

The capital critique of the drug trade and its warnings

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Abstract. Considering the possibility that the legalization of cannabis in some neighboring countries may transmit cross-border effects to China's border regions, this paper analyzes the issue through the principles of Marxist political economy, helping to reveal the deep exploitation mechanisms behind such policies. The study concludes that drug trafficking organizations undermine society's reproductive capacity through addictive substances to obtain surplus profits. Furthermore, some countries leverage the drug trade to generate external conflicts and divert domestic crises, thereby maintaining and consolidating rapid capital accumulation within their own borders.

Keywords: capital accumulation, surplus value, commodification of drugs, excess surplus profits

1. Introduction

Currently, scholarly discussions on the proliferation of foreign drugs mainly focus on law, public security, and medical fields, while studies from the perspective of political economy remain relatively scarce. The importance of such research lies in the vulnerability of China's border regions to the commodification of drugs in neighboring countries. Yunnan Province, located on China's southwestern frontier, maintains close ties with Southeast Asia. At present, some ASEAN countries have implemented cannabis legalization policies, which may affect the security and stability of China's border provinces. Against this backdrop, the conclusion is that the bourgeoisie, having previously abandoned the extraction of surplus value from industrial workers, has turned to embrace the enormous profits offered by the commodification of drugs. On the international stage, specific transnational actors interfere with the social reproductive capacity of target countries through addictive drug trade systems.

Therefore, it is necessary for China to strengthen theoretical research on foreign cannabis legalization and resolutely prevent the risks of drug proliferation from crossing its borders. Taking Thailand as an example: "Thailand is a member and founding country of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and is also a member of APEC, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Thailand has maintained close political, economic, and personnel exchanges with China. Adjustments to its legal and policy frameworks may, to some extent, impact China's anti-drug efforts" [1].

Domestic academic activity on this topic is relatively active, with a substantial increase in research output and the continuous expansion and updating of analytical perspectives. The causal chains are increasingly extended, making straightforward logical reasoning insufficient for addressing the core issues. Beyond the contributions of law, medicine, public security, and economics in revealing the harms of drug proliferation,

mere phenomenological research is inadequate for clarifying the fundamental problem. Early manifestations of these issues are relatively simple and limited in scope, and the connection between surface phenomena and underlying essence is relatively close. Therefore, initial theoretical exploration of the essence of the problem carries greater analytical depth, enduring relevance, and practical reference value. Analyzing the political-economic causes behind the drug trade is of significant theoretical and practical importance for broadening research perspectives and safeguarding the daily life security of people in China's border regions.

The capital logic of the drug trade can be analyzed along three interconnected dimensions: the self-expansion of capital, the deep exploitation of surplus value, and the material basis for intensified exploitation. Its operation is characterized as follows: capital controls labor through primitive accumulation to extract massive surplus value, which serves as a node for further exploiting rent and interest, thereby forming the traditional income of capitalists. On this basis, the organic composition of capital is elevated to achieve full industrial automation. In the context of highly automated industries, when the surplus value¹ that workers can provide is relatively limited, capital turns to expanding sources of excess surplus profits through the legalization and commodification of drugs.

From the perspective of production forces determining production relations, the rapid development of capitalist industry drives corresponding improvements in political and legal institutions at the level of production relations. These "improvements" ensure that the traditional income of industrial capitalists can serve as an important funding source for drug commodification.

2. The self-expansion of capital

Under conditions of private property, the commodification of drugs serves as an important institutional vehicle for capital to achieve a high organic composition and to extract excess surplus profits through deep exploitation. Prior to this, primitive accumulation and the old social division of labor had already transformed the living conditions of workers, internalizing commodity consumption as a structural need of the proletariat and thereby depriving industrial laborers of their rights to survival and development. The historical prerequisite for capital's self-expansion is the acquisition of a broad social foundation. As Marx noted, "After conquering a country, the conqueror next must take possession of the people" [2].

Under private property, the only way for people to maintain independence and vitality is through the fact that capitalists, by privately owning the means of production and appropriating labor products, deprive workers of the objective conditions of labor. This historical premise forces laborers, having lost material means of subsistence, to exchange their labor power with capitalists in return for necessary living materials. The establishment of labor-capital relations thus intensifies the civilian class's dependence on commodity consumption, making their production and livelihood entirely dependent on capitalists. Free workers outside capitalist factories and marginalized vagrants are also treated as capital elements in a dormant state.

