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NEWS

US Expands War for Africa 2

Cultural Imperialism Triggers Global Protests Against US 3

Russia Accuses West of Blackmail on Syria 4

Brazil Represses the People in Preparation of World Cup and Olympics 4

U.S. Seeks New Energy Monopoly 5

THEORY

Problems with First Wordism 6

\$6 Bill. Spent on Sham Elections 7

Slavoj Zizek: A "Radical" Apologist for Imperialism 7

REVIEWS

In Memory of 9-11-73 10

Book Review "Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry" 11

What is The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement?

The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement (RAIM) is an informal collection of autonomous individuals and groups working in support of organized revolutionary struggle against capitalist-imperialist and for the creation of a society based on justice, egalitarianism, and ecological congruence.

Today, a small section of the world, encompassing a majority population of core-zone First World countries and led by the imperialist bourgeoisie, lives off of the exploitation of the proletarian masses of the peripheral Third World. This system, Known as capitalist-imperialism, along with its social effects (increasing disparities, structural poverty, militarism, and ecological crises on one hand; and glaring affluence and parasitic decadence on the other) is the primary feature of the world today.

These problems and conflicts caused by imperialism can only be resolved through organized class struggle culminating in revolution. This revolution must be carried out by the masses of the Third World and their allies and must be principally directed against imperialism, the comprador bourgeoisie, and the First World petty-bourgeois masses. Revolution is an act of organized violence by which one class overthrows another, establishes its rule, and alters the social relations which condition day to day life and define the system as a whole. We work for global New Democracy, the revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist First World by the exploited Third World, as the principal means of struggling for achieving a world without exploitation and oppression. Anyone can be a member of

RAIM. All it takes is genuine interest, solid and creative effort, and real dedication. Ultimately, the fate of humanity lies not just in the conscious activity of the masses, but with the activity and dedication of astute individuals representing proletarian class consciousness. To find out about some of the range of activity and thought within RAIM, visit our website at anti-imperialism.com. Live up to the necessity of anti-imperialist revolution and build the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement.

Long Live Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Struggle!
Long Live the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement!



U.S. Expands War for Africa

Recent article in the Washington Post by Craig Whitlock titled "U.S. Expands Secret Intelligence Operations in Africa," has generated interest among many different circles. It talks about the expansion of a spy and surveillance program that utilizes small aircraft for reconnaissance missions in different African countries. These are often operated by private mercenary companies. The article also gives light to the plans of U.S. imperialism to expand its military presence in Africa.

The Global War on Terror of the past decade has seen U.S. imperial forces expand in many regions of the globe, and Africa is a key site in its expansion. AFRICOM was created in 2007, and has constantly expanded since. The CIA is also expanding its programs in Africa. This spy program reported on shows an increasing long-term presence for U.S. forces on the continent.

As the Post reports, "At the heart of the surveillance operations are small, unarmed turboprop aircraft disguised as private planes. Equipped with hidden sensors that can record full-motion video, track infrared heat patterns, and vacuum up radio and cellphone signals, the planes refuel on isolated airstrips favored by African bush pilots, extending their effective flight range by thousands of miles."

This network operates through about a dozen air bases that have been constructed since 2007, along with smaller airfields used by bush pilots to be used for refueling. With this expanded program the countries the U.S. has a military presence in include Mauritania, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, Seychelles, and plans for a base in the newly-independent South Sudan. These surveillance programs, going by names like Creek Sand, Tusker Wing, and Aztec Archer, are operated by U.S. Special Operations forces. Its basis involve collaboration with national milit-

ary forces, and reliance on private mercenary contractors. This latter also gives them a range of deniability.

The hub of this network is based in Burkina Faso, based in that country due to its purported stability. There a base flies surveillance missions around Mali, site of a recent coup and an independence struggle of the Tuaregs. Other countries pinpointed include Nigeria and Somalia, targeting Al Qaeda affiliates there. Uganda is a main target also, along with its neighbors in Central Africa, against the Lords Resistance Army and Joseph Kony. Uganda also has U.S. military advisors and has been a target by imperialist-leaning NGO's to gain support for more intervention.



Despite the number of conflicts in these places, even the Washington Post sees them as local internal affairs that do not threaten the U.S. directly.

"The creeping U.S. military involvement in long-simmering African conflicts, however, carries risks. Some State Department officials have expressed reservations about the militarization of U.S. foreign policy on the continent. They have argued that most terrorist cells in Africa are pursuing local aims, not global ones, and do not present a direct threat to the United States."

The potential for creating a popular backlash can be seen across the Red Sea, where an escalating campaign of U.S. drone strikes in Yemen is angering tribesmen and generating sympathy for an al-Qaeda franchise there."

In further reports of escalating intervention in Africa, the Army is planning to send 3,000 troops to Africa in different missions training militaries and assisting locals to further U.S. interests. The article reporting this states: "Though U.S. soldiers have operated in Africa for decades, including more than 1,200 soldiers currently stationed at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, the region in many ways remains the Army's last frontier." This colonialist mindset guides the militaristic actions of the U.S. More collaboration with the militaries of comprador governments in Africa under humanitarian guises will continue. But as history shows, militaries that have collaborated with the U.S. use their training to repress their own people in the end.

This new spy program is consistent with Obama's national security strategy, who continues imperialist policies in a smoother direction. Relying on drone warfare and use of unconventional forces, it lessens the Amerikan casualties that would drive domestic opposition to war, even as Obama has expanded military intervention in several more countries than has Bush before him. In fact polls earlier this year showed that Obama's national security policies were overwhelmingly supported by Americans, including a majority of liberal Democrats even as these policies prove vastly unpopular to the rest of the world. As U.S. imperialism continues to plunder the continent more people will unite against their common enemy. Throughout the world the people see Amerika as a thief and terrorist. The real motives of the U.S. in Africa has always been the motives of imperialism, that of exploitation. It is to secure access to the continents vast resources, which include oil, rare earth minerals, and water, among others. What this will bring is even more lives ended needlessly by imperial capitalism. The increasing U.S. military presence throughout Africa is an ongoing shadow war against the people and nations of the continent. It is not just the "elites"

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(US WAR FOR AFRICA)

who gain from this plunder. First World luxury, the American way of life, First World standards of living, would not be possible without this superexploitation, involving the death of millions of human lives. That is why this "way of life" must come to an end so that the rest of humanity can live.

