



SEIZE THE TIME

ISSUE 2 SUMMER 2011

A publication of the Revolutionary
Anti-Imperialist Movement

www.antiimperialism.wordpress.com

Update on Army Kill Team in Afghanistan: Amerikans Are Still Pigs

(RAIM Denver) We reported before on an Army “Kill Team” operating in Afghanistan that came to light.

Recently one of these pig soldiers, Jeremy Morelock, pleaded guilty to being part of that “kill team” that deliberately targeted Afghan civilians. This atrocity was significant not only on the scale of the hideousness inflicted on other human beings, but that it was exposed out in the open. The U.S. military could not ignore such blatant acts of murder, so it brought the members of this kill team to trial. Morelock, in exchange for testifying against the other pig soldiers accused, will get 24 years in jail with parole eligibility in seven years. Hardly justice, but typical for those who

kill for imperialism, many of its servants who will never have to face up to their crimes.

According to the Guardian, “In a series of videotaped confessions to investigators, some of which have been broadcast on American television, Morelock detailed how he and other members of his Stryker brigade set up and faked combat situations so that they could kill civilians who posed no threat to them. Four other soldiers are still to come to trial over the incidents.”

The Guardian further mentions how much of a public relations disaster this will be for the U.S. military. The geniuses who handle the Pentagon’s PR rightly predict that the story of these U.S. Army (page 3)

CIA Killer In Pakistan Released After Blood Money Payment

(RAIM-Denver) While world attention has been focused on the revolts in North Africa, and the beginnings of U.S. and NATO military escalation in Libya, recently in Pakistan a case of murder by a CIA “contractor” (read mercenary) has raised tensions in the region. It also shows the extent the U.S. is involved covertly in Pakistan in its war in the region.

Raymond Davis, a mercenary connected to Hyperion Protective Consultants LLC, was a 10 year Army Special Forces veteran and a former employee of Blackwater. On January 27 2011 Davis gunned down two men on a motorcycle, and was subsequently arrested. A third person was killed by a speeding car going the other way down a one way street, presumably by an Amerikan agent attempting to rescue him.

We have previously reported on the covert war going on in Pakistan orchestrated by the CIA and its private contractors, specifically Blackwater. This current incident left a lot of questions about the extent of Amerikan covert operations in Pakistan, not helped by the spin going on by the U.S. trying to secure his release. When he was first arrested the U.S. claimed Davis was a “diplomat,” only later coming out that he was a CIA contractor. The U.S. wanted him released on grounds of diplomatic immunity, which Pakistan denied.

Davis was recently freed after a payment of \$2.34 million in “blood money” to the families of the victims. In exchange Davis received a pardon for his crimes, in a deal negotiated in a closed door (PAGE 3)

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Program of the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement

- We are revolutionaries. We want to smash this world and build a new, better one in its place. Today, the median global income is around \$2.50 a day. Over one billion people face chronic hunger and a child dies of starvation every five seconds. The planet is being destroyed at an unprecedented rate. Yet, a global minority, a mere 15%, lives in comfort, largely unconcerned about their effect on the world. We aim to change this.
- We understand there is a causal relationship between wealth on one hand and poverty, oppression and environmental destruction on the other. The First World maintains its privilege through the exploitation of the Third World masses; spreading war and militarism; and spearheading man-made ecological disasters. This global divide, called imperialism, is the principal feature of the world today.
- We side with the Third World masses and support their struggles for liberation. We support the struggles of people to live free from exploitation and oppression, and hence we support struggles against capitalist-imperialism. We support the right of resistance and revolution for oppressed peoples against their oppressors.
- We reject First Worldism: politics which panders to or assumes First World ‘masses’ are a social base for revolution. The vast majority of First Worlders are part of the world’s richest 15%. We must identify this global minority for what it is: a petty-exploiter class which regularly supports the imperialist system from which it benefits. Our demand is clear: a just, egalitarian and sustainable distribution of the world’s resources and wealth. We want to radically lower the First World’s material standard of living, not raise it.
- We organize collectively for the revolutionary transformation of society. We understand imperialism will not be defeated and a new world built by individual actions divorced from organized efforts. The imperialist system utilizes thousands of organizations for its defense and perpetuation. Conversely, the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement is one organization of many working to overcome imperialism. RAIM represents a collective effort and utilizes a variety of strategies and tactics to best shoulder our responsibilities to the revolutionary struggle.

(AFGHANISTAN) sadists who not only killed but took pictures and collected trophies of their victims will affect Amerika's already fragile image around the world. Let's hope it does. If anyone in the world, including in Amerika itself, is not familiar with what the imperialist United Snakes is about by now, then wake the fuck up already.

Recently the German magazine Der Spiegel released 3 of the estimated 4,000 photos and videos taken by these pigs. Rolling Stone magazine published more photos.

If the facts about the kill team are not enough to get one to hate Amerika, a look at their supporters should be a helpful boost.

Our previous article on this subject, also posted at our old blog, generated a great spike in hits in the past few days due to the recent news about this case. One unfavorable comment was left by some kracker-ass named appropriately enough "dog shit." It is as follows, in all its bad spelling and grammar glory:

"thank you, i didnt know how stupid you and your dumb web site were until i read this ol artical...i just wanted you to know that ive printed out a copy and used it tonight as toilet

paper to wipe the shit out of my ass....too bad your faces were"nt close by,,,,,,...anyway just thought id drop you a line to let ya know how everythings going and sincerely hope you get the flu again sometime soonsincerely your high school buddy...."

So, our alleged high school buddy, who from the looks of it did not even graduate, thinks RAIM and our website are stupid and dumb. But at least we can write in whole sentences nah nah nah. And we hope his employer knows about his misuse of the office printer, and his lack of use of toilet paper. Or maybe he was trying to read it and like typical Americans mistook his head for his ass. Well, we at RAIM can only hope the contents of our article on the Kill Team gets absorbed through this asshat's bloodstream via his preferred reading method. And as we always say in Amerika and inside any other First World exploiter countries, Fuck The Troops!



(PAKISTAN) court session in Pakistan. After the payoff, Secretary of State Clinton, becoming as expert at truth bending as her husband Bill, denied the U.S. made the payment. Some suspect it was the CIA, which operates under an unaccountable "black budget," while others say it was the Pakistani government, with the expectation to be reimbursed by the U.S. government.

Furthermore, a part of the deal involved 331 U.S. officials accused of engaging in espionage under diplomatic cover, to immediately leave the country.

The Davis case has increased tensions between the U.S. and Pakistan, whose relationship has been volatile since the beginning of the so-called War on Terror. Back in 2001 the U.S. twisted the arm of the Pakistan government to allow the U.S. to use the country as a staging ground in its war against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan, which previously supported the Taliban, did an expedient turnaround as the subsequent

governments attempted to contain Islamists and anti-Americans inside their governments and within the populace. With this the CIA is not trusting of the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, for the latter putting its country's strategic interests before the American's own. It can be seen in this situation how the CIA is operating without any checks by Pakistan. One of the rumors circulating is that the two killed were connected to the ISI, and not just robbers as Davis claimed.

There has also been increased conflict within Pakistan between its weak government, propped up by \$3 billion a year in military and development aid from the U.S., and the populace at large. Right wing and Islamist parties have already rallied around this issue, and claim the families were forced to take the blood money. Reports say many family members were taken by ISI for days. Pakistanis have overwhelmingly been against the U.S. presence in their country. Polls

taken have shown that the majority think the biggest threat to their country is the United States.

As the Vietnam War was not only fought in Vietnam, the Afghanistan War is being fought outside of that country also, specifically in Pakistan. Among other things drone strikes have been a common occurrence in the country, and have increased every year. Most of these strikes have targeted civilians.

On March 17th, just after Davis was released, a drone strike in the tribal area of North Waziristan killed over 40 people, including tribal elders. This was the highest number killed in a single strike, and the casualties brought rare condemnation from Pakistani civilian and military officials, who usually are apologists for American presence there. The Pakistani government is expected to buy off the families of the victims with more blood money to appease their anger.

The opposition Pakistani parties are agitating on (NEXT)

KKKlinton Meddles In Egypt and Tunisia

(RAIM-Denver)As part of a March trip, which included a stop in France, Hilary Clinton visited Tunisia and Egypt to meddle in the wake of protests which toppled the heads of two US-backed regimes in the respective countries. After decades of supporting the Tunisian ruler, Zine Ben Ali, Clinton met with youth who took part in the civil unrest which caused him to flee the country on January 14th, 2011.

Clinton, in her typical doublespeak, promised to help Tunisia “economically” and with their “transition to democracy.” Yet, up until Ben Ali’s departure, Clinton remained adamant the US was neutral regarding clashes between popular and state forces. Concurrently, Clinton has been silent regarding Saudi Arabia sending its military to quell unrest in the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.



Clinton’s Tunisian visit was met by protests from politically conscious forces. Hundreds gathered near Bourguiba Avenue, the focal point of the weeks-long mass demonstrations which have since spread throughout the entire region.(NEXT PAGE)

Amerikan Drones Kill Own Troops, Chickens Come Home to Roost

(RAIM-Denver) We have reported widely about the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, and their use in the current wars the United Snakes is conducting.

Recently there was another military strike that involved drones. This time the attack killed Amerika’s own troops. According to the Pentagon, a drone fired a Hellfire missile that killed a Marine and a Navy medic.

This incident took place in the southern province of Helmand in Afghanistan. This has been a site where U.S. led occupation forces have had many battles with the Taliban. A contingent of Amerikan marines were under heavy fire. Other troops came their for backup, along with unmanned Predator drones. Those Marines under attack were able to view the infrared images from the Predator drone, and mistook their own troops for resistance fighters.

This is just one case of what Malcolm X called ‘the Chickens Coming Home to Roost.’ Amerikan imperialism has a wanton disregard for human life in the recent wars in this region. Over 1 million Iraqi people were killed in the latest US military operation in that country. Already thousands have died in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The resistance here has cost the U.S. thousands in troops and trillions of dollars,

itself stolen from exploitation around the world. The euphemism “friendly fire” is a case of being killed by ones own troops, what with the mass amounts of firepower expended even their own troops get hit with it. With drones and other high tech weapons of war Amerikan troops are even less in danger in prosecuting imperialist occupation, but more danger comes to the Third World people they target.

Predator drones are remote control instruments of death. These and other drones, like the Reaper drone, are operated by remote pilots residing in the U.S., half way around the world. Despite the high technology resources poured into them the number of supposed accidental killings has risen as the number of drone strikes goes up. The technology, while lauded, is not always accurate in pinpointing the intended targets, and not surprisingly non-combatants are killed.

A number of civilians have been killed, not only by these drones, in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Civilian casualties in Afghanistan have happened since 2001, and each time the puppet government of Hamid Karzai gives a weak verbal protest to the U.S. while the body count continues to rise. Recently the news of an Amerikan army “kill team,” or death squad, (NEXT)

(PAKISTAN) these issues now. Yet Pakistan has been revealed. It is no doubt the actual extent of CIA and military involvement in Pakistan is much deeper. The Pakistani people are right to resist Amerikan imperialism in their country. This should also be a warning to other countries aligning with the CIA and

other agents of U.S. imperialism. Keep U.S. out of everywhere.



Why I still say “Fuck the Troops”

(by Nick Brown) Brandon Hocking was 24 years old when he died of injuries from a roadside bomb attack in southern Iraq. It happened just days after the eighth anniversary of the US-led invasion and occupation and days before he was scheduled to return home.

Death, though tragic, occurs for all. More significant is how one lived. Hocking lived and died in service to imperialism. He played his role in an aggressive war: a war resulting in over a million Iraqi deaths and the displacement of tens of millions more; one to usurp any independent national sovereignty from the Iraqi people. Hocking traveled over 100,000 kilometers from his home to enforce and maintain US hegemony in the Middle East. Hocking's death should not be mourned, as his life was spent as an oppressor.

Some will be deeply outraged by these words, yet it is these people who deserve the most scorn. They are the “loved ones” who supported his actions and decisions, and the decadent, militarist society which

bore him. And, of course, many who consider themselves ‘left-wing.’

Let's face it: one either supports US imperialism or opposes it. There is no middle ground on the terrain of global class struggle. I say ‘Fuck the Troops’ (with any number of words and actions) specifically to withdraw my support from US militarism and imperialism which ravages the world's people and is destroying the planet.

US militarism and imperialism won't be beat by ‘passive resistance’ and non-violence on the part of oppressed people. Nor will it be seriously challenged from within by ‘supporting the troops,’ even ‘critically’ from so-called opponents.

Brandon Hawking made it clear what side he stood on. So too did the people who planted the bomb which ended his life. Where the First World ‘left’ stands is a far more open question.

(KKKLINTON) “We want her to stay out,” said Hawla Hammoun, a 21-year-old female university student.

“We know why she is coming here. She is coming here to find another alternative for the government that we toppled, to find someone else to sit here and to work for the ... American agenda for her here in Tunisia. That used to keep the people always under their control in order to be able to exploit the fortune of the country.”

Right now, the US is actively pursuing a policy to co-opt the popular forces which overthrew the heads of the Tunisian and Egyptian governments. It is seeking out a new comprador class to betray the people's interest and maintain the neo-colonial order. Imperialism is also trying to engineer such a situation in Libya, i.e. pushing aside old compradors for newer ones who are more pliable, friendly to Western interests and likely to increase long-term stability for Capital.

(DRONES) has been revealed, which we have also covered, showing the real extent of the depravity of this war and occupation.

As in Pakistan, with another subservient government, there have been increased civilian casualties from these drone strikes. The CIA, which orchestrates these targeted assassinations, has developed its own networks inside Pakistan to bypass the Pakistani ISI intelligence service. The U.S. willfully violates the sovereignty of Pakistan, and gives the ISI no advance warnings of the drone attacks. Popular anger against the U.S. has risen, due to the recent discoveries of CIA involvement in Pakistan where one

Only politically conscious masses organized around a revolutionary program can bring an end to the era of imperialism and neo-colonialism. The fall of Ben Ali in Tunisia and Mubarek in Egypt will open up democratic space for such organizing. For revolutionary anti-imperialists in the First World, our job is to expose and oppose imperialist intervention and meddling, and maintain strict internationalism. We must support the struggles of the Arab, North African and Third World masses, not merely through slogan and declarations, but through our own independent, conscious work which bring to light and challenges all aspects of imperialism. The united struggles of the Third World masses, ignited by a revolutionary program, is our struggle. Imperialists will unite around exploiting and keeping weak the Third World masses. Yet, the Third World masses united around their collective liberation is a force which cannot be stopped.

of their mercenaries was captured after murdering two motorists, and increasing drone attacks that have resulted in civilian casualties. Many in Pakistan have called openly to for Pakistanis to shoot down the drones, although moderate elements warn the alternative could be Amerikan ground troops.

The drone attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan have become more frequent, as the U.S. relies more on these instruments in their war of occupation. The attacks have begun attacking more “low-level fighters and junior commanders,” not just top operatives as supposedly before. With the increase of drone attacks, it means more casualties, including more (PAGE 6)

The Euro-US War on Libya: Official Lies and Misconceptions of Critics

RAIM has long pointed out that many on the First Worldist "Left," even those who are self-described socialists, aid and side with imperialism in their positions. The response of many leftists attacking Gaddafi and tacitly supporting U.S.-European military intervention proved our point, even to many of our critics.

