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CRISES OF CAPITALISM IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY: CYCLICAL OR PERMANENT?

Krize kapitalizma u 21. veku: ciklične ili permanentne?

ABSTRACT: *The cause of contemporary “secular stagnation” of economic growth in developed capitalist countries is analyzed in this paper. A hypothesis is introduced that it signifies a transfer from cyclical to permanent economic crisis, opening the perspective of collapse of the system. It is demonstrated that the crisis is the consequence of the basic characteristic (and contradiction) of capitalism, and therefore cannot be removed within the ramifications of present social relations. The contradiction is the product of growing discrepancy between, on the one hand, the process of production of goods, services, and knowledge, which increasingly expounds (directly or indirectly) its social character and, on the other, the process of control/management of production, including rising accumulation of individual fortunes, which retain their private character. The widening hiatus constantly produces disturbances in chains of everyday economic reproduction, but also leads to more frequent eruptions of severe global crises which threaten the dominant socio-political and economic order. Efficient remedies for overcoming the crises do not exist, since the previously built mechanisms have been dismantled during the last decades themselves becoming the new/additional source of crisis.*

KEY WORDS: *capitalism, socialization, crisis, secular stagnation.*

APSTRAKT: *U tekstu se traga za uzrocima savremene „sekularne stagnacije“ kapitalističkog ekonomskog rasta u razvijenim zemljama i izlaže hipoteza da ona označava prelazak iz cikličnih u permanentnu krizu, pa tako otvara perspektivu sloma sistema. Pokazuje se da uzroci krize izvire iz najdublje protivrečnosti kapitalizma, pa se stoga ne mogu ukloniti unutar okvira tog poretka. Reč je o sve većem raskoraku između: a. procesa proizvodnje dobara, usluga i znanja, koji sve ubrzanije razvija svoj društveni karakter (putem direktnog i indirektnog podružtvljavanja); i b. procesa kontrole i upravljanja tom proizvodnjom, te sve više*

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nesrazmernog prisvajanja njenih plodova (rasta nejednakosti), koji zadržavaju privatnu osnovu. Taj rastući jaz konstantno proizvodi poremećaje u lancima svakodnevne ekonomske reprodukcije, ali i uzrokuje sve učestaliju pojavu dubljih globalnih kriza, koje ugrožavaju ukupan vladajući političko-ekonomski poredak. Za njihovo prevladavanje ne postoje efikasni instrumenti, jer se do sada postojeći već uveliko razgrađuju, i to tako da počinju da deluju kao novo/dodatno izvoriste kriza.

KLJUČNE REČI: kapitalizam, podružtvljanje, kriza, sekularna stagnacija.

Introduction

Momentous crises which for years now keep shaking (even the most advanced) capitalist countries ever more openly question the sustainability of this manner of social life production. That which at the beginning of the last decade of the past millennium appeared to signify the final (and lasting) historical victory of this order, moreover its “purified” liberal form (neoliberalism), over the alternative order (socialism) was infantilely named “the end of history” (Fukuyama, 1992). However, the initial euphoria was soon disrupted by numerous (and seemingly) individual deep upheavals: financial crises, decelerated growth and even intermittent GDP drops, undermining the only just created unilateral world order – absolute planetary domination of the USA – with economic, technological, military and even also some indications of political ascendancy of China (and prospectively also of India); reversion of the state to the role of an indispensable direct economic actor (bailing out stumbling banks and giant corporations and, at the time of the Covid pandemic, also numerous smaller firms, massive investments into both public and private sectors, interventions at the labor market, etc.); renewed reinforcement of state sovereignty at the expense of international organizations (primarily US controlled World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, etc.); and finally, a wide-scale war in Europe used for the showdown of large powers in their struggle to reform the world order over the backs (dead bodies!) of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples.²

A series of the above mentioned more or less directly linked individual processes once again challenged the dominant form of the capitalist socio-political system (market economy and liberal democracy). The related analytical questions, if reduced to their main characteristics (it being impossible here to address their numerous variations, or the still predominant ideological neoliberal apotheoses of capitalism) warn of the following problems. The fact is that throughout its history capitalism has been faced with crises which threatened

2 To this we should certainly add abortive attempts at a comprehensive, coordinated international intervention required by planetary climate changes, endangering not only the political-economic basis of the capitalist order but also the biological reproduction of the living world.

with long-term limitation of possibilities for successful accumulation, and had to be persistently countered by various economic policy measures. A good example in this respect is the hypothesis on “secular stagnation” espoused already during the 1930s’ crisis: the concept implied a long-term tendency in developed market economies to register low GDP growth rates, high unemployment and low interest rates due to weaknesses of aggregate demand (Hansen, 1938). This hypothesis, recently resurrected by Summers (2014) was accepted by a substantial number of economists (see Teulings and Baldwin, 2014). According to this interpretation (again leaving aside substantial differences among various authors) the main factors causing the secular crisis of the capitalist economy, namely the diversely triggered disruptions in relations between supply of and demand for different production factors (goods, services, capital, labor, etc.), are unavoidable within the frameworks of a market economy. As for the most recent crisis started in 2007–8 its main causes are reportedly the following factors: demographic changes, linked primarily with the ageing of the population; inequalities, limiting consumption of the overwhelming majority of the population; education level of the population the overall increase of which reaches a limit and thus can no longer have a major influence on productivity; excessive indebtedness of the state. These factors result in insufficient investments as well as consumption and permanently stump economic growth (widening the gap between potential and real growth).³

An essentially similar line is taken by authors who, although indicating deeper structural sources of frequent crises in capitalism, recall the potential systemic alternative to this order, the socialist political-economic system. What we have in mind here are theoretical critical challenges voiced among others by Harvey (2005), Piketty (2014; 2020), and Milanovic (2019). Economic criticism of the neoliberal form of capital accumulation is by these authors corroborated with analyses of the political sphere, indicating at “socialist” party programs of Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain, Bernie Sanders’ mobilizing success in the USA or Mélenchon in France, etc.⁴ Still, the theoretical and political-economic, sharp but not thoroughly radical criticism of capitalism of these authors as a rule ends with the following conclusion: Notwithstanding the threat to the very foundations of human survival (social: through a dramatic increase in economic

3 The Covid pandemic, accompanied by mass economic (and non-economic) state interventions suppressed this thesis from discussions concerning the slow growth. The ease with which fundamental criticism of capitalism was pushed out of sight is evidenced by the fact that even Summers recently suggested that the danger of secular stagnation had been left behind. Blanchard (2023) does not agree with that conclusion. For the causes of current crises viewed in this key, see also Krugman, 2008, 2020. For inequalities the enormous increase of which stumps economic growth, see Stiglitz 2012, 2015, 2019.

