organic relationship between theory and practice, and Marxists are thereby different from those “critical authors [who] do not want to be action-oriented because they [only] want to know how the world is viewed, who decided how the world is understood, and for what purpose” [15. P. 92]. For instance, since (GCS) entails the combat of women for equal rights (the second form of class struggles according to Losurdo), the Marxist paradigm would radically modify concepts like “feminist geopolitics”, by transforming its demands to go much further than “a better diversity and inclusion in terms of knowledge creation, discourse, and interpretation” [15. P. 152].

The Marxist conception of (GCS) helps gain a better understanding of phenomena such as migration, non-state and state-driven terrorism, etc., by treating them as partial problems within a larger geopolitical context that superimposes the universal structure of social classes and the global dichotomy of centre / periphery. By uncovering that certain events are parts of an assault of the imperialist bourgeoisie on the working class of a certain country in the periphery — a group that Amin describes as “the spearhead of the revolutionary forces on the world scale” [14. P. 92], the Marxist analysis is clearly positioning itself on the side of those proletarians as a concrete weapon at their disposal. If one takes a closer look at the examples of migration and terrorism, the consideration of broader context involving notions like the so-called “global war on terrorism”, “fourth generation warfare”, and “clash of civilisation” imposes itself. For these are elements of the strategy of the *bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries* in its struggles against the proletariat of the peripheries. This strategy can be exposed by maintaining that “identity and fourth generation warfare provide the means, and clash of civilizations the fuel, to keep the global war on terrorism and associated conflicts going” [16. P. 393]. Moreover, the assumption of a key role for (GCS) in shaping current geopolitical circumstances is closely related to the question of access to and control over data and information resources. The ongoing revolution in information and communication technology has a decisive impact on the daily developments driven by (GCS). The substantial role of social media, the accelerating achievements in

digitalization and artificial intelligence, and all the related processes of making and influencing public opinion are determining key issues at the very core of contemporary geopolitics. Grasping the relations of these new realities to the global political realm helps acquire the means for revolutionary change. For instance, it helps to appropriately analyse and effectively confront the phenomena surrounding the so-called “coloured revolutions”, i.e. the attempts of Western imperialism to destabilize and overthrow regimes that resist its hegemony.

### **The Normative Potential of Proletarian Internationalism**

“Proletarian Internationalism” (PI) is famously an established concept in Marxism and it “was to Marx and Engels an alternative principle for the organization of mankind, superior to that on which the states-system is based” [5. P. 118]. The concept was intensively discussed and variously interpreted by the different Marxist schools and movements [5. P. 117–137]. Without addressing these debates, I propose to understand (PI) as having powerful normative potential within Marxist theory and practice. This occurs by focusing on two aspects of (PI) that I take to be relevant for the approach to contemporary geopolitics. The first aspect is the thesis that (PI) rests on the dialectic of the local and global levels, and the second aspect concerns the class character of anti-imperialist struggles.

As we have seen in the first section, the claim that Marx and Engels allegedly neglected the field of (IR) was argued for by noting that they did not witness the era of imperialism and that their theory is primarily concerned with national economic systems. Although the writings of Marx and Engels can easily refute such claims, it is worth noting that this type of discourse has tackled the crucial function of class struggles as follows: “Class struggle, in other words, already to the Marxists the motive force of history, had yet to break out of its territorial bonds and make an entrance upon the international stage” [5. P. 28]. This ahistorical statement conceives of class struggles as lacking any international dimension during the nineteenth century and “receives” it with the onset of the imperialist age. That the representatives of this view speak about “a paradoxical situation” [5. P. 29] facing Marxist theory can be explained through their omission of any discussion of the *dialectic* of the local and the global levels, i.e. the dialectic of the intrastate level of one single national economy and the interstate level of the entire world economy.

Dialectical thinking, in general, and materialist dialectic, in particular, are famously essential parts of the overall theoretical orientation of the founders of Marxism. This remains true for the overwhelming majority of the subsequent generations of Marxist thinkers. Dialectic — or *the algebra of the revolution* as Alexander Herzen describes it — is by the same token indispensable for any Marxist approach to the complex field of geopolitics. In the case of the simultaneous consideration of the local and the global, the involved dialectical processes have a historically determinant function. In fact, “the conflict and tension between particularity and universality” are nothing less than “organizing principles within the modern world” [2. P. 156]. Marx and Engels were deploying the dialectic

of the particular and the universal in many respects: (i) Regarding the scientific work of the critique of political economy, there is no separation between the critique of the internal relations of production within a single class society and the critique of the relations of production at the level of international division of labour. (ii) Marx and Engels recognize that the questions of national emancipation, national liberation movements, right of self-determination for oppressed peoples, etc., are substantial parts of (GCS). Far from being contrary or contradictory to the *inter-nationalist* attitude of the proletariat, these causes belong definitely to the revolutionary position that truly deserves to be called “Proletarian Internationalism” (PI).

The dialectic of the local and global levels as a foundation of (PI) can be illustrated through several examples from the works of Marx and Engels. In the *Civil War in France* (1871), Marx describes the Paris Commune with the following words: “If the Commune was thus the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore the truly national Government, it was, at the same time, as a working men’s Government, as the bold champion of the emancipation of labour, emphatically international.” [17. P. 338]. One can mention another example that shows how the dialectic of national and international struggles sees *no contradiction* between the two levels. Marx expresses this idea in the particular context of the Polish question — but it can be applied to Russia, to occupied Palestine, or to any other case in today’s global geopolitical situation — as he observes in 1875 that:

“It is by no means a contradiction that the international Working Men’s Party should strive for the restoration of the Polish nation. On the contrary: only when Poland has re-conquered its independence, when it once again exercises control over itself as a free people, only then can its internal development recommence and will it be able to take part in its own right in the social transformation of Europe” [18. P. 57].