Furthermore, within the scope of capitalist production, unemployed workers serve as an industrial reserve army, always ready to accept exploitation by capital in exchange for life necessities, enabling capital to achieve complete economic domination over people. Compared with industrial workers, free workers cannot directly generate the economic benefits required by capital, and the anarchic citizenry presents potential security risks for organized, large-scale capitalist factories. To "reasonably" ensure the continuous and stable extraction of surplus value, the most basic human rights of workers—the right to survival and development—are systematically deprived through a series of capitalist-imposed policies. With the rapid development of natural science and large-scale industry, drugs play an increasingly significant role in depriving workers of their fundamental rights.

2.1. Capitalist appropriation of land

Capitalists first appropriate land, thereby depriving laborers of the objective conditions for production. Capital accumulation relies on large-scale social relations centered on generalized commodity production and exchange—that is, a market system. The natural economic attributes of smallholder farming and the narrow, direct social relations it sustains fundamentally conflict with the generalized, objectified commodity production relations required for capital circulation, posing obstacles to both primitive and continuous capital accumulation.

The establishment and development of capitalist production thus necessarily involve the expropriation of peasants' means of production through enclosures, colonial expansion, and industrial disruption, dismantling smallholder economies and integrating them into the capitalist market system. This creates the necessary social relationships for capital circulation and accumulation. By seizing land, capitalists deprive laborers of production materials, and land privatization robs agricultural workers of their labor rights.

Historically, land has been essential to peasants' survival. Fundamentally, the core means of subsistence necessary for human life—particularly food and raw materials for clothing—depend on the cultivation of land. Once an individual loses access to land, they are not only cut off from direct access to essential survival resources but also systematically deprived of the basic productive capacity needed to sustain themselves, making survival dependent on the will of capitalists. Without land, there is no food or clothing, and the survival of the people is imperiled. Land privatization thus deprives peasants of their basic right to life, while capitalists exploit the principle that without land, humans cannot survive. On this foundation, the social division of labor further restricts and undermines laborers' fundamental right to development.

2.2. Fragmentation of the labor process

The social division of labor prevents workers from engaging with the entire production process of a commodity, making private labor difficult to directly transform into social labor. Detailed departmental division of labor and highly coordinated production stages are designed to meet the profit-driven expansion demands of capitalist enterprises, ultimately forming a vast, interlinked system of international division of labor. In conditions where production is highly internationalized and socialized, international division of labor amplifies the inherent tension of capitalism: the contradiction between globalized production and private ownership of the means of production. As the exploitation system extends across society and the globe, traditional factory-level exploitation becomes minimized and obscured. This more expansive exploitation mechanism systematizes and normalizes labor control, embedding it in everyday activities so that it becomes invisible.

During the handicraft era, artisans engaged with the entire production process of a commodity—for example, a shoemaker had to make the shoelaces, upper, sole, and insole and assemble them into a complete product. The drawback was slow production, but the advantage was that private labor could more directly transform into social labor, providing an alternative livelihood beyond agriculture. As Marx observed, workers "gradually lost the habit and ability to engage comprehensively in their original handicrafts" [3]. With the advent of the industrial era, production processes were segmented, activities isolated, and complete labor processes divided. A shoemaker became four specialized workers producing shoelaces, uppers, soles, and insoles, respectively. Only when the fragmented labor products are recombined into complete commodities can their labor value be recognized as social labor, a process achievable only within capitalist factories.

Workers' autonomy over their labor is entirely transferred to capitalists. The division of labor deprives workers of their right to development, and only through exchange can their labor produce monetary wages. The wage system, as a medium for converting labor value, embeds structural control over the reproduction of

labor power, enabling capitalists to extract surplus value and systematically "domesticate" wage laborers. However, with the development of the chemical industry and industrial automation, the marketization of addictive substances gradually replaces the wage system as a lower-cost, higher-yield tool for controlling labor.

The proliferation of addictive drugs abroad and the trend toward cannabis legalization are driven by capital's pursuit of excess surplus profits to satisfy the needs of expanded reproduction. This logic positions drug commodification as, to a significant degree, an inevitable outcome of post-industrial² capital seeking new avenues of profit.

