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# The Global Perspective: Reflections on Imperialism and Resistance

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The Global Perspective: Reflections on Imperialism and Resistance

By Torkil Lauesen.

Translation by Gabriel Kuhn.

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# Preface

Important scientific and scholarly interpretations of imperialism have in the last thirty years reshaped the paradigms through which we analyse and understand human history. However, while post-colonial studies has from the 1970s described the perseverance of forms of cultural domination, a crucial marker of imperialist influence, critical geopolitical and economic analysis is absent in much of the research. At the same time, whereas colonialism has largely been abandoned (though not completely, as the examples of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine show), free-market globalisation has stimulated a new era of neo-colonial imperialism, reinforcing inequality both within and between countries. This resurgent imperialism has provided a spur to the further investigation of all facets of the phenomenon.

In recent years, as European and North American society has shifted further to the right, there has been a dramatic surge in pro-Imperial discourse. Many British writers, for instance, have built their careers on declaiming the glory of Empire, the march of progress, and the triumph of Western civilisation. In the 1990s, US political scientist and Vietnam War hawk Samuel Huntington famously decried the inherent barbarism of all non-Western cultures in his *The Clash of Civilizations*. He found an eager popular and academic audience in the context of the so-called War on Terror (during which the United States, the United Kingdom, and its closest European allies have wantonly and shamelessly slaughtered and starved millions of civilians) and the discourse of “humanitarian interventionism.”

The bigotry and hypocrisy of such “conservative” propagandists for unearned wealth and unvarnished power are apparent to all who possess even a modicum of critical awareness, whether inside or outside the academy. Yet intellectual dishonesty and complicity with the crimes of the great powers is not the sole preserve of the political right, though it is more obviously apparent there. Unfortunately, national chauvinism is promoted in the Global North by both the right *and* its ostensible liberal, socialist, and communist foes. Unquestionably, the class interests of the most affluent and bourgeois fractions of the international workforce are reflected in the analyses and propaganda of the European and North American left, for which imperialism is too often understood either as a historical or cultural anachronism, or as benefiting only big capitalists or a narrow upper stratum of workers in certain specialised sectors of the economy.

As this work by Torkil Lauesen reveals, however, under capitalism the advantages enjoyed by European, North American, and Japanese workers relative to the proletariat proper (exploited wage-earners in industry and agriculture) are paid for only by means of imperialism and can, therefore, only be maintained or extended through imperialism. Ultimately, this ensures that the pursuit of short-term economic advancement by what is thus constituted as a mass labour aristocracy must entail open or tacit compromise with capital. As such, those within the upper echelons of the global working class who seek to determine their future free of capitalist diktat must necessarily advocate the abolition of global wage scaling, even in the certain knowledge that this will mean a lengthy and considerable reduction in their own and their compatriots’ purchasing power.

The present work examines how imperialism has impacted societies in the Third World or Global South, that is, the former colonies of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, as well as how it has shaped social relations and popular perceptions in the First World or Global North countries of Europe, North America, and Japan. It describes imperialism’s evolving means of international wealth transfer and reveals how returns derived from unequal exchange, accumulation by dispossession, and capital export (none of which can be treated in isolation from the other) have come to form the very taproot of the global profit system.

Today, the nations of the Third World face imperialist invasion, occupation, proxy war, embargo, extortion, starvation, assassination, genocide, fascist repression, corporate plunder, and grinding superexploitation. The contrast with the consumption, leisure time, and social peace that imperialism has afforded the nations of the First World could not be clearer. In spite of this, we have reached the point where authors such as Torkil Lauesen are forced to not only explain but to plainly state the obvious, even (and especially) to alleged Marxists. In these bleak times, it is often hard to discern how we can possibly work towards a better future. On an intellectual level at least, we can only begin to do so if we adopt the perspective of the world majority struggling for a better life.