4 Yet, one must not disregard the strengthening of the right-wing populist trend threatening liberal policies and thus also political foundations of the modern capitalist order in a whole series of European (and not only European) countries: France, Italy, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Sweden, etc. For the earlier stage of this development, see among others a study by Ionescu and Gellner, 1969. Of the dozens of new studies, I will only mention Dieckhoff, Jaffrelot, Massicard, 2022.

inequalities within and among states;⁵ internal and international conflicts, extremely egotistic individualism; and we may also add, natural, in the ecological and health spheres), a significant (although not fundamental!) change of the now reigning social form is attainable only through massive acceptance of ethically based appeals.⁶ Besides, even this deep change is in foreseeable future – leastwise according to Piketty (2020) and Milanovic (2019) – limited to the replacement of destructive models of capitalism with its (possible!?) more human variants.

However, the fact that capitalism has structurally come dangerously close to the limits of its survival and that “restoration” of this dominant social model based exclusively on humanistic principles cannot resolve (but only for a short term merely alleviate) the fatal crisis of this manner of social production does not appear credible to the above mentioned (in many respects brilliant) critics of this order. That is why the causes of “secular stagnation” in economic growth (transition from cyclical to permanent crisis and potential system breakdown) shall in this text be sought elsewhere, in what, in our view, represents the deepest contradiction of capitalism and is hence impossible to resolve within the frameworks of that order. The issue at point is the growing discrepancy between the process of production of goods, services and knowledge which is ever faster developing its social character, and the process of control and management of that production, along with a remarkable and increasingly disproportionate appropriation of its fruits, which retain a private basis. This widening gap, on the one hand, constantly produces disruptions in chains of everyday economic reproduction and also causes increasingly frequent breakouts of deep global crises that endanger the entire ruling political-economic order and are impossible to overcome in the absence of efficient instruments (since the disintegration of the existing ones is already well under way and the construction of the new ones appears unsuccessful/impossible).

Therefore, this text seeks to examine the following: Have we over the past decades seen the emerging of structural problems of capitalism (on the suggested bases) so deep as to render partial “improvement” of the order impossible leading it, step by step, to a collapse (which at present, in the absence of even a glimpse of an appropriate alternative, may endanger the very foundations of modern civilization)? In other words, have the cyclical crises (Kondratiev waves) which characterized the centuries long ascent of capitalism, with their intermittent interruptions of this ascent only to give it even stronger impetus, during the past few decades turned into a permanent crisis as a new dominant feature of the system now punctuated with only an occasional brief upswing? Finally, are the mechanisms until recently employed as instruments for crises management and still used to overcome the growing obstacles to successful accumulation simultaneously acting as a new powerful source of crises?

5 For alternative interpretation of effects which various stages of globalizations had on economic inequalities (decreasing after an initial growth), see Baldwin, 2016 (see also Baldwin, 2019; Galbraith, 2012).

6 The importance of the ethical dimension of the critique of capitalism is especially emphasized by Collier, 2018.

Socialization processes

Already half a century ago it was demonstrated, notably in the case of the most developed capitalist order (in the USA), that the logic of capital accumulation inevitably leads to accelerated socialization of production, in contrast to its private-ownership basis (consequently also changing the foundations of overall social life) thus sharpening the crucial contradiction of capitalism, that between the growing direct-social character of production and private management/appropriation of resources (Lazić, 1988).⁷ This inevitable socialization resulted from a meteoric growth of giant corporations (in absolute terms, but also in terms of their share in the social product) and from their increasing control over smaller, seemingly (legally) independent firms, operating as their competitors or “auxiliaries”.⁸ The role of state regulation also grew, as did the social functions of the state (welfare state, to which O’Connor rightly added the warfare state), and even state ownership.⁹ At the same time, there was a relative decrease in until recently dominant economic role of (individual) private ownership, in view of expanding forms of shareholding: growing numbers of owners in large corporations, accompanied by disappearance of majority private owners, as well as an increased share of institutional owners – e.g. pension and investment funds, insurance companies, etc.¹⁰ A progressively important role in corporative management was given to managers who were non-majority owners.¹¹ Finally, there was a strong pressure on corporations to confer with organized labor (trade unions) in order to secure unobstructed accumulation in circumstances allowing for potential strengthening of social conflicts, etc.¹²

7 See also Galbraith, 1970. Marxist literature, from Marks onwards, commonly sees one of the central contradiction of capitalism in opposition between the mode of production (social) and nature of appropriation (private). It is also how this issue is seen by Picketty who finds the “fundamental force for divergence” in capitalism in the relation between R and G, i.e. “rate of return on capital” (ownership) and rate of economic growth (2014, 38-39). However, in addition to appropriation as a fundamental feature of capitalist relations we must also mention management of the process of production of society (goods, services, knowledge, culture...). Namely, as we have already known ever since the 1930s a (partial) split between ownership and management is not only possible (Berle and Means, 1968) but even endures, and the resultant of this split (temporary partial prevalence of one factor of domination) is changeable and does not alter its character regardless of who is directly managing the sources of production, an individual, a group of shareholders, or even all employees (Picketty’s, and even Milanovic’s, “borderline-capitalist” solution) as long as actors of the production process engage in a competitive race for profits at the market..

8 Economic concentration, 1964-1969; Edwards, 1979.

9 O’Connor, 1973. For analyses of various state functions and their respective changes in the period after the Second World War, see Holloway and Piccioto, 1979. Of the huge number of works addressing this topic at that time let us mention Habermas, 1975; Milliband, 1969; Kindleberger, 1975.

10 Berle, 1965; Chandler, 1977.

11 A prominent role in initiating a wider discussion on this topic was played by Berle and Means’ study (Berle and Means, 1968); see also Mermelstein, 1975; Burch, 1972.