With repression breeds resistance, and it will come to an end by the actions of the masses of the world. Many wars go on in Africa right now, and U.S. actions will bring about more. As Mao Zedong once stated, "We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun." Peoples wars are wars to bring about peace. We support the peoples in Africa in their united struggle against Amerikan aggressors.★



US Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens gives thumbs up over the body of Qaddafi (left); corrected by Libyan crowd (right).

Cultural Imperialism Triggers Global Protests Against U.S.

by Wiawimawo for MIM-Prisons

Tens of thousands of people in dozens of cities and slums across Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and parts of Europe and Australia have demonstrated in recent days in response to a film made in the United States attacking the Prophet Muhammad. Protests primarily targeted U.S. embassies and other symbols of imperialism including an Amerikan school, a KFC restaurant, and a UN camp. The latter was one of many locations where authorities shot at protesters with live ammunition. Many have died so far. Some common unifying symbolism of these actions has been burning of Amerikan flags and chants of "Death to Amerika!"

The first protest that got the world's attention was in Libya, where U.S.-backed forces recently overthrew the decades-old government there. Timed to occur on the anniversary of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States by Al Qaeda, rebels grabbed headlines by laying siege to the embassy, killing as many as a dozen people, including the new U.S. ambassador. Since then protesters have attacked imperialist embassies in Tunisia, Yemen and Sudan without firearms.

While incumbent U.S. President Barack Obama has been making plenty of mention of his role in the assassination of Al-Qaeda's former leader Osama bin Laden in campaign speeches, hundreds of protestors in Kuwait chanted outside the U.S. embassy, "Obama, we are all Osama." Osama's vision of a Pan-Islamic resistance to U.S. occupations and economic interference in the Muslim world has reached new heights this week.

The Amerikan media has tried to play it off as a small group of trouble makers protesting, while Amerikans are shocked that they can be blamed for a fringe movie they have never seen and think is a piece of crap. At the same time, Amerikans seem very willing to condemn the protestors as ignorant, violent, low-lifes! just as the movie in question portrayed Muslims. But the trigger of these protests is far less important than the history of U.S. relations to the people involved. The most violent reactions occurred in countries that have all been under recent bombing attacks by the U.S. military, two of them for many years now, and the other had their whole government overthrown. Cocky Amerikans won't recognize that the ambassador was tar-

geted as the highest level representative of the U.S. puppet master in Libya.

MIM has held for some time that Muslim organizations have done more to fight imperialism in recent years in most of the world than communists have. And while there are plenty of ways communists could theoretically be doing a better job, they are not. As materialists we must accept and work with the people and conditions we are given. And we do not hesitate to recognize that Islam has brought us the biggest internationalist demonstration of anti-imperialism we've seen in some time.★

About MIM-Prisons

The Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons, or MIM-Prisons, is an independent Maoist cell founded in 2007 and dedicated to fighting imperialism and the criminal injustice system.

visit them at
prisoncensorship.info

Russia Accuses West of Blackmail on Syria, U.S. Pressures African Proxies on Iran

On Monday, July 16th, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused the US and its western allies of using blackmail to secure a UN Security Council resolution on Syria. The draft resolution, circulated by members of the British delegation, included economic sanctions on the Syrian government and could pave the way for a future UN-backed intervention.



Last year, in the immediate wake of the Arab Spring, covert operations and media campaigns were launched to secure even greater western economic control in several north African and the Middle Eastern countries. As part of a drive by western capital to secure its hold over the world, the US is as determined as ever to secure political dominance over the region. Much of this is done by using (and in some cases creating) proxies to isolate and overthrow one obstacle after another. Part of the goal of overthrowing the Syrian government led by Bashir al-Assad is to weaken and isolate Iran, for example. The ultimate goal of US imperialism in all of this is to maintain its superior position over not just the people of the world but vis-à-vis Russia and Chinese capital as well.

Along with attempting to blackmail UN SC member countries, the US has also been busy blackmailing African countries to drop economic ties to Iran. Kenya recently yielded the threats emanating from Washington and canceled planned oil imports from Tehran. Around 100-200 US troops work closely with the Kenyan military as part of a US shadow war in Africa. Kenyan officials were likely served the message that if they didn't go along with the west on Iran they could face the "consequences" of being violently destabilized like Syria.

All nations and peoples which desire political self-determination and economic justice must stand in opposition to offenses by US imperialism wherever they occur. United in solidarity, the peoples of the Third World and their allies in the First World can defeat US imperialism and throw off the shackles of capitalism. ☆

Brazil Represses the People in Preparation of World Cup and Olympics

The country of Brazil is hosting two events in the next few years that will bring it attention on the world stage. Brazil is scheduled to host both the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. Like other countries who have hosted the Olympics and other international sporting events previously, Brazil is using a mixture of carrots and sticks in its preparations. The carrots are in the form of nearly half a billion dollar investments in infrastructure preceding the games. The sticks are in the forms of repression of the poor. Brazil has launched many paramilitary operations in its well-known favelas in the past few years, with a large one conducted just recently.

Here is a recent report from BBC news:

Hundreds of Brazilian police officers backed by armoured cars and helicopters have moved to take control of two Rio de Janeiro slums notorious for drugs. Some 1,500 police and commandos took part in the operation in the

northern favelas of Jacarezinho and Manguinhos, which began at 05:00 (08:00 GMT).

The no-go areas are known as centres for the trafficking of crack cocaine.

Brazil has been trying to clean up its most dangerous regions ahead of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics. The raids are part of a policy known as "pacification" which was adopted in recent years to help the state establish a more permanent presence in shanty towns. The drug gangs' gunmen apparently retreated ahead of the operation and there appeared to be little resistance.