In the present volume, the author places imperialism at the centre of his rigorous class analysis and, at the same time, positions class analysis at the centre of his understanding of imperialism. It is a work profoundly informed by a decades--long and unwavering commitment to labour internationalism. The author himself does not merely pay lip-service to this ideal as do most socialists in the West today, but tacitly affirms in every sentence that it is impossible to properly understand imperialism without sympathy for and solidarity with the struggles waged against it. This book deserves to have a very wide readership and a profound influence.

*Dr. Zak Cope,  
Belfast, Ireland  
12 February, 2018*

*“If the parasite state theory was accepted in our part of the world, it would be false.”*

*Joke inside Communist Working Circle, 1975*

# introduction:

## Why this book?

### A Child of the Cold War

I was born in 1952. My mother worked as a nurse, my father as a ferry navigator. I grew up in the Danish social welfare state, at a time when consumer society hit it big. In 1956, we bought a television set, a telephone, and a refrigerator, and in 1959, a Renault 4CV. In 1962, we left our council flat for our very own house. The motto of the governing social democrats was: “Make good times better!”

My first political memory relates to the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. The Soviets wanted to deploy nuclear weapons in Cuba. This was in response to the USA deploying nuclear weapons in Turkey and the CIA’s attempt to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs a year earlier. Soviet ships carrying nuclear warheads were spotted on their way to the Caribbean, and the US navy enforced a blockade of the “communist island.” No one knew what was going to happen when the Soviets met the American fleet; a nuclear war between the world’s superpowers seemed possible.

I was only ten years old but I understood the gravity of the situation. Earlier that year, the Danish government had distributed manuals to all households, titled “If the War Comes.” They included pictures teaching you to crawl underneath a table if you saw a blast. Then, you were instructed, you should head for the basement where water and food were stored. On our new TV set, I had seen images of the mushroom cloud, and I was familiar with the sirens that were tested every Wednesday in our neighborhood. Numerous people did indeed store water and food in their basements, but all I could think of was: “Once we have eaten all the food—then what?”

The Cuban missile crisis ended. The nuclear war hadn’t come. Instead, our generation embraced Elvis, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and long hair. For some, myself included, politics became very important. The first political organization I joined was *Aldrig Mere Krig*, “War, Never Again.” I became a conscientious objector.

The war in Vietnam soon consumed my attention, not least because it was reported about on TV every day. Those images would have an enormous impact on the anti--imperialists of my generation. The war waged by the US in Vietnam was one of the most brutal in modern history. The bombing raids by B--52 planes—conducted nonstop from Operation Rolling Thunder in 1965 to the truce of 1973—were unprecedented. Measured in tons, the number of bombs dropped over North Vietnam (which is roughly equal in size to Texas) was three times higher than that of all bombs dropped during World War II over Europe, Asia, and Africa combined. Seven million tons of explosives, with a force equivalent to four hundred Hiroshima bombs, devastated the country.<sup>1</sup> Chemical weapons were used and civilians terrorized. More than eighty thousand alleged Viet Cong supporters were killed in anti--insurgency operations such as Operation Phoenix. All in all, over 1.5 million Vietnamese lost their lives during the war.<sup>2</sup> The American government was widely accused of genocide; a verdict confirmed by the Stockholm Russell Tribunal under the chairmanship of Jean-Paul Sartre in 1967. According to international law, President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger should have been tried as war criminals.

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<sup>1</sup>. Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*. New York: Penguin Books (1997), p. 431.

<sup>2</sup>. Christian G. Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides*. New York: Viking (2003), p. 361.

In 1969, I bought my first political book. Fittingly, it was *War Crimes in Vietnam* by the philosopher and Nobel laureate Bertrand Russell. I reread it before writing this introduction and found the following passage underlined: “To some, the expression ‘US imperialism’ appears as a cliché because it is not part of their own experience. We in the West are the beneficiaries of imperialism. The spoils of exploitation are the means of our corruption.”<sup>3</sup> These words, which obviously made an impression on me at the time, conveyed a sentiment that would become a central feature of my political biography.