On the wider scale of things, the influence of all the various so-called socialist and Marxist grouplets in the United States is marginal. We are more concerned in how pro-imperialist positions affect those that should be allies to the Third World. For instance, a solidarity rally was held in March 2011 by the Muslim Student Association on a college campus in Denver, which RAIM supporters attended. At the rally participants held up flags of the Libyan monarchy, and speakers voiced support for no fly zones. It is disheartening to see groups that have been or would naturally be anti-imperialist take on pro-imperialist positions based on lies and misunderstanding.

RAIM publishes this analysis by James Petras and Robin Abaya to further address these issues and generate discussion. As always, posting this particular piece does not imply any endorsement, nor does it mean we agree with everything said here.

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The Euro-US War on Libya:
Official Lies and
Misconceptions of Critics

By James Petras and Robin E. Abaya (03-25-2011)

Many critics of the ongoing Euro-US wars in the Middle East and, now, North Africa, have based their arguments on clichés and generalizations devoid of fact.

The most common line heard in regard to the current US-Euro war on Libya is that it's "all about oil"

(DRONES)civilians. Furthermore, Obama has authorized drone attacks for the first time in Libya, as the U.S.-NATO war in that country expands.

In both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and surely in Libya too, the people have directed their anger at Amerika. And they are right to do so. Imperialism is the chief enemy of the people of the world, bringing

– the goal is the seizure of Libya's oil wells. On the other hand Euro-U.S. government spokespeople defend the war by claiming it's "all about saving civilian lives in the face of genocide", calling it "humanitarian intervention".

Following the lead of their imperial powers, most of what passes for the Left in the US and Europe, ranging from Social Democrats, Marxists, Trotskyists, Greens and other assorted progressives claim they see and support a revolutionary mass uprising of the Libyan people, and not a few have called for military intervention by the imperial powers, or the same thing, the UN, to help the "Libyan revolutionaries" defeat the Gaddafi dictatorship.

These arguments are without foundation and belie the true nature of US-UK-French imperial power, expansionist militarism, as evidenced in all the ongoing wars over the past decade (Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, etc.). What is much more revealing about the militarist

intervention in Libya is that the major countries, which refused to engage in the War, operate via a very different form of global expansion based on economic and market forces. China, India, Brazil, Russia, Turkey and Germany, the most dynamic capitalist countries in Asia, Europe and the Middle East are fundamentally opposed to the self-styled "allied" military response against the Libyan government – because Gaddafi represents

no threat to their security and they already have full access to the oil and a favorable investment climate. Besides, these economically dynamic countries see no prospect for a stable, progressive or democratic Libyan government emerging from the so-called 'rebel' leaders, who are disparate elites competing for power and Western favor. (NEXT PAGE)



death and misery on them, and their violence they spread oftentimes comes back to them. We don't weep for the two Amerikans killed by their own government. Turning the tables they would be called collateral damage, a reference used by the Amerikan military to refer to unintended deaths of the ones they target. Their deaths, from their own oppressor military, are lighter than a

feather, and much lighter than a Predator drone. One should weep for the ones whose lives have been taken too soon by the exploitative and oppressive system Amerikan imperialism stands for. Imperialism itself is a predatory system, leaving many corpses behind it. Only the peoples resistance will stop it and build something better.

(1) The Six Myths about Libya: Right and Left

The principle imperial powers and their mass media mouthpieces claim they are bombing Libya for “humanitarian reasons”. Their recent past and current military interventions present a different picture: The intervention in Iraq resulted in well over a million civilian deaths, four million refugees and the systematic destruction of a complex society and its infrastructure, including its water supplies and sewage treatment, irrigation, electricity grid, factories, not to mention research centers, schools, historical archives, museums and Iraq’s extensive social welfare system.

A worse disaster followed the invasion of Afghanistan. What was trumpeted as a ‘humanitarian intervention’ to liberate Afghan women and drive out the Taliban resulted in a human catastrophe for the Afghan people.

The road to imperial barbarism in Iraq began with ‘sanctions’, progressed to ‘no fly zones’, then de facto partition of the north, invasion and foreign occupation and the unleashing of sectarian warfare among the ‘liberated’ Iraqi death squads.

Equally telling, the imperial assault against Yugoslavia in the 1990’s, trotted out as the great “humanitarian war” to stop genocide, led to a 40-day aerial bombardment and destruction of Belgrade and other major cities, the imposition of a gangster terrorist regime (KLA) in Kosovo, the near-total ethnic cleansing of all non-Albanian residents from Kosovo and the construction of the largest US military base on the continent (Camp Bondsteel).

The bombing of Libya has already destroyed major civilian infrastructure, airports, roads, seaports and communication centers, as well as ‘military’ targets. The blockade of Libya and military attacks have driven out scores of multi-national corporations and led to the mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of Asian, Eastern European, Sub-Saharan African, Middle Eastern and North African skilled and unskilled immigrant workers and specialists of all types, devastating the economy and creating, virtually overnight, massive unemployment, bread-lines and critical gasoline shortages. Moreover, following the logic of previous imperial military interventions, the seemingly ‘restrained’ call to patrol the skies via “no fly zone”, has led directly to bombing civilian as well as military targets on the ground, and is pushing to overthrow the legitimate government. The current imperial warmongers leading the attack on Libya, just like their predecessors, are not engaged in anything remotely resembling a humanitarian mission: they are destroying the fundamental basis of the civilian lives they claim to be saving – or as an earlier generation of

American generals would claim in Vietnam, they are ‘destroying the villages in order to save them’.

(2) War for Oil or Oil for Sale?

The ‘critical’ Left’s favorite cliché is that the imperial invasion is all about “seizing control of Libya’s oil and turning it over to their multi-nationals”. This is despite the fact that US, French and British multinationals (as well as their Asian competitors) had already “taken over” millions of acres of Libyan oil fields without dropping a single bomb. For the past decade, “Big Oil” had been pumping and exporting Libyan oil and gas and reaping huge profits. Gaddafi welcomed the biggest MNC’s to exploit the oil wealth of Libya from the early 1990’s to the present day. There are more major oil companies doing business in Libya than in most oil producing regions in the world. These include: British Petroleum, with a seven-year contract on two concessions and over \$1 billion dollars in planned investments. Each BP concession exploits huge geographic areas of Libya, one the size of Kuwait and the other the size of Belgium (Libyonline.com). In addition, five Japanese major corporations, including Mitsubishi and Nippon Petroleum, Italy’s Eni Gas, British Gas and the US giant Exxon Mobil signed new exploration and exploitation contracts in October 2010. The most recent oil concession signed in January 2010 mainly benefited US oil companies, especially Occidental Petroleum. Other multi-nationals operating in Libya include Royal Dutch Shell, Total (France), Oil India, CNPC (China), Indonesia’s Pertamina and Norway’s Norsk Hydro (BBC News, 10/03/2005).

Despite the economic sanctions against Libya, imposed by US President Reagan in 1986, US multinational giant, Halliburton, had secured multi-billion dollar gas and oil projects since the 1980’s. During his tenure as CEO of Halliburton, former Defense Secretary Cheney led the fight against these sanctions stating, “as a nation (there is) enormous value having American businesses engaged around the world” (Halliburtonwatch.com). Officially, sanctions against Libya were only lifted under Bush in 2004. Clearly, with all the European and US imperial countries already exploiting Libya oil on a massive scale, the mantra that the “war is about oil” doesn’t hold water or oil!

(3) Gaddafi is a Terrorist

In the run-up to the current military assault on Tripoli, the US Treasury Department’s (and Israel’s special agent) Stuart Levey, authored a sanctions policy freezing \$30 billion dollars in Libyan assets on the pretext that Gaddafi was a murderous tyrant (Washington Post, 3/24/11). However, seven years earlier, Cheney, Bush and Condoleezza Rice had taken Libya off the list of terrorist regimes and ordered Levey and his minions to lift the Reagan-era (NEXT)

(LIBYA)sanctions. Every major European power quickly followed suite: Gaddafi was welcomed in European capitals, prime ministers visited Tripoli and Gaddafi reciprocated by unilaterally dismantling his nuclear and chemical weapons programs (BBC, 9/5/2008). Gaddafi became Washington's partner in its campaign against a broad array of groups, political movements and individuals arbitrarily placed on the US' "terror list", arresting, torturing and killing Al Qaeda suspects, expelling Palestinian militants and openly criticizing Hezbollah, Hamas and other opponents of Israel. The United Nations Human Rights Commission gave the Gaddafi regime a clean bill of health in 2010. In the end Gaddafi's political 'turnabout', however much celebrated by the Western elite, did not save him from this massive military assault. The imposition of neo-liberal 'reforms', his political 'apostasy' and cooperation in the 'War on Terror' and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, only weakened the regime. Libya became vulnerable to attack and isolated from any consequential anti-imperialist allies. Gaddafi's much ballyhooed concessions to the West set his regime up as an easy target for the militarists of Washington, London and Paris, eager for a quick 'victory'.

(4) The Myth of the Revolutionary Masses

The Left, including the mainly electoral social democrat, green and even left-socialist parties of Europe and the US swallowed the entire mass media propaganda package demonizing the Gaddafi regime while lauding the 'rebels'. Parroting their imperial mentors, the 'Left' justified their support for imperial military intervention in the name of the "revolutionary Libyan people", the "peace-loving" masses "fighting tyranny" and organizing peoples' militias to "liberate their country". Nothing could be further from the truth. The center of the armed uprising is Benghazi, longtime monarchist hotbed of tribal supporters and clients of the deposed King Idris and his family. Idris, until he was overthrown by the young firebrand Col. Gaddafi, had ruled Libya with an iron fist over a semi-feudal backwater and was popular with Washington, having given the US its largest air base (Wheeler) in the Mediterranean. Among the feuding leaders of the "transitional council" in Benghazi (who purport to lead but have few organized followers) one finds neo-liberal expats, who first promoted the Euro-US military invasion envisioning their ride to power on the back of Western missiles. They openly favor dismantling the Libyan state oil companies currently engaged in joint ventures with foreign MNCs. Independent observers have commented on the lack of any clear reformist tendencies, let alone revolutionary organizations or democratic popular movements among the 'rebels'.

While the US, British and French are firing missiles, loaded with depleted uranium, at the Libyan military and key civilian installations, their 'allies' the armed militias in Benghazi, rather than go to battle against the regime's armed forces, are busy rounding up, arresting and often executing any suspected members of Gaddafi's "revolutionary committees", arbitrarily labeling these civilians as "fifth columnists". The top leaders of these "revolutionary" masses in Benghazi include two recent defectors from what the 'Left' dubs Gaddafi's "murderous regime": Mustafa Abdul Jalil, a former Justice minister, who prosecuted dissenters up to the day before the armed uprising, Mahmoud Jebri, who was prominent in inviting multi-nationals to take over the oil fields (FT, March 23, 2011, p. 7), and Gaddafi's former ambassador to India, Ali Aziz al-Eisawa, who jumped ship as soon as it looked like the uprising appeared to be succeeding. These self-appointed 'leaders' of the rebels who now staunchly support the Euro-US military intervention, were long-time supporters of the Gaddafi's dictatorship and promoters of MNC takeovers of oil and gas fields. The heads of the "rebels" military council is Omar Hariri and General Abdul Fattah Younis, former head of the Ministry of Interior. Both men have long histories (since 1969) of repressing democratic movements within Libya. Given their unsavory background, it is not surprising that these top level military defectors to the 'rebel' cause have been unable to arouse their troops, mostly conscripts, to engage the loyalist forces backing Gaddafi. They too will have to take ride into Tripoli on the coattails of the Anglo-US-French armed forces.

The anti-Gaddafi force's lack of any democratic credentials and mass support is evident in their reliance on foreign imperial armed forces to bring them to power and their subservience to imperial demands. Their abuse and persecution of immigrant workers from Asia, Turkey and especially sub-Sahara Africa, as well as black Libyan citizens, is well documented in the international press. Their brutal treatment of black Libyans, falsely accused of being Gaddafi's "mercenaries", includes torture, mutilation and horrific executions, does not auger well for the advent of a new democratic order, or even the revival of an economy, which has been dependent on immigrant labor, let alone a unified country with national institutions and a national economy.

The self-declared leadership of the "National Transitional Council" is not democratic, nationalist or even capable of uniting the country. These are not credible leaders capable of restoring the economy and creating jobs lost as a result of their armed power grab. No one seriously envisions these 'exiles', tribalists, monarchists and Islamists maintaining the (NEXT)

(LIBYA)paternalistic social welfare and employment programs created by the Gaddafi government and which gave Libyans the highest per-capita income in Africa.

(5) Al Qaeda

The greatest geographical concentration of suspected terrorists with links to Al Qaeda just happens to be in the areas dominated by the “rebels” (see Alexander Cockburn: Counterpunch, March 24, 2011). For over a decade Gaddafi has been in the forefront of the fight against Al Qaeda, following his embrace of the Bush-Obama ‘War on Terror’ doctrine. These jihadist Libyans, having honed their skills in US-occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, are now among the ranks of the “rebels” fighting the much more secular Libyan government. Likewise, the tribal chiefs, fundamentalist clerics and monarchists in the East have been active in a “holy war” against Gaddafi welcoming arms and air support from the Anglo-French-US “crusaders” – just like the mullahs and tribal chiefs welcomed the arms and training from the Carter-Reagan White House to overthrow a secular regime in Afghanistan. Once again, imperial intervention is based on ‘alliances’ with the most retrograde forces. The composition of the future regime (or regimes, if Libya is divided) is a big question and the prospects of a return to political stability for Big Oil to profitably exploit Libya’s resources are dubious.

(6) “Genocide” or Armed Civil War

Unlike all ongoing mass popular Arab uprisings, the Libyan conflict began as an armed insurrection, directed at seizing power by force. Unlike the autocratic rulers of Egypt and Tunisia, Gaddafi has secured a mass regional base among a substantial sector of the Libyan population. This support is based on the fact that almost two generations of Libyans have benefited from Gaddafi’s petroleum-financed welfare, educational, employment and housing programs, none of which existed under America’s favorite, King Idris. Since violence is inherent in any armed uprising, once one picks up the gun to seize power, they lose their claim on ‘civil rights’. In armed civil conflicts, civil rights are violated on all sides. Regardless of the Western media’s lurid portrayal of Gaddafi’s “African mercenary forces” and its more muted approval of ‘revolutionary justice’ against Gaddafi supporters and government soldiers captured in the rebel strongholds, the rules of warfare should have come into play, including the protection of non-combatants-civilians (including government supporters and officials), as well as protection of Libyan prisoners of war in the areas under NATO-rebel control.

The unsubstantiated Euro-US claim of “genocide” amplified by the mass media and parroted by “left” spokespersons is contradicted by the daily reports of single and double digit deaths and injuries, resulting from urban violence on both sides, as control

of cities and towns shifts between the two sides. Truth is the first casualty of war, and especially of civil war. Both sides have resorted to monstrous fabrications of victories, casualties, monsters and victims.

Demons and angels aside, this conflict began as a civil war between two sets of Libyan elites: An established paternalistic, now burgeoning neo-liberal, autocracy with substantial popular backing versus a western imperialist financed and trained elite, backed by an amorphous group of regional, tribal and clerical chiefs, monarchists and neo-liberal professionals devoid of democratic and nationalist credentials – and lacking broad-based mass support.