Brazil is the world's largest consumer of crack cocaine, and the second largest consumer of cocaine and derivative



Income Inequality in Brazil.

drugs after the US, according to a study released last month by the Sao Paulo Federal University. The report further states that operations have involved up to 2,000 police and military personnel that have included soldiers from the Brazilian navy, and included use of armored vehicles and helicopters. Many residents have been in a state of fear as many of their houses have been entered and searched by these armed men. Over 20 of Rio's nearly 1,000 favelas have (CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

U.S. Seeks New Energy and Military Monopoly : Fusion

While the United States is busy plotting the downfall of various anti-hegemonic regimes in the global south, it has also been pursuing another strategy to stave off crisis and possible loss of global supremacy: fusion technology, the ‘holy grail’ of energy.

Unlike fission, in which heavy atoms are split into lighter ones, fusion combines light-weight atoms. Fusion reactions, which cause our sun to give off light and energy, could use hydrogen, one of the most common elements on Earth, for fuel. Additionally, fusion energy would not produce the radioactive waste associated with current nuclear energy technology.

The National Ignition Facility (NIF) in Livermore, California, one of many such ongoing projects, is a military research lab aiming to produce a controlled fusion reaction using a series of high-power laser beams. If successful, the multi-billion dollar ‘ignition’ project may create a completely new source of boundless clean energy. The prospect of unlimited clean energy via fusion technology highlights the main contradictions of the capitalist-imperialist system.

While the development of fusion technology could provide clean abundant energy to all, instead US-led imperialism will likely use it to its own advantage: gaining new monopolistic power vis a vis emergent capitalist blocs (i.e., Russia, China, Brazil, etc) and other actors in the world-economy while reducing the relative strength of economies reliant on oil exports.

Along with working on fusion technology, the National Ignition Facility is part of the Stockpile Stewardship Program, which devises ways to create reliable next-generation nuclear weapons without the need to test-fire them. Through the Stockpile Stewardship Program, the NIF is already directly engaged in boosting US-led imperialism’s monopoly on weapons of mass destruction, an

essential component for the maintenance of its hegemonic rule.

The prospect of fusion energy also raises another contradiction. While US-led imperialism is pursuing fusion technology for reactionary ends, such an accomplishment would be another noose around its neck.

On one hand, the tools and technologies capitalism unleashes into the world are meant to delay crises and smooth over contradictions, though they actually heighten their underlying causes over the long run. On the other hand, these are the very tools and technologies which can be seized and used for radically different ends.

The same technologies in the hands of the revolutionary people can be used in ways which dramatically improve the lives of the world’s masses while establishing the conditions for a new mode of production based on just and sustainable distribution of resources. Thus by ushering into the world such advanced technologies, capitalism and US-led imperialism also helps open the door for its own demise.

The future is unwritten, but various alternatives are set before us. Technology will continue to be developed, but the question remains how it will be used.

Rosa Luxemburg described our ongoing choice under capitalist-imperialism as between socialism or barbarianism.

Various contemporary writers and revolutionaries posit it as one between global socialism or global apartheid; more liberty and equality or more hierarchy and oppression. The question humanity must struggle around and resolve is which of these two polar trends emergent technologies such as fusion energy will ultimately serve.★

(BRAZIL REPRESSES...)

reportedly been “pacified” so far. Pacification is an attempt to gain more state control over these areas where before the only governance was done by armed criminal organizations. But the police, corrupt and brutal, are often no better than the drug traffickers. And the Brazilian state has only recently shown an interest in these areas to clean up for these upcoming games for the benefit of tourists who will be arriving for these events. Informed observers have long pointed out the repression by cities and nations that precedes their hosting of the Olympics. The cities that host them become virtual police states during the hosting time. Movement is monitored and poor peoples are relocated and restricted. Brazil will be no different.

Also Brazil is wrought with many contradictions. Brazil, although considered a Third World country is one that is wealthy on a comparative scale. It is becoming a major force in the global economy. While it increases its presence in the global economy and a few become wealthy, the majority of the people will remain in poverty, popular movements will be repressed, and inequality will continue. Brazil has elected progressive parties in the past, but none of them have broken from the reins of capitalist-imperialism. Only the people of Brazil will do this in the end.

The favelas of Brazil are a glowing example of the situations the masses of the world find themselves in. Today 1 out of every 5 persons in Rio de Janeiro lives in a favela. Increasingly around the world the global poor is concentrated in cities. Mike Davis wrote about this phenomenon in his book “Planet of Slums.” Now over half the population of the world lives in cities, in contrast to the countryside.

As the World Cup and Olympics approach, more repression such as this will continue. This along with several different struggles that popular movements inside Brazil continually wage every day to achieve justice. In the end the people of Brazil, as will the masses of the rest of the world, will win and bring about a new world that is one of justice and equality.★

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Problems with First-Worldism

First Worldism is a long-standing trend within ‘left-wing’ politics which preferences or exaggerates the role of First World workers to the effect of considering them friends or allies of revolution. First Worldism is a problem of class analysis. It sees the First World lifestyle not as a parasitic one involving the circulation of superprofits extracted from the Third World but simply as another form of the condition of economic exploitation. It is the failure on the part of nominal radicals to correctly answer the questions, “Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?”

First Worldism, which is often based on sentimentality or dogma, is fundamentally incorrect in terms of understanding the world. However, there are also several practical problems with the theoretical error.

IN THE FIRST WORLD

The most visible result of First Worldism is the First World is that those engaged in it are “spinning their wheels without ever going anywhere.” That is to say the most salient result of the work of First Worldist ‘leftists’ in the First World is the marginal existence of a First Worldist ‘left.’ Furthermore, as the First World left continues on in a comatose state, with occasionally just enough signs of life to give hope to some, reactionary trends and movements emanating from the First World have only increased in numbers, size, and strength. In essence, while crackerish Trots, crypto-Trots, and Democrats blather on about how exploited their First World cohorts are, an increasing number of their First World “proletarian” brethren are settling in and accepting (if not supporting) some of the most reactionary aspects of First World society.

Obviously the life of a First Worlder First Worldist is ‘tough.’ As is become clear that the First World so-called working class lacks the qualities that it is believed to hold and as organizing efforts remain stagnant, the idealism of nascent First Worldism typically gives way to frustration and cynicism. One out is extreme opportunism: increasingly

tailing the mythical First World ‘proletariat’ and settling with its political leadership. Another is receding further into one’s own ideas while ignoring the outstanding fact these ideas are as isolated and unpopular as ever among those whose class interests they are claimed to represent.