My political itinerary started with emotion; for example, the outrage at US napalm bombs and the hope of justice for the people of Vietnam. It probably also started with a guilty conscience, since I lived such a comfortable life while people in the Third World did not. I still live a very comfortable life. I am writing this text on one of the two computers we own. We live in a spacious two--bedroom apartment. We have an iPad, two mobile phones, and a flat screen TV. The apartment is equipped with all of the modern bathroom and kitchen facilities your heart desires. When I go on vacation, I fly to countries whose people cannot afford vacations. There, I enjoy their climate, culture, and food. My salary allows me to buy anything I need and much I don’t need.

The fact that living conditions around the world are so different has been the driving force of my political activism. For years, I’ve been pondering the following questions: Why does this difference exist? In what historical context did it develop? What are the economic and political mechanisms that keep it in place? And why is it so bloody difficult to change all of this?

I went to boarding school in the small Danish town of Holbæk. There, I experienced the uprising of 1968. Its impact was so strong that it even engulfed the Danish countryside. We challenged the authorities at our school, edited a critical student newspaper, and organized meetings on the war in Vietnam. I belonged to a study circle that discussed political theory in order to understand the injustices of the world and find ways to fight against them.

In 1968, one of my peers introduced me to the *Kommunistisk Arbejdskreds* (KAK), the “Communist Working Circle.” It was a life-altering moment. KAK’s theoretical foundation, the “parasite state theory,” corresponded to my everyday experiences. It explained that there was a direct connection between the wealth in our part of the world and the poverty elsewhere. The connection was imperialism. The parasite state theory also explained why the working classes in our part of the world were not interested in revolution but only in changes to the ruling system that would grant them a bigger share of imperialist plunder.

Once I discovered KAK, my individual, uncoordinated, and emotional political approach gave way to an organized and strategic one. I first became a KAK sympathizer and later a very dedicated member. I went on study trips to the Third World and gathered resources to support Third World liberation movements, legally as well as illegally. My travels to Middle Eastern and African countries and the collaboration with Third World revolutionaries strengthened the emotions that got me interested in politics in the first place—my wish for justice and my outrage at imperialist oppression—but they also sparked a feeling of personal responsibility: Third World liberation movements were no longer abstract political entities but now consisted of real--life people and comrades who I felt obliged to. We, the members of KAK, wanted to be a little wheel in a big machine fighting for a different world order. Our emotions, experiences, and actions led to constant questioning of ourselves and our politics. We had to remain motivated and engaged in this fight—and, if possible, we had to motivate others to do the same.

Theory was very important to us. Our practice was always informed by theoretical, strategic, and tactical reflections. This also applied to our collaboration with Third World liberation movements. We would discuss politics first; only after would we decide on any action plan. Emotion, theory, organization, practice, everything was connected: emotions were the driving force, theory provided guidance, organization brought structure, and practice gave concrete results. In my case, forty years of political activism have been defined by this framework. This book is a summary of my experiences.

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<sup>3</sup>. Bertrand Russell, *War Crimes in Vietnam*. London: George Allen & Unwin (1967), p. 94

## The Parasite State Theory

I already mentioned how important outrage at the US war in Vietnam was for my politicization. Equally important, however, was the inspiration provided by the struggle of the Vietnamese people. The war proved that a human element—the country's people and their resistance, a *people's war*—was able to defeat the world's greatest superpower.

In Denmark, the solidarity movement with Vietnam was led by students and youth. The working class and its organizations were largely absent. The concerns of the Danish working class were very different from those of Third World workers. Danish workers demanded longer vacations, a higher pension, and a raise of US\$1 per hour—Third World workers were starving, did not have a single day off, and were lucky to earn US\$1 per day.

