DARE TO WIN



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14 Caribbean Nations Sue Imperialist Powers

Fourteen Caribbean nations, most being members of Caricom with the inclusion of Haiti and Suriname, are suing Britain, Holland, and France for the legacy of slavery which they claim has "condemned the region to a poverty that still afflicts it today" [1]. The plaintiff nations could be seeking upwards of £200bil citing the British compensation of slave owners when slavery in British lands ended 175 years ago. This legal suit took place after Caricom formed an official commission on reparations for slavery [2].

Interestingly enough, the Caricom committee hired the legal team responsible for winning compensation for the Kenyan victims of British torture following the Mau Mau Rebellion [3]. Coincidentally building upon the conscious nature of this suit that will likely make the British Crown its biggest target.

Clearly, legal action is not what one might consider a manifestation of Global People's War. Equally so, action within the bourgeois legal system should not be seen as a universal precedent for struggling against imperialism. We understand such action to usually fall within the realm of liberalism; especially when granted that the bourgeois legal system could not possibly take real action against the standing of the major imperialist powers as a whole (meaning in the context of the reformist movements and other non-revolutionary socialist politics). Rather what is important to understand is how such action works to advance the consciousness of the world's oppressed peoples against their oppressors

Now, critics have made the usual objections to such action, the most popular being a distrust for reparations as a justifiable mechanism. The problem here being that this suit represents more than reparations for slavery (not diminishing the importance of reparations or the legacy of slavery) but a conscious recognition of how current material conditions have been shaped by imperialist processes and how these current powers are culpable for the abhorrent poverty. Even then, a dislike for reparations usually stems from a reactionary understanding of race and politics at large. With that said, there is a legitimate criticism of reparations to be made in this case; specifically how the imperialist powers might embrace reparations to absolve themselves from

the terrible consequences of their subsequent exploitation. This is worrisome especially in the era of neocolonial 'reconquest' which has intensified in South America and the Caribbean over the past couple of decades. If the imperialist powers were to absolve themselves in this way it would certainly damage the standing of ideological struggle among, within, and outside the periphery.

However, the fact that the respective imperialist powers have resisted this action by the plaintiff nations lends some credibility to the potential victory to be won should damages be awarded.

Other critics have drawn attention to the objective contrast between the more wealthy plaintiff nations and the more drastically poor. Essentially the argument being that nations such as the Barbados and Bahamas have no real need for the development money from damages considering their relative wealth to the region. This would make sense if these nations were not still developmentally depressed from the same legacy of oppression shared with the other plaintiffs Nations like the Bahamas and the Barbados are still functionally dependent on the Global North and if anything are just neatly disguised neocolonies. These nations have only been able to experience infrequent success because their economies have been conditioned by the monopolists in their service. A quick glance at the composition of their economic activity makes it clear these nations are 'successful' only as tropical options for capital to be accumulated by the oppressors.

Setting aside the handbag of contradictions that make themselves apparent when analyzing such action within the scope of Marxism-Leninism, we should see the practical nature of these nations winning such a suit. The case being made by the plantiff nations is fundamentally true. The present condition of the Caribbean, specifically the underdevelopment of its productive sectors, is directly traceable to the respective history of colonization, slavery, and imperialism. The incredible squalor under which so many anguish in the Caribbean is a living testament to the imperialist processes of uneven development and superexploitation. The point

Unrest in the Ukraine: Imperialism and Rivalry

Last Saturday, December 14, US Senator and former GOP presidential candidate John McCain arrived in Kiev to meet with Ukrainian opposition leaders. The meeting comes during a tumultuous period for Ukrainian politics as hundreds of thousands of anti-government protesters have gathered over the past weeks to express blatant discontent with current President Viktor Yanukovych and his administration. Yanukovych recently made the decision to strike a number of economic deals with Russia effectively crowding out European engagement on several planes; this has been received as a sign Yanukovych is moving towards Putin's political ambitions for the former Soviet states. The recent deal combined with numerous charges of corruption which span the past few years prompted opposition leaders in parliament to try and force Yanukovych out of office with a vote of 'no confidence'. Although the vote failed to bring down Yanukovych's administration it severely damaged the political capital thereof and unleashed the flood gate of protests which now fill the streets of Kiev.

The protests caught the immediate attention of the world with the visit of John McCain (and his subse-

quent blame of Obama) as well as the broader Left with the toppling of Lenin's monument by protesters in Kiev.

Both instances can perhaps lend understanding to the political contradictions at work in the Ukraine.

The current political struggle in the Ukraine can be characterized as a struggle, foremost, between imperialist centers; a contradiction of decisive inter-imperialist rivalry. Arguably the most aggressive imperialist conglomerate, the EU is locked in a grudge match of soft power with geo-political rival Russia, both of whom wish to extend political dominance in part for the immediate benefit of an industrialized Ukraine and to counter-pose the desire of the other. Yanukovvch's move to fall under the Russian wing immediately found backlash from the pro-European factions of parliament and sublimated anti-Russian sentiments in the Ukraine especially in the western half of the country. McCain's visit now begins to invoke sentiments of the NATO alliance against Russian imperialism despite the remarkably ambiguous tone coming from the White House.

(Continued: 14 Caribbean Nations)

at which potential damages improve the material security of millions of impoverished Caribbeans is the point at which we must support such action or at least stand in solidarity with the plaintiff.

However, we know that we cannot rely on the bourgeois framework to defeat the bourgeois as a global class. Victory for the exploited and oppressed peoples of the world will only come through a socialist revolution which destroys imperialism and all vestiges of the capitalist class. Yet, we should recognize this suit as a concrete indication of rising consciousness among the oppressed peoples of the Global South. Whether or not this suit succeeds, whether or not its results parallel legitimate relief, we must see this as progress in cultivating proletarian consciousness and internationalism; hopefully, what might progress into the construction of base areas for the anti-imperialist struggle. Nevertheless we need to consolidate our victories, crystallize allied forces, and cement ourselves firmly in solidarity

with the oppressed peoples of Caricom and the Global South; with the world proletariat against the global capitalists and all their reactionary allies.

For the destruction of the old and the construction anew.

