

Issue 2

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# PICK-UP LINES

Reviews, Polemics and Debates from Monkey Smashes Heaven  
and the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement

Peoples War Press

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# People's War

# Press

# CODE PINK: PIGS FOR MORE PIE

(RAIM-Denver) Times have been tough for the remnants of the antiwar movement in the United States. Liberals crossed over to Obama, a recession has driven down donations, and healthcare reform and Tea Party opposition became the focus in Amerika. Code Pink, led by non-profit profiteer Medea Benjamin, is working to "extend an olive branch" to the reactionary Tea Party, using their anti-tax rhetoric to focus on military spending. Benjamin sent an open message to teaklanners and Code Pink supporters:

*"Don't relax on tax day. Your country needs you to start a difficult conversation right now. Because building peace means reaching out to the other side, CODEPINK is extending an olive branch to the Tea Party. If the Tea Party is really against runaway government spending, then certainly we can work together to cut a slice out of the military pork that is bankrupting our nation. After all, one way to shrink big government is to rein in military spending.*

*Similarly, we are asking you to reach out to your conservative family members, friends and co-workers, with this very special e-card to start a conversation about how a bloated military budget is affecting our share of the pie. Maybe you will find common ground!"*

And this graphic:



Besides the total lameness and lack of direction, Code Pink's most recent campaign gives a clear message about "our share of the pie." According to Benjamin and Code Pink, Joe Amerikan should be fat too, not just those at the Pentagon spending his tax dollars.

Certainly, Code Pink isn't lying about the great amount of Amerikan tax dollars which go to war-making. Obama's "defense" budget for 2011 will be \$663.7 billion, making up 42 percent of all the worlds military spending. This is compared to China with 5.8 percent of world military spending and France with 4.5 percent of world military spending. However, the real victims of this militarism are those killed by Amerikan bombs and locked into imperialist exploitation, not Code Pink and the Tea Party's reactionary parasite constituency.

The Tea Party almost never brings up the spending on military. In fact many of them are current or former troops and embedded in military culture. Many Tea-baggers wear military caps and insignia and flirt with armed insurrection against the federal government. Their message of reducing taxes and spending is one based on narrow labor-aristocratic interest, not of concern for non-Amerikans facing direct and proxy aggression from the US.

In their attempt to find "common ground," Code Pink's politics in essence are shown as no different from the Tea Party's. Both pander to the base interests of Amerikans; neither question where Amerikan wealth truly comes from. Rather than raising principled opposition to the

most murderous system the world has ever seen, US-led imperialism, Code Pink reveals their chauvinism as they opportunistically ignore the blatant racism and jingoism of the Tea Party movement. Code Pink will likely find few supporters within the Tea Party movement, as many of the latter consider the former no more than traitors and subversives. Medea Benjamin and other modern Don Quixotes, rather than standing in principled solidarity with the world's people, comes off as big chauvinists in an attempt to find and activate a mythical progressive Amerika majority.

The Amerikan right and the Amerikan "left" agree on one thing: Amerikans should have more. They do not question that Amerikans should have so much, just an argument over how it should be directed. We at RAIM say the opposite, Amerikans deserve less. They got their wealth from the beginning of their history through stolen land, labor, and resources. They already get a disproportionate share of the wealth of the world, maintained mainly through the expenditure on the military. We realize this message will not get us supporters, money, or fame, but we say it anyway because it is the truth based on fact. Half the world lives off only \$2 a day or less. So we can care less about the menial troubles of an average First Worlder about taxes, gas prices, healthcare, etc. The oppressed and exploited peoples of the world, in the final analysis, will be the ones who bring down Amerikan imperialism and subsequently all oppression. We stand with the majority of the world who wants liberation, not for Amerikan morons wanting more.

(<http://raimd.wordpress.com/2010/04/26/code-pink-pigs-for-more-pie/>)

# REVIEW: ARUN GUPTA ASKS, “WHAT ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT”

(RAIM-Denver) A year after Barack Obama’s presidential election and with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan still raging (and spreading into Pakistan), many within anti-war circles are engaged in dialogue about which way the movement should go. A large part of the problem faced by anti-war activists is that their once relatively large movement is now far smaller and less vibrant. Much focus has been given as to why this is. Many of those still dedicated to the anti-war cause are now taking a critical look at the movement’s preceding years, attempting to find lessons which can help them recover from a major slump in organizing and mass action.

One such activist is Arun Gupta, editor of the New York City ‘left’-oriented newspaper, the Independent. In a speech presented by Democracy Now!, another nominally left media outlet, Arun Gupta attempts to answer some of the hows and whys of the death of the anti-war movement and offers prescriptions for future organizing.

Talking about his background, Gupta says he cut his political teeth as part of solidarity activism for the South African anti-apartheid movement and Latin American struggles. In explaining thoughts at the time about wider radical organizing, Gupta states, “there’s always been this notion that the left would re-found itself into a mass base movement if we only had some sort of imperialist war that we could oppose, something on the scale of Vietnam; that this would radicalize the population enough and it would show the true face of imperialism.” Gupta begins by noting how this never came to fruition.

## **Gupta on the death of the Amerikan anti-war movement**

In attempting to answer why a mass, radical anti-war movement never came into being, Gupta reflects on one of the main US anti-war organizations, United For Peace and Justice (UFPJ). Gupta rightly pegs

UFPJ as a shill for the war-mongering Democratic Party, something most remaining Amerikan anti-war activists are aware of. Citing mostly anecdotes and quotes, Gupta describes UFPJ’s role inside the anti-war movement as one of shepherding activists towards the reformist morass of mainstream electoral politics.

After the Democratic Party gained a congressional majority in 2006, UFPJ supporters, including Gupta, were advocating a “power of the purse strategy,” urging Democrats to use their federal budgeting power to cut funding to the war. Gupta says the leader of UFPJ, Judith LeBlanc, characterized that strategy, reformist as it was, as being “on the outside shaking our fists,” and told supporters that the way forward was working within the Democratic Party. Gupta also notes how long-time ‘leftists’ such as Carl Davidson, who campaigned for Barack Obama, hailed his presidential victory as a milestone for “class struggle.” According to Gupta, UFPJ and leaders such as Carl Davidson are why the anti-war movement collapsed.

Gupta also says there was a failure on the part of the “great hope” that was the “direct action left,” “anti-globalization movement,” “anarchists,” “student-led groups” and “some of the parties” [most likely referring to the ‘Party for Socialism and Liberation’ and ‘Workers World Party’]. Though there was a lot of talk between these groups about reforming and refocusing on anti-war work, he states, “nothing has really come from it.” He dwells little on why this is and fails to examine the politics of any of these groups. Instead, he still thinks they could potentially come together to form a “new, radical, principled anti-war movement.” According to Gupta, because it isn’t happening, UFPJ still maintains power in the passive, anti-war movement which now supports Obama.

## **Where Gupta gets it wrong**

While UFPJ and Carl Davidson helped lead the anti-war movement’s shift towards support for the Democratic Party, Gupta adds no analysis or understandings beyond this. His answer of why the anti-war movement never coalesced into a mass-radical movement is shallow, bordering on conspiratorial. Thus, Gupta misses the point entirely.

From the beginning, the anti-war movement was a largely anti-Bush movement, a domestic reaction to the brash, John Wayne-esque brand of imperialism. There was almost none, if any, focused internationalism coming from the largely pro-Amerika movement. Almost all internationalist actions and slogans were by accident, as parts of the anti-war movement took up anti-militarist causes: one memorable example being when Portland ‘anarchists’ burnt an effigy of a US troop while chanting “Bye bye G.I., in Iraq you’re gonna die.” It is important to note this example was a fringe rejected by the mainstream of Amerikan anti-war sentiment. Moreover, the ‘anarchists’ undertook the action based on liberal anti-militarism, never bridging over towards a long-term, principled stand with the world’s oppressed against imperialism.

One meme to come out of the anti-war movement was that Bush had turned world opinion against the US. Another was that “peace is patriotic.” Hardly internationalist or radical slogans, the anti-war movement peddled the mythology of historic Amerikan greatness and a false picture international fraternity. It actually saw itself as trying to improve Amerika’s image worldwide. More contrived was the anti-war movement’s talk about how the wars are supposedly against the interests of Americans. Moaning about ‘our’ wasted tax money was common throughout the anti-war movement. The obvious problem with this is that imperialism, which Americans do benefit from, requires imperialist

wars. Amerika's wealth is and always has been based on the oppression of other peoples. Americans intuitively understand this and most never joined the anti-war movement.

Into 2005, as the war dragged on, and with Bush's incompetence and instability in Iraq dominating attention, more Americans began seeing the wars as becoming overly costly and offering less in the way of long term returns, even describing them as a burden to Amerika's interests. However, this is not an anti-imperialist view. After all, even ardent imperialists, such as Obama, have described the Iraq war in this light.

