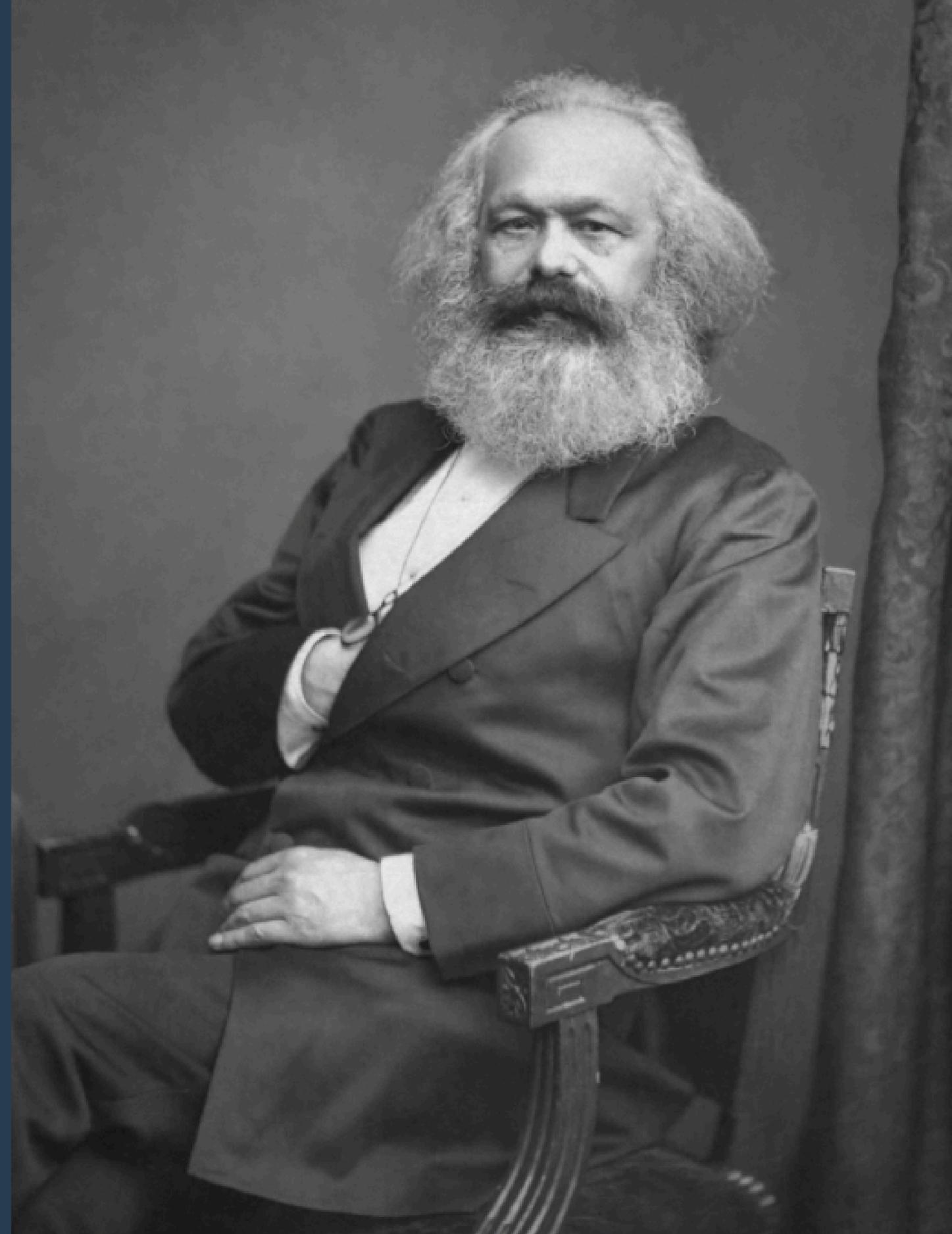

Karl Marx and Contemporary Global Crises

What would Marx say about
Ukraine and Venezuela?