- Zak Drabczyk

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[3] Ibid.



Moreover, the toppling of Lenin's monument narrates several features of this inter-imperialist rivalry, particularly among the pro-EU forces. First, we see a starkly anti-Communist and anti-Russian character exuded by the quickly growing fascist Svoboda Party formerly known as the Social-National Party of Ukraine. The All-Ukrainian Union Svoboda, led by Neo-Nazis, gave up their swastikas in the mid 2000's for suits, ties, and a "soft" ultra-nationalist platform that has exploded in popularity over the past couple months. Among their immediate demands include the resignation of Yanukovych, the dismissal of his administration, and a host of fascist political points designed to combat what their leader Oleh Tyahnybok has called the "Muscovite-Jewish mafia". Interestingly, 'Svoboda' translates to 'freedom' reflecting the conception that Ukrainian self-determination lies within the depths of fierce nationalism and anti everything that might be considered Russian (a point which some have hideously attributed to Stalin and the Ukrainian famine of the 1930s). More interesting is how Svoboda and other nationalist factions have reconciled their ideology under the banner of pan-European solidarity; the belief that the Ukraine is decidedly European and a closer relationship with Europe will strengthen the Ukraine as a nation.

And perhaps that is the strength of this emerging European imperialist order; first with the carrot of soft power and 'mutual cooperation' followed by the stick of sanctions and in the case of former colonial possessions, brute force. Of course the terminology behind 'emerging' is uncharacteristic of the broader European imperialist and colonialist historicity. Although the interests of the European imperialists took the back seat to a US-led NATO during the Cold War, the end thereof has meant a resurgence of formally European interests. However, the European monopolists have been able to repackage their conquests under the political guise of 'democratization' and the economic interests of the young national bourgeoisie especially in Eastern Europe. The 'softening' of tactics has meant this diluted European imperialism has been able to slip through the cultural cracks constructed during the previous era.

To this end it appears that eventually the EU will win if the course of developments remains unchanged. Forces within the US, Europe, and more recently the UN are putting tremendous pressure on Yanukovych and his administration to err on the side of their pro-West detractors. While Russia will exercise its heavy economic gravity to sway the Ukraine little can be done to change the opinion of many Ukrainians who find Russia synonymous with foreign domination.

While the people of the Ukraine should rightfully seek their self-determination, the European imperialist center cannot offer anything other than subjugation. This is not to bend towards metaphysics in the realm of national liberation and internationalism. In the specific context of global monopoly capital, the correct resolution to inter-imperialist rivalry is more complicated than 'anything-but-Europe'; or conversely, 'anythingbut-Russia'. Therefore the question in regard to interimperialist rivalry becomes not discerning principal to secondary contradictions but rather the aspects thereof. It is scientifically and generally impossible to form a solid political line on the political contradiction within the Ukraine without first investigating the social realities of the nation. This is the method by which knowledge can become a system of action tempered by anti-imperialist practice; this is the method Communists must adopt in relation to the current situation.

Until then the world will watch and wait for the resolution of this deepening contradiction.

- Zak Drabczyk

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Cattle Ranchers Given Go Ahead to Bulldoze Last Refuge of Uncontacted Ayoreo Indians

The Paraguayan government has recently given Brazilian cattle ranching company Yaguarete Porá S.A. permission to move ahead with bulldozing a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the country's tropical forests.

While the UNESCO reserve itself is important for the sake of preserving ever-shrinking tropical forests and maintaining biological diversity, it is also the home of the uncontacted Ayoreo-Totobiegosode people.

The Ayoreo-Totobiegosode are among the dwindling numbers of uncontacted indigenous peoples in Latin America. By clearing the forest they call home, Yaguarete is threatening the destruction of their very way of life.

Previously contacted members of the tribe were forced out of the forest in 1998 and 2004 by pressure from ranchers. Since then, Ayoreo in contacted villages have experienced devastating rates of tuberculosis and similar lung diseases.

Having never been exposed to the deadly diseases carried by the settlers, the Ayoreo have no immunity and are thus extremely prone to contracting them. Disease has long been used as a means of rudimentary biological warfare by settler-colonialism to clear the way of indigenous peoples who stand in the way of expansion.

Disease compounded with the rapid dietary shifts and other lifestyle changes forced upon contacted Ayoreo has resulted in a significant drop in life expectancy and general physical well-being. This is a part of the ongoing genocide of indigenous peoples of the so-called "Americas."

Cattle Ranching and Corporate Greenwashing

After coming under fire for destroying thousands of hectares of forest land, Yaguarete proposed turning a portion of the forest into a private 'nature reserve.' This underhanded PR move serves solely to create a facade of corporate responsibility. It is a minor sacrifice made by the company in order to continue its larger operations in the forests of Paraguay.

The company currently owns 78,549 hectares of Ayoreo ancestral territory and plans to set aside a measly 16,784 hectares for its 'nature reserve.' The remaining two-thirds will be used to enrich the violent and ecologically destructive beef industry.

Some Ayoreo-Totobiegosode have openly opposed the plans stating that it violates Paraguayan and international law regarding the rights of indigenous peoples.

In the wake of its cynical attempts to save face, Yaguarete was named winner of the 2010 'Greenwashing Award' by human rights organization, Survival International.

Like carbon offsets and emission cap-and-trade programs, setting aside this small piece of land as a nature reserve is a false solution. It does not, and can not counteract the detrimental effects of destroying huge tracts of tropical forest in search of profit.

Unfortunately, Yaguarete's business practices are not an isolated incident in the world of ranching. The cattle industry at large compromises the long-term well-being of our planet and frequently displaces rural poor and indigenous populations. According to the World Wildlife Fund, "the largest environmental impact of agriculture is the conversion of natural habitats to farming land. More pasture is used for cattle than all other domesticated crops combined."

More than two-thirds of the world's agricultural land is currently dedicated to maintaining livestock. Deforestation, overgrazing, and poor agricultural practices have played a major role in the desertification of a third of the world's landmass. The most harrowing effects of this are felt in the already poverty-stricken Third World.