Conclusion

If not to prevent genocide, grab the oil or promote democracy (via Patriot missiles), what then is the driving force behind the Euro-US imperial intervention?

A clue is in the selectivity of Western military intervention: In Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Jordan, Qatar and Oman ruling autocrats, allied with and backed by Euro-US imperial states go about arresting, torturing and murdering unarmed urban protestors with total impunity. In Egypt and Tunisia, the US is backing a conservative junta of self-appointed civil-military elites in order to block the profound democratic and nationalist transformation of society demanded by the protesters. The ‘junta’ aims to push through neo-liberal economic “reforms” through carefully-vetted pro-Western ‘elected’ officials. While liberal critics may accuse the West of “hypocrisy” and “double standards” in bombing Gaddafi but not the Gulf butchers, in reality the imperial rulers consistently apply the same standards in each region: They defend strategic autocratic client regimes, which have allowed imperial states to build strategic air force and naval bases, run regional intelligence operations and set up logistical platforms for their ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as their future planned conflict with Iran. They attack Gaddafi’s Libya precisely because Gaddafi had refused to actively contribute to Western military operations in Africa and the Middle East.

The key point is that while Libya allows the biggest US-European multi-nationals to plunder its oil wealth, it did not become a strategic geo-political-military asset of the empire. As we have written in many previous essays the driving force of US empire-building is military – and not economic. This is why billions of dollars of Western economic interests and contracts had been sacrificed in the setting up of sanctions against Iraq and Iran – with the costly result that the invasion and occupation of Iraq shut down most oil exploitation for over a decade.

(NEXT)

Middle East and North Africa: People's Just Struggles Lead to Cosmetic Changes Without Revolutionary Leadership

(by Soso of MIM-Prisons) Starting in Tunisia on December 17, and spreading across the region in January and February, the people of north Africa and the Middle East are taking to the streets to fight brutal dictatorships in their respective countries. Taken by surprise by the force and longevity of these protest movements, the various imperialist backed regimes are working hard to come up with changes that will pacify the people without fundamentally changing the system. These just struggles of the people are primarily targeting the figureheads in government, but the real problem lies in the system itself and at this stage we are only seeing some shuffling of the leadership.

Protests are sweeping across the region as the people are emboldened and inspired by the actions and results of those in neighboring countries, even moving further south into other parts of Africa. As this article is being written, there are reports of people's uprisings in Bahrain, Libya, Iran, Yemen, Iraq, Kuwait, Algeria, Djibouti, Syria, Morocco and Jordan. In other parts of Africa, less visible in the media, popular revolts are also happening in Sudan, Gabon and Ethiopia.(1) Protesters

are facing violent repression by the governments in most of these countries.

The response in the United States has been strong condemnation of Mubarak and other leaders targeted by protests (among those paying attention). Arabs may falsely look to Americans as friends in their current struggles. But where was this American "support" for the last thirty years as their country bank-rolled Mubarak with billions of dollars? In reality, their reaction is a sick reminder of what went down in Iraq. The same seething opposition to Mubarak was aimed at Saddam Hussein, resulting in the deaths of millions of Iraqis and the destruction of one of the most developed Arab countries. Iraq is just one example to demonstrate how American racism quickly lends itself to popular support for militarism, the savior of post-WWII U.S. global dominance.

Economics of the People's Struggles

There are many differences between these mostly Arabic-speaking countries, but the one common enemy of the people there is the enemy of the people throughout the world: imperialism. (NEXT PAGE)

(LIBYA) The Washington-led assault on Libya, with the majority of air sorties and missiles strikes being carried out by the Obama regime, is part of a more general counter-attack in response to the most recent Arab popular pro-democracy movements. The West is backing the suppression of these pro-democracy movements throughout the Gulf; it finances the pro-imperial, pro-Israel junta in Egypt and it is intervening in Tunisia to ensure that any new regime is "correctly aligned". It supports a despotic regime in Algeria as well as Israel's daily assaults on Gaza. In line with this policy, the West backs the uprising of ex-Gaddafi's and right-wing monarchists, confident that the 'liberated' Libya will once again provide military bases for the US-European military empire-builders.

In contrast, the emerging market-driven global and regional powers have refused to support this conflict, which jeopardizes their access to oil and threatens the current large-scale oil exploration contracts signed with Gaddafi. The growing economies of Germany, China, Russia, Turkey, India and Brazil rely on exploiting new markets and natural resources all over Africa and the Middle East, while the US, Britain and France spend billions pursuing wars that destabilize these markets, destroy infrastructure and foment long-term wars of resistance. The growing market powers recognize that the Libyan "rebels"

cannot secure a quick victory or ensure a stable environment for long-term trade and investments. The "rebels", once in power, will be political clients of their militarist imperial mentors. Clearly, imperial military intervention on behalf of regional separatists seriously threatens these emerging market economies: The US supports ethno-religious rebels in China's Tibetan province and as well as the Uyghur separatists; Washington and London have long backed the Chechen separatists in the Russian Caucasus. India is wary of the US military support for Pakistan, which claims Kashmir. Turkey is facing Kurdish separatists who receive arms and safe haven from their US-supplied Iraqi Kurdish counterparts.

The North African precedent of an imperial invasion of Libya on behalf of its separatist clients worries the emerging market-powers. It is also an ongoing threat to the mass-based popular Arab freedom movements. And the invasion sounds the death knell for the US economy and its fragile 'recovery': three ongoing, endless wars will break the budget much sooner than later. Most tragic of all, the West's 'humanitarian' invasion has fatally undermined genuine efforts by Libya's civilian democrats, socialists and nationalists to free their country from both a dictatorship and from imperial-backed reactionaries. |

(MIDEAST)Capitalism is a system that is defined by the ownership of the means of production (factories, farms, etc.) by the wealthy few who we call the bourgeoisie, and who exploit the majority of the people (the workers, also called the proletariat) to generate profit for the owners. Imperialism is the global stage of capitalism where the territories of the world have been divided up and exploited for profit. Under imperialism, the economy in each country no longer operates independently, and what happens in one country has repercussions around the world. Because of this global interdependence, events in the Middle East and north Africa are very significant to the American and European capitalists, and are related to events in the global economy.

The question of real change hinges on whether the exploited countries that are now mobilizing stay within the U\$.-dominated economic structure, or whether they look to each other and turn their back on the exploiter nations. While militarily and politically controlled by the United States, their economic relationship to imperialism is dominated by the European Union who was responsible for 50% of trade for countries in the southern Mediterranean region in 1998. A mere 3% of their trade was with each other that year.(2) In 2009, these percentages had not changed, despite the lofty promises of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area to develop trade between Arab countries.(3) Tunisia, where the first spark was lit, had 78% of its exports and 72% of its imports with the European Union. Compare these numbers to the ASEAN and MERCOSUR regional trade groups, also made up of predominately Third World countries, which had about 25% of their trade internally.(4)

The problem with Europe dominating trade in the region is based in the theories of “unequal exchange” that lead trade between imperialist and exploited countries to be inherently exploitative. Part of this is because the north African countries mostly produce agricultural goods and textiles, which they trade for manufactured goods from Europe. The former are more susceptible to manipulations in commodities markets that, of course, are controlled by the imperialist finance capitalists. The latter are priced high enough to pay European wages, resulting in a transfer of surplus value from the north African nations to the European workers.

In order to develop industries for the European market, these countries have been forced to accept Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) from the various world banking systems (World Bank, International Monetary Fund). This has further tied the governments to imperialist interests over the years, as SAPs have many strings attached. The loans

themselves, which are larger in this region than for the average Third World country (5), serve to transfer vast amounts of wealth from the debtor nations to the lender nations in the form of interest payments.

Countries in the Middle East and north Africa generally have greater relative wealth compared with Third World countries in the rest of Africa, Asia and Latin America. As a result the people in these countries enjoy higher levels of education, better health and fewer people living in poverty.(see World Bank, World Health Organization and CIA statistics) General trends since WWII are a growing middle class with a emigrant population that expanded and benefited from European reconstruction up to the 1980s. Since then immigration restrictions have increased in the European countries, particularly connected to “security” concerns after 9/11. The north African countries relate to the European Union similar to how Mexico does to the United States, but Mexico remains more economically independent by comparison. These uprisings are certainly connected to the growing population and the shrinking job market with slower migration to the EU.

Locally, there are economic differences within the region that are important as well. Other than the stick of oppressive regimes, some governments in the region have been able to use their oil revenues as a carrot to slow proletarian unity. Even so, extreme international debt, increasing unemployment with decreasing migration opportunities and the overall levels of poverty indicate that these countries are part of the global proletariat.

The recent economic crisis demonstrates the tenuous hold the governments of the Middle East and north African countries had on their people. Because imperialism is a global system with money, raw material and consumer goods produced and exchanged on a global market, economic crises happen on a global scale. The economic crisis of the past few years has affected the economy of this region with rising cost of living and increased unemployment rates. In particular food prices have reached unprecedented highs in the past few months.(6) One might think this would help the large agricultural sectors in these countries. However, food prices affect the Third World disproportionately because of the portion of their income spent on food and the form their food is consumed in. On top of this, all of these countries have come to import much of their cereal staples as their economies have been structured to produce for European consumption.

Reliable economic statistics are difficult to find for this region. Estimates of unemployment in any country can range from under 10% up to 40% and even higher, and there is similar variability in (NEXT)

(MIDEAST) estimates of the portion of the population living below the poverty level. But all agree that both unemployment and poverty have been on the rise in the past two years. We suspect this trend dates back further with the decrease in migration opportunities mentioned above.

In Egypt about two-thirds of the population is under age 30 and more than 85% of these youth are unemployed. About 40% of Egypt's population lives on less than \$2 a day.(7)

The middle class in these countries, who enjoy some economic advantages, are sliding further into poverty. This group is particularly large in Tunisia and Egypt compared to many other countries in the region.(8) In Egypt the middle class increased from 10% to 30% of the population in the second half of the 20th century, with half of those people being "upper" middle class.(9) This class has been closely linked to the rise of NGOs encouraged by the European-led Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area. They know that it is possible for them to have a better standard of living and enjoy more political freedom without a complete overthrow of the capitalist system. And so we saw many of the leaders and participants in the recent protests demand better conditions for themselves, but generally leave out the demands of the proletariat.

In fact, some middle class leaders, like Wael Ghonim (an Egyptian Google employee who was a vocal leader in the fight against Mubarak), are calling for striking workers to go back to work now that Mubarak has stepped down, effectively opposing the demands and struggles of the Egyptian proletariat. Without the leadership of the proletariat, who have never had significant benefits from imperialism, these protests end up representing middle class demands to shuffling the capitalist deck and put another imperialist-lackey government in place. The result might be a slight improvement in middle class conditions but the proletariat ends up right back where they started.

In Tunisia and Egypt, where the uprisings started, the leadership and many of the activists were from the educated middle class youth.(10) In Tunisia people were inspired to act after the suicide of Mohammed Bouazizi, an impoverished young vegetable street seller supporting an extended family of eight. He set himself on fire in a public place on December 17 after the police confiscated his produce because he would not pay a bribe. Like many youth in Tunisia, Bouazizi was unable to find a job after school. He completed the equivalent of American high school, but there are many Tunisian youth who graduate from college and are still unable to find work.

The relative calm in the heavy oil producing region that includes Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman and

Qatar underscores the key role of economics and class in these events. These countries enjoy a much higher economic level than the rest of the region, as a direct result of the consumerist First World's dependence on their natural resources. Only Libya joins these countries in having a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita above \$5000, while all others in the region are below that level.(11) That's compared to a GNI in the U.\$ of \$46,730.(12)

One economic factor that has not made the news much and which does not seem to be a focus of the protesters so far, is the importing of foreign labor to do the worst jobs in the wealthy oil-producing countries. In the Gulf Cooperation Council (consisting of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman) there are an estimated 10 million foreign workers and 3 million of their family members living in these countries.(13) This was used as a carrot to the proletariat who were losing opportunities to work in the European Union. Egypt in particular encouraged this emigration of workers.

Revolutions or Unrest?

To belittle the just struggles of people around the world, typical imperialist media is referring to the recent uprisings "unrest," as if the people just need to be calmed down to bring things back to normal. On the other side, many protesters and their supporters are calling these movements revolutions. For communists, the label revolution is used to describe movements fighting for fundamental change in the economic structure. In the world today, that means fighting to overthrow imperialism and for the establishment of socialism so that we can implement a system where the people control the means of production, taking that power and wealth out of the hands of just a few people.

The global system of imperialism puts the nations of the Middle East and north Africa on the side of the oppressed. These nations have comprador leaders running their governments, who get rich by working for imperialist masters. Yet these struggles are very focused on the governments in power in each country without making these broader connections. Until the people make a break with imperialist control, changes in local governments won't lead to liberation of the people.

Further, we have heard much from both organizers and the press about social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) as a tool of the revolution. These tools are celebrated as a replacement for leadership. It is true that the internet is a useful tool for sharing information and organizing, and decentralization makes it harder to repress a movement. But the lack of ideological unity leads to the lowest common denominator, and very few real demands from the people. No doubt "Mubarak out" is not all the Egyptian people can rally (NEXT)

(MIDEAST)around, but without centralized leadership it is hard for the people to come together to generate other demands.

Related to the use of social media, it is worth underscoring the value of information that came from Wikileaks to help galvanize the people to action in these countries; the corruption and opulence of the leaders described in cables leaked at the end of 2010 no doubt helped inspire the struggles.(14)

Egypt provides a good example of why we would not call these protest movements “revolutions.” The Egyptian people forced President Mubarak out of the country, but accepted his replacement with the Supreme Council of the Military – essentially one military dictatorship was replaced by another. One of the key members of this Council is Sueliman, the CIA point man in the country and head of the Egyptian general intelligence service. He ran secret prisons for the United States and personally participated in the torturing of those prisoners.

Tunisia is also a good example of the lack of fundamental revolutionary change. Tunisia’s president of 23 years, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, stepped down on January 14 and fled to Saudi Arabia. But members of Ben Ali’s corrupt party remained in positions of power throughout the government and protests continue.

In State and Revolution, Lenin wrote that the revolution must set a goal “not of improving the state machine, but of smashing and destroying it.” The protests and peoples’ struggles in the Middle East and Africa reinforce the importance of this message as we see the sacrifice of life in so many countries resulting in only cosmetic changes in governments. What is the U\$ interest?

The United States is the biggest imperialist power in the world today; it controls the largest number and most wealth producing territories in the world. Just as the economic crises of imperialism affect the rest of the world, political uprisings around the world affect the United States. The capitalist corporations who have factories and investments in this region have a strong financial interest in stability and a government that will allow them to continue to exploit the resources and labor. And with capitalism’s constant need to expand, any shrinking of the imperialist sphere of influence will help trigger future crises faster.

The American military interest in this region relies on having some strong puppet governments as allies to defend the interests of American imperialism and hold off the independent aspirations of the regional capitalists. This includes managing the planet’s largest oil reserves, which is important for U\$. control of the European Union, and defending their #1 lackey – Israel.

