

## The Geopolitical Ecology of Empire's Ally: An Interview with Greg Albo and Jerome Klassen

- Jordy Cummings

**Jordy Cummings<sup>1</sup> (JC):** One of the overarching themes of *Empire's Ally* in general, and your contribution in particular, is a questioning of the predominant thesis held by supporters and detractors of the Conservative government, that is to say, the idea that there was a qualitative shift in Canadian foreign policy in the last few years, as if being “empire’s ally” is something new. Can you delineate what has changed in Canadian foreign policy, and what has stayed constant, and connect that, in turn, with shifts within the Canadian ruling classes?

**Greg Albo<sup>2</sup> (GA):** Let me clarify this by elaborating a few basic themes that I and others attempt to raise in the collection in situating Canada as a core imperialist state playing both an independent and supportive role in relation to the US empire and its strategy of primacy in the world order.

First, in relation to Canadian foreign policy debates, it is necessary to take distance from the dogmas about the Canadian state that even much of the Left has taken aboard. This was seeing Canada as a ‘middle power’ that forged a theory and practice of foreign policy based on new formally equal status of states by the United Nations. For Canada, this meant serving as ‘loyal ally’ to the U.S. in an evolving multilateral world still braced by the Cold War: of nation-states steadily increasing the

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economic and military interdependence of the continent within formal institutions; developing with the U.S. joint interests in a liberalized international trading system and defending against external – read communist and socialist movements – threats; prioritizing ‘systemic peace’ in relations between the cold war blocs; cultivating a ‘quiet diplomacy’; and contributing to multilateral institutions and fora where differences in tactics could be debated and compromises negotiated between greater and lesser powers in the context of the U.S. strategy of *détente*. This position was associated with the thinkers that ‘made’ Canadian diplomacy – G. Ignatieff, Pearson, Holmes, and others.

More recently, this was the view that the imperatives of economic integration need to be ‘balanced’ by ‘human security’. An arsenal of new doctrines of multilateral governance need to be integrated into the foreign policy practices ‘agenda-setting’ powers: democratic capacity-building, developmentalism, peace-building, responsibility-to-protect, discursive diplomacy, civil society enhancement, responsible governance and so on. This has been the approach of M. Ignatieff, Byers, Axworthy and host of others, and formed the key thinking behind what critics have labeled ‘human rights imperialism’. For these liberals and social democrats, Harper represents a Canadian turn to the foreign policies of a rogue state as it abandons many of these policies and moves toward a practice of diplomatic isolationism from multilateralism.

But Canada has always played, we argue, an important role in imperialism, from the supportive position of Britain in the Atlantic slave triangle to a key ally of the British and US across the 20th century in the making of global capitalism. It has done so, we argue in *Empire’s Ally*, as a ‘secondary imperialist power’. This has meant pursuing and developing its own imperialist interests and capacities, but aligned with the dominant imperialist states of the U.K. and the U.S. This is a pattern of ‘co-operative specialization’ in foreign policy as Canada cooperates closely with the lead imperialist power. Over the Cold War period, this meant specializing in diplomacy, peace-keeping and soft power, and in the text Jerome Klassen and Paul Kellogg lay out how this worked. In the period of neoliberalism, the foreign policy tasks have shifted: Canada now specializes in diplomatic coverage for foreign intervention (as in Haiti, Lebanon, Honduras), advancing free trade agreements (NAFTA, with CETA or the Trans-Pacific Partnership) and the hard power of ‘disciplinary militarism’ of foreign combat missions. When looking at the overall position of Canada within the imperialist hierarchies of the state system, it is the continuities that stand out, and it is from there that the

specifics of the Harper regime need to be judged. This is pretty much a unique thesis to *Empire's Ally*, as only a few writers have pointed in this direction at all, and none of these develop a Marxist-inspired critique of Canadian foreign policy.