3. The exploitation of surplus value

Primitive accumulation and the old social division of labor transformed workers' living conditions, progressively depriving them of their rights to survival and development. In the absence of sufficient ready-made necessities, laborers are forced to sell their labor power in exchange for wages to sustain their lives. However, wage labor often places workers in an inherently unequal position: capitalists appropriate the surplus value and excess profits generated by workers—that is, the value beyond traditional profits—directly deducting it from workers' wages. Through profits (surplus value), rent (excess profit), and interest (derivative of excess profit), capitalists not only exploit wages but also covertly capture the limited income remaining after workers' labor has been exploited. One of the means to achieve this is through addictive substances, with drug-based profits serving as a particularly prominent example. Within this context, capital demonstrates a significant structural dependence on addictive substances.

3.1. Expansion of the exploitation scope

Both internationally and domestically, the scarcity of resources is an objective precondition for conflict, but private property serves as the "spark" that allows these conflicts to spread. Private property not only intensifies structural scarcity in resource distribution but also transforms resource acquisition into a zero-sum game, generating further instability. In capitalist society, the value created by laborers is divided into wages and surplus value. When money-holders purchase labor power—a special commodity—the apparent equivalence in the transaction obscures the hidden exploitation arising from labor's ability to generate surplus value beyond its own cost. The total value created by workers always exceeds the wage corresponding to the value of their labor power, and the difference—surplus value—is appropriated by capitalists without compensation.

On this basis, capitalists may further exploit workers' wages. By extracting rent, capitalists appropriate a portion of workers' income as excess profit, which in practice is often reflected in workers paying rent. The portion of wages corresponding to the value of essential subsistence goods—a rigid expenditure necessary for survival—is forcibly occupied by rent. As Marx observed, "The cost of labor is precisely the quantity of necessities required to enable the worker to maintain their labor-power and prevent the working class from extinction" [4]. Workers who lack sufficient income to purchase basic necessities must borrow from capitalists to sustain themselves. In this context, the remaining wage after rent is converted into loan interest, accruing to the capitalist.

The inherent exploitative mechanism of private property drives comprehensive alienation of labor, and alienated labor becomes a crucial condition for capital to pursue value expansion. This drives capital's process of expanded reproduction beyond the limits of individual factories, extending to entire sectors and even society as a whole. When monopolistic organizations establish control across society, their profit flows create a false cycle of "taking from society, using within society." In practice, the few remaining funds available to

workers are often spent on alcohol or tobacco to relieve survival pressure and escape reality. A common scene in civil society is that of workers in slums, smoking and drinking, constantly facing the threat of unemployment: "And everything pushes the worker closer to it... he must have something to make him feel it is still worth working, to endure another day of suffering" [5].

Theoretically, Hegel constructed a narrative method to explain social contradictions: "Although wealth is in abundance, civil society is never sufficiently rich; that is, the property it possesses and which truly belongs to it is never enough to prevent the overproduction of poverty and the overproduction of the outcast" [6]. Limited material resources cannot absorb the social pressures caused by industrialized mass production and population surpluses, leading to internal social stratification and conflict. In response, economists often assume a fixed total quantity of material resources and a long-term stagnation of productive forces. Based on this assumption, as civil society continues to expand and the population grows, demand for limited resources inevitably exceeds supply, ultimately leading to resource depletion.

To ensure the continued operation of the social system and satisfy the inherent need for capital accumulation, measures to eliminate populations exceeding the carrying capacity of material resources are historically rationalized as a "necessary choice" in social evolution. Within this logic, drugs—as a socially functional control tool—become an effective means to achieve this end. In reality, Western developed countries, guided by such theoretical imperatives, follow a fixed script for drug commodification. When domestic goods invade foreign markets and face resistance that cannot be overcome quickly, drugs and military interventions are used to forcibly remove obstacles. The objective is to extract primary industrial products from the targeted countries and sell their own manufactured goods at a substantial price differential, greedily plundering foreign treasuries. Ultimately, driven by the impulse for unlimited capital expansion, multiple national treasuries are caught in the siphoning of profits, forming a global exploitation system in which wealth flows from the periphery to the center.

3.2. Deepening of exploitation

Although workers suffer severe exploitation, their revolutionary consciousness does not necessarily awaken. Constrained by institutional structures and the necessities of survival, their resistance often focuses on immediate economic demands, namely the acquisition of wages. Even when remuneration is minimal, workers tend to continue laboring to sustain their livelihood. When capitalists' appropriation of wages reaches an absolute extreme—leaving workers unable to secure any compensation for their labor—capital comes into fundamental conflict with the very survival needs of the working class. Such extreme economic deprivation constitutes a direct source of revolutionary sentiment among workers.