Tunisia is a long standing ally of the United States, cooperating with American “anti-terrorism” to maintain American imperialist power in the region. Other imperialist powers also have a strong interest in the dictatorships in Tunisia including France whose government shipped tear gas grenades to Tunis on January 12 to help Ben Ali fight the protesters.(15)

Bahrain is a close U\$ ally, home to the U\$ Navy’s Fifth Fleet.(16)

Egypt has been second only to Israel in the amount of U\$. aid it gets since 1979, at about \$2 billion a year. The majority of this money, about \$1.3 billion a year, goes to the Egyptian military.(17) Further, the United States trains the Egyptian military each year in combined military exercises and deployments of U\$ troops to Egypt.(18) So for America, the Supreme Council of the Military taking power in Egypt is a perfectly acceptable “change.” To shore up the new regime and it’s relationship with the United States, Secretary of State Clinton announced on Feb 18 that the United States would give \$150 million in aid to Egypt to help with economic problems and “ensure an orderly, democratic transition.” In exchange, the Council has already pledged to uphold the 1979 peace accords with Israel. Prior to 1979, much of the Arab world was engaged in long periods of wars with the settler state.

United States aid to countries in this region is centered around Israel. The countries closest geographically to Israel are the biggest recipients of American money, a good way to keep control of the area surrounding the biggest American ally. In addition to Egypt and Israel, Jordan (\$843 million) and Lebanon (\$238 million) received sizable economic and military aid packages in 2010.(19) Compared to these numbers, “aid” to the rest of the region is significantly smaller with notable recipients including Yemen (\$67M), Morocco (\$35M), Bahrain (\$21M) and Tunisia (\$19M). The U\$ gives “aid” in exchange for economic, military and political influence.

Is Wisconsin the American Tunisia?

The global economic crisis clearly affects imperialist countries like America just like it does other countries of the world, but we don’t see the people in this country rising up to take over Washington, DC and demanding a change in government. Like the Middle East, the youth of America are having a harder time finding jobs after graduation from college. But unlike their counterparts in the Middle East, American youth and their families do not face starvation when this happens.

Some people are drawing comparisons between the wide-spread protests by labor unions in Wisconsin and the events in Tunisia and Egypt. These (NEXT)

(MIDEAST)events do give us a good basis for comparison to underscore the differences between imperialist countries and the Third World. Amerikan wealth is so much greater than the rest of the world (U\$. GDP per capita = \$46,436); even compared to oil-rich countries like Saudi Arabia (GDP = \$24,200). GDP does not account for the distribution of wealth, but in the U\$. the median household income in 2008 was \$52,029. This number is not inflated by the extreme wealth of a few individuals, it represents the middle point in income for households in this country.

On the surface, unemployment statistics for the United States appear similar to some numbers for countries in the Middle East and north Africa. In 2008, 13.2% of the population was unemployed in the United States based on the latest census data.(20) However, with income levels so much higher in Amerika, unemployment doesn't mean an immediate plunge into poverty and starvation. For youth in this country, there is the safety net of moving back in with parents if there is no immediate post-college job.

Similarly, U\$. poverty statistics appear quite high, comparable to rates in the Middle East and north Africa, at 14.3% in 2009. But this poverty rate uses chauvinistic standards of poverty for Amerikans. The U\$. census bureau puts the poverty level of a single individual with no dependents at \$11,161.(21) Much higher than the statistics that look at the portion of the population living at \$2 or \$1.25 per day (adjusted for differences in purchasing power). Wisconsin public teachers average salaries of about \$48k per year.

The Leading Light Communist Organization produced some clear economic comparisons between Egypt and the U\$: "The bottom 90% of income earners in Egypt make only half as much (roughly \$5,000 USD annually) as the bottom 10% of income earners in the U\$. (roughly 10,000), per capita distribution. Depending on the figures used, an egalitarian distribution of the global social product is anywhere between \$6,000 and \$11,000 per capita annually. This does not even account for other inequalities between an exploiter country and an exploited country, such as infrastructure, housing, productive forces, quality and diversity of consumer goods, etc."(22)

In the United States it is possible for the elite to enjoy their millionaire lifestyles while the majority of the workers are kept in relative luxury with salaries that exceed the value of their labor. This is possible because other countries, like those in the Middle East and Africa, are supplying the exploited workforce that generates profits to be brought home and shared with Amerikan workers. Even Amerikan workers who are unemployed and struggling to pay bills are not rallying for an end to the economic system of capitalism. They

are just demanding more corporate taxes and less CEO bonuses. In other words they want a bigger piece of the imperialist pie: money that comes at the expense of the Third World workers. These same Amerikan workers rally behind their government in wars of aggression around the world, overwhelmingly supporting the fight against the Al-Qaeda boogeyman in Arab clothing.

Down with Amerikanism, Long Live pan-Arabism

Whether in Madison or Cairo, signs implying that Wisconsin is the Tunisia of north Amerika are examples of what we call "false internationalism" on both sides of the divide between rich and poor nations. Combating false internationalism, which is inherent in any pro-Amerikanism in the Third World, is part of the fight against revisionism in general.

What no one can deny is the connection between the mass mobilizations across the Arab world. That this represents a reawakening of pan-Arabism is both clear and promising for the anti-imperialist struggle. Even non-Arab groups in North Africa that have felt marginalized will benefit from the greater internationalist consciousness and inherent anti-imperialism with an Arabic-speaking world united against First World exploitation and interference.

Of course, Palestine also stands to benefit from these movements. The colonial dominance of Palestine has long been a lightning rod issue for the Arab world, that only the U\$. puppet regimes (particularly in Egypt) have been able to repress.

Everyone wants to know what's next. While the media can create hype about the "successful revolutions" in Tunisia and Egypt, this is just the beginning if there is to be any real change. Regional unity needs to lead to more economic cooperation and self-sufficiency and to unlink the economies of the Arab countries from U\$. and European imperialism. Without that, the wealth continues to flow out of the region to the First World.

As Frantz Fanon discussed extensively in writing about colonial Algeria, the spontaneous violence of the masses must be transformed into an organized, conscious, national violence to rid the colony of the colonizer. Unfortunately, his vision was not realized in the revolutionary upsurge that he lived through in north Africa and neo-colonialism became the rule across the continent. Today, the masses know that imperialism in Brown/Black face is no better. As fast as the protests spread, they must continue to spread to the masses of the Arab world before we will see an independent and self-determined people. |

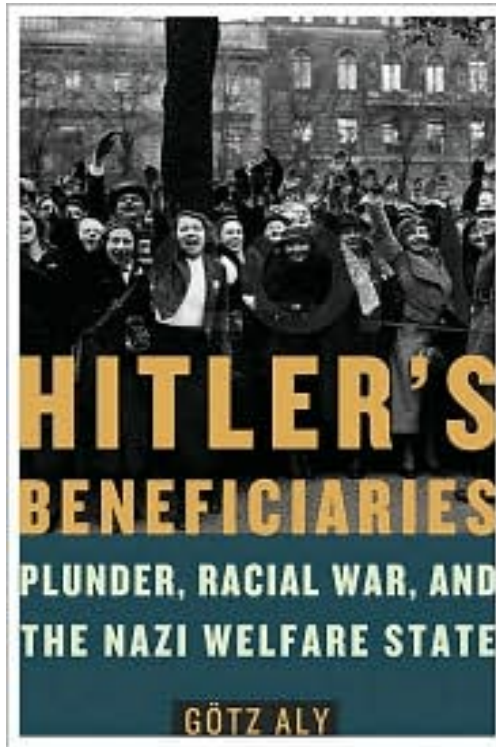
Hitler's Beneficiaries (2005) by Gotz Aly reviewed by Prairie Fire

(Ilco.org) Gotz Aly's book *Hitler's Beneficiaries* (2005) is a groundbreaking book. Aly breaks with the dogmatic view held by many myth-makers on the "left" that the German working class despised Hitler's tyranny. It dispenses with the shared mythology found among almost all First Worldists, be they Trotskyist or Marxist-Leninist or whatever. Aly thoroughly shows that Hitler's regime did not survive at the expense of German working class, but because of it. Hitler's regime was able to stay in power, even when it was losing the war, because it was popular among ordinary Germans:

"Precisely because so many Germans did in fact benefit from Nazi Germany's campaigns of plunder, only marginal resistance arose. Content as most Germans were, there was little chance for a domestic movement that would have halted Nazi crimes. This new perspective on the Nazi regime as a kind of racist-totalitarian welfare state allows us to understand the connection between the Nazi policies of racial genocide and the countless, seemingly benign family anecdotes about how a generation of German citizens 'got through' World War II." (2)

Aly explains how the fascist regime's imperial conquests were used to elevate the standard of living of ordinary Germans. This made the regime quite popular and dulled any resistance to its policies, including its radical racist policies. Nazi policy makers were very aware of the connection between imperial conquest, expropriation of the wealth of oppressed peoples, and domestic social peace. So much were they aware of this connection that they often sought to micro-manage every aspect of the plunder and exploitation of the conquered

lands in order to assure continued German popular support. Aly's book is important for those seeking to understand the relationship between



the First World and Third World today. Just as the average German reaped benefits from German conquests, so too do First World workers reap huge benefits from the imperialist world system. Just as the Nazi regime designed a system to expropriate the wealth of oppressed peoples and other countries to benefit the German population, so too do policy makers today in the First World seek to benefit the populations of the First World at the expense of the Third World. The book is an important one for those seeking to understand how class structure changes due to imperialism.

Popular, Young and Radical

The word "Nazi" gets thrown around to mean all kinds of things. It is almost always associated with brutal, unpopular dictatorship. Though the Nazi regime was a brutal and unpopular dictatorship toward

those that it oppressed, most Germans did not perceive it that way. Most Germans were not on the receiving end of its jackboot. According to Aly:

"The Third Reich was not a dictatorship maintained by force. Indeed, the Nazi leadership developed an almost fearful preoccupation with the mood of the populace, which they monitored carefully, devoting considerable energy and resources toward fulfilling consumer desires, even to the detriment of the country's rearmament program." (25)

Aly paints another picture of the regime, at least as it was experienced by Germans. Hitler's regime was very popular, radical, and young. It was not perceived as representing the old, stale, conservative order. It was seen as very new and different. The Nazi revolution was seen as exciting. It was a revolution for and by the young. For example:

"When Hitler came to power in 1933, Joseph Goebbels was thirty-five years old. Reinhard Heydrich was twenty-eight; Albert Speer, twenty-seven; Adolf Eichmann, twenty-six; Josef Mengele, twenty-one; and Heinrich Himmler and Hans Frank, both thirty-two. Hermann Göring, one of the eldest among the party leadership, had just celebrated his fortieth birthday." (13-14)

Later, during World War 2, according to one survey, the average age of mid-level party leaders was 34, and within the government 44. (14) Nazi leaders were some of the youngest in the world. Germans in their 20s and 30s were deciding major state policies. The Nazi young were shaping the world. They were deciding the fates of peoples and nations. Most Germans did not see the regime as oppressive and stogy, they saw the regime as (NEXT)

The Zoot Suit Riots: Yet Another Indictment of Amerikan Racism

(RAIM-Denver) The zoot suit riots that took place in Los Angeles in 1943 are an indictment of the inherent racism of the American armed forces. The riots began after the much-publicized trial and subsequent conviction of Henry Leyvas and associates for the murder of Jose Diaz. Henry Leyvas and his girlfriend were beaten by rival pachucos at a popular meeting spot known as the Sleepy Lagoon. Leyvas recruited others to search out the men who had beaten him and his girlfriend. The fight was carried to a ranch house located near the Sleepy Lagoon. The next morning Jose Diaz was found dead. 1

Diaz's autopsy revealed that he was intoxicated and died from blunt-force trauma to the head. There was never conclusive evidence that the death was a murder. The trial was a sham. The defendants were not allowed to sit or consult with their lawyers. They were forced to remain wearing their zoot suits during the trial in an effort to portray the young men as "hoodlums." The trial was a platform for the racism prevalent in LA. The men were not allowed a fair trial and racial tensions escalated. The men were sent to prison and zoot suits were further associated with the "violence" of the Mexicano/Chicano community. 2

Later that year the zoot suit riots began. Sailors rushed into LA and began savagely beating and stripping anyone who was found wearing a zoot suit. Other members of oppressed communities were beaten as well, including blacks and Filipinos. The riot

continued for several days and soldiers in the area joined the sailors in their racist beatings. Eventually, downtown Los Angeles was declared off-limits to military personnel and the rioting came to an end. 3

The trial and the riots are one of limitless examples of racism in America. This instance highlights the racial tensions in Los Angeles, a city with a large Chicano/Mexicano population. The men who were tried were done so in an effort to indict the Chicano community as murderous and violent. This further escalated the racially tense Los Angeles area. The most vehement of America's racists, the armed services, took advantage of this heightened tension and sought out and beat men and boys, Chicano and black. The riots were largely aimed at the Chicano community, but other oppressed communities felt the fists of the sailors and soldiers.

The zoot suit riots are a famous example of American racism, but there are many others. Incidents like this have happened all over America, including California, the Southwest, and the South. Racism and brutality is a part of American history, from lynching to residential schools. There have been other racially motivated public showings since the time of the zoot suit riots. The riots that followed the beating of Rodney King by LAPD were in protest of police violence against the black community.

One, of many, contemporary examples of racism against Chicanos/Mexicanos is the (NEXT)

(HITLER'S) redesigning a young and brave new world:

"For most young Germans, National Socialism did not mean dictatorship, censorship, and repression; it meant freedom and adventure." (14)

Even during the war, the regime was popular:

"The German leadership created and maintained a kind of wartime socialism aimed at attracting the loyalty of ordinary citizens." (53)

The regime was not dominated by conservative pessimism, but by youthful optimism about over-coming the old divisions between Germans. The regime saw the traditional divisions and inequality between Germans as a big part of the problems that faced

the nation. The youthful spirit of the regime meant that it was more likely to take on ambitious social programs to overcome these divisions. The regime put a premium on unity and social peace, at least among Germans. This peace was more often than not bought at the expense of other peoples. Even though the Nazi ideology preached inequality between the races, it placed great importance on equality among Germans. This was the "socialist" aspect to "National Socialism." Although, in reality, there was nothing truly socialist about the Nazi regime. There is no such thing as "National Socialism," the only true socialism is internationalist. Real socialism does not merely represent the interests of a single nation's workers. Real socialism represents

the interests of the proletariat, which is the international revolutionary class. Socialism and communism should not be confused with nationalism.

Debt, Taxation, Aryanization

As the Nazi regime began its rearmament program, it borrowed extensively. As the regime rearmed, and even as it went to war, it sought to shift the burden away from ordinary Germans. The regime sought to keep the social peace. During World War 1, between 1914 and 1918, the average German's standard of living fell almost 65 percent. The Third Reich did not want a repeat of this situation as they planned for World War 2. (35) In 1939, one Nazi law stipulated: "Previous standards of (PAGE 25)

Review: Jasiri X, Choose a Side

(By PTT of MIM Prisons)

(<http://www.prisoncensorship.info/news/all/US/995/>)

Jasiri X is a hip hop artist from Pittsburgh who raps the news over some dope beats produced by The Grand Architect Paradise Gray of X Clan. The two release these tracks as videos on youtube.com in a series titled “This Week with Jasiri X.” Jasiri X is popular in activist circles, frequently performing at benefits and rallies. We’ve been bobbing our heads to X’s tracks since the release of OG3 – Oscar Grant Tribute in January 2009, but in light of his most recent release, American Workers vs. Multi-Billionaires, we decided to take a closer look.

