

Atlantis Rising Blueprint for a Better World

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Abstract:

The current dynamics of the global political economy are depressing: A multidimensional climate crisis is taking on speed; new pandemic waves with unknown lethal consequences are building up; National capitalism – bent to become a new form of fascism – raises its head and the return to military conflict solution makes a 3rd World War possible. But despite these gloomy perspectives it remains true that mankind so far has mastered all difficulties as soon as it became aware of them. Our species in principle has all means – physically and intellectually – to let a new Atlantis rise. And the guidelines how to overcome the above mentioned three crises, are delivering the blueprint of the organizational design of such a new Atlantis.

This paper explores this exciting hypothesis. The first goal to reach clearly is to avoid a 3rd World War, which means to defeat the fascist movements in the world. As the 20th century showed, fascism developed out of nationalism, which in turn was nourished by a nationwide controlled class rule, a form of military (and police) governed capitalist exploitation. This currently so successful form of capitalism (China, Russia, USA) is defined as 'National Capitalism'. It corresponds to what I called disintegrating capitalism in (Hanappi 2019a). Being victorious, to have overcome national capitalism, means to have been able to establish a global democratic government. To get there the progressive opposition to National Capitalism has to develop theory, strategy and practice. As described in (Hanappi 2020) a certain degree of division of progressive labor activities – the emergence of a global class of organic intellectuals² – will be needed. Only with global governance the other two crises, the climate crisis and the future global health crises, can be overcome. Since they are already here and help to make the impasse of capitalism, of national capitalism, become very visible to every human individual, we already can find ways of global coordination to prevent them. In doing so, success is possible and can yield into the necessary optimism, an attitude which is necessary for the emotional basis of any progressive, humanistic movement. A man-made Atlantis can rise - not beyond an ocean but here on earth. We just have to unite our intellectual forces and to continue the century-old struggle for emancipatory social evolution³.

Keywords: global political economy; global crises; future policies, pandemic, environment, democracy.

JEL Classification: F01; F02; F50; F60.

Introduction

In the last years the human species has been confronted with several global crises. In this paper only the three most important ones are singled out: The climate crisis, the health crisis, and the crisis in global political economy, call it the World War Crisis. Each of them will be dealt with in turn. Obviously, the start has to be made with the World War Crisis because the other two crises can only be tackled if there exists a reliable, democratic global government of the human species that can develop, implement, and coordinate the appropriate measures. This conclusion is rather evident if the failures of environmental policy in the last 40 years are considered. As long as decisions are restricted to the arbitrary decision-making processes of local national governments, while the dynamics of climate change take place on the global level, as long as this is the case, there is no chance for a turnaround of the fast lane to the abyss that we are currently taking. With respect to the global health crisis, it was only the terrible experience of the Corona pandemic since 2020 that brought to our attention how important global health policy is. Till today large parts of the politically powerful elites are caught in their short-term endeavors, e.g., to make money or to get re-elected. Only when the pandemic did hit it became visible how strong the globally interwoven production system - i.e., worldwide division of labor - not only enables more welfare but also bears the

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² In explaining Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectual Perry Anderson writes: 'Gramsci argued that intellectuals are absolutely necessary for the proletariat, both in historical periods when it is a class in-itself and in those when it is a class for-itself. Without intellectuals the proletariat could neither come to power, nor consolidate or develop its power after winning it.' (Anderson 2016, Kindle-Positions 1971-1982).

³ Thomas Morus wrote his 'Utopia' in 1516.

risk of a sudden collapse of this system if large parts of the global labor force are suddenly missing. To prevent a collapse, global health policy has to have the power to act globally, *e.g.*, to provide vaccination immediately to all parts of the world if necessary. To have this power the institutions of global health policy have to have a strong global government supporting them. As long as a new pandemic, *e.g.*, a new mutation of a virus, can develop in a part of the world where vaccination and sanitary conditions are inappropriate because profit expectations of firms or nationalist considerations have hindered an adequate improvement to take place, as long as this is the case global pandemics are inevitable.

For both types of crisis global governance thus is indispensable. As can be shown, the emergence of a global governing institution at the same time is the necessary result of an overcoming of the third type of crisis, the World War Crisis. It thus is this crisis that has to attract our attention first.

1. The World War Crisis

After the end of World War 2 a bipolar global political economy had been established. The USA had settled their role as the leading capitalist country, the hegemon of the Western World, whereas in the East the USSR had been rising to a military powerful opponent with a ruling class that based its internal dominance on police-controlled central planning – on administrative and coercive power. For many developing countries the latter organization form of the USSR was attractive because the idea of central planning by the state fitted well to their needs to build-up elementary infrastructure: energy, transport, communication, etc. In the West the narrative of the benefits of enabling capital accumulation of private firms was the main ideological weapon. All that a state was necessary for was thought to be the establishment of free markets⁴, which then automatically would increase welfare for all. This idea, of course, was attractive too. During WW2 the involved countries had suffered from the narrowing restrictions that a command economy – which any war-faring country necessarily has to be – implies for its citizens. To choose where to work and what to produce, what to consume, this was the freedom that was promised by the democratic regimes in the West. The academic correlate in economic theory, of course, was the neoclassical model of economic theory: In the end – after markets have done their job - the inborn utility functions of human individuals determine the best of all (technologically) possible worlds⁵. The truth of this narrative (but not the correctness of its mathematical counterpart) hinges on the adequateness of its assumptions: each homo sapiens maintains an appropriate utility function, communication exists only via prices, direct coercive power does not take place, class structures and political state entities in societies reconciling them are not existing, and - of course - all markets are perfect⁶. While the world of Stalin and his followers laid the emphasis of power maintenance of the ruling class on direct coercive control, the US dominated West combined military supremacy with a convincing fairy tale that enabled a much more effective ideological underpinning than the shallow echoes of a misunderstood Marxian theory that Stalin's followers till 1990 still prayed.