To maintain their dominance, the bourgeoisie may provide addictive substances as a means of social control, aiming to weaken the proletariat's consciousness of resistance or revolutionary inclination. Compared with drugs, tobacco and alcohol are relatively less addictive. When workers witness colleagues losing employment opportunities due to smoking or alcohol abuse, they consciously restrain such behaviors to preserve their livelihood. This moderation in consumption reduces the income sources available to capitalists. Consequently, capital requires a specific type of commodity exclusively sold to the subjugated class: a substance that, despite its known harms and the workers' efforts to abstain, proves nearly impossible to quit.

Capital's structural dependence on addictive substances rests on the inherent difficulty of overcoming drug addiction. This persistent characteristic allows capital to transform the addiction mechanism into an effective control tool, establishing deep physiological and psychological dependence and thereby indirectly ensuring the laborer's profound reliance on capital. Drugs are extremely cheap to produce but yield exceptionally high returns, enabling workers to "willingly" surrender their wages to capitalists. Meanwhile, workers are socially

constructed as morally corrupt, degraded "outcasts," masking the exploitative violence of capital. As observed historically, "English workers now favor patent medicines... the most harmful of these patent medicines are those prepared from opium, particularly tinctures of opium" [5]. After paying interest and rent, workers spend their remaining wages on drugs, enabling capital to achieve further expanded reproduction.

3.3. Exploitation using drugs as a tool

Within the capitalist system, drugs function as a social control instrument. By regulating their circulation and consumption, entrenched interest groups numb the working class's class consciousness. The proletariat, seduced by illusory satisfaction, becomes less capable of resistance, thereby consolidating capitalists' absolute dominion over the unpaid appropriation of surplus labor value.

At the individual level, economic issues constitute the fundamental problems that humanity must ultimately resolve to secure survival and development. Dialectically, economic issues occupy the position of the principal contradiction among human challenges, with production and subsistence representing the primary aspect of this contradiction. Fundamentally, it is through engagement in productive and subsistence activities that human life is sustained and perpetuated. Therefore, the essence of economic issues lies in providing basic subsistence guarantees and a material foundation for continued and improved development.

Two points are noteworthy in this process. First, humans can only sustain life through productive and subsistence activities—an objective law independent of individual will. Second, the deeply rooted instinct for survival acts as a powerful internal driver: in the face of existential threats, it compels individuals to engage in productive and subsistence activity. At the individual level, the objective law of survival and the subjective agency it activates share a structural origin: the former constitutes the material basis for the latter, while the latter provides the internal driving force for the former; the two are organically unified and mutually indispensable.

From this logical perspective, any force capable of effectively intervening in any element of this unified system can exercise control over the critical determinants of human life, thereby asserting control over an individual's survival and development. Within this framework, addictive substances—particularly drugs—become a powerful tool for such intervention and control.

4. The material basis for the deepening of exploitation

Drugs, as a pathological manifestation of industrial civilization, have been instrumentalized by capitalists as a metabolic catalyst for controlling labor power. When opium sap is alienated on the production line into the lubricant of capital's machinery, workers' veins become new conduits for generating enormous profits. The persistent intrusion of addiction precisely regulates the rate at which fatigued bodies on the assembly line deteriorate. Under private property, the drug problem reflects the deepening mutual dependence of capitalists and workers on drug capital: through addictive mechanisms, laborers are "tamed" to develop both physiological and psychological dependence on capital, enabling drug capital to achieve dual control over human beings.

Alienated labor is particularly evident in the context of addiction: it is as if the chemist's labor product—drugs—intervenes directly in the course of human life. For certain severely addicted individuals, forcibly interrupting drug intake can trigger fatal outcomes due to the inability to endure such intervention. As Marx observed, "The more a worker expends his strength in labor, the stronger becomes the power he has created opposed to himself and alien to him; the poorer he is in his own internal world, the less he possesses" [7]. Applied to the drug context, the more laborers produce drugs—their own labor product—the more severe the

addiction problem becomes, and the less opportunity they have for normal life. Even their very lives become imperiled, ultimately consumed by drugs, rendering them lifelong slaves to the machinery of industrial production.