OG3 tells the story of the murder of Oscar Grant and the rebellions following his murder, from the points of view of Oscar Grant and the protesters. Although the facts aren’t 100% correct in OG3, it is a good example of the many tracks Jasiri X has released about police brutality and aggression against Black people in Amerika. A track titled Free the Jena 6 was one of the first that got peoples’ attention, and he continues to shout out victims of police execution and violence by name.

When working on an international piece, Jasiri X correctly draws connections between police brutality here and imperial aggression against Third World peoples around the world. He recently released a track about the uprisings in Egypt with M-1 of Dead Prez, titled We All Shall Be Free!

Despite his revolutionary lean, Jasiri X still holds on to his Amerikanism on several issues, which comes up big time in American Workers vs. Multi-Billionaires. The video for this song was shot inside the capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin, against a backdrop of labor aristocrats raising a stink to keep their “fair share” of the imperialist pie. The title implies that a line is being drawn between Amerikan “workers” and

the capitalist multi-billionaires with this union busting legislation. However, as outlined in several articles and books(1) Amerikan “workers” are actually fundamentally allied with the imperialist, capitalist class on an international level. It is only because of the pillage of resources and lives in the Third World that the government employees in Wisconsin even have health care in the first place. Defending this “right” to health care is essentially the same thing as supporting Amerikan wars, which Jasiri X says he is against. History has shown that the multi-billionaires won’t give up theirs without a fight.

“When did the American worker become the enemy? Why is wanting a living wage such a penalty?”

- Jasiri X from “American Workers vs. Multi-Billionaires”

The Amerikan “worker,” or labor aristocrat, is the enemy of the majority of the world’s people because their lives are subsidized by the economic exploitation of the Third World. Third World peoples’ sweat, blood, and lives are wasted to pay for the Amerikan “worker’s” pensions and health care. This is because most of the “work” that Americans do does not generate value; we have a service-based economy. The only reason our society has such a disproportionately high “living wage” (as if those who make less die) is because we are comfortable swinging our weight around in imperialist wars of aggression to extract wealth from the Third World. Jasiri X seems to be opposed to this extraction of wealth, but does not make the connection that Amerikan “workers” are directly benefiting from it, and not just the multi-billionaires.

Jasiri X seems to adhere to an anti-racist model of social change. Besides being supported by an incorrect analysis of history, it also has him defending Obama as a Black man, rather than attacking (NEXT)

(ZOOT SUIT) actions of the Minutemen, particularly in Arizona. Shawna Forde, a leader of the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps and the Minuteman American Defense, was recently convicted of the murder of Raul Flores and his daughter Brisenia Flores. This was one of a series of crimes planned or perpetrated by the minutemen in Arizona against Chicanos/Mexicanos.

Joe Arpaio is another instance of settler racism towards Chicanos/Mexicanos. His infamous tent city, near Phoenix AZ, houses inmates in inhumane conditions. The temperatures in this region can reach over 100 degrees in the summer. Joe Arpaio admits that his department arrested predominantly “Hispanic” people. The tent city houses many detained migrants

and men awaiting trial. The population of this prison is largely Chicano/Mexicano. Arpaio represents the attitude of the pigs in the Southwest regarding the Chicano community. 4

The settler population of the US is vehemently racist against those from whom the land was stolen. There are numerous examples of settler brutality against oppressed communities throughout the history of the United States. The zoot suit riots were perpetrated by the armed wing of settlerism, but the settlers themselves, such as Shawna Forde, are intimately involved in violence perpetrated against the Chicano/Mexicano communities across the Southwest and West.

Review: “The Trajectory of Historical Capitalism and Marxism’s Tricontinental Vocation” by Samir Amin. Monthly Review, Volume 62, Number 9.

Reviewed by Nick Brown

The main contradiction in the world is between the Global North and the Global South. Due to super-exploitation of the Third World, the “masses” in the First World have been bought off. The main battleground for revolutionary change lies not in the imperialist cores, but in the exploited peripheries. These ideas, often expounded by the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement, are not ours alone. In his recent essay, “The Trajectory of Historical Capitalism and Marxism’s Tricontinental Vocation,” Samir Amin, director of the Third World Forum and author of the recent book ‘The Law of Worldwide Value,’ presents a similar series of arguments regarding what he calls the struggle for socialism and communism.

Samir Amin is part of a trend in Marxism which has adopted ‘World Systems’ and ‘Unequal Exchange’ Theory views regarding global class structure. According to these theories, capital accumulation in great part happens internationally between the imperialist core (the First World triad of Europe, the United States and Japan) and the periphery (what RAIM normally refers to as the Third World). This happens through forced disparities in wages and prices on the international market, as well as through other financial manipulation and means of active coercion. Though the details vary, other authors and organizations which have adopted World Systems and Unequal Exchange Theories as part of a revolutionary analysis include Arghiri Emmanuel, Immanuel Wallerstein and the Leading Light Communist Organization.

Amin’s essay begins with his own account of the historic rise and development of capitalism, which he divides into “three distinct, successive phases: (1) a lengthy preparation[...] from 1000 to 1800; (2) a short period of maturity (the nineteenth century), during which the ‘West’ affirmed its domination; (3) the long ‘decline’ caused by the ‘Awakening of the South’ [...] in

which the peoples and their states regained the major initiative in transforming the world—the first wave having taken place in the twentieth century.”

According to Amin, it was within the first phase of capitalism, its preparation, that the development of latter phases was sealed:

“The European (“Western”) form of historical capitalism that emerged in Atlantic and Central Europe, in its offspring in the United States, and later, in Japan, developed its own characteristics—notably a mode of accumulation based on the dispossession, first, of the peasants and then of the peoples in the peripheries, who were integrated as dependencies into its global system.[...]”

Amin describes mature capitalism between 1800-1900 as dynamic yet destructive in nuanced, theory-laden terms:

“Historical capitalism took on its final form at the end of the eighteenth century with the English Industrial Revolution that invented the new ‘machine factory’ (together with the creation of the new industrial proletariat) and the French Revolution that gave rise to modern politics.

“Mature capitalism developed over the short period that marked the apogee of this system in the nineteenth century. Capital accumulation then took on its definitive form and became the basic law that governed society. From the beginning, this form of accumulation was constructive (it enabled a prodigious and continuous acceleration in the productivity of social labor). But it was, at the same time, destructive. Marx observed that accumulation destroys the two bases of wealth: the human being (victim of commodity alienation) and nature.

“In my analyses of historical capitalism I particularly stressed a third dimension of accumulation’s destructiveness: the material and cultural dispossession of the dominated peoples(NEXT)

(JASIRI X)him as the chosen leader of the largest and most aggressive imperialist country in the world. Jasiri X correctly pins Obama as an ally of the Amerikan people; their key to a comfortable lifestyle and fat retirement plan. But as an ally of the oppressed, Jasiri X should accept that Obama, and the labor aristocracy, are enemies of the majority of the world’s people, and leave patriotism behind. Agitating for the betterment of people in Haiti, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, etc. as Jasiri X does through some of his raps, while at the same time

defending Obama and the Amerikan “worker,” is a recipe for stagnation. If we want to end oppression the world over, we need to have a clear idea of who are our friends and who are our enemies.

[RAIM adds: Not only does First Worldism lead to stagnation in terms of organizing in the First World, but it is detrimental to the overall struggle of the world’s exploited and oppressed people against imperialism.]

(AMIN) of the periphery—whom Marx had somewhat overlooked. This was no doubt because, in the short period when Marx was producing his works, Europe seemed almost exclusively dedicated to the requirements of internal accumulation. Marx thus relegated this dispossession to a temporary phase of “primitive accumulation” that I, on the contrary, have described as permanent.”

Amin describes capitalism after 1900 as being in a long period of decline, i.e., a period in which ‘socialist transition’ is possible. According to Amin, the ‘long decline’ of capitalism continues today, despite attempts by Capital to recover through increased centralization.

“This qualitative transformation of capitalism took shape with the setting up of new production monopolies (no longer only in the areas of trade and colonial conquest, as in the mercantilist period) at the end of the nineteenth century.... The emergence of monopoly capitalism... showed that classic, freely competitive capitalism, and indeed capitalism itself, had by now ‘had its day,’ and become ‘obsolete.’ [...]”

“A host of major questions arise from this interpretation of the ‘long decline’ of capitalism, which concern the nature of the ‘revolution’ that was the order of the day. Could the ‘long decline’ of historical monopoly capitalism be synonymous with the ‘long transition’ to socialism/communism? Under what conditions?”

Amin describes our current period as one of “generalized monopoly capitalism” and peripheral resistance:

“Lenin described the imperialism of the monopolies as the “highest stage of capitalism.” I have described imperialism as a “permanent phase of capitalism” in the sense that globalized historical capitalism has built up, and never ceases from reproducing and deepening, the center/periphery polarization. [...] Lenin was certainly too optimistic, having underestimated the devastating effects of the imperialist rent—and the transfer associated with it—on the revolution from the West (the centers) to the East (the peripheries). [...]”

“Nevertheless, capitalism underwent a second long crisis that began in the 1970s, exactly one hundred years after the first one. The reactions of capital to this crisis were the same as it had had to the previous one: reinforced concentration, which gave rise to generalized monopoly capitalism, globalization (“liberal”), and financialization.[...]”

“The second wave of the centralization of capital, which took place in the last third of the twentieth century, constituted a second qualitative transformation of the system, which I have described as “generalized monopolies.” From now on, they not only

commanded the heights of the modern economy; they also succeeded in imposing their direct control over the whole production system. The small and medium enterprises (and even the large ones outside the monopolies), such as the farmers, were literally dispossessed, reduced to the status of sub-contractors, with their upstream and downstream operations, and subjected to rigid control by the monopolies.

“At this highest phase of the centralization of capital, its ties with a living organic body—the bourgeoisie—have broken. This is an immensely important change: the historical bourgeoisie, constituted of families rooted locally, has given way to an anonymous oligarchy/plutocracy that controls the monopolies, in spite of the dispersion of the title deeds of their capital. The range of financial operations invented over the last decades bears witness to this supreme form of alienation: the speculator can now sell what he does not even possess, so that the principle of property is reduced to a status that is little less than derisory.

“The function of socially productive labor has disappeared. The high degree of alienation had already attributed a productive virtue to money (‘money makes little ones’). Now alienation has reached new heights: it is time (‘time is money’) that by its virtue alone ‘produces profit.’ The new bourgeois class that responds to the requirements of the reproduction of the system has been reduced to the status of ‘waged servants’ (precarious, to boot), even when they are, as members of the upper sectors of the middle classes, privileged people who are very well paid for their ‘work.’ [...]”

“But the moment of triumph [for Capital] —the second ‘belle époque,’ from 1990 to 2008, echoing the first ‘belle époque,’ from 1890 to 1914—of the new collective imperialism of the Triad (the United States, Europe, and Japan) was indeed brief. A new epoch of chaos, wars, and revolutions emerged. In this situation, the second wave of the awakening of the nations of the periphery (which had already started), now refused to allow the collective imperialism of the Triad to maintain its dominant positions, other than through the military control of the planet. The Washington establishment, by giving priority to this strategic objective, proves that it is perfectly aware of the real issues at stake in the struggles and decisive conflicts of our epoch, as opposed to the naïve vision of the majority currents in Western ‘alterworldism.’ [...]”

“This being so, should one not conclude that capitalism has had its day? There is no other possible answer to the challenge: the monopolies must be nationalized. This is a first, unavoidable step toward a possible socialization of their management by (NEXT)

(AMIN)workers and citizens. Only this will make it possible to progress along the long road to socialism. At the same time, it will be the only way of developing a new macro economy that restores a genuine space for the operations of small and medium enterprises. If that is not done, the logic of domination by abstract capital can produce nothing but the decline of democracy and civilization, to a 'generalized apartheid' at the world level."

Amin sees the division of the world and pattern of resistance in terms similar to those of RAIM:

"My interpretation of historical capitalism stresses the polarization of the world (the contrast of center/periphery) produced by the historical form of the accumulation of capital....It has to be recognized that what the most important social and political struggles of the twentieth century tried to challenge was not so much capitalism in itself as the permanent imperialist dimension of actually existing capitalism... Confronting the basics—i.e., the discovery of the real source of surplus value produced by the exploitation of social labor by capital—is indispensable to this struggle."

Although Amin notes much of First World 'Marxism' is mired in its own chauvinism, he maintains Marxism is the progenitor of his own analysis:

"Marx's thinking associates 'scientific' clarity in the analysis of reality with social and political action (the class struggle in its broadest sense) aimed at 'changing the world.'...If this fundamental and lucid contribution of Marx is abandoned, a double failure is inevitably the result. Any such abandonment of the theory of exploitation (law of value) reduces the analysis of reality to that of appearances only, a way of thinking that is limited by its abject submission to the requirements of commodification, itself engendered by the system. Similarly, such abandonment of the labor value-based critique of the system annihilates the effectiveness of strategies and struggles to change the world, which are thereby conceived within this alienating framework, the "scientific" claims of which have no real basis...."

"Nevertheless, it is not enough just to cling to the lucid analysis formulated by Marx. This is not only because 'reality' itself changes, and there are always 'new' things to be taken into account in the development of the critique of the real world that started with Marx. But more fundamentally, it is because, as we know, the analysis that Marx put forward in Capital was left incomplete. In the planned sixth volume of this work (which was never written), Marx proposed treating the globalization of capitalism. This now has to be done by others, which is why I have dared to advocate the formulation of the "law of globalized value," restoring the place of the unequal development (through the

center/periphery polarization) that is inseparable from the global expansion of historical capitalism. In this formulation, 'imperialist rent' is integrated into the whole process of the production and circulation of capital and the distribution of the surplus value. This rent is at the origin of the challenge: it accounts for why the struggles for socialism in the imperialist centers have faded, and it highlights the anti-imperialist dimensions of the struggles in the peripheries against the system of capitalist/imperialist globalization."

Throughout his essay, Amin mentions "imperialist rent," i.e. the exploitation of the Third World by the First, and how this comes to deeply affect the material basis upon which the exploiter society is built while simultaneously quieting any anti-capitalist demands from taking center-stage there. While RAIM positions that First World workers consume more labor than they expend and are hence net-exploiters, Amin asserts the exploitation of First World workers is "evident" without providing additional arguments for this claim:

"Imperialist rent not "only" benefited the monopolies of the dominant center (in the form of super profits), it was also the basis of the reproduction of society as a whole, in spite of its evident class structure and the exploitation of its workers."

Within the context of the rest of the essay, the statement about the 'evident' exploitation of First World workers is strange. Though it is relevant, the general gist of his essay is the importance of unequal exchange and resistance from the South.

According to Amin, we are now entering a period of great upheaval with the potential towards "socialist transition," led by the social formations of the Third World.

"The second wave of independent initiatives of the countries of the South has begun. The 'emerging' countries and others, like their peoples, are fighting the ways in which the collective imperialism of the Triad tries to perpetuate its domination....Recovering control over natural resources [and labor] is now the order of the day....The popular organizations and the parties of the radical left in struggle have already defeated some liberal programs (in Latin America) or are on the way to doing so. [...]"