The co-existence of the two worlds never was a peaceful one. The fact that immediately after WW2 a hot war between them could be prevented cannot hide the fact that the ensuing Cold War never ended. The breakdown of the USSR in 1990 was not the breakdown of the ruling class, organized as a political party with a strong military coercive force, in Russia. With Putin the nationalist turn of Russia, already envisaged by Stalin, was reinforced to consolidate its status as the second leading world power. The few remaining socialist aspirations were dropped. In 2016, when Donald Trump became the leader of the US, of the 'Free World', a major shift in the Western class societies and their governance mechanisms became visible too. The autocratic style of political performers, front man of powerful business groups, had proven to be a successful strategy that could win elections (*e.g.*, Donald Trump). The pivotal element for this success clearly was to focus on nationalist arguments distributed by well-controlled mass media. The idea was not new, Hitler and Stalin had built on it though with less sophisticated technological possibilities. The two most remarkable novelties in the autocratic turn of 2016 were: the extent of influence of centrally steered mass media on election results; the invisibility of the force of the military-industrial complex on its autocratic, personal, political representative.

The second point clearly is shared by Putin and his own military-industrial complex – and probably explains personal sympathy between leading front men like Trump, Putin, Berlusconi, Erdogan, and the like.

⁴ In the time of Walras the adjective 'free' meant 'free from the intervention of the ruling feudal class'. It thus carried a progressive connotation. Today the capitalist ruling class has changed this connotation, it now means 'free from the intervention of an integrated capitalist state'. The progressive character is lost.

⁵ This is the upshot of what in neoclassical economic theory is called 'welfare economics', compare (Gravelle Rees, 456-502).

⁶ For non-economists, unaware of these completely inadequate assumptions, Rostow (1960) had produced a convincing book that traced out the possible development path for all countries in the world to reach the 'age of high mass consumption', which already was proclaimed to exist in the USA. The book was translated into numerous languages and distributed to opinion leaders all over the world.

The term military-industrial complex was coined by US president D.D. Eisenhower in 1961, who warned of its rising influence in US politics: This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence - economic, political, even spiritual - is felt in every city, every statehouse, every office of the federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society. In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists, and will persist. ([Farewell Address to the Nation](#) 17th of January, 1961).

From the perspective of political economy this warning is a warning from a take-over of the ultimate political power in a democratic state by an alliance of top military leaders and a small, but wealthy business group engaged in producing military products and related supplies. As the above mentioned first novelty in 2016 states, information technology industry supporting the ideological battlefield now also falls under the latter category.

As a consequence, the naked insistence on the concept of 'democracy' – without specification of the concrete feedback mechanisms with which a population is enabled to control its self-governance, *i.e.*, 'democracy' - today can fall prey to the enhanced mind-manipulation machinery of the contemporary military-industrial complex⁷. Again, the appeal to 'national' feelings proves to be the key to promote the imperialist political aspirations of the military-industrial complex. As described in (Hanappi, 2022a) these aspirations already gained momentum in the USA in the mid-90-ties. In Russia the already existing dominance of its military-industrial complex found its leading public representative only a few years later: Vladimir Putin. The clash between Russia and the US-led NATO, the global military arm of the US military-industrial complex, was in the air during the last 20 years already. With the invasion of Russia in Ukraine this acceleration of hostility finally exploded.

The conglomerate of coercive power and information power has always been the essence of class rule applied in an exploitative process. In the Middle Ages the group of knights and mercenaries – the military force – represented the coercive arm as the priests with their religious indoctrination represented the force of information power. Both were stabilizing the exploitation of farmers and workers by the feudal class. In capitalism the coercive arm became a specialized force within the capitalist state, which integrated not only the different capital accumulating branches but also did some appeasement work with respect to rebellious workers. The ideological tasks of religion were modernized by the adapted para-religious streams of economic ideology – finally leading to the contemporary omnipresence of the capitalist algorithm⁸.

The re-appearance of the 'political' (the coercive strength of the military-industrial complex) as the dominant force in the dynamics of 'political economy' is at the same time a draw-back for most economic concerns. But the ensuing economic hardness that a war means for the majority of concerned populations turns out as Golden Times for a handful of businesses with exploding profits. Since 2009 total capital accumulation - approximated as real GDP growth – had slowed down. For the minds of (bastard-) Keynesians a sure sign that the consumer demand failed to catch-up after the great financial crisis of 2008. As the interwar period had shown in an extreme way a possible solution is to substitute consumer demand by the demand for weapons that states need to lead a war. This type of demand does not need any price considerations and even the indebtedness of a state plays only a minor role⁹. All it needs is an autocratic regime, in the 1930-ties the Fascist party, which orders this type of demand. And it also became immediately clear that this new turn to autocratic governance had to be supplemented by a massive attack on the ideological battlefield. In a speech on January 17, 1936, Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels stated: "We can do without butter, but ... not without arms. One cannot shoot with butter, but with guns." And when he asked the cherishing masses, 'Do you want guns or butter?', they answered yelling wildly, 'Guns!'. 2022 is not 1936: In Russia streamlined media and rigid control makes acclamation outside Putin's inner circle unnecessary, while in the West even the massive, well-organized media support did not allow Donald Trump to seize power at the January 6th riot, when he turned out to have lost the elections. Nevertheless, with the war in Ukraine the military-industrial complex in the West has identified another opportunity to push forward its war game – and prosperity of its economic allies will follow. Perhaps some of the accruing extra profits will be enough to consolidate right-wing governance in some EU countries, though the overall political situation in Europe will become very unstable.

Returning to the issue of a possible lesson to be learned for a blueprint of Atlantis, the design of democratic mechanisms is standing out as a major task. Democracy cannot be reduced to a majority rule in an election process

⁷ In the USA the propaganda for the war in the Middle East during the Bush presidency had already been an impressive example of ideological warfare. In Europe the surprisingly successful BREXIT campaign in the UK showed the manipulative strength of some interested business circles.

⁸ Compare (Hanappi 2013).

⁹ German Fascism solved the problem by introducing its new currency, the Reichsmark, compare (Sohn-Rethel 1987).

with one-man-one-vote.

First, the decision to be voted on has to be specified. Even the choice of what is important and what is neglectable is an important part of democratic governance, in particular in times when information overload is used strategically by political entrepreneurs to generate followers in the alienated masses. From the global perspective of the human species, questions concerning the capability of the reproduction of the species – though not of its overall growth – evidently are of highest priority. This is why the climate crisis and the health crisis qualify as high-priority problems.