Most people on the left understand that the concerns of workers in the Third World are different from those in countries such as Denmark. They also understand that this difference inevitably causes anger, unrest, and demands for a new world order. Yet, in our part of the world, many find it difficult to apply this understanding to their politics. They are hesitant to openly declare that the working class in a country such as Denmark benefits from the international division of labor and has no real interest in changing the current world order, at least not fundamentally. This is confirmed by the lack of international solidarity from the working classes of imperialist countries. A famous quote attributed to US writer Upton Sinclair sums up the problem succinctly: “It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it.”<sup>4</sup>

KAK's parasite state theory was based on such heretical insights. But it was not only the logic in KAK's theory that appealed to me; it was also the practical conclusions drawn by its members as well as their commitment and integrity. Solidarity did not just consist of words but of action. It was “something you could hold in your hand,” as we used to say. In KAK, there was a strong correlation between what was being said and what was being done.

The parasite state theory was formulated and developed by KAK's leader, Gotfred Appel. He laid out the theory in a series of articles that appeared in the organization's journal *Kommunistisk Orientering* from 1966 until the organization split into various groups in 1978.<sup>5</sup> Out of these groups, only *Manifest-Kommunistisk Arbejdsgruppe* (M-KA) survived more than two years. It was named after the journal it edited and included those most centrally involved in KAK's illegal practice, the so-called Blekingegade Group.<sup>6</sup>

One of the reasons for KAK's demise was the Leninist dogmatism that had characterized the organization. Among other things, this had prevented theoretical development. M-KA now offered this possibility. We updated the parasite state theory's economic foundation by adding Arghiri Emmanuel's work on *unequal exchange*, which stressed the importance of trade between high-wage and low-wage countries in the exploitation of the proletarians of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We also studied Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory, which traced capitalism's history

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<sup>4</sup>. Upton Sinclair, *I, Candidate for Governor: And How I Got Licked*. Berkeley: University of California Press (1994), p. 109

<sup>5</sup>. Many of these texts have been uploaded to [www.snylterstaten.dk](http://www.snylterstaten.dk).

<sup>6</sup>. See Jørgensen, Lauesen, and Weimann, “It Is All About Politics,” in Gabriel Kuhn (ed.), *Turning Money Into Rebellion: The Unlikely Story of Denmark's Revolutionary Bank Robbers*. Montreal and Oakland: Kersplebedeb and PM Press (2014), pp. 21–92.



and political development from the Middle Ages to modern times. One of its central themes was the divide between a dominant *center* or *core* and an exploited *periphery*.

In 1983, M--KA published the book *Imperialismen i dag: Det ulige bytte og mulighederne for socialisme i en delt verden* ("Imperialism Today: Unequal Exchange and the Possibilities for Socialism in a Divided World")—an English edition, titled *Unequal Exchange and the Prospects of Socialism*, was published three years later.<sup>7</sup> The book contained the first proper summary of the parasite state theory, outlining its economic underpinnings, its consequences for class politics, and its implications for an anti--imperialist practice in the imperialist core countries.

M--KA dissolved in April 1989, after several of its members were arrested as alleged members of the so--called Blekingegade Group. Six comrades and myself were found guilty of various robberies and other criminal acts.<sup>8</sup>

During the years I spent in prison, I focused on globalization and neoliberalism in my reading and writing. Outside the walls surrounding me, the world underwent significant changes. The Soviet Union and state socialism in Eastern Europe collapsed. The successor countries were absorbed by the capitalist world market. Anti--imperialist struggles in the Third World declined significantly, and the liberation movements that had gained power abandoned their socialist principles. At the same time, the world system itself remained unchanged. The world was still divided into rich and poor countries, with no sign that this would change anytime soon. The waning socialist perspective of the Third World liberation struggles and the collapse of the Soviet Union required a new orientation for the left. How could a socialist economy be established? How could socialists come to power? What strategies and practices were needed?