12 Aronowitz, 1974; Piven and Cloward, 1979; Yellen, 1974; Kidron, 1970.

Naturally, the very notion of socialization is abstract and polysemous, which is why its meaning in the discussion below must be more precisely defined. The concept of advancement (increase) of socialization in this analysis thus refers to the following: It has long been known (at least ever since A. Smith, 1776/2014) that the division of labor is at the basis of economic and, especially, technological development as a close “companion” of the development of means of production (alternately as its consequence and cause). Since every work operation (for the purpose of increased productivity, profit, etc.) is, whenever possible, divided into a growing series of sub-operations formally independent from one another, this means that between them an ever stronger indirect, although at first sight less visible connection is established: not a single work operation, in the whole supply chain, can be carried out (on a more permanent basis) if incompatible with another (others). In other words, a possible break in supply at any point at all, however trivial the component of a product may seem, threatens to stop (or actually halts) overall production of the end product, thus endangering the production program of a whole series of, even seemingly unconnected, production processes due to burgeoning networking of their mutual supply chains. Work operations thus become essentially interdependent, regardless of the formal circumstances of their unfolding (in single ownership or with separate owners at one or more locations, time-wise simultaneously or consecutively, etc.).

In a word, the concept of socialization of labor, in the sense it is used here, implies the process of progressive (*direct* or *indirect*) integration of previously, and increasingly differentiated work functions, in the course of which ever wider areas of material and cultural reproduction of overall social life are organized as *de facto* single entities. Namely, mutual connections – interdependence – of all elements of the production/transport (exchange) complex (including consumption as well as distribution) assume such proportions that not one part of that complex can be singled out, relatively independently sustained or reproduced without a direct (in/direct) link with other elements. Or, in order to be successful this connectedness can less and less be formed “accidentally”, through spontaneous (subsequent) links at the market and more and more requires predetermined mutual relations which, in a broader sense, may be designated as planned, although they could also be created even without a formal (and binding) plan, on the basis of different contractual forms or at least established, widely accepted forms of conduct and, with growing frequency, also within formally conjoined entities (inside gigantic – no longer multi/transnational, but rather international – corporations). Moreover, the formally-legally institutionalized processes of interlinking (ownership takeovers, exchange of managing board members of formally independent corporations, long-term contracts on joint production, etc.) may be designated as organizational forms of **direct** socialization, and other, less formal but still lasting forms of concerted action, as means of **indirect** socialization. Finally, the classical notion of socialization may in modern terms also be represented as a process of continuing and “endless” extension of the supply chain, through the division of production of a product’s existing components to an increasing number of potentially (but

only seemingly) independent operations (susceptible to still further divisions/differentiation, etc.) both vertically and horizontally, through interlinking/networking of diverse formally separated work operations.

It is a process of change analogous to the one seen at the beginning of the industrial revolution when un/connected artisan workshops (the production processes of which were mediated and merged into a whole by traders) gradually grew into factories wherein production – from the initial processing of raw-materials to final products – became an unbreakable unit; see Braudel, 1981–84). In contrast to this course, where factory production brought about integration of diverse individual elements of production in a single place, modern integration (socialization) leads to global chain-forming and networked interdependence, which is both as a whole and in parts deterritorialized (Giddens, 1990; Baldwin, 2016, 2019). Organic interconnectedness of the whole survives (and grows) although individual elements of production (material, intellectual) unfold at different locations (even on different continents). That was, of course, made possible by the transport-information revolution, and the supply chains became not only infinitely cross-crossed but also synthesized at a distance. At that, this process of integration/socialization includes both individual firms (gigantic or small) and groups of firms, as well as states, which act in alliance with corporative networks but also remain on the outside. States thus continue to protect overall conditions of capital accumulation, remaining in principle on their economic borders. Moreover, during the advancing stage of globalization, from the 1990s to the outbreak of the 2007 world financial crisis, state action largely took the course of abandoning political protection of “sovereignty” as its priority function, in line with the neoliberal doctrine on the potentially complete self-regulation of the market and practical application of this doctrine. Thus, until the outbreak of the crisis it appeared that a theoretical and practical consensus was established concerning the conditions under which long-term (lasting!) economic growth in global frameworks was ensured.

Socialization and nation state

The main limitation of arguments supporting comprehensive advancement of the process of socialization in capital production from the end of the Second World War until the 1970s was the fact that research work was primarily concerned with developments within a single state. Regardless of its size, its economic, political, military, and even legitimation (ideological) dominance, it was also a period of simultaneous accelerated advance of the capital internationalization trend (increase in the number and size of international corporations).¹³ Of primary importance here is not the fact that internationalization (analyzed most often in the conceptual terms of “globalization”) statistically decreases the relative level of consolidation of market actors (degrees reached by certain indicators of direct socialization such as concentration and centralization of capital are

13 For an analysis of expansion of international companies from the 19th century until the second decade of the 21st century, see Fitzgerald, 2015.

substantially lower; the share of relatively smaller firms in the market structure is increased; market competition appears to be stronger, etc.), but rather the fact that the role of the state as one of the main actors of socialization, indirect as well as direct, is shown in an essentially different light (state/public ownership, i.e. regulation and control of market competition, monetary and fiscal policy, indicative planning, etc.).

Namely, within these frameworks states at the international level necessarily also appear as “competitors”, the more so the stronger the accumulation process is gripped by the crisis. The “game” is then rejoined by the previously seemingly overcome issue of the seat of international firms, and states using diverse political-military means, seek to impose the interests of “their” corporations on other states, i.e. they protect “their” economic spaces from the imposition of interests of corporations with seats/centers in other states.¹⁴ This indirectly leads to a situation where countries with military-political supremacy (primarily the USA) at the international level protect and encourage socialization processes (supporting expansion of their “own” corporations and imposing the rules of business operations through “international” agencies so that the world economy is reproduced primarily according to American needs, of which the continuing use of the dollar as the “world” currency is among the most important). States positioned lower in the military-political hierarchy increasingly seek to oppose this process as best they can, trying to establish direct mutual links, individually or in groups (creation and expansion of BRICS, expansion of G20, etc.) in their own interest. In the political sphere, these processes are interpreted as a (renewed) growth of aspirations towards state “sovereignty”.¹⁵

In other words, the process of (international) socialization is to a significant degree evolving with the support of non-economic (in a wider sense, i.e. political) means, but it is likewise opposed by competing actors using non-economic instruments, which is why the forming of subsequent economic relations significantly depends on the balance of powers of these non-economic actors at a given moment. Thus, the process we see here is paradoxical. In a situation where the (nation!) state is expected to substantially help curb the processes conducive to economic crises, states are confronted with the heritage of the previous stage in neoliberal development where precisely the role of the state was limited. This paradox is summarized in introductory notes for Bauman and Bordoni’s book (2014): Today we hear much talk of crisis and comparisons are often made with the Great Depression of the 1930s, but there is a crucial difference that sets our current malaise apart from the 1930s: today we no longer trust in the capacity of the state to resolve the crisis and to chart a new way forward. In our increasingly

14 In addition to activities of the USA, we should here, individually, single out primarily other members of G7, China and India, as well as collectively the EU and BRICS all of which are capable of offering substantial resistance to the US domination. Piketty speaks of „the present system of cutthroat competition between countries and territories“ (2020, 72). „The European Union, as built in recent decades, is based on widespread competition between countries, on fiscal and social dumping in favor of the most mobile economic actors, and it functions objectively to the benefit of the most privileged.“ (195).