The World War Crisis has become a high-priority problem: because of the destructive capacity of nuclear weapons; and because it has to be overcome to enable global governance, which in turn is a condition sine-qua-non for solving the other two high-level problems.

There are many problems of lesser importance, which has led to the opinion that 'each problem should be solved at the level that can solve it best', the so-called subsidiary principle. This principle is itself a problem, since it takes as granted that there exists a unique level which is optimal for solving a problem¹⁰. In the case of the migration problem in 2015 the impotence of the subsidiary principle became painfully visible: At the village level as well as at the state level the game-theoretic prisoners' dilemma situation paralyzed the decision-making, which then turned into a stalemate on EU level, since certain EU heads-of-state (e.g., Victor Orban) used the institutional setup of the EU (e.g. the unanimity rule) as well as their dominance of local media to cement their local authoritarian position. In that way this example showed that a democratic mechanism in some cases has to allow for the delegation of power to a better informed, higher-level decision center¹¹. This often is the case if decisions have to be made fast, or if there are too many administration-oriented routines to be exposed to time-consuming voting processes¹². But the central characteristic of a democratic mechanism is that it insists on a feedback process, which allows for a change in the higher ranks of the decision process, a change that can be initiated by the lower ranks after a predetermined - rather short¹³ - time period. The feedback procedure itself has to be institutionalized and thus out-of-reach of the direct control of the high-level decision-maker.

Within a governance period of a higher-level decision-making unit feedback from lower levels plays an important role too: It is the communication process between different levels (feedback in both directions) that provides the organic character of the life of the species.

Feedback design on the highest level has to be secured by institutionalization, a goal that nation states today typically solve by providing a set of constitutional laws that need high majority votes to be changed. But also, at lower levels the delegation of power upwards and downwards typically is frozen in a set of ordinary laws. This law system has to be more flexible, because it reflects temporary compromises between the different classes in a society. And as the power relation between the classes can change, so will the corresponding system of compromises, the law system. As long as these compromises are to a sufficient degree accepted by the concerned classes (note again the pivotal role of ideological warfare¹⁴) the domestic need for police and military will be small. Criminal activity typically will mainly occur at the very low level of society (lumpenproletariat) and at the top level (corruption); if these two levels merge, powerful international criminal organizations can emerge.

A problem occurs when compromises between classes are not possible any more. Be it that an authoritarian ruling class eliminates most feedback mechanisms, or be it that a large entity – like the global world economy consisting of rich North and poor South – never had installed the sufficiently strong feedback mechanisms that can be consciously experienced as the background of a compromise. In this case class struggle will be knocking at the door and parts of a national ruling class will might try to change the character of police and military, the bourgeois state then becomes a police state, the law system adjusts to the regime. Often the head of state then also becomes someone with a military background. This is the standard way towards a Fascist regime¹⁵. This happens in many countries on the outskirts of the global value chains, where strict labor exploitation regimes are ruling, e.g., Bolsaro's

¹⁰ Compare (Hanappi 2015).

¹¹ A recent contribution to the organization of decision structures is provided by (Nunes, 2021).

¹² Imagine a firm in which every morning elections are held who will play the secretary, who will play the CEO, who will be work at which machine, etc. In such cases a certain amount of repetition of hierarchy clearly can be a win-win solution.

¹³ How long a period of central decision-making should last, depends on the minimum time it takes to carry out this urgent central task. Of course, a central authority can always step down earlier. For routine tasks a period of two years should be a good choice. It is telling that authoritarian leaders usually try to delay re-election.

¹⁴ At this point Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony of a class enters the discussion of ideological warfare.

¹⁵ Anderson writes, 'For historically, and this is the most essential point of all, the development of any revolutionary crisis necessarily displaces the dominance within the bourgeois power structure from ideology to violence. Coercion becomes both determinant and dominant in the supreme crisis, and the army inevitably occupies the front of the stage in any class struggle against the prospect of a real inauguration of socialism.' (Anderson 2016, Kindle-Positions 1171-1174)

government in Brazil.

The lesson to be learned for the design of Atlantis is straight forward: Design your feedback mechanisms carefully and embed them in acceptable compromises institutionalized in flexible enough law systems. Watch your policing executors of the law system (lawyers and policemen) closely, change the personal often enough and take recruits from all classes and parts of the world. This is not only important for safeguarding fascist developments, it also helps to reduce the improper, even criminal, acquisition of advantages that stem from the execution of the state monopoly of coercive power, or the corresponding use of loopholes in the existing law system.

The last paragraph contains an implicit link to the question of motives that is of utmost importance for the design of democratic mechanisms: Once a question to be democratically decided is on the table, the persons to decide it have to be chosen. Evidently, not all 9 billion human individuals can – and will want to - vote on every upcoming decision. An obvious immediate narrowing assumption is that voters should be those who are concerned by the outcome of the election. The caveat of this reasonable idea is that in a world with such a tightly-woven interdependence of all economic processes:

- the number of relevant questions still remains much too large for each concerned voter;
- the expertise to recognize the relevant interdependencies is typically completely missing.

The answer to these difficulties usually is growing agnosticism, people abstain. Blind trust in emotionally determined political or religious leaders starts to flourish. Thus, the danger of the political entrepreneurs of fascism in new clothes pops up again.

The counting of heads in an election therefore has to be amended. Being concerned is not only a question of geography, it is a question of a person's position in the overall process of global political economy. The scope of many questions might at first sight look negligible, e.g., why should a European citizen take sides if Toyota wants to stick to its hybrid car design instead of focusing on electric cars only. And many of them actually are. But then there do exist intellectual circles for many of these questions, which at least can give some preliminary insight – often already available in the internet¹⁶. Instead of just counting votes the counting of weighted votes would improve the situation. Weights could be adjusted by the degree of being concerned as well as by the degree of proven expertise. And then there is the necessity of veto rights: There have to be general limits to the force of decisions taken by electorates. One typical no-go would be the death penalty for human individuals, but there are others.

