

# **Development paths in a colonist society: the challenges of the Communist Movement in Brazil<sup>1</sup>**

## **ABSTRACT**

We draw on a tri-modal class structure view of Brazilian colonial society, divided between colonisers, colonists and colonised, to argue that Brazilian independence movement was built, as with most Latin American independences in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly by rebel colonists who sought to maintain internal structures of value appropriation and oppression, which we call the “colonial mode of accumulation”, while establishing an independent national state. These structures were founded upon primitive accumulation of land and labour. This arrangement had its ideological reflection in the myth of the so-called “racial democracy”, a formulation so successful that it has thrived among the ranks of the communist movement. The bourgeois-labour alliance in mid-20th century occurred only within the ranks of the colonist, and “national” development meant a “nation” that was only for them. We call it the “national-colonist development project”, which united industrial development with colonist monopoly of land and the reproduction of the colonial mode of accumulation through primitive accumulation at the expense of the colonised. In the late 1980’s, political liberation was conditioned upon the neocolonial transition. We attempt a class analysis within the above framework to argue that, in light of the bourgeoisie’s trade of development and sovereign aspirations for the maintenance of the colonial mode of accumulation, a bourgeois-proletarian alliance has become impossible. Only a truly popular political project, meaning one that fights both external and internal colonialism, is capable of developing the nation’s potential, and that’s the only one the communists should espouse.

**Keywords:** Communism, communist movement in Brazil, Brazilian society, colonist society, national bourgeoisie.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1) PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION, COLONIAL MODE OF ACCUMULATION AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF COLONIST INDEPENDENCE**

As opposed to later African and Asian national liberation movements, 19th century Latin American independence movements were built by local-born white colonists, called criollos in Spanish-speaking America, who consisted of the privileged class and the internal beneficiaries of the colonialist regime. As noted by Mattos (1987) for the Brazilian case, the colonists, most notably the Brazilian-born white landed class and their associates, were in contradiction with both the colonisers – the Portuguese merchants Crown bureaucrats – by whom they were exploited, and the colonised – African or Brazilian-born black slaves and indigenous peoples – whose labour they exploited.

The first “exploitation” mentioned above is not really an exploitation in the strict technical sense since it is not exploitation of labour, but actually a division of the spoils of it. The colonist class

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organised the exploitation of labour inside the colony and the coloniser class organised the colonialist regime globally; these two classes divided among themselves the value produced by labour. But, as the politically dominant class, the latter got the most of it. This alliance was broken in the beginning of the 19th century, and the colonists then re-organized Brazilian polity to, in the words of Mattos, “re-mint the colonial coin” in their favour. In other words: to cut the Portuguese off and maintain what we are calling the *colonial mode of accumulation*, which was based on enslaved labour, while establishing an independent national state.

This mode of accumulation was founded upon two “primitive” accumulations, in the sense of being straightforward spoliations of land and labour as opposed to exploitation of the latter within the cycle of capital:<sup>2</sup> on the one hand, previous inhabitants of the land have been continuously deprived of it, in a process of ever expanding the agricultural frontier by either expelling or massively killing them; on the other, goods have been produced by labour which is remunerated under its rate of natural reproduction, a pattern which Marini (2000) named “super-exploitation of labour”. Both processes lead to the production of capital outside of its cycle of reproduction because they amount to exhausting land and labour – i.e., not reintroducing them into the cycle by paying for their conditions of reproduction – but rather spoliating more of them and adding them again in the next phase of the “cycle”, as figures 1 and 2 show. This is not really a cycle since it does not reproduce its own conditions, requiring more and more primitive accumulation of land and labour.

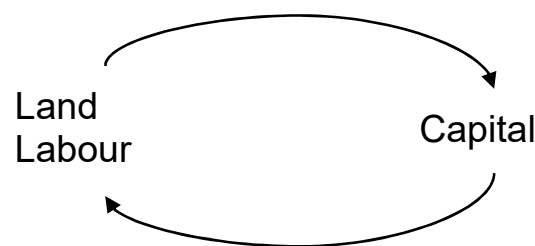


Fig. 1: the cycle of reproduction capital

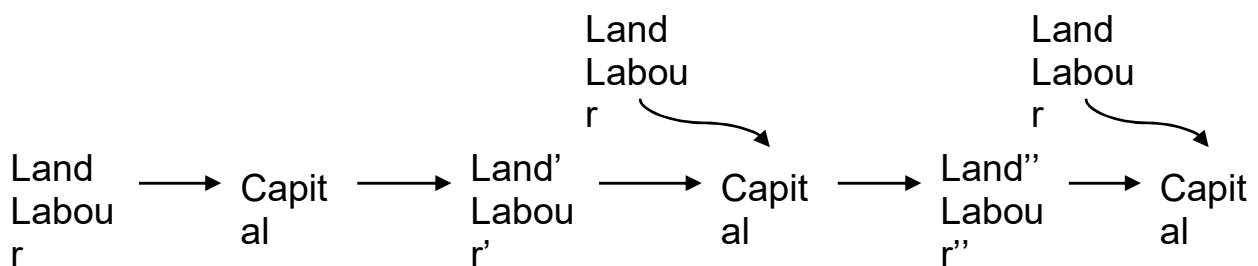


Fig. 2: the “cycle” of primitive accumulation of capital, where  $land' < land$  and  $labour' < labour$ .

The main victims of primitive accumulation of labour have been the enslaved African and African-Brazilian people, but also the Indigenous people; the latter in turn have been the main victims of primitive accumulation of land, together too with African and African-Brazilian who fled slavery and took hold of the land by establishing *quilombos*. Needless to say, all these peoples have merged somewhat in different places at different times. As a result, this mode of accumulation is structurally

<sup>2</sup> The concept of “primitive accumulation” was developed by Marx in 26th chapter of Capital volume 1 (Marx, 2004). Despite its name, we do not believe Marx, who names it the “so called primitive accumulation”, reserved its mechanisms to the past of capitalism; the notion of a “continuing” primitive accumulation was, anyhow, put clearly by Luxemburg (1951) and has been developed recently (Fraser, 2016; Harvey, 2003; Moyo et al., 2012; Patnaik, 2017; Shivji, 2009, 2019).

dependent on the idea of race as in racial super-exploitation of labour, but also appropriation of land which is founded upon genocide.

The reason primitive accumulation exhausts land and labour is that it does not pay for their costs of reproduction. The labour case was examined by Marini and it amounts to paying labour under the value of labour power, i.e. the one that would permit its reproduction. Most of the time, this means undermining the workers' own physical reproduction, resulting in their premature death or otherwise inability to keep working. As for the land case, it amounts to exhausting productive land over a few seasons by means of the use of unsustainable predatory cultivation techniques. It also means making use of unrenovable natural, chemical and energy resources as inputs of production and of the economy more generally.<sup>3</sup>

In this line of argument, and comparing the objects of primitive accumulation, Mies (1986) labels non-whites, women and nature – besides colonies proper – all as “colonies”. Moreover, integrating both human and non-human nature, Moore (2015) argues this mode of accumulation takes advantage of “cheap nature”, since capital is draining resources that were previously accumulated and not replacing them. That is the case, for example, with land fertility and labour power, that are systematically exhausted and, when that happens, more of them are dragged into the cycle of capital to sustain the process at the cost of a pool of resources that will eventually disappear. For Moore, this mode of accumulation is not peculiar to colonial societies, but is characteristic of capital accumulation from a world-systemic viewpoint. In other words, for him, as for Luxemburg (1951), a true *cycle* of capital is impossible; accumulation only happens through plunder.

The first historical form of racial super-exploitation of labour was slavery, which exhausted labour by overwork and underpayment<sup>4</sup> and also resorted to murder for disciplinary reasons. Consequently, it constantly needed to kidnap more workers from Africa. Thus, slavery never paid the costs of the reproduction of labour, the burden of which remained within the African societies that raised, fed and socialised their workers only to lose them to slavery. The result of this was a systematic and secular process of drain of value from the African societies towards the colonist and the coloniser societies, who shared this spoliated value. Nevertheless, this process has not ended with the end of slavery, and both super-exploitation of labour and genocide of blacks continued after its abolition and indeed continue to this day, as if there were, in countries such as Brazil, two different and parallel societies, the colonist and the colonised, the first of which drains the second of value. This situation is akin to that of the “Black Belt” of Southern United States, which was theorised by Harry Haywood as follows:

In this respect the region's economy is typical of that of colonial and other retarded nations. One can say that the Black Belt is a kind of “internal colony” of American imperialism, made to function mainly as the raw material appendage of the latter. The character of the oppression of the Negro people in no sense differs from that of colonial peoples. The economy of the region is not controlled by the Negro capitalists. Its immediate direction is in the hands of white local capitalists and landlords, who act as the outpost command for the real rulers, the financial dynasty of Wall Street. (...) This only emphasises the fact that the economy of the Black Belt

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<sup>3</sup> This unsustainable mode of using land has actually expanded worldwide in the monopolist phase of capitalism with the so-called “green revolution”. See Moore (2015).

