

Lumpenbourgeoisie

An analysis delving into the emerging fusion of plutocratic elements in the underworld, and surface capitalism

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Karl Marx defined the lumpenproletariat as members of a class below that of the proletariat. This included vagabonds, homeless, criminals, disenfranchised military and similar portions of society. Generally deemed unfit to participate in the revolutionary efforts. A principle which was greatly adapted by the Soviet Union and even Maoist China.

Typically the largest portion of this group were the peasants. Who suffered a great deal of agitation and repression from the Soviet and Maoist Vanguard.

There were, however, countering ideologies within communism. Such as Makhnovism, lead by Nestor Makhno, a peasant himself. Who amassed the Black Army, who at first aligned themselves with the Bolsheviks in the fight against the Tsarist White Army forces. This alliance quickly broke apart after the October Revolution. As infighting and sectarian violence began. Both with the Ukrainian Makhnovists, but also with the libertarian communists who were membered by the Black Guard in Russian metropolitan regions.

There were several motivators for this attack on the Black communists. Especially the exercise of Russian sovereignty against Ukraine. But also the notion that the peasants and criminal classes of the Black Army were unfit revolutionaries.

Today, with the rise of the neoliberal establishment, however, classes have begun to develop internal hierarchies. The war on drugs, combined with housing segregation and ghettos after WW2 have partitioned classes into separate microsocieties. These societies in turn then develop their own regional bourgeoisie structures. The lumpenproletariat is no exception to this.

So who are the lumpenbourgeoisie? As we have already defined what lumpen signifies. We must then define what bourgeoisie means. Most people mistake it to refer to the middle class. But in Marxist contexts it refers to people with enough amassed capital to override the policies demanded by democratic powers. It refers to the plutocrats of the world.

As such, the lumpenbourgeoisie are the plutocrats of the underworld. They come in several shapes and forms, and have strong ties with the power structure purported by capitalist and sometimes even vanguardist states.

A good example would be the Front Nationalé in France. A mainstream far-right political party guarded by institutional policies of free expression by the state. Who would enlist gangs of Neo-Nazis to agitate and terrorise people on the streets of Paris in the 1980's in an effort to curb

immigration and opposing political ideas. Even high ranking police officers would sympathise and oft times overlook crimes committed by Neo-Nazi gang members according to interviews with members of opposing vigilante groups. Who intimately describe how the police would take Neo-Nazis into custody only to release them shortly after. Charges dropped, and they would not even confiscate their weapons.¹

These gangs ruled by violence, and would greatly influence the democratic process in the region. As such they may very well qualify as lumpenbourgeoisie.

Another example is chronicled by former US Army intelligence worker and activist Stephen Kangas. In the same year as the CIA “Office of Policy Coordination” is created, in which a secret charter specifies its purpose to be “Propaganda, Economic Warfare, Preventive Direct Action, including sabotage, antisabotage, demolition and evacuation procedures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance groups, and support of indigenous anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the free world.”

Kangas then goes on to describe how in this year, 1948, the CIA proceeds to use covert tactics to influence and rig the Italian election. Tactics include buying votes, broadcasting propaganda, violence and intimidation and also infiltration intended to disrupt rival political groups. Considering the tactics the charter specifies. It is not unlikely that they indeed delegated some of these tasks to lumpenbourgeoisie elements in Italy.²

However, there are also historical examples of the lumpenbourgeoisie operating as an independent authority. That rivals the power of the surface bourgeoisie. One such example are the South American cartels. The Medellin Cartel in Columbia had a cocaine industry with an annual GDP measuring to about 2 billion US dollars.³⁴

Keep in mind that this is an American billion. However, another article by the Wall Street Journal estimates this figure might have been doubled.⁵ There are also other articles that dispute this claim and say the organisation had a revenue of 420 million dollars every week at it’s height. Indicating the annual GDP might have been as high as almost 23 billion dollars.⁶⁷ Meaning they controlled over 60% of Columbia’s national GDP at the time.

Regardless of the sum, such a strong industry could have the capital to rival the influence of surface bourgeoisie institutes.

The political power of the Medellin Cartel is certainly a matter of public knowledge. Being able to at one point participate in open war against the state and even collaborate with the FARC paramilitary group. This shows how the prominence of a lumpenbourgeoisie institution can grow beyond the ghettos and it’s class framed micro-society. To the point where they have their own military resources.