Introduction

Contemporary Global Crises



Ukraine: war with major economic and social consequences



Venezuela: long-term economic collapse and social crisis

- These crises are often explained by political decisions or leadership failures
- A Marxist perspective allows us to focus on deeper economic dynamics

Table of contents

PART 1: A marxist perspective

1. Global crises as contradictions of capitalism
2. The role of the State and imperialism
3. Class consequences of crises

PART 2: Limits of the Marxist framework



Global crises as contradictions of capitalism

Marx's perspective on capitalist crises

- Crises are not accidental but inherent to capitalism
- Capitalism is based on competition, profit-seeking, and continuous accumulation
- These dynamics generate internal tensions the system cannot fully control
- Crises reveal the structural contradictions of global capitalism
- They are moments when economic instability becomes visible



Global crises as contradictions of capitalism

Application: Ukraine and Venezuela

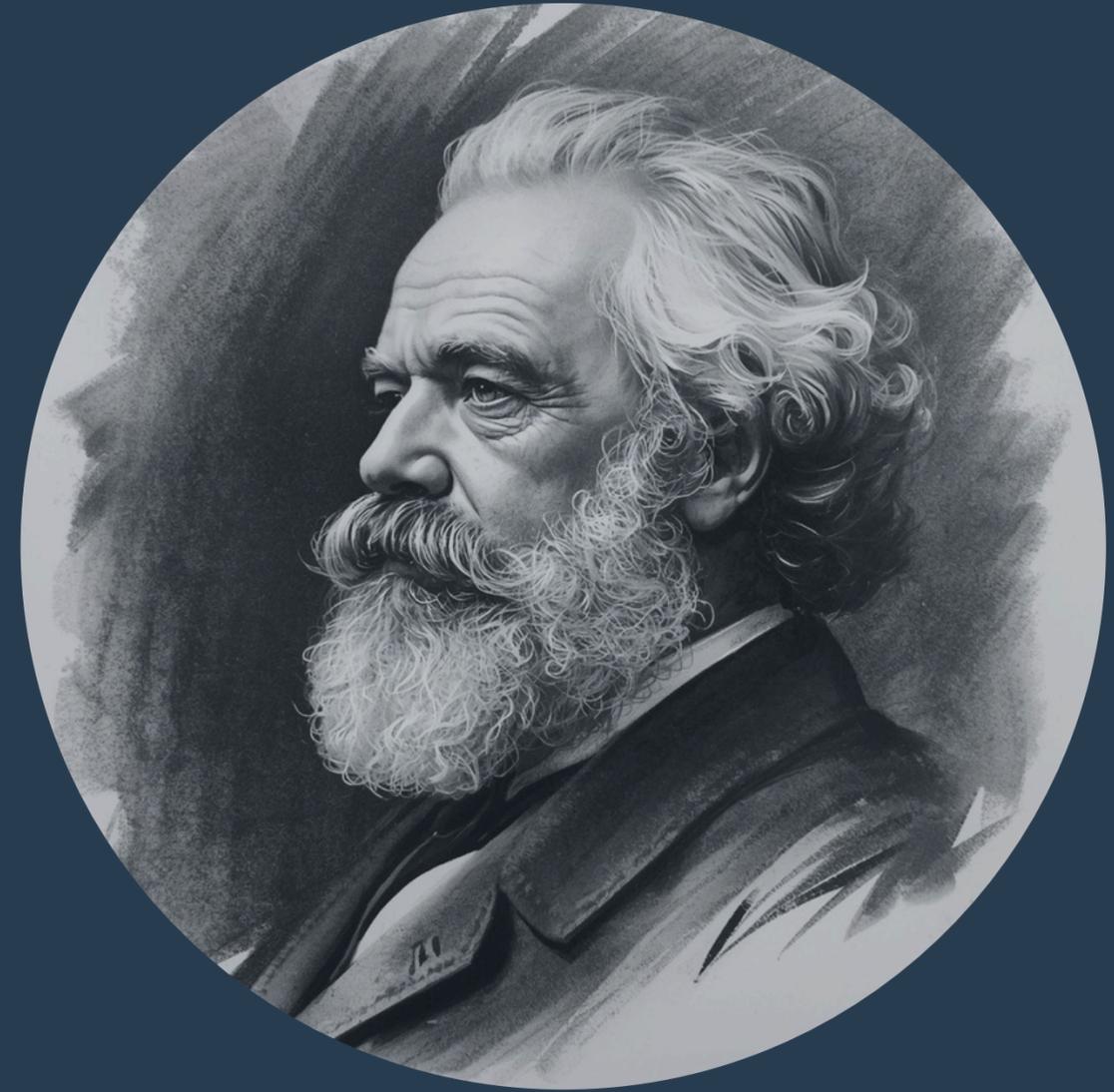
- Ukraine holds a strategic position in global capitalism
- Key role in energy transit and agricultural production
- Economic and geopolitical alignment between capitalist blocs
- The war reflects competition between capitalist powers for resources and influence