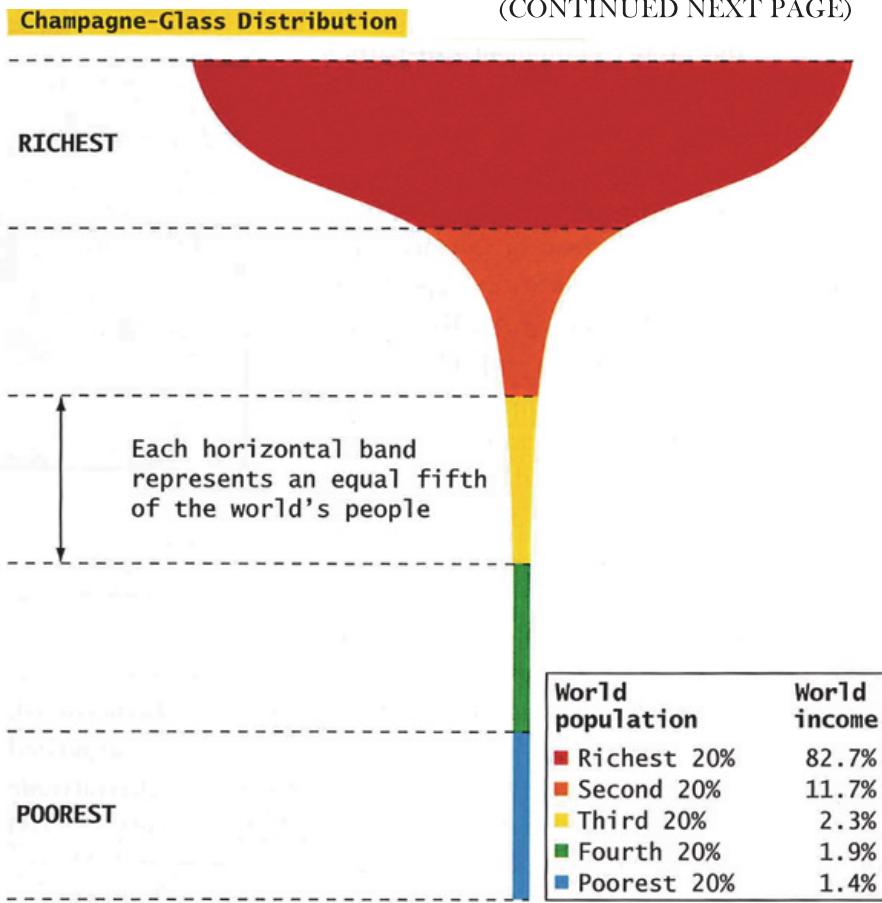
IN THE SEMI-PERIPHERY AND THE THIRD WORLD

The problems of First Worldism in the Semi-periphery and Third World are more fundamental. In essence, promoting the false understanding that First Worlders are exploited under capitalism creates a kind of false consciousness among non-First World actual proletarians. First Worldism is dangerous because it promotes capitalism in the Semi-periphery and Third World. By claiming that First Worlders are simply exploited in qualitatively different ways, the struggle of oppressed and exploited peoples becomes not for national liberation,

socialism, and communism, but to build the basis for a similar capitalist system and to be ‘exploited like First Worlders.’ First Worldism has an obvious impact in that dissuades the masses from staying on the long road of revolutionary struggle. Instead, First Worldism in the Semi-periphery and Third World steers activity into reactionary class collaborationism and/or that which is inspired by the false hope of support from First Worlders. While First Worldism generally wishes to see a “bourgeoisie without a proletariat” and largely operates with this regard, as long as capitalism exists the exploited labor of work-worn proletarians will be the basis upon which the rest of society lives.

The revolution must be one of the Third World-centered proletariat against the system of structural theft. It must challenge and defeat not only the “1%” but also the 15-20% of the world at large which benefits and reproduces itself through capitalist-imperialist exploitation of Semi-peripheral and Third World countries.

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(FIRST-WORDISM....)

SOLUTION TO FIRST-WORDISM

Revolutionary struggles must be carried on not simply without the First World ‘masses,’ but against them. This is because surplus value extracted from the labor of Third Worlders in part sustains the living conditions of First Worlders.

That is not to say that a small percentage of First Worlders will not find dissatisfaction with their lives; nor that First Worlders on an individual level will not find cause to side with Third World peoples struggle and become genuine allies of revolution. But overall, this is the result of alienation or oppression, not exploitation. As such, there is no immediate basis for consistent unity between First World-centered net-exploiters and the Third World-centered proletariat. The world can not wait for the First World ‘masses’ to get on board.

Because of the outstanding problems with First Worldism, i.e., those associated with the longstanding failure to correctly answer “Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?”, revolutionary movements must reject and struggle against it. No longer can First Worldism be allowed to impede revolutionary struggles. Now more than ever we must raise our voices, speaking with vigor, clarity and comprehensiveness, and drown out the siren song of First Worldism.



More U.S. Parasitism: \$6 Billion to be Spent on Sham Elections

According to recent reports, around 6 billion USD will likely be spent in this year's presidential election campaign, a figure which tops previous campaigns. Some analysts estimate each candidate is already spending over \$30 million each week in advertising, and both candidates have thus far paid out millions as wages and salaries for campaign workers. As well, the role of nominally independent super PACs has ballooned in recent years. Like many sections of the US economy, the billions floating around as part of the presidential campaigns operates on a level of pure parasitism.

As part of the modern world, surplus value is stripped from the periphery (Third World) and invested in tertiary economic activities in the core (First World). These tertiary activities may or may not be of real higher value for society as a whole but they cater to the niche interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy, the latter being retained by the former as unproductive laborers in the expanded tertiary sectors. As such, these tertiary sectors are often inflated in economic value. This dynamic can only occur under conditions in which a relatively



small number of economic centers dominate that world (i.e. capitalist-imperialism). This dynamic has socially and economically stabilized the system as a whole.

Though the activity generated by the money being spent this election season isn't typical of tertiary activity, it has become a regular feature of the Amerikan political landscape and provides a case study into the parasitism of the US economy. Little that happens on the \$6 billion “campaign trail” is of any wider social benefit, and the outcome is of little consequence. Thus the question arises: besides imperialism's tendency to invest in tertiary sectors, what wider function does the U.S.' elaborately expensive presidential campaign serve?