Second, the American state's position as the dominant imperialist power and its continued pursuit of primacy has been a consistent in framing Canadian foreign policy. Obama, for example, never broke with any of the strategies and practices taken up by Bush in the 'war on terror'. He continues with the constant referrals to the US as the 'indispensable nation' and has acted on the basis of American exceptionalism with respect to the norms of the world order as, for example, the right to deploy drones at its discretion. This is a strategy of 'disciplinary militarism': the use of armed force to compel states, if their domestic capitalist classes and political elites are not already doing so, to adhere to the neoliberal world order under U.S. hegemony.

Alongside the American-led international policies for free trade, capital mobility, and the re-capitalization of the banking system, they have formed the basis for what can be called a 'new imperialism' in terms of the geo-economic framework that has emerged. This has evolved since Reagan and consolidated as part of the way neoliberalism has formed the new basis of social rule in the 1990s. It is blindingly obvious that Canadian foreign policy even since Mulroney has been a key support to this strategy. What we attempted to do in *Empire's Ally* was to accept this context and address how the Canadian state and capital out of their own interest fit within this context, and the way the Canadian state transformed its internal and international security regimes as a result of the Afghan war, as part of what Adam Hanieh refers to in the volume as a 'single war' across the Middle and Far East. A lot of conventional military analysts have referred to this as a 'revolution' in Canadian military and foreign policy, and there is something to that. But they totally neglect the continuities in Canadian imperialism and simply ignore the role in supporting the internationalization of Canadian capital.

Third, capitalist states always need to be assessed as making, mediating and reflecting the balance of social processes; in other words, as being the institutionalization of social struggles within liberal democracies. They are not neutral instruments held accountable by, and responding to, parliamentary deputies. As such, the department and branches of the state are also being re-ordered and shifting in the internal hierarchy of state power to reflect shifts in social struggle and ruling class strategies. This theoretical point is often seen to be obvious in the case

of the Canadian state, given the degree of its autonomy from popular democratic forces, and the way the Canadian state has been continually re-organized to assist capital accumulation, including the foreign and military apparatuses, and trade and capital flows from Britain and the U.S. with Canada.

Since 2001 and the opening of the new round of military interventions, there has been a substantial re-ordering of the Canadian state: a general degradation of the institutions of representation and democratic processes; a hardening of the state in terms of policing, prisons military and the security apparatuses, in all its dimensions, from border security to CSIS; a re-orientation of the economic and trade policy branches to facilitate the internationalization of capital and the competitive capacity of labour processes; and a restructuring of the military and diplomatic apparatuses. But it builds on the project of 'deep integration' between Canada and the US since the 1990s. 'Deep integration' follows the internal logic of neoliberalism and the linkage between national security and economic liberalization that have been integral to the exercise of American imperial power.

It would take pages to catalogue all of the policy shifts that have been made, but a few can be signaled: the Fortress North America realignment of border and security relations with the U.S., as well as economic competitiveness; the support for FIPA, CETA, TPP and a host of other 'free trade' agreements that secure new mandates for the internationalization of capital; the cooperation around continental energy policies, particularly around the extreme energy policies of offshore, fracking and the tar sands; the remaking of Canadian defence policy to secure the Arctic for North American control and for the deployment of Canadian troops in joint operations in multiple battlefields; and the recasting of Canadian diplomatic offices and practices to support 'hard power' deployment and alignment with US policies with respect to the Middle East and Latin America. It is this phase of the new imperialism in Canada that we attempt to document in *Empire's Ally*, and the way that the Canadian intervention in Afghanistan helped facilitate these transformations.

**JC:** So Canada is a "secondary power" within the US led "Empire of Capital", to use Ellen Wood's phrase, a class strategy to restructure Canadian foreign policy in line with the internationalization of Canadian capital. This begs the question, however, is the notion of "secondary power" sufficient to demarcate the role of Canada, when the capitalist class is so thoroughly integrated with U.S. and global capital, on one hand? Or

on the other hand, does the Canadian state and Canadian capital have interests of their own that sometimes diverge with international capital?