It is estimated that each year a part of the world's rain-forests larger than the State of New York is felled to make way for cattle grazing. After the land is cleared, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and alien species of plant life are introduced to provide enough food to sustain the grazing cattle. In the winter, cattle are fed hay and grains, further accelerating deforestation.

Yaguarete's claim of being dedicated to preserving

Electoral Politics: On the Victory of Kshama Sawant

December 2, 2013

In all honesty, watching the imperialist 'yes men' over at Forbes scream and cry about the legitimacy of a socialist candidate was more than amusing; however, this is not the reason why the electoral victory of Socialist Alternative candidate Kshama Sawant made its way onto Anti-imperialism.com .

Rather Sawant's victory has reopened the tentative discussion on the role of electoral politics in revolutionary praxis and the peculiar situation of organizing in North America.

The socialist Left in the US seems to be still 'dizzy with success' but many have begun questioning the gravity of Sawant's victory in a more formal manner. What does this mean for the revolutionary anti-capitalist movement in North America as a whole and more importantly is this a "real" victory?

This question must be taken with the utmost objectivity and requires an "all-sided" analysis.

While plenty of political criticism can be made of Sawant, let alone the Socialist Alternative, that is neither the objective of this piece nor immediately relevant to the situation at hand. Needless to say there are many functional distinctions between a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist and the equivalent of a 'democratic socialist' which form the foundations of any meaningful criticism; this must at least be kept in mind when reading.

However, we are not interested in a "Maoism vs. Democratic Socialism" piece (at least now). Anyone truly curious in the ideological features which make these two politically incongruent can visit the recommended readings page or perhaps ask a Maoist.

Instead we would like to highlight a few points which necessarily become relevant whenever the issue of electoral politics surfaces. The following is a list of contentions with specific attention to the situation in Seattle and the campaign waged by Kshama Sawant.

1. Is the goal social democracy, or socialism? To the untrained eye these two may seem synonymous but they are most certainly not. The former could crudely be described as "welfare capitalism" (contemporarily) in which 'progressive' organizations pressure the capitalist mode to direct more value towards the working class and petty bourgeois usually in the form of wide

(Continued: Ranchers Bulldoze Refuge)

critical ecosystems is the paragon of blatant capitalist green washing.

Systemic Problems Require Systemic Solutions

Despite the enormity of the problem at hand, proposed solutions have been mild at best. Human rights organizations have called upon the EU, the UN, and the Paraguayan government to enforce international laws protecting the rights of indigenous people. Survival International encourages concerned individuals to write government officials and Paraguayan embassies demanding action to halt the company's ecocidal, colonial practices. Even the Paraguayan government itself has given token acknowledgment to the situation by slapping Yaguarete with a small fine of \$16,800. As per usual, these efforts have proven themselves insufficient.

After an outbreak of foot-and-mouth-disease in 2011, the EU halted beef imports from Paraguay. In Novem-

ber 2013, the World Organization for Animal Health certified that the country is free of the disease and it is expected that the EU will resume imports after its Food and Veterinary Office carries out another inspection.

In light of this, it is clear that the EU, the Paraguayan government, and Yaguarete have a clear material interest in resuming cattle ranching in the region in spite of concerns regarding ecological consequences and violations of indigenous rights.

Capitalism and the political channels it offers are incapable of leading humanity to a just and sustainable society. Because the capitalist ruling class currently holds a monopoly on political, economic, and military power, stopping ecological destruction and protecting the rights of oppressed peoples necessitate an international mass movement against capitalism-imperialism under the banner of revolutionary communism.

- Aspen Miller



social programs e.g. Western Europe. The latter is a transitional period from capitalism to communism characterized by a proletarian conquest of state power and the social ownership of the means of production. Both descriptions are ridiculously simplistic yet even at their crudest levels one can begin to differentiate the two fundamentally. Sawant's campaign carries all the traits of a standard Social Democratic movement: higher minimum wage, housing control, public school policy, steeper income tax, and a rather explicit focus on the "overtaxed" middle classes as the social base for this change. Yet, Sawant's campaign page specifically identifies the "socialist transformation of society" as a campaign goal. Granted the phrase is used eclectically and in the abstract; however, one still must ask whether this rhetoric is attributable to genuine political confusion or outright denial of Marxist methodology. In the future perhaps Sawant and/or her campaign could adequately address this question and clarify what they mean in regard to the "socialist transformation of society".

2. Electoral politics is the breeding ground for capitulation and reformism. Since the early 20th century the Communist movement has had to correct those who believe working within bourgeois politics is the path to socialism. This method especially when understanding the daunting backwardness of the Amerikan electorate becomes increasingly implausible; not including the complicated relationship between and among the 'politically silent' majority, oppressed nations, internal colonies, and engendered socio-politics all of which act as objective conditions which shape the construction of subjective forces. Reformism and capitulation are also highly lethal to a young and fragile revolutionary movement; consistently undermining the political forces building for a real socialist revolution. This does not mean, as some would wrongly suggest, that we should embrace a line of adventurism and start our guerrilla war tomorrow. This is not the only alternative to reformist electoral politics. Instead, we advance the universality of Protracted People's War and the necessity for building Dual Power in the base areas (both of which are subjects for another time but can be studied

http://angrymarxists.wordpress.com/2012/04/17/on-protracted-peoples-war-and-its-universal-applicability/ and http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/apr/09.htm . The presence of electoral politics (reformism) can and does seriously damage these revolutionary efforts. A concrete example would be the effect Sawant's victory will no doubt have on the

Africa Town community in Seattle. A living (granted, limited) example of dual power in the United States. Politics like those of Sawant drag attention and vital resources away from counter-acting the bourgeois organs of power and effectively reinforce them.

This does not mean that electoral politics cannot have some role in revolutionary praxis. In some places under certain conditions this method may be the best course of action. Revolutionaries should never arbitrarily limit their weapons in the conquest of political power. However, electoral politics is certainly not universal and in the specific case of North America (especially Seattle) is indeed counter-intuitive to a genuine revolutionary struggle.