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

Slavoj Žizek - A "Radical" Apologist for Imperialism

(The following article by Karlo Mikhail and originally published in the Platypus Journal challenges common notions that

Slavoj Žizek presents a particularly radical critique of capitalist-imperialism.

While we are reposting this for the purpose of discussion and critical review,

doing so in no manner implies endorsement or affiliation)

The Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek has a reputation for lashing out against the “postmodern” and “social democratic” Left, rightly pointing out

that this hodgepodge are advocates of capitalism with a human face and not of genuine revolutionary change. A closer look at the political positions taken by Žižek, however, would show that he is no different from the quarters that have been at the receiving end of his attacks.

I have keenly followed the zigzags of Žižek's school of thought in the past five years and even defended him on some occasions. His infusion of Lacanian psychoanalysis into the concept of ideology, his defense of revolutionary violence against the objective violence of the ruling system, his humorous diatribes, and his appropriation of

popular culture references to enhance his arguments seemed refreshing for a time.

However, it would seem that Žižek's trajectory only seeks to lead the emergent social movements away from the path of a clear and organized struggle to smash the present system and replace it with a new and liberating one. Žižek's regressive views are particularly crystallized in an interview by Haseeb Ahmed and Chris Cutrone at the Platypus Review entitled “The Occupy Movement, a renascent Left, and Marxism Today: An Interview with Slavoj Žižek.”

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(ELECTIONS...)

Generally speaking, elections serve to legitimize the state as the protector of the wider set of class relations and to provide residents with an outlet through which to organize for various social issues. While different candidates may have different views on social issues (LGBTQ rights, environmental protection, economic policies, etc), the broad outlines regarding the system are never up for debate. In this case both Obama and Romney defend the efficacy of capitalism and also insist that the US will continue to be a dominant imperialist power in the years to come.

As many commentators have noted, the increased cost of running campaigns has made candidates evermore reliant on big contributors. The overall cost of running campaigns, as well as many other factors, insures that any serious contender for political office is beholden to those with economic power. This is of little consequence in the US as the political machinery is sometimes a tempering force on the ultra-reactionary sections of Amerikan people. But the

US is keen to promote its forms of parasitic sham democracy in countries around the Third World; and such exported big-budget political campaigns are an increasingly convenient way for imperialists to control the policies of weak states.

Some say that Obama is worse than his predecessor, George W. Bush. Others contend that things will be even worse if Mitt Romney is elected as the next US president. As the astute Iranian professor Muhammad Marandi recently pointed out, there is little distinction between Obama and Romney except that one currently has their finger on the trigger and the other does not. The question of things getting better or worse is largely independent of who holds political office. Rather, the political climate of various countries, the US included, is predicated upon larger developments in the capitalist-imperialist world system.

Capitalist-imperialism, which not only grinds down a majority of humanity into

indignity and squalor, is also leading an even greater majority of humanity to a much worse future. Real solutions will come from broad global class struggle, not by campaigning and cheering for this or that political candidate.

Elections in the US, rather than providing any real democratic function, are a parasitic tertiary sector of economic activity whose main outcome is to legitimize the political system and to distribute nominal power around social issues in a stabilizing manner. Real democracy can be built only through the collective organized struggles of oppressed and exploited peoples and their allies against capitalist-imperialist exploitation and the systems of oppression which enable it. Real democracy means overturning US and imperialist dominance. It means global new democracy: placing exploiters under the political sovereignty of exploited and oppressed peoples and ending the existence of the United States of Amerika.★

(ŽIŽEK...) FROM KAUTSKY TO ZIZEK

"There is no longer the metropolis screwing the Third World countries," declares Žižek. Eschewing the theory of uneven development and the fundamental contradiction between the imperialist powers and the oppressed nation, he posits that the globalization of capital has erased the divide between industrial capitalist powers and their client-states.

Global capitalism has, in this view, transformed the entire world into "colonies" of an all-powerful international capital that is not beholden to any nation. "American capital cannot be considered that of the U.S.," Žižek boldly proclaims. "Capitalism is really universal today," he adds. It has become, as Hardt and Negri describes it, a "Global Empire."

In this regard, Žižek is no different from present-day anarchists and postmodern leftists such as Hardt and Negri who rail against what they perceive as an amorphous and increasingly anonymous multinational or transnational capitalism

larded over by octopus corporations that have transcended the nation as their base.

Žižek, in short, simply rehashes the ideas of Karl Kautsky and his disciples in the social democratic Second International. For them, the investment of surplus capital in the Third World by the industrial powers would provide the basis for the peaceful transition of the whole world to capitalism. In this theory of "ultraimperialism," the peripheries would gradually acquire the capacity for industrial production in exchange for their raw resources and cheap labor.

While there is no question about the global scope of the world capitalist system, what is questionable about Žižek's foray into political economy is the analysis of the relationship between the different parts of this system, of how the prosperity and abundance in the United States, Western Europe, and Japan rests on the superexploitation of the rest of the world through a chain of sweatshops, agricultural plantations, call centers, logging and mining concessions, and export processing zones.



In this setup, we have the imperialist nations on the one side and their direct colonies and semi-colonies on the other. The advanced industrial powers maintain their political, economic, and cultural hold on these subordinate states for the plunder of raw products, natural resources, and cheap labor as well as captive markets for the disposing of their manufactured goods and surplus capital.

(CONTINUED NEXT TWO PAGES)

(ŽIŽEK...)

The so-called “outsourcing” that he bandies about loosely has its limits and does not lead to the industrial development of Third World countries. Even now we are already seeing how U.S. Barrack Obama threatened to withdraw the business process outsourcing centers outside the U.S. when he spoke in his January 2012 State of the Nation Address.

Even the newly industrialized countries like South Korea and Taiwan did not progress out of the benevolence of the imperialist powers or the whim of an anonymous global capitalist system that simply saw the profitability of investment in these regions.

The development of these countries was based on the implementation of genuine agrarian reform and the liberation of millions of poor peasants which became the basis for further industrial development. These minor exceptions were allowed by the geopolitical considerations of countering the “red menace of North Korea and Mao’s China.