<sup>4</sup> If we regard the meals the lords provide to the enslaved workers as “payment” or “salary” (Gorender, 2016), even in that case, underpayment is the rule.

is typical of that of an oppressed nation, whose full development is artificially and forcibly retarded by imperialism (HAYWOOD, 1948, p. 146).

Haywood was referring to a specific perimeter that, despite being within the borders of the United States, had a marked difference in relation to northern areas, in a way identical to a colony of another nation. A similar situation was, for example, that of Algeria, which was juridically part of the French Republic, despite being in fact its colony. In Brazil, the Northeast and other areas also bear resemblance to these examples and could be called the country's "Black (and Indigenous) Belt". But, apart from that, we believe that the category of "internal colony" can also be employed to less geographically marked regions, as both societies may co-exist in some areas. In another case, the geography is marked but the colonial areas are smaller and more pulverised, bearing resemblance to the Bantustans of South Africa and the ghettos of the United States: these are the case of the favelas, which function as labour reserve areas.<sup>5</sup>

It must be noted, also, that in the US Haywood found representatives of all three "classes" of colonialism: the colonisers, the colonised, and the colonists, these being the intermediate "local capitalists and landlords" of the South. The presence of the colonisers in Wall Street is a consequence of the status of the United States of a colonialist power. This is not the case of Brazil, which is the reason why the colonisers are not present in the latter country after its Independence, unless as foreign firms personnel. This is another reason why "internal colonialism" does not appear in Brazil as two discrete geographical regions. Therefore, it is more accurate to say that Brazil and the *Southern United States only* are similar societies, that is, heir societies to colonialism which, after their independence, carry on an identical mode of accumulation. But then, from the perspective of the colonists of Southern US, the colonisers have only been replaced: from British to Yankee oppressors, both being integrated in a common polity with the Southerners (which is the reason why the Civil War appears, to white Southerners, as a *national-colonist* war of liberation – more on this category latter). In Brazil, on the other hand, the colonists managed to, politically and juridically, get rid of the colonisers entirely, only to see British capital take that position without needing to dominate the country directly.<sup>6</sup>

Primitive accumulation of land has not ended as well, as it is usually thought, in the remote past. In fact, it has never stopped, and there is a surge of it from time to time, as in the Brazilian military regime *colonisation* of the Centre-West region and, recently, during Bolsonaro administration's rise in fires in the Amazon, illegal mining (*garimpo*) and the like. Truth be told, this is a structural characteristic of the colonist occupation of the continent that exists also when there are progressive administrations in Brasília; only that an openly colonist one as Bolsonaro's encourages it more. Also, globally, it is evident that the whole of the 20th century's economic growth was based on cheap energy and natural resources, the supply of which was guaranteed by imperialist oppression upon the global south, including Brazil, and ultimately by spoliating nature. The so-called "green revolution", amounting to the use of fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides in agriculture, and finally genetic modified crops, must also be seen as a historical form of looting the resources accumulated naturally over millennia (Moore, 2015).

The reason reproduction – or production – of capital is based on primitive accumulation is that, in a context of a big pool of resources seen as inextinguishable, it is cheaper to simply consume

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<sup>5</sup> For a study of the role and development of Bantustans and the migrant labour system in South Africa, see chapter 4 of Magubane (1979).

<sup>6</sup> This echoes Nkrumah's (1965) later conceptualised category of "neo-colonialism".

them than to pay for their cost of reproduction. Luxemburg (1951) has argued that Marx's (2004) cycle of expanded reproduction is logically impossible and that expanded reproduction is necessarily based on this kind of spoliation of nature and societies. More recently, Patnaik and Patnaik (2017) have put forward an interesting theory of imperialism which argues that, in a context of a fixed tropical landmass in the periphery, capital is obliged to impose income deflation on the peoples of the periphery in order to avoid increasing supply price of the agriculture tropical goods it needs to reproduce labour (and the bourgeoisie) at the core and thereby permanently threat the value of money.

It is clear that income deflation has indeed been happening in the form of slavery and its historical successor, the super-exploitation of labour (Marini, 2000), resulting in diminishing calories intake by the working classes in the periphery, for which the Patnaiks present evidence for India. In Brazilian history, as land got exhausted, the colonists had to systematically expand the agricultural frontier at the expense of the indigenous peoples – which casts doubt on the Patnaiks' premise of a fixed landmass in the periphery, and in itself shows another alternative for capital to avoid increasing supply price. Either way, different forms of primitive accumulation would be inseparable from the "cycle" of capital, as the colonists had to systematically bring more kidnapped labour from Africa or, after abolition, either from internal labour reserves that were formed at the margins of the society, or from abroad.

This structure had its colonial phase, when it was crystallised in the slavery mode of production. The colonisers, the colonists and the colonised were, then, social classes in the full meaning of the term: if slavery is the dominant mode of production, landlords and poor white workers should be regarded as sectors of the colonist class.<sup>7</sup> The transition to capitalism in Brazil was controlled by the colonists in order to achieve the reproduction of the colonial mode of accumulation in the capitalist mode of production. As a result, we can speak of a *capitalist phase* of the colonial mode of accumulation. In the sense that this structure implies a mode of accumulation within the capitalist mode of production, we can speak of colonisers, colonists and colonised as *classes*, a category reserved to imply a position that a social group occupies within the system of relations of production.

Also, as Engels (...) and Stalin (1953) have noted, the capitalist mode of production is made up not only by the exploration of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, which is internal to the nation state, but also the exploration of the oppressed nations by the imperialist ones. In Stalin's words:

...the world is divided into two camps: the camp of a handful of civilised nations, which possess finance capital and exploit the vast majority of the population of the globe; and the camp of the oppressed and exploited peoples in the colonies and dependent countries, which constitute the majority (Stalin, 1953, n.p.).

Therefore, the perspective by which imperialism is relegated to a secondary type of oppression has, in Stalin's view, "been exposed" by Leninism more than a century ago: "(t)he national question is a part of the general question of the proletarian revolution, a part of the question of the dictator (*sic*) of the proletariat". Moreover, imperialism is, in this regard, elevated to the "common enemy" of both the revolutionary liberation movement of the oppressed countries and the proletarian revolution, which amounts to saying it is the main enemy, and that capital and imperialism are the same thing (Stalin, 1953, n.p.). In our framework, imperialist exploration has its internal dimension as well,

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<sup>7</sup> For a theory that sees colonial slavery as a mode of production in its own right, see Gorender (2022). For a bibliographical study of the discussions on Brazilian colonial modes of production, see Gissoni (2019).

which is materialised in the struggle opposing the colonists and the colonised. This struggle is an integral part of the national question and, consequently, an integral part of the proletarian revolution, and the defeat of the colonists is, together with the defeat of the colonisers, part of the defeat of imperialism.

## **2) 1930 NATIONAL-COLONIST DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND MID-20th CENTURY EXPERIMENTATION WITH INTER-CLASS ALLIANCE**

As shown by Yeros et al. (2019), by the 1930's, an alliance emerged from intra-colonist class struggle (opposing the industrialist and landed sectors) that strove for industrial development for the colonist society. Being in contradiction with both the coloniser and the colonised, the colonist aspired a development akin to the one their cousins had been pursuing in Europe, but that is to be considered a “national” type of development only within the confines of the colonist society, i.e., only if we make account that “*the nation*” is constituted by the colonists and not by other nations present in the territory that they internally colonise. The project was, in one word, that of building an European nation in South America. The most clear evidence of this is that the industrial development from the 1930's onwards was, in contrast to the one that had been happening in Europe, conditioned upon the maintenance of the agrarian structure that privileged the whites and excluded blacks and indigenous from access to land. In other terms, the emergence of this intra-class alliance unifying agrarian and industrial power was possible only with a veto for agrarian reform and the maintenance of the whites' monopoly of land.

Although the concrete emergence of that alliance happened only in the 1930's, this was not the first time its development programme appeared as an idea, which happened already within the 1822 independence movement. Symptomatically, an important proponent of this idea and considered the “patriarch of independence”, José Bonifácio, defended industrial development for Brazil while being for the abolition of slavery not because that institution was repugnant but because it brought a gigantic contingent of alien peoples inside the country and threatened the (colonist) society's security (Bonifacio d'Andrada e Silva, 1825).<sup>8</sup>

When, in 1964, the industrialist project was starting to spin of control and risked agrarian reform and people power, the colonist class resorted to a fascist coup – not, surprising some contemporaries, to put an end to industrialism and reestablish the pre-1930 agrarian society, but to resume the industrialist project coupled with colonist agrarian power in a more controlled environment. After a securing period of a few years in which an austere economic policy was implemented, the development project resumed in a clear national-colonist fashion. This period corresponded to the stabilisation of colonist political power: with the political dimension secured, the country could venture with bolder economics. In other words, with the colonised firmly controlled, the colonists could challenge the colonisers. The experience of the 1950's and early 1960's showed that, if that condition was not met, the colonists risked losing control and political power altogether.