"In 2008 the second long crisis of capitalism moved into a new phase. Violent international conflicts have already begun and are visible: will they challenge the domination of the generalized monopolies, based on anti-imperialist positions? How do they relate to the social struggles of the victims of the austerity policies pursued by the dominant classes in response to the crisis? In other words, will the peoples employ a strategy of extricating themselves from a (NEXT)

(AMIN) *capitalism in crisis, instead of the strategy to extricate the system from its crisis, as pursued by the powers that be?*“

RAIM, unlike many World Systems theorists, is a not proponent of ‘general crisis’ theories within the framework of millenarianism. The successful struggle of the world’s masses would be the biggest possible crisis imperialism could face. It is precisely these types of crises we revolutionaries seeks to create. Amin himself realizes this when he attributes the ‘second long crisis’ to the ‘second wave of independent initiative of the countries of the South,’ and when he later states that political radicalization of social movements in the South is key to their success. We can’t sit around waiting for and responding to ‘crisis,’ but instead must help inspire them. For revolutionaries, the bigger the crises, the better.

Nonetheless, it is within this framework of Third World-led progressive class struggle that Amin defines three “dimensions of reality”: the people, the nation and the state.

“The people (popular classes) ‘want the revolution.’ This means that it is possible to construct a hegemonic bloc that brings together the different dominated and exploited classes, as opposed to the one that enables the reproduction of the system of the domination of imperialist capitalism, exercised through the comprador hegemonic bloc and the state at its service.

“Mention of nations refers to the fact that imperialist domination denies the dignity of the ‘nations’ (call them what you will), forged by the history of the societies of the peripheries. Such domination has systematically destroyed all that give the nations their originality—in the name of “Westernization” and the proliferation of cheap junk. The liberation of the people is therefore inseparable from that of the nations to which they belong... Nations want their ‘liberation,’ seen as being complementary to the struggle of the people and not conflictual with it. The liberation in question is not, therefore, the restoration of the past—the illusion fostered by a culturalist attachment to the past—but the invention of the future. [...]

“The reference to the state is based on the necessary recognition of the relative autonomy of its power in its relations with the hegemonic bloc that is the base of its legitimacy, even if this is popular and national. This relative autonomy cannot be ignored as long as the state exists, that is, at least for the whole duration of the transition to communism. It is only after this that we can think of a ‘stateless society’—not before. This is not only because the popular and national advances must be protected from the

permanent aggression of imperialism, which still dominates the world, but also, and perhaps above all, because ‘to advance on the long transition’ also requires ‘developing productive forces.’ In other words, the goal is to achieve that which imperialism has been preventing in the countries of the periphery, and to obliterate the heritage of world polarization, which is inseparable from the world expansion of historical capitalism. The program is not the same as ‘catching up’ through the imitation of central capitalism—a catching up which is, incidentally, impossible and above all, undesirable. It imposes a different conception of ‘modernization/industrialization,’ based on the genuine participation of the popular classes in the process of implementation, with immediate benefits for them at each stage as it advances.”

Beyond the general questions of class, Amin asserts, *“The correct articulation of reality at these three levels—peoples, nations, and states—conditions the success of the progress on the long road of the transition.”*

“There will be an impasse if one of these levels is not concerned about its articulation with the others. The abstract notion of the ‘people’ as being the only entity that counts, and the thesis of the abstract ‘movement,’ capable of transforming the world without worrying about taking over power, are simply naive.”

Conversely, *“a notion of power, conceived as being capable of ‘attaining achievements’ for the people, but which is, in fact, to be exercised without them [...necessarily leads to] the drift to authoritarianism and the crystallization of a new bourgeoisie. The deviation of Sovietism, which evolved from a ‘capitalism without capitalists’ (state capitalism) to a ‘capitalism with capitalists,’ is the most tragic example of this.”*

Beyond these internal challenges of the revolutionary struggle, Amin also cautions the Global South about imperialist counter-offensives:

“The oligarchies in power of the contemporary capitalist system are trying to restore the system as it was before the financial crisis of 2008. For this, they need to convince people through a ‘consensus’ that does not challenge their supreme power. To succeed in this, they are prepared to make some rhetorical concessions about the ecological challenges (in particular about the question of the climate), green-washing their domination, and even hinting that they will carry out social reforms (the ‘war on poverty’) and political reforms (‘good governance’).“

Amin warns against ‘leftists’ buying into such imperialist counter-strategies.

“To take part in this game of convincing people of the need to forge a new consensus—even (NEXT)

(AMIN)defined in terms that are clearly better—will end up in failure. Worse, still, it will prolong fatal illusions. This is because the response to the challenge raised by the crisis of the global system first requires the transformation of power relationships to the benefit of the workers, as well as of international relationships to the benefit of the peoples of the peripheries.”

Again, the notion that First World workers aren't net-beneficiaries in the imperialist system is somewhat awkward given everything else said. We find it hard to believe that Samir Amin wouldn't uphold the fact that most First World workers already consume a disproportionate share of the social product. Perhaps he thinks as some in RAIM and here by conceiving of alternative power structures in which First World workers can participate in their own class suicide. He seems to hint so later in this essay when he states the strategy of de-linking is applicable and necessary in the First World as well the Third. Or perhaps, he is broadly suggesting proximity to Capital is a larger determinate of social consciousness than whether one is exploited by it in the most technical sense. Nonetheless, throughout his essay, Amin, despite his optimism on First World 'workers,' runs into the fact that they are not revolutionary.

Speaking again on the 'Awakening of the South,' which Amin posits as decisive in the most preliminary way, Amin provides a few general prescriptions:

“The political radicalization of the social struggles is the condition for overcoming their internal fragmentation and their exclusively defensive strategy ('safeguarding social benefits'). Only this will make it possible to identify the objectives needed for undertaking the long road to socialism. Only this will enable the “movements” to generate real empowerment.

“The empowerment of the movements requires a framework of macro political and economic conditions that make their concrete projects viable. How to create these conditions? Here we come to the central question of the power of the state. Would a renewed state, genuinely popular and democratic, be capable of carrying out effective policies in the globalized conditions of the contemporary world? An immediate, negative response on the left has led to calls for initiatives to achieve a minimal global consensus, as a basis for universal political change, circumventing the state. This response and its corollary are proving fruitless. There is no other solution than to generate advances at the national level, perhaps reinforced by appropriate action at the regional level. They must aim at dismantling the world system ('delinking') prior to eventual reconstruction, on a different social basis, with the prospect of going beyond capitalism.”

According to Amin, the support of the 'masses' of the core for their own imperialists is a fact that cannot be ignored because it has wide implications in past and future struggles:

“The limits of the advances made by the awakening of the South in the twentieth century and the exacerbation of the contradictions that resulted were the cause of the first liberation wave losing its impetus. This was greatly reinforced by the permanent hostility of the states in the imperialist center, which went to the extent of waging open warfare that—it has to be said—was supported, or at least accepted, by the peoples of the North. The benefits of the imperialist rent were certainly an important factor in this rejection of internationalism by the popular forces of the North....The defeat of internationalism shares part of the responsibility for the authoritarian drifts toward autocracy in the socialist experiences of the past century. The explosion of inventive expressions of democracy during the course of the Russian and Chinese Revolutions gives the lie to the too easy judgment that these countries were not 'ripe' for democracy. The hostility of the imperialist countries, facilitated by the support of their peoples, largely contributed to making the pursuit of democratic socialism even harder in conditions that were already difficult, a consequence of the inheritance of peripheral capitalism.”

Looking to the future and in light of past experiences, Amin foresees some old problems in the revolutionary camp recurring:

“[T]he second wave of the awakening of the peoples, nations, and states of the peripheries of the twenty-first century starts out in conditions that are hardly better, in fact, are even more difficult.[...] In this situation, the collapse of this [imperialist] military project becomes the first priority and the preliminary condition for the success of the second wave of the liberation being undertaken through the struggles of the peoples, nations, and states of the three continents. Until this happens, their present and future advances will remain vulnerable. A possible remake of the twentieth century is not, therefore, to be excluded even if, obviously, the conditions of our epoch are quite different from those of the last century.”

Nonetheless, Amin maintains a degree of cautious optimism.

“This tragic scenario is not, however, the only possible one. The offensive of capital against the workers is already under way in the very heartlands [i.e. Cores] of the system. This is proof, if it were necessary, that capital, when it is reinforced by its victories against the peoples of the periphery, is then able to attack frontally the positions of the (NEXT)

(AMIN) *working classes in the centers of the system. In this situation, it is no longer impossible to visualize the radicalization of the struggles. The heritage of European political cultures is not yet lost, and it should facilitate the rebirth of an international consciousness that meets the requirements of its globalization. An evolution in this direction, however, comes up against the obstacle of the imperialist rent.*"

Despite Amin's hopefulness, he still runs head on into the reality of imperialist exploitation of the Third World and the First World labor aristocracy it has spawned. This reality, according to Amin, keeps the South, for the time being, in the forefront of revolutionary struggle:

"['Imperialist rent'] is not only a major source of exceptional profits for the monopolies; it also conditions the reproduction of the society as a whole. And, with the indirect support of those popular elements seeking to preserve at all costs the existing electoral model of 'democracy' (however undemocratic in reality), the weight of the middle classes can in all likelihood destroy the potential strength arising from the radicalization of the popular classes. Because of this, it is probable that the progress in the tricontinental South will continue to be at the forefront of the scene, as in the last century. However, as soon as the advances have had their effects and seriously restricted the extent of the imperialist rent, the peoples of the North should be in a better position to understand the failure of strategies that submit to the requirements of the generalized imperialist monopolies. The ideological and political forces of the radical left should then take their place in this great movement of liberation, built on the solidarity of peoples and workers."

Even here, RAIM would say Amin is too optimistic. This historical record of internationalism within the First World is slim, far outweighed by examples of chauvinism and bourgeois-tailing amongst the 'left' and so-called 'masses.' Instead of internationalism, a loss of imperialist rent and accompanying privileges will more likely push First World workers towards the path of fascism. As Amin himself noted, throughout the 20th century, the 'masses' of the First World largely supported their own imperialists. Greater class struggle on the part of the people of the Global South may sharpen contradictions within the First World, but that doesn't mean the fundamental history and nature of the First World itself will be erased overnight. Like Lenin before him, Samir Amin is "too optimistic" and underestimates "the devastating effects of the imperialist rent" on political culture and class alignment.

Perhaps Amin's oddest statement, or at least the one with the least explanation throughout the essay, is

his call for the "building a Fifth International of workers and peoples." The history of the previous four Internationals are mired in controversy. Though Amin calls this a "strategic objective," he doesn't elaborate on a Fifth International's specific role in the endgame of the struggle for socialism and communism. Moreover, the nature of any such International is tied to questions of class. Just as Amin states revolution is "impossible unless it provides a solution to the problems of the peoples in the periphery—only 80 percent of the world population!," it is similarly impossible unless it finds ways to overthrow and suppress the First World, only the remaining 20% of the world. If it is to be truly successful, any future International would have to be made up of groups tackling these two related questions.

Despite some obvious problems, Samir Amin's essay provides a clearer picture than the vague 'leftism' and First Worldist 'Marxism' most common today. Samir Amin's analysis, as with RAIM's, goes much further in explaining the world and its potential than the vast majority claiming to be ideological and intellectual representatives in the English-speaking 'left.'

Neither RAIM nor Samir Amin have all the answers, but we provide a series of salient premises from which more refined questions, speculation and practice can flow.

RAIM and Amin at this time disagree over details. Yet, in many ways it is RAIM doing the work in the Global North that Amin says is necessary. Very few groups in the First World besides RAIM offer a vision of "another world" which does in fact provide "solutions to the peoples in the periphery." RAIM supports a broad united front against imperialism and can't be counted amongst those First World 'leftists' which categorically deny the progressive nature of the state when incorporated into the revolutionary, anti-imperialist project. More importantly, while many groups claim to oppose imperialism as an abstract concept, RAIM is one of very few which opposes the "imperialist rent" that Amin prolifically mentions. Going further, RAIM by providing the most clear, direct political analysis possible is working to counter the effect this imperialist rent has on its population. We work to pull First Worlders away from their class (call it what you will) inclinations and towards internationalist solidarity in the most direct way.

RAIM and Samir Amin's analysis is much more sophisticated than much of the left. This isn't hard. Most so-called 'leftists' are movementarians, i.e. they uncritically support whatever 'movement' is popular and accessible to them. Movementarianism is susceptible to First Worldism and other imperialist manipulations. We need more than movementarianism (a kind of fake support) to progress further (NEXT)

Reflections on May Day and the Killing of Osama Bin Laden

(RAIM-Denver) May Day this year, 2011, will also be known as the day that Osama Bin Laden, the purported leader of Al Qaeda, was assassinated by U.S. forces. Any analysis of either of these events would eventually bring up the other, so we will look at both of these together.

May Day Denver 2011

A coalition of activist groups held a May Day block party at La Raza Park here in Denver. RAIM participated with many allied groups. It went off well, with very few hitches. Lots of speakers, food, and politics. There was good music, with DJ Tonic Kemistry, local bands Mono Verde and Wandering Monks, and Rebel Diaz, politically active hip hop from New York. RAIM gave out much literature and engaged many in conversations.

The event attracted over 100 people, many from the activist scenes in Denver as well as others new to it. It was smaller than the event the year before, but regardless it was important to have a space for radical and independent thought even in the heart of empire.

There were many other celebrations around the United States, mainly organized by immigrant, labor, and radical organizations. May Day was revived inside the U.S. recently due to migrant struggles of the past years. There were other celebrations around the world, the people there having a longer tradition of struggle on this day. The media reported hundreds of thousands of people in different countries participating in various street protests and actions celebrating May Day. (1)

Of course this news is overshadowed by the bigger story that day, that Osama Bin Laden, longtime pariah of the United States, was reported to have been killed. The U.S. conducted an assassination hit in a compound in the north of Pakistan where Bin Laden was reportedly dwelling. It ended with Bin Laden and three others shot dead.

This action, happening at night on May Day this year, created jubilation in American streets. Imperialistic nationalism was in the air, American flags waved, people gloating in his death. Cheering like their home team won, because one man died. That man who was responsible for the biggest terrorist attack on the United States in 2001, which made that arrogant nation

feel vulnerable from retaliation for its many crimes it committed around the world.

Yet Amerika as a whole, while cheering this moment, conveniently forgot that it is still at war. Of course war is hardly an appropriate word for a one-sided imperial slaughter. The recent occupations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan have resulted in death tolls that have far surpassed 9/11. Over a million have died in these wars since 2003. Many more will be affected by the disruptions in food, medical care, sanitation, and other effects of the military disruptions. From Army "kill teams" to drone attacks on civilians, people in Afghanistan and Pakistan daily experience the depravity of American military terrorism. With American military involvement also in Libya, Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia, and many other countries, their sovereignty recklessly disregarded. Not to mention the human rights abuses conducted at Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, Bagram Air Force Base, and other outsourcing of torture to its subservient countries. Before this, Iraq had genocidal sanctions imposed on it from 1991 to 2003 that killed over a million people. And even before this, the war in Vietnam which resulted in 3 to 4 million dead of its people, a fact like the others above casually dismissed in the American streets. Left author William Blum shows that Amerika has been at war somewhere ever since its founding. War is embedded in American consciousness.

