Various Authors
Always Against The Tanks
Three Essays on Red Nationalism
November 22, 2019

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Three Essays on Red Nationalism

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Contents

Eastern Bloc. Ignoring, denying, or re-writing What Went Wrong only undermines socialist and communist movements today. If we can't find a way for our movements to progress from this, then I'll happily watch them die out. Tankies are regressive and, frankly, a fucking embarrassment to the Left.

Introduction

This zine was compiled with the goal of making accessible a critique of "tankism," a reactionary ideological position that seems to be trending on the Left. Much like the alt-right, which in 2015 appeared to be an internet phenomenon with little potential to gain a foothold in the streets, tankies have fared well in the era of ascendant nationalisms. In North America they are making the jump from Twitter to our offline communities.

Those of us who believe in a world of radically expanded freedom and the end of domination must contend with the zombified corpse of the 20th Century's authoritarian Left.

In "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Tankies, But Were Afraid to Ask," Mike Harman uncovers the history of the term "tankie" and its relationship to various strains of Marxism-Leninism. Then "Ending the Idealization of the Other" draws on Su-lin Yu's critique of Orientalism to explain why some queer people of color in North America support repression when it is committed by "socialist states." Finally, in "Is Genocide Denial Anti-Imperialist Now?" Darya Rustamova confronts the fetishization of the USSR while expounding on the harm caused by those denying or minimizing genocide and war crimes.

Everything you ever wanted to know about tankies, but were afraid to ask

By Mike Harman, @libcomorg
March 8th, 2018

What does tankie mean?

On October 27th 1956, Peter Fryer, a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and correspondent for its paper the Weekly Worker, arrived in Hungary. This was four days into an uprising of workers calling for worker controlled socialism. Factories had been taken over nationally by workers councils, in a demonstration of workers self-organisation that was unprecedented at the time, and the first strike on its scale in an Eastern-bloc country. On the 4th of November, Russian T54 tanks rolled into Budapest to suppress the uprising. Street fighting continued until the 10th November, although the workers councils held out for two months.

Fryer returned to the UK horrified by the Soviet repression he had seen, but his attempt to write about it for the Daily Worker was suppressed — the editors were sticking to the official USSR line that the entire uprising was a fascist counter-revolutionary plot and refused to publish anything contradicting that narrative. When Fryer wrote up his experiences anyway, he was expelled from the CPGB. Hungary 1956 split Com-

America or Britain!" It means "apply the same critical lens to Putin's Russian Federation as you do to Western nation-states".

Tankism often goes hand-in-hand with a particularly gruesome form of Assadism. These are the chemical weapon deniers (or even celebrators), the militarists, so-called "kebab removers" recapitulating the same excuses of "Western propaganda" and endlessly bootlicking Russian geopolitical interests through any possible man or medium.

Yet, many seem to feel that Russia is an oppressed underdog which needs its name and reputation protected. It's somehow become impossible to consider that the Russian Federation in all its forms throughout modern history has been little more than a mirror of the US (and its lap-dog, the UK). Russia has colonised or attempted to colonise most of central Asia. It's aligned itself with the cruellest forces in the world (now including the USA and the UK). Throughout each of its eras, it has systematically cleansed itself of religious and ethnic minorities. It's fully terrible. It is imperative that all Tankies re-evaluate their priorities and direct their dubious critical thinking capacities elsewhere. Leave this mess behind.

Tankie Discourse is over for me. I'm not engaging in it anymore. It surrounds a set of ideological referents which respond to nothing in the living or dead world. It is a toxic network of arguments and counter-arguments based upon unfounded claims and empty accusations of propaganda. It's a disaster of a fashion parade by people who have no idea about the still-living experiences of the Soviet world. Bin this arrogance, the dialectical nonsense, the cultural insensitivity and sheer ignorance of Tankism.

We don't have a choice. Stalin Did Some Things Wrong. Stalin's state was dramatically racist, sexist, and destructive and the effects of his failures are still ringing out through the

In a flash-back to denial of Stalin's crimes against ethnicities, the Unconditional-Russophiles are aligning themselves with Islamophobic forms of racism once more. Thus the people and campaigns defending every facet of the Soviet Union keep backsliding into support for Putin and the modern state of the Russian Federation. For example, in early 2016, a historian exposed new accounts of Stalinist crimes via the unearthing of a mass grave containing 9000 bodies from the 1930s, (yeah, deny that Tankies) now a remembrance site known as Sandarmokh. He was swiftly sent to a psychiatric ward by Putin and was evaluated at the Serbski centre, an infamous interrogation centre around which several propaganda efforts are spin-doctored, and remains on trial.

Since his re-election campaign, Putin has strongly emphasised that what he calls an "excessive demonisation of Stalin" was being used to undermine Russia and its government. Along with the instrumentalisation of Victory Day, this has led to Stalin's popularity rising to a "record high" among Russians today. He denounces all attempts to dredge up negative accounts of Sovietism precisely because it undermines the primacy of the Russian state and the rampant Russian nationalism it spreads.

Putin is arming and supporting violent states and armies around the world. He is brutally repressing LGBT+ and women's' rights within his own nation and imprisoning protestors. He has solidified a system of oligarchy and corporatism, a form of state-regulated capitalism which centres the profits of the government and its aristocracy. He has restored the Russian Orthodox Church in the government, bolstered by repressions of other religions throughout the nation. His foreign policy has seen the occupations and/or invasions of Chechnya, Ingushetia, South Ossetia, Abkhazia Georgia, Ukraine, and Crimea. He is perpetrating daily massacres in Syria. Saying all of this doesn't mean "Putin is worse than

munist parties across the world; many who had supported the USSR up until this point became disillusioned and split or left individually, while those who stayed loyal to the USSR earned the epithet 'tankies'.

After 1956, the USSR was to invade Czechoslovakia in 1968, then Afghanistan in 1979.

Are all Tankies Marxist-Leninists?

While the original 'tankie' epithet grew out of the split in the Communist Party of Great Britain, the geo-political 'anti-imperialist' support for the USSR and any state aligned against the USA has also been popular with some Trotskyist groups.

In the 1980s it was revealed that the Trotskyist Workers Revolutionary Party (famous for the involvement of actress Vanessa Redgrave) had been receiving funding from Libyan intelligence services and passing details of Iraqi dissidents in the UK to Saddam Hussein.