A similar trajectory is to be found in foreign policy. In the early 1960's, as the anti-colonial movement gained momentum globally, Brasília was taking daring roads by visiting Mao Zedong and receiving a visit from Che Guevara. 1964 marked a shift towards automatic alignment with the United States and also Portugal, relatively to the issue of the national liberation of the latter's colonies in Africa. Nevertheless, the trend eventually moved back to a supposedly more anti-colonialist foreign policy once colonist political power was secured, with a new doctrine called “responsible and

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<sup>8</sup> Curiously, others *defended* slavery because it enriched national culture. See Alencar (2008).

ecumenical pragmatism” issued by Foreign Minister Azeredo da Silveira under President Gen. Ernesto Geisel. It is often vaunted that, under this doctrine, Brazil was the first country to recognize the independences of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. More on which later.

All this bear striking resemblance to the trajectories seen in Southern Africa, where the colonists eventually got themselves in irreconcilable contradictions with the imperial powers (the colonisers), and arranged “national” independences and industrial development programmes coupled with state structures designed to oppress the African natives, secure white privilege over land, and produce and super-exploit labour reserves, as the cases of Rhodesia and South Africa clearly show. From a different perspective, this meant the abortion of genuine national liberation that was trending in all of Africa by the beginning of the 1960’s; therefore, the colonists arranged a way to block this trend and resume their exploitation of coloniser labour. They were successful for about three decades notwithstanding ensuing conflicts and wars.

The colonists also formed a kind of *colonist international* that organised military expeditions to repress national liberation movements regionally. The most notable example of this in Africa is the Alcora Exercise – Portuguese acronym for *Aliança Contra as Rebeliões em África*, or Alliance Against the Rebellions in Africa – a secret military alliance between South Africa, Portugal, and Rhodesia, formally in force between 1970 and 1974. The alliance promoted cooperation among the white-settler regimes in the Angolan, Mozambican, Namibian and Zimbabwean Wars of Independence. After the collapse of the Portuguese right-wing regime in Lisbon, and thus Alcora, following the Carnation Revolution in April 1974, cooperation between South African/Rhodesian and Portuguese colonists acting in the Angolan and Mozambican Civil Wars continued.<sup>9</sup>

The colonist international expedient was also used in South America in an extensive number of cases since at least the Paraguayan War, and in the 20th century most notably in Operation Condor

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<sup>9</sup> Regarding the colonist international acting in Southern Africa after the collapse of Alcora, see Lobato (2017, pp. 34-35): “Before American help materialized, the FNLA [*Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola*] had already incorporated a group of Portuguese led by Colonel Gilberto Santos e Castro, a commander in the Portuguese Liberation Army (Exército de Libertação de Portugal - ELP), an armed group set up in Angola by a conservative white minority. Members of the ELP, which was connected to the [deposed Portuguese President General] Spínola-founded Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Portugal (Movimento Democrático de Libertação de Portugal - MDLP), included ex-military and former agents of the Portuguese secret police, or PIDE/DGS [...]. In exchange for support in the Angolan conflict, Spínola expected FNLA aid for his plan to regain power in Portugal. At the time, the General was in exile in Brazil, where he also negotiated support for his counter-coup attempt, but his talks with Brazilian intelligence sectors were overruled by President Ernesto Geisel [...].

With CIA support, the FNLA’s ranks swelled between late July and early August [1975], thanks to recruiting efforts in Rhodesia. The Flechas (‘Arrows’), a special operations force connected to the recently abolished PIDE/DGS, had retreated there from Mozambique following the events of 25 April [1974], where they stuck together in Salisbury and planned to attack the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique – FRELIMO). The group, headed by Major Álvaro Alves Cardoso, attracted Portuguese officials deserting in Mozambique. Alves Cardoso’s command was mobilized to reinforce [FNLA leader Holden] Roberto’s troops, and his first men left Salisbury for Johannesburg on 29 July 1975, proceeding on to Kinshasa. Having made initial contacts in the Zairean capital, they moved into Angola and established themselves in Ambriz, the ‘military capital’ of the FNLA [...].

The FNLA also received some backing from South Africa. Strategists there saw opposition to the MPLA [*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*] as essential to ensuring the stability of apartheid and continued South African control over Namibia. South Africa’s involvement in Angola, while initially discreet, would be shored up in the summer of 1975. Spurred on by the United States, it came to a decisive head in October of that year with the start of Operation Savannah and the mobilization of regular troops to combat the MPLA [...]. In parallel with the escalation of South African involvement, Cuba moved to bolster its support to the MPLA, which was already making use of arms and training supplied by the Soviet Union. Havana began its Angolan intervention in late July 1975 after an appeal from MPLA leader Agostinho Neto. The Cuban presence in Angola would only swell over the second half of 1975, but Fidel Castro’s regular troops only arrived on the eve of independence. Operation Carlota, as it was called, allowed the MPLA to maintain its control over Luanda, fending off both the FNLA, advancing from the North with Zairean support, and the South Africans, moving up from the South with UNITA [*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*]”.

(Yeros et al., 2019) – and, most interestingly, South Atlantic colonist connections were formed. Gisele Lobato has discovered and traced the steps of a group of Rio de Janeiro policemen connected to state repression that were sent in an “semi-official” mission to Ambriz to fight alongside FNLA, Zairean and South African troops against MPLA forces in Angola. FNLA, the acronym in Portuguese for National Front for the Liberation of Angola, was helped by Luso-Angolan white colonists, Portuguese Army men that deserted after the Carnation Revolution, and the Apartheid regime, while the MPLA, or People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, would receive substantial help from the Soviet Union and, especially, Cuba. As Lobato states, it is presently not possible to assert whether this mission was known to the Brazilian Presidency, but most probably it was known to at least some of the policemen's superiors (Lobato, 2017). These could even be high figures in Brasília dissatisfied with Geisel's policy, as Army Minister Sylvio Frota, fired by Geisel in 1977. And then:

Another challenge will be to better understand the military networks that spread across the South Atlantic on the margins of the Western bloc in the Cold War, since the sources examined here suggest that Brazilian agents were recruited directly by the FNLA, and not through the United States (Lobato, 2017, p. 45).

For our purposes, the extent of the state's involvement in this colonist international is not too relevant. While the existence of right-wing international organisations is not at all a novelty, our point is that this case crystallises not only that, and not even an international in defence of colonialism, but, specifically, of *colonism*. This is evidenced by the fact that the resulting networks operated without any agency by the United States (Lobato, 2017). And, as it turned out, they proved important in the unfolding of events in both continents and for the preservation of either the colonist “nation” states or, when these were finally defeated, to guarantee that they would be exchanged for neo-colonial states and not sovereign states run by the previously colonised peoples.

In any case, this pseudo-national – or *national-colonist* – development project did signify a departure from a foreign policy subservient to the interests of imperialism, as well as with the economic structure oriented to supply European countries with agricultural and mineral products – although not with the race, class and agrarian structure associated with it. What's more, it is fair to say this alignment produced, or at least concluded, the transition to capitalism in Brazil and the formation of the bourgeois and proletarian classes, the former being composed of its agrarian and industrial sectors and the latter traversed by race contradictions that reproduced the colonist-colonised contradiction among the workers.

On account of that, many within the communist movement in Brazil thought the society had developed a national bourgeoisie interested in liquidating the country's dependent position within the global economy and, eventually, the landed class itself. As there was, by this vision, a confluence of interests between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the conclusion was that it was now possible for these classes to form an alliance for national development against that inherited agrarian structure, either classified as “feudal” or not.

Thus, an inter-class alliance was also formed, resulting in the Communist Party of Brazil (PCB)'s support for President Getulio Vargas' bid in 1950 and, most notably, in the 1958 “Declaration of March” establishing a party programme of alliance with the national sectors of the bourgeoisie (PCB, 1980; see also Prestes, 1980). This ultimately led to a schism, in the context of the 1956 “de-stalinization” occurring in the USSR, and the reorganisation of the movement into a re-named Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and a re-organised Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) in 1962. Both parties exist to this day, with PCB itself being re-organised in a revolutionary strategy



line since a 1992 frauded congress tried to liquidate it by rebranding it “People’s Socialist Party” and abandoning marxism-leninism.

This alliance between sectors of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat was traversed by the conflict among the colonist and the colonised since among the colonists ranked both the bourgeoisie and part of the proletariat, the other part of the latter of course ranking among the colonised. The interplaying of all these conflicts and alliances, therefore, account for the complexity of Brazilian political trajectory. The colonists/colonised are “classes” – for lack of a better term – within the colonial mode of accumulation, while the bourgeoisie/proletariat are classes within the capitalist mode of production. The correspondence between these two axis of contradictions is not exact, which is why the same individuals are part of the same class in one of them and opposed in the other. The co-presence of them in a class in one axis predisposes them to an alliance on the other, as in a white proletariat-bourgeoisie alliance.