4.1. Human homeostasis: from resistance to loss of control

Withdrawal symptoms compel users to continue consuming drugs to maintain bodily equilibrium, thus establishing addiction. The deskilling and mechanization of factory labor, coupled with low wages and poor living conditions, create an environment of extreme suppression in which workers require a specific form of relief to alleviate life stress. Natural pleasure requires external stimuli to trigger physiological responses through specific neural circuits—a process that typically takes several minutes. Active ingredients in drugs bypass these circuits, directly affecting the human body: drug intake produces a massive release of dopamine, while "the brain must restore system homeostasis, thus beginning to counteract the surge of dopamine" [8]. This counteractive process gradually diminishes the regulatory effect of dopamine.

Ordinary addictive behaviors, such as smoking, activate specific brain loci through bodily circulation, after which these loci become less sensitive upon subsequent exposure [8]. Accordingly, the body develops tolerance. Similarly, an addict seeking the same pleasure as the first experience must increase both the dosage and frequency of drug intake. With rising doses and repeated consumption, withdrawal symptoms emerge: without drugs, users experience relentless suffocating pain. Beyond irreversible physiological damage, the more terrifying aspect is that long-term users, in order to maintain normal functioning and avoid withdrawal, must continuously ingest substances to relieve suffering. Tragically, each subsequent withdrawal episode is more intense than the previous one; escalating suffocation compels users to consume even more drugs, creating an unending cycle that may ultimately lead to death.

This tightly coupled vicious cycle—comprising physiological dependence, increasing tolerance, high relapse rates, and pain-avoidance behaviors—generates a sustained, stable, and expanding endogenous demand for drugs. Users shift from "seeking pleasure" to "avoiding pain," compelling them to continuously pursue drugs. This physiological demand and behavioral compulsion underlie the persistent, widespread proliferation of the drug trade, despite repeated interdiction efforts.

4.2. Physiological dependence and pain-avoidance as drivers of addiction

The characteristics of drugs in combination with human physiology are central to the development of addiction. First, the brain's inherent "plasticity" provides the fundamental substrate for the operation of drug addiction mechanisms. The formation and cessation of addiction constitute processes of "shaping" and "reshaping" the brain in response to habitual drug use. The neural imprints formed by sustained drug use do not disappear simply through abstinence; they are transformed into a different mode of existence, and attempts at reshaping may, to some extent, further deepen the brain's addiction-related imprints. In practice, even individuals considered successfully detoxified are likely to relapse upon encountering drugs or related "cues" after leaving rehabilitation facilities. Such relapse is often accompanied by higher rates of re-addiction, increased consumption, and the emergence of more potent, novel drugs. Once an individual has used drugs, complete abstinence becomes practically impossible; survival then depends on sheer willpower and self-control, bringing both physiological suffering and moral torment. The cumulative and multiplicative effects of withdrawal responses can easily overwhelm the patient's resolve and psychological defenses, plunging them into the "abyss of addiction."

Second, the active components of drugs induce dependence through reverse neural circuits. Normally, the sensation of "pleasure" requires passage through specific neural pathways. Experimental studies have shown

that CB1 receptors are distributed throughout the human brain. When Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) enters the brain, it interacts globally with neural structures, producing strong subjective effects. With repeated binding, CB1 sensitivity declines significantly, which manifests as addicts being unable to achieve the same pleasurable experience from the second dose as from the first. The sense of loss following the cessation of pleasurable effects is also a critical mechanism driving addiction. Drug constituents reverse neural circuit function, while endogenous cannabinoids, such as 2-AG, appear to further propagate this reversal: "arachidonylethanolamide and 2-AG transmit signals in the opposite direction, 'retrogradely' diffusing across synapses to relay information from signal-receiving cells to signal-sending cells" [8]. These reverse circuits objectively disrupt bodily homeostasis, producing excessive pleasure followed by endless loss and anxiety. To avoid this emotional and physiological discomfort, users repeatedly consume drugs in cycles, attempting to recapture the initial experience.

Third, "the endocannabinoid system helps organize our experiences, highlighting those that are most meaningful and important" [8]. Under drug influence, emotional experiences are categorized, and the loss experienced after drug use scales proportionally with the prior pleasure. The stronger the initial high, the deeper the subsequent sense of loss. This stark contrast between pleasure and post-use loss drives the persistent cycle of relapse. Coupled with the progressive desensitization of CB1 receptors, addicts are compelled to increase dosage, generating extreme cravings and severe dependence.