APOLOGIA FOR IMPERIALISM

Žižek has a reputation for bandying about the name of Lenin in his avowed aim of resuscitating the late revolutionary’s legacy in works such as Repeating Lenin, A Plea for Leninist Tolerance, Revolution at the Gates, etc. What comes as a surprise is Žižek’s complete disregard for the same Lenin who wrote Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism.

Production and capital is now more concentrated than ever in the hands of monopolies based in the imperialist nations. The financial oligarchy sitting on the merger of industrial and financial capital has grown in leaps and bounds, especially with the financialization of the global economy. The export of capital has become more extensive than ever, with the most powerful imperialist nations having divided the whole world for themselves.

The fundamental features of the world capitalist system as described by Lenin remain all the more true today. And to

Žižek’s distorted political economy, Lenin would have said: “is ‘ultraimperialism’ possible, or is it ultra-nonsense?” It is precisely this nonsense that leads Žižek to take some of the most reactionary positions.

Žižek has on various occasions taken the role of the apologist of imperialism like in his support for the U.S.-led imperialist war of aggression in the Balkans in the 90s in the guise of humanitarian missions.



Ultra-Imperialism?

No, just Ultra-Nonsense.

He even alludes to supporting the U.S. puppet regime in occupied Iraq in the pretext of supporting the so-called Iraqi “Left”. Because of his eschewing of the theory of imperialism, he absurdly forwards the idea that the U.S. occupation is needed because the Iraqi people cannot liberate themselves on their own.

But is it not that the events in Egypt and Tunisia effectively contradict his assertions? The same could have happened in Iraq on its own if not for the U.S. intervention:

The racist Western left’s view was that the only way you can mobilize the stupid Arabs was through anti-Semitism, religious fundamentalism, or nationalism. But here we had secular democratic protest that was not anti-Semitic, not Islamic fundamentalist, or even nationalist.

He even idolizes Nelson Mandela for pushing neoliberal policies in favor of foreign monopoly capitalist interests and in betrayal of the South African masses. “Mandela was not a traitor,” declares Žižek, saying that the alternative would have been a disastrous repetition of what he calls “a Zimbabwe fiasco.” So any effort, for Žižek, to independently chart out one’s national development outside the auspices of the world capitalist system inevitably ends in certain failure. Isn’t this line any different from his criticism of the fear that all revolutions lead to the establishment of even more oppressive and exploitative conditions?

STALINIST BOGEYMAN

Žižek testifies: “isn’t the tragedy of 20th century Stalinism that precisely they tried to suspend, not money, but the market, and what was the result? The reassertion of brutal direct domination.”

Echoing the standard reactionary narrative against Russia under Stalin and China under Mao, he comes up with the one-sided notion that these experiments in socialist revolution and construction were “total failures.”

“This is the lesson of the 20th century,” Žižek pronounces. “The lessons are only negative: We learn what not to do. This is very important. Maybe I’m wrong, but I don’t see positive lessons. I am an honest pessimist.”

The fact that the Chinese revolution as led by Mao liberated millions of poor Chinese peasants and workers from the shackles of imperialist domination and feudal subjugation is overlooked. The victorious advance of a poor war-torn country relying solely on its own people and resources in order to develop step by step its agriculture and industry and raise the standard of living of its people is disregarded.

In fact, Mao’s socialist regime that Žižek maliciously accuse as a “total failure” presided over the emancipation of women and minorities from gender and national oppression, the elimination of exploitation by the old comprador-landlord classes, and the provision of the material needs of the people, including food, healthcare, water, shelter, and education.

(ŽIŽEK...)

The Great Leap Forward, which Žižek paints in the vilest colors as a mega-tragedy causing the death of millions due to famine and starvation, actually endeavored to collective agriculture, close the gap between urban and rural areas, and lay down the foundation for the satisfaction of human needs and industrial development for the people.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution meanwhile brought further development to the masses by bringing millions of youth to the countryside to provide education and health care and help in the management of agri-industrial production in the grassroots. This in turn helped remoulded these youth to make them more dedicated servants of the people.

The conscious struggle against the capitalist-roaders in the state bureaucracy and the party hierarchy empowered millions of Chinese masses, a process that was unfortunately reversed with the death of Mao and the capitalist restoration.

Stalin did commit errors in the form of a tendency towards an overgrown bureaucracy, the premature announcement of the withering away of classes and class struggle, and excesses in the struggle against enemies of the people. But the Žižekian “only negative” verdict ignores real gains in the construction of socialism, the gigantic leaps in the soviet economy, the social welfare system, and the heroic defense against fascism in the Second World War.

All these were achieved in spite of the imperialist encirclement and intervention, the various schemes by the former ruling classes and the bourgeois elements inside the Soviet party to regain power, and the real limits posed by the vestiges of the old czarist society from whose womb the new Soviet state emerged.

RADICAL FACADE

It comes as no surprise that Žižek, who aligns himself with Trotsky and other rightwing figures and renegades who he considers “brutal realist,” eschews all forms of resistance to the present order:

Not only state socialism and the social-democratic welfare state, but also, I would add, the deepest hope of the utopian left, “horizontal organization,” local communities, direct democracy, self-organization! all this, I don’t think it works.

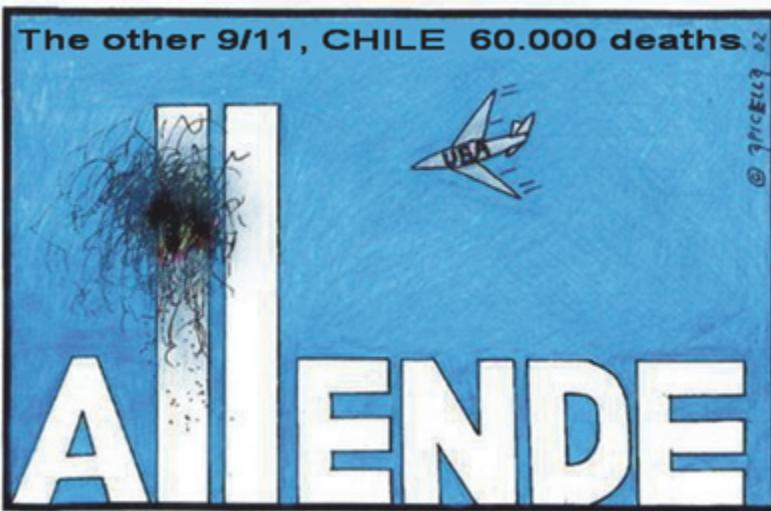
For all the lip service on how doing nothing will lead to even greater global catastrophes, all he coughs up is another version of the reactionary Fukuyama conclusion that there is no alternative to capitalism.