15 For different individual policies of six EU countries, with respect to whether they more or less gain or lose in the globalization process, see Kriezi et al. 2006.

globalized world, states have been stripped of much of their power to shape the course of events. Many of our problems are globally produced but the volume of power at the disposal of individual nation-states is simply not sufficient to cope with the problems they face. This divorce between power and politics produces a new kind of paralysis. It undermines the political agency that is needed to tackle the crisis and it saps citizens' belief that governments can deliver on their promises. The impotence of governments goes hand in hand with the growing cynicism and distrust of citizens. Hence the current crisis is at once a crisis of agency, a crisis of representative democracy and a crisis of the sovereignty of the state.

It is precisely there in the sphere of international relations (power politics) that another important change has meanwhile occurred: a visible decline in the dominant position of the USA. That is primarily due to the growing economic-political role of China and then also India (and along with them the whole BRICS group: Russia, Brazil, South African Republic...), with an additional role of Russia's refusal to become a deprived part of the "world order". Finally, an important factor in dethroning the USA could also be found in (intermittent rather than continuous) tougher resistance of the European Union, in the event that their strong centrifugal forces (interests of individual Union members) are successfully checked.¹⁶

Crisis of the neoliberal stage of capitalist accumulation

It is already known that at the time of accelerated evolution of the process of socialization of capitalist accumulation in the most developed capitalist country (the USA) during the 1970s and early 1980s, the globalization process advanced internationally (Fitzgerald, 2015). Thus, at a manifest level direct socialization of capitalist production appeared to slow down (although the less visible and less noticeable indirect socialization was encouraged), and its direction was also seemingly changed (this other process became the predominant field of research in studies of capitalist globalization). However, while previous developments appeared systemically consistent (concentration and centralization of capital, supported by state interventions) and resulted in decades-long overall (worldwide) economic growth, the fast advancing globalization, which clearly introduced inconsistent elements into the system (growth of international competition of capital which supported and reinforced competitive relations between states) unfolded simultaneously with an overall slowdown of GDP growth rate in most developed Western countries (Piketty, 2014) and outbreaks of systemic economic and political crises (Harvey, 2005).¹⁷

16 The ongoing war in Ukraine, or rather the manner in which they became embroiled in it, reduced to the minimum the capabilities of individual EU members, as well as the Union as a whole, to offer resistance to the US political-economic domination.

17 One must always bear in mind that successful growth of individual global corporations may be accompanied by declining profitability (reduction of growth rates) at the level of national economies, where these corporations are seated. The reasons for that may be many. For example, extra profits gained in semi/peripheral countries do not "return" to their "home" countries but are reinvested in those wherein they were made, or in other semi/peripheral countries where new extra profits are generated (advance of globalization), etc.

Capitalist order reacted to the new circumstances with more extensive reshaping of the hitherto stage of capital accumulation, i.e. by enthroning a new, neoliberal (“post-Fordist”) stage.

There is no doubt that the slowdown of economic growth (Piketty) and the falling rate of profit at national economy level (Harvey) in most developed countries, were crucial indicators of the crisis in the previous social-economic formation of capitalist production organization and served as incentives for important changes in this organization. The issue of fundamental causes of the crisis cannot be addressed in any depth here. Let us only recall that the “classical” Marxist analysis primarily refers to depletion of sources of accumulation (a drop in the rate and mass of surplus value) owing to changes in the “organic composition of capital” (decrease in the share of the relative surplus value is due to a continuing technological advancement of production, which limits the basis – “live labor” – upon which the possibility, i.e. source of investments is created; examples of different Marxist interpretations of additional factors of economic crises may be found in Luxemburg, 1951; Grossman, 2000; Mandel, 1975; Roberts, 2020). Harvey emphasizes the second cause, not incompatible with the first one: the real growth of wages and other costs of labor, resulting from the successful class struggle of the workers after the Second World War, relatively reduced profits as sources of investment funds. To this we could naturally add a series of situational factors, such as e.g. abrupt increases in oil prices, etc. Still, these internal-economic factors should inevitably be complemented by the external, political ones: difficulties increasingly faced by capital accumulation at a world scale.

Namely, the process at play here was contradictory. As already mentioned, the advent of the neoliberal stage of capitalism since the late 1970s was, at the internal level, accompanied by efforts to remove/discourage the role of the state as an active factor of capital accumulation (and especially to curb the meanwhile developed forms of “welfare state”, with extensive privatization, especially in the case of Great Britain). A similar strategy was also pursued, at least nominally (especially outside the narrow circle of central countries), at foreign-policy level (reverting the state to the role of the “night watchman”). Only ten or so years later, the collapse of socialist orders in Eastern Europe, along with the removal of the “iron curtain” (political, economic, legitimacy and in places – such as Berlin – also physical) separating two mutually opposed forms of social life organization, appeared as an act finally opening the entire planet to the capitalist economic-political-social order. Clear profiling of the economic-political center of the world system, in the form of absolute global domination of the USA (shaped much earlier according to Wallerstein, 1976), initially indicated the removal of contradictions between (politically) unbridled neoliberal economy and the necessity for a non-economic actor – the state – to ensure overall conditions for capital accumulation. Instead of competing states at the world level the role of the single supervisor of these overall conditions was apparently assumed by a system of international organizations under US control (World Bank, IMF, dollar as the world currency, etc.).