In the end, UFPJ didn't simply act as a pied piper, marching the anti-war movement to grave of the Democratic Party. UFPJ is simply on the same page with those nominally opposed to the war. While Gupta thinks there is mass, radical potential within First World, UFPJ has a better understanding of where most Americans stand. Thus, groups like UFPJ are able to maintain leadership of the anti-war movement despite the appearance of a seemingly radical fringe. The anti-war movement's shift towards Obama was a natural one, not principally engineered by UFPJ.

### **Gupta's "anti-imperialism"**

Gupta, under mistaken notions about Amerika and the anti-war movement, says that the way forward is building a mass "anti-imperialist" movement.

From the beginning, Gupta defines imperialism in a metaphysical, abstract way. According to Gupta, capitalist-imperialism is "the defining if not dominant inter-state relation and flows of power in the world today." Gupta points to the Iraq war as an example of Western imperialism's attempt to secure Mideast oil against gains by the lesser imperialist bloc of Russia and China. While this is true to an extent, Gupta misses the point.

Capitalist-imperialism, today's "flow of power," is the process of capital accumulation on a global scale: it is the exploitation of

the global majority, the Third World masses, to the effect of benefitting and buying-off virtually all of the First World. A primary feature of the current capitalist-imperialist system is vast global inequality between the exploiter First World and the exploited Third World.

Gupta is also wrong to say that imperialism is the "defining inter-state relations." In actuality, states are propped up over the course of class struggle to enforce class rule. With few exceptions, Third World states are extensions of imperialism, surrogates to the process of capital accumulation. Also, while divisions between the imperialists of different countries exist, they are rarely a principal feature. What is significant about the Iraq war is not possible ambitions to wedge out lesser imperialist forces, but rather a multinational, U.S.-led force invaded and occupied a country to secure a greater stake in oil reserves against the interests of the Iraqi and Third World masses.

Throughout his speech, Gupta never does come to terms what imperialism really is. Rather than stating the obvious—First Worlders enjoy greater rates of consumption, more leisure time, little repression, are visibly better off than most of the world's people and thus have little reason to radicalize or become anti-imperialists—Gupta uses a ridiculous abstraction, "consensual hegemony," to explain why First Worlders support the imperialist system. Gupta simply refuses to approach reality: the First World masses support imperialism because it supports them.

Because of this, Gupta's "anti-imperialism" remains hollow. Not based on serious analysis, Gupta posits an "anti-imperialism" which almost anyone can embrace. Gupta's "anti-imperialism" changes nothing in terms of practical implications for those who do uphold it. In this case, "anti-imperialism" is an abstract tag-on phrase, a meaningless slogan, for ultimately First Worldist, movementarian politics. Gupta is not

concerned with doing a serious study of imperialism, including coming to terms with its consequences. For Gupta, his goal has always been to organize Americans.

### **The magic key theory**

According to Gupta, there is a magic key that can unlock a radical potential in Americans. First Gupta thought it would be an imperialist war. Then he decides that supporting UFPJ and doing 'independent' journalism would somehow radicalize American masses. Now Gupta calls for "principled anti-imperialism" as part of his latest attempt to inspire a radical idealism into Americans. Gupta's calls for "anti-imperialism," like his calls for other moralistic positions, will fall on deaf ears as long as he sees Americans and the First World as a social base for radical, progressive change.

Because Gupta is a proponent of the magic key theory, his critique of other groups are petty. He claims that the more radical sectors of the anti-war movement never really confronted the state. He says that the anti-war movement was really never able to break free from the limitations of the state, and thus was never able to expand as a radical movement. But what does this mean and is it true? Just in Denver, for example, anti-war graffiti popped up. Khristopher Kolumbus and other statues have been vandalized multiple times. During the DNC, a protest led by a black bloc took the streets and marched downtown. Denver has solidarity networks for prisoners and victims of police brutality and active chapters of Copwatch. Most recently, a nominal anarchist has been accused by the pigs of breaking windows at the Democratic Party Headquarters.

What does Gupta think was missing? "A golden opportunity was missed in the counter-recruitment movement," he says. Surely, counter-recruitment was another one of Gupta's magic keys: another one that didn't work supposedly because the "left" wasn't turning hard enough.

Like Gupta's "anti-imperialism," his prescribed necessity to confront state power is abstract. Besides his counter-recruitment spiel, Gupta never defines "confronting state power." He doesn't give other examples, historic or modern. "Confronting state power," for Gupta, is another movementarian fantasy, speculatively postulated in a way that ignores the real social and material basis of mass apathy and reaction-ism in Amerika.

### **Gupta's chauvinism**

Gupta's "anti-imperialism" is not anti-imperialism at all. Instead, Gupta's politics is one of chauvinism wrapped in loosely-construed, "anti-imperialist" slogans.

As a matter of narrowness and "left" Amerikan exceptionalism, Gupta never once mentions resistance efforts on the part of oppressed peoples in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Third World. Gupta, now a self-described "anti-imperialist," not once mentions those exploited by imperialism in the Third World! Instead he focuses solely on the "radical potential" of the largely defunct anti-war movement in the First World. We ask, how can this possibly be anti-imperialism?

Gupta uses his privilege and broadcasts a phoney "anti-imperialism," objectively to the disservice of real anti-imperialism. Those in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in the Third World, for whom anti-imperialist struggles are often ones of life and death, do not have the luxury to freely and openly broadcast their ideas and experiences on their common struggle against imperialism. Instead, this is a luxury for Gupta, who not only speaks the colonizer's language but has the privilege of doing so without repression. Does he take this privilege seriously? No. For Gupta, "anti-imperialism" is another phrase, liberally thrown around to see if Amerikans bite. Without a second thought, he uses his membership of the world's richest 15% to broadcast

an effective lie, that Amerikans are friends of the Third World, calling it "anti-imperialism." Again, we ask, what is Gupta doing besides objectively blunting real anti-imperialism worldwide?

### **Revolutionary anti-imperialism**

The difference between Gupta and ourselves is obvious. Gupta conceives of unity between the Third and First World masses where none meaningfully exists; he insists that Amerikans are potentially revolutionary when they clearly are not. Thus, his politics will always be implicitly pro-Amerikan and not representative of the immediate interest of the world's people.

Real anti-imperialism, the politics of the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement, derives its strength from and seeks to inspire the global masses, the 80% of the people in the Third World for whom resistance is a way of life. Real anti-imperialists see Amerikans for what they are— class enemies of the Third World masses— and understand this: imperialism will only come crashing down through the advancements of the struggle by Third World peoples for liberation.

### **Our strategy**

While Gupta is wasting time trying to radicalize Amerikans, the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement (RAIM) is engaged in real strategies for real revolutionary change. Whereas "anti-imperialism" is just a buzzword for Gupta and First Worldists, RAIM understands that imperialism is the crux of world dynamics and proceeds from there. A hallmark of RAIM's strategy is accounting for limitations imposed on us by the fact that Amerikans support imperialism and using our privilege to develop real aid in the revolutionary struggle.

We don't water down genuine anti-imperialist politics to pander to First Worlders. Above all, RAIM speaks the truth and says it loud and clear: First Worlders maintain their

decadent lifestyles via imperialism; are class enemies of the real masses in the Third World; the complicit 'Volk' in a murderous global empire; and must be overthrown along with imperialism. We openly represent anti-imperialist politics and broadcast our analysis to a global audience, using our own privilege to do so, even if most Amerikans don't like or 'get' it.

First World mass movements come and go, along with most of its participants. Rather than trying to build an "anti-imperialist" mass movement in the First World, RAIM is a politically sophisticated and technically versatile one, with the aim of best serving the Third World masses and their struggle. We want dedicated, determined comrades who are all in for the long haul. RAIM broadcasts a consistent message of anti-imperialist solidarity globally and is a focal point of revolutionary agitation, education and political development within the belly of the beast, Amerika. Through RAIM, we seek out and educate those few First Worlders who can be best won over the consistent anti-imperialist politics. Through RAIM, we develop both politically and technically, becoming more of an asset to the revolutionary struggle.

RAIM is important as a national network which openly represents anti-imperialist politics, but it should be seen for what it is: an appendage to the vast Third World struggle; our collective effort to contribute to this larger revolutionary movement. RAIM's message is huge, too big for RAIM alone. We encourage constant political and technical development, specialization and the application of Third World-oriented, revolutionary politics to different types and forms of work. We support those who support the movement of the exploited Third World against the imperialist First.

### **The scorecard**

# SEVEN YEARS ON ONGOING U\$ IMPERIALIST SLAUGHTER IN IRAQ

(RAIM-Seattle) Figures and statistics are stubborn things sometimes, especially for the impotent First Worldist “anti-war left.” A RAIM-S analysis of polling data reveals that roughly 75% of Amerikkans supported the invasion and occupation of the nation of Iraq in the Spring of 2003. By the Spring of 2007, Amerikkkan support had fallen to 25% – a total reversal in the ratio of support to opposition.

The so-called “anti-war movement” likes to brag about the millions of participants globally (with the bulk of them First Worlders) in protests against the Iraq invasion in the early part of 2003. As if they can claim credit for stopping the invasion in the first place! Such pseudo-intellectual arrogance crumbles into dust when facing the facts on who is actually stopping the imperialists dead in their tracks.