**Jerome Klassen<sup>3</sup> (JK):** In the social sciences, there are several theories of Canadian state power in the global political economy. In liberal theory, Canada is a 'middle power' and thus holds a vested interest in multilateral diplomacy and conflict resolution. It believes, furthermore, that Canadian foreign policy is guided by the ethical motivations of political leaders and reflects the democratic will of the public. In my view, this is far too idealistic and uncritical. Canada, like every other state, has selfish interests in the global political economy and forges policies that reflect not the popular will but dominant social interests. The idea that Canada is a 'middle power' is also incorrect; it is a major economic power with considerable military capacities and is not viewed as a 'middle power' by other states, especially in the periphery.

The realist theory of Canadian foreign policy is more accurate in these regards. Generally speaking, it debunks the liberal ideology of the postwar period – in particular, the notion that Canada was a 'middle power' in the Cold War and practiced 'peacekeeping' for noble and selfless purposes – and tends to view Canada as strong or 'principal' power in world affairs. One stream of realism also recognizes the power of the U.S. over Canada and the way in which Canada is forced to work within U.S. power projections. Despite these strengths, realist theory is based on a reification of the state and thus ignores the internationalization of Canadian capital and the role of dominant social groups in forging Canadian state policy at home and abroad. Unfortunately, these issues are completely off the radar of realist research, which has been highly supportive of the new militarism in Canadian foreign policy.

Marxism offers the third perspective on these matters. In brief, it holds that Canada is an imperialist power in that it is bound up with transnational forms of class exploitation and political domination. However, this perspective is still underdeveloped. Although there is a

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strong tradition of Marxian political economy in Canada, it hasn't really addressed foreign policy issues, at least in an academic format. So, one goal of *Empire's Ally* was to generate a new research program on the class politics of Canadian foreign policy. In my view, the Canadian state is best viewed as a 'secondary' imperialist power for several reasons. First, it does not command the political, economic, or military powers to fully set an agenda for global politics, for example, as the United States or even China does. Instead, it operates in a supporting or 'secondary' role in the world market and state system.

Second, despite its formal autonomy and independent interests and capacities, it tends to work internationally by internalizing and incorporating the political, economic, and military norms and priorities of primary powers such as the United States. This has been true since World War II, but has increased dramatically since 9/11, as the Canadian state embraced the 'global war on terror' and, to this end, thoroughly transformed itself. *Empire's Ally* attempts to make sense of these various dynamics. It recognizes that the Canadian capitalist class has claims across the world economy and thus is a key player in the internationalization of capital, including in many poor countries and regions. However, the internationalization of Canadian capital is still focused on North America, which is dominated by the United States and its national bloc of capital.

So, for the most part, *Empire's Ally* recognizes that Canada is an imperialist power, but tends to support, or to operate under, U.S. hegemonic designs. Of course, tensions and rivalries continue to exist between capitalist classes of different nation-states, including the US and Canada. But the idea that Canada is locked in 'inter-imperialist rivalry' with the U.S. is simply not the case, as some Trotskyists seem to argue. To get around these issues, *Empire's Ally* tries to analyze the general tendencies of capitalist imperialism as well as the particular role of Canada as a secondary power in the current global conjuncture. In my view, future research should look more closely at how the particular structure of accumulation in Canada – in particular, the nexus of energy, mining and finance – generates unique patterns of international engagement under the hegemonic direction of Canadian capital.

**JC:** In terms of Canada's and others' efforts to "rebuild" the Afghan state, what hurdles have been faced, and how has Canada failed to manage and/or transcended such hurdles? If it is indeed possible to help Afghanistan, what can be done, not merely by the Canadian state, but by international assistance?

**JK:** Canada's approach to state building in Afghanistan has been characterized by two key features. First, it largely followed the U.S.-led process of working with President Hamid Karzai and various warlords, commanders, and sectarian leaders, who filled the power vacuum in 2001. As part of this, the US and the international financial institutions dictated a neoliberal development program for Afghanistan, one that was geared towards the privatization of state industries and the liberalization of trade and investment flows. International NGOs played a key role in this project, in particular, by providing services and building infrastructure in towns and villages.