	<b>Colonised</b>	<b>Colonists</b>
<b>Proletariat</b>	X	X
<b>Bourgeoisie</b>	-----	X

The interplay of these conflicts and alliances, therefore, account for the complexity of Brazilian political trajectory. The colonised or the colonist faces of the proletariat, as a whole, may predominate, as the proletarian or the bourgeois faces of the colonists, as a whole, may predominate. There is no colonised bourgeoisie. Thus, in the above table, co-operation may predominate in a horizontal pattern, when class consciousness predominate among white workers and there is proletarian solidarity between the colonists and the colonised; or it can predominate in a vertical pattern, when race consciousness predominate among white workers and there is colonist solidarity between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The question is, then, the following: will whiteness or proletarian consciousness predominate among the colonist workers?

Clearly, white workers have immediate material interests in assuming their colonist position and reproducing the exploration of the colonised. That gives them some privileges and puts them in a relatively better position within society, at the cost of also reproducing bourgeois dominance, for proletarian revolution is inseparable from colonised revolution. Therefore, the colonial mode of accumulation serves, politically speaking, the purpose of blocking the proletarian revolution by means of buying off the colonist proletariat. Quite often, the latter, pressured towards the material situation of the colonised masses, assumes a neurotic and phobic reactionary position which actually appears to be to the right of the bourgeoisie’s, which is clear in Bolsonaro’s case (a mainly lower class political phenomenon), and Malan’s South Africa and Trump’s United State’s for that matter. Nevertheless, that position is really that of the bourgeoisie’s, which thanks to its existence may pose itself as a cleaner and more democratic form of capitalism.

The arrangement by which capital buys off white workers in colonist societies corresponds to their internal expression of the one by which capital has bought off white workers in the system’s centre – transforming them into colonisers – that Przeworski (2002) referred to. But in the former, instead of producing an apparently homogeneous, democratic and welfare society, i.e. the model to be followed within capitalism, the arrangement produces the opposite: an apparently fractured society, prone to authoritarianism, and filled with misery – the model to be avoided. What is actually fractured, authoritarian and miserable is the colonial system globally, that produces relatively

attractive societies at the core while producing the opposite in the periphery for the vast majority of the world's populations – be it in colonist or colonised type of societies.

The question of the political position of white workers is at the nucleus of the challenges of the communist movement in Brazil. As the vanguard of the proletariat, the movement expects to represent that class, the majority of which is composed of non-whites. Nevertheless, the major trend in the society is that power positions will be held by whites and the communist movement is no exception. Therefore, its leaders are prone to reproduce the contradictions of the colonist proletariat and frequently embrace the colonists' interests. Especially, when a bourgeois-proletarian alliance was enacted as a means to build a national development project and conclude national liberation, the meaning of "national" was understood mainly within the lines proposed by the colonists, that is, throwing light on its opposition towards the colonisers, and obscuring the internal opposition between the colonists and the colonised.

Since the foundation of PCB in 1922, the colonists' interests appeared within the communist movement in the form of the negation of race contradictions within Brazilian society, the posing a false opposition between the categories of class and race, and the disregard of the latter altogether (Chadarevian, 2012) – despite, on the other hand, theoretical developments in the opposite direction, put forward mainly by black communists such as Edison Carneiro and Clóvis Moura (Rocha, 2021). It is important to note, however, that up until the foundation of the Frente Negra Brasileira (Brazilian Black Front – FNB), in 1931, the organisations of the black movement had mainly an assistance, recreative and cultural character. Starting in the 1900's, they pullulated alongside the so-called black press. The FNB, on the other hand, had "more deliberate political reinvidications" – and over 20 thousand associates, consisting of the greatest black organisation of the period – but these were right biassed and close to the Brazilian fascist movement (Domingues, 2007, p. 106, own translation).

Of course the national project of the 1930's-1950's itself reflected societal conflicts and was contradictory in character, and the communists were not the only ones put in that position. The contradictions of the 1930 colonist development project were thus a consequence of the conflicts within the bourgeoisie-proletariat colonist alliance, which kept open the possibility of an evolution towards an anti-colonist project.<sup>10</sup> These contradictions reached their peak in 1964 when only one out of the two possibilities could continue to be pursued. The April 1st coup d'état meant the solution of the crisis by the resumption of colonist power with a renewed security apparatus that was to keep the colonised in check and repress any attempt to break that power. Industrial development was to continue without threatening white privileges and land monopoly, but this did not mean it was not to enter new arenas of struggle against coloniser imperialism.

The contradictory character of 1930 thus evolved, in 1964, towards a clearly *national-colonist* project that was at the same time developmentalist and anti-labour, anti-colonialist and radically anti-colonised and, as we try to illuminate by the category here proposed, national and (internal) colonialist – or, better yet, colonist. This point is often missed in the analyses within the left, which is the reason why the latter is usually sympathetic with the economic policies of the military regime that followed

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<sup>10</sup> There were other contradictions in play too, but these are analysed in mainstream historiography. It should be sufficient to mention the tensions within fractions of the bourgeoisie that either stood for the traditional agrarian power or industrial development. This was provisionally solved in the 1930 Revolution itself and the Federal Government's victory in the so-called "1932 Constitutionalist Revolution" conflicts against the State Government of São Paulo. Some authors (Boito, 2017; Berringer & Belasques, 2020), drawing on Poulantzas (1978), give special significance to the conflict among these different fractions to explain the trajectory of capitalism in Brazil up until today. The category of "colonism", on the other hand, helps to identify their unity. The contradictions that do exist within the bourgeoisie have until now been solved in the direction of the reproduction of the colonial mode of accumulation, for the latter sets up the structure of both agrarian and industrial exploration of labour in Brazil.

the 1964 coup while profoundly against it politically. To see it in light of the tri-polar contradiction between the colonisers, the colonists and the colonised helps to apprehend this character.

Also, this is not unique to Brazil: by the same time, South Africa was becoming a republic and withdrawing from the Commonwealth of Nations (1961), while deepening apartheid violence, and Rhodesia was issuing its unilateral declaration of independence from the United Kingdom (1965), while starting the Bush War against the natives. Indeed, this trend has been present since at least the American Revolution, which was national-colonist and had the same tri-modular character. It suffices to remember that the indigenous peoples of North America allied, then, with the British.

### **3) RACIAL DEMOCRACY: IDEOLOGY OF NATIONAL-COLONISM**

The national project that prevailed from 1930 to 1980 had to have its ideological correspondent, and it was pinpointed by the emergence and hegemony of the myth of racial democracy. This ideology assumes the nonexistence of racial inequality and racism more generally in Brazilian society, or at least a trend in this direction. The supposed racial democracy is rooted in culture: peaceful coexistence among races and even among slaves and masters, cultural amalgamation, common cuisine and the kitchen as a place of encounter (Freyre, 2006), lusotropicalism (Freyre, 2010a, 2010b), historically new three race civilization (Ribeiro, 2015), and, above all, ethnic miscegenation. It was actively promoted by the government and the media, also in the sphere of culture, as we can see in the cult of Isabel, Princess Imperial of Brazil who signed the Abolition law, the Carnival *enredo* themes that were predominant until very recently, *samba* songs as “Bonde de São Januário” that promoted the worker man in place of resistant forms of social existence associated with black culture, “Zé Carioca” Walt Disney character, and the like. Although this is a complex theme, for much of racial-democratic thought, the sole place racism exists is in “colour” prejudice, but this is seen as a personal deformation in the ones who practise it and not as a social pathology.

That ideology contrasts sharply with the one prevailing in the previous period, which was marked by open racism, usually with scientific credentials, and a political project aimed at whitening the population by fomenting European immigration. The latter is famously expressed in the 1895 painting “Ham’s Redemption” by Modesto Brocos, which depicts a family being progressively whitened in three generations by inter-racial miscegenation. The supposedly more progressive character of racial democracy in comparison with scientific racism led the communist movement to adhere to it, at least initially, almost completely (Chadarevian, 2012). This went well with the movement’s embrace of the Vargas’ and following governments. Indeed racial democracy seemed the touchstone of industrial society, and even when it was perceived that there was a racial question, as in progressive sociologist Florestan Fernandes’ early studies, this was deemed to be eventually overcome by modernisation (Fernandes, 1969).

There were, along these lines, more progressive formulations of the concept of racial democracy by black activists in the 1950’s. Agreeing with the scholars and the cultural establishment of the time that there had been a legacy of racial democracy, in the legal sense, since Abolition – in contrast with the legal racism present in the US – they thought, nevertheless, that Abolition had not been complete, insofar as blacks had not been economically and socially integrated in the new capitalist order. It was necessary, therefore, to promote a “second Abolition” (Guimarães, 2001).

