

Violent Entanglements

Militarism and Capitalism

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Militarism and capitalism have been conjoined, in symbiosis, from at least the period of the triangular trade one-half millennia ago, when industrialization projects around the globe trafficked in human bodies and the labor and armaments of systemic control. The evolving enmeshment of capitalist and military growth, in fact, generates a multitude of intricate relationships, where militarism avails its considerable resources to suppress anticapitalist movements globally, and where the military-industrial complex stabilizes capitalist activity, absorbing its excesses by producing armaments, surveillance tactics, and ever-diversifying uses of security technology. Further, as capitalist activity continues to seek new markets and forms of production, in concomitant fashion, policies of human dispossession, dislocation, and destruction inevitably are normalized. In the United States, for example, state and private enterprises approach these twined forces of expansion and destruction with the false yet clichéd appeal of spreading the “greater goods” of capitalism and democracy through the War on Terror. That is, deeper conjunctions of militarism and capitalism make the line between them increasingly indistinct and call for radical interventions to expose the military-industrial complex’s inner workings and impacts on the quality of human life and on the viability of societies across the globe. The editors of this issue and the scholars whose work appears on its pages seek to demonstrate the critical need to understand capitalist projects and military aggression by illuminating their deep entanglements.

Radical History Review

Issue 133 (January 2019) DOI 10.1215/01636545-7160029

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For each of us, the lethal combination of militarism and capitalism is an issue of world-historical importance made increasingly dire as their conjunctions become ever tighter within economies of permanent violence. The image on the cover of this issue tells this story. It captures a mural that greets visitors at the entrance of the Daechuri Art and Peace Village in Pyeongtaek, South Korea, just outside of US Army Garrison Humphreys. In 2001, when the US Department of Defense (DOD) announced plans to expand the army base, Daechuri villagers launched a protracted struggle to save their homes and communities from destruction. They held candlelit vigils, squatted in evicted buildings, confronted the riot police, and demonstrated outside the base gates. The protests sparked international attention and drew antimilitary activists from South Korea and throughout the world. In May 2006, 11,500 South Korean police officers and troops descended on Daechuri and violently ended the uprising, using clubs and water cannons to disperse the protesters. Although the South Korean government destroyed the original Daechuri village, the local residents erected the Art and Peace Village in its place to preserve the memory of the struggle with photography exhibits, sculptures, and other art-making projects. Next to the mural at the village's entrance, a wooden sign announces in Korean and English that this is "a war and brutality free zone."¹

The Daechuri Art and Peace Village stands as a potent reminder of the people's resistance against the US military, which becomes all the more urgent as the evicted and the dispossessed are being transformed into dependents of Camp Humphreys's growing economy. Camp Humphreys, the US DOD's "crown jewel of overseas installations," occupies 14.7 million square meters of South Korea's rural landscape.² When its expansion is set to complete in 2020, Camp Humphreys will be the largest US military base in the world. It will house more than forty-five thousand residents and include such amenities as an eighteen-hole golf course, a supermarket, a movie theater, a "super gym," and a 300,000-square-foot shopping center. One army official called it "our little piece of America."³ On and surrounding the base, the US Army has created its own economy modeled on US suburban communities, similar to the little pieces of Americana on the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base or on Kwajalein Island that cater to US military personnel and their families.⁴ These spaces of leisure require the constant displacement of local people and their incorporation into the new militarized economy. In Pyeongtaek, Camp Humphreys's economy is built partly on the ruins of the original Daechuri Village; it exists because rice fields and farming villages were expropriated from the people who lived there and their labor was absorbed into making the military town function. This seems to be, in effect, primitive accumulation in action, even in the era of late capitalism. Though the villagers were already enmeshed in capitalist circuits of production and consumption, they nevertheless found themselves forced off their lands and their means of production, thereby restructuring the local economy entirely. And if the economies surrounding other US military bases in South Korea (or, indeed,

the whole world) offer us a window into the future, we can foresee such economic dependence on Camp Humphreys becoming normalized or even desired by people who survive off of or profit from the base. Transforming land-based agricultural workers into workers on behalf of a war economy led by an imperial, foreign nation extends the original violence of expropriation into a lasting structure of the Daechuri villagers' everyday existence.