While it seems to be difficult and hard intellectual work, but still possible to install democratic mechanisms, the pressing question is how to master the currently looming 3rd World War to get a chance to make Atlantis rise. The global conflict clearly is a conflict between three capitalist regimes - USA, Russia, and China – that all are led by representatives of their ruling class, all being closely linked their respective military-industrial complex. The motive of the national capitalism of the three big players is still the same of all kinds of capitalism, namely to maximize exploitation. This, of course, implies an increase of impoverishment within their respective domain. Almost 200 years ago Marx' had the vision that all exploited classes of the world will unite to form the one class of the global proletariat that will defeat the capitalist class. It turned out that today it is not the worker 'who does not have a fatherland', today it rather is capital that is searching for new possibilities to exploit in each corner of the world – irrespective of continents and countries. Despite his outstanding scholarship Marx did not have the ability to predict what will be the turns that capitalism will take in the coming century¹⁷.

The theoretical underpinnings explaining the development of the capitalist class in the 20th century till today are highly unsatisfactory¹⁸. The military-industrial complex, identified by Eisenhower in 1961 became an important concept – not so much in academic work, but in the real-world dynamics of the evolution of capital. The large US corporations¹⁹ involved in this transformation of the capitalist class realized that they needed to streamline academic research to install a military-industrial-academic complex. To direct academic research towards areas that allow to enhance exploitation became one of the two major pillars on which integrated capitalism of the 2nd half of the 20th century could build²⁰. The other pillar was the amplification of ideological manipulation, of information power exemplified by the use of centrally produced and then distributed interpretation schemes of what is going on

¹⁶ The content of the internet is of course another burning problem that goes beyond the scope of this paper.

¹⁷ Marx knew this and this is the reason why he shied away from describing any future communist system. He was content to stick to the more urgent immediate task to criticize and to overcome 19th century capitalism.

¹⁸ One of the most promising early attempts came from Hilferding (1910). His notion of 'Finanzkapital' correctly anticipated not only the extending global reach of capital, but also its growing social and geographical distance to actually executed physical exploitation of workers.

¹⁹ A list of these corporations can be found at <https://www.militaryindustrialcomplex.com>.

²⁰ An insightful book on the cases of MIT and Stanford has been published by Stuart W. Leslie (Leslie 1994). In a sense this type of 'science' (in particular 'economic theory') took over the role of religion in feudalism, serving as the ideology that implants the dominance of existing class relations in the brains of the population.

in the world, compare (Hanappi 2022c, 52-95). Of course, this was made possible by the achieved technological advances. Today an overwhelming amount of information power not only runs from centrally produced interpretations to the general public, but also from the last leaves in the information hierarchy upwards to the top decision-makers²¹. Though these two pillars on which the power of the military-industrial complex rests are best documented in the USA, there is no doubt that they are also cornerstones of imperial force in Russia and China.

From the point of view of large corporations in the world, of the super-rich in all three dominating countries, the global division of labor that already existed till February 2022 was a rather prosperous state of affairs – despite the two years of Corona pandemic. And here comes the speculative hypothesis: With a shifted, new iron curtain the three global capital groups can agree to form a unique global class. All that is needed is to direct the military part of the military-industrial complex towards the global surveillance of workers. This, admittedly, is not an easy goal – warriors trained for decades to have a say whom to fight and what the priorities are, are not easily to re-direct. And with the force of the second pillar – amplified ideological intervention – it can be expected that local fascist resistance areas will develop. But in the end the deeply rooted local perspective of all fascist regimes will falter as an aspiring global capitalist class will form.

In this process, probably characterized by several local wars, a new global class of the exploited population can get its historical chance. The fruits of capitalism, lately of disintegrating capitalism, with respect to technological abilities (though largely mis-used by profit-maximizing goals) make it possible to install an institutionalized global democracy. The class of organic intellectuals – opposing, of course, the priests of neoclassical economics and their followers in other social sciences – can refine the institutionalized feedback loops that connect local desires with global necessities. And instead of the motive of an omnipresent capitalist algorithm in all brains and all societies²² there can be room for other motives. Life can be experienced as lifetime shared with the whole species.

The qualitative jump to the new type of global life of the species will not come about without decisive victory of the global class of the exploited population. How, and if, this end of the 'pre-history of mankind' (Marx) will take place cannot be predicted; history teaches us that a combination of fights, changing alliances and temporary compromises – all in a rather short sequence – can be expected. The role of a guiding progressive group of scientists (organic intellectuals) as well as the fact that there is a unique global enemy (the exploiting, globally ruling class) will be an advantage. Decisive battles will have to be won on the battlefield of ideology. There, convincing blueprints for democratic feedback loops have to be developed and have to be distributed to reach the public opinion.

At the horizon of these speculative ideas a future Atlantis can become visible.

2. The Health Crisis

There is no doubt that the Corona pandemic that started in 2020 had a tremendous impact on the global political economy. In the first two months after its start, it was thought to be a problem, which mainly concerns China. Then, within a few weeks, it turned out that in a global economy that is as tightly interwoven as our global production system there is something like the concept of a global health status of the whole species, compare Figure 1.