In a time when the whole world is up in arms against the oppressive and exploitative system and social movements are advancing towards ever greater heights, we are all, as Mao puts it, faced with three alternatives: “To march at their head and lead them? To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing? Or to stand in their way and oppose them?”

It has become increasingly clear where Žižek stands on this question. Far from representing a truly revolutionary alternative, he only exposes himself as an apologist of the ruling order hidden behind a radical facade. ☆

In Memory of 9-11-1973

On September 11th, 1973, democratically-elected Chilean president, Salvador Allende, was violently overthrown by a CIA orchestrated coup. Bombs struck the presidential palace, tanks rolled through the streets, and the massacre began. The nine-eleven of Chile was underway. Salvador Allende, convinced he would be assassinated, instead took his own life as his home was being bombarded. The new, U.S. funded military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet went to work immediately. The soccer stadium of Santiago was converted into a make-shift concentration camp! execution center for accused communist sympathizers and Allende supporters. The stadium was filled with the corpses of tortured! murdered civilians, as were



the blood-soaked streets, waterways and prisons. Predictably, all literature sympathizing with Allende's socialist ideology was burned. As a result, this was one of the bloodiest coups in the history of South and Central America, which over its dictatorship, murdered and tortured 60,000 people, conservatively.

U.S. involvement in world affairs is rampant and has always been. In Chile's case, as in so many others', there came a figure who promised to nationalize the country's resources. This figure was Salvador Allende. Allende signed his own death sentence when he promised to use Chile's resources to feed and medicate his own troubled people instead of allowing the U.S. corporations to continue their privatized rape of those resources. He wanted to get the imperialist hand of Amerikkka out of Chile. He wanted to redistribute Chile's wealth to the Chilean people, not Amerikkka's corporations. The people of Chile were tired of the Spanish and British overseeing their country and equally tired of the Ameriklan empire, which “won the rights” to Chile from Britain.

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Brutalizing the Americas, and the world, is nothing alien to the United States, but Salvador Allende did overcome a multimillion-dollar CIA operation against him before. He lost the 1964 due to it, but to the surprise of the U.S. was elected in 1970. After much failed pressure, the U.S. did what it does best.

The self-appointed corporate elite and their puppets were well aware of the implications of Allende's goals. That is why Richard Nixon and his puppy, Henry Kissinger stepped into action. I believe the loss of Chile was a secondary concern inside United States. First and foremost, Amerikkka was worried that a socialist system in one nation would

inspire other oppressed peoples to take the same route. That would mean the capitalist demon to the north might lose a lot more than just Chile. Legitimate people's revolutions are a dangerous risk to U.S. business, because such movements are generally followed by land reforms, education, and nationalization of resources to be used by those people for their greater good. Therefore, in the words of this 1970 classified "CIA Operation Guidance Cable" document, Kissinger's orders are conveyed clearly: "It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup. It would be much preferable to have this transpire prior to 24 October but efforts in this regard will

continue vigorously beyond this date. We are to continue to generate maximum pressure toward this end utilizing every appropriate resource. It is imperative that these actions be implemented clandestinely and securely so that the American hand be well hidden! "

Support all oppressed peoples across the globe and stand against imperialism.

PATRIA O MUERTE! ☆



Book Review "Steel Drivin' Man : John Henry"

Bourgeois history is typified by its appreciation of particulars. In turn it rejects larger narratives regarding fundamental social relations. The effect of this is obscuring unflattering trends in the history of the capitalist world-system and particular dominant countries therein. Though highly accessible, Scott Reynolds Nelson's Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry: The Untold Story of an American Legend adds speculation to the fold. A central thesis of Nelson's is that the musical tradition of John Henry has its origins in a real man. Nelson postulates that the origins of the John Henry tale lies with its cautionary and mournful aspects, such as the larger context of employment of "freed" black convict laborers during the US' post-Civil War industrial boom. In the process, he fails to connect the more obvious and incriminating dots with an endless series of historical anecdotes; glossing over larger trends of colonization and exploitation of captive and oppressed people, extermination of indigenous peoples and the wholesale conquest and settlement of their lands, and the militaristic and reactionary nationalist tendencies which developed in that period of US history.

Despite Nelson's larger failings, Steel Drivin' Man is nonetheless an interesting exposition on his own work. Nelson's narrative of John Henry is weaved together with his own journey in piecing this story together. The reader is taken along as the author travels the

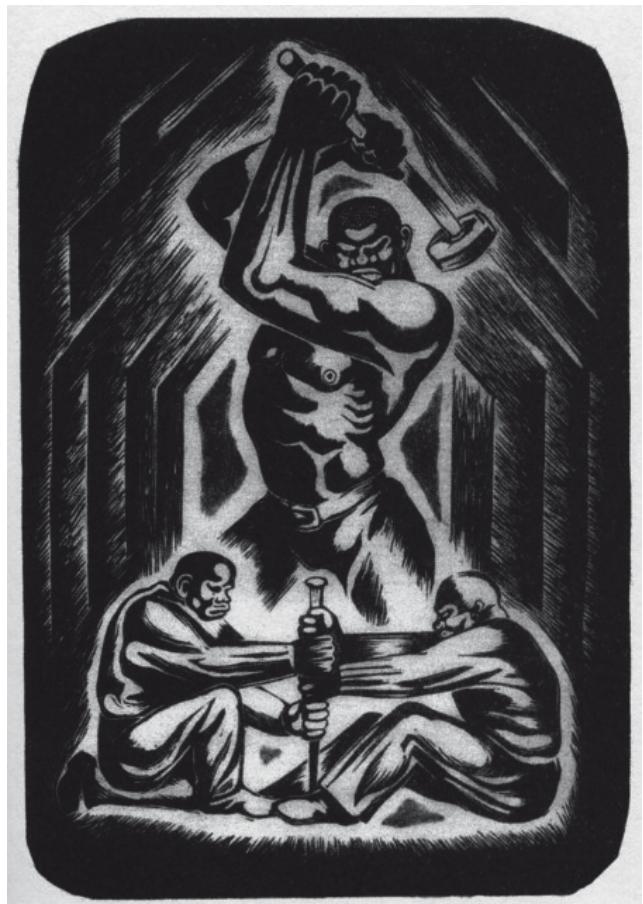
interstate next to the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad track, forages junk roads, enters closed railroad tunnels, delves into university archives, browses the web, and visits small towns to interview older residents. Additionally, while analyzing different versions of songs about John Henry, Nelson brings his own expertise regarding the construction of the railroad into the mix.