While Iraq is certainly not free of u\$ imperialist occupation, the glorious Iraqi resistance has managed to put a dent in their plans for absolute control of Iraqi national resources. The First Worldist so-called “left” cannot make this claim about themselves and their social base. The Iraqi people’s righteous resistance to u\$ imperialism, actually sending the oppressors away in body bags, is what switched Amerikkkan public opinion around. What did the fake left think is was going to do on its own? Some of these kkklowns were actually considering campaigning with Demokkrats to reinstate the draft! This was all in a cynical attempt to “shape” Amerikkkan public opinion on their own by attempting to mechanically rehash Vietnam-era social conditions.

Now, there are those within the First Worldist “left” that will give the Iraqi resistance their due credit. But did they forge an outlook and strategy that correctly

flows from this truth? Hell no. Instead, we got “Drive Out the Bush Regime!” and “Impeach Bush!” And then what? Bu\$h is gone and now Amerikkka has Obomber. These First Worldist activists sure took advantage of Amerikkkan dissatisfaction, not to end imperialism, but to ultimately whitewash u\$ imperialism with a Black liberal face. All of the so-called “anti-war” movement’s political energy ended up getting dissolved into demokkratic election campaigns.

To really split hairs among the First Worldists, there are some of them who would say that they are “against imperialism ” and always opposed the demokkrats. These people are the most tragic of our delusional First Worldists. We believe that these are sincere people who genuinely wish to see a world without exploitation and oppression. Unfortunately, they have not dealt with the cruel reality of the Amerikkkan mASSES and where their class interests lie. They are trying to recruit from the same people, Amerikkans, that would just as soon kill them in a fascist coup. It pains us RAIMers to see these people beat their heads against this ideological brick wall over and over again.

If these Amerikkka loving, so-called “revolutionaries” would just have the moral courage to confront two basic facts, they would be a lot better off. They might even retool their strategies to match the reality of global class structure.

Fact #1: The fact the an Amerikkkan majority now opposes the imperialist assault on Iraq has nothing to do with any internationalist compassion on their part towards Iraqis. The Iraqi resistance was simply kicking their parasite Amerikkkan asses for four years –

## *Gupta Review cont*

Arun Gupta and RAIM represent two very different types of “anti-imperialism.” Gupta’s is one of magic keys and preeminent, potentially ‘radical’ First World ‘masses.’ He brings little new to the table. His explanations of everything from why the anti-war movement collapsed to what is imperialism seem shallow or abstract. His analysis is neither real anti-imperialism nor a strategy for revolutionary change.

Nearing the end of his speech, after talking for thirty minutes, in the typical manner of First Worldist intellectuals, asking how to build a genuine, radical mass movement, Gupta says it’s something he’s

thought about a lot about, but doesn’t have any real answers for. Typical.

RAIM posits an anti-imperialism that is new, that explains things in a way Gupta can’t. Our anti-imperialism is groundbreaking and changes the focus and look revolutionary political work for those in the First World.

RAIM won’t lead a revolutionary mass movement, nor do we intend to. Nevertheless, we still have a positive role to play in the global revolutionary struggle. By working together, representing and broadcasting a consistent anti-imperialist message, operating as a school to our own and others’ political and technical development and promoting Third World-oriented, revolutionary unity, we can act as

agents of global revolutionary change in a way that First Worldists such as Gupta can’t.

The difference is simple. Gupta is First Worlder who’s into nominally-’leftist’ mass movements. RAIM? The name says it all.

Video of Gupta's speech can be found here: [http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2009/9/24/arun\\_gupta\\_asks\\_where\\_is\\_the\\_anti\\_war\\_movement](http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2009/9/24/arun_gupta_asks_where_is_the_anti_war_movement)

(<http://raimd.wordpress.com/2009/11/25/review-arun-gupta-asks-what-anti-war-movement/>)

# REVIEW: RAJ PATEL, THE VALUE OF NOTHING

(RAIM-Seattle) Raj Patel spoke at Town Hall in late January, to promote his latest book *The Value of Nothing*. He begins by highlighting a quote in the book from Oscar Wilde, stating that “people today know the price of everything and the value of nothing.” He uses the quote to pinpoint the pro-capitalist consumer mentality towards the concept of value. This is precisely the mentality among First World populations today with their “mall economy.”

Within this introduction, Patel states that “I’m not a communist, but I am open-minded.” He manages to throw some positive words thrown in for socialism that drew applause from the nominally “left” groupings in the auditorium. Also thrown into the intro is Patel’s mentioning of his new status as an Amerikkkan citizen. Interestingly enough, applause came from the very same corners of the hall for both Patel’s new Amerikkkan citizenship and for “socialism.” This is so very typical of the “we love Amerikkka” politics of the fake “left” in Seattle, whether of the demokkkratic or “revolutionary” flavor. Following the applause, Patel stated that his decision to become an Amerikkkan citizen was not patriotic, but tactical, so that he would simply not be deported for protesting against

u\$ imperialism! RAIM loudly applauded to this rhetorical curveball response by Patel, to this visible discomfort of the Amerikkka loving “socialists” in the crowd.

As in the opening chapter of *The Value of Nothing*, Patel gives a concrete example of the real cost of a typical \$4.00 Amerikkkan fast-food McShitburger. He cites a report from the Centre for Science and the Environment stating that the actual cost of that \$4 shitburger is more like \$200. Patel points out the \$200 tag might actually be on the low end, given the added hidden costs of Amerikkkan corn subsidies and of the junk-food related health care costs (heart disease, diabetes, obesity, etc.) RAIM will one-up Patel on the cost of the shitburger even further: The hidden cost of this so-called “cheap food” is concealed within the superexploitation of Third World labor by the First World as a whole. This can be seen with the median global wage standing around \$2.50 an hour, while 90% of Amerikkkans are among the world’s richest 15%. We would remind Patel that it’s not just exploited tomato pickers in Immokalee, Florida who are absorbing the cost of that \$4 sodium/cholesterol krapwich. All this waste and exploitation, so Amerikkkan

soccer moms/dads can take their brood through the drive-thru after soccer practice, thus neutralizing any benefit for the kids gained from physical exercise. The insustainability and utter parasitism of the way Amerikkkans eat is sickening enough. Contrast it to the overall suffering in the Third World from malnutrition related diseases, and it becomes just downright infuriating.

Patel uses the burger example to point to the overall failure of the current economic paradigm of “free markets.” He conjures up the exchange between u\$ Congressman Henry Waxman and former Fed chairman Alan Greenspan, in the Amerikkkan congressional hearings following the 2008 economic meltdown. In Greenspan’s testimony, he states that he found a “... flaw in the model that I perceived as the critical functioning structure that defines how the world works... I was shocked, because I’ve been going for forty years or more [In particular, the post-Bretton Woods form of imperialism] with very considerable evidence that it had been working exceptionally well.” Raj Patel plays up this admission by Ayn Rand devotee Green\$pan to be significant admission for an imperialist in our era. In reality, there have been several

## *Seven Years in Iraq cont*

eventually breaking the imperial citizenry’s desire to “stay the course.” Amerikkkans were not moved to oppose the war from the one million Iraqis murdered, the two million Iraqis displaced, or the five million orphaned Iraqi children. In fact, Amerikkkans continue to support their sister settler state of I\$rael over Palestine consistently – and reaching a high point at 63% just recently! Amerikkka, and Amerikkkans, are virtually always on the side of evil and death in the world.

Fact #2: There is a material reason why the majority Amerikkkans are always on the side of imperialism – they benefit from it. Over 90% of Amerikkkans are the world’s richest 15%. They are in this position from theft of wage labor, land, and natural resources both historically and currently. What the hell makes the First World “left” think they can make a

positive difference for the people and planet, while relying on these parasite crackers as “revolutionary” material? We’ll probably never know...

Should the hopelessness of the Amerikkkan asses make us hopeless? Hardly. RAIM has something we call “strategic confidence” in the world’s oppressed and exploited majority. We put our faith for the triumph of justice not in the millions of privileged, but in the billions who are truly exploited in the Third World. As Lin Biao said, “Victory will certainly go to the people of the world!”

Here’s a real anti-war slogan for y’all, in honor of the Iraqi Resistance :

**“The Amerikkkan majority supported the war,  
The Iraqi resistance will even the score!”**

(<http://raims.wordpress.com/2010/03/27/7-years-of-going-u-imperialist-slaughter-in-iraq/>)

such significant admissions like this from the imperialist class. One of the most significant of these admissions was made by u\$ Gen. Smedley Butler nearly a century ago: “In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism.” The exploited in the Global South, of course, don’t need any of these imperialists to admit the various flaws and evils of their system to know this fact. The Third World masses have known what the full price of imperialism has been the whole time. It is they, who are paying that price in the death and suffering from war, repression, malnutrition, preventable disease, illiteracy, and underdevelopment.