In the USA, the Workers World Party and Party for Socialism and Liberation both originated in a split from the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party under Sam Marcy. Marcy split from the SWP over the position it took on Hungary '56, although somewhat bizarrely, also accused those who supported the uprising of being Stalinists. Both parties describe themselves as Marxist-Leninist now, and no longer cite Trotsky, but their origination was in the Trotskyist theory of the USSR as a 'deformed workers state.

So support for crushing of workers movements is shared by both some Marxist-Leninists and some Trotskyists, one explanation for this is that the actual politics of Stalin and Trotsky were not very different.

Are all Marxist-Leninists tankies?

The significance of Hungary was not only the uprising itself, but that it occurred in an Eastern Bloc country which was claiming to be socialist. This caused an existential crisis for any communist that still considered the USSR to be a workers' state. Along with Khrushchev's speech to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956, exposing and denouncing many of the actions of Stalin.

It was at the same time that Mao began to gradually distance China from the USSR. Maoism had already become a distinct current but without any formal break, which was precipitated by Khruschev's speech and the international reaction to it. Both China and the USSR claimed to be the vanguard of Marxist-Leninism from this point onwards (from here sprang a million accusations of 'revisionism'). This was mostly due to the national interests of the two countries, and internal contradictions in China but was expressed politically as a split with Khrushchev.

The split between China and the USSR, between Maoism and Stalinism, had repercussions elsewhere, such as the multiple splits in the Communist Party of India in the mid-1960s, most often associated with the the Naxalite rebellion, or when the two countries supported opposite sides in Angola's civil war in the 1970s.

Tanks rolled into Tiananmen square in 1989, and those who supported the Chinese government against workers and students have sometimes been labelled 'tankies' too.

This means that 'Marxist Leninist' in the 1960s could include those still aligned with the USSR, those who had been aligned with the USSR but had split after 1956, those influenced by Maoism (Marxism-Leninism-Maoism was coined later in the '90s) and even more confusingly, some Trotskyists would occasionally call themselves Marxist-Leninist too (because they were Leninist Marxists!).

People who open up a critical discourse about the Soviet Union are excluded from certain Western leftist spaces. Whether explicitly, like this…

The exclusion of post-Soviet voices goes further. We still have worrying misunderstandings of the post-Soviet nations, they are under-represented in the press, popular culture, and academia, and for many historical reasons, few people travel or migrate outside of their nations, particularly from Russia and Central Asia. Few people from Europe travel beyond Moscow and St. Petersburg. Post-Soviet voices are already marginalised in Western spaces. The left-leaning agenda simply has to fight against this.

For example, a few years ago, Chechnya started trending on every platform. At the same time, "Where is Chechnya" was searched in Google just over 178,000 times. International Business Times broke the first English-language article "Chechnya detains 100 gay men in first concentration camps since the Holocaust"

Firstly, Chechnya isn't actually a country (not that it shouldn't be, but the fact that so many individuals and news outlets are writing it as a nation in itself shows how little they understand).

Secondly, Russia, which Chechnya resides within (for now — freedom and justice for the North Caucasus will come), has been systematically detaining, torturing, and by extension killing LGBT+ folks for a long time now. I have to add, this probably isn't the 'first concentration camp since the holocaust' — ethnic Chechens were not long ago put in what I would call concentration camps. This isn't one of those "how did you not know this has been happening for AGES???" arguments, but when the IBT reports that Chechnya is doing it, why does this trend instantly? A particular Russian (and European and American) Islamophobic agenda currently marks the, predominantly Muslim, Caucasus and Central Asia as a space of terrorism and general barbarity.

A present that matters less

The impact of "Tankies" has become damaging in contemporary discourse. Real, wonderful, radical socialist movements are out there fighting against the real living legacies of Russian imperialism. Unfortunately, Western politics students with 3000+ Twitter followers are taking up their space. They are wasting our energies on discourse about 100-year-old propaganda. The Russian state and its surrounding colonial legacy is still harmful and still worth debating.

For example, since the USSR enforced unwanted borders and governance, regions in the Caucasus have been fighting for their right to independence and self-determination. You can read more about these fights here. After Russia invaded, Crimean Tatar populations have faced violence and discrimination in their own lands, many being unlawfully detained, forced to leave their homes, and there are numerous missing persons still unaccounted for. You can read more and offer your support here. Meanwhile the usual suspects of the UK far left; Worker's Hammer, the Socialist Worker and the Morning Star, each unequivocally supported the 2014 "referendum" which refused to give Tatars votes as justification for Russia's invasion of the Crimea.

Vital and important histories of Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Tatarstan, Crimea, Siberia, Ichkeria, and so many more, are being co-opted, appropriated, and re-written in Leftbook groups made up of middle-class students in Paris. People whose Google searches only bring up English-language articles and archives should not be telling Georgians and Uzbeks that they are just passive victims of Western propaganda. The creeping Russian occupation of Ukraine and the Caucasus is being bolstered and supported by Twitter warriors who have never been East of Berlin (okay, Chiang Mai doesn't count).

Are all Leninist Marxists Marxist-Leninists?

There have been other historical currents that were influenced by Lenin, including Trotskyism, the Italian branch of Left Communism, and the Operaismo (workerist) tradition in 1960s and 1970s Italy, as well as major figures like CLR James (early on a Trotskyist and leading Pan-Africanist, later moving towards a council communist position). There are huge differences between these currents, as wide as the differences between 'anarchists' and 'marxists'. In terms of a relationship to Lenin we can identity some questions which most of these currents and others have had to answer:

— whether Lenin's work contains unique insights relative to other Marxists at the time

— whether Lenin was correct that Russia would have to pass through a capitalist stage prior to communism and that the task of the Bolshevik party was to raise the forces of production prior to a transition to communism.

— whether the conditions of Russia in 1917 apply to the US in 1960, or to anywhere in the world in 2018.

— whether the USSR was still revolutionary after 1921, 1927, 1956, or 1981.

The answers to these questions led Marxists like CLR James to abandon 'Leninism' almost entirely, whilst still retaining an admiration of Lenin the thinker and historical figure.

Were the Black Panthers tankies?

Some Black Panthers, such as Fred Hampton, described themselves as Marxist-Leninist, but were more influenced by the writings of Lenin and Mao (and the context of Vietnamese resistance to US invasion and African liberation struggles) than the internal or foreign policy of the the USSR. Huey

Newton in 1970 introduced the idea of Revolutionary Intercommunalism, a clarification of his ideas which firmly rejected 'socialism in one country'.