- 3. Who is the revolutionary subject? Nominally the oppressed and exploited, generally the proletariat, however the nuance of which is subjective. This is a question only a concrete investigation into the particular conditions and relationships which compose Seattle (locally) and North America (generally) could answer. Which is precisely the problem and leads to the next question: where is the concrete investigation? Sawant's team seems to have highlighted the bourgeois individualist condition of the "overtaxed" middle class as at least a strong ally to the nominal working class. The obvious remark here is that all who can be united should be united and without a doubt this is not the problem. Was the petty bourgeois and labor aristocracy brought under the helm of the revolutionary proletariat or was the proletariat simply parceled out and dragged through the mud of inter-bourgeois contradiction? Sadly I fear the latter and the inconclusive identity to this struggle lends no weight to its proletarian character.
- 4. Where is the Party? The knee jerk response is a half-witted nod towards the Socialist Alternative yet this is clearly fallacious. The Socialist Alternative is a self-described collection of "community activists" which for better or for worse is not a Communist party as described by Lenin et al. The Party is intrinsically necessary and uniquely capable of transforming proletarian struggle into a social revolution and guiding the direction thereof. Without a Party led by the most advanced from the proletariat the "socialist transformation of society" is essentially impossible. There is no need to continue regurgitating orthodoxy from Marxism-Leninism but the contention remains.
- 5. No to 'independent working class politics', yes to a United Front and proletarian internationalism. In the quest for a "democratic socialist society" Sawant has

On Ariel Sharon: The Atrocity of Imperialism

Saturday, January 11th, saw the passing of one of the most notorious war criminals in world history: Ariel Sharon. The former Israeli defense minister (1981-83), prime minister (2001-06) and military commander oversaw some of the most horrific atrocities committed against a civilian population in the contemporary era. The Kahan commission found Sharon held "personal responsibility" for the Sabra massacre in 1982 where Israeli aligned Lebanese forces butchered a Palestinian refugee camp killing up to 3500 civilians. Observers noted the incredible brutality by which the attack proceeded with women raped and murdered, children and the elderly butchered along with many

victims being mutilated in the massacre. Sharon eventually resigned but was never formally tried for his crimes and would later become prime minister. Through the end of the 20th century Sharon promoted the growth of Israeli settlements onto Palestinian land leading to an explosion in the construction of settler communities; an act of occupation that even the Geneva Convention details as a violation of international law. And neither of these examples could fully summarize the laundry list of abuses committed by Sharon.

Despite all of this his legacy remains an issue of hot debate. But in actuality few, even anti-communists, would defend Sharon as some do in futility. However,

(Continued: Victory of Kshama Sawant)

called for her model to exported all across the United States to elect hundreds of other independent and pro-worker candidates. Noble yet misguided, Sawant's desire illustrates a fundamental misunderstanding in the condition of the working class and its interest in political supremacy. What the working peoples need is a strong United Front of revolutionary organizations, a correct application of the Mass Line, and dual power; further conditioned by international solidarity with the oppressed and exploited peoples of the periphery and semi-periphery. Furthermore, Sawant's model has no way of adequately addressing the oppressed nations held inside the 'belly of the beast' among all internal colonies and the unique position of indigenous struggle. Not to mention that the method of electoral 'struggle' usually presumes some form of structural exclusion for those whom we consider likely allies in the Communist movement

The above five points only sum an analysis which will continue to unfold as the situation progresses.

Although, there is something to gain from the election of Sawant. Particularly how this electoral victory opens up discussion for opposition to the prevailing social order and all facets of capital domination. If anything, the Communist movement can gain from this discursive breathing room and catapult towards a more concrete organization of revolutionary forces towards a revolutionary end. This tactical use however also requires a strategic distance from the moderate (to

say the least) politics of Sawant and company. The correctness of such praxis hinges on the ability to both advance and resist; to join the mobilization against capital domination and defeat revisionist and anti-Marxist tendencies in the process.

Effectively, the monopolists have conditioned the electoral process. This should not change the goal by which we mean the point of political power but how we investigate going about the task. Not to deny the contradictions in organizing for Protracted People's War or the construction of dual power; rather to point how utilizing functions shaped by centuries of imperialism can do little but reinforce the method by which imperialism is justified and materially realized.

A principle for solid mass struggle indicates revolutionary work must begin where the masses will tolerate in any given deposition. This is one of many reasons why we reject the adventurist notion of Focoism. And while such a principle bestows great understanding it must constantly be clarified within the dialectic of universality and application. Electoral politics may be tolerated in the major streams but the existence of a "politically silent" majority which includes many nationally oppressed and exploited groups makes the delineation of revolutionary ends a functional impossibility. Our mass work must be tolerated in the prerequisite and build all subjective forces towards a revolutionary goal being the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

- Zak Drabczyk

those who do defend him do so less regarding the actual man but more concerning the system in which he represented: the brutal system of capitalist-imperialism by which the mass of exploited peoples are crushed under the weight of an oppressor nation.

And we should take this as a lesson in understanding capitalist-imperialism as with all productive modes. The individual becomes only a function in the social process of reproduction. For example, in the present order of capitalism the capitalist is only the human functionary of capital. His existence is necessitated only insofar as he advances the cycle of M-C-M': the method of capital accumulation. This is why we are able to observe capitalist productive relations absent the actual 'capitalist'. The problem lies in the actual dominance of capital not the actions of a select individual or another. In the given instance, Israeli settlerimperialism would have advanced even without the leadership of Ariel Sharon. His existence only embodied the process in an individual who mediated the relationship between the oppressor and oppressed.

Now, this should not dilute the severity of the atrocities committed by Sharon. Rather it should lead us to a principled understanding of the conflict at hand and how we might resolve it.

An unfortunate trend in the modern 'left' is to attribute systemic features to a personality. While this might make good material for organizing or sloganeering it is far too shallow in regard for actual analysis. It's not a Margaret Thatcher problem; it's a capitalism problem. It's not a Barack Obama problem; it's a neocolonialism problem. It's not an Ariel Sharon problem; it's an imperialism problem. None of this absolves these individuals from their unique position in mediating the relationship between capital and its object but instead suggests a deeper condition of oppression than the personality of a few oppressors.

Truth being that the march of capitalist-imperialism can and will continue without the presence of these infamous functionaries. In this case, imperialist forces still occupy the lands of Palestinians on behalf of their settlerist masters, even without the being of Sharon.