The result has been a highly contingent and unaccountable form of state building and development, one in which popular needs are not addressed or fulfilled by state institutions. In this context, there is some concern that the Afghan state may disintegrate if a civil war resumes after U.S./NATO forces withdrawal over the next year. The U.S.-led mission has done nothing for reconciliation and transitional justice after decades of civil war, authoritarian rule, and outside intervention. For example, at the present moment, the U.S. is trying to sign a Status of Forces Agreement for a long-term military presence in Afghanistan, one in which its troops will be given legal immunity from Afghan jurisdiction and sovereignty. This is a further example of how outside intervention has continued to limit or undermine efforts at sovereign state building in that country.

It is important to recognize that Canada has enabled the U.S.-led project in Afghanistan through several contributions. In fact, it has tried to develop specialized props for the state-building effort. In our book, Anthony Fenton and Jon Elmer show how Canada's efforts at 'democracy promotion' were in fact based on an elitist model of institutionalizing popular sovereignty. Likewise, Angela Joya and Justin Podur show how Canada's development projects were linked to a militarized, neoliberal model of pacification. In these ways, the authors demonstrate the particular methods of Canadian imperialism in the Afghan theatre.

What alternatives exist? As several authors in our book argue, Canada should withdrawal its remaining military forces and support active and transparent forms of conflict resolution involving the UN, the key regional powers, and the full spectrum of Afghan political forces. After this, Canada should provide aid and reconstruction funding to a future Afghan government, which must be allowed to set its own priorities for economic growth and social development. The Canadian state

must also investigate any Canadian military, diplomatic, or security personnel who participated in potential war crimes, including the transfer of prisoners to torture.

**JC:** While *Empire's Ally* touches upon this, I'm wondering if you can say a bit more about the ecological dimension of Canadian foreign policy, such as the Canadian state's support and encouragement of ecologically destructive mining industries.

**JK:** Environmental issues do not factor centrally into *Empire's Ally*. Michael Skinner's chapter does, however, discuss the environmental impact of mining development in Afghanistan. The massive projects coming down the pipe are expected to displace small-scale farming and even backyard mining operations, and to disrupt the delicate ecological balance, including irrigation systems, in certain regions. Beyond this, the book doesn't really grapple with environmental concerns.

Future research on Canadian imperialism must, however, do so thoroughly. As a leading per capita emitter of greenhouse gases, Canada holds a 'climate debt' to the world and thus practices 'ecological imperialism,' or the unequal exploitation of the world's atmosphere as a carbon dump. One major reason for this is that capital accumulation in Canada is increasingly based on energy-intensive industrial operations, including mining and bitumen extraction. The subordination of production in Canada to global market imperatives has also made the country increasingly reliant on global trade and with it, the infinite use of hydrocarbon resources. For these reasons, progressive movements must integrate an ecological perspective into their anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist frameworks. In the final chapter of the book, Derrick O'Keefe of the Canadian Peace Alliance makes this point in very clear terms and suggests methods for making it happen.

**GA:** In a moment's reflection, it should become apparent that the American military is the most destructive ecological force on the planet: for its use of natural resources in general; as the foremost user of fossil fuels (and thus contributor to climate change); for its mass campaigns of defoliation and aerial bombing; and for the legacy of radioactive and toxic waste it has strewn across the planet. Military activity as a whole is the single greatest contributor to ecological destruction, with the Canadian military being a significant contributor. Just think of the toxic waste that have been left across the Canadian Arctic by Norad's Dew Line, or the ecological

mess that resides at every Canadian and American military base across the country. Modern warfare is really one of the areas where the terms 'ecocide' and 'ecological imperialism' really fit, and they have potentially a very rich conceptual range and possibilities in peace studies research. It is something we need to take up with respect to the Canadian military.

There is no modern imperialist military intervention that has not left a terrible toxic ecological legacy. We are not yet able to make an assessment of what the impacts on Afghanistan has been, but we know it will not be trivial. It is impossible today to be an ecological activist and not also take on militarism and its consequences for climate change and the natural ecology as a whole. And this carries over into being anti-imperialist for this is what the American and Western military forces are organized to defend and enforce. In turn, to be anti-militarist is to take on the ecological consequences of war-making today. These are clearly the analytical and political points of convergence of the ecological and anti-war movements. But we are some ways still of getting that level of social consciousness and political organization as part of the everyday common-sense of the Left and working-class people.