> In 1966 we called our Party a Black Nationalist Party. We called ourselves Black Nationalists because we thought that nationhood was the answer. Shortly after that we decided that what was really needed was revolutionary nationalism, that is, nationalism plus socialism. After analyzing conditions a little more, we found that it was impractical and even contradictory. Therefore, we went to a higher level of consciousness. We saw that in order to be free we had to crush the ruling circle and therefore we had to unite with the peoples of the world. So we called ourselves Internationalists. We sought solidarity with the peoples of the world. We sought solidarity with what we thought were the nations of the world. But then what happened? We found that because everything is in a constant state of transformation, because of the development of technology, because of the development of the mass media, because of the fire power of the imperialist, and because of the fact that the United States is no longer a nation but an empire, nations could not exist, for they did not have the criteria for nationhood. Their self- determination, economic determination, and cultural determination has been transformed by the imperialists and the ruling circle. They were no longer nations. We found that in order to be Internationalists we had to be also Nationalists, or at least acknowledge nationhood. Internationalism, if I understand the word, means the interrelationship among a

We don't have to pick a side. We all have a duty to dismantle power imbalances around the world. To claim "my enemy's enemy is my friend" is a very Western-centric way to view the Soviet Union and all it left behind. When you deliberately ground your viewpoint only in precisely that which "The West" despises, you are still basing your view on the Western worldview, and that is still not very cool nor subversive. Attempting to retroactively justify the deaths and suffering of millions of civilians is dangerous, baseless, and absurd. This categorically vague and ideological (and shockingly individualistic) notion of who does or does not deserve to live, within the strange utopia called "The Soviet Union" which lives only in the minds of 20-year-old-white-boys, is no more offensive than it is fucking meaningless.

The conjecture which fills the online duels between Tankies, Ultras, Ancoms, Brocialists, etc. is so empty of any worldly referents that it's largely impossible to engage with. Sometimes I latch onto something I recognise and get involved. Usually it's famine denial or any mention of Crimea, and usually, I get called a Nazi sympathiser by three 19 year-olds from Nottingham and sent a link to a Reddit thread describing how the documents must have been forged by bourgeois new-world economists because you can see the different pixels throughout the text.

But, how can you argue with somebody who's attacking epistemology itself? Fighting against narratives can feel like you're in a dark room trying to catch a mosquito that you're not sure actually exists. Is Twitter the forum to discuss historicism? The Tankie's idea of the Soviet Union, the picture in their mind, is of some rose-coloured, radical and glorious thing which never actually existed. What the Tankie says of the USSR says more about the Tankie than the USSR itself. God bless Edward Said. On the whole, I'm glad people are interested in the Soviet Union. But that interest should go further, we need more nuance, new voices, and better arguments.

Kalmyks and so many more. 4 million people were forced to migrate within the Soviet Union, around half of whom died as a result. Need I fucking continue?

Denying genocides and war crimes simultaneously denies the voices of surviving populations and their right to accept and overcome trauma. It removes the possibility for tackling the roots and causes of these atrocities, and it prevents us from being able to move on and stop this shit happening again. It is also horrifying that I have to even try to summarise to someone why they maybe shouldn't roll their eyes at victim testimonies and deny recognised massacres.

Can you imagine being the last living member of your family, bartering with your food allowance and not eating for three weeks, then using the cigarettes you earned to bribe a guard to give you one metal spoon, then sharpening the spoon gradually over two months, using it to cut your way through a fence and threaten the guard who tries to apprehend you, and walking for twenty eight days to the nearest liberated village **(that was a true story btw)** where you run into some kind of Vice contributor from Dorset who shouts "HoLOLdomor was fake go to gulag peasant hahaha!" You crumble, all hope is lost, you drop to your knees and shout to the sky "WHY DID I FALL VICTIM TO WESTERN PROPAGANDA".

The Cold War instilled in both parties a binary view of geopolitics that we need to deconstruct. It also cemented the binary outlook on geopolitics, which largely essentialises ideologies into Capitalist and Communist. If you're not with us, you're against us. Hating the US doesn't mean you've gotta love and believe the Russian state. What sort of world must this be if we have to choose between the US/UK alliance, and Russia/DPRK/China? Acknowledging and remembering the millions killed by Soviet famine does not mean you can't also acknowledge and remember that Britain forcibly starved three million to death in Bangladesh.

> group of nations. But since no nation exists, and since the United States is in fact an empire, it is impossible for us to be Internationalists.
>
> These transformations and phenomena require us to call ourselves "intercommunalists" because nations have been transformed into communities of the world.
> […]
> I don't see how we can talk about socialism when the problem is world distribution. I think this is what Marx meant when he talked about the non-state.

Former Black Panthers such as Russell Maroon Shoatz and Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, both of whom have spent years in prison for their association with the BPP, have broken with Marxist-Leninism after seeing how the Leninist structure of the Black Panther Party made it vulnerable to the FBI's COINTELPRO programme, and by examining the trajectory of Leninist revolutions.

So the BPP wasn't a monolithic entity politically, and the individual politics of its members as well as the orientation of the party itself changed over time. Rather than claiming it was any one thing, we can read what Black Panther Party members actually wrote in their own right.

And the League of Revolutionary Black Workers?

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers, based in Detroit, described themselves as Marxist-Leninist, but they had close relationships with associates of CLR James such as Martin Glaberman, Grace Boggs, and James Boggs who had broken

with Leninism more than a decade earlier, while also being influenced by Fanon and others. Once again the politics are a bit more complex than the labels.

What about anti-imperialism?

Anti-imperialism means different things to different people. Fundamentally, to be *against imperialism* should mean support for working class struggles against colonialism, and opposition to capitalist war. Unfortunately 'anti-imperialism' has often morphed into simply taking the side of the USSR in geopolitical conflicts, and post-1990, unconditional support to the ruling class in any country aligned against the US.

Lenin in 1914 wrote in The Right of Nations to Self-Determination that communists should support the *right* of nations to secede, but not the specifics of any particular national struggle. This is because Lenin saw nationalist movements as essential to the development of capitalism over feudalism, as a step on the way towards communism:

> Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated.

Even within this statist framework, Lenin still ultimately stated that the class struggle should take absolute precedence over the nationalist movement:

Many of the generations born out of the Soviet era have a sense of disconnect with their cultural and ethnic roots due to the mass campaigns of cleansing and deportation perpetrated against them. The resulting trauma and erasure of their histories is a living remnant of Soviet rule.