“Racial democracy”, in this context, has, according to Guimarães, a contradictory character, for it is the “right to something not materialised”. In the context of the 1952-1955 UNESCO research project on race relations in Brazil, Roger Bastide and Florestan Fernandes, white scholars, formulated

“racial democracy” as an “ideal pattern of behaviour” which co-exists contradictorily and concomitantly with “colour prejudice” as, respectively, “social practice and norm”. This formulation had already been advanced by black activists such as Abdias do Nascimento and Guerreiro Ramos in opposition to conservative variants that argued for the non-existence of “colour prejudice” in Brazil. But even these did not contest the “consensus on ‘racial democracy’, even if it polarised its meaning” (Guimarães, 2001, pp. 151-152, own translation).

According to Guimarães, the “populist” or “national-developmental” pact was in force from 1930 to 1964. Under it:

(t)he blacks were completely integrated into the Brazilian nation, in symbolic terms, by the means of the adoption of a mestizo or syncretic national culture, and, in material terms, at least partially, by the means of the regulation of the labour market and social security, reversing the framework of exclusion and lack of commitment sponsored by the First Republic (Guimarães, 2001, p. 161, own translation).

The “rupture of the democratic pact”, in Guimarães’ words, in 1964, led the black movement to emphasise the African roots of black culture – in opposition to mestizo values – and to progressively denounce racial democracy as a myth. Abdias started this denouncement in 1968 before going into exile, and continued it after his return in 1977. The process culminated with the emergence of MNU and the new black movement in 1978. What is missed in this description is that the 1964 “rupture” is only partial in the sense that it signifies the resumption of the same colonist views regarding national formation. Symptomatically, regulation of the labour market and social security were never extended to rural workers before 1988.

What had indeed changed in 1964 is that the relative democratic conditions in which the national-colonist project was pursued until then, and that were tensioning the project by the growing of a rival colonised narrative, were lifted. Accordingly, black movement was dismantled and the foundation of MNU would happen only when the political situation started to relax, with the return of the exiled. Interestingly enough, even before this denouncement, the military regime, interested in developing its relations to African countries, was promoting Afro-brazilian culture (Guimarães, 2001). While it framed this as yet another example of Brazilian racial democracy, it still signified a departure from the concept of the latter in which it is rooted in racial miscegenation, which amounted to negating racial particularities (other than white).

Before Abdias’ formulations, the FNB combined a critique of colour prejudice with a vision of national formation in syntony with more conservative advocates of racial democracy, such as Gilberto Freyre, and with the national-colonist project. According to Moura (1994), FNB’s leader Arlindo Veiga dos Santos “monarchist, nationalist, catholic and elitist” posture was white in character, evidencing a “divided personality” in which ethnic protest amalgamated to the reproduction of white patterns and values.

In Moura’s words:

In our opinion, there’s no proposal for *blackness*, but for the formation of a nation in which these initial ethnicities – Portuguese, indian and black – would build the matrices that would provide the fundamental foundations of this ethnic triangulation leading to a brown Brazilian race. We cannot see in his thought a radical direction to the black people’s demands, but a proposal for the formation of a nation in which black people would enter as one of its components and would be protected, via nationalist values, from racism that would be progressively diluted, as these

conservative values – Catholicism, monarchism and authoritarianism – asserted themselves as politically dominant values (Moura, 1994, p. 195, own translation).

Santos, after critically citing a case in which nobody wanted to seat at the side of a black boy in a tram in São Paulo boarded by King Albert of Belgium, says the following:

The lusos, the negro and the bugger threw themselves into the rough wilderness and conquered, planted, settled and created Brazil. They made it powerful, just them. We have separated ourselves, afterwards, from Portugal, for believing we were “something defined”, for judging ourselves “ourselves” and not Portugal. We made ourselves respectful in the world, we have imposed ourselves and we have been arbitrators of serious issues arising among states proud of their power. We have seriously influenced international life and, by our economy, we weigh as a very strong producer. With the republic that is fortunately gone, we have lost much of our diplomatic bright, nevertheless a great part of our economic value has remained. Looking at the distant past, we see ourselves beating Frenchmen, Englishmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, etc., because we have already created our unmistakable religious, racial, national, Brazilian identity. (Santos *apud* Moura, 1994, p. 195, own translation).

It is noticeable that Santos’ views consist exactly of the national-colonist racial democratic identity that emerged in the 1930’s. Even though they could be seen as an expression of the *zeitgeist*, the class character of the black movement must, thus, be considered in order to properly address these ideas: as Moura pointed out, most men and women organised in the black movement are *petit-bourgeois* and relatively privileged in the face of the mass of the black race. In the 1930’s, this contradiction crystallised in the positions assumed by the FNB and its adherence to the national-colonist project.

Today, the contradiction reappears in a liberal and pro-systemic black movement abstracted from the necessarily radical and anti-colonialist nature of the race question. It is a pro-colonialist fraction of the black movement that, in this neocolonial stage, rejects national-colonist positions, even denouncing them, but now embraces the coloniser’s agenda in actual association with monopoly capital represented by international financiers. Both manifestations are in sharp contrast with radical black critique, especially Movimento Negro Unificado (MNU) and the movements emerging in the late 1970’s, which correctly situation the race question in the context of imperialism.

In the 1930’s and now, these *petit-bourgeois* black movements have rightly been criticised by the communist movement for these anti-classist positions. But instead of producing a dialectical synthesis, by abstracting black protest of its *petit-bourgeois* elements and reintegrating it into a radical examination of colonialism globally and internally, part of the communist movement has retreated to the colonist position, rejecting black protest altogether. While accusing the black movement’s legitimate claims of fracturing the working class, these communists actually perpetrated this fracturing by assuming an unequivocal colonist position which antagonises the colonised. There is no excuse for this politically and intellectually miserable formulation, since, even more than promoting colonism, it also promotes capitalism by blocking proletarian unity among black and white workers.

#### **4) NEO-COLONIALIST TRANSITION AND THE DECAY OF NATIONAL-COLONISM**

The concept of “neo-colonialism” has been developed by Nkrumah (1965), at the time of decolonization of Africa, to underscore the contradictory process by which imperialism’s widespread “retreat” from direct political domination of the colonies was accompanied by direction from the outside of their economic system and political policy. Summarising the argument, neo-colonialism amounts to both political liberalisation and economic subjugation. As national liberation advances in the periphery, specially after Ghanaian Independence in 1958, and territories become “nominally independent”, economic means are taken by the core to subjugate their economies and, consequently, control their policies.

It is not Nkrumah’s idea that this type of economic subjugation of independent polities constitutes a novelty of the second half of the twentieth century. The author mentions the case of Egypt in which such a situation could actually be converted into direct colonisation in the nineteenth century. But then in the 1960’s a similar type of re-conversion was, following Nkrumah’s argument, not possible anymore. Independence had come for good – and neo-colonialism was turned into the strategy of the day. Thus, the phenomenon matured to constitute a “stage of imperialism” – as the book’s name, resonating Lenin, directly states – whilst former colonies transitioned to neo-colonial states.

Nevertheless, as Yeros and Jha suggest, in the countries characterised by significant white settler population, the neo-colonial transition was “aborted” at this time. In these cases, political conditions aggravated to compensate for the neo-colonial trend of liberalisation but, as the opposite side of the coin, the settler minority also sought economic and industrial development and geopolitical expansionism in accordance with their colonist agenda (Yeros & Jha, 2020). This development was, of course, based on the super-exploitation of their respective colonised populations, and thus did not amount to either neo-colonialism, where politics is released but economics is blocked, nor a true national development project, where both are sought in benefit of the whole of the national population. As with Brazilian 1822 Independence, it amounted to the re-minting of colonialism by action of the internal colonist class.

In accordance with this vision, which is very common in African political economy debate but almost unheard of in Latin America, decolonization for countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe did not occur at the time of their juridical independence from the British Empire (which in the South African case can be traced back to the Statute of Westminster in 1931 and even the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910) but when white minority regimes were finally defeated in the 1980’s and 1990’s – together, as in other cases two or three decades earlier, with the neo-colonial transition – since colonist independence does not really mean decolonization. In the case of the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique the trend is very similar, with the Portuguese state and white settlers refusing decolonization in the 1960’s and delaying it up until 1975, at which point a civil war broke out to refuse liberation for another 20 years.