These examples clearly illustrate how the proletariat, in every country, assumes a harmonious connection between its particular struggles for national liberation and its more general struggles for universal emancipation. The same cause of freedom applies in both cases. This dialectical unity of the struggles indicates that the conception of (PI) includes an essential *normative* component that has a decisive function within (GCS). The objectivity of the link between a concrete single fight and the overall purposes of the fighting movement is an inexhaustible source of energy and motivation for the fighters. It is precisely in this sense that one should read the following remark of Marx on the Paris Commune: “The Commune admitted all foreigners to the honour of dying for an immortal cause.” [17. P. 338]. I claim that this complementarity of objectivity and normativity is an exclusive feature of Marxism.

The Russian philosopher Alexander Dugin criticises Marxism as “dogmatic” [19. P. 11], and *all* Marxists for being “mechanicist” [19. P. 28], and rejects a number of points he believes they represent the essence of Marxism. Among these

points we find “the idea of class as the only historical subject” [19. P. 43], which Dugin considers to be “the core of the communists’ dramatic vision of history” [19. P. 31]. Despite this attitude, he wants to integrate a special understanding of Marxism in his conception of the “Fourth Political Theory”. He calls this version of Marxism — that serves his purposes — “mythic sociological Marxism”, to which he ascribes the following features:

“Marxism is relevant in terms of its description of liberalism, in identifying the contradictions of capitalism, in its criticism of the bourgeois system, and in revealing the truth behind the bourgeois democratic policies of exploitation and enslavement presented as ‘development’ and ‘liberation’. Marxism’s critical potential is highly useful and applicable” [19. P. 43].

Thus, Dugin admits that Marxism is a powerful tool for criticising the dominant system and exposing its problems and failures. Despite this avowal, he treats Marxism at the same level as liberalism and fascism, namely as one among three rival ideologies to be overcome by his suggested fourth new candidate. Dugin seems to interpret the “critical potential” of Marxism in an Aristotelian sense of potentiality that fully eliminates any actuality. He completely ignores the relationship between the scientifically based critique of capitalist class society and the *ongoing* struggles, which necessarily (re)create that criticised class structure. Equally important is the fact that Dugin is blind vis-à-vis the normative potential of the “critical potential” of Marxism. He seems to discuss normativity basically in relation to gender issues, in a comparative context echoing a clash of political theories [19. P. 217–224]. However, the realm of normativity encompasses a wide range of further questions that deserve attention. Among these questions, the problems surrounding recognition, cultural hegemony, identity production, etc., should be analysed in light of current (GCS), since they are decisive factors influencing the development prospects of global geopolitics. In fact, as already mentioned above, these phenomena are directly related to the strategy of imperialist powers in their global war against the working classes of all countries. For among the “typical elements of a modern fourth generation warfare conflict” one finds the “explicit targeting of the enemy’s culture and cultural symbol, and the deployment through media manipulation of sophisticated psychological warfare operations” [16. P. 398]. Acting upon the normative dimension is thus a major attribute of today’s global struggles, and it should be brought to the forefront within the ongoing confrontation between the imperialist and the anti-imperialist camps.

Within a Marxist approach to geopolitics, these aspects are considered in their close relationship with the economic basis that gave rise to them. For the normative dimension of (GCS) cannot be understood without grasping the material interests that govern the behaviour of the involved agents. To illustrate the difference between a Marxist and non-Marxist assessment of the status of normativity, let us look at the difference between the definitions of *globalization* given by Alexander Dugin and Samir Amin. Dugin focuses on the link between ethnos and culture as a distinguishing feature, and for him “globalization is thus nothing more than a

globally deployed model of Western European, or, rather, Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism, which is the purest manifestation of racist ideology [19. P. 39]. For Amin, who emphasizes class analysis, “‘globalization’ is the name they [the generalized monopolies] have given to the set of demands by which they exert their control over the productive systems of the periphery of global capitalism <...>. It is nothing other than a new stage of imperialism” [9. P. 15]. One can say that Dugin takes a side effect to be the essence of the phenomenon itself, while Amin is much closer to a truthful determination of the contemporary state of affairs. Indeed, Amin’s reading of today’s (GCS) is essentially an anti-imperialist struggle that contributes to establish a new paradigm in the field of geopolitics. This Marxist paradigm avoids two types of reduction of the “extraordinary fact” (i.e. the crucial role of the centre / periphery dichotomy): (i) to reduce it to the form of “class struggle pitting labor against capital”, and (ii) “its symmetrical reduction to power struggles, like [bourgeois] geopolitical analysis of national policies” [14. P. 120].

By identifying the current situation with a certain stage of imperialism’s development, the Marxist approach — being *per definitionem* anti-capitalist and thus anti-imperialist — underlines the crucial importance of today’s anti-imperialist struggles as a historical task for the working class worldwide. To perform this task means to develop a consciousness of (PI) that clearly recognizes the enemy and its deployed strategies and consequently develop firm attitudes and cutting positions. In questions of imperialism / anti-imperialism, as well as colonialism / anti-colonialism, there are no middle positions. As Edward Said points out, there are only two mutually exclusive positions: “The emergence of almost a hundred new decolonized post-colonial states after 1945 is not a neutral fact, but one to which, in discussions of it, scholars, historians, activists have been either for or against” [20. P. 233–234].

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