Furthermore, much of contemporary Russian politics and public opinion is still swayed along similar lines to that of Sovietism. People from the Caucasus and Central Asia are routinely discriminated against in Russia and the nations are still bearing the harmful effects of the USSR's and the Russian Federation's colonial campaigns.

A large section of humanity's existence hangs by a thread made up of recent multiple genocides, forced deportations, and famines directly executed by leaders of the Soviet Union. We have to muster some understanding and empathy for the histories of those who suffered under "Communist" rule. We have to listen and learn from this.

There were a huge number of deliberate and pre-meditated massacres perpetrated on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, class, and more. Pleas of "Western propaganda" cannot conveniently explain away the mass graves of those targeted by Soviet leaders. Nor can any ideological argument about the invalidity of religion, precisely which classes are counter-revolutionary, or who conspired with the Germans, be used to justify such a scale of suffering.

It's a fucking outrage that I have to even give examples again, especially as these are the most well-documented, well-researched, and widely available instances. But here we go. Mass rape was planned and used by Soviet soldiers across Poland and East Germany to punish ex-POWs. Jewish communities were wiped out across countless nations. 2 million Afghans were killed in a Soviet genocide. 18 million people were sent to gulags. 10 million deaths resulted from the 1932–3 deliberate, man-made famine. Ethnic genocides of Poles, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Karachay, Crimean Tatars,

I kind of understand why some Lefties would feel defensive of the USSR. It is all too often used as the litmus test of all Left-leaning morality. Communists must be sick to death of trying to justify state communism given the terrible attempts we've seen so far. As much as I wish we had been given a great example of living Communism, we haven't. Only when we accept that, can we work to make it actually happen. It does not undermine the ideologies of communism and socialism, and even Marxism-Leninism, to accept that Stalin Did a Bunch of Stuff Wrong.

A history which no longer matters, apparently

I'm not writing a mere list of the hypocrisies within a single London activist scene (honestly, I'd be typing for weeks), and I'm not (just) being snarky. There is a huge problem when teen hipsters who discovered Marxist theory at a freshers fair three months ago try to explain the USSR to people who have known about it since they were in the womb.

Since most of the people who should be saying this were forcibly starved to death, deported to slave camps, and/or lined up and shot, parts of me made it through the gene pool, into the delightful world of English-language online discourse, and I'm here to blog about it. Like most people with post-Soviet heritage, my family history is disjointed, depressing, and confusing. Having ancestors from what are now known as Armenia, Uzbekistan, Russia, Britain, and Pakistan, I grew up in a gloriously multicultural Northern town and I am lucky to have (almost) always been comfortable asserting a British identity. I am very white, I (unfortunately) have a strong regional English accent, and in the UK it's only upon seeing my name that people start to realise there is something foreign going on.

> The bourgeoisie always places its national demands in the forefront, and does so in categorical fashion. With the proletariat, however, these demands are subordinated to the interests of the class struggle. […] the important thing for the proletariat is to ensure the development of its class. For the bourgeoisie it is important to hamper this development by pushing the aims of its "own" nation before those of the proletariat. That is why the proletariat confines itself, so to speak, to the negative demand for recognition of the *right* to self-determination, without giving guarantees to any nation, and without undertaking to give anything at the expense of another nation.

Additionally, while American imperialism in 1916 was not at the level it is now, he also rejected the hypocrisy of simply playing off one imperialism against another, in Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism

> Let us suppose that a Japanese condemns the annexation of the Philippines by the Americans. The question is: will many believe that he does so because he has a horror of annexations as such, and not because he himself has a desire to annex the Philippines? And shall we not be constrained to admit that the "fight" the Japanese is waging against annexations can be regarded as being sincere and politically honest only if he fights against the annexation of Korea by Japan, and urges freedom for Korea to secede from Japan?

In War and Revolution Lenin wrote:

> Nothing but a workers' revolution in several countries can defeat this war. The war is not a game, it

> is an appalling thing taking toll of millions of lives, and it is not to be ended easily.

Lenin therefore saw anti-imperialist struggle as being in the realm of bourgeois national revolutions (something to 'critically support' but subordinated to the class struggle), dismissing inter-imperialist conflicts with the slogan "Turn the imperialist war into civil war".

Didn't the USSR support African national liberation?

Sometimes, but only when it supported the USSR's own geopolitical interests. CLR James described his conversation with George Padmore, who had joined the Communist Party and moved to the USSR in 1929, before leaving in 1934 due to the purges and a change in orientation:

> But one day, sometime in late 1934 or 1935 there was a knock at my door and I went do the door and there was George Padmore. [...] He said, "I've left those people you know." And that was the biggest shock I received since I had gone to Brazil three years before. "I have left those people" meant he had left the Communist Party. And he was the biggest black man in Moscow, dealing with black people and the colonial revolution. So I said, "What happened?" And he told me. He said, "They are changing the line and now they tell me that in future we are going to be soft and not attack strongly the democratic imperialists which are Britain, France and the United States. That the main attack is to be directed upon the Fascist imperialists, Italy, Germany and Japan. And George, we would like you to do this in

have murdered thousands of Muslims because there aren't any Muslims in Russia".

Checkmate, history.

Those boys from the home-counties who fetishise the Eastern Bloc, deeming any critique of Soviet-Communism as "US Imperialist Propaganda" while refusing to listen to anyone who experienced Soviet colonialism. The same ones who shout "religion only causes wars‼" from beneath their fedoras while defending the secular ideology which calculatedly burned Muslims out of the Caucasus, because their Socialism doesn't leave space for the religious. The ones who are rightly calling out imageries of slavery and the holocaust in veganism campaigns, while in the same breath firing out gulag jokes from every platform. The ones who think Stalin fought off the Nazis because he hated racism SO MUCH. The ☒ Twitter ☒ accounts constantly fantasising about lining up their ideological opposites against the wall or sending them to gulags while insisting that the Soviet state did not use any excessive violence. It's the Worker's Lib leaflets denouncing antisemitism yet unequivocally denying Stalin's. It's the new waves of the same old people calling for Corbyn to resign over his promise to renew Trident while defending the right of Russia and North Korea to buy and sell nuclear arms (...without wanting to add to the imbalanced negative coverage of Corbz in the press, his stance on Syria would make me shout "STFU tankie" at him in any undergrad common room.) It's the dude in my undergrad anthropology module wearing a "Free Tibet" t-shirt while arguing that "communist" nation-states never play Imperialism.