This is not exclusive to the developing world either. An even greater establishment of lumpenbourgeoisie can be found in continental Europe. A network of smaller gangs operating as pha-

¹ ANTIFA: Chasseurs de Skins

² A Timeline of CIA Atrocities by Stephen Kangas

³ <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303960604575158203628601096>

⁴ World bank estimate of Columbian GDP in 1987.

⁵ <http://www.wsj.com/ad/cocainenomics>

⁶ <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/08/03/pablo-escobar-s-favorite-hitman-is-on-facebook-and-spilling-dirt.html>

⁷ <http://www.businessinsider.com/pablo-escobar-and-rubber-bands-2015-9?r=US&IR=T&IR=T>

langes for an inner circle of organised criminals. This "hand" of the underworld economy, and who it is that exactly controls it remains unknown to even the most powerful of its participants.

This began in Russia during the early 90's, as the Soviet Union dissolved and transitioned into a neoliberal economy. This transition was detrimental to the Russian people, particularly in small towns and rural areas. As a result, crime became its own industry. With drug distribution, firearms, human trafficking and bootlegging fuelling what would become a strong industry with its own independent financialist interests and institutions. As thousands of "Bratvas" began to work together.

The structure of the criminal underworld seems too chaotic and unorganised to be considered an economy. However, when you look at the core mechanics of capitalism. A similar pattern emerges, as thousands, possibly millions of companies, corporations, conglomerates, manufacturers, investment firms and other institutions work independently and still remain tied together by the market forces. It is an unorganised and arbitrary system orbiting around one guiding force. Much like entire galaxies, who in their chaotic formations, orbit around a black hole. A fitting metaphor to describe an economic model that will eventually swirl into a vortex of endless consumption demand.

When you look at capitalism in this way, it becomes far more credible to think that the underworld would manufacture their own parallel market and create similar institutes to orbit it. Using bruisers, thugs, hitmen and other enforcers to maintain the same hierarchy of violence as the state would otherwise do.

So who created the European market for the underworld? It was a man by the name of Semion Mogilevich. Semion was born in the U(krainian)SSR, and established a criminal empire. However, unlike men before him in similar situations. He was going to change the structure of organised crime. Unlike the traditional Al Capone approach to running a mob, he simply saw organised crime as step 1.

A way to get seeding money for legitimate investments.

Thus creating a bridge between the lumpenbourgeoisie and the surface bourgeoisie. Starting his career with the Lyuberts Mafia group in Russia. At this point he committed smaller crimes and counterfeiting. As well as running a side business for funeral arrangements. In the 1980's he moved on to work with the Solntsevskaya organisation and at this point he also ran a business of smuggling items for Jewish migrants. A few years later he moved to Hungary and bought a nightclub in Budapest.

Which would serve as his headquarters. After this he began to purchase other establishments in places such as Prague and Moscow to establish an international network. This was important as we now see the transition between new and old organised crime. He started his own company called YBM Magnex and falsified documents in order to raise the value of stock prices by 2000%.

This investment scheme was his first step into the financial world. After that he invested into and controlled a company known as Army Co-Op using one of his other firms. This company would then allow him to do a takeover of the Digep machine factory. Formerly owned by the Hungarian state. Digep was used to manufacture armaments, as we now see the lumpenbourgeoisie actually appropriate not only industry belonging to the surface bourgeoisie, but actually even appropriate vital state-run industries through privatisation. At this point, even members of the surface bourgeoisie work for Semion. Including Alexei Alexandrov. Who holds degrees in economics and engineering, and was once a director of BP Tradeproduction.

The industrial complex flourishes and a domino effect of investments and takeovers, combined with an underlying industry of drug trafficking and smuggling, eventually makes Semion one of the key figures in Russia's large natural gas industry. Owning several pipelines in Eastern Europe. Semion is a free man to this day, supposedly living in Moscow without ever facing prosecution for any criminal charges aside from one charge of tax fraud.