The only way to prevent future atrocities, to end the oppression of marginalized peoples, is to destroy the

system which necessitates war criminals like Sharon. Dismantle the system of imperialism and in doing so all of its subsequent processes. Destroy the organs of oppressor state power. Establish the political dominance of the oppressed and exploited peoples. In a phrase, overthrow capitalism as a mode of production.

Unless we are able to do so the present relationships which we describe in great horror will never change. Imperialist war, expansionism, and militarism along with all the terror they bring remains inevitable. Understandably so because these phenomena delineate the conditions by which capital accumulation taken the imperialist form reproduces itself. In the present social reality of capitalist-imperialism such terrible atrocities become as predictable and yet inevitable as rainfall or sunshine. Their function is wholly realized in the totality of the social formation.

And this is the 'logic of war criminals' the irony found in the very phrase itself. All imperialist war is a crime. Not in the crudely abstract or bourgeois humanist sense but in concrete reference to a real liberation politics. Certainly the crimes of Sharon and other contemporaries are highlighted for their exceptional brutality which has permeated the history of imperialist aggression; however, all imperialist war acts in service of the oppressor consolidating his power at the expense of suffering people. Thus the action of war criminals only makes sense in this terrible system of domination and oppression.

All of this leads us to only one viable conclusion for the destruction of imperialism: agitating and organizing for a truly monumental transformation, the transfer of power from the oppressor to the oppressed through the victory of social revolution.

In the case of Palestine, we should lend all solidarity to the struggle of the nationally oppressed and the future of their liberation. All of us at Anti-imperialism.com fully support the emancipation of the Palestinian people and the establishment of a socialist Palestine. Furthermore we celebrate the passing of the war criminal and butcher Ariel Sharon in solidarity with his victims, the Palestinian people, and oppressed people around the world. We hope the death of Sharon and others like him might ignite a movement for revo-

ANTI-IMPERIALISM .COM News Analysis Culture

Movie Review: 12 Years a Slave

[Spoiler warning] 12 Years a Slave is an acclaimed film about the real-life story of Solomon Northup, a freeman living in upstate New York with his family, who in 1841 was abducted, sold into slavery, and put to work on a plantation in Louisiana.

Aesthetically the film is well made. Actor Chiwetel Ejiofor, who plays Northup, does an excellent job of portraying the mental anguish and transformation inflicted through bondage. Scenes and shots are carried on slightly longer than in typical films, imparting to the audience a tension felt by the protagonist. The story proceeds in a slow measured pace representing the drawn-out bleakness of slave life.

Though not the typical Hollywood blockbuster, 12 Years a Slave has been hailed by critics for the 'horror' it depicts. After seeing the film, a reviewer for Time magazine proudly proclaimed she "will never look at this country again."

With popular films on controversial topics, it is worth examining why they are popular to begin with. Popular culture is part of the super-structure and functions to obscure and reinforce extant class relations. What is commonly called 'history' is merely a narrative regarding the past which advances specific collective interests in the present. Underlying its appropriately nerve-wracking aesthetics, 12 Years a Slave is fundamentally political in the broad sense. And in this sense, it is fundamentally counter-revolutionary.

The broad message of 12 Years a Slave is one against resisting oppression or violently rising up. Instead, perseverance and patience is better. According to the narrative, freedom and liberation can be attained by benevolent saviors from among oppressors.

The subject of the film is important for the film's popularity. There could be a major film depicting in a positive light the 'true story' of Nat Turner or Den-

mark Vesey. Would such a film be as popular as 12 Years a Slave? Probably not.

The notion of violent resistance comes up in the beginning of the film. Yet the lead plotter is quickly killed by a white rapist working aboard a slave ship [one of those rugged white 'proletariat' types]. Never again does the film's protagonist attempt to violently resist. Instead, Northup takes the advice of another slave and conceals his identity and hides the fact he is educated.

Eventually Northup is 'saved' after he meets a sympathetic bearded white carpenter from Canada (played by Brad Pitt) who is briefly hired by the plantation patriarch. Injustice, the film's narrative explains, is resolved not by mass resistance and class warfare but instead by the select graces of those among the oppressor classes (especially those whom we are accustomed to playing 'good guy' starring roles).

Related to the overall message of the movie, another problematic aspect of 12 Years a Slave is the voyeuristic violence meted out against Northup and the other black slaves. Like the oddly vivid rape scene in 'The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo,' 12 Years a Slave contains intense depictions of brutality against the oppressed. When it comes time for the oppressed to get revenge however, the audience must use its imagination or be narrated to about the futility of violence. In one scene Northup is forced to abuse another slave. Unfortunately, any analogy to the present is likely lost on the modern audience.

What is more interesting, 12 Years a Slave represents the best of mainstream US culture – high culture – but not mass culture at large. Whereas this counter-revolutionary narrative is widely extolled by what is commonly called the left, another segment of the population is infatuated with vapid 'reality' TV shows like as 'Duck Dynasty,' which features millionaires who play racist, homophobic rednecks. For Third

(Continued: Ariel Sharon Deceased)

lutionary change among those conscious of the existing social conditions. In addition, it is our duty as Communists to orient that movement of dissent towards a radical goal of transforming social relationships and material conditions by destroying the dominance of capital in any given social formation. This can only be accomplished by completely demol-

ishing all vestiges of the old society; realizing the unity of opposites between a dying capitalism and a rising communism; destroying the old and building anew.

Until then, death to all war criminals and functionaries of the oppressor system; bring the butcher Benjamin Netanyahu to justice; expel the Zionists and liberate Palestine!

- Zak Drabczyk

Against Capital-Driven Reform

Recently, weak, piece-meal reformism, relying on capitalism, has expressed itself in a few different ways. Green consumerism, carbon offsets and emission capand-trade programs are some examples. Each of these processes, born of capitalist values, inherit their fatal flaw from the same. Critical evaluation of the global imperialist economy shows clearly that capitalism can never be ecologically sound. Nothing short of the eradication of capitalism paired with drastic reduction in people's material consumption will bring the current parasitic existence of the human race closer to something that could be defined as a symbiotic relationship between us and our planet.