Schrodinger's Marxist insists that communism ought not to be reduced to the views and actions of totalitarian leaders while shutting down those who deign to criticise them. It is more damaging to try to defend the actions of extreme war criminals associated with left movements than to critique them, develop our views, and move on.

in defending and re-evaluating a regime which on thousands of well-documented occasions used mass rape as a tool of war, sent women and children to gulags, and carried out countless ethnic and religious genocides during its reign (ended sexism and racism, my fucking hat). What I don't believe in is uncritically standing up for Sovietism to defend the ideologies of the Left. We have come a long way and we can do better than 1917. These views are like the intellectual manifestation of those inflatable things with flailing arms outside car dealerships. They're ugly and they don't make sense. We need to finally dispense with the unconditional celebration of Sovietism. 2017 is over. It's now 102 years since the Bolshevik revolution, and 102nd anniversaries don't mean shit.

I know the Soviet aesthetic is edgy and quirky and kids like to have a hammer and sickle as their Twitter names or some vapourwave Stalin cover photo. Soviet tower blocks look fucking cool, I know. The USSR was important and fascinating. Gulag jokes and genocide denial look less cool. What looks like an innocent Weeaboo 2.0 aesthetic of Stalin's face and glitch filters, with deeply misapplied Cyrillic letters, has become a cover-story for the denial and appropriation and revision of a history which has been set in the minds of the Eastern bloc for centuries.

The age of leftbook has brought explicit prohibitions on racist, transphobic, homophobic, colourist, biphobic, aphobic, anti-semitic behaviour, yet only a handful of groups ban "tankism". Plenty of users see no problem with the tankies' characteristic support for (or denial of) Soviet violence, repression, and imperialism. The debate is wide open and it seems like everyone has an opinion. Yet, people who grew up in Soviet and post-Soviet nations are being silenced by Soviet apologist Marxists who insist that "Stalin Did Nothing Wrong". You know, those lads who have "PLEASE DON'T BRING UP AFGHANISTAN" written in their eyes. "Stalin can't

> the propaganda that you are doing and in the articles that you are writing and the paper you are publishing, to follow that line." And George said, "That is impossible. Germany and Japan have no colonies in Africa. How am I to say the democratic imperialists, such as the United States is the most race ridden territory in the western world. So I am to say that Britain and France who have the colonies in Africa and the United States, can be democratic imperialists and be soft to them but be strong against Japan, Italy and Germany. That is impossible. What do you think of that?"

Isn't criticising the USSR anti-communist?

There is a tendency by everyone from conservatives, to liberals, to social democrats to criticise the 'crimes of communism' and ignore the actions of capitalist countries. This is complete shite and we reject it completely.

While there were famines and bread riots in the USSR in the 1930s, British policy caused the Bengal famine killing 3 million people in 1943.

While the USSR and China have imprisoned political dissidents, including many communists and anarchists, the USA has the highest incarceration rate in the world, with some political prisoners held in solitary confinement for decades and 1,000 extra-judicial killings by police per year.

While Lenin deported dissident Bolsheviks like Miasnikov and presided over the crushing of the Kronstadt rebellion, social democrats in Germany oversaw the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknicht in collaboration with the fascist Freikorps.

While the USSR had 'gulags', Britain put hundreds of thousands of Kenyans and Malayans into concentration camps in

the 1950s, and there were forced-labour camps in the UK itself in the 1930s under Labour.

While the US healthcare system leaves people without medical care and destitute, Cuba despite economic sanctions has socialised healthcare and trains healthcare workers for other countries.

Liberal myopia sees a horseshoe where liberal democracy is 'reasonable' and fascism and communism are two poles of 'authoritarianism'. A libertarian communist critique asserts that communism is impossible within the framework of the nation state, and that *all* states, whether fascist, liberal democratic or socialist will suppress workers self-organisation in the interest of capital.

What about Syria, Iran, North Korea?

A central line of communist and anarchist thought and praxis has been internationalism, and an opposition to war in all its forms. This caused the split in the Second International in 1914 when German Social Democrats voted for war credits. However putting this into practice has turns out to be a lot more complicated.

With the war in Syria, opposition to US intervention, shared by all communists (though not necessarily social democrats), has been marred by support from some organisations for the Syrian government and Bashar Assad and Russia despite the of bombing civilians, on the basis that areas such as Eastern Ghouta are held by Islamist militias and that the 400,000 civilians trapped there are being used as 'human shields'.

This is further complicated by Rojava, supported by both some Marxist Leninists and some anarchists, due to the Marxist-Leninist orientation of the PKK, the Libertarian Municipalist ideas recently adopted by the PKK's leader Ocalan, the TEV-DEM system of administrative councils, and

smile at him, I tell him I don't have Russian citizenship and he leaves me alone.

The London Marxist Society is here handing out flyers and their header is a picture of Mount Rushmore with stone faces of Lenin, Marx, Stalin, and Putin. If this isn't baffling enough, these symbols are followed with the words "down with imperialism".

Later we all go to The Lexington, there's a pub quiz where the team with the funniest name wins a bag of Doritos. When the names are handed in, the man with the microphone is astounded that 6 out of 10 are called Crimea River. It's weird and almost as disappointing as the Doritos being fucking Cool Original.

It's 2017 and I'm standing outside SOAS with a friend, and Jonty Leff, the Worker's Revolutionary Party candidate for Hackney South and Shoreditch, comes over to us. He begins badly, "Hey you gorgeous ladies".

He hands us a leaflet for a symposium celebrating the 100th anniversary of the February Revolution (first outrage, attendance costs £48), and tells me they want more women involved in their movement because, after all, it was in 1917 Petrograd where sexism met its *final* demise. He turns to my friend (a Moroccan woman) and adds "you know, the 1917 revolution was also the *first* defeat of racism in the modern world!"