It is telling that turnouts this day, May Day, in the United States were dramatically more for Bin Laden's death than any of the May Day events organized by migrant, labor, and radical groups. Looking in the past it was more than most anti-war actions. Speaking of which, here's an informative analysis of the anti-war movement. (2) It says what has been evident: the anti-war movement was based on partisan politics, overwhelmingly Democrat, opposed to the reactionary jingoism of Bush. When Bush got out of power and Obama got in many anti-war participants dropped out, even though Obama continued and expanded militarist policies. This study is not news, for the American anti-war movement overall was not motivated out of a concern for victims of imperialist slaughter, but with the costs for Americans themselves, in taxes and their own troops. But now that (PAGE 25)

(AMIN) along the route of revolutionary struggle. We need a clear, critical analysis which both explains real social forces and illuminates possible areas for revolutionaries to intercede. Whereas the First Worldist 'left' is more likely to be acting in tandem with imperialism than against it, it is the hard analysis of

groups like RAIM and authors like Samir Amin which aid and help bring to life deeper resistance to imperialism and the embryo of a future, non-exploitative world.

(MAY DAY)Obama is continuing military actions in other countries there is not only no protests but as seen in the streets last week jubilation about his war crimes. Yes, the Democrat is no wimp, he can kill dark people for profit just like the Republicans.

In another telling example of the Amerikan imperial mentality, the operation that killed Bin Laden was named Geronimo, after the name of the Apache nation resistance leader of the 19th century. This has angered many Native people here predictably. Yet this is at the core of an Amerika that names its weapon systems, not to mention its cars and sports teams, after Native Americans it previously slaughtered in conquest.

Conspiracy theorists will continue to speculate on this incident. Many say he was killed years before, others say he is not dead, others say Al Qaeda is invented and controlled by the United States. The U.S.

(HITLER'S)living and peacetime income levels are to be taken into account when calculating degrees of family support for members of the Wehrmacht." (69) The Nazi regime sought a "socially just sharing of the burden" in the years leading up to the war and after. (38) The regime accomplished this in many ways. For example, the Nazis regime's taxation policies were redesigned to lift the burden from the ordinary German. (55) The Nazi hierarchy rejected tax policies that would alienate their popular support. (50) The Nazis implemented progressive taxation designed to create popular support. One Nazi report was happy of the successes in 1943: "People meet their financial obligations, mortgages are paid off, and court-ordered repossessions are on the decline." (58) Tax breaks were especially extended to farmers and subsidies were extended (55) At the same time, the Nazis increase the tax burden on the wealthy. "The trend toward soaking businesses and the wealthy gained further momentum in the fiscal year 1942-43." (62) Hitler also increased the burden on those who made "effortless income" through investments in the stock market. (65) Industrialists complained that the Nazi regime was siphoning off 80 to 90 percent of business profits in 1943. Even though this figure is an exaggeration, it gives a sense about the Nazi's orientation to keep the social peace at home. (68)

In addition, the Nazis kept the social peace by increasing welfare and state benefits. They voted for an increase in social programs and in pension payments, especially for small-time pensioners. They called for "blue- and white-collar workers to be put on equal footing" to give them a preliminary taste of the harmonious future to come. This future would be achieved by "generous reform of the social welfare state in the interest of working people." Over and over, the more ideological wing of the regime often intervened against the more pragmatic wing. Social peace and

didn't help anything by quickly burying his body at sea, and refusing to release the photos. An imperial power feels it is always above the law. We at RAIM don't care to create conclusions out of flimsy evidence. The crimes the U.S. causes creates a reaction that encompasses many sectors, Al Qaeda being just one of them. The anger of the masses in the Arab and Muslim world are not the result of one man. Imperialism has, and continues to, wreck destruction and death everywhere in this region.

May Day is a day for the working classes, the oppressed and exploited peoples of the world. It is still right to resist Amerikan imperialism, its lackeys, and neo-colonial puppets. The continuing aggression inflicted by U.S. militarism will continue to create resistance on a global scale, and in the end it will fall. We just have to help with the pushing. |

social benefits often won out over fiscal responsibility. Despite budget problems, people like Martin Bormann, Albert Speer, Heinrich Himmler, and Food and Agricultural Minister Herbert Backe intervened for ordinary Germans. Hitler was able to stay aloof from the debate. (57)

As they rearmed, made war, and sought to keep the social peace, the regime went into massive debt so much so that it faced eventual financial collapse. The Nazis borrowed from domestic and foreign sources. Eventually, they would strong-arm occupied countries into "loaning" the regime large sums. The Nazis had no intention of paying these sums back and entered them as revenue in their books. (266) The Nazis used whatever financial tricks were available to hide the true extent of their borrowing. In 1938, Göring stated, "I know no other way to keep my Four Year Plan and the German economy going." (45) The borrowing reached a point where the only solution to keeping the German economy afloat was to cannibalize the Jewish population and, eventually other peoples. The cannibalization of Jewish assets was referred to as "Aryanization." Aly writes:

"Forced to come up with ever more creative ways of refinancing the national debt, they turned their attention to property owned by German Jews, which was soon confiscated and added to the so-called Volksvermögen, or collective assets, which by no means restricted to German society, implied the possibility of dispossessing those considered 'alien' (Volksfremden) or 'hostile' (Volksfeinden) to the ethnic mainstream." (41)

Aly writes:

"[The state] distributed material goods that improved the popular mood. The political leadership unambiguously directed civil servants 'to act, in light of their special responsibility toward all the people, (NEXT)

(HITLER'S)with corresponding understanding of the concerns and needs of family members of front-line soldiers.'" (70)

Aryanization was the transfer of Jewish assets into the hands of the regime and into the hands of ordinary Germans. (41) The regime sought the "definitive removal of Jews from economic life" and "transforming Jewish wealth in Germany into assets that will deny [the Jews] any economic influence." (44)

"Aryanization was essentially a gigantic, trans-European trafficking operation in stolen goods. It may have taken different forms in different countries, but the ultimate destination of the revenues generated was always the German war chest. These funds enabled the Reich to defray its main financial burdens." (184)

Aryanization took various forms from outright plunder of assets and terror against Jewish people to legal and quasi-legal measures. Banks and other financial institutions helped the process. "The bank directors were not the ones doing the actual plundering here, but they acted as accessories, helping maximize the efficiency of the dispossession campaign." (50) Often, the transfer was thinly disguised. For example, the regime forced Jews to surrender their assets for government stocks and bonds. On paper, the Jews were compensated. (43) Göring stated:

"The Jew is being driven from the economy and is surrendering his economic assets to the state. In return he is being compensated. His compensation is noted in the ledger sheet and accrues a certain amount of interest. That is what he has to live on." (45)

In the end, the population would be driven into exile and liquidated in the Holocaust, never redeeming their property. For example, in 1938, Jewish liquid assets, according to one calculation, which excluded real-estate and business assets, totaled 4.8 billion reichsmarks which could be confiscated by the Reich. The process was repeated again and again. This helped keep the state solvent. The state also took preemptive measures when Jews sought to flee or transfer assets out of Germany. In 1938, the state issued an edict that the proceeds of the expulsion of Jews go directly to the Reich. Jewish goods were sold at cheap prices to the public, while at the same time financing the regime's war-chest and social democratic policies. (43-47) Librarian Gertrud Seydelmann recalled the auctions of Aryanized goods in Hamburg's working-class districts:

"Ordinary housewives suddenly wore fur coats, traded coffee and jewelry, and had imported antique furniture and rugs from Holland and France... Some of our regular readers were always telling me to go down to the harbor if I wanted to get hold of rugs, carpets, furniture, jewelry, and furs. It was property stolen from

Dutch Jews who, as I learned after the war, had been taken away to the death camps..." (130)

Aly writes:

"The Reich and its citizens also benefited from the increased availability of capital, real estate, and goods ranging from precious stones and jewels all the way down to the cheap wares sold at flea markets. The dispossession of the Jews also stabilized the economies and calmed the political atmosphere in occupied countries, greatly simplifying the task of the Wehrmacht. Goods sold off at less than their actual worth provided an indirect subsidy to both German and foreign buyers." (248)

The regime sought to justify the plunder of Jewish assets with their racist, but also social democratic, ideology. Those who pushed for social democratic reform were also those who pushed the most genocidal policies. The two were linked. (57) In 1938, Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick stated:

"Assets currently in Jewish hands are to be regarded as the property of the German people. Any destruction of or decrease in their value means a decrease in the collective assets of the German people." (45-46)

Selling off of Jewish goods also slowed down inflation, associated with the war. It also eased the tax burdens on ordinary Germans, yet more benefits accrued from plunder. (186) The Aryanization of assets helped keep the economy afloat, increased the luxuries available to the German population, and helped keep government benefits flowing. The policies were popular with ordinary German tax payers. The Aryanization of Germany would later become the model for a more ambitious Aryanization throughout occupied Europe. (46-48)

War, Occupation, Plunder

Even during the height of the war, Germans were, generally, satisfied with their lot. Just as the Nazis cannibalized Jewish assets in order to increase social peace, they also transferred value from those countries they occupied to Germany. Aly writes:

"[O]nce the Nazi state undertook what became the most expensive war in world history, the majority of Germans bore virtually none of the costs. Hitler shielded the average Aryan from that burden at the cost of depriving others of their basic subsistence." (9)

"The Nazi regime required the constant military destabilization of the periphery in order to maintain the illusion of financial stability at the center of the Reich." (40)

The regime designed elaborate methods to offset war costs and also to keep value flowing from the occupied countries to Germany in order to keep Germans happy. One way that they (NEXT)

(HITLER'S) accomplished this was by requiring occupied countries to pay for their own occupation.

"Over the course of World War II, Germany mandated unprecedented contributions, along with compulsory loans and population-based 'quotas,' on the defeated countries of Europe. These financial tributes soon exceeded the total peacetime budgets of the countries in question, usually by more than 100 percent and in the second half of the war by more than 200 percent." (77)

"By 1943 the majority of the Reich's additional war-related revenues came from abroad, from foreign slave laborers in Germany, and from the dispossession of Jews as 'enemies of the state.' These sources of income underwrote a significant portion of Germany's military efforts." (79)

These occupation costs were used to exact more and more tribute from the defeated. For example, the French complained that the tribute paid to Germany for occupation costs was being used for things that had nothing to do with occupation. (78) In Greece, plundering wiped out "some 40 percent of real Greek income" in 1941. (248) This was part of a larger process of shifting the burdens of the war away from Germans onto other peoples.

Another way that the Germans offset their costs and plundered occupied peoples was through requisitioning materials needed on the spot from occupied peoples. Germans introduced Reich Credit Bank certificates, a kind of promissory note for services and goods used by the occupation forces. These were used so that the military did not have to forcibly confiscate goods. The certificates gave the plunder the appearance of legality, an air of legitimacy. The introduction of certificates was the introduction of a second currency:

"German bayonets forced

the defeated enemy to accept ultimately worthless pieces of paper as a de facto equivalent of their own currency. The damage to the French economy was scarcely noticeable at first, while the German economy earned a tidy profit." (88)

This was repeated elsewhere in occupied areas. This second currency made the short term transfer of value easier, but it also had the side-effect of destabilizing the local currencies of occupied peoples. This made long-term transfer of value more difficult because the introduction of a second currency controlled by the Germans wrecked the economies of the occupied peoples. The introduction of the certificates helped streamline the short-term plunder of occupied peoples. Later, in 1943, these certificates were withdrawn to stabilize the franc in France. (87) This was part of an ongoing conflict between policy makers. Some sought to transfer as much value back to Germany as immediately as possible to offset war costs and keep Germans happy. Others recognized that there would be a bigger pay off to Germans if the economies of occupied countries were kept stable. More value could be siphoned off to Germany in the long term.

Plunder was also carried on through other financial manipulations that benefited Germans at the expense of occupied peoples. The Nazi occupation forces disguised their plunder of the occupied peoples through currency manipulations that favored Germans. The Germans consciously manipulated currency exchange rates in their favor. Currency manipulation benefited both the German economy and soldiers in the occupied countries. Germany relied on the importation of raw materials to maintain its war effort and domestic production. Currency manipulation made the purchase and export of materials to Germany cheaper. It

gave German soldiers in the occupied areas more purchasing power to buy more goods for themselves and allowed them to send more to Germany. Manipulating foreign currencies both kept German consumers well supplied and it added to Germany's war-chest. (76-81)

Plunder in Hand and Mail

German soldiers emptied the shelves of occupied countries. They plundered and stole. However, they also paid for goods that were radically undervalued. German policy was designed to crash the economies of the occupied countries to aid in value transfer to Germany. An intended effect of this was to increase the purchasing power of German soldiers. The goods they acquired were consumed by soldiers themselves or sent back home to Germany through military packages. Also soldiers carried goods back with them when they could. Many Germans look back fondly of the abundance of foreign luxuries made possible by the war. Germans who received goods from the occupied lands "boasted and bragged." Aly quotes a German who lived through the period:

"I remember a number of nice things.. that friends and relatives would proudly unpack from parcels received from 'abroad'... People had more respect for the sender and compared him favorably with those who hadn't sent anything back." (97)

Laws were changed to encourage the smooth flow of value to Germany. Deputy Finance Minister Reinhardt intervened to settled complaints on Germany's northern and eastern borders. He invoked a decree by Hitler: "It is the Fuhrer's will that as many foodstuffs as possible be brought back home from the occupied eastern territories and that customs authorities take a hands-off approach." (106) Also, the customs border between (PAGE 28)

(HITLER'S) Germany and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Monrovia was abolished. This prompted a "purchasing frenzy" among German soldiers. One official wrote, "the luggage nets of the express trains are packed to the roof with heavy suitcases, bulky packages, and stuffed bags." Everyone, even those of high rank, were packaging their luggage with "the most extraordinary consumer goods – furs, watches, medicines, shoes – in nearly unimaginable quantities." (97) One historian describes what the French called "potato beetles":

"Loaded with heavy packages, German soldiers departed from the Gare de l'Est for home leave. They had been acquired in countless petty transactions, but they did significant damage to the French national economy, playing a significant role in the development of the black market and inflation. They were the reason it was increasingly difficult for everyday French people to procure the basic necessities." (98)

In 1942, when debate arose over the failure to enforce customs policies, Göring intervened, "*Mr. Reinhardt, desist with your customs checks. I'm, no longer interested in them... I'd rather have unlimited amounts of goods smuggled in than have customs duties paid on nothing at all.*" The Nazi elite intervened against the bureaucracy and in favor of the ordinary German. Thus ordinary Germans benefited in a very direct and tangible way from the occupation of defeated peoples.

Conflicts again arose between those bent on helping the ordinary Germany by the immediate plunder and those with a more long-term approach. In these debates, Göring stated:

"It has been said that we need to restrict soldiers' access to their pay, or it will cause inflation in France. But inflation is what I want to see more than anything else... The franc

should be worth nothing more than a sheet of a certain type of paper used for a specific purpose. That will hit France exactly the way we want to hit France." (105)

Throughout the war and occupations, debates arose within the regime about how best to transfer value out of the defeated and occupied countries. Bureaucrats weighed the pluses and minuses of short-term and long-term strategies. However, throughout, the Nazis were very aware to design occupation policies to benefit the German state, but also to benefit the ordinary German and keep the social peace.