Today's First Worlders maintain lifestyles that are far beyond the means of their value-producing capabilities so they rely Third World labor and resources to support them. The average First World citizen consumes material resources and produces waste at a rate that is 32 times higher than that of their Third World counterpart¹. To sustain this inflated rate of consumption the means of production have grown past the traditional barriers afforded by divided territories. Since the 1800's, the rich countries that form the First World are increasingly reliant upon extraction of resources and labor from the Third World in order to support their gluttonous lifestyles. Because capitalism is predicated on constant growth this bloated mode of living is not just a by-product of capitalism, it is necessitated by its framework. Because of this, capitalism's existence is antithetical to the regeneration of Earth's natural systems.

Green consumerism relies on the individual choice of the consumer as a means to improving the world. Advocates believe that by increasing the demand for organic or environmentally friendly products and brands they will destabilize particularly irresponsible companies and cause proliferation of better companies. This idea is problematic due to the adverse incentives provided by capitalism.

In relation to the consumer, capitalism incentivizes spending less money on individual products as a way to gain more spending power and therefore access to more resources. So the idea that people will buy the more expensive but more responsible product is reliant upon a belief in personal altruism and contradictory to concrete material analysis.

Green consumerism in the sense of the producers relationship to the economy is likewise based off of an analysis that takes no account of the incentives provided by capitalism. In order to compete in the capitalist marketplace businesses are pressed to create products at the lowest cost with the best market value. Businesses will not attempt to find more responsible means of production if it does not allow them to directly profit from it. Furthermore, if they can reap the increased profit from selling products that appear to be ecologically sound to consumers who appear to care while cutting corners during production they will. Not surprisingly they have. This is where practices like green washing and selective advertising stem from.

The precepts of green consumerism also fall short in that they utilize a utopian understanding of the free market. The "free" market is marred by the political powers that are becoming increasingly more influential to the market's course. This has led to the protection of business interests taking precedence in policy. The fluid relationship between big business and politics are illustrated by things like the results of the Citizens United case and the revolving door phenomenon.

(Continued: Review of 12 Years a Slave)

Worldists, this is further evidence that majority sections of imperialist nation populations lend their agency to reaction.

There is no wondering why 12 Years a Slave is popular, despite its controversial topic. The film's overall message, the function of its narrative in modern society, is one which protects existing class structures by ideologically polemicizing against liberatory violence. While perpetuating the acceptability of viewing the 'bad' violence against the oppressed, it falsely renders

it safely in the past. This gives 'enlightened' liberal audiences the ability to be grateful for their new-found understanding of the United States – without actually changing their understanding of the United States or the broader development of the modern system. More fundamental to the film's counter-revolutionary politics is the lack of sympathy for the violence of the oppressed, whether then or now, and faith in the miraculous intervention by philanthropic members of oppressor classes.

- Nikolai Brown

What is RAIM?

The Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement (RAIM) is a collection of revolutionary communist organizers, activists, artists, and technical workers based in the United States and Canada.

Ideologically, RAIM upholds the revolutionary tradition of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. However, we differ from many modern Maoist and communist organizations in our analysis of global class relations. We understand that a majority proportion of people in core imperialist countries are historically an embour-

geoisified vanguard of the global labor aristocracy, a section which is prone to defending capital. We additionally support the national liberation of oppressed nations in tangent with a global dictatorship of exploited and oppressed nations as a means of politically liquidating settler-imperialist countries like the United States and Canada.

Revolution will come to the US and Canada as part of a general process of global defeat for US-led imperialism. RAIM exists to develop the subjective forces necessary for the eventual seizure of power away from US-led imperialism as part of a world-wide upsurge of proletarian revolutionary struggles.

(Continued: Against Capital-Driven Reform)

Even if the nature of most people inclined them to do good and even if our "democratic" (oligarchic) political system did not constantly create economic and political loopholes in favor of big businesses, the incremental changes that green consumerism could afford are too minute to lend it any credibility.

Carbon offsets are purchased accolades which reflect the social chauvinism that the plush First World lifestyle has generated and do nothing to advocate for a true sense of social responsibility. Carbon offsets are popular among celebrities who, like all capitalists, have commandeered the public's rising (though poorly informed) concern for the environment. Bands like Coldplay can now produce an album, buy carbon offsets to assuage any guilt stemming from wasteful production and packaging methods and then turn around and advertise the same album as a low impact product thereby furthering their personal interests. This practice occurs among a huge variety of companies. Like green washing, the purchase of carbon offsets firstly serves a personal interest and is constructed within the framework of capitalism so it will never make a substantial environmental impact.

The EU's Emission Cap and Trade program, one result of the Kyoto Protocol, is another case of shallow reformism reflective of the power relationships which underscore capitalism's vicious nature. The Emission Cap and Trade Program sets a limit on the amount of metric tons of carbon emissions that the contracted countries are allowed to produce. If a country exceeds

the amount of carbon emissions that it is allotted then it is forced to pay reparations or buy more carbon allowances from another country. This policy favors rich countries which are the countries with the highest rates of consumption and therefore the highest incentive to produce. If the economic incentive remains high enough to produce certain materials then countries will factor in the economic punishment of the Emissions Cap and Trade Program as just another production expense. This is analogous to the way that BP Oil has historically reacted to environmental sanctions and like we've seen over and over again this cannot curtail the environmental repercussions of the elevated production rates necessary to sustain global capitalism.

Though for most people it is being hidden from view by false advertising and shortsighted policy measures the ultimatum that we are facing is very clear: in order for the Earth to recover from its current state either capitalism or the human race must perish. The more time that we waste on furthering reform measures that rely on capitalism the less time we will have to eradicate the root of the ecological crises that we are now facing.

- Bucharest Twin

Notes

1. Diamond, Jared (2005). *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York: Penguin (Non-Classics). pp. 495–496.



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News and analysis of struggles in the Global South

9 Point Program

What we believe:

1) Under the current capitalist-imperialist system, a majority of humynity located primarily in the peripheral Third World is ground down and exploited by a minority of imperialist-led classes which are numerically and socially dominant in core-zone First World economies. The contradiction between the masses exploited by imperialism and the minority of classes which benefit from imperialism is primary today.