I want to add here that I read Jonty Leff's manifesto, and I agreed with every policy. I am a socialist, I believe in the redistribution of wealth, free welfare, and dismantling hierarchies of power. I believe Jonty Leff has good ideas and I would be happy to see him elected one day. I don't believe the USSR upheld the values of socialism or Marxism, and I don't believe

Is Genocide Denial Anti-Imperialist Now? How Tankies are Taking Over Leftbook and the London Student Scene

By Darya Rustamova
August 13th, 2019

Picture a British second-year Sociology student holding a Socialist Worker's Party placard and shouting "hands-off DPRK" outside your student halls (that image in your head, he's male and wearing cargo shorts, right? He's going to ask you out for a chai latte, take you to Bookmarks, explain the women's lib. section to you, and then ghost you for six months). Now imagine a room full of them. This is my fresher's week Socialist Society meet and greet.

It's September 2013 and three people in front of me are reading RT on their macbook pros, "an unofficial survey showed the majority of Crimea would choose an economic partnership with Russia over the EU". It's not a good start.

A boy from Cambridge in a keffiyeh he bought from Camden Lock whips his head around when he hears what he thinks is a Russian name called on the register. He later tells me if he could marry into any nationality it would be Russian. I don't

the right to national self-determination of the Kurds. On the other hand, both some Marxist Leninists and some anarchist and anti-state Marxists have been fiercely critical of Rojava, due to collaboration militarily with the US against ISIS (and most recently with Assad against Turkey). *On libcom.org we've continued to allow publishing of texts both critical and supportive of Rojava, and regularly get attacked for being NATO shills for both, whether it's the US against Assad or Turkey against Rojava.*

With Iran, despite the religious nature of the regime and the fact that all communist parties are banned, when strikes and street protests broke out at the end of December 2017, there was an immediate reluctance to recognise the grassroots nature of the actions, due to the possibility that the US might use the protests as an excuse for 'regime change'. Some commentators went as far as to suggest the protests had been almost immediately hijacked by the CIA, Mossad, or Saudi Arabia.

The cases of Iran and Assad show that in these discussions, the internal contradictions of a country can be completely ignored, with the central question always being "is the country aligned against the US or not?" — on the one hand celebrating Assad's attacks against Islamists, on the other celebrating Iran's religious state against the Haft-Tappeh sugar workers or leftist students.

Our position is that *regardless* of the actions of the Iranian or Syrian state, we completely oppose foreign intervention, whether US, Russia, or Turkey, on the base that foreign intervention always makes things worse. But to oppose intervention does not require a denial of the internal contradictions of those states or the reality of working class resistance to them.

The same applies to North Korea — we reject under any circumstances US intervention in North Korea, hawks in the US talking about a nuclear weapons programme gloss over the US bombing Japan twice in 1945, let alone the use of depleted

uranium shells against civilian areas in Iraq. But to reject sanctions and intervention can rely on a principled anti-militarism and internationalism, solidarity with the North Korean working class, not with Kim Jong Un personally. As we would support the Gwangju uprising in South Korea in 1980, we would support workers struggle in North Korea too.

But Communist parties are very successful in India/Japan?

While the CPI-M likes to hold huge rallies with hammer and sickle flags, it's policies are social democratic. It runs for elections, and where it wins pursues pro-business policies. In Kerala the new communist administration under Pinarayi Vijayan stressed partnership between management and trade unions and promised investment to stimulate industry, including 'Silicon Valley-like hubs'. Not quite seizing the means of production, then.

The Japanese Communist Party, with several members in the Japanese parliament (Diet) abandoned Leninism 25 years ago, deciding to pursue a purely electoral road to socialism, and has recently attempted to work with centrist liberal MPs.

They might be popular Communist Parties, but they aren't… communist.. at all.

What about American Marxist Leninists, are they social democrats too?

The Marcyite Party for Socialism and Liberation's program also sounds suspiciously social democrat if you actually read it, for example:

> It will be a right of every person in the United States to have a job with guaranteed union repre-

Works Cited

I owe a great deal of the readings and analysis in this piece to this sensitive,nuanced critique of Kristeva by Su-lin Yu of National Cheng Kung University, Tainan, Taiwan.

Yu, Su-lin. "Reconstructing Western Female Subjectivity: Between Orientalism and Feminism in Julia Kristeva's About Chinese Women." 2002. legacy.chass.ncsu.edu

ing of the US state. In queer tankism, the two flip and become seamlessly melded together: the "anti-imperialism" of queer tankies, and the"Western queer/trans critic" identity category through which it is refracted,while seemingly "liberatory" in fact becomes the mirror image of the roving,imperial "America, World Police." So intent on finding and fighting instances of US imperialism all over the globe, even where it doesn't exist,these queer tankies use liberatory rhetoric to argue for oppressed people's very subjection in "socialist states."

Thus, this radicalism surrounding gender, sexuality, or race is not necessarily inconsonant with imperial behavior. Subsuming everything under the rubric of AMERICA, including the very critique of America, reifies America as the geopolitical actor par excellence — it is the mechanism of discourse repeating itself. These tankie takes, in essence, are being underwritten by a general US chauvinism, in which American conceptions of race, gender,sexuality, culture, and politics, however subconsciously, come to take precedence over the real material contradictions and complex personhood of the actors in any given global uprising.

Let me be clear: US marginalized people's intense identification with the movements of the oppressed elsewhere is understandable and, in fact,laudable. It is a project that I myself partake in. It is when this identification and "empathy" (with all its Hartmanian overtones) run roughshod over the voices and actual conditions of the "oppressed elsewhere" that the reality of living and speaking and acting from the US as still holding a certain epistemological and material power is made clear.

The Western critique of the West must be able to grapple with the reality of contradiction (as Mao reminds us) rather than trying to smooth everything into something con/subsumable into the American "critique" of America.This requires an "ethics after idealism," the end to the idealization of the Other as the intellectual and moral force of our analyses and our activism.

> sentation and full social benefits provided by the socialist government, including a pension, health care, workers' compensation, paid parental and family leave for up to two years, paid sick and disability leave, a minimum of one month's paid vacation, and at least 12 paid holidays.

Isn't this… Sweden?

> Working conditions will aim to enhance the humanity and dignity of all workers. The working week will be 30 hours.

That's ten hours less than Bernie's offering, but not quite the abolition of wage labour.

However the PSL is just one party, and you will also see Marxist Leninists oppose electoral activity, working on prisoner solidarity etc. The important thing is to actually read what people say they want, and observe what they do, not just listen to what they say about themselves or check whether there's a hammer and sickle or a rose printed next to the promise of full employment — these aren't the things that decide whether someone is communist or not.

Liberals just call anyone they don't like a tankie!