Thus the globalization process seemingly secured a soft (but at the same time steadfast and omnipresent) hand of overall regulation, pretending to represent general economic-political interests of the capitalist order, excluding, or leastwise limiting, the damaging (for profit increase) international competition (the formation of a new “transnational capitalist class”, which became the subject of ever wider interest to social sciences – Muller and Barnett, 1974; Sklair, 1995; Robinson and Harris, 2000 – could be understood as a process complementary to the creation of a single, hierarchically organized “accumulation on a global scale”, Amin, 1971).

Namely, the advancing process of internationalization was until then fundamentally limited by the regulative role of this state, thus, one of the main assumptions upon which the previous stage of accumulation was constituted (its welfare/warfare and Keynesian aspects). Proclaiming the principle of radical limitation of internal state regulation, which “aggravates/slow down accumulation”, actors of the new form of capitalist organization of accumulation (primarily global firms) simultaneously also removed the external limits: obstacles established by the nation state on the basis of political “sovereignty”. Naturally, this primarily applied to semi-peripheral and peripheral states, but was no less important for parts of the center. The exception was, in the first place, the “epicenter”, the USA, where state regulation had already been limited, while external action played a larger role, successfully protecting American business interests (international corporations) in the international sphere by means of political-military instruments.

Other (known) important elements of the “Washington consensus” (founding principles of neoliberalism) were part of a single parcel (naturally, largely consistent; for inbuilt inconsistencies, see Harvey, 2005, 19), which enabled accelerated absolute and relative growth of global corporations. In addition, further insistence on privatization was primarily aimed at the restructuring of formerly socialist economies, while public consumption restructuring was more important in countries wherein “welfare capitalism” was more advanced (removal of mechanisms for reduction of inequalities in Scandinavian countries, e.g., Andersen, 1990). Thus it seems that the process of socialization characteristic of the previous stage of capitalist accumulation was in the new social-economic order – although at first sight reversed, stopped or at least slowed down (in transition from national to international scene) – actually obtained a new long-term incentive (in the form of indirect socialization) what is more in expanded global frameworks, with the removal of obstacles for growth posed until that time by political (state) borders and regulation within their bounds.

Neoliberal removal of obstacles for accelerated growth of international corporations, and therefore also for continuation of the socialization process of production at the international level was, however, soon faced with new contradictions. Polanyi’s analysis of the 1940s (Polanyi, 1944) already provided the basis allowing for unambiguous conclusion that the process of capital accumulation cannot unfold exclusively as “private business”, and that certain forms of regulation (as well as extra-economic regulators) were necessary for

economic reproduction of the capitalist order as much as for the survival of social community as a whole.¹⁸ That was most strikingly manifested precisely in the area which represented the center of new accumulation – finances (in contrast to the previous, industrial center) stricken by a disastrous crisis in the second half of the first decade of the new century (2007).

The looming collapse of the financial system in the US once again ushered the interventionist state onto the large economic stage, moreover into the very center of the neoliberal variant of the capitalist order. Massive financial support of public funds to private (or seemingly independent, public) financial institutions the collapse of which would be potentially conducive to a dramatic economic recession, revealed, in the practical sphere, the unsurmountable boundaries of the neoliberal episode of capitalist accumulation organization. In addition, the ideological framework of the mainstream economic opinion retained a neoliberal rhetoric, finding important reliance and use in a, crucial for capital, continuing insistence on the limitation of national political institutions as obstacles to accumulation at the world level, the more so the greater the distance from the center of the country concerned was. That process, the rise of which started in the first decade of the new millennium, continued to gain momentum in its second and third decades.¹⁹

That is to say that (temporary) overcoming of the then acute world financial crisis failed to establish the conditions for accelerated economic growth, with the withdrawal of the state to the previous position of an overall supervisor of autonomous market regulation. Decelerated growth (with further expansion of economic inequalities within states, and continuing changes in the position of individual states in the global hierarchical economic-political structure – Piketty, 2014, Baldwin, 2016, Milanovic, 2019) was soon confronted with new global challenges. The Covid pandemic, accompanied by dramatic worsening of conditions for accumulation (massive halting of production-transport operations, breakup of supply chains, different forms of economic closures undertaken by states seeking to protect their domestic firms and/or the living standard of their population, public health, etc.) placed the ecological economic policy into the center of the capital accumulation process as an instrument of state regulation. That was soon after joined by the armed conflict in the European east which actually assumed numerous characteristics of the first stage in a worldwide conflict for hegemonic/subordinated positions in the world system (a conflict which inevitably promotes state apparatuses as principal comprehensive – political, economic, social and cultural – actors).

There is no doubt that causal sequences which led (and still lead) to growing international political-economic conflicts include a whole series of factors, two of which with most important roles are simultaneously complementary and

18 If Polanyi's views could be ignored until the beginning of the 21st century, climatic changes, as well as the COVID pandemic provide irrefutable evidence in favour of his conclusions.

19 The same pattern is again found this year, 2023, in "fortresses" of neoliberalism; the USA and Switzerland, with the collapse of the SVB and certain other American banks, as well as Credit Suisse.

confronted. Firstly, in its attempt to remain at the top of the hierarchicalized single world order (the objective sought structurally, by the logic of capitalist socialization, as well as actively), the US strive towards military defeat, or at least substantial weakening and political-economic submission of Russia as one of its more powerful opponents (or rather obstacles to its global domination) to thus strengthen its own position in a decisive conflict with the new pretendent at domination – China. Pursuing that aim with strict control of their closest allies (the EU, Britain, etc.) which are by diverse – formal as well as informal – means directly drawn into the conflict to thus reinforce their “alliance”, the USA at the same time relatively weakens individual political-economic positions of each of these countries (or groups of countries), thus strengthening its own dominant position, in both political-military and economic terms. The problem is, however, that this strategy worsens the economic position of countries which in a wider sense belong to the “center” of the world economic-political system (“the world’s West”). On the other hand, it can thus encourage the resistance of these countries and alliances (a glaring example is e.g. the statement of the French president Macron on the need and possibilities of the EU to grow into the third “world domination center”, alongside the US and China). This all the more applies to countries from the semi/periphery which are not directly linked with the (western) center: countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and in particular the large ones among them (BRICS and states which gravitate towards this alliance or seek to join it). Thus, the war in Ukraine, for example, simultaneously adds to attempts at (forcible) strengthening of global integration, and efforts of individual countries (especially those closer to the top of the pyramid of power) to win greater independence from the (epi)center – the USA.