The masses of the First World are typically net-exploiters whose incomes are above the value they create. This is accomplished primarily through global wage scaling and imperialist exploitation of Third World peoples. 'Super-wages' for a minority of the global workforce has the economic function of saturating wealth in First World core-zone economies and an ideological function of transforming the masses in these economies into agents of global oppression and capitalist-imperialism.

Understanding class dynamics is essential to Marxism as a revolutionary science. The formation, relation, and reproduction of classes is not some passing question, but has far-reaching implications for those who want all-around revolution.

- 2) Imperialism is decadent capitalism which both sustains itself through the ongoing exploitation of the Third World-centered proletariat and sets itself against the long-term interests of humynity and ever growing numbers of people. Opulence, security, and stability for a few exist against a backdrop of endemic poverty, massive disruption of ecological metabolic processes, growing militarism, social and intellectual degeneracy, and increased economic waste. This contradiction can only lead to the increased formalized oppression of the world's masses or socialist revolution against capitalist-imperialism.
- 3) The growing problems endemic to capitalist imperialism will not be resolved on their own. Instead, revolution, the seizure of power by those exploited and oppressed by capital and the termination of capitalist social relations is the best hope for humynity. Revolution is not a single event but a global epoch which proceeds from the global new democratic stage (in which relations of imperialist robbery are terminated), to the socialist stage (in which value and profit cease to be the primary regulators of the economy, and political power and other elements of the super structure are firmly in the hands of the proletariat in route

to the next stage), and to finally communism (in which classes have ceased to exist as distinct collective bodies joined together through unequal structural relationships). The process of revolution, though global in scope, is uneven and plays out on the local level. Advances in some countries and regions are often met with set backs in others. Nonetheless, the process of revolution can not be completed until capitalism has been buried globally.

Revolutions are neither determined nor spontaneous events. The quality of the revolutionary subjective forces is a large factor. Specifically, the existence of organizations of 'occupational revolutionaries,' the growth of popular disaffection from existing political edifices, and the ability of these 'professional revolutionaries' to unite and gain support from diverse popular revolutionary coalitions are three local variable factors which determine the likelihood of the development and success of revolutionary movements.

Revolution is not a straight line. Into socialism, due to inherent structural inequalities, the potential exists for the emergence of a new bourgeoisie which will use positions of authority to seize power and reconcile with the old ruling classes within the world-system. This trend must be checked by the continuation of class struggle under socialism until capitalist-imperialism has been defeated, communism built, and classes and the state eliminated.

What we want:

- 4) We want to build for revolution and to destroy all obstacles before it. We want a qualitative change in social and economic relations on a world-scale that creates the potential for further revolutionary struggles. We support efforts at building a proletarian-led united front against imperialism which culminates in global new democratic revolution and opens the door for continuing the revolution through socialism to communism. We aim to be part of this process through our work 'behind enemy lines' and 'in the belly of the beast.'
- 5) We want independent institutions of the oppressed which advance the revolution forward. From vanguard parties, to mass organizations, single-issue coalitions, media outlets, student clubs, community unions, and revolutionary serve the people programs, we want institutions capable of consolidating ever-greater numbers of people into revolutionary coalitions.
- 6) We want national liberation of captive oppressed nations. We want the dismemberment of settler-impe-

rialist countries (such as the United States and Canada, among others) through national liberation and self-determination of oppressed nations. We want independent institutions of oppressed and exploited nations to exert sovereignty against imperialist oppressor nations.

- 7) We want to end patriarchy. We want a stop to the use of womyn's bodies as commodities, as a holder of cheap or free labor-power, and by its refashioning for the purposes of economic circulation. Without the support, participation, and leadership of womyn, revolution is impossible. We want revolutionary institutions which broadly support the interests of womyn in tangent with anti-imperialist, socialist, and communist revolutions
- 8) We want class traitors. We want individual members of exploiter classes to side with the world's exploited masses. We want class suicide: abandonment of the decadent petty-bourgeois path for the arduous trek of revolutionary struggle alongside the proletariat. We want to create conscious allies of the proletariat who organize and work for revolution; who forsake their own class for a better future for humynity at large.
- 9) We want revolutionary internationalist politics in command. We want to carry forward the revolutionary tradition of Marxism while combating reformist, chauvinist, and revisionist trends which camouflage themselves in Marxist-sounding phraseology. We want to popularize an oppositional politics which reaffirms the revolutionary legacy of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and bases itself on the solid foundation of historical materialism and a sound analysis of modern political economy and class relations.

5 Organizing Principles

Dedication

Revolutions do not come easily. Rather, they require a variety of factors, including a determined force of

collective vanguard elements composed of quality cadre

Education

To be a revolutionary is to be both a learner and teacher. Cadres must dedicate themselves to learning both from the previous experience of revolutionary movements and from day-to-day practice.

Outreach

It is not enough to know the world. Communists must change it. This begins with building public opinion and organizing ever greater numbers into revolutionary coalitions.

Independence

In order to maintain tactical initiative and strategic strength, it is necessary for vanguard elements to operate alongside and among various forces while retaining ultimate independence.

Internationalism

All of our actions must be based on the emergent and long-standing needs of global proletarian revolution. Communists must be a beacon of proletarian politics while having strategic confidence in the ability of the exploited and oppressed masses to carry forward revolution.

What is Maoism (Third Worldism)?

Maoism (Third Worldism) is a theoretical culmination of historical revolutionary practice, a science of understanding the world so as to change it. It is the Marxism of today.