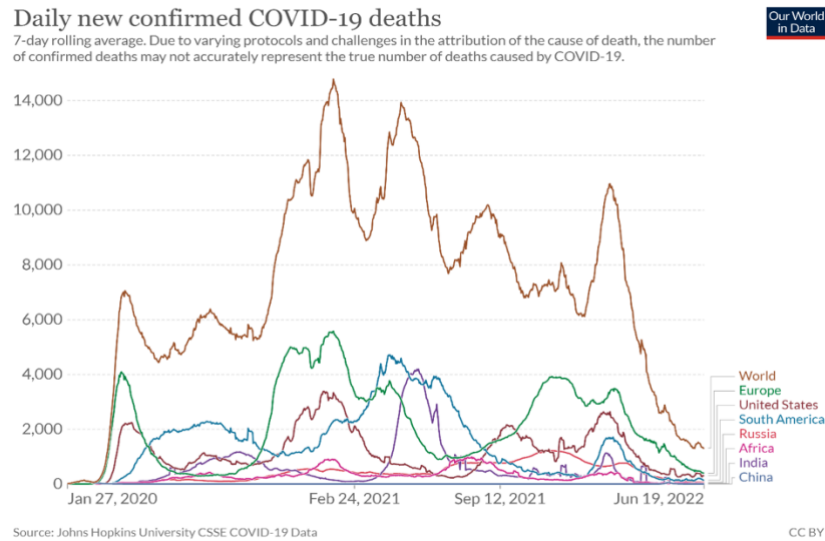
The world total of daily deaths is probably the most reliable time series to present the global development, because new cases of infections are mostly not correctly reported in the poor countries of the global South. The curve shows that the world has seen 7 peaks of the pandemic²³: 17-04-2020 (7.062), 10-08-2020 (6.387), 27-01-2021 (14.666), 29-04-2021 (13.932), 26-08-2021 (10.192), 06-12-2021 (7.977), and 10-02-2022 (10.963). Europe and the USA have been major contributors, pointing to their particularly high spreading rates due to very high mobility of the population – despite the fact that their medical systems are far better than those in the poor South. India and South America had their main impact in May and June 2021; South America had become the main contributor already during the Summer of 2020. As soon as vaccination became possible – after the 7th peak - the death toll could be reduced dramatically.

²¹ One of many descriptions of surveillance capitalism was provided by Shoshana Zuboff (Zuboff 2019).

²² Instead of some privately owned stock of 'dead labour', which one has to accumulate via restless profit maximization – as firm, or as individual – it will turn out that the only private property that can be fruitfully owned is one's private knowledge and sensitivity. And these two 'assets' escape the imperative of 'growth' – they just evolve.

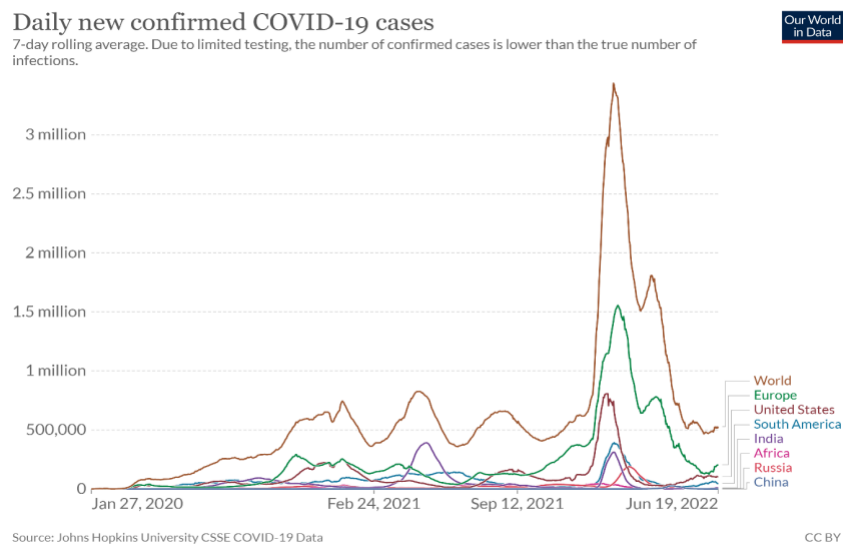
²³ An interactive version of the presented diagrams is available at <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>.

Figure 1. Covid deaths confirmed



Does this mean that the pandemic is over? A look at the development of new cases reveals that this is cannot be concluded, see Figure 2.

Figure 2. COVID cases long-run



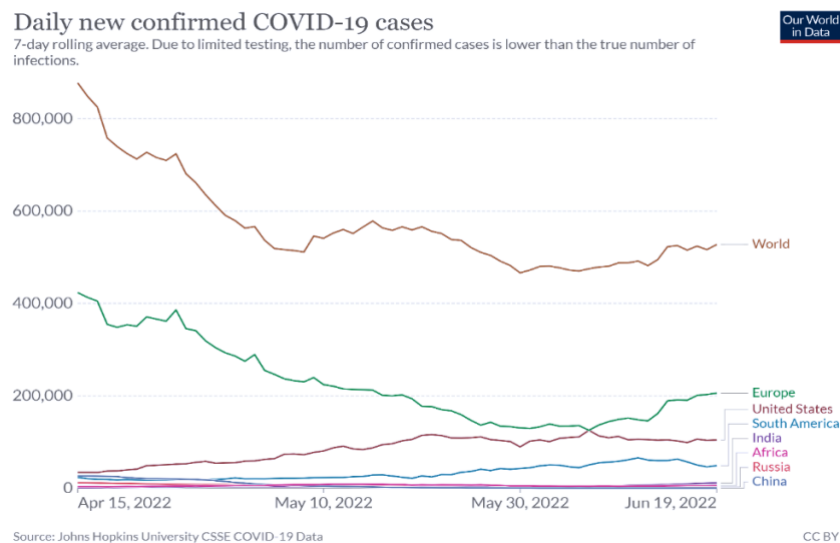
The main message of Figure 2 is that just before the last peak of new deaths was reached a new variant of COVID-19, namely Omicron, had arrived, a variant that was far more contagious than all previous variants. Four times as contagious as Figure 2 shows. There were thus just two elements that till now prevented a further high death rate: The scientific triumph to develop vaccines and the property of Omicron to cause less lethal endings. It is known that new mutations of COVID might not share the properties of the Omicron variant; and it is also unclear how fast scientists can react to develop new vaccines²⁴. To give a taste of how close the next Corona wave could be, the last weeks before these lines were written can be magnified, compare Figure 3.

With most Corona measures taken down and the general feeling that the new variants BA 4 and BA 5 seem to be as harmless as Omicron, it is again Europe that already shows an upswing in infections. While most governments in Europe somehow constructed an – unscientific – consensus that a next wave might only emerge in Autumn, this evidently need not be the case. Omicron needed barely a month (from 26-12-2021 to 24-01-2022) to swell to its extraordinary peak. What makes the situation even worse is the fact that right-wing political movements in Europe and in the USA have taken an anti-vaccination attitude as a leading part of their political agenda. The mostly mild forms of disease that Omicron produced seemed to justify their agenda, though this experience does not provide any information on a future mutation of Covid. For global health policy it has become a significant hurdle that anti-scientific attitudes did merge with right-wing, even fascist movements in Europe and

²⁴ See (Arnold 2022) for a description of the difficulties – and limited successes- in predicting the properties of new mutations of the covid virus.

the USA.