- Venezuela's economy has been highly dependent on oil exports
- Strong dependence on global markets increases vulnerability to global shocks
- Both cases illustrate uneven development within global capitalism

The role of the State and imperialism

Marx's view of the State and imperialism

- The State is not a neutral actor in society
- It is closely linked to economic structures and class interests
- In times of crisis, the State mainly acts to preserve system stability
- Imperialism is not only military but also economic and financial
- Dependence can be created through debt, aid, and market integration



The role of the State and imperialism

Application: Ukraine and Venezuela

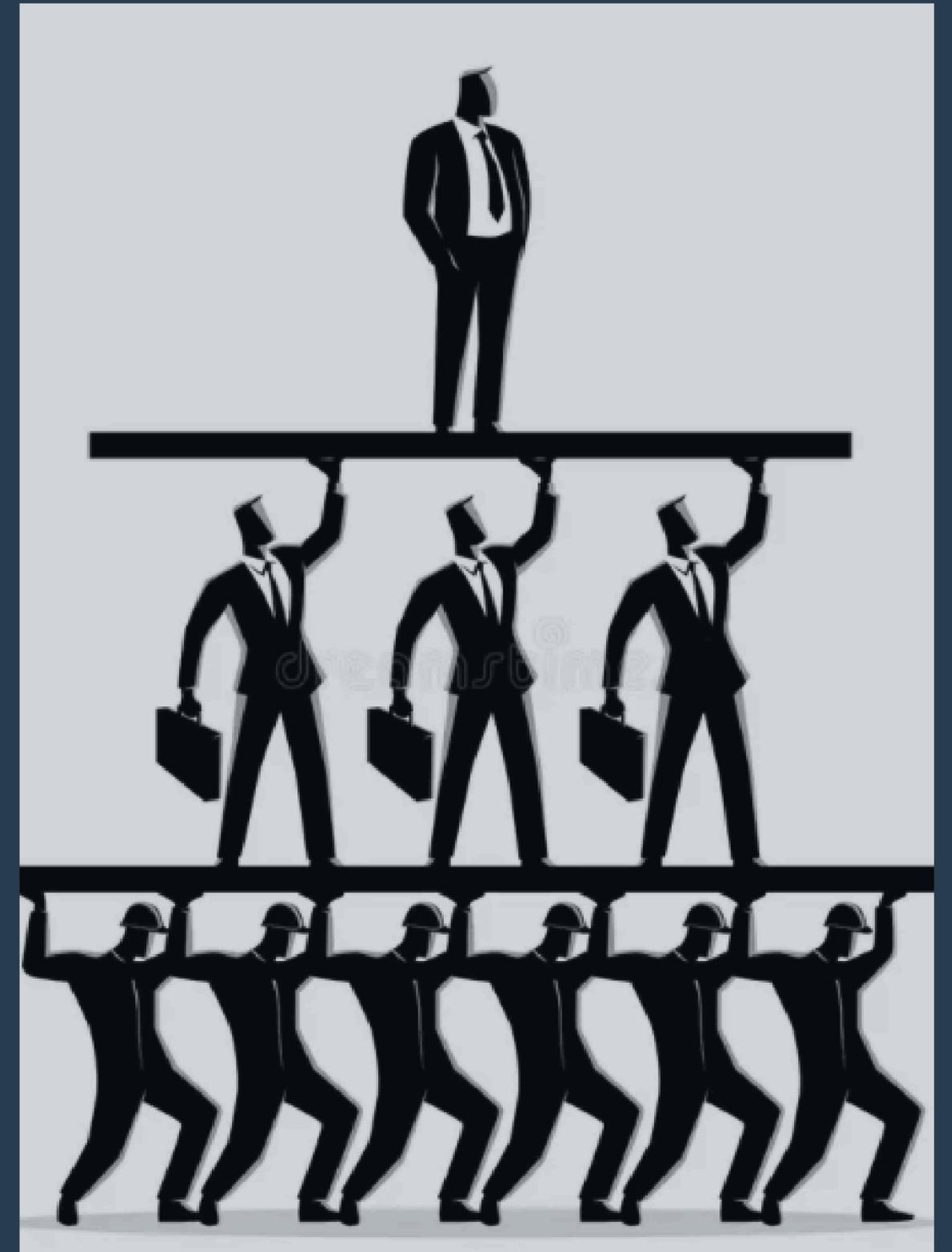
- In Ukraine, the State has become increasingly militarized
- Strong financial and military dependence on external actors
- Alignment with larger economic and political blocs