Making him only an alleged figure of the international organised crime industry. This may have to do with a confession made by a KGB agent named Alexander Litvinenko. Who recorded himself on tape speaking about Semion's close relationship with Vladimir Putin, and by extension, the Russian Federation. One year before his assassination.⁸⁹¹⁰¹¹

Which concludes the possibility and demonstrable presence of the lumpenbourgeoisie. Who stands at the top of the hierarchy of violence, within their own parallel capitalism. Much like the surface bourgeoisie stand at the top of the well known and established hierarchy of violence in legitimised capitalism.

I would even go further and suggest that one of the purposes of neoliberalism is to create a symbiotic relationship between these new and old bourgeoisie forces and to satiate a particular demand for manageable institutes of violence in a world that is becoming more and more democratic with each generation.

Long gone are the days of Pinkertons and corrupt police officers who would do the bidding of the rich. As influences such as direct action, journalism and activism demands more government transparency. While there are certainly still abusive law enforcement agencies that are often overlooked, fact still remains that large reformations have taken place in the past two decades. As the police have become a weaker asset to the bourgeoisie. Mainly maintaining class gaps and cultivating climates of private property without direct involvement in bourgeoisie agendas.

As such, to enforce the interests of financialist and capitalist forces in the developing world, and lower class societies, organised crime is a welcome substitute that remains directly obedient to the forces of capital. Without any hindrance of public scrutiny. This can even be demonstrated, as such an event took place not long ago in South America. As in July 24, 2001, the Coca Cola Company was involved in contracting far-right paramilitary hitmen from the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia to slay labour union activists in Columbia. The Autodefensas call themselves a militia, but have been involved with drug trafficking and are known to operate like a gang.¹²¹³¹⁴ Generally persecuting left wing groups in the Columbian region. Both peaceful and militant, and will sometimes even slay family members and children belonging to their proclaimed enemies.¹⁵¹⁶

Much like the Mexican cartels, they exploit a climate of terror to assert sovereignty in the underworld.¹⁷¹⁸ Having been known to use chainsaws and machetes to torture, dismember and

⁸ <http://www.businessinsider.com/semion-mogilevich-relationship-with-putin-2015-1?r=US&IR=T&IR=T>

⁹ https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/stories/2009/october/mogilevich_102109

¹⁰ <http://www.businessinsider.com/tape-reveals-poisoned-ex-kgb-spy-making-accusations-against-putin-2015-1?r=US&IR=T&IR=T>

¹¹ <http://www.larryjkolb.com/file/docs/fbimogilevich.pdf>

¹² <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/auc.htm>

¹³ <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/85>

¹⁴ <http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/auc>

¹⁵ <https://www.crin.org/en/library/legal-database/mapiripan-massacre-v-colombia>

¹⁶ http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_134_ing.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.crin.org/en/library/legal-database/mapiripan-massacre-v-colombia>

¹⁸ http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_134_ing.pdf

mutilate people in order to inflict large scale intimidation upon neighbouring communities.¹⁹ The Colombian government admitted in court that they had sanctioned these actions.²⁰ Further proving the fusion between the lumpenbourgeoisie and surface bourgeoisie elements.

Coca Cola have adamantly denied their association with this group. However, Javier Correa who is the president of the affected union, Sinaltrainal, have testified to similar murders occurring since 1989. The number of unionised labourers have also dropped by over 60% and he proceeds to say that 14 union organisers have been assassinated.²²

Many might wonder why Coca Cola is so involved in Colombian industry. It is because they are the only company in the United States who have legal sanction to use and process coca leaves as a flavouring for their signature beverage. The bottles or cans omit listing this ingredient in their contents, however.²³

As the power dynamics change on a global scale. The uniformed peacekeepers who would commit dark deeds behind closed doors when the security cameras are turned off, are being assisted by the same groups they claim to protect us from. As the new proletariat, and it's lumpen equivalents are faced with a new force of the ruling elite. If the lumpenbourgeoisie and surface bourgeoisie have allied themselves, we must ask ourselves if the lower and working classes will find the means to do the same.

¹⁹ http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_134_ing.pdf

²⁰ http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_134_ing.pdf

²¹ <http://www.globalresearch.ca/declassified-documents-1997-mapirip-n-massacre-coordinated-in-advance-with-colombian-army/31962>

²² <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/07/26/world/union-says-coca-cola-in-colombia-uses-thugs.html>

²³ <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/07/01/business/how-coca-cola-obtains-its-coca.html>

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