After being released from prison in 1996, I was active in what was known as the anti--globalization movement, inspired by the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, and by the resistance against the World Trade Organization (WTO). I attended the first international encounter organized by the Zapatistas in 1996 and various World Social Forum meetings.

Neoliberal globalization required that certain aspects of the parasite state theory be updated. It introduced new transnational forms of production and a new global division of labor. The parasite state theory still stands on solid ground, however, and I'm not the only one who holds that opinion. Another new development of recent decades, the Internet, has made me aware of the many groups and individuals studying imperialist forms of exchange and their political consequences. It has been encouraging to see that I do not represent an endangered species but belong to an active network of people trying to understand the economic system ruling over our lives and to develop strategies for change. A global perspective is mandatory in these efforts. The strength of Marxism lies in its analysis of concrete situations, but today's concrete situations are not confined to single countries or a single class. Capitalism is a global system and each and every country and class is a part of it. We must not be the frog of Mao's famous anecdote, quipping: "The sky is no bigger than the mouth of the well."<sup>9</sup> The sky *is* bigger than what we can see from where we stand. We cannot understand life in our part of the world if we don't look at the world's other parts.

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<sup>7</sup>. Both editions of the book have been uploaded to [www.snylterstaten.dk](http://www.snylterstaten.dk).

<sup>8</sup>. For a detailed account of the group's practice and history, see Gabriel Kuhn (ed.), *Turning Money Into Rebellion: The Unlikely Story of Denmark's Revolutionary Bank Robbers*. Montreal and Oakland: Kersplebedeb and PM Press, 2014.

<sup>9</sup>. "In approaching a problem a Marxist should see the whole as well as the parts. A frog in a well says, 'The sky is no bigger than the mouth of the well.' That is untrue, for the sky is not just the size of the mouth of the well. If it said, 'A part of the sky is the size of the mouth of a well,' that would be true, for it tallies with the facts." (Mao Tse--tung, "On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism." In: *Selected Works of Mao Tse--tung, Volume I*. Peking: Peoples Publishing House (1935), p. 159).

## Academia and Politics

I hope that this book expresses the combination of emotion, theory, organization, and practice that has defined my political activism. That was my goal in writing it. The text you have in front of you is not an academic text, neither in the way it is structured nor in its intentions. At the same time, I have used numerous academic sources in writing it and have done the best I can to reference them. Strictly speaking, this is not a political text either. It has not been issued by an organization but solely expresses the opinions of an individual. It is a personal text, presenting an understanding of imperialism based on my own experiences as a Marxist militant. However, it *is* a political text in the sense that I want to explain my positions, argue for them, and mobilize people to take action.

If I look at all the contributions to theories of imperialism that I have read over the years, comparing academic studies to accounts of people involved in struggles on the ground, there is a significant difference. For most academics, practical experiences provide material that they then analyze and evaluate. Academics want to understand and explain the world. Rarely do they have anything to say about what ought to be done, not least because they don't want to be associated with particular ideologies, organizations, or tactics, fearing that this would disqualify them as scholars. Practice is not their terrain and they politely leave it to others. For militants, however, theory is first and foremost a tool. It is supposed to help them struggle in the most effective way. We can see this approach in the works of Lenin, Mao, and several high-profile figures of the post--World War II liberation movements, such as Che Guevara and Amílcar Cabral.

The relationship between theory and practice must be dialectical. A theory that does not inspire practice is not a good theory. We can talk for hours about politics and present fine analyses, but if, at the end of the day, we have no answer to the question of what ought to be done, the critical part is missing.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, there is no good practice without good theory. How shall we develop effective forms of struggle if we lack an understanding of the political, economic, and social realities we are up against? Under such circumstances, how are we to develop viable visions and strategies?