Figure 3. COVID cases short-run



The rationale behind this alliance is simple. For the right-wing movements any upheaval against the current government of the nation state helps to get itself into state power. What they will do there (elimination of all political enemies) is independent from the issues with which they can bring down the current government. For an anti-vaccination movement, the fascist insistence on the priority of the wishes of an (Aryan) human individual that do not necessarily follow the general health prescriptions of a much too 'socialist' society might seem to be attractive. The emerging mixture typically consists of two groups:

- rather simple-minded blind followers;
- gifted demagogues that expect to gain high political positions when the government is overthrown.

It is not clear yet if the next Corona wave will be accompanied by an even stronger alliance of these forces, or not. In any case, national governments in richer Western countries will face a difficult task with a population that has to cope with welfare losses and largely has lost its faith in the long-run effectiveness of vaccination. The general mood will oscillate between despaired agony and sudden break-outs of undirected protest. In poor countries the pandemic showed that the prevailing approach of mainstream development theory (*i.e.*, the palliative, poverty-alleviation method that gave rise to the Millennium Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda of 'Sustainable Development Goals') fails, compare (García-Quero and Castellano 2022).

On a global level this could be the hour of the WHO. Disappointment with the performance of the national government and the increasing gap between right-wing nationalists and their national enemies, a polarization which national governments typically rather exploit than try to close, should help to offer a beneficial transnational alternative – UN institutions, *e.g.* the WHO – as a possible, lucky escape option. The crux of such institutions, of course, is their finance.

In capitalism the fight against the pandemic had two back-bones:

- the monopoly of power of the nation state, which could dictate behavioral rules and lockdowns;
- the financial power of the pharmaceutical industry, which could expect enormous future profits from selling vaccines.

In many Western countries the second pillar had an additional twist that favored the pharmaceutical industry: A developed social security system centralizes the demand side for pharmaceuticals and total national demand therefore is taken out of the vagaries that individual human demand makes life difficult for suppliers. Demand is stabilized by a state agency. Additionally, the cost of research for vaccines could be partly put on bill of public universities paying their research staff.

The trouble is that the countries of the global South do not have what Keynes had called 'effective demand', *i.e.*, demand of an expected buying public that also has the money to pay for its needs. To give away vaccines without monetary compensation goes far beyond the capability of Western capitalist firms. The more centralized Chinese firms partly were able to strike deals with poor countries exchanging vaccines for economic and political influence in the respective poor country. A policy that now carries fruits as many of these countries are more skeptical when Western media try to involve them on their side of the ideological battlefield in the Ukraine war. In any case it will prove to be unwise to have excluded the global South from the blessings of vaccination due to the dominance of the capitalist algorithm. Many of the new mutations emerge in the highly populated parts of the South

(Brazil, South Africa, etc.), and then are transferred to the world of hectic exchanges in the busy business North where they then hit heavy.

What can be learned for a rising Atlantis is straight forward. Abolish the dominance of the capitalist algorithm and substitute it by a global institution guided by the best progressive scientists. The WHO – despite of some shortcomings - should be considered as a forerunner for such an institution. Global health, *e.g.*, to prevent pandemics, is a number one goal for the species. All surplus value that emerges from the global production system and in the sequel reappears as electronic money sign²⁵ on the screens of a global government first has to be reduced by the amount that is needed to maintain the health of the species. In this case, there need not be any weighting scheme for different human individuals, each life counts the same.

In this context it is necessary to mention that physical and mental health is highly correlated with education levels. A number one goal of global health therefore points at a number one goal of global education. By being able to recognize and to avoid unhealthy behavior human individuals are empowered to take care of their health, help needed from a global health institution can be reduced. Nevertheless, what is to be considered as healthy is changing over time – so a continuous study of the dynamics of the health status of the species and the changing environmental conditions falls also into the competencies and duties of a central global health institution²⁶.

The good news is that the fast development of Corona vaccines has shown that a concentrated effort of scientists working all over the world is a mighty weapon that can be able to give shelter if a pandemic strikes. On the other hand, the inability of each single nation state to master the Corona crisis on its own is an outstanding prove for the need of a global governance institution²⁷. And this was exactly the point of the discussion of the World War Crisis discussed above.

3. The Climate Crisis

While the Corona pandemic could have been - and has now been – experienced as a heavy, but transitory shock, the climate crisis creeps much slower, but with a taste of unavoidable fate into the consciousness of the human species. Changes are measured in degree Celsius of temperature per year, or centimeters of the sea level per year, and the like. All of them looking small at first sight²⁸, at least as long as no scientific explanation of consequences and no comparison to historically observed numbers is available²⁹. But in the general public a general awareness of the severe character of this crisis now slowly is emerging.

Like the Corona Crisis the Climate Crisis also first is felt on a very local level: More days of extreme heat every year, more severe and longer drought reducing the harvest every year, heavier storms and rainfall every year. But while the deaths of Corona are buried and gone, the worsening local disasters are looming in the future with no end in sight. This is why migration explodes in some worst hit areas of the world, this is why the wealthiest parts of society try to escape to seemingly safe heavens with stable climate.

The usual treatment of the climate crisis starts with a list of the most dangerous threats for mankind that human activity is causing, pushing the environment of our species into a state that calls into question our survival. In other words, the two worlds – the world of the human species and the surrounding non-human world – are becoming incompatible, are leaving a presupposed equilibrium. As evolutionary theory has shown (it actually is its central point), the evolution of life on earth is almost always a disequilibrium process and mankind itself is only the most recent result of this one evolutionary development. The distinction between the two worlds – our human world disturbing a natural world that is in equilibrium – is obsolete. There only is one world of life on earth. The characteristic property of the human species is that it is particularly good in dealing with conditions out of equilibrium, it even became able to use disequilibria for its own purposes. This will be the perspective on which the following paragraphs will build.