The expropriation of land in Daechuri was not carried out with the intention of creating workers for the capitalist economy of the military base, though it certainly achieves that outcome. Instead, the DOD needed the land for a strategically located military base meant to secure US geopolitical and capitalist interests in Asia. Here, we see the transnational collaboration of state violence at work between the South Korean state and the US empire. The deployment of South Korean police and military to remove Daechuri residents exemplifies a longer history of the collusion of South Korean "violence workers"⁵ operating on behalf of the United States to ensure the continued US "protection" of South Korea from communist incursions on its borders. We saw this in the 1960s, when the South Korean government deployed 340,000 of its citizens to fight and die in the US war in Vietnam, and when it has suppressed the "Yankee Go Home!" antimilitary protests that have erupted continuously since the 1980s. The expansion of US imperial capital in the post-1945 era has required the outsourcing of state violence to host countries and allied states, so that the US military can keep its hands clean in quelling popular resistance while continuing its operations.⁶

Indeed, the expansion of Camp Humphreys is part of an extensive, long-term reposturing of the US military in Asia that aligns with the "pivot to Asia" policy begun under the Obama administration. The expansion entails closing the Yongsan Garrison in Seoul, the headquarters of the US forces in Korea and a major site of South Korean citizens' protest, and restationing troops away from the Seoul metropolitan area and the Demilitarized Zone.⁷ Camp Humphreys's geographical siting signals the attempt by the United States to strengthen its position in the Asia-Pacific region. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was a part of this "pivot to Asia" that relies on relationships of diplomacy, including trade and commerce, but is also always backed up by the muscle of the military. The apparent demise of the TPP means that Camp Humphreys will likely become increasingly important to US dominance in the region, especially against the rising competitive power of China, which is already making its own trade agreements with nations like Malaysia in the wake of TPP's demise and creating new artificial islands for military bases in the region.⁸

We open with a discussion of the Daechuri Art and Peace Village and Camp Humphreys because these spaces highlight many of the critical issues threaded through the pages that follow: militarism as a structure of everyday life under capitalism; the role of the state in managing the contradictions of militarized capital, from suppressing dissent to mobilizing labor; violence that exceeds the temporal

and spatial boundaries of formal combat, as well as the discursive boundary between “soft” and “hard” power; and the spaces of sociality where local workers and foreign soldiers interact. The following essays show that the relations of violence that converged in Pyeongtaek in recent years are not exceptional to this particular locale but have animated other sites of the US empire where the imperatives of militarism and capitalism converge. They also show the creative militancy of people who are on the front lines of documenting communities and lifeways lost to these convergent forces—similar to the art making and place-based memorialization at Daechuri—and who insist that another world is possible.

The presence of US military bases like Camp Humphreys in South Korea obviously traces back to the Korean War, when nearly 1.8 million US troops entered the country, ultimately generating new social and economic relations with Korean people. Adding to the rich scholarship on the economies of sex work and military bases, Jeong Min Kim’s article, “From Military Supplies to Wartime Commodities,” sheds new light on the relationship between transactional sex and black market economies that emerged alongside US military installations and became essential to the economic survival of Koreans living under the dire privations of war. Kim examines how US soldiers paid for sex and domestic services with pilfered PX goods, which Korean civilians then exchanged on the black market for money or daily necessities. She argues these stolen PX goods functioned as a “quasi currency” that was neither a commodity nor a money currency, whose fluctuating value Koreans had to negotiate in each transaction, from the bedroom to the black market and back to the bedroom. Indeed, US soldiers profited as consumers of sex work, which kept the flow of PX goods moving into the black market. The gendered and sexual labor of Korean sex workers and domestic servants, Kim argues, fundamentally propped up the wartime economy, showing how military capitalism “permeates everyday economic and social life.”