In the 1960s and 70s, world-systems theory (Immanuel Wallerstein) and dependency theory (Samir Amin, Arghiri Emmanuel, and Andre Gunder Frank) were at the forefront of analyzing the global economic and political system. Their work represented the biggest innovations in imperialism theory since the 1920s. Also of great importance was the work done by theorists around the journal *Monthly Review*, scholars such as Harry Magdoff, Paul A. Baran, and Paul M. Sweezy. Numerous communist organizations were founded in the imperialist world, and liberation struggles swept the colonies. Unfortunately, the academic studies and the struggles on the ground were largely separate and rarely informed one another. The Communist Party of China (CPC), for example, did not make significant contributions to imperialism theory, while many liberation movement leaders had a limited understanding of political economy (the above--mentioned Che Guevara and Amílcar Cabral being two of the most notable exceptions). I am aware that Marx's famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach has been quoted countless times, but I also believe that it cannot be repeated often enough: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>. See, for example, the final chapter in *Unequal Exchange and the Prospects of Socialism* (Manifest--Kommunistisk Arbejdsgruppe, 1986) as well as Manifest--Kommunistisk Arbejdsgruppe (1985). Both texts are available at [www.snylterstaten.dk](http://www.snylterstaten.dk).

<sup>11</sup>. Karl Marx, "Theses On Feuerbach, no XI." In: *Marx/Engels Selected Works, Volume I*. Moscow: Progress Publishers (1969), pp. 13–15.

I am tackling big topics in this book: the history of imperialism, the global economy, political systems, and strategies for resistance. It is impossible to investigate all of this in a manner that will satisfy academics. Furthermore, I mix political reflection with personal anecdote and use theoretical concepts without any commitment to a particular ideology. In other words, I am not faithful to any particular political line. I have had bad experiences with dogmatism. KAK's strict Leninism got in the way of theoretical innovation, and our hostility toward suspected deviants of all kinds prevented productive intellectual exchange. There are aspects of the political culture of the 1970s that I do not miss.

### Methodological and Philosophical Reflections

If a critical academic had to put a label on the method I am using in this book, it would probably be "eclecticism." I make use of numerous ideas, even some that might seem incompatible. But they are all connected by the convictions this book is built upon. These convictions constitute a red thread running through its pages.

Theoretical studies were important for KAK. They went beyond politics and economics. We also studied methodology and philosophy. In 1975, we had a study circle on dialectical materialism that I found particularly rewarding. It is exhilarating to feel that you've figured out how the world works. The philosophical studies we engaged in were supposed to provide us with important background for our political and economic readings and our travels. The ultimate goal, however, was always to develop an effective practice.

There is an important distinction between the world *as such*, and our interpretation of it, the world *for us*. There is a world out there that exists whether we as individuals exist or not. At the same time, we as individuals interpret the world in certain ways. Our respective interpretations do not form hierarchies in the sense of how close they come to the "real world," that is, the world as such. The world for us is not a poor mirror image of the world as such, it simply frames our understanding of reality. Let us think of a pair of glasses: the shape and color of the lenses determines our perception of the world. We focus on certain aspects of it and find them meaningful. Every kind of knowledge is based on interpretation. This does not mean that notions such as "true" and "false" are meaningless. Interpretations can be true or false, depending on the perspective we take.

People might think that seeing the world through a particular pair of glasses results in a tunnel vision. But that is not necessarily the case; not if we are conscious of wearing glasses and willing to scrutinize the interpretations they allow. That way, we avoid the traps of both uncritical universalism and random relativism, and critical discussion remains possible.

My perspective is materialist. This implies, among other things, that I believe the way in which we produce and distribute goods significantly impacts our interpretation of the world. The conditions under which human beings work and live determine to a large degree how they think. Socialization is neither mechanical nor deterministic but dialectical. I believe that we best understand history through historical materialism. Capitalism has existed for five hundred years. It had a beginning and it will have an end, like any other system that has existed in the past ten thousand years. We have a tendency to forget that. We find it hard to believe that the institutions that control our lives will, one day, be gone.