These cases present a strikingly simultaneous trajectory. Maybe aided by the defeat of the soviet camp, the transition to majority rule was permitted in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, but conditioned upon the neo-colonial transition which kept sovereignty in check by other means. After Zimbabwean pioneer liberation in 1980, Namibia adopted a constitution and proclaimed independence in 1990. The consequent South African withdraw from that country led Angola to dump its socialist project and adopt a liberal multi-party political model in 1991 and a new constitution in 1992, holding elections in that same year. The final end of the Civil War, nevertheless, had to wait

until UNITA's faction leader Jonas Savimbi's death in 2002. Mozambique adopted a multi-party constitution in 1990, put an end to the Civil War in 1992 and held elections in 1994. In South Africa, Apartheid legislation was repealed in 1991, and multiracial elections were held in 1994.

As for Brazil, elections were held in 1989 under the banner of the new 1988 Constitution. This "Citizen Constitution", as it is called, may be regarded as halmarking both the country's neo-colonial transition and its transition to majority rule, albeit imperfectly. For the first time in its history, Brazil – as well as the African cases mentioned – had universal suffrage, permitting the vote of the illiterate. It also criminalised racism and instituted a universal security system comprising public health, social security and social assistance, as well as a whole series of economic, social and labour rights. As to the indigenous question, it instituted a juridical, administrative and organisational framework direct to preserving the indigenous peoples' rights to their ancestral lands. Later on, policies on affirmative action were instituted as well.

These legal advancements may be regarded as the burial of the myth of racial democracy at the state level,<sup>11</sup> after it had been denounced by the black movement, although this idea must be contrasted with the official promotion of black culture by the late military regime, already referred to. In any case, this could be compared to South Africa's myth of "rainbow nation", and several declarations by post-Apartheid presidents that Afrikaners were Africans in full right. Lula's first term motto, by its turn, read "Brazil: a country of everyone". That kind of incorporation of the colonised into the nation also functions in reverse way, to state the country is for the colonists too. This could be seen as a renewed national ideology for the neocolonial transition, a type of political liberation that preserves property rights, especially land property.

Accordingly, the state financial structure organised by the 1988 Constitution and subsequent legislation, which should provide for the materialisation of its welfare agenda, actually squeezed the public fund with several neoliberal institutions which made the social-democratic project idealised in the Constitution impossible to pursue (Bercovici & Massonetto, 2006). Even worse, there has been a spike in state violence and incarceration of the colonised, which seems to be a management technique of the growing labour reserves for primitive accumulation in late neocolonialism (Yeros & Jha, 2020) – an ever increasing phenomenon, by the way, in the context of the so-called gig economy. Also, although public indigenist service regulated the state's contact with the indigenous peoples by the principle of the latter's wishes to establish contact or not, actual land grabbing by various agents is an ongoing process. This is the hallmark of a colonist society: from the indigenous perspective, there is a continuity of the colonisation process, be it perpetrated by the Portuguese or by the Brazilian – something unthinkable in Africa after national liberation.

In sum, during the 1980's the colonists handed over – or almostly – political power, but only after ensuring that the economic mechanism destined to maintain the colonised subjugated to primitive accumulation were put in place. Yeros and Jha (2020) have proposed to apply to Latin America the framework of analysis developed by many authors for Southern Africa. Indeed, a very similar pattern can be found: presence of a large community of white settlers, trend for decolonization being aborted in the 1960's, with previous colonist independence (which in the American case happened 100 to 150 years earlier) not amounting to the same thing; then escalation of political oppression coupled with a national-colonist development project; and political liberalisation in the 1980's and 1990's coupled with neoliberalism and adhesion to the Washington Consensus. As the authors say:

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<sup>11</sup> I thank Paris Yeros for this suggestion and the ideas that follow.

There was also a significant number of juridically independent peripheral states that did not make the transition to neo-colonialism at this time, did not participate in Bandung or share its ideals, even if they displayed interest in the development of the productive forces internally. These were the white-settler states of Southern Africa and Latin America, which remained in settler-colonial mode of political domination long after obtaining juridical independence from the British or Iberian metropolises. Generally, the neo-colonial transition in these regions dragged on for decades after the Second World War, until the defeat of minority rule and military regimes. In almost all cases, universal suffrage without any qualifications advanced only after the Second World War, but again most transitions were aborted by the hardening of white supremacism and serial coups d'état. In most cases, the transition to neo-colonialism was only made possible under neoliberalism, in this late phase of neo-colonialism, with South Africa and Brazil in particular shaking off the settler-colonial stranglehold simultaneously (Yeros & Jha, 2020, p. 86).

The failure to apprehend this “settler-colonial mode of political domination” is at the root of the Brazilian communist movement and actually almost the whole of the Brazilian left’s positive view of the economic development of the period 1964-1985. Even the assertive international positions of Geisel’s presidency (1974-1979) is well regarded. It is often mentioned Brazil’s pioneer recognition of Angolan Independence as declared by marxist-leninist MPLA faction in November 11th 1975. This is as contradictory an act as the United State’s support for national liberation in Africa and elsewhere. The point for national-colonialism is that its sovereign aspirations usually mean to defy imperialism, provided, nevertheless, that the colonised are controlled at home and colonist power is secured. What is more, Brazil reversed its position to stand with Portugal in the latter’s policy to resist decolonization of its empire only when Portugal itself decided to grant its colonies independence in the wake of the Carnation Revolution in April 25th, 1974. Even then, this allegedly moderate position – Geisel often being regarded as a moderate president within the military regime – was not met with acquiescence by colonist hardliners, as the case narrated by Lobato (2017) clearly shows.

The flip side of the coin is the left’s usual defence of the 1988 Constitution’s political, social and economic rights while regarding the neoliberal hegemony of the period as of “national decay”. Thus, PCdoB’s Program (PCdoB, [s.d.], own translation), in spite of saying the 1964 coup “puts a break on the reforms that would energise development” and that it “symbolises internal adversities and the impositions of imperialism against the national project”, calls the whole of the period 1930-1980 “second civilizational cycle” – the first being comprised by the slavery and colonial period. Also, while recognizing the “positive legacy of redemocratization conquered in 1985 after great popular mobilizations for democratic liberties” and that the Constitution “has given the country a democratic juridical and political framework, besides incorporating important social conquests”, the Program has a mainly negative view of the period 1981-2002, which is called “two ‘lost decades’” and “national decay”.

This view is understandable only as much as the country has really abandoned any national development project and assertive foreign policy. But both the “national” character of previous development must be challenged and the truly national and democratic conquests of the 1980’s democratisation movements must be properly addressed. For the communists’ purpose, the central issue is that political liberalisation was conditioned upon imperialist economic domination. This is



indeed the contradictory essence of the neo-colonial project in the periphery as a whole, as illuminated by Nkrumah. In any case, to be nostalgic of national-colonist development is pointless since it should be obvious that national development and liberation must be, in our view, for the nation, and not for the white settler colonist class. We do not want to “re-mint the colonial coin” once again, but to root out colonialism altogether.

## 5) AN ATTEMPT AT CLASS ANALYSIS

The situation in the world today exhibits a curious feature that defies the classic right-left cleavage framework. Within the imperialist nations, political forces traditionally identified with the left have been the main proponents of the escalation of violence against the oppressed nations, as with the Democrat Party and SPD. This may be because the working classes in these nations have become minor associates of imperialism, benefiting from a relatively better material position by means of the extraction of value obtained through the exploration of the working classes in the oppressed nations, an issue identified with social-democratic forces already in the aftermath of World War 2 (Przeworski, 2002). These forces have also become, in recent years, more or less aligned with the so-called struggle against the oppressions, translating the race, gender and LGBT issues to a capitalist and liberal agenda, even though they are rooted in imperialism, colonialism and capitalism.

At the same time, political forces associated with the right in these countries have grown, at least in rhetoric, increasingly against so-called “globalism”, which is represented not only by international organisations but also global monopoly capital. This has attracted the working classes to these forces, and even if we consider that this rhetoric is a means to canalise these classes’ grievances in a way that preserves monopoly capital, it is nevertheless meaningful that right-wing political forces have developed a discourse that has the appearance of being anti-systemic. The exponent of this movement is Donald Trump, but the European right is involved too. In Britain, Brexit has been fueled by feelings against globalism and the EU and nostalgia of the British Empire. Also, in the face of the left-wing forces alignment with the struggles against the oppressions, the right’s positions have been built up as a reaction against this, thus turning the right-left cleavage, in appearance, into a struggle opposing nationalists and workers against globalists and oppressed “minorities”. This point enhances the internal contradiction of this *imperialist anti-imperialism* because, again, the race issue is rooted in imperialism.

Within the nations victimised by imperialism, in turn, a movement more or less similar to this anti-globalist right, but with a clear anti-imperialist agenda, has emerged. This is centred in nationalist and eurasianist Russia and the so-called “4th theory”. As with the right in the United States of North America, these forces are profoundly anti-feminist and anti-LGBT, and militantly christian. But, being located in an oppressed nation, they also represent a genuine reaction against imperialism, which a “nationalist” movement in an imperialist nation cannot be. At the same time, in Russia and other countries, feminist and LGBT agenda is perceived by these forces to be pro-imperialist, as by being introduced in the country from the outside by the imperialist forces.