Whereas Kim examines the emergence of informal and illicit economies that develop adjacent to US military endeavors, Patrick Chung focuses his attention on the formal economy, showing how the demands of war galvanized innovations that revolutionized the global shipping industry. Chung historicizes the emergence of military outsourcing, particularly of logistics, by examining the rise of the Hanjin Corporation, from its origins with one man and his truck during the Korean War to its expansive growth during the Vietnam War as one of the US military’s main subcontractors, and then its preeminence as one of the world’s largest and most profitable logistics companies. Highlighting the centrality of cost control to war making, Chung shows how outsourcing noncombat operations to local and third-country nationals depended heavily on racialized exploitations of labor and the violence of both the United States and South Korea to suppress worker demands.

The issues Chung raises about military contractors clearly plague militarism today, with the astonishing proliferation of military corporations, particularly under the Global War on Terrorism. Like Chung, Betsy A. Beasley focuses not on the

military state but on the corporation “that exported services as part of the process of making war” to expose the historical thread connecting US wars in the Cold War Pacific to the present day. Focusing on Halliburton and KBR, Inc. through the lens of Donald Rumsfeld’s “strange career,” Beasley illuminates the entanglements between resource extraction and war economies. Military conflict offered a growth area to oil companies at a time when their core business was declining, motivating them to move from selling the product of refined oil to selling their services in complex logistics; their experience in oil extraction translated readily to war making. Rather than cast the state as subservient to the rising power of these corporations, or the corporations as the minions of the state, Beasley demonstrates how the state and these corporations are coconstituted, with logistics corporations funded by the state and the state’s foreign policy shaped by the corporations’ activities abroad.

As these essays demonstrate, US militarism in the Cold War Pacific is generative, producing lasting material effects on economies around military bases, on revolutionizing technologies for global industry, and on the proliferation of new forms of transnational businesses. Further, as Davorn Sisavath’s essay illuminates, even the waste produced by war’s destruction can be generative—for survivors of such catastrophic violence, for entrepreneurs located in the West, and for scholars, particularly those who must confront disappeared archives. Sisavath describes how confronting the redactions and withdrawal notices in the archives documenting the “secret war” in Laos compelled her to find new methods of interpreting this history, including studying the waste of war. War waste like unexploded ordnance and bomb casings litters the land of Laos, the most heavily bombed country per capita in the world, providing evidence of a war that was never secret to the people who lived there. She studies how ordinary Laotian people make use of this “good metal,” turning bomb casings into planters or tourist decorations and transforming the metal into practical tools like spoons. Further, this war waste returns to the circuits of global capitalism as commodities, as US entrepreneurs sell “ethical” jewelry by encouraging their consumers to “buy back the bomb.” In transforming bombs into baubles, the commodification of this war waste conceals both the labor that creates the jewelry (including the dangerous work of demining unexploded ordnance) and the history of violence that produced their material in the first place. Sisavath’s work demonstrates how the waste itself archives this history of military violence that is continuously under erasure, even in vacuous attempts to confront (while profiting from) it.

This issue also examines the centrality of militarism to capitalist development projects that displace indigenous and indigenous-identified communities and disrupt ecosystems: the worldviews, cultural practices, social organizations, and economic activities that both historically and presently rely on the very same natural resources brashly marked for extraction by capital investors. In her Interventions essay, Kalamaoka’aina Niheu argues that this industrial pursuit of natural resources and geographies violates indigenous systems of sustainability. Niheu