Maoism (Third Worldism) includes several historical and new paradigmatic shifts in understandings regarding class struggle. These include:

1) All hitherto history is the history of class struggle! Maoism (Third Worldism) reaffirms historical materi-



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- alism, i.e. that the struggle between groups over their relationship to the means of producing and distributing wealth is the chief factor which shapes history.
- 2) Capital is dead labor that only lives by sucking living labor! All economic wealth is the product of labor. Under capitalism, wealth becomes concentrated in fewer and fewer hands to the detriment of producers. This contradiction between the proletariat, the class for which the struggle against capitalism represents 'nothing to loose but chains and a world to win,' on one hand and exploiters on the other is irresolvable under capitalism.
- 3) Socialism or barbarianism! All things, including the social world, are in a process of development. The question of what direction the world will develop depends on class struggle. The basic choice facing humynity today is between socialism and communism or widespread ruin.
- 4) The proletariat must organize to destroy the old structure of power and build the new! Substantive progressive change to the capitalist system can not come from political reforms. Rather, the proletariat must organize to seize the instruments of production and construct their own state-forms to suppress reactionaries and carry through the revolution.
- 5) Proletarian class consciousness comes from without day-to-day economic struggles! The struggle against capitalism and for socialism is representative of the immediate necessity of an entire class and exemplifies an even larger range of interests. Yet this is not always demonstrated in the direct struggles waged by particular groups of the proletariat. Proletariat political consciousness is that which recognizes and organizes around the long-term strategic and tactical interests of the proletariat as a class, is bore from wider experiences of class struggle, and it is often brought to the proletarian masses by its most conscious elements or from without.
- 6) The doctrine of class dictatorship! Everything reflects in some manner extant social relations. The state, culture, art, and day-to-day interactions are field of struggle in which different lines of understanding based on either proletarian class consciousness or reactionary ideology play out. Maoism (Third Worldism) promotes the revolutionary struggle to seize power both over the means of production and every aspect of the superstructure as well.
- 7) Socialism is the necessary prelude to communism! Socialism is transitional period between the formal

- overthrow of capitalism under the leadership of the proletariat to the restructuring of society based on the democratic and rational control over the production and allocation of use values, without oppression, classes, or a state.
- 8) Imperialism is a qualitative shift in capitalism! The growth of the productive forces combined with historically-enshrined and militarily-enforced monopoly/imperialist advantages renders the contradiction between the proletariat and capital as one between exploiter and exploited nations. Hence, the principal contradiction today is between the masses of peripheral and semi-peripheral countries on one hand and exploiter classes tied to capitalist-imperialism on the other. A revolution on the part of the world's Third World masses would in fact be a world revolution, as much of the value captured by the First World today is produced in the vast Third World.
- 9) Parasitism and the wages of imperialism! Imperialism renders entire local, national, and regional economies of the core as primarily parasitic and dependent on the exploitation of the wider peripheral and semiperipheral zones; and this necessarily alters the terrain of class struggle. Specifically, imperialism pays a qualitatively higher wages to a minority of workers. This has both an economic function in maintaining capital accumulation in the core at the expense of the masses of the Third World and an ideological function by 'bribing' these workers into supporting imperialism. First World and 'middle class' workers who receive wages above the abstract value of labor, i.e. above the value of the goods and services exchanged throughout the world-economy in a given period divided be the quantity of labor through which it is produced, are not part of the proletariat because the magnitude of their wages are dependent on imperialist exploitation and could not be maintained without it. Hence, Maoism (Third Worldism) opposes all economism on behalf of workers in imperialist countries.
- 10) Global people's war and global new democracy! Protracted people's war complimented by the mass line, as demonstrated in the Chinese Revolution and creatively applied to particular situations, is the best suited means of revolutionary struggle in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries. The notion of waging class struggle must be considered globally as well. Lin Biao noted that the imperialist First World represented the "cities of the world" and that the exploited Third World the "countryside of the world." Given the vast underdevelopment of the Third World at the hands of the First World, the struggle of the world's masses is

not immediately one for socialism but for global new democracy: the hemming in and wide-ranging defeat of imperialism by an international proletariat-led coalition of progressive classes and the building of the requisite productive forces, class alliances, and consciousness to continue the struggle for socialism and communism.

11) Continuing class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat! Socialism is not a straight line towards communism. Rather, due to leftover attitudes and oppressions, privileges which accompany positions of authority, and the existence of capitalist blocs, the structural possibility remains for the generation of a 'new bourgeoisie' under socialism which will attempt to seize power, halt class struggle, and unite to make accommodations with remaining reactionaries. The only solution is the continuation of class struggle under socialism to the end of countering and routing these efforts at the restoration of capitalism. This is the only means to continue towards communism.

12) Women hold up half the sky! The participation of women is paramount for the success of the struggles for people's war, global new democracy, socialism, and communism. Women make up over half of the proletariat and form the backbone of our ability to reach and transform the day-to-day lives of the masses through struggle.

13) Ecological congruence! As a paradigmatic shift, the struggle for socialism and communism must take a totally different approach to humynity's relationship the the natural environment. Under socialism and communism, the preservation and enhancement of natural abundance for the common good will take precedence over the profit-seeking interest of the few. Moreover, people's relationship with non-humyn life must more closely resemble the relationship that we strive to achieve between ourselves.

14) National liberation for oppressed nations! The struggle for proletarian revolution must support and

find common cause with the struggle for liberation and self-determination of oppressed nations. Within imperialist cores, the struggle for national liberation should be promoted as a detachment of the wider struggle for global new democracy, socialism, and communism.

The semantic application of 'Maoism (Third Worldism)' and the above terminology are not so important. What is important is that the above lessons are internalized and put into practice by revolutionary movements today.

The struggle against capitalist-imperialism is a life or death matter for a large portion of the world's people.

The wider program of proletarian revolution touches on all aspects of life and carries with it the long-term interest of humynity itself.

For these reasons, it is important that Marxism today, revolutionary science, draws from the history of class struggle the best understandings available.

Capitalist-imperialism won't fall on its own, but it can be defeated. Enlightened by the lessons of previous class struggle and carried out in concert with a broad united front against imperialism, proletarian-led revolutionary struggles can defeat capitalist-imperialism, lay the foundations of socialism, and embark on the road to communism.

Join RAIM

There are a million reasons to oppose capitalist-imperialism but only one solution: revolution. But revolutions do not just happen spontaneously. They require the dedicated efforts of an advanced element representing the proletariat. RAIM exists to push forward the subjective forces of global new democracy, socialism, and communism. Yet what we are doing so far is only the beginning. And we need your help.

Check out RevolutionaryAIM.org for more info on how to get involved with RAIM.

Onward toward victory, comrades!