As for this second element, the deepening of the economic crisis (additionally induced by the COVID pandemic, and ever stronger indicators of tectonic ecological changes) inevitably led to the dissolution of already globalized structures (“deglobalization”, fragmentation of globalization), with the only means of defense readily available to the struggling market economies being the intervention of the (national) state. That also means renewed strengthening of efforts by individual states to retain “sovereignty”, i.e. relative political-economic autonomy from the top of the hierarchical world order and the “rules” it imposes (Podvrsic, 2023).

Naturally, and seemingly paradoxically, one of the leading roles in the new state interventionism is again played by the USA, which uses enormous budgetary investments (hundreds of billions of dollars within e.g. the Biden-Harris American industry revitalization plan (Plan to Revitalize American Manufacturing...; White House, 2022), as well as far reaching normative solutions (import-export trade limitations, prohibitions of technology transfer, measures of monetary and fiscal policy, etc.) to protect its own economy, undermining market foundations of their closest allies’ economies.²⁰ We should

20 It is difficult to e.g. calculate exactly how many dozens of millions of dollars the German economy loses due to discontinued imports of energy and other raw materials from Russia, under the US pressure.

furthermore mention that a reindustrialization program was a year before also announced by the French president Macron. However, the question remains whether interventions of this kind (state stimulation of firms to bring industrial production “back home”) would ultimately contribute to the overcoming of the social-economic crisis or, conversely, merely to its deepening. Namely, reindustrialization of highly developed capitalist economies would be faced with two challenges: Shortage of trained labor and increased costs of production, which would affect market competitiveness of their firms. The shortage of labor could only be compensated by “importation” of foreign workers, already faced with substantial difficulties (external – lack of trained work force, and internal – resistance of domicile population to the settling in of “culturally different” groups, “designated” as the main source of internal political-economic crisis; Milanovic, 2019). In addition, higher wage levels in industrial firms of central countries would increase the prices of produced goods thus jeopardizing profitability of their producers. Attempts to lower labor costs (in a situation of already declining living standards of a substantial part of the population – lower and middle strata; Butler, Savage, eds. 1995; Picketty, 2014), would lead to intensification of social conflicts, which would, on their part, be additionally aggravated by simultaneous immigration waves, etc. Thus, new sources would additionally “feed” the crisis of capitalism in the world center.

In other words, the dramatic growth and expansion of international corporations in the period of neoliberal globalization, have apparently overturned the hitherto trend of socialization of capital reproduction, reliant on the growing degree of concentration and centralization, by increasing the degree of competitive struggle at the international level, with drastic limitation of the regulatory role of the state (“external” factor of socialization) at the internal level. Simultaneous accelerated development of the means of communication (informatics, transport...), however, expanded the overall accumulation process (with dramatic extension and networking of supply chains) to the whole of the planet, thus leading to the restructuring of the world economy; China and then (some even before China) other parts of Asia (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Vietnam, etc.) were turned into “world factories” (assuming the role once played by England, and then the USA), while countries of the center monopolized control over financial capital seeking to reinforce their hold over the core of technological advance (informatics, biotechnology, etc.). In this way the socialization process characteristic of the previous social-economic development was gradually substituted by the indirect one. Division of labor which progressively advanced in circumstances where individual production-technical processes were separated by distances of thousands of kilometers, imposes mutual dependence of producers of “components” (material and/or intellectual) to the extent that makes coordination a condition of profitability and therefore also survival. And it is precisely due to space-wise separation (necessary in view of the “dispersed” resources – natural, technological, human and as well as possibly also the development of new technologies) the state is inevitably involved (externally: as an “ally” or “enemy”; internally: as an

unavoidable regulator) into the game of socialization as an indispensable and once again increasingly direct actor.²¹

Search for higher profits, attainable especially in semi/peripheral states, abrupt technological development and with it also the division of labor, “dispersion” of natural, as well as human resources with faster and cheap transport of goods and information – all are processes conducive to the growth of indirect socialization at the global level (and reinforcement of interdependence without formalized institutional support, on the basis of endless networking of supply chains). Furthermore, systemically-historically necessary processes of capital production monopolization, with the removal of the state as the limiting “protector” of conditions for accumulation on a “sovereign” (limited) territory have, over time, also started to gradually bolster direct socialization, which previously rested on predominantly intra-state basis (domination of giant international oligopolies in several branches of economy). All that was thrown into question by the dramatic financial crisis (2007) started at the very center of capitalism, the USA, and until then inconceivably large financial interventions of the state in favor of faltering financial corporations.

The problem which surfaced with these interventions was the following: the crisis that triggered them was not of a transitory nature. A weak and short-lived economic recovery in the second decade of the 21st century²² was followed by new major crises of diverse forms and origins (Covid pandemic; war in Ukraine; increasingly pronounced pretensions of China to assume central role in the world system, with successful recruitment of semi/peripheral countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia, gathered around BRICS and other initiatives – refusal to sever trade relations with Russia etc.; expansion and deepening of protectionist measures; prohibition of exports/imports to/from “enemy” countries, protective custom duties and financial incentives to “domestic firms”, etc.), each of which drew the state ever deeper into “interventionism”. Huge resources were invested in the health system to provide for hundreds of thousands of the infected and prevent massive spread of the disease. Measures included generous financial assistance to (private, highly profitable pharmaceutical, as well as other) firms with falling sales or broken chains of supply. Wide strata of the population with low incomes (salaries, pensions, social welfare, etc.) were given subsidies. Budgetary deficits reached huge proportions, as did borrowings of states faced with substantially declining budgetary revenues. In addition to that came the war in Ukraine, the economic consequences of which largely increased the

21 Clearly visible in this context is the paradoxical effect of the war in Ukraine. Aspiration to remove Russia as an important political-economic world actor included the attempt at economic isolation of not only that country but also other countries which tried to retain economic relations with Russia. These include China, although threats to isolate it (if realized) would mean dramatic breakup of world supply chains, certain economic regression of all direct and indirect actors of the conflict and a severe blow to indirect socialization due to further reinforcement of state regulation in its national economic frameworks.

22 For the data on the constantly declining share of “advanced economies” and the growth of the “emerging markets” in the World GDP PP from the 1980s until the present, with the continuation of that trend, see IMF World Economic Outlook, 2022, 2023.

already mentioned problems, along with huge outlays for military costs (read: hugely increased income of firms within the military-industrial complex, as well as extra profits of energy firms, etc.).