It is not our intention to provide a profound analysis of the global political struggle, a task which demands more thinking. But, with the above sketch in mind, we can try to grasp how political forces in Brazil, anchored in the three classes framework provided, act in that framework of global forces.

As we have said, the colonist class has been historically identified for struggling for sovereignty on the world stage while simultaneously reinforcing colonialism internally, which we have called the “national-colonist” project. We can thus develop, for countries like Brazil, two axis

of political cleavage that oppose forces for being more or less aligned with both external imperialism and internal colonialism. The colonisers – once the agents of the metropolis, now global monopoly capital – are the ones struggling for the deepening of both external and internal oppressions, while the colonised struggle against both.

Up until Brazilian neo-colonial transition in the 1980's, the position of the colonists was against external imperialism and for internal colonialism. Nevertheless, since the colonists chose to trade sovereignty for the maintenance of the colonial mode of accumulation (in the face of political liberalisation), that position has shrunk. It still lives, though, mainly in the Labour Democratic Party (PDT) and in personalities like Dep. Aldo Rebelo and former Gov. Ciro Gomes, both from PDT, and runt Party of the Workers' Cause (PCO) leader Rui Costa Pimenta. This position has actually been experiencing a resurgence in recent years – following accumulated neoliberal failures – which is shown in the not negligible amount of votes received by Gomes for President, and in the emergence of internet influencers like Cmdt. Robinson Farinazzo, Rogério Anitablian and Rubem Gonzalez. These personalities have notoriously defended “national development” (which usually amounts to national industrialization) and sovereignty, criticised the United States’ imperialism, and been strongly refractory to race and gender demands,<sup>12</sup> which are seen to divide the Brazilian people. The Indigenous peoples have been specially targeted.

Nevertheless, the trend since the 1980's is for the abandonment of the national-colonist project. The latter, as we have said, was constituted by a labour-bourgeois alliance and, as such, had a labour and a bourgeois component – its labour component consisting, of course, of the colonist component of the labour class. With the breaking of that alliance, which is the consequence of the new conditions of the class struggle world-wide and the neocolonial transition everywhere, the colonists have splitted into two positions: the colonist-left, which has traded racist positions for an anti-oppression agenda and sovereign positions to a neocolonial agenda, while keeping intact the colonial mode of accumulation and the core of its white privileges, and the colonist-right, which traded only sovereignty for neocolonialism, opposing the anti-oppression agenda and backing the colonial mode of accumulation and the white privileges even more. We now turn to these contemporary positions.

The colonist-right position poses to be heir to the national-colonist project. This is visible in the military, who during the dictatorship of 1964-1985 took positions antagonising the US in a number of issues, such as Brazilian nuclear policy and sovereignty in the Amazon region; internally, the latter was undertaken as a public policy for “colonising” the territory at the expense of the indigenous peoples. Now, the military have been criticised by the national-colonist personalities mentioned above for being too close to the US, while Rebelo has defended, in social networks, mining activities in the Amazon that has caused ongoing Yanomami people genocide crises. Rebelo's video was shared by Jair Bolsonaro, who represents the military. Bolsonaro has tried to position himself as a defender of the old national-colonist position, but his agenda is too aligned with external imperialism and monopoly capital to succeed in this move. This is an indicative, therefore, that the colonist “class” has abandoned former national-colonist development aspirations and embraced imperialism, while carrying on its internal colonist agenda, which is really the core of its project.

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<sup>12</sup> For a Farinazzo's view on LGBT rights policies within the Brazilian Armoured Forces – timid as that may be – that criticises both the ones, in the military, with “sexual attraction for the United States” and “identitarianism”, see ARTE DA GUERRA (2023). Here the inception of foreign liberal LGBT agenda in national politics, by imperialism, is perceived as being favoured by a sexual deprivation of military personnel who are attracted by US polity and its military hardware, as well as, presumably, by other men.

The colonist-left position is diametrically opposed to the old national-colonist project: it supports external imperialism and opposes internal colonialism. This is an oxymoron, but it has actually come to reality through, on the one hand, the colonist-left trade above mentioned, which opened up an possibility for capital to show sympathy towards race and gender demands – in a way that is acceptable to capital – and, on the other, the co-optation of part of the colonised's forces forces internally, say the petit-bourgeois black movement, by imperialism. It expresses itself as an “agenda against the oppressions” in a formal and juridical framework and a capitalist and liberal nature, very much aligned with the one advanced by the Democrat Party in the United States.

Part of the colonist “class”, having dumped the national-colonist project, now espouse both imperialism and an agenda addressing these “oppressions” in a manner that actually maintains the material exploration of the majority of the oppressed, that is, the colonial mode of accumulation. This pinpoints a colonist left which, having previously opposed both imperialism and the loss of its white privileges, now, in the face of the advancement of race demands, sees itself in need of supporting these demands and trades any anti-imperialist position for this new arrangement (anti-oppression coupled with continuing exploration). That political position, which may be called the imperialist left, is fiercely criticised by the ones who espouse the opposed position, that is, the national-colonist project – the anti-imperialist right. But the former is actually the flip side of the latter: both are hallmarked by the internal contradiction of confronting only one dimension of imperialism, either internal (internal colonialism) or external (neocolonialism), while completely embracing the other. The development of global capitalism has produced this inversion. No consequent anti-imperialist struggle is to come out of neither.

The bourgeoisie is inclined towards the colonist-right position, that is, to maintain the colonial mode of accumulation to its maximum extent. In this stage of global capitalism, this means the neocolonial mode of accumulation. Equally in relation to the previous stage, the peripheral bourgeoisies have to share the most part of the value extracted from peripheral labour with the imperial bourgeoisies at the core. Differently from the previous stage, though, they now compensate this not by, as before, national-colonist projects aimed at ascending in global capitalism and augmenting its share of extract value, but by accelerating primitive accumulation in the periphery, which interest both the peripheral and imperial bourgeoisies.

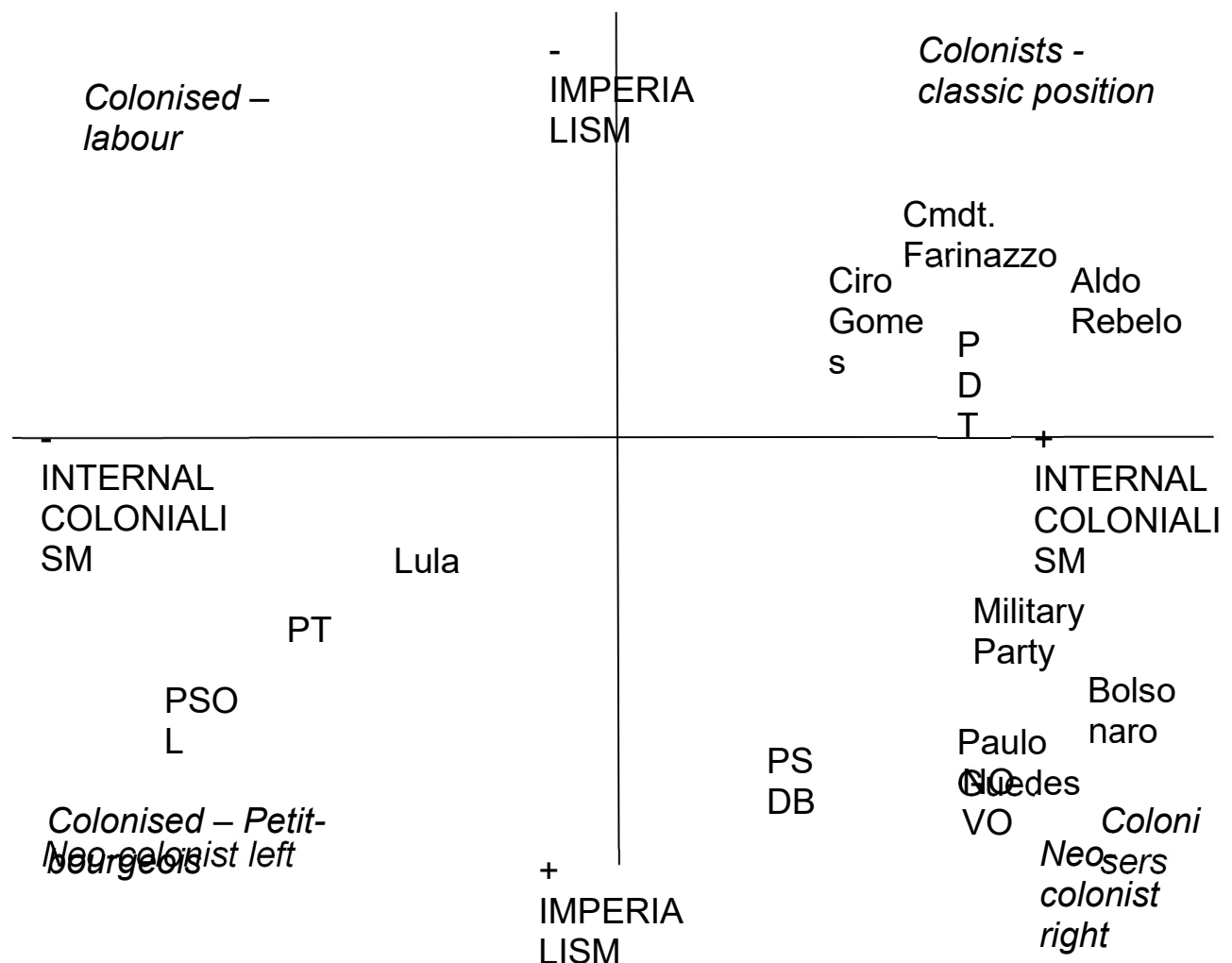
That explains the rise of Jair Bolsonaro, as representative of the bourgeois colonist-right project – not without attracting ample sectors of colonist labour, interested in maintaining relative privileges in the face of the colonised masses. But contemporary bourgeoisies cannot afford radically racist and misogynist positions, nor is the majority of Brazilian bourgeoisie willing to dump the democratic state. Thus, most of it has abandoned Bolsonaro, in tandem with its bourgeois ally at the core. That approximates it with the colonist-left position, stressing the latter. But the nucleus of the bourgeois agenda remains to maintain the colonial mode of accumulation.