Slavery

An estimated 8 to 12 million slave laborers, mostly from Eastern Europe, worked for the Nazi regime. They worked under dangerous and inhuman conditions, often in the German arms industry. In the most infamous cases, especially in the East, German and German-backed enterprises and organizations "worked to death [their forced laborers] in conditions of virtual slavery." (161) Even capitalists complained on occasion. For example, conditions were so bad for forced laborers that sometimes German companies protested their treatment. For example, in East Prussia, German companies complained that Polish workers were being so brutally exploited that there was no incentive to work. They complained to the Nazi regime that the system was so brutal that it was hindering the ability to produce. Sometimes these workers received a nominal "pay" that was 15 to 40 percent lower than the average German pay. They "paid" the workers as part of public relations to shield themselves from criticism. However, the reality is that the authorities invented a number of schemes to cheat their workers and confiscate this "pay." For example,

when Germans occupied northern Italy, in September 1943, they put more than half a million POWs to work in the Reich as forced laborers. "Pay" was deposited into an account supposedly set up for the workers' families to be able to withdraw the funds. However, the pay never made it back to the families of the forced laborers. Rather, the funds were secretly converted into German treasury bonds to pay for external occupation costs. (156-161)

The Germans stole the possessions of forced laborers. For example, when forced laborers were conscripted in the Ukraine, "Possessions left behind as well as any cash" were handed over and sold. "Animal inventory (horses, cows, pigs, sheep, chickens, geese, etc.) as well as hay, straw, and field crops" were offered up for sale to the economics command of the local Wehrmacht division. The money from the sale of the assets of forced laborers eventually made their way to the German treasury. In theory, these funds would be transferred back to their owners at a later date. The reality is the funds only made their way into German accounts. This pattern was repeated over and over. The plunder, exploitation and taxation of German forced laborers ended up benefiting the German populace. It gave the cash-strapped German welfare programs a boost. (163-164)

Fat Germans and the Starving East

The Nazis also enacted policies of total plunder, designed to both aid Germans and to destroy enemy populations. In 1941, Göring issued a statement, "As a general principle for occupied territories, only those who work for us should be assured of receiving the food they need." He advocated "ruthless conservation measures" to ensure the flow of food to Germany. Some of the first to be affected by these policies were Soviet (PAGE 29)

(HITLER'S) POWs. Goebbels noted: "The catastrophic starvation there exceeds all description." In Riga, German soldiers discussed their "assignment to let Russian POWs starve and freeze to death." By, February 2, 1942, 2 million of the 3.3 million Red Army prisoners, 60 percent, had died in the hands of the German camps or in transit. (174-175)

The policy of starving Soviet POWs and Jews was also applied to Soviet cities. Göring addressed an audience in 1942, telling them that "we are feeding our entire army from the occupied territories." He went on to announce that food rations would be increased and there would be a "special allocation" for Christmas. Göring proclaimed: "From this day on things will continue to get better since we now possess huge stretches of fertile land. There are stocks of eggs, butter, and flour there that you cannot even imagine." He also announced that there would be an "opening up of space in the East" that would allow for a return of "near-peacetime conditions." He promised that the war would be fought to "successful conclusion without major privations." One report stated that "Göring spoke to the heart and stomach." (175) Aly shows some representative statistics showing how much food was transferred:

In 1942, one official wrote that his job was to relieve "*the home front as much as possible from the need to send supplies.*" All that was left over that "*the Wehrmacht couldn't find a use for*" was to be sent back to Germany.

"Huge amounts of wheat, sunflower seeds, sunflower oil, and eggs are being transported for distribution to the Reich. If, as my wife wrote me, the few weeks of food production should be see the successful delivery of sunflower oil, I can say with pride that I was

directly involved in the operation." (178-179)

In 1942, extra food sent back from the front was directed especially toward Germans engaged in hard physical labor, pregnant women, and Aryan senior citizens. Ordinary German citizens also benefited. Their access to food and purchasing power increased as a result of the plundering of food. One German recalled after the war, "*During the war we didn't go hungry. Back then everything worked. It was only after the war that things turned bad.*" (178-179)

German National "Socialism"

Nazis sought to advance the interests of Germans by creating a great German-centered empire. This vision was linked to the subjugation of other peoples, including the genocide of the Jews and Eastern peoples. Other countries were to be subdued, their populations made to work for the benefit of Germans. Eastern peoples would be enslaved and exterminated, so their land could be settled. Hitler once compared his Eastern ambitions with the genocide and Western expansion of the United States in North America. This vision aimed at German social peace, at elevating the standard of living of ordinary Germans. Aly writes:

"The constant Nazi talk of needing more space and colonies, of Germany's place on the world stage and eastward expansion, as well as of the imperative of 'de-Jewification,' was aimed at hastening a rise in the German standard of living, which the domestic economy alone could never have supported." (317)

Himmler, in his capacity as Reich commissioner for settlement projects, stated:

"The territories in question have been conquered by armed campaigns as part of a war waged by all Germans [so that] the fruits of

this victory may benefit the entire German people." (306)

Reducing class differences was a big part of the plan to settle Germans in Eastern Europe. (30-31) Reducing divisions and social peace among Germans were a big part of Nazi ideology. Hitler promised equality to all members of the Volk. During the war, every member of the Volk was to be provided for. In 1940, an observer from the Social Democratic Party reported that in Berlin: "*The working classes thoroughly welcome the fact that 'the better off' have, in practical terms, ceased to be that.*" Rationing policies during the war strove for equality among Germans. (322)

Elevating ordinary Germans was a big part of Nazi policy. Their loyalty was secured through progressive taxation policies designed to lift the burden from working and lower-strata Germans. Their loyalty was bought by increasing their wages, purchasing power, and access to consumer goods. Nazi policies sought to increase the benefits to ordinary German workers. They sought to expand privileges once reserved for the upper classes to the lower classes. For example, the Berlin regional warden of the German Labor Front was very energetic in his promotion of benefits to labor:

"In 1938 we want to devote ourselves more and more to reaching all those comrades who still think that vacation travel isn't something for blue-collar workers. This persistent misconception must finally be overcome." (21)

In 1943, at the height of the war, Nazis were fixated on keeping Germans happy. Martin Bormann stated: "The spending power of the broad masses is what's important!" (57) Nazi policy did much to shift the burden off of ordinary Germans to the conquered peoples, but also to the upper classes in Germany:

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(HITLER'S) "From the fall of 1941 onward, the political leadership blocked all proposals by finance experts to levy supplementary wartime taxes on the wages and everyday consumer spending of average Germans. They had no such scruples about taxing the upper classes." (312)

was to keep all Germans happy." (324)

"Later, when the fighting was over, the fateful collaboration of millions of Germans vanished, as if by magic, to be replaced by a wildly exaggerated — and historically insignificant — record of resistance to Hitler." (319)

All of these popular measures combined in National "Socialism." The Nazi regime kept Germans well fed. It turned genocide and the conquest of other peoples into a gold rush. Ordinary Germans willingly participated. "[C]oncern for the welfare of Germans was the decisive motivation behind policies of terrorizing, enslaving, and exterminating enemy groups." (309)

Aly holds that it was the Nazi appeal to the stomach more than ideological pronouncements about the "master race" that kept the German population loyal. "The Nazi regime profited from the basic satisfaction of ordinary Germans, regardless of whether they felt a sense of attachment to or... distance from the party ideology." (311)

Because the regime sought to advance the interests of ordinary Germans, real resistance to the regime "from below" never materialized. Aly dismisses the myth-making that has surrounded a German supposed "resistance" to Hitler.

"Germans were kept passive and generally content by a lavish social welfare system that was paid for by these riches. The improvement in the public mood that came with increases in people's material welfare..." (304)

"Nothing less than massive popular greed made it possible for the regime to tame the majority of Germans with a combination of low taxes, ample supplies of consumer goods, and targeted acts of terror against social outsiders. The best strategy in the eyes of the public-opinion-conscious Nazi leadership

This lack of resistance was also reflected in the size of the Gestapo:

"[T]he Gestapo in 1937 had just over 7,000 employees, including bureaucrats and secretarial staff. Together with a far smaller force of police, they sufficed to keep tabs on more than 60 million people. Most Germans simply did not need to be subjected to surveillance or detention." (29)

The parallels today are obvious. Just as Hitler elevated the German population on the backs of the defeated peoples, First World peoples live on the backs of the Third World peoples. Just as people waited in vain for a German worker's revolution against Hitler, they wait in vain for First World worker's revolution. The Nazis were not defeated internally, the Nazis were defeated externally, by the Red Army. German workers did not oppose the Nazi regime because they benefited from it. They willingly joined in the cannibalization of other peoples. Today, First World peoples as a whole join with their own rulers against the peoples of the Third World. We are in the middle of yet another world war, a war by the First World against the Third World. This war only benefits the First World at the expense of the Third World. Just as Hitler was defeated by the Red Army, so too must the First World be defeated by a global people's war led by Leading Light Communists.

Metaphysics versus Materialism
Karl Marx famously critiqued the idea that history should

be explained as a series of great men. Instead of looking at history as the result of great men or cabals of great men, Marx looked at history scientifically. Marx looked at the world through the lenses of power. Marx traced historic and social phenomena back to power systems of classes, nations, and genders. Marx called this historical materialism. Aly applies historical materialism to the question of how Nazism could have happened.

"So complex an answer to the question of how Nazism could have happened does not lend itself to mere antifascist sloganeering or didacticism of museum exhibits. It is necessary to focus on the socialist aspect of National Socialism, if only as a way of advancing beyond the usual projections of blame onto specific individuals and groups — most often the delusional, possibly insane Fuhrer but also the cabal of racist ideologues or the members of a particular class, like bankers and business tycoons, or certain Wehrmacht generals or the elite killing units. The chief problem with such approaches is they all suggest that a special group of evil 'others' bears culpability for Nazi crimes." (8)

Aly extends our understanding of the relationship between fascism and social democracy. Aly's book develops the analysis of the Comintern in the 1930s. Whether Aly is aware of it or not, Aly stands in the tradition of Marxists like Rajani Palme Dutt and the theories of "social fascism." Aly casts aside "leftist" dogma. Rather Nazism is explained by ruthlessly looking at its material origin. The Nazis represented an alignment of social forces, which included German workers. German workers supported the Nazis. The Nazis returned the favor. In many ways, the Nazi politics was very similar to their social democratic opponents. It was Lenin who (PAGE 31)

Music Video, “Illmerica,” Reviewed by Nick Brown

“Illmerica” is a recent electro-house song by US dance music producer, Wolfgang Gartner. Though the song itself is absent lyrics, the video is highly critical of the United States.

Unlike most Western and Western-inspired dance music videos, “Illmerica” combines popular aesthetics with political criticism. Many messages are presented in different ways throughout the video. However, one message stands out: Amerikan history is one of violence and bloodshed. Amerika is, as evident from the video, not to be exalted.

Violence between factions of oppressors is depicted prominently. The video quickly flows through scenes of the Amerikan ‘Revolutionary’ and ‘Civil’ wars and World Wars I and II. These are shown as conflicts presaging even further violence, imperial expansion, and conquest, not leading to further freedom or democracy as typical pro-US narratives tell.

Unfortunately, the video fails to highlight the realities and perspectives of Third World peoples, whose greatly exploited positions are the basis of all First World society and culture. Similarly, people of captive, oppressed nations are depicted infrequently and as lacking agency. A confused, one-sided presentation

(HITLER’S) criticized the German and French social democrats when they supported the war efforts of their imperialist homelands in World War 1. The revisionists placed their own peoples, their own workers, ahead of the global proletariat by doing so. Lenin, by contrast, advocated the policy of revolutionary defeatism. Lenin sought the defeat of the Czarist empire in the hope that a defeat for his imperialist homeland could lead to a revolutionary situation. Contrary to Lenin, the revisionists of the Second International were the social imperialists and social fascists of their day. They were socialist in name, but in reality, they were imperialists. Even the Nazis’ official party name was the “National Socialist German Workers’ Party.” Today, First Worldism is the main form of social imperialism and social fascism. Like the Nazis in World War 2 and the social democrats of World War 1, First Worldists may use Marxist and socialist rhetoric, they may even claim to care about the Third World, but, in reality, they seek to advance the interests of their populations at the expense of the vast majority of humanity. First Worldism raises the red flag to oppose the red flag. Like Lenin before, Leading Light Communism represents the interests of the proletariat and oppressed as a whole. Just as Lenin made the break with the kind of narrow, unimaginative, dogmatic thinking of his day, so does every real revolutionary scientist, so too does Leading Light Communism.

of today’s status of Whites is given, and the video make a point to show an oversized single-family home with a ‘foreclosed’ sign in front of it. Nevertheless, White Amerika is depicted as eternally hypocritical, war-obsessed and degenerate.

Context counts for a lot. Depending on the viewer, the video itself may be a step forward or backwards ideologically. In a nut shell, the video could be described as a critique of Amerika from a narrow perspective. Such a perspective may question aspects of modern imperialism, its bloody history and more philistine habits, but it will never come out against imperialism as a total economic, political, cultural and ideological system. Such a perspective may be at times critical, but it will rarely be oppositional. In a strong sense, videos such as “Illmerica,” along with many so-called “progressive” and “revolutionary” ideologies, do as much or more to legitimize and support the capitalist-imperialist system as they do to oppose it.

The music video for “Illmerica” is progressive in a narrow sense. For listener-viewers steeped in pro-US ideology and with little introduction into alternative history and social theory, such videos may be among the first steps to questioning dominant (NEXT)

The First Worldist outlook is not based on scientific analysis, it is based on dogma. Aly helps demonstrate the bankruptcy of First Worldist chauvinism and the vulgar “workerism” that simply assumes that everyone who makes a wage or receives a salary has a common interest in socialism. Such “workerism” makes the assumption that all employees have a common class interest and can be aligned for socialism. To maintain that all of those who are employed, both in the First World and Third World, are part of the same class is pure metaphysics. The entire twentieth century has shown us that this is simply not the case. The reason that “communism” is considered dead today is that people can easily see that the rhetoric of those claiming to be “communist” does not correspond with reality at all. Even radical Islam, and its jihad against the West, draws the lines of friends and enemies more accurately than First Worldist so-called Marxism. By contrast, Leading Light Communism looks at the real world. Leading Lights look at the actual historical record; Leading Lights look at the actual way social forces align, not how we imagine them to align. Leading Light Communism has brought science back to communism. The Leading Lights have elevated revolutionary science to a whole new stage. Aly’s book is a powerful weapon in the struggle against dipshitism posing as Marxism.

(ILLMERICA)historical and social narratives. Generally however, “Illmerica” has too many failings to list. As with any number of so-called critics of imperialism, this should be expected. Such ‘critical’ perspectives will never be able to provide clear answers nor give solid meanings to the vast majority of people of the world struggling against imperialism. To accomplish these latter tasks, revolutionaries study the history of people’s struggle and inform themselves through internationalist practice. The video for Wolfgang Gartner’s “Illmerica” is notable because it is critical of Amerika. We must be critical of everything and hate Amerika. |

There are No Rights ...

... Only Power Struggles



THE REVOLUTIONARY ANTI-IMPERIALIST MOVEMENT