Following Darwin, the evolution of life on earth is to be understood as a sequence of species, see (Darwin,

²⁵ How to establish world money is a topic of its own, compare (Hanappi 2021).

²⁶ The upcoming age of alienation – due to the advanced division of labour – cannot be avoided and has already produced a plethora of dangers for mental health. It is evident that the study of these problems needs a transdisciplinary approach, which is just one instance that will invoke a reframing of the set of scientific disciplines.

²⁷ This does not imply that a study of the dynamics of a pandemic only makes sense on a global level, quite the opposite is true. The socio-economic and cultural context of a certain city or region frames Corona dynamics to a remarkably high degree. The insights of such studies thus eventually can teach much more than studies that rely too much on national or continental averages, compare (Hanappi 2022b).

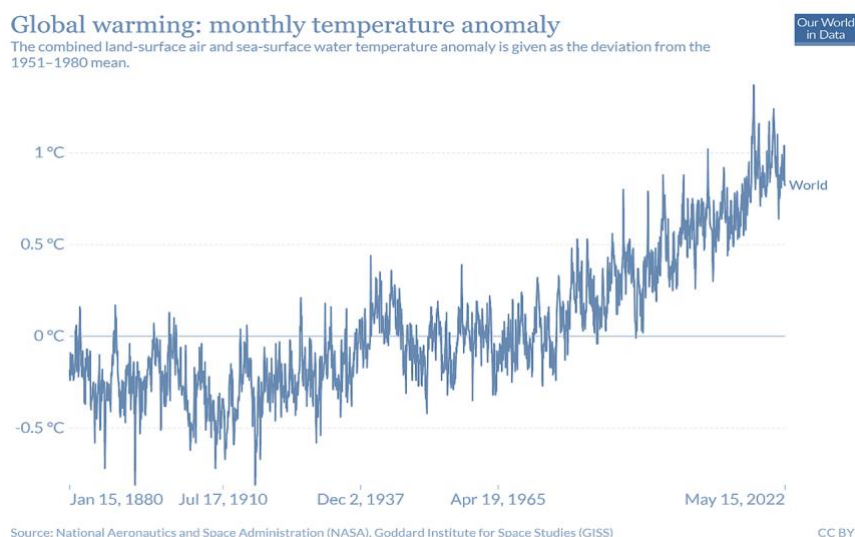
²⁸ In a best-selling book David Craig recently indeed claimed that there is no climate crisis at all (Craig 2021). This title probably is only a marketing gag, but to ask - from a long-run perspective - to which extent current developments are exceptions certainly is important.

²⁹ A good survey of climate crisis indicators is provided by the IMF, see [Climate Change Data](#).

1859). Or, to be more precise, the concept of a species can itself be explained by theorizing how a certain type of species was shaped by its interaction with its environment to become another species. The origin of the currently observed species can be discovered with the help of a study of its long-run interaction with a new environment. This is what Darwin had done on the Galapagos Islands, an exceptional natural laboratory on which birds had lived 1000 miles away from mainland birds for many thousand years (Darwin 2022). The disequilibrium at the moment when birds first migrated to the islands had slowly been transformed by the survival of the fittest into a new, adapted form of the species, a new species. Changes that are based on the extinction of the respective older generation – and this is the standard case in the animal kingdom – are taking a very long time. Changes in the human species, which has the advantage of having its knowledge coded and stored over many generations to be used in adaptive and sophisticated new models, these changes luckily can happen much faster – we need not call us a new species after such a change. Is the climate crisis such a change, a sudden disequilibrium, that knocks at our door?

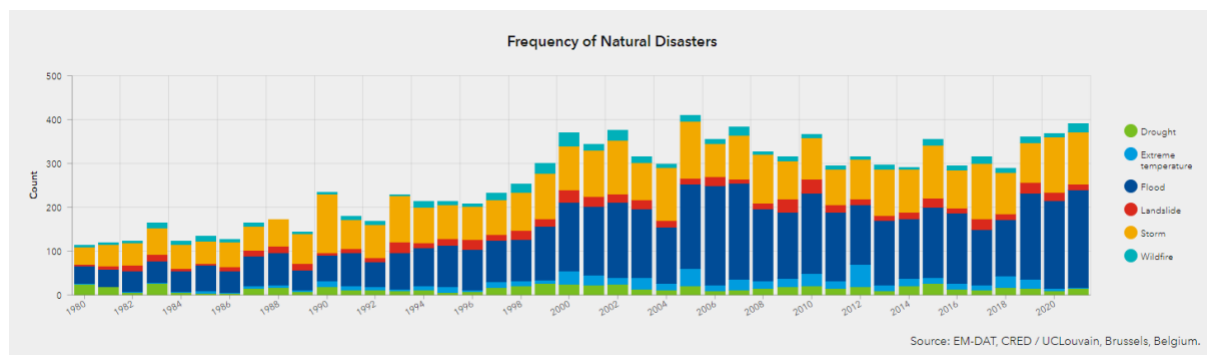
The most visible signs for a dramatic change come from the increase of the strength and duration of droughts in the poorest parts of the world, in particular in Africa. They lead to bad harvests, which in turn cause starvation and mass migration. They are not immediately visible to the majority of populations in the richer North, they only are discovered as a social problem when migrants from the South try to become citizens of the North. Rising average temperature certainly is an index for more droughts, compare figure 4, but the rise of natural disasters that this brings about is even a clearer sign³⁰, compare Figure 5.

Figure 4. Monthly temperature anomaly



The main, but not the only, reason for the rise in average temperature is the rise of greenhouse gas emissions produced by human societies. The largest part of greenhouse gases is CO₂.

Figure 5. Natural disasters



And at this point the split-up of the species into countries becomes important again, compare Figure 6.