- In Venezuela, the State intervened heavily through nationalizations
- However, production structures remained unchanged
- Continued dependence on oil revenues and global markets

Class consequences of crises

Marx's view on class and crises

- Crises do not affect all social groups equally
- Workers and lower classes tend to bear the highest costs
- Capital can adapt, relocate, or restructure after crises
- Labor faces immediate losses in income, security, and living conditions
- Crises make class inequalities more visible



Class consequences of crises

Application: Ukraine and Venezuela

- In Ukraine, inflation and infrastructure destruction affect daily life
- Job insecurity and military mobilization weigh heavily on workers
- Living conditions deteriorate rapidly for the working population

- In Venezuela, real wages collapsed over time
- Growth of informal work and shortages of basic goods
- Mass emigration as an economic survival strategy

Limits of the Marxist framework

Nationalism and ideology

- Focus on economic and class factors
- National identity can override class interests
- Ukraine: acceptance of hardship driven by nationalism

Capitalism's capacity to adapt

- Crises do not necessarily weaken capitalism
- System often adapts and restructures
- New forms of accumulation after crises
- Ukraine: reconstruction may reinforce capitalism

Limits of State control

- State intervention \neq structural change
- Nationalizations alone are insufficient
- Venezuela remained oil-dependent
- Global market constraints persist

No automatic class consciousness

- Crisis does not guarantee class awareness
- Fragmentation or emigration as responses
- Venezuela: migration as survival strategy
- Social outcomes remain uncertain

Bibliography

- Marx, K. — Capital, Vol. I & III
- Harvey, D. — The New Imperialism
- Harvey, D. — Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism
- Brenner, R. — The Economics of Global Turbulence
- Gallup. (2026, January 8). Decade of distress clouds Venezuela's future. Gallup News:<https://news.gallup.com/poll/700568/decade-distress-clouds-venezuela-future.aspx>
- United Nations Development Programme. Socio-economic impacts of the war in Ukraine on host communities and emerging migration and displacement patterns. UNDP.<https://www.undp.org/eurasia/publications/socio-economic-impacts-war-ukraine-migration-displacement>