But we also need to see the ecological dimensions of foreign policy in terms of the overall organization of the apparatuses of the Canadian state. Since there has been so much sloppy thinking with respect to the Canadian state and foreign policy, it is necessary to begin with a broader point. Capitalist states are, as Marx put it, "the form of organization which the bourgeois necessarily adopt for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests." National states play an indispensable nodal role in supplying the extra-market institutional and coordinative roles necessary for capital accumulation, including mediating the inter-state system. As such, the diplomatic branches of the state are delimited in their role with respect to these essential systemic needs of capital. Even the much touted period of Canada as a 'middle-power broker' really reflected the areas of 'co-operative specialization', as I put it, consistent with Canada's position as part of the imperialist core re-making global capitalism over the cold war period.

Since 2001, as we already noted, the foreign policy branches of the Canadian state dealing with 'soft power' issues like climate change, human rights, family planning, and so forth, have been marginalized relative to security and military issues. And the diplomatic and economic components of the state facilitating the accumulation of capital have been given increased roles and powers. In fact, in the case of Afghanistan, the 3D policy framework tied economic and military components together in

particular ways. The more recent shifting of CIDA into the, now renamed, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, has also gone in this direction. Not surprisingly, given the competitive capacities of the Canadian extractive sector, and Bay St. as the central place in the world for financing mining, the Canadian state has been playing a big part in backing up the internationalization of mining capital.

This, of course, has come at some cost to ecological issues, which the Harper government has symbolized by gutting environmental regulation and moving Environment Canada to the margins of the Canadian state. But environmental issues are a really important dimension in the matrix of foreign policy issues today, given the international dimensions to all ecology issues, especially climate change. Even with what often appears as localized problems of ecology, the competitive imperatives driving capital accumulation forces inter-state competition that puts ecology into competition – in developing more extreme energy sources, dumping pollutants, shirking GHG reduction targets, and so on. This forms a fundamental contradiction in international relations. Through international coordination capitalist states can agree to coordinate action to address ecological issues through upgrading binding constraints (the strategy since the Brundtland Report on sustainable development in 1987). But at the same time these very same states are encouraging accumulation and the competitive capacities of the capitals in their own territorial space that undermine the agreements.

Well, one of the tendencies within this contradiction is going to prevail. It is clear enough that ecology has been subordinated to the imperialist ordering of the inter-state system and the internationalization of capital. The economic crisis since 2008, and the turn to what can be called permanent austerity, has further pushed ecology to the margins. So, not surprisingly, we have witnessed over the last two years the Harper government mobilize the entire international branches of the Canadian state in support of oil and gas exports – the Keystone pipeline to the U.S. and various natural gas export plans to East Asia; and at the same time do whatever the government can do to disrupt the various climate change protocols being negotiated to succeed the Kyoto Accord (the targets from that agreement being basically ignored, before just withdrawing from the Accord). There are any number of other examples of Canadian foreign policy taking the exact same stance of disregard for ecology – from landmines, to withdrawal from the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, to lack of cooperation in international research on the ecology of the Arctic and the other oceans bordering Canada, and others.

There is a habit in progressive circles to charge Harper with a radical re-working of Canadian foreign policy and stump for an NDP-Liberal alliance, backed by a social movement front, to defeat the Conservatives. This would allow a return to the Canadian state role as 'active global statesman'. Well, Harper has certainly intensified the most aggressive and imperialist components of the Canadian state, the thesis of *Empire's Ally* suggests that Canada's shifting international role was already forming under Chretien and Martin and the Liberals. The core features of Canadian foreign policy will not be radically remade, particularly as both the NDP and Liberals have committed to developing the tar sands and the internationalization of Canadian capital.

To be clear, any departure in Canada's position in the world order is really dependent upon an alternate bloc forming with a program that links anti-militarism and ecology to the traditional demands of the left for democratization, socially-responsible production, increased diversity and autonomy for alternate development models and addressing the inequalities of the world order. In one form or another, this has always constituted the basis of a socialist program for international relations. The anti-war and anti-imperialist movements in Canada could play a bit role in bringing these positions from out of the margins.