As an alternative to the bankrupt capitalist paradigm, Patel presents “the commons” as studied by u\$ economist Elinor Ostrom. He states within *The Value of Nothing*:

“There were organizations before what we call the modern state, and they’ll be organizations after it. Some of them were, and will be, more democratic than those we have right now. Those that thrive will have figured out how to make governments manage ‘free’ goods in ways that are both sustainable and equitable. Insofar as tomorrow’s governments succeed, they will owe a debt to yesterday’s politics of the public domain, to older ways of viewing and sharing the world, which were once more thoughtfully called ‘the commons’.”

Whether or not “the commons”, as Patel defines it, is the best system to replace imperialism is a better question for our Maoist-Third Worldist friends of the Internationalist Jacobin Club (IJC) [see *Pick Up Lines #1*]. RAIM-S is passing its notes on the event and Patel’s book to IJC, to assist in their research project on a post-imperialist society.

However, RAIM does share Raj Patel’s view of how the commons was historically undermined the world over by the advance of colonialism, capitalism, and modern imperialism. This is shown from stealing the land

of and wiping out the First Nations in the “New World”, through the eviction of peasants from what was once considered “common land” in 19th century England, to the ongoing imperialist machinations in Africa. Patel demonstrates how it was necessary for the ruling classes (then and now) to uproot any “common” approach to running society, in order to make way for the functioning of private property, land rents, and wage labor instead.

Patel also makes the connection with this “commodification” process in society to the historical disenfranchisement of women, economically and politically. He shows how historically women were in many cases the administrators of common property and the defenders of the environment. Thus, the agents of modern capitalism employed the patriarchal “witch hunt” to slander, silence, enslave and/or eliminate these influential women of the commons. Similarly, RAIM sees the “intersectionality” of three strands of oppression (class, nation, and gender) as both the root, and ultimately the fatal weakness of, imperialism itself.

It is with this that Raj Patel mentions *La Via Campesina* (International Peasants Movement), to which RAIM is one of the few heard giving applause in the vast hall full of “lefty” Seattleites. *Via Campesina*, as a movement of exploited food producers, is a key player in the “anti-globalization” struggles. The organization advances the concept of “food sovereignty” in its resistance against imperialist institutions and corporations. “Food sovereignty,” according to the peasant movement, “is the peoples’, Countries’ or State Unions’ RIGHT to define their agricultural and food policy.” The demand for food sovereignty is a revolutionary, Third Worldist demand that RAIM can have unity with.

*La Via Campesina* was originally founded in the First World, and is active in organizing anti-

capitalist resistance among the marginally exploited (as in Immokalee, Florida). Given its internationalism on the food question, they have understandably found most of its focus on the struggles of Third World. Speaking to the intersection of strands of oppression, Patel recites the slogan of *Via Campesina*: “Food sovereignty is about an end to all forms of violence against women.” (7) We totally agree with this slogan as a righteous expression of genuine, internationalist feminism. The point is that the violence that Third World women face daily has the effect of ensuring their exploitation by patriarchy with “domestic” labor. Phony “revolutionaries” talk about women’s rights in Iran, while they barely peep about the violence of Saudi Arabia’s patriarchy. The monarchist regime of Saudi Arabia, a staunch u\$ lackey, makes Iran look like a Western pro-sex liberal feminist haven – in any honest scholarly comparison of Islamic societies. Notice how the u\$ State Department spews the same unaccountable shit, totally in tandem with these fake “leftists” through the imperialist media! Coincidence?

From this account, Patel claims that *Via Campesina* is one successful model (with the Zapatistas being another) of a new “commons” with a sustainable perspective on value. We agree with this only in part. RAIM has nothing but praise for most of their “Declaration of the Rights of Peasants,” especially the following radical prescription:

*“[From Article XI] ... 5. Peasants (women and men) have the right to reparation for ecological debt and the historical and current dispossession of their territories.”*

RAIM and its allies have always called for radical reparations on a global scale from the First World to Third World. We have unity with *La Via Campesina* on this and other key points in their declaration. On the subject of reparations: Within *The Value of Nothing*, Patel uses an

estimate from Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes on the “value” of an Amerikkkan life (approx. \$7.2 million) lost in the Iraq occupation. Applying this very \$7.2 million figure to Iraqi civilians yields a total price tag of \$8.6 TRILLION, according to Patel. Amerikkkans will have to pay at least that amount, and many times over for every other imperialist crime of plunder and genocide; from Afghanistan, Vietnam, and all the way back to KKKolumbus. Only then can they avoid being deported and their leaders guillotined. We’re not holding our breath for Amerikkka to ever pay up willingly though. The Third World will eventually have to defeat the First World, and decisively, in order to extract the reparations due to them. It’s with this perspective that we ask of Raj Patel and Via Campesina, “What’s up with this?” Observe from the following from La Via Campesina’s declaration:

*“[From Article XII] ... 5. Peasants (women and men) have the right to resist oppression and to resort to peaceful direct action in order to protect their rights”*

What? How the hell can the international rural proletariat and peasantry really “have the right to resist oppression” when the only have the right to do so “using peaceful direct action”? Via Campesina shouldn’t tie their hands from utilizing armed resistance. The Monsanto Corporation has direct access to the war apparatus of u\$ imperialism and its lackeys in the Third World.

Let’s briefly forget about extracting reparations from Monsanto for the devastation done to the planet and food producers worldwide: How the hell is Via Campesina supposed to merely defend itself from a full-on state military assault, sponsored by the Monsanto mafia? Does Raj Patel really think scumbag imperialists like Monsanto are just going to give up on forcing their genetically modified crops on the international peasantry, and voluntarily respect their food

sovereignty rights? Is Boeing going to stop building weapons of mass destruction just because someone in the lame First Worldist “anti-war” movement shouted loud enough for them to hear?

The Iraqi armed resistance to Amerikkkan imperialism, and not exclusively is what got the Blackkkwater “rent-a-pig” pigpen (now called “Xe”) into its current business troubles. RAIM’s critique of Via Campesina’s is not radical: The UN Charter itself, not exactly a revolutionary manifesto, upholds the right to use armed force in self-defense and in resistance to oppression. Other Third World resistance movements have studied Via Campesina’s vision of food sovereignty. La Via Campesina should, in turn, study Ward Churchill’s *Pacifism as Pathology* and Lin Biao’s pamphlet “Long Live the Victory of People’s War!” in the hope that their resistance to imperialism is strengthened. While is definitely true that “It’s right to rebel,” but it is also just as true that “In order to get rid of the gun, it is necessary to take up the gun.”

During the Q&A, Patel addressed the looming “What about Haiti?” question. Patel correctly characterizes the Bu\$h/KKKClinton joint-mission to Haiti as akin to sending “two of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse to save Haiti. He also exposes the criminal role of colonialist France and imperialist Amerikkka exploiting and oppressing Haiti, historically and currently.

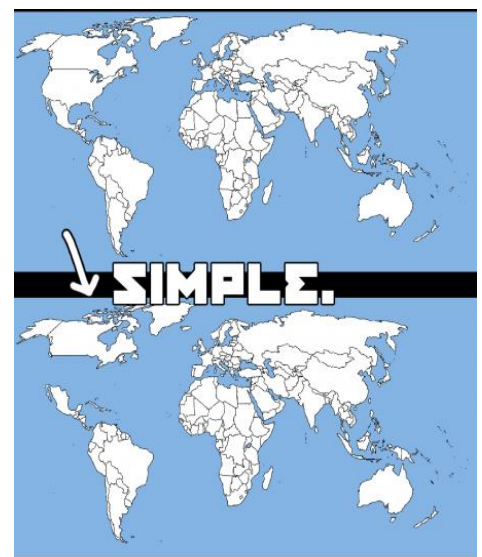
Another inevitable question to Patel was “So, what can we [First Worlders] do?” To this, Patel gave recognition to the Community Alliance for Global Justice (CAGJ) in Seattle as the most effective local organization upholding food sovereignty. While educating First Worlders about food sovereignty issues “at home” (local/organic produce, lifestyle sustainability, edible landscaping, etc.) might have

some minor benefit, it is still putting the cart before the horse. The better part of CAGJ’s work highlights Third World food sovereignty efforts.

RAIM cuts to the chase with its approach to global change. We don’t waste our time trying to persuade Amerikkkans, one “progressive” white community at a time, to stop being global parasites and start living sustainably. Raj Patel is incorrect to characterize the perspective of the Amerikkkan mASSes as being a case of false consciousness, or “Anton’s Blindness.” The reactionary consumerist perspective of First Worlders is their true class consciousness as a global parasite class. We openly state that the will of the world’s exploited majority must set the terms for a truly just global economy, with a perspective on value that serves the people and preserves the planet.

Let the Third World recoup the real costs of that shitburger from these overfed giggers!