A materialist understanding of history implies not only an understanding of economics but also of class relations. Class relations force capitalism to change its form constantly. History is an ongoing process that never stops. The world changes; not gradually, but in ruptures. Yet historical materialism is not teleology.<sup>12</sup> There is no *automatic* transition from capitalism to socialism. Social development is complex and unpredictable. We don't know what society will look like in

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<sup>12</sup>. Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific. The English Edition Introduction: History (the role of Religion) in the English middle--class." In: *Marx/Engels Selected Works, Volume 3*. Moscow: Progress Publishers (1970), pp. 95–151.

fifty years. Social systems are more or less chaotic. During some periods, they can be relatively stable, and even if revolutionary movements try to throw them off balance, they can hold their own. Yet, they change during this process. When they enter a structural crisis, they become unstable and can no longer hold their own. This is when revolutionary movements take on special significance. This is when a shoeshine boy killing himself in protest can become the butterfly that flaps its wings in one part of the world and causes a storm in another. This is how the complex relationship between social structures shaping people and people shaping social structures must be understood.

If I translate all of this into a succinct description of the reality we live in, it can be summed up like this: The world is divided into rich and poor countries; this division has economic causes and is reflected in class relations and politics.

### To the Reader

This book consists of three parts. Part One outlines imperialism's history and relevant analyses up to the year 1989. It is a very particular account, as I will focus on theories that were especially important to KAK and to myself. The year 1989 marks both a general and a personal watershed. As the Berlin Wall came tumbling down, several comrades and I were facing prison terms. M--KA dissolved. My revisiting, in this book, the theories that influenced our activism will be a combination of reflections, anecdotes, and quotations. I hope there will be enough information for the reader to investigate further if so inclined.

There are two main reasons why I deem it important to retrace imperialism's history from its very beginnings in the mid--nineteenth century. First, it is important to emphasize that the imperialist legacy continues. Second, it is important to revisit the ideological struggles—and the related political experiences—within imperialism theory. This is particularly true for imperialist countries. In imperialist countries, anti--imperialism has never been a central part of the left, as it concerns realities that we do not suffer from. For the left in imperialist countries, anti--imperialism relates to injustices experienced by others and does not reflect struggles on our home turf. None of us is forced to resist imperialist oppression in our everyday lives. Making anti--imperialism a focus of our political work is something we must choose.

In Part Two of the book, I analyze the current state of imperialism. What role does imperialism play in globalized capitalism? What is its impact on global class relations? I will outline the contributions to imperialism theory since 1989, coming from both academics and militants.

In Part Three, I address the political consequences of imperialism theory, both in the Global North and the Global South. What are the political frameworks we operate in? Who are the main political actors? What are viable forms of resistance? In short, I will discuss anti--imperialist practice today. Should we choose a strategy of delinking from neoliberal globalization in order to focus on national development? Should we respond to globalized capitalism with globalized resistance? Are national liberation movements still a factor to consider? Can international trade union organizations be a relevant force? Do our hopes rest solely with social movements? What do anti--imperialist politics in our part of the world look like? By raising questions like these, I hope to spark the discussions we need to have.

To summarize: Part One focuses on political history, Part Two on political economy, and Part Three on political practice. There are also two appendices: one on Marx's theory of value, and one on Foucault's theory of power. Both are essential to understanding my approach, but they are included as appendices to avoid disrupting the book's narrative.

The English edition at hand is a revised and updated version of the Danish original that appeared in 2016. I have omitted parts that relate primarily to Western Europe and added parts that relate primarily to North America in order to make the book more relevant for readers who don't share my own stomping grounds. I would like to thank everyone who has read drafts of this book and provided me with useful comments, particularly Zak Cope. I would also like to thank Karl Kersplebedeb for his commitment to an English edition and enhancing the final manuscript, and Gabriel Kuhn for an excellent translation and editorial expertise.