While Nelson brings plenty of knowledge and anecdotes to the table, this historical knowledge is often left disassembled from a wider historical context. While he can relate how today's objects, trees for instances, are related to historical events such as slavery and the Civil War, he seems unable to place these events within a larger developmental context of the political economy of settler colonialism and chattel slavery. (p. 7-9)

Nelson reflects critically on relying on the objects of study for the final word of understanding. He notes how the stories told by elderly whites in

the South relay a much rosier picture of the past than those of elderly blacks, not to mention the historical record. (p. 21,22) Ironically, critical historians should always take authors such as Nelson with a grain of salt, as he is doing little more than representing a

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(JOHN HENRY...)

specific view of a society from which he receives entitlements denied to others, much like the elderly whites he interviews do with their bygone days as privileged railroad workers. In some instances, Nelson is outright dense. At one point, instead of making connections between the unreported deaths of black convict workers to the larger context of white supremacist society, he goes into a tome about how important it is for historians like himself to collect and report on various bits of historical documentation. (p. 25-27)

Speculative connections over John Henry's real-life origins tie Nelson's initial narrative together and give it some degree of efficacy. Despite being convinced that John Henry was a real person, a convict from New Jersey who was leased out to work as a tunneler on the construction of the Ohio and Chesapeake railroad and died during Reconstruction, Nelson shies from making a frank assessment regarding the role of white supremacy both before and after the Civil War. (Chap. 3, 4) Notions such as colonization and exploitation barely register for Nelson, who is largely unable to articulate a much more critical history than the southern and industrial historians he finds himself skeptical of. (p. 23) In constructing his story of John Henry, Nelson fails to point to the obvious: the preeminent use of captive black labor in the economic development and sustenance of the US both before and after the Civil War. Before the Civil War, blacks were privately bought and sold by whites and used for labor. Following the Civil War, they were criminalized and arrested en masse, then contracted out as a labor force, or terrorized into working as tenant farmers for their former white masters.

While Nelson is quick to gloss over the obvious narrative surrounding black rail workers during the period (that of continuing subjugation to white dominance), he is quick to speculate that John Henry was one of these workers. This seems plausible, and Nelson does much to provide a convincing argument, but it is neither provable nor significant. In some regards, his whole project seems haphazard. One can imagine future historians of similar persuasions

engaging in similar work: investigating if perhaps the James Bond character might not represent a real life person originating in the late 20th century, for example. This obsession of speculating at the micro-level, typical of bourgeois historians, is matched by his disinterest in the larger developmental context that the ballad of John Henry, whether based on a real person or not, likely represents.

In spite of this, Nelson brings enough awareness to the table to dispel the idea that John Henry was a heroic figure. Instead, Nelson argues that songs about John Henry were often work songs that set the pace for the rhythmic tunneling work, the content of which related complaints and cautionary advice. For Nelson, songs about John Henry originated in conditions of hardship not joy. (p. 32) Overtime, Nelson argues, the meaning of the songs have changed via different interpretation. (p. 35, Chap 7, 8) Yet they still offer clues in the past lives of railroad workers during the time John Henry supposedly lived.

Perhaps the most interesting portion of Steel Drivin' Man is the final chapter, in which Nelson describes John Henry as a "Communist Strongman" and states that "after radicals had seized upon John Henry during the Depression, his iconic status had been assured." (p. 166) According to Nelson, musicians like Pete Seeger and artists like Frank W. Long and Jack Kirby immortalized John Henry as the man of strength with whom we are most familiar today.

Nelson's exposition of Communist politics of the period is superficial and largely in lockstep with mainstream US historiography and liberal nostalgia. He places the COMINTERN's declaration on blacks as an oppressed nation in quotations, implying it was somehow a more convoluted notion at the time than "race." (p. 146) He has a one-liner noting "Stalin's reign of terror," which is typical of bourgeois history, without once pausing to reflect on or call out the terror inflicted upon blacks in the south, Mexicans in the southwest, and Natives across the continent. (Ibid.) Nelson's understanding of the so-called Communist role in promoting John Henry reflects his uncritical view of Amerikan society. The COMINTERN,

at the behest of Stalin and Harry Haywood, did impose on the US party the policy of recognition of the right to national self-determination for blacks in the south. By adopting this policy as a rhetorical posture, the white-led Communist Party USA worked to better integrate blacks within their own movement and campaigns. By World War II, as Nelson explains with less clarity, many of these so-called leftists move on to more overtly imperialistic endeavors. (p. 164) Thus, songs about John Henry, once used by nominal dissidents like Seeger and Long for supposedly dissident purposes' became part of the cultural cannon of the US' burgeoning 'multiracial' empire.

Nelson's Steel Drivin' Man is quick to place John Henry into the context of reconstruction and industrialization. Yet he often fails to put the story of reconstruction and industrialization into the context of figures like John Henry and the class he represented: young colonized men and women whose austere lives and exploited labor was a large part of the fire in the engine of US economic and social development during the period. While he paints a vivid picture regarding John Henry's story and his own search to uncover it, what is left out is any truly critical history of the US and the economic relations it encompasses. Though Scott Reynolds Nelson's work may find acclaim in the field of social history, such work is firmly outside the realm of oppositional discourse. Thus, the narrative he spins around John Henry explicitly reveals little of relevance for more deeper analysis of US history, the world capitalist-imperialist system, or the systems of oppression through which it is maintained.★