(<http://raims.wordpress.com/2010/02/11/raj-patel-%e2%80%93-the-value-of-nothing-jeremy-rifkin-%e2%80%93-the-empathetic-civilization-2/>)



(art by Politics is Over)

# EARTHQUAKE STRIKES HAITI, IMPERIALISM IS A DISASTER

(RAIM-Denver) On Tuesday, January 12th, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake rocked the country of Haiti, its epicenter a mere fifteen miles from the country's capital, Port-au-Prince. By that Thursday, 80,000 people were already buried in mass-graves and 200,000 people were estimated to have perished. In the wake of the tremor, international aid has rushed to the small Caribbean country. The news of the massive earthquake and its human toll has overshadowed a larger crisis in Haiti: crushing poverty, widespread malnutrition and imperialist super-exploitation.

## A history of imperialism

Haiti became the second independent republic in the Western Hemisphere after Black slaves rose up against their owners and then the French between 1791 and 1804. Quickly after defeating France, however, they were straddled with debt. Their former colonial masters demanded 130 million francs (later lowered to 90 million) in indemnity for the Haitian war of liberation. The newly consolidated Haitian government had no such funds and resorted to borrowing the first 30 million from the Bank of France at exorbitant interest rates. It would not be until after World War II that Haiti fully repaid debt accrued from its war of independence.

During the Haitian Revolution, US President Thomas Jefferson initially offered military aid to the French, but backed out at the last minute. After Haiti attained independence, Jefferson signed a legislative bill barring trade between the two countries. The United States, a country with its own substantial Black-slave population, refused to recognize the new, Black republic for six decades in an attempt to stifle it.

Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, has also suffered the most imperialist meddling. Between 1849 and 1919 US troops were sent to the country 24 times to "protect American (sic) lives

and property." Throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the US supported 'Papa' and 'Baby Doc' Duvalier as strongmen puppets in country. This ended after much conflict in 1990 when a reformer, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was elected to the presidency.

In 1991, Aristide was overthrown by a U.S.-backed military coup. As part of a compromise deal to return to power three years later, Aristide made a slew of concessions, including wholesale, IMF-sponsored structural adjustments and the occupation of the country by U.N. 'peacekeepers.' Aristide began appealing to the international community regarding the plight of Haiti and Third World. Aristide was again ousted in 2004, Haiti's bicentennial.

Throughout this process, imperialism has tightened its squeeze on the Haitian masses. Prior to the 1970s and 80s, Haiti was a moderately self-sufficient, agrarian society. Then, the IMF forced the Haitian state to cut tariffs on US imports of rice and other food commodities. Because US farms are heavily subsidized, a flood of cheap agricultural imports drove the Haitian masses off the land and into the slums. Another major blow to Haitians came when international agencies persuaded the Haitian government that a pig acclimated to the island needed to be killed off and replaced. The native pig, which served as a hedge against starvation, needed little water or food, whilst the breed imported from Iowa needed clean water, shelter and feed daily, something the majority of Haitians couldn't provide even for themselves. Thus, Haitians were deprived of their two traditional, staple foods and left at the whim of international food prices. Western-demanded privatizations have also swept Haiti in recent years, closing of country's only flour mill and cement factory and furthering the Haitian masses' dependence on an unfair, uncaring market. Despite so-called 'aid,' foreign debt has crippled

the Haitian economy. In 2003, for example, Haiti paid \$57 million dollars to service foreign loans while receiving \$39 million from aid programs.

## An ongoing disaster in Haiti

During the Summer of 2008, it was reported that Haitians in the slums of Port-au-Prince began widely eating sun-baked mud pies. Food riots occurred the same year. An estimated three-quarters of the country lives on less than \$2 a day. Over half the country subsists on less than a dollar a day.

Cite Soleil, the shanty town adjacent to Port-au-Prince, is home to 2-300,000 residents and is one of the largest slums in the Western Hemisphere. The residents, often the children of former farmers, are said to sleep in shifts for lack of space. Basic education is a privilege; illiteracy is on the rise. There is no welfare or economic safety-net in Haiti. Life expectancy in the country is around 52. Very little modern infrastructure exists.

The Haitian masses are trapped in their miserable condition. Their border with the Dominican Republic is closed and the surrounding waters are patrolled by the US Coast Guard. Haitians caught on the water or 'illegally' inside the US are forced back into the squalid conditions of their home country. Even after the quake, US military airplanes have broadcast a message over Haiti, telling residents to not flee the country. This stands in stark contrast to Cubans, who are deemed 'political refugees' and given free residency status once inside the US.

Most Haitians were unaware the possibility of a quake even existed. In 2008 however, Patrick Charles of Havana's Geological Institute reported, "conditions are ripe for major seismic activity in Port-au-Prince. The inhabitants of the Haitian capital need to prepare themselves for an event which will inevitably occur..." "Thank God that science

has provided instruments that help predict these type of events and show how we have arrived at these conclusions,” he added.

Unfortunately, social conditions prevailed over science’s ability to predict and mitigate the human devastation caused by natural occurrences. The earthquake struck Haiti’s capital city just before 5 pm, rocking the imperialist-ravaged country at the peak of daily activity.

### **The response from the West**

Predictably, the response from the West, especially Americans, has been disgusting.

Pat Robertson, a right-wing, American religious leader, said on his television show, the 700 Club, that the earthquake, along with Haiti’s poverty, was a punishment from god. According to Robertson, Haiti’s 18th-century rebels “signed a pact with the devil” in order to get free from the French. Racist to the extreme, Robertson has a daily television audience of 1 million viewers.

Within the more mainstream of American society, the response has been similar but toned-down. ‘Why were so many Haitians killed? Can’t they build proper buildings? Now we have to help them, again? They really owe us now!’ Most Americans expressed a viewpoint which blames the victim; views them as ‘backwards’; offers ‘aid’ as part of the responsibility carried by ‘advanced’ countries; and expects ‘gratitude,’ i.e. unchallenged political and economic control of their country, in return. American broadcasters played into the view that Haitians are incapable of being anything besides poor and miserable. Associated Press, in one early story, quoted a man who was “wielding a broken wooden plank with nails to protect his bottle of rum.” Western media has sensationalized so-called looting while extolling the roll of the US military in the quake’s aftermath. Youth in “lawless” Haiti are said to be at risk of “sex trade, slavery and murder.” Reports tell of difficulty getting food to hungry Haitians due to

civil disorder, as if such is somehow exceptional in a deeply impoverished, densely-populated city after a major earthquake. All of this paints a picture of Haitians as violent imbeciles whose misery is their own fault. This racist narrative ignores the two-centuries-long unnatural disaster that has crippled Haiti’s self-reliance, including Haiti’s institutions’ ability to respond.

### **US take-over and imperialist penetration**

By January 24th, 20,000 US troops arrived to ‘save’ Haiti. As part of the first act of the relief effort, the US military seized the airport in Port-au-Prince, one of the few in the country. Thereafter, the US has controlled all air-traffic in and out of the capital.

Thus far the US has assumed a de facto governing role in Haiti, with the Dept. of Defense, the State Dept., and USAID taking the lead. Of the 20,000 US troops in Haiti, over half are stationed off the coast, a virtual blockade meant to prevent Haitians from taking to the waters in an expected wave of migration.

Some commentators have called it an occupation. Some have condemned the security-style tactics, such as shooting live rounds into the air and pointing M16s at crowds. Others have noted the impediment to relief efforts the massive troop presence is causing. Journalists and Haiti-advocate, Kim Ives, explained:

“Watching the scene in front of the General Hospital yesterday said it all. Here were people who were going in and out of the hospital bringing food to their loved ones in there or needing to go to the hospital, and there were a bunch of Marine[s]—of US 82nd Airborne soldiers in front yelling in English at this crowd. They didn’t know what they were doing. They were creating more chaos rather than diminishing it. It was a comedy, if it weren’t so tragic.”

One thing that can’t be missed is the near-hegemonic role the US has played in the so-called relief and

recovery effort. Despite the good intentions of some individuals, intervention in Haiti is part of a larger strategy for imperialism.

One influential group, the right-wing Heritage Foundation, noted early-on how the crisis could be used to further American interests. “In addition to providing immediate humanitarian assistance, the US response to the tragic earthquake in Haiti offers opportunities to reshape Haiti’s long-dysfunctional government and economy as well as to improve the public image of the United States in the region,” it stated in a draft report.

Thus far imperialism has rushed in and already pulled off a number of PR stunts.

First, Obama granted temporary amnesty to Haitians scheduled for deportation from the US, after it was demanded by advocacy groups. Likewise, it was reported early on, perhaps erroneously, that the US-controlled IMF demanded wage freezes and rises in electricity prices as part of an emergency 100 million dollar loan package. Later, the IMF came out with a statement, declaring that the \$100 million loan would be interest and condition-free. Managing director of the fund, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, went even further by saying, “the most important thing is that the IMF is now working with all donors to try to delete all the Haitian debt, including our new loan. If we succeed—and I’m sure we will succeed—even this loan will turn out to be finally a grant, because all the debt will have been deleted.”

The IMF’s statement should be seen for what it is: imperialist doublespeak. While imperialism, especially American imperialism, is promising to help Haiti, the real intention is to help itself.