Drugs directly stimulate dopamine release, rapidly establishing physiological dependence and disrupting neural homeostasis. To counteract the drug's effects, the body develops tolerance and escalating withdrawal responses, forcing users into a painful, dose-escalating cycle to avoid withdrawal. This essentially irreversible physiological addiction mechanism creates a persistent, expanding, and inelastic demand for drugs, ensuring the ongoing existence of the market. Consequently, the enormous profitability of the drug trade far exceeds the combined traditional returns from rent, interest, and profit (surplus value). Even if capitalists formally forgo these "legitimate" sources of income, drugs themselves continue to generate immense wealth. Traditional capital returns often serve as the initial accumulation base for the development of the drug industry. The rise of drugs effectively absorbs and replaces conventional "legitimate" capital income (profits, rent, interest) with the vastly larger and illicit profits from drugs.

However, the sheer scale and illegal nature of these profits create a persistent tension, necessitating a legal façade for sustainability. Legalizing specific drugs (such as cannabis) provides capitalists with an effective mechanism to transform illicit profits into legitimate revenue. Drugs hijack the brain's reward system through their effects on the central nervous system, which is a primary factor in the intense physiological addiction observed in users.

5. Impacts and warnings for China

With the deepening of China's international exchanges and the globalization of the world economy, certain harmful ideologies and negative influences originating from Western capitalism have continued to infiltrate Chinese society. Among these, the harm caused by new psychoactive substances to youth is particularly pronounced, with current trends showing an increasingly younger population of users. "Against the backdrop of cannabis legalization policies implemented in multiple countries and regions, the industry of legally cultivating and processing cannabis has developed rapidly. Access to various cannabis products and seeds has become more convenient, and prices have been suppressed to relatively low levels, reducing the operational costs for domestic criminals involved in smuggling or illegally cultivating raw cannabis plants, while profits increase correspondingly" [9].

Faced with attempts by some Western forces to undermine China's social stability and national security through drugs, it is imperative to fully leverage the power of the proletarian dictatorship, employing concrete material measures to curb the profit-driven greed of capital. This involves safeguarding public security, fully utilizing government macro-control mechanisms, and effectively preventing the disorderly expansion of capital. It is essential to resolutely eliminate any environment in which cannabis legalization could take root and spread in China. "If the path of cannabis legalization continues, the actual effectiveness of post-legalization monitoring is worrying, and the potential social consequences are not optimistic. If the prohibitionist approach is maintained, strict anti-drug policies may encounter bottlenecks, and thorny issues arising under current cannabis control remain unresolved" [10]. These measures are necessary to provide a stable and harmonious environment for the sustainable development of socialist productive forces and ensure practical protections for society.

The existence and development of capital are rooted in specific material foundations, and the realization of its value depends on the process of commodity exchange. In this process, the bourgeoisie reinforces workers' dependence on consumption, compelling civil society to continuously generate value, thereby sustaining capital itself. The fundamental purpose of all human social activity is the acquisition of basic rights to survival and development. Once capital can manipulate these fundamental human rights, it achieves control over individuals. In the early stages, the bourgeoisie used violent means to expropriate land, forcing laborers into wage dependence, depriving them of their right to development, and extracting surplus value. With the advancement of modern chemical industries, capitalists have further weaponized drugs as a novel tool to control labor, intensifying the proliferation of substance abuse in capitalist societies. The root cause of these problems lies in the capitalist system of private ownership. As long as the capitalist system continues to accommodate limited productive development, the drug proliferation inherent to its private-property nature cannot be eradicated, and the basic survival rights of workers will remain under threat.