The colonist right and left are, therefore, different expressions of neo-colonialism, which consists of external imperialism enforced through economic means. Neo-colonialism is the contemporary form of the colonial mode of accumulation, and since for it to accomplish its objectives it suffices to choke nations economically, it is sufficient for the colonist class to exploit the colonised economically as well. Some degree of political liberation is therefore acceptable, which explains the 1988 Constitution and the “agenda against the oppressions”. This form of exploitation of the colonised, which we may call the *neo-colonist left* project, is actually preferable, as it allows for absorbing social demands up to a point.

On the other hand, we may talk of the *neo-colonist right* project, that is, the one that also adopts the economic exploitation associated with neo-colonialism – in association with external

imperialism and in order to reproduce the colonial mode of accumulation – but, on top of that, seeks to expand the classic oppression of the colonised associated with national-colonialism. In other words, it does not accept the political liberalisation. This position is represented by Bolsonaro and sometimes finds resonance with the lower ranks of the colonists, that is, the white workers. This sector, being more stressed by the loss of political and symbolic privileges than the higher ranks of the colonists, and threatened to be demoted to the status of the colonised, reacts against neo-colonial political liberation.

As to the co-optation of the colonised forces, it happens partly by agency of the *petit-bourgeois* black movement, that amalgamate that addresses colonised demands in accordance with their class interests, and partly by agency of monopoly acting in the financing of movements. Its function is to both prevent that the forces interested in opposing internal colonialism, especially the black and indigenous movements, associate themselves to anti-imperialism as well, and that the forces opposing imperialism stand also against internal colonialism, although this was before already the major trend with the colonists. Anyhow, both positions grow increasingly refractory to each other and an alliance of these forces is thus prevented.



The loose inspiration for the above graph is “The Political Compass” (s./d.), although only in a limited and critical way. In our view, the authors of the Compass are right in that one dimensional political measure left-right is insufficient in grasping all the elements of political alignment. But their discrete segregation of the so-called economic and social scales (as if the latter was not determined in the last instance by the former - lead to absurd conclusions like French party *Rassemblement*

*national* being “extremist” only in “social attitudes”, while being economically to the left of the *Parti Socialiste*.

The real issue here is that the *PS* is very much aligned with global imperialism and the *RN* criticises and advocates for a more sovereign role for France. While the real consequences of the latter policy in an imperialist country like France remains to be fully grasped, its position in the Political Compass can be compared to that of the colonists’ classic position in a settler-colonial country like Brazil. That is why we propose our graph as a – provisional – attempt to represent political positions in such countries in a way that is rooted in class analysis and not floating on the air.

It is curious to see that the authors of the Political Compass have positioned Lula in their compass in a place very similar to the one we have in our graph. But again, their blindness towards the national question has lead them to see only the “authoritarian” aspect of Bolsonaro’s political discourse, placing him in the upper-right quadrant (The Political Compass, 2022). As the colonist classic position is indeed authoritarian, this aspect, in our understanding, reflects Bolsonaro’s attempt to pose himself as a leader of that position, as we have previously noted. But this is only the surface. As a deeper view of the former president’s policies leave no doubt of his alignment with imperialist interests, Bolsonaro must be placed in the bottom-right quadrant.

## **CONCLUSION: ON THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A NATIONAL-COLONIST BOURGEOISIE**

Among many in the Brazilian communist movement, it is thought that the best national strategy is to forge an inter-class alliance among the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. We are not going to say that this is impossible, as it has indeed been possible in many countries. We do need, though, to properly characterise the Brazilian bourgeoisie. Beyond usual thinking about the latter’s supposed “national”, “internal”, “comprador” character etc., it should be stressed that it is, on the whole, colonist. This is unambiguously expressed in its racial character but also in the mode of accumulation it perpetrates, which is based on the dual primitive accumulation over land and labour.

Truth be told, this is also the character of the bourgeoisie at the core, or else there would be no imperialism. But there a national project in alliance with the bourgeoisie was possible precisely because the meaning of “national” in the system’s centre is “imperialist”. The bourgeoisie has developed those countries by spoliating the periphery and has made the proletariat an allied of that agenda, which is the reason why the latter has gone conservative and has been supporting most economic or military action against the peoples of the world since at least the end of World War 2, not to speak of the support for nazism itself.

In Brazil, the national-colonist bourgeoisie has in the past shown some interest in national development of the colonist type. But, when this threatened to spin out of its control, evolving to a truly national and anti-colonial project, it did not hesitate to abort it and assert its political control over the colonised. This decisive position has been taken in spite of any contradictions between the agrarian and industrial fractions of the bourgeoisie. In fact, these contradictions go stronger in relatively democratic periods, when tensions as to the possibilities of colonised liberation increase. Both in the 1930’s and 1960’s, these contradictions were solved by the accommodation of industrialist interests within the colonist agrarian power and monopoly of land: indeed, the labour legislations produced during this period were not extended to rural workers until the end of the 1980’s. The colonist monopoly of land is a condition *sine qua non* for the reproduction of the colonial mode of accumulation, which is the best interest of both fractions. Authoritarian periods, therefore, appear as the necessary way to promote industrial development and colonist power simultaneously.

Until the late 1980's, all of the bourgeoisie has positioned itself in the upper right quadrant of our compass. Then, when this kind of authoritarian political control over the colonised turned impossible to carry on, it traded national-colonist development for colonist privilege and abandoned the former altogether. Ever since, it has continued to expropriate land and super-exploit labour, while being content with its subordinated character in the global sphere, because with this it preserves its position and reproduces the colonial mode of accumulation. It is thus strongly aligned with the imperial bourgeoisie and migrated itself to the bottom-right quadrant of our compass together with the latter.

The colonist labour has classically stood against imperialism and for internal colonialism. This was the material base for the colonist bourgeoisie-labour alliance which underpinned national-colonist development in the mid-20th century. The alliance started to break in 1964 and completed this process in 1985, when the national-colonist bourgeoisie committed "class" suicide and became a comprador bourgeoisie. Colonist labour has ever since been oscillating between the national-colonist classic position (upper-right quadrant), the neo-colonist left position (bottom-left), and allegiance with colonist right (bottom-right). Part of it feels abandoned and has resorted to neo-fascist alternatives. Although this has been a solution for the bourgeoisie to co-opt colonist labour, after the job of destroying national and progressive state structures was done, it has dumped the alternative.

The bourgeoisie-labour alliance within the colonist position has thus become impossible. Any strategy for national development on that basis is destined to fail and, moreover, must be exposed as a colonist decrepitude. Even more pathetic is a strategy that tries to address race and gender issues while failing to engage against imperialism. There are those trying to make the communist movement embrace any of these positions, which would lead it to dissolve itself among either the liberal left or the national-colonist right. What is striking, in this view, is that the upper-left quadrant of our compass is mainly politically void. There are only a few minority forces within the black, indigenous and communist movements that occupy this place, but they are still too small to make a difference. In the face of the absence of a great, coherent and organised political force that advances the strategy of the colonised, the latter are deceived by colonist labour. The path of the Brazilian communist movement will be that of fighting both imperialism and internal colonialism or will be none. Only a truly popular political project, meaning one that fights both imperialism and its proxy, the colonist bourgeoisie, is capable of developing the nation's potential, and that's the only one the communists should espouse. The time has come to shout with our colonised comrades in all three continents: "Down with colonialism!" (Minh, 2007).

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