Under the imperialist system, ‘aid’ is almost exclusively used as a political weapon. Aid packages and loans often come with strings, such as the freezing of wages and rises in prices for public services, among

other things. When Washington's edicts are not followed, aid money to poor countries is withheld and instead given to opposition groups, as was the case in Haiti after Aristide was reelected in 2000. Additionally, 'aid' rarely makes it to those it is professed to serve. 84% of US aid money to the Third World returns to the US economy in the form of contracts, wages, consulting fees and payments for goods. Of the remaining 16%, an unknown amount is pocketed by the recipient country's goonish puppet-elite.

Recently, the United States has been touting investment in Haiti. Twice in 2009, Bill Clinton, acting on behalf of the UN, made high-profile visits to Haiti. In one trip, Clinton gave 150 investors a tour of potential investment sites in the country. Prior to this, Clinton visited with UN General Secretary, Ban-Ki Mon, who said during a press conference the country must do more to attract investment. However, this investment is of a narrow type, as illustrated by a post-earthquake opinion piece in the *Ottawa Citizen*:

"[Regarding 'rebuilding' and 'development' plans,] [t]he Haitian government has singled out tourism, "export processing zones" (EPZs) and agriculture as sectors that hold promise and should be supported. But donors seem to be placing the bulk of their faith in EPZs, or expanding the textile industry."

Facing a 'financial crisis,' US imperialism likely sees the Haitian earthquake as an opportunity to ratchet up and expand exploitation in the country. Food sustainability and commercial agriculture for Haitians is not profitable for imperialism and will not be promoted as part of imperialist 'development' schemes.

Impetus will be given to legal 'reforms,' new building construction and infrastructure development. However, such will not be geared to the benefit of the people of Haiti, but rather those who control the Haitian economy: imperialists and a small comprador class. Infrastructure and

'development' will expand imperialism's exploitation of the country and perhaps convert the country's north shore into a resort destination for the exclusive use of Western vacationers. For the bulk of Haiti's population though, conditions will not change. Though a few new sweatshop jobs may come to the country, most Haitians will continue to rely on small-scale agriculture, the informal sector and remittances from abroad for daily survival.

#### **Recent resistance in Haiti**

Since the mid-90s, resistance to continual imperialist meddling and economic strangulation amongst Haitians has coalesced under former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the Fanmi Lavalas [Avalanche Family] party.

While president of Haiti, Aristide used Fanmi Lavalas and other independent institutions to provide services to and render support from the poor, especially where the Haitian state's hands were tied by US-sponsored trade agreements. Chief among Aristide's plans for Haiti was a more democratic productive and distributive method within the grassroots and informal sector, those areas which imperialism and the Haitian state had the least control over.

Though Aristide was supported by the masses of Haiti, he never prepared them to struggle against inevitable imperialist suppression. His politics and program were heavily tinged with liberalism: an inability to make and follow through with clear distinctions. In a very real sense, he wanted to have it both ways. He wanted to be both a legitimate statesman within the imperialist system as well as someone leading progressive social change within Haiti. This, in addition to his pacifist tendencies, left himself and his supporters vulnerable to attacks.

Aristide's liberalism was perhaps best expressed as he looked for allies in Haiti's struggle against imposed poverty. Rather than building alliances on the basis of clear common interest, i.e. with those

countries also struggling under IMF-imposed debt and unfair trade deals, Aristide spent a considerable amount of time appealing to rich countries. Rather than championing and joining in solidarity with those being attacked and threatened by the imperialism globally, he formed a government-in-exile inside the US after his first ouster. In *Eyes of the Heart*, a short book published in 2000, he made a moral case against modern globalization; attempting to expose the plight of Haitians to Western audiences in a non-threatening way.

The logical result of Aristide's misguided politics came in 2004, an election year. The US-funded opposition made allegations of fraud and labeled Aristide a dictator. They staged acts of civil unrest and launched a rebellion which threatened to violently overtake the capital, prompting the US to "restore democracy," i.e. kidnap Aristide and fly him to Africa as part of a coup d'état. Since Aristide's ouster, Fanmi Lavalas has been banned from running in elections, branded "violent, pro-Aristide gangs" and subject to repression. The small gains Haitians made during Aristide's short stints as president have been reversed. For all his internationally-directed appeals, they went unheard and ignored in the West. When he was overthrown a second time by the US, there was no outcry from the Western "masses."

What is revealed here is that the struggle for Third World liberation is a political-military one. In this regard, Aristide's strategy failed the Haitian masses, leaving them to languish under the jackboot of imperialism.

It also reveals the saliency of class in today's world. The illusionary 'morality' of the First World is not reliable in any effective sense. Any 'progressive movement' within Amerika is overstated, largely for propaganda purposes. Generally, First Worlders are exploiter enemies of the Third World masses.

#### **Anti-Imperialist Alternative**

One thing should be clear: the disaster that's befallen Haiti is not natural. It is the result of an economic system, a class system which actively benefits a minority of humanity at the expense of the majority.

There are two ideas at the core of this. First, Haitians are far from alone in their plight. They are one small part of the exploited masses of the world. Second, it will take more than reforms or even revolution in a single country to relieve its people of the capitalist-imperialist threat eternally. It will take a global revolution- an uprising of the exploited Third World masses against imperialism, its agents and supporters- to end this system forever.

The idea that a cataclysmic, global revolution will be unleashed upon the world is millenarian. Because of this, the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Movement (RAIM) supports various forces actively opposing imperialism throughout the Third World. We support a united front against imperialism, i.e. unity between forces resisting imperialism in individual countries.

Revolutionaries push for widespread social transformation. While it is important to accept and

support reforms when they are on the table, revolutionaries must also defend reforms from attacks and organize to transform society on a more widespread basis. Society must be revolutionized on all levels, including the adoption of a foreign policy based on revolutionary internationalism and not narrow state interests. Revolutionaries the world over must make clear distinctions and have a clear strategy; not cloud up the picture with liberalism, uninhibited moralism and unwarranted reverence for the First World. Above all, revolutionaries are anti-imperialists and see their own struggle as global in scope.

### **Which way from here**

The lack of a revolutionary or popular democratic movement in Haiti places it in great disadvantage vis-a-vis imperialist penetration and restructuring in the aftermath of the recent earthquake. As it looks, the living conditions in Haiti will be hellish for some time.

However, from this ongoing disaster, Haitians and the global masses have the opportunity to learn from and reject the errors of Haiti's most recent struggles. As revolutionaries, we also have an

obligation to study and learn from what is happening in the world, presenting our findings with utmost clarity to the Third World masses and those who might be their allies. In the First World, we have an obligation to agitate for and meaningfully support the united front, using our own bourgeois privilege when expedient. In the Third World, revolutionaries must incorporate these lessons into their struggle, so as to not repeat the same mistakes.

While doctors and food may help in this time of emergency, they are hardly long-term solutions to the problems inherent in capitalist-imperialism. The best form of relief for Haiti would be a global, anti-imperialist movement. Unlike the US-dominated 'recovery' effort, a successful, class-conscious movement on the part of exploited Haitians and the Third World masses is the only thing capable of truly saving Haiti.

(<http://raimd.wordpress.com/2010/02/04/earthquake-strikes-haiti-imperialism-is-a-disaster/>)



Image from RAIM-Denver

# MSH ON HEALTHCARE, NPR ON BAREFOOT DOCTORS

(MSH, NPR.org) The following is a mainstream, bourgeois article from National Public Radio on socialist China's barefoot doctors. The barefoot doctors were an part of socialist China's alternative approach to medicine. The program sought to provide basic health care to the Chinese masses. Under previous regimes, the vast majority in China had little access to health care. Because of programs and campaigns such as this one, China's life expectancy doubled while the Communists were in power from 1949 to the 1970s. However, socialism in China was reversed in the 1970s. Today, China is thoroughly capitalist. And, its masses have suffered as a result. Nonetheless, it is important to learn for the successes and failures of past revolutionary movements.

Today there is a debate over whether or not to enact health care reform in the United States. The Democratic Party, led by Obama, seeks something close to universal coverage for Americans. The Republicans are doing what they can to block the reform. The Republicans seek to keep health care as it is, in the private sector. Even though communists seek health care for all. It should be pointed out that if social democratic-type gains are made under Obama, they will be paid for by the Third World. Third World peoples, largely without health care, will be paying for American health care reform. Americans already, under their current system, have more health care than most people in the world. Americans, with their wealth and privilege, already consume way more than their share of the global social product. The real tragedy is that billions of people in the Third World have almost no health care at all. While the liberals, and liberals wearing Marxist masks, concern themselves with increasing the standard of living for Americans, the poorest of which are still rich by world standards, real communists

seek a radical reorganization of the world economy that serves the majority of humanity. Real communists recognize that by raising the standard of living for Americans, one lowers the standard of living for the vast majority in the Third World. The wealth it takes to raise Americans up has to come from somewhere. Real communists seek to increase access to health care for the proletariat and its allies in the Third World before they seek to increase health care for the wealthy First World populations. With this goal in mind, China's experiment with barefoot doctors is especially important. It is a model that relied on people power more than capital. The model pioneered by the Maoists is one that can be applied across the Third World. It is a model that serves the people.