**JC:** Is there a peace movement in Canada? Is there an environmental movement in Canada? What I mean by this question is that, assuming mobilizing for peace and environmental justice are co-constitutive struggles, how can progressive scholars and activists conjoin these movements – and do these movements indeed exist?

**GA:** This is a tough set of questions – they raise the challenge of reading the conjuncture and the state of Left strategy and tactics, in Canada and more generally. And there are as many illusions about the state of social movements in Canada, or elsewhere for that matter, as there are about Canadian foreign policy. There has been a certain impulse in some strands of the left, and particularly among movement activists, that capitalism is in deep crisis; that the ruling bloc and the core capitalist countries are increasingly divided (and thus able to resolve political problems and rule); that resistance is rising; and that the social movements have within themselves, as is, a ready alternative. Sometimes a further, parallel claim – particularly by union leaderships and progressive NGOs – is made: that the NDP and social democratic forces will be able to switch the channel on the policy agenda (perhaps in alliance with the Liberals).

Although there is still a protracted economic crisis, none of these individual claims hold up, and together they have been terribly disorienting for political thinking and strategizing, especially in a country with such a weak socialist culture as Canada. It is tiresome when repeated every few years for decades. In fact, the disorganization of the broad left – in radical and social democratic parties and in unions and social movements – has been the actual trajectory. The old Leninist formulations behind this theme are completed out of step with the times. The most immediate need is the steady rebuilding of socialist and radical infrastructures and organizational capacities. Otherwise the defeats will mount and the illusions of a coming resistance will seem ever more fantastical. Rather than building the movements, this type of politics always invoking the coming revolt encourages the collapse of oppositional forces, and the broad working classes, into a fatalism that accepts the existing state of ‘no alternatives’. In effect, the political space that can be occupied by right wing populism is widened and filled, for example, by Harperism or the ‘Ford Nation’ in Toronto. We have to begin from a very tough-minded assessment – Gramsci’s pessimism of the intellect – of where we are actually at, steadily building new organizational capacities, experimenting with parties of a new kind, and contributing to key political struggles by connecting them across sectors and to a critique of capitalism. There are no political short-cuts.

This reading of the current period is, more or less, an implicit theme of *Empire’s Ally* in attempting to emphasize Canada’s place in the core imperial countries, the reorganization of the military and diplomatic components of the state, and to put the anti-war agenda in Canada in terms of building an anti-neoliberal and anti-capitalist movement. This is why there is such thorough critique of the mythologies of Canada as neutral broker, or as a peacekeeping nation, across the volume. We need to understand the current political terrain as a hardening of capitalist power, not its’ weakening, and make political calculations on the Left on that basis.

A number of contributions in *Empire’s Ally* address the question of the peace movement directly, and to their credit none of this nonsense of impending collapse is to be found. Instead, there is a sober assessment of what the peace movements in Quebec and Canada accomplished in opposition to the war in Afghanistan and what remains to be done. Benoit Renaud and Jessica Squires, for example, analyze the course of the anti-war movement in Quebec, *Échec à la guerre*, in relation to the

formation of Quebec Solidaire, and a range of human rights, labour and anti-racist struggles. But they warn that even on this much stronger political ground than elsewhere in North America, there is still a long way to go to rebuild mass movements and the capacity for mass mobilization. Derrick O'Keefe, one of the co-chairs of the Canadian Peace Alliance, carefully dissects the way that a new military strategy has formed in the Canadian state. He stakes out an agenda for re-building an anti-war movement in Canada in this new context, and to keep the peace movement relevant. Similarly, Angela Joya and Anthony Fenton and Jon Elmer pick apart the way that much of NGO and development work has assisted in building what the latter refer to as an 'expeditionary force for democracy promotion'.