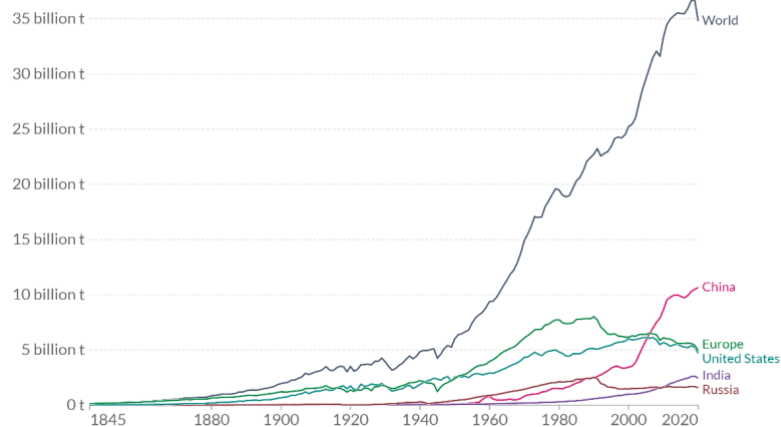
Figure 6. CO₂ Emissions

³⁰ In recent years even European citizens note stronger oscillations in temperature and more natural disasters.

Annual CO₂ emissions

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the burning of fossil fuels for energy and cement production. Land use change is not included.

Our World
in Data



Source: Our World in Data based on the Global Carbon Project
OurWorldInData.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions/ • CC BY

It is remarkable that total emissions since 2000 have mainly been driven by China and a bit by India, Europe and the USA stayed constant at a high level. In a diagram with emissions per head this fact cannot be seen due to the large populations in China and India³¹. In fact, for a turnaround of the absolute levels of CO₂ emissions on earth any isolated national attempt will fall short of achieving a satisfying result. China, India and the countries of the poor South do have a strong incentive to provide their populations the living standards they can watch on TV as being available in the rich North. And raising their incomes – against the logic of the exploitation mechanism of global value chains – surely will increase global CO₂ emissions massively. Return to Darwin's idea that a species is thrown on an island that poses seemingly unsurmountable contradictions.

For a species like the human species, which in principle has at its command very powerful modelling and simulation techniques, it would be possible to solve this puzzle – note that this again is a building block of a blueprint for a rising Atlantis.

To raise living conditions in the global South, in India, and in China does not necessarily mean that every Chinese family owns and drives two or three cars – what one can watch in the soap operas of the US movie industry. But consumer demand for environmentally insane consumption goods is only one side of the problem. The more essential problem is on the side of the global production system: In capitalism the decision on what is going to be produced hinges mainly on the expectations of amount and the quick availability of profit that can be made. "Take the money and run!", the more money the better, the faster you are out of the deal, the better³². Correct short-sightedness thus is a necessary ingredient of successful finance capital. On the other end of the global production process direct coercive power in the sweatshops of the poor South is the more durable guarantee that commodities are produced at all. Combining both elements is the mystery why the three large empires – USA, China, and Russia – were able to dominate; and in case they are able to unite somehow, will dominate the global production system in the future. Nowhere in the actual³³ mantra of their ruling classes is room for a design of the global political economy that enhances the living standards of the exploited masses.

After capitalism³⁴, the globally effective decision mechanisms for the production system have to drop the capitalist algorithm. They have to reverse the above-mentioned increasing contradictions, the trend of diverging living standards. They have to re-define living standards, have to redefine them in terms of personally determined time use relative to time contributed to global production, not just monetary success of an investment made by large capital funds³⁵. The time horizon used on the production side has to be as long as possible (allowing for the consideration of environmental feedbacks), giving the individual on the other hand the chance to enjoy very short time-horizons, daily lucky moments, because their democratic feedback opportunities provide life-long stability and

³¹ Still such diagrams are helpful to compare and to see how socio-economic and cultural circumstances can amplify or dampen CO₂ emissions. In this respect the USA is by far the worst country.

³² The legendary investor André Kostolany compared financial money making with a jump into a swimming pool with cold water: 'Jump in quickly (with intuition, H.H.) and get out again as fast as you can!'

³³ Of course, the production of an illusion of an 'American Dream', as the one provided by Rostow (1962), can be helpful in calming down unsatisfied populations. For actual production decisions they are irrelevant.

³⁴ Compare (Hanappi 2018).

³⁵ This transition is also a challenging theoretical task to be envisaged. It involves a re-birth of a modified labour theory of value, see Hanappi (2019).

security. An institutional setup of such a democratic global governance system that incorporates environmental concerns is technologically already feasible. In other words, the climate crisis is nothing but a crisis of the capitalist algorithm, of the way in which decisions (mainly) on the production side are made. By getting rid of capitalism – preserving some of the sensory facilities that market mechanisms provide – it is possible to make Atlantis rise. First as a guiding vision, later in real political and economic life.

Conclusions

The steps towards Atlantis are clear: First, prevent a Third World War, establish a period of peace³⁶ that eventually will lead to a united global class of exploiters. Second, create and organize a global class of organic intellectuals, of scientists, who work on a design for Atlantis – together with the parts of the exploited class in the part of the world where they live. That's why they are called organic³⁷. Third, there comes the role of the large waves of crisis that global capitalism necessarily initiates. Each of these crisis opens opportunities in some parts of the world (Latin America? Russia? USA? Africa? India? Europe?), opportunities for a revolution that then might spread – never forget that organic intellectuals nowadays are electronically connected. From a Darwinian point of view there hardly is reason for pessimism: The problems are getting better visible every day and the capacities to solve them – technologically and politically – exist too. It just is global class struggle simple.

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³⁶ In an insightful article on the possible ends of the Ukraine war Tony Woods has proposed five possible scenarios (Wood 2022). His fifth scenario is what relates best to the position taken in this paper. To understand local wars – like understanding local pandemic dynamics – it typically is necessary to go into details of the cultural and political local environment. An excellent starting point to do so is provided by Ishchenko (2022).

³⁷ After almost 100 years Gramsci's vocabulary needs a kind of an overhaul too. The globally exploited class is not the European working class of the interwar period, and so 'organic intellectual' has changed its meaning too. The same is true for the concept of 'civil society', the place where the progressive class should try to conquer 'positions' to gain 'hegemony', see (Gramsci 1930). It is interesting that Marx had returned to his use of the concept 'civil society' after the failed revolution of 1848, when he tried to understand the emergence of Bonapartism, see Marx (1852). The concept of 'civil society' thus seems to become theoretically important when the opportunity for a revolution has not arrived yet, but already needs important theoretical underpinnings to be developed.

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