Article follows:

*"Health for the Masses: China's 'Barefoot Doctors'?" by Vikki Valentine*

*When doctors and money are in short in supply, how does a government provide health care for its people? Brenda Wilson has reported that at a time when they're needed most, physicians and nurses from developing countries are being recruited away in large numbers by Western countries. This shortage — for example, one doctor for every 10,000 people in Kenya — is complicating the fight against AIDS and other diseases.*

*On the eve of the 1949 Communist Revolution, China found itself in a situation similar to that faced by African countries today. China had estimated that there were about 40,000 physicians trained in Western and Soviet medicine in the country, serving a population of 540 million people. Worse yet, most of these physicians worked in large cities; 80 percent of the population were rural peasants.*

*'Big Belly' and the Communist Party*  
*Ten million of these peasants suffered from "big belly" — the peasant name for schistosomiasis.*

*The disease is caused by a worm living in snails found in swamps and rivers. Peasants catch the parasite while wading in water; once inside the body, the worm mates in blood vessels, and released eggs travel throughout the body, particularly to the intestines, bladder and liver. It's the body's immune reaction that causes the disease's symptoms, such as seizures and the characteristic swollen belly. Chronic cases risk permanent damage to organs such as the liver, intestines and lungs.*

*A major platform of the Communist Party was a revolution in agriculture. A "Great Leap Forward" was needed in China. But Party leaders, including Chairman Mao Zedong, knew that improving the health of peasants was integral to increasing agricultural production.*

*What followed was a backlash against Western-style "elite" medicine. The "bourgeois" policies of "self-interested" physicians who only treated rare and difficult diseases were denounced as "disregarding the masses."*

*Chairman Mao's Snail*

*One of the Party's first steps in medical reform called for massive campaigns against infectious disease. Thousands of workers were trained and sent out into the countryside to examine and treat peasants, and organize sanitation campaigns.*

*Health teams claimed to have examined 2.8 million peasants in 1958, the first year of the schistosomiasis program. (One team claimed examining 1,200 patients in a single day.) Some 67 million latrines were reportedly built or repaired, and over the next few years, hundreds of thousands of peasants were set to work day and night, drying out swamps and building drainage ditches to get rid of the snail's habitat. Party workers claimed schistosomiasis cure rates of 85 to 95 percent in some areas, and that the disease had been wiped out in more than half of previously endemic areas along the Yangtze River.*

# A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OF MAO'S ERRORS

(MSH) Mao Zedong was the greatest revolutionary of the last century. Mao led a quarter of the world in throwing off the chains of imperialism, feudalism and capitalism. "China has stood up," he announced from the steps of Tian'anmen. A quarter of the world's population threw in their lot with Mao's revolution, to build a new world without oppression. Out of this experience, Maoism was born. Maoism was a leap in our scientific understanding of how to make revolution. Although Maoism was not Mao's alone, his writings served as its major point of reference. Mao's greatest gift to humanity is his contribution to Maoism. Maoism was a key step in the development of Maoism-Third Worldism, the highest peak of revolutionary science to date. Maoism-Third Worldism leads the global struggle today. We owe the greatest debt to Mao. Nonetheless, it is important to distinguish between Mao and Maoism, and between Mao

and Maoism-Third Worldism. Mao was by no means perfect. Despite all of his accomplishments, he still made grave errors. In part, Maoism-Third Worldism is a response to these errors.

## First Worldism

Third Worldist views can be found contending with First Worldist views throughout the history of the communist movement. Yet First Worldism has been the dominant view historically. Mao, unfortunately, inherited First Worldist dogma. Mao never broke with the idea that it was only a minority of elites in the First World that exploit and oppress the vast majority. He never broke with the idea that the majority of First World peoples, including the majority of the First World working class, are allies of the world revolution. Furthermore, Mao's view of the American people reflects this error. For example, Mao stated:*(next page)*

**NPR cont** *Chairman Mao was impressed, and the Party became fond of declaring that it could "cure what the powers above have failed to do."*

*But Mao's revolution was struggling, and in 1965, with his launch of the Cultural Revolution, he expanded the idea of health for the masses beyond infectious disease. Mao ordered, "In health and medical work, put the stress on rural areas." With that, China's cadre of "barefoot doctors" was born.*

### *A Peasant Medical Force*

*Thousands of peasants — men and women who were mostly in their 20s and already had some general education — were selected for an intensive three- to six-month course in medical training. They were instructed in anatomy, bacteriology, diagnosing disease, acupuncture, prescribing traditional and Western medicines, birth control and maternal and infant care.*

*The barefoot doctors continued their farming work in the commune fields, working alongside their comrades. Their proximity also made them readily available to help those in need. They provided basic health care: first aid, immunizations against diseases such as diphtheria, whooping cough and measles, and health education. They taught hygiene as basic as washing hands before eating and after using latrines.*

*Illnesses beyond their training, the barefoot doctors referred on to physicians at commune health centers.*

*Ten years after the Cultural Revolution, there were an estimated 1 million barefoot doctors in China. Looking back, however, gauging the program's success is complicated.*

### *A Model for Rural Health Care?*

*In the 1970s, the World Health Organization and leaders in some developing countries — even the Soviet Union — began to consider China's program as an alternate model to Western-style health care. They were looking for inexpensive ways to deliver health care to rural populations; China had seemed to set up a successful model.*

*But the barefoot doctors program largely fell apart in the 1980s and '90s: The central government provided less financial support for the program, and the country's emerging free-market system began forcing farmers to pay for their health care. The World Health Organization recently ranked China as fourth-worst out of 190 countries for equality of health care. Yet 40 years after the program began, the program still holds allure, and lessons, for health officials around the world looking for a solution for inadequate rural health care.*

*Some of the claims made about the program's successes weren't always*

*backed up by data. On a visit in 1972, American doctor Victor Sidel admitted it was hard to measure the quality of the program. Nonetheless, Sidel praised it for supplying health care where previously there had been none; he also singled out the barefoot doctors themselves for their role as patient advocates.*

*There is also agreement outside of China that the country did go much further than other countries of comparable wealth in reducing infectious diseases, such as polio, smallpox and schistosomiasis, writes historian John Farley in his book, "Bilharzia: A History of Tropical Medicine."*

*Farley also relates the observations of Dr. Paul Bausch, of Stanford University, who made a visit to China in 1984. Bausch reported back that there indeed had been a 90 percent reduction of schistosomiasis in some regions. Overall, according to Bausch, cases were down from 10 million people 30 years earlier to 2.4 million, with most cases being mild.*

*The barefoot doctors, and their predecessors, had in fact, as the Communist Party claimed, turned "snail-infected swamps into 'rivers of happiness.'"*

*(http://monkeysmaashesheaven.wordpress.com/2010/02/21/msh-on-healthcare-npr-on-barefoot-doctors/)*

*“The Chinese people firmly support the revolutionary struggle of the American people. I am convinced that the American people who are fighting valiantly will ultimately win victory...”*

*“In the United States, it is only the reactionary ruling clique among the whites which is oppressing the Negro people. They can in no way represent the workers, farmers, revolutionary intellectuals, and other enlightened persons who comprise the overwhelming majority of the white people. At present, it is the handful of imperialists, headed by the United States, and their supporters, the reactionaries in different countries, who are carrying out oppression, aggression and intimidation against the overwhelming majority of the nations and peoples of the world. They are the minority, and we are the majority. At most they make up less than ten percent of the 3,000 million people of the world.”*

In addition, Mao failed to recognize that the struggle for Black national liberation would be a struggle against White occupation. Instead, Mao conceived the struggle in the United States as a multi-national one that included Whites.

*“The struggle of the black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers’ movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class.”*

Mao’s First Worldism is consistent throughout his life. The Chinese Communist Party echoed Mao’s First Worldism for most of its existence. However, during the Lin Biao period from 1965 to 1971, the CCP’s First Worldist rhetoric, at times, almost vanishes from sight. This is especially the case from 1965 to 1968. In fact, during these years, another line emerges in Chinese publications alongside First Worldism. The line that emerges is one that ignores or writes off First World struggles. This line is the line of Lin Biao’s 1965 article Long Live the Victory of People’s War! Lin Biao recognized the contradiction of the global city versus the global countryside, the exploiter nations versus exploited nations, etc, as the principal one. At the height of the Cultural Revolution in 1967, Beijing Review, for example, published an article by Robert F. Williams that paraphrased Lin Biao’s line:

*“In keeping with the the principles of people’s war, wherein the great masses of exploited peoples of the world represent the rural areas surrounding the cities (the exploiting industrial countries), the Afro-American revolutionaries represent a mighty urban underground within the city.”*

We can infer that there was a struggle within the Chinese Communist Party over how to evaluate the First World populations. By publishing Robert F. Williams, who is not under the discipline of the Party, the minority line is able to make its way into the media on occasion. Unfortunately, the Lin Biao line did not win out over the Mao-backed First Worldist dogma.