"China's people suffered profoundly during the Opium Wars, and the lessons of history must not be forgotten. Regardless of changes in foreign cannabis policies, our country will resolutely uphold an unwavering anti-drug stance" [1]. We must persistently intensify anti-drug efforts both online and offline, in theory and in practice, to effectively safeguard the productive and social order of a socialist society and fully protect the lives and property of the people. Upholding the leadership of the Communist Party of China is the fundamental political guarantee for ultimately winning this people's war against drugs. Building and training an absolutely loyal, disciplined, and people-serving public security and research workforce is a critical safeguard for constructing a modern socialist power and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

6. Conclusion

Deepen theoretical research and establish a strategic cognitive framework. In the face of foreign drug proliferation and legalization trends affecting China's border security, it is essential—based on Marxist political economy—to develop a comprehensive research approach that transcends single-discipline perspectives and enables objective problem analysis. Research should systematically examine the capital logic behind the commodification of foreign drugs from a political-economic perspective, clarifying its objectives in the post-industrial era: transferring surplus capital, pursuing excess profits, and exercising social control. This requires situating adjustments in neighboring countries' drug policies within the broader framework of global capital flows and national security, thereby providing solid theoretical support for China's law enforcement and diplomatic countermeasures.

Implement precise interventions to sever the drug trade cycle. Capital, in pursuit of excess surplus profits, invests in and generates expansive criminal networks that spread drugs through violence and illegality while deliberately creating and controlling large numbers of addicts. These networks form complex criminal systems that cannot be dismantled through isolated interventions. Multi-dimensional containment strategies are necessary: enforce and strengthen economic sanctions against drug-related criminal organizations; leverage cross-departmental and international cooperation, utilizing mechanisms such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, to thoroughly investigate and freeze illicit funds and sever financial sources; upgrade enforcement methods to target "contactless" drug trafficking via dark web platforms and cryptocurrencies; deepen international law enforcement collaboration to dismantle the technical infrastructure and operational models of transnational criminal organizations; and, in public outreach, enhance scientific literacy by explaining the neurological formation and reinforcement of addiction, thereby reducing drug proliferation caused by misunderstanding or blind imitation.

Strengthen border governance to reinforce national security. Drug infiltration should be treated as a core non-traditional security threat. In frontier provinces such as Yunnan, integrate border management, community prevention, public education, and international cooperation resources to establish cross-departmental drug risk monitoring and emergency response systems. By promoting balanced socio-economic development in border regions, the resilience of communities against drug encroachment can be fundamentally enhanced.

In summary, effectively addressing this challenge depends on shifting from passive containment to proactive strategic shaping. Through the organic integration of theoretical innovation, precise enforcement, and systematic governance, a strategic barrier can be fundamentally constructed to keep drugs from entering the nation.

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Note

1. Excess surplus profit refers to the combined outcome of (rent) surplus profit and (interest) surplus profit as a derivative of interest-bearing capital. Essentially, it represents the continuous and covert appropriation of workers' wages on the basis of rent exploitation. In practice, it primarily denotes the enormous profits generated from the commodification of drugs based on workers' wages. This forms both the material and practical foundation for the legalization of cannabis in foreign countries.

2. The post-industrial era is a hallmark concept describing the revolutionary transformation of social and economic structures, first proposed by the American sociologist Daniel Bell in his 1973 work *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*. It specifically refers to a new stage following the peak of industrialization, during which large-scale industrial automation is completed, and the socio-economic focus shifts from traditional manufacturing to the service sector, knowledge industries, and the information economy—essentially, a new epoch in which “brainpower replaces manual labor, code replaces assembly lines, and data replaces oil.” During this period, practical activities reshape modes of wealth creation, career pathways, and social power structures. Overall social creativity and innovation capacity are enhanced, while labor-capital relations are considerably weakened. Concurrently, individual subjectivity awareness grows significantly, and the diversity and complexity of everyday social demands increase, creating a noticeable gap between the supply of spiritual or cultural goods and public demand. This leads to a widespread phenomenon of value disorientation and general “decline” in the spiritual domain.

International capitalism exploits this context to enforce intervention in other countries' domestic affairs through military invasions and ideological infiltration, constructing global markets for capitalist profit extraction. Ideological penetration is

particularly crucial: it systematically deconstructs notions of fair value and leverages the entertainment industry to normalize an unequal order based on competition and class stratification, transforming it into tacit, everyday knowledge for the target population, thereby undermining potential critique and resistance. Under the inducement of Western liberal ideology and amplification by mass media, the Western entertainment industry reshapes the pursuit of novelty and stimulation, subtly reconciling hegemonic culture with local traditions and using a sense of “cultural superiority” to achieve a soft yet far-reaching ideological conquest. Consumerism and hedonism flourish, emphasizing instant gratification and intense pleasure as core psychological drivers—providing an important ideological foundation and broad social basis for some countries’ policy initiatives, including the legalization of cannabis.

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