writes as an indigenous activist and scientist on the front lines of the struggle against militarization, settler colonialism, and climate change in Hawai'i. She details the economic, cosmological, and physical violence that Kanaka Maoli, the original people of Hawai'i, have confronted as they have struggled against the capitalist development that requires the ongoing illegal seizures of their lands—from the establishment of the first sugar plantations and military bases to more recent suburban housing complexes. Yet mobilizations of labor and resources on behalf of industrial developments also have created the contexts for Kanaka Maoli and their allies to defeat technologies of extraction and colonial violence on her home island of O'ahu. Her essay weaves together the array of problems and potential sites of resistance that the convergence of militarism and capitalism generate, including climate change, the propagation of gun violence, and transnational alliances of indigenous people against the resource extraction that threatens water and life. In particular, the food sovereignty movement that Niheu has engaged with for more than two decades has revitalized ancient farming techniques, a process that has depended on nonviolent direct action to reclaim water rights and to take back the lands stolen by the US government. The lessons of nonviolent direct action, she argues, were passed down from an earlier generation of activists who helped birth the Hawaiian Renaissance in the 1970s. Niheu ends her essay with a powerful call to build transborder alliances across the globe among peoples who similarly struggle against militarism, colonialism, and state violence and to recognize one's own complicity in that violence.

The question of lands rights and racialization was fundamental to the Peruvian military junta, led by Juan Velasco (1968–75), to discredit rural agriculturalists' landholder entitlements in Peru's central sierra region. Javier Puente argues that at the heart of Peru's 1969 agrarian reform was a rhetorical campaign to “modernize” indigenous-identified rural laborers on behalf of national development, by changing the agriculturalists' cultural and economic relationship to communal lands and by switching the system of *ayllus* (centuries-old collective familial land arrangements) with state agricultural cooperatives. The military junta publicly cast the racialized (read: atavistic) Andean citizens, *indios* (Indians), in stark contrast to the modern, atomized, and deracialized *campesinos* (peasants) who were compatible with national advancement because they relinquished to the state their communal land and labor rights. That is, the military justified its scheme to co-opt agriculturalist labor and expropriate rural lands by drawing on the rhetoric of nationalist advancement and stability through commodifiable labor patterns. Andean *indios* would change their sense of social organization and ties to the land to support large-scale, monoagricultural commodity production for state (military) profit. Rural laborers were called on, then, to radically shift their connection to the land and dismantle their ecosystems, replacing them with heavily rationalized and exploitative farming under military control. *Indios*-turned-*campesinos* fought back against state privatization through walkouts, strikes, and other forms of protest and were met with violent repression by Peru's military government.

Though they successfully challenged rural cooperativization in Peru, for indios-turned-campesinos, the condition of agricultural wage labor became increasingly violent and coerced. In Peru's central sierra, as in O'ahu, Hawai'i, indigenous and indigenous-identified populations continue to fight for survival. Niheu's Intervention article and Puente's feature article both make clear that scholars and activists use multiple strategies to protect their sustainable lifeways. Beyond Hawai'i and South America, Niheu urges us to consider the globe-spanning systemic violence—in Vieques, Flint, New York, Canada, Standing Rock, Palestine, and Afghanistan, as well as Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, and Parkland. Whether about pineapple plantations, the Reynolds aluminum foundry, General Motors automotive plants, or gentrified, unaffordable housing on O'ahu, Hawai'i, the essays reveal that despite the destructive ethos of their partnership, militarism and capitalism continuously spur people to ethnic and labor mobilizations that protect sustainable resources and lifeways, even though they play David to forces of Goliath proportion.

One of the two (Re)View essays included in the issue situates recent scholarship on indigenous challenges to militarism and capitalism. In his look at the literature on indigenous mobilization to protect lands and lifeways, Jorge Ramírez suggests that when indigenous peoples engage in “self-activity,” the everyday acts “grounded in distinct and particular ways of knowing and being” and that build toward “liberation,” they disrupt the rhetorical justification of capitalist land expropriation, challenge silences about indigenous resistance, and sustain a sense of self and community. In her review, Jennifer Kelly looks at four new works that focus on the affective attachments that sustain US imperial projects, such as aerial representations of war, the care industries, exceptional US citizens, and drone warfare. Authored by scholars rooted in feminist cultural studies, the readings both diagnose and disrupt these attachments.