Possibilities for crisis resolution

In a situation of a continuously escalating fiscal crisis (the previous forms of which were, already five decades ago, in the period of ever stronger dissolution of “welfare capitalism”, convincingly analyzed by O’Connor, 1973), the state found itself in a contradictory position. On the one hand, within “national frameworks”, it was increasingly required to act as a direct economic regulator (“interventionism” within the limits of “national sovereignty”). On the other hand, faced with ever denser connections within a networked and hierarchized world economic-political system, it was compelled to restrain “sovereignist” aspirations (and needs). In other words, it was faced with a widening gap between mutually necessary *sphere of regulation* (wherein free market could decreasingly play a satisfactory balancing role and had to be “supplemented” with active involvement of the state or another – domestic or international – institutionalized subject) and the *sphere of sovereignty*. Moreover, the sphere of unavoidable economic-political regulation is much wider than that of (state) sovereignty, and actors who would offset the difference in the spread between the two were clearly lacking. Therefore, state regulation (reliant on political sovereignty) is necessary but not sufficient for national economy, and state sovereignty is unsustainable under conditions of a globalized economy. The attained level of direct socialization of the world economy requires the existence of an actor – central global regulator – to enhance the indirect form of socialization (institutionally organized world system). Marginal presence (or rather functional displacement) of this actor in recent years, in the form of international agencies, agreements, etc. (International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization, etc.) is manifested as a drastic growth of “geoeconomic fragmentation” (GEF; Aiyar, et al., 2023).²³ Naturally, this is the case of *geopolitical-economic* fragmentation (GPEF), because it is a phenomenon resting on “resurrection” of state sovereignty in consequence of the economic crisis, even where it was previously suppressed in the neoliberally established global economy.

This immediately opens the following question: is it possible, and if so how, to reverse this process of fragmentation, or rather what sort of means could be applied to limit the process of growth of state sovereignty and once again globally expand the field of economic regulation? The reason necessitating this reversal is quite simple: fragmentation produces major economic losses, initially

23 This is how these authors define the GEF concept: Policy-driven reversal of (international economic – n. M.L.) integration, often guided by strategic considerations, will be referred to as geoeconomic fragmentation (GEF)... GEF encompasses reversals along any and all of the different channels whereby countries engage with each other economically, including through trade, capital flows, the movement of workers across national boundaries, international payments, and multilateral cooperation to provide global public goods (Aiyar, et al., 2023: 5).

for a limited number of national economies, and later for all of them. This is how the IMF experts see it: The benefits of globalization propagate through multiple channels; the adverse consequences of GEF would be felt in many areas as well. For several decades, *trade deepening* has helped catalyze catch-up in per capita incomes across countries and a large reduction in global poverty, while in advanced economies, low-income consumers have benefited disproportionately through lower prices. Conversely, the unravelling of trade links would most adversely impact low-income countries and less well-off consumers in advanced economies. Restrictions on *cross-border migration* would deprive host economies of valuable skills while reducing remittances in migrant-sending economies. Reduced *capital flows* would hinder financial deepening in destination countries, especially through foreign direct investment which can be an important source of *technological diffusion*. And a decline in international cooperation would put at risk the provision of vital *global public goods* (Aiyar, at al., 2023, 4).

Naturally, it is possible to conceive of several forms of an institutionally non/organized global political-economic order starting from its complete collapse and reduction of international relations to predominantly or exclusively bilateral state arrangements (that would, in political terms, represent a return to a Hobbesian world of a potentially general war of all against all, to a state of unlimited sovereignism insupportable with the achieved level of technological development at the basis of present day economic development, to the establishment of a single institutionally set up world order, guaranteed by laws and actors who ensure respect of the established rules. And while the former possibility may be a hardly probable and only temporary solution, since it would lead to the disintegration of civilization (to real and potential wars that would exhaust all human and economic resources, and certainly ultimately also the end of capitalism as an order oriented towards generation of profits based on economic and personal freedoms), the latter possibility opens different alternatives, of which only two of the most general nature will be mentioned:

a. Unipolar world order that would signify retention/resumption by the USA of the center of the global political-economic world system, within which military power and economic domination of this country would ensure unobstructed functioning of a single system of economic regulation through generally accepted (i.e. imposed) institutions (the UN with its agencies, World Bank, World Trade Organization, dollar as the world currency, etc.). The problem with this solution is the fact that in the meantime a new global economic-political power, China has emerged (prospectively gradually approached by India) which can, not only refuse to accept a second-rate position in the world system but seeks (and in certain cases also manages) to take over the leading role in certain economic-political spheres (overall GDP, GDPPP, growth rate, economically supported political influence in countries opposing the US domination, especially within BRICS and those trying to approach it).

By the same logic, one must envisage a similar development should China – as a new center –tried to place under its control the overall global order in view of the resistance that could be efficiently offered by the USA, EU and other

politically-economically more or less powerful allied countries. In other words, retaining of/reversal to unipolar order is hardly a likely outcome of the current crisis and would end just as the previous non-order, i.e. with the deepening of the political-economic crisis of the overall capitalist mode of social life production.

b. Creation of various forms of a multipolar order. One of such forms would be the formation of two relatively separate “world” political-economic systems (macro-fragmentation). Along with a continuing domination of the USA within the frameworks of the hitherto existing world system, but now reduced to the “followers” of that model (EU, G7, other pro-Western countries), another (parallel) world system would be gradually formed through the expansion of the present day BRICS organization to include new members from Asia, Latin America and Africa, along with a restructuring of this system placing China at its center, as economically and politically-militarily dominant country (including the overall level of economic development, technological leadership, financial control through various institutions and introduction of yuan – or its “surrogate” under Chinese control – as the system’s/world currency, etc. Relations between the two world orders would naturally be competitive and probably also adversarial (struggle for expansion to still “neutral” or “the other’s” territories, due to the uneven world distribution primarily of natural resources, lower labor costs etc.) but the danger of overall destruction would, hopefully, potentially restrain the scope of mutual conflicts.

This outcome would clearly generally result in (temporary) limitation/ deceleration of the process of socialization at the most general level of the analysis (global society as a whole) but it would soon be resumed within each of these two systems. Furthermore, in view of the increased role of the state in the political-economic competitive struggle of the two systems, the direct (intra-state) form of socialization would receive new incentives (typical example: the US reindustrialization program for the protection from Chinese industrial domination is, as already demonstrated, based on huge public investments, i.e. direct state regulation; similar consequences are produced by state limitation of investments from the competing system, e.g. outright bans or limits on takeovers of certain “strategic” firms or transport infrastructure such as ports, for instance). In addition, international corporations seated in countries of the “western system’s” center, as well as these countries themselves would, in direct consequence of the emergent competitive world order, experience a reduction of extra profits, generated in underdeveloped countries, a substantial number of which would join the new (alternative, rival) world system.²⁴

24 Incidentally, it might also be possible to envisage a kind of a “transitory” stage (like Orwell, 1949) in the form of an attempt at further macro-fragmentation to more than two global political-economic systems: one that would, in addition to those under the domination of the USA and China, also include that of Latin American countries, along with yet another in Asia with India at its centre, and with a different nature of intra-systemic relations (more or less centralized), as well as relations inside individual states (for different variants of hybrid systems; see “variants of capitalism” in Milanovic, 2019). However, the achieved level of global economic socialization (uneven territorial distribution of resources: natural, technological, military-political,), could hardly enable maintenance of this degree of macro-fragmentation in a longer term.

Furthermore, according to IMF experts this also applies to the ongoing (intrasystemic) fragmentation, and would even to a larger extent apply under the circumstances marked by the growth of a competing world system, thus leading to a significant increase in the costs of capital accumulation: „Available studies suggest that the deeper the fragmentation, the deeper the costs; that technological decoupling significantly amplifies losses from trade restrictions; that adjustment costs are likely to be large; and that emerging market economies and low-income countries are likely to be most at risk due to the loss of knowledge spillovers. Depending on modelling assumptions, the cost to global output from trade fragmentation could range from 0.2 percent (in a limited fragmentation / low-cost adjustment scenario) to up to 7 percent of GDP (in a severe fragmentation / high-cost adjustment scenario); with the addition of technological decoupling, the loss in output could reach 8 to 12 percent in some countries. More work is needed to assess and aggregate the costs through multiple channels...

While fragmentation may entail strategic advantages for some countries in selected cases, it is very likely to involve significant economic costs in the aggregate. The costs would include higher import prices, segmented markets, diminished access to technology and to both skilled and unskilled labor, and ultimately reduced productivity which may result in lower living standards. GEF is likely to complicate multilateral cooperation in critical areas such as climate change mitigation and pandemic preparedness“ (Aiyar, et al., 2023: 5).

Finally, increased costs and growing global risks take place in decades that witness overall decline of the GDP growth rate at the world level, linked primarily to a decades long slowdown of GDP growth and dropping profit rates in most advanced Western societies (Piketty, 2014).²⁵

Concluding remarks

To sum up. The text demonstrates that the current (post)industrial revolution (primarily in the IT and transport sectors) inevitably spurs (accelerates) further socialization processes, both **direct** (institutionally supported coordination of the production-transport process – “elements” of supply chains – based on ownership and management, private and public) and **indirect** (infinite networking of ever longer supply chains, requiring coordination on a more lasting basis than that provided by the market), necessarily at a global level (the birth of a “network society”; see Castells, 2010). The private nature of control, management and appropriation, however, precludes the stability of such coordination. Once when, for different reasons, problems in stable functioning of supply chains emerge

25 Piketty, and the IMF experts alike, offer a good analysis of different GEF consequences, i.e. elements of the crisis affecting the modern form of world capital accumulation, suggesting measures for their removal. They however, do not perceive that the crisis originates from overall preconditions for the reproduction of the capitalist order themselves, described here in briefest terms as a gap (contrariness) between the social nature and private control of the process of social reproduction that cannot be overcome by “improvements” within the system, but only by the change of the system as a whole.

(market competition, pandemics, war...) nonexistence of a mechanism for efficient overcoming the source of the crisis gains prominence. Namely, due to the implosion of the American political-economic domination within the world system, global institutions under US control can no longer impose uniform response to the crisis. The only remaining mechanism of interventive regulation is the one at the level of national states (or groups of states – EU or G7 for instance – but even that often only on a temporary basis) which seek to find a local (specific) answer to the crisis inside national economies. These attempts at partial (national) resolution in a long term destroy the previously existing global regulation mechanisms (attained forms of intermediate or indirect socialization, institutional or established in practice) and thus only deepen the assumptions that give rise to the crisis. In other words, fragmentation of the already achieved degree of global socialization (“deglobalization” in consequence of the crisis) does not open new possibilities for global anti-crisis regulation: growth of international competition (“crumbling” of the hierarchical international order under the US domination, due to the ascent of new potential leaders – China, India, now already expanded BRICS, etc.) leaves no possibility for a new single global hierarchical order, any more than an alternative in the form of consensual regulators (independent agencies, UN e.g.). Thus, the conditions are created for lasting renewal of the political-economic global crisis, without a prospect of a long-term sustainable, imposed or voluntarily accepted solution.

The overall result of this contradictory development unfolding under conditions of a decades long decline of GDP growth rates in most developed countries and increased economic inequalities of internal or occasionally interstate nature, along with a reduction or long-term stagnation in living standards of a wide strata of the population (starting from the relatively well-off middle strata in most developed countries to dozens of millions of people affected by famine in underdeveloped societies) are manifested as outbreaks of ever more frequent and deeper economic and social crises.²⁶ Thus the crises no longer appear in cycles, coming in long or medium waves (where the end of one cycle signifies the beginning of a new phase of social-economic ascent) but rather as a permanent state of the system (interrupted by temporary mild instances of “recovery”). Furthermore, it becomes increasingly clear that the capitalist form of social relations lacks the mechanisms to deal with the future strengthening of two legitimate, mutually opposed tendencies: that of socialization of production and of maintenance of the private nature of management over that production and appropriation of its results. Actually, it means that capitalism no longer has the mechanisms to efficiently prevent accelerated outbreaks of social crises. And the attempts to overcome them through the reestablishment of a single global system of accumulation (unipolar hierarchical world order) or alternatively, by means of reinforced state sovereignty (political-economic fragmentation) lead only to further worsening of conditions for accumulation. Bearing in mind the

26 The limited space here does not allow for an analysis of potential political-economic systemic consequences of social conflicts within the countries at the center of the world system inevitably caused by the substantial increase in economic inequalities therein.

lack of space here to examine the potential (and probably also) catastrophic consequences of these failures, we can only conclude that in the coming decades, capitalism will unavoidably, and ever more radically, be faced with the limits of its own systemic reproduction.

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