### **Failure to follow through on the Cultural Revolution: domestic policy, creeping capitalism**

Other errors surrounded Mao’s shift to the right following the Ninth Congress of April of 1969. Into the 1970s, Mao moved rightward in both domestic policy and foreign policy. When Mao turned to the right, he came into conflict with many Maoists. When the spontaneous mass movements were ended, the Cultural Revolution Group was purged of its “ultra-left” at the end of 1967 through 1968. Wang Li, hero of the Wuhan Incident, who first theorized “continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat,” was purged at the end of 1967. Guan Feng and Qi Benyu were also purged. This put an end to the spontaneous mass movements and power seizures from below. In 1970, Chen Boda lost power. In 1971, Lin Biao lost power and died. Chen Boda and Lin Biao were the ones most responsible for the systematization and elevation of Maoism as a new stage of Marxism. Lin Biao was accused of a coup, but no credible evidence has ever been presented to support this claim. The “evidence” that was presented at Lin Biao’s trial was trivial, and often forged. The story of Lin Biao’s coup is the clumsiest of police narratives. Interestingly, the Gang of Four, the last remaining top Maoists in 1976, in a repeat of the falsifications surrounding Lin Biao, would also be charged with plotting a coup.

After the victory of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1969) and the Ninth Congress (1969), the Maoist prize should have been a return to the Maoist economic policies that had been defeated by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping during the Great Leap years (1958-1962). The point of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1969) had been to reverse the creeping capitalism as the Maoist model was abandoned during the Great Leap years. This defeat during the Great Leap prompted Mao to initially talk about the danger of capitalist counter-revolution by a new capitalist class. Yet after clearing away his opposition, Mao did not return to the Maoist development model after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1969). Instead of taking hold of the prize, Mao opted to return to a position very similar to the compromise position that the revisionists had forced on the Maoists at the end of the Great Leap. The return to a strong Maoist development model championed by those around Chen Boda and Lin Biao, informally known as the “Flying Leap,” was abandoned. In other words, there was a turn away from Maoism throughout the 1970s, especially following the removal of Lin Biao. At times, Mao was part of this turn to the right.

Through the 1970s, as a part of the turn, verdicts were slowly reversed and those who had been deposed during the Cultural Revolution were restored. For example, in 1972, Mao attended Chen Yi’s funeral and referred to him as a “comrade.” Thus Mao signaled a reversal of the verdict on this Adverse Current leader and staunch opponent of the Cultural Revolution. Ye Jianying, who later orchestrated the arrest of the Gang of Four in

# RCP ELABORATES ON THE TRAGIC OPPRESSION OF NFL MILLIONAIRES

(MSH) Recently, the Revolution newspaper website of the so-called Revolutionary Communist Party (USA) took advantage of the hype surrounding the Super Bowl. In an appeal to Joe Six Pack, a Revolution writer examines the plight of football athletes in the NFL. Revolution asks what kind of system is it that oppresses multi-millionaire athletes by forcing them to perform even when they are injured — truly a horror. The writer cites a work by another author

that covers the supposed oppression of NFL athletes:

*“However, he blasts the NFL for how they are handling this problem. He finds that team doctors are very incompetent, and they have a conflict of interest in that they are working for the team that has a compulsion to get an injured player back on to the field as soon as possible. He points out that studies of concussions funded by the NFL were poorly designed and their conclusions*

*differed from most other medical studies on concussions. He states that the NFL has produced flawed studies that do not adequately diagnose concussions nor trace their long-term effects.”*

Luckily for those playing in the Super Bowl, there is a party that is willing to stick up for their interests. Revolution states:

*“However, it is ultimately going to take revolution and getting rid of capitalism/imperialism in order to*

## **Mao’s Errors cont**

1976, and other revisionists and rightists, were promoted with Mao’s approval to fill the power void left after the People’s Liberation Army was purged of the Maoists.

*“In our country there are people who curse us, saying we are completely leftist. Which people are our ‘leftist faction’? They are those who wanted to knock down the Premeir today, Chen Yi tomorrow, Ye Jianying the next day. This so-called ‘left’ faction is now in jail. For several years there was chaos under heaven, fighting in various places throughout the nation, widespread civil war. The two sides fired guns, all together one million guns. This army faction supported this faction, that army faction supported that faction, [all] fighting. Power was seized by that ‘left’ faction... The chief backstage backer [of the ‘left’ faction] is now no longer with us, [he is] Lin Biao.”*

The most famous case was that of Deng Xiaoping. During the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping was characterized and deposed as the “second person in authority taking the capitalist road.” In 1972, Mao changed his tune. Mao said that the problem of Deng Xiaoping, exiled in Jiangxi at the time, was a “contradiction among the people.” (6) Deng Xiaoping was brought back to power in 1974 to a top leadership role with Mao’s blessing. Deng Xiaoping would later preside over the complete dismantling of socialism in the 1980s. Despite coming into conflict with the revisionists at times, Mao wavered and waffled. At times, Mao even protected the revisionists. Even though Deng Xiaoping was removed from power more than once, Mao had protected him. For example, Mao personally intervened to separate Deng Xiaoping’s case from Liu Shaoqi’s at the height of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1969). Thus Mao saved Deng Xiaoping, allowing him to make a comeback. Mao failed to carry the Cultural Revolution through to the end.

### **Errors in global outlook and foreign policy**

Errors were made in foreign policy and global outlook also. Mao correctly broke with the Soviet social-imperialists, in part, because of the Soviets had become imperialist themselves and even begun to align with the

Western imperialists. Yet, in the 1970s, the CCP found itself also aligning with the Western imperialists. This rightward turn was part of Mao’s rejection of Lin Biao’s global people’s war outlook. Lin Biao was associated with the line that China ought to promote the global people’s war led by Maoism. The Lin Biao line was connected to dissemination of Maoism internationally. Lin Biao’s line put China at odds with almost every state in the world except revolutionary and popular ones. The Lin Biao line advocated fighting both Western imperialism headed by the United States and social-imperialism all at once. The correct Lin Biao line came to be seen as ultra-left by Mao. As early as 1969, Mao assigned people like Chen Yi and Deng Xiaoping to come up with a new line. Eventually the new, anti-Lin Biao line would recommend a tacit Chinese-US alliance against the Soviet Union, which the CCP characterized as “Hitler-like.” This came to be justified after the fact by “Three Worlds Theory” of the 1970s. Deng Xiaoping was the main spokesman for this line and theory during the 1970s. Lin Biao’s faction opposed this reactionary turn in foreign policy and global outlook. The endgame of the new, reactionary line was the full capitulation to imperialism that occurred under Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s. China, which had been a beacon for oppressed countries everywhere, now seemed to be selling out. This reactionary line had the effect of discrediting Mao-influenced movements worldwide.

The revolutionary movement faces difficult challenges in the coming years. There are no socialist states. There is no organizational center worldwide. In this context, revolutionary scientists must step up. It is our duty to avoid the mistakes of the past. This necessitates the ruthless evaluation of the history of the revolutionary movement. No stone must be left unturned. Today, Maoism-Third Worldism blazes a trail by setting the record straight where others disseminate self-serving falsifications. We must take what was right about past movements, elevate and develop that. We must reject all that was wrong.

# WHAT ABOUT THE RIM?

(MSH) The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) was an attempt to regroup various parties under various versions of First Worldist “Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.” The more well-known signatories to early the RIM statements included Communist Party of Peru, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist. The Revolutionary Communist Party of the United States of America (RCP), led by their “main man” Bob Avakian, also was a participant.

Mike Ely is a one-time editor of the RCP’s newspaper, a one-time bigwig follower of Bob Avakian and his RCP. In recent years, he has split from Avakian. Ely has published a recent, helpful article that confirms much of what we have been trying to tell people for years. Ely writes:

## ***RCP cont***

*fully put an end to the business of sports that treats athletes as commodities and chews them up and spits them out. Only when we get to socialism will we really be able to transform athletics and sport into a game and not a business where the product takes precedent over athletes’ health.”*

Revolution specifically questions whether Ben Roethlisberger should be playing football since he was involved in a motorcycle accident in 2006, “He was not wearing a helmet! The fact that he was able to play the next season after that accident was amazing.” Incidentally, Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger was the highest paid, taking home the NFL’s largest single-season paycheck, earning more than \$27.7 million in 2008. However, lower NFL salaries can range around \$600,000 to \$1.5 million. Even the poorest working Amerikan falls within the richest 15% of the world’s population. However, NFL athletes are extremely rich even by the standards of the First World. The clear implication by the Revolution article is that even the filthy rich have an interest in communist revolution. In their fantasy world, Amerikans, including the filthy rich, can be aligned for revolution. The First Worldists of the RIM threw out class

*“Thanks for giving me a chance to clarify.... First, I don’t speak from any special knowