

Imperialist Circuits

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Abstract:

This paper interrogates militarisation as a regime of primitive destruction, whereby capital depletes and diminishes the vitality of life, land, and labour in order to enable renewed imperialist cycles of accumulation. In other words, it asks: what if destruction, degradation, and dispossession are not unfortunate side effects, but necessary productive logics at the heart of capitalist and imperialist world-making? Through this intervention, we trace three axes of analysis: theoretical, empirical, and transformational. We work this analysis through four case studies involving Ireland, Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), Denmark, and the USA, where we demonstrate how military training, arms production, military facilitation and extractive infrastructures damage environments and devalue the lives of those who depend on these environments. Second, we examine how these sites are interconnected through those imperial and geopolitical systems organized around the logistical nodes necessary for the production, circulation and consumption of weaponry. This consumption, of course, involves destruction, and weapons – valued for their destructive utility, reveal how capitalism commodifies the conditions that make life more-or-less livable. Ultimately, the aim of our analysis is to challenge dominant security paradigms while amplifying community-led strategies of resistance, self-determination and non-capitalist world making. From an anti-militarist standpoint, this involves addressing the material infrastructure of war – the means of preparing for and facilitating war, and not just warfare itself. This includes ending situational complicity in the escalating genocide in Palestine, and imperialist aggression throughout West and Central Asia, where the process of primitive destruction is reaching a monstrous extreme.

Keywords:

Militarisation, arms trade, critical geopolitics, political economy, world-making.