This is often true. There has been regular red-baiting of mild social democrat Jeremy Corbyn, recently accusing him of being a spy for East Germany in the '80s. The right wing of the Democrats at one point was calling any Bernie Sanders supporter a Russian-influenced alt-leftist. William Gillis of the Center for a Stateless Society recently said of us 'Remember when libcom was about as tankie and class-reductionist as you would ever encounter in the radical left, and we all viewed

them as evil suspicious bastards because they wouldn't all outright id as anarchists? ' presumably due to our hosting and promotion of anti-state and post-Leninist Marxists.

Therefore if someone is using 'tankie', they may be objecting to a specific leftist ideology that prioritisies geopolitics over class struggle, or they might just be punching left. When liberals have a go at 'communism' they often mean the Soviet Union (and let's be honest sometimes it's tempting to tell people they'll be first in the gulags after the revolution when they do this, especially if it's fucking Jordan Peterson).

Should I work with Marxist-Leninists?

If you're organising at work or around housing issues, the people you work with are not going to all have the same politics at you, and your opinions on the July 1918 uprising of Left Socialist Revolutionaries after their expulsion from the Bolshevik government are not relevant to that situation. Yes, really, no-one gives a shit. You're relating to each other as workers in that situation, not as representatives of a political niche, at least we hope not.

Anarchists and Marxist-Leninists have also worked together as members of anti-fascist collectives in the US and elsewhere, and this is really a choice for people to make locally.

Things you should bear in mind when organising are —

However co-operation with individuals is very different from a left-unity project, coalitions of organisations etc. The questions to consider when a group is organised in for example an anti-war protest is are they going to try to divert a protest into an ineffectual rally, or co-operate with the police if protesters try to step outside strict limits of activity. Similarly with workplace organising, do co-workers have links with the union hierarchy or management? Approaches to this differ

cavalier game with the violent repression of the (unidealized) Other. The so-called dissident Other that the "socialist state" requires"protection" from — these are the real people identified for justified extermination by queer, people of color in America. Fascism in red clothes.

This is the painful reality, one that I have personally felt the most betrayed by: not only that many leftist intellectuals that I must deal with in real life,senior scholars who wield some power over me, follow and support these tankies online but that many of them are queers, many POC, all hopping on the tankie bandwagon to condemn those outside the US in their struggles against imperialism and for the right to self-determination.

What could it be then? Despite the radical gender and sexuality vanguardism of these tankies, the imperial act of rendering non-US sites as both totally knowable (an analysis by the capable "I" of a site and its people without the first clue about its material conditions) and paradoxically completely unknowable (a homogeneous phantasm that has no connection to reality) reinstantiates classic patriarchal dominance that is tied to the active subject in the liberal, Enlightenment tradition, likewise in theories of Orientalism, in which a masculine West feminizes the Eastern objects of study. As Rey Chow argues in Woman and Chinese Modernity, "Kristeva's book about Chinese women shows us how the alluring tactic of 'feminizing' another culture in the attempt to criticize Western discourse actually repeats the mechanisms of the discourse and hence cannot be an alternative to it."

What we see in the implicit conjunction of US-centric radical gender/sexuality vanguardism and the abstraction and idealization of the other in online discourse is the latent masculine chauvinism of US imperialism as an ideology rearing its head. Puar's "homonationalism"revealed Islamophobia as underwriting both the paternal LGBT bleeding-heart "concern" for oppressed gay brown people over there and the warmonger-

representation of the other as complex, flawed, contradictory or otherwise.

The illusion is so complete because tankies often correctly cite historical instances of US imperialist destabilization but the anticipatory, paranoid reading of "AMERICA" into every instance of struggle and resistance abroad shows how oftentimes the academic critique, disconnected from material struggle, or even more simply, the lived experience of non-US people,reduces everything outside to something possessable and understandable on the inside. This subjugation of the world under the rubric of American analysis is hegemonic, colonial behavior.

6. But why queer? Why POC?

> "Often, in an attempt to show 'the ways things really are' in the non-West, our discourses produce a non-West that is deprived of fantasy, desires, and contradictory emotions. When it is not the site of warfare and bloodshed, when it is not what compels humanistic sympathies and charities, the non-West commands solemn, humorless reverence as he Other that we cannot hope to know." — Rey Chow, Woman and Chinese Modernity

The seemingly obvious answer to the problem of tankism — whiteness — no longer holds water. The idealistic notion of solidarity amongst all oppressed peoples has also proven to be harder than a simple identity politics. Certainly, the core problem of tankism is a colonial-racial one: the uncritical romanticization, the noble savagery, of foreign sites of authoritarian repression as a means to gain moral superiority in a narrowly defined notion of anti-imperialism is by definition one that ignores the complexity of localized racial and ethnic division and conflict, among many other things. It also plays a

from organisation to organisation and is not strictly linked to ideology.

If there are real political and organisational disagreements, it's better to be open about them than gloss over them, and retain some independence.

Ending the Idealization of the Other: Notes on the Queer POC Tankie

Uncredited
August 30th, 2019

> Our fascination with the native, the oppressed, the savage, all such figures masks a desire to hold onto an unchanging certainty somewhere outside our own 'fake' experience. It is a desire for being 'non-duped,' which is a not-too-innocent desire to seize control. — Rey Chow, Writing Diaspora

1. So what is a tankie?

> Tankism: the uncritical, unwavering support for any state aligned against the US, typically imperialist, anti-worker (former) authoritarian socialist states.

What more can be said about the tankie that hasn't already been said? Darya Rustamova's recent essay dismantles tankism thoroughly enough to be the final word on the recent resurgence of this disturbing, ahistorical school of thought. You'll also want to read Mike Harman's incredibly thorough explainer on the origins of modern tankism too. Yet, if there is a shortcoming in Rustamova's essay, it would be that she aims

Chinese Women is "a book precisely about the dangers of using oneself as a measure for the other."

So while tankies either impose an ahistorical homogeneity on China in order to idealize it (or idealistically take CCP policy documents as a representation of reality), they similarly impose homogeneity on Hong Kong in order to demonize it. Unlike Kristeva, who articulates the futility of representing the other (despite still going ahead and doing so), this presents a unique situation wherein the US-centrism and unconscious identificatory impulse is so strong as to have deluded itself into thinking it has refused this imperial subject constitution. The tankie psychology has carved up and constituted fantasy identifications for both China and HK, disconnected almost entirely from material reality — effectively playing a game of Risk with sites and populations that are filled with material and historical contradiction.

As an astute comrade recently observed to me, American tankies project US race relations as if that itself is a form of geopolitical analysis. This is classical discursive colonialism. So intent are these critics on mapping US political concerns, histories, and actors onto non-US sites of struggle, that it becomes exceedingly clear — almost blindingly obvious à la Orientalism — that the projection diagnoses the subject themselves (tankie), not the object (China/HK).

Borrowing from Saidiya Hartman's famous argument against white abolitionist empathy in Scenes of Subjection, we can see that the tankie, in fact, by "em/sympathizing" so strongly with the "Socialist Other," recenters the self and with their good intention actually renders the other fungible,that is abstract. Like the white abolitionist who reinstantiates the relations of chattel slavery through his empathic identification with the enslaved African,the tankie reinstantiates the relations of US imperialism (the desire to map,to see, to describe) rather than engaging in truthful grappling or honest

the academy, which (irony of ironies) operated, if not as a literal arm of Cold War military production, then certainly as an institution in sync with the aims and demands of the US Information Service (the US cultural propaganda arm) and the CIA. The academy, perhaps, has been the CIA's greatest psy-op.

5. About Socialist People

> It is impossible for me to go any further in such a psychological hypothesis without projecting onto it the Western vision — Julia Kristeva, About Chinese Women

Julia Kristeva's (in)famous Orientalist tract on "Chinese women" has been thoroughly criticized for its cavalier, Eurocentric, and almost complete misunderstanding of modern Chinese society and women's place within it.And though Kristeva is wonderfully ignorant in many ways of her positionality as a European woman drawing anthropological conclusions about complex societies absent any real ethnographic method, to her credit,her text often erupts with moments of anxiety, in which she recognizes the Orientalist analysis that she cannot help but perpetuate.

Critically, in one infamous passage, Kristeva looks at a group of Chinese women and tries to see herself in them, thinking wistfully that she "recognized [her] own pioneer komsomol childhood in the little red guards,and [that she owes her] cheekbones to some Asian ancestor." As a Bulgarian,she was a foreigner in France. This identification with the position of outsider in a French context, Jane Gallop argues, allows Kristeva to attempt to see herself as the same as Chinese women, for her the absolute Other. Gallop concludes, that this attempt at identification shows that Kristeva believes "she alone might be able to bridge the abyss of otherness, to contact and report the heterogeneous," and that About

squarely at that dude we all know, the white, mansplaining, cishet socialist bro. I don't doubt these men make up a large part of the tankie left in London, or anywhere else in the West for that matter, since men are by and large the worst misogynists and purveyors of heteropatriarchal power in socialist circles. This takes place under the guise of a focus on "class struggle" over what is derisively called the distraction of idpol, or identity politics. But, as many of us online know, there's a significant population of tankies who also identify as queer, trans, nonbinary, and so on. Many of them are also people of color.

2. Post-9/11, queer liberalism as forerunner

This is not altogether unprecedented. As Jasbir Puar argues in developing her concept of "homonationalism," the synchronicity between the racism of "well-meaning" Western gays and lesbians and the racism of nation-state imperialist militarism was thrown into full relief in post-9/11 America, as the LGBT contingent that fixated on the supposed homophobia of the Iranian regime were also the same people that opposed the possible US invasion of Iran. Yet it was exactly the separate uptake of Islamophobic ideology by these LGBT activists and government war hawks that allowed the two purposes to dovetail.

The late 90s saw the general shift of the "homosexual" from association with death (the AIDS epidemic) toward reproductive futurity (marriage and families). This folding into life, Puar notes, signals the use of queerness as a lens for the "production, disciplining, and maintenance" of racialized populations, particularly against "Muslim, Arab, Sikh, and South Asian sexualities." While Puar's critique is an accurate indictment of mainstream LGBT liberalism in the early aughts,

something has changed since then as America's so-called "Forever Wars" have dragged on into the 2010s, the obvious object of criticism, the queer liberal, has given way in the last decade to something quite new: the radical queer tankie.

3. Something new

> "To attribute difference to the other… even to adore or idealize that difference, is not at all the same as to respect the other subject as an equal, as an equivalent center of being." — Jessica Benjamin, Like Subjects, Love Objects

Queer tankie profiles online usually feature the same characteristics: they highlight not just their gender pronouns and radical queer/trans identities online but combine it with fluency in ML/MLM (Marxist-Leninist/Maoist)dicta (distilled into a hammer and sickle emoji). Often times quite open about their academic training, these queer tankies spout the right talking points about the globe-spanning, inescapable tentacles of US imperialism.While it should be clear that the dismissal of "id-pol" is simply a retrenchment of patriarchy under a revolutionary guise, it seems it is less clear to tankies (especially in an Anglo-US context) that the subsumption of global revolutions under the political mapping of US politics is simply a retrenchment of imperialism under the guise of left internationalism.

Thus, at its core, the logic of the contemporary tankie (as with the logic of empire) must be understood through the question of "the Other." Uncritical defenders of "socialist states," by idealizing them so thoroughly as a desired and perfect object, in fact, detach the people, the country, and its material conditions (the context of real people's lives) and reinsert it into their own fantasies, a psychic frame of reference. But for what purpose?

> "Identification is neither a historically universal concept nor a politically innocent one. Identification is an imperial process, a form of violent appropriation in which the Other is deposed and assimilated into the lordly domain of Self." — Diana Fuss, Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification

As many theorists of Orientalism and psychoanalysis argue, the imperial "I" must construct the other in order to construct the self. This is the basis of the liberal Individual as well as the psychic foundation for other acts of border creation, be it on a national, community, or group scale. So how could this have happened? How could people with high access to academic training that also embody marginalized identity categories come to the point where they idealize the subjection of the Other? The answer lies in the academy itself.

4. The Imperial Academy

Much ink has been spilled on the US academy's origins as both the "arts and sciences" arm of the American anti-Communist effort in Cold War knowledge production and technological advancement. The core of this project was the formation of a fundamentally American epistemology that carved the world into bi-polar ideological empires, everything from culture,society, and politics, fell into these two separate camps. Thus, tankies, in distilling their understanding of post-1991 geopolitics down to US EMPIRE vs. EVERYONE ELSE actually operate upon this foundation of liberal imperialism that they so putatively decry.

Despite their fervent use of (dank) Soviet symbology, these unrelenting critics of the ahistorical agent called "Empire," thus take as foundational the imperialist knowledge production of