Teaching global history has gained importance in US public colleges and universities as they increasingly tout their mission of educating “global citizens” at the same time that they have eroded the fundamental role of public education—that of providing a means of upward mobility for marginalized publics—at the expense of serving corporations, including the defense industry. In his Teaching Radical History essay, Eric Covey reflects on his role as a contingent faculty member at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and his efforts to infuse critical lessons about Africa and the United States in a class that satisfies a core requirement on behalf of the university's globalizing mission. Covey illustrates the epistemological challenges of teaching about Africa and the United States, beginning with the premise that his students know very little about Africa. His goal is to illuminate Africa not solely as an object of knowledge but as a contested site of imperial militarism and capitalism over centuries animated by the Atlantic slave trade, colonial extraction during the so-called scramble for Africa, and the violent economies of the War on Terror. In the process, he elucidates “the United States” as part of the problem of knowledge that students should investigate.

We end with a closing section on Curated Spaces, featuring Joseph DeLappe's stunning visual essay, "Memory and Resistance." DeLappe's work serves as a powerful reminder about the insurgent possibilities of undoing the violence of militarism and capitalism through art making. His work is deeply interactive and engages the public in multiple ways, from the act of creation to its performance and circulation. In *The Drone Project*, for example, DeLappe worked with students, interns, and volunteers at Fresno State University to create a sculptural reproduction of an MQ1 Predator drone. The installation functioned as a "participatory memorial" in which visitors inscribed the names of civilian drone casualties from Pakistan onto the sculpture, and the names were read aloud. This spirit of collective engagement and critical remembering infuses his other projects as well. In Rubber Stamp Currency Interventions, a crowd-sourced project involving the rubber stamping of various politically charged images on US currency bills, the violence of the War on Terror and the violence of the police killings of African Americans are visually linked, underscoring the multispatial dimensions of US state violence produced through the deadly convergence of militarism and capitalism.

What new forms of resistance to the convergence of militarism and capitalism might emerge from its ruins?

In closing, we come back to the mural that invites visitors into the Daechuri Art and Peace Village. The mural depicts bombs dropping from a military jet, a sight not unfamiliar to the Korean Peninsula, decimated by bombs and troops a mere six decades ago. Yet, these bombs contain not explosive armaments designed to destroy everything in their path but seedlings that would generate new life forms. With the Art and Peace Village, Daechuri villagers displaced by Camp Humphreys still mark their presence and persistence, despite the theft and destruction of their lands and livelihoods. While it cannot recover all that Camp Humphreys has taken, the mural, photographs, and other artworks, as well as the insistence that this space, literally next door to the largest US military base in the world, is a "brutality-free zone," help us imagine other possible pathways that might grow from the destruction of militarism and capitalism's convergence. As we write in April 2018, what once seemed unimaginable possibilities are opening, as we witness the signing of the Panmunjom Declaration, a statement signed by the leaders of North and South Korea committing to the promise of a denuclearized peninsula and an end to the Korean War. And while we remain cautiously optimistic, we also recognize that Camp Humphreys itself marks a major impediment to this lasting peace agreement and commitment to a safer, less violent world. Yet again, the convergence of US security and capitalist interests is directly interfering with establishing peace in this relic of the Cold War.

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Notes

1. Kindig, "Someday This Army Is Going to Leave."
2. Ibid.
3. Letman, "USAG Humphreys."
4. Hansen, *Guantanamo*; Hirshberg, "Targeting Kwajalein."
5. Seigel, *Violence Work*.
6. Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*; Wood, *Empire of Capital*.
7. Satkowski, "New 'Footprint' Emerging."
8. Suokas, "Malaysia Shifts Focus"; Cohen, "Photos Reveal Growth."

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