The peace movement is illustrative of the difficulty of building movements in the context of neoliberalism and a hardening of the military strategy of the Canadian state. But the environmental movements illustrate a different trajectory. As neoliberalism consolidated in the 1990s, most of the big ENGOs accommodated to the new political terrain – they wanted to remain relevant and they wanted immediate changes, even if incremental and symbolic. A number of us, particularly in the Toronto Group meeting around the journal *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, began tracking the steady embrace of market ecology by the ecology movement, and an incredibly naïve believe in market prices and cost internalization for effecting 'green growth' within capitalism. We further picked these views apart in the *Socialist Register* volume 43, *Coming to Terms with Nature*. Even in the current fight over climate change, many of the major ecology groups are relying on market mechanisms and slower development rather than taking up an anti-capitalist political position. The search is for a sustainable energy fix within capitalist social relations.

This is not untypical of a range of social movements. It may well be more accurate to speak of a range of activist nodes each, in their way, opposing some of the dislocations produced by neoliberalism. But not becoming social movements mobilizing tens of thousands in mass protests, and the day-to-day practices of resistance – petitions, picketing, deputations, workplace agitation, and so on. And not forming into anti-systemic organizational forces shifting the correlation of national or international forces in a more democratic and egalitarian direction. So much of what goes under the name of social movements in Canada represents deep frustrations with the way we live, and anger at the gross abuses of power and privilege of capitalism in Canada, but not coherent democratic forces able to suggest a path to another way of living. This is

why we put so much stress in *Empire's Ally* on Canada as a major capitalist power embedded in the wider U.S. and NATO imperialist agenda, and the Harper government as an intensification of some of these neoliberal trends but not the initiator.

Let me return to some of the wider themes. A number of structural transformations have altered the organizational foundations for Left politics: the changes in the nature of employment towards more networked production processes and fragmented services provision; the increasing international circulation of capital; the internal differentiation and stratification of the working class; and the re-orientation of so much organized political activism toward negotiating defensive compromises with the state. Neoliberalism has, of course, driven these pressures. Left alternatives have also suffered historical defeats, for good and ill, in the end of authoritarian communism and the realignment of social democracy toward increasing accommodation of the market and existing distributional relations. These developments have shifted working class capacities in terms of workplace organization, political leadership of oppositional forces and ideological inventiveness. As a consequence, Left politics under neoliberalism (in Canada since the failure to defeat NAFTA in the early 1990s) has oscillated between, on the one hand, a 'politics of chaos' that in fact reflects the disarray of Left forces and organizational weakness, and, on the other, short-term political calculation to avoid further social erosion.

Above all, then, the socialist Left must be actively fostering the formation of new political agencies. One necessary aspect of such an engagement is class reformation through revitalization of unions, and the linking of unions to workers in new sectors, the struggles for gender and racial equality, and the marginalized outside 'normal' work processes. It is also necessary to experiment in organizational convergence between the remnants of the independent Left, civic organizations, and the sections within social democracy that remained committed to a transformative project. Such a reformation needs to be grounded in the building up of educational, communicative and cultural resources indispensable to forming the political identity necessary for a 'new socialism' for the 21st century. And concrete anti-neoliberal alliances forged in struggle to defeat particular initiatives and make inroads against neoliberalism will make such a process of reformation 'organic'.

The anti-war movement is, as we signal in *Empire's Ally*, a crucial component of this convergence as a new Canadian Left will have to be clearly anti-imperialist and offer a radical challenge to the current world

order and the current matrix of foreign policy. It is not difficult to suggest some of the transitional demands that we need to insist upon – a rejection of current policies toward the Middle and Far East and war reparations to the people of Afghanistan and just settlement in Palestine; supporting a multi-polar world order and regional capacities for enforcing peace and dispute settlement; withdrawal from international military alliances and the conversion of military forces into increasingly civil organizations for defence, emergency relief and ecological cleanup; forging a new international economic architecture that places control on capital movements, plans trade, transfers technology and resources, and internationally coordinates a transition to low-carbon economies; and an industrial conversion strategy away from military production. This is the kind of agenda that, as we suggest in *Empire's Ally*, is beginning to emerge across the inter-state system. It is part of the emerging anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist sensibility that is beginning to lay the basis for a new socialism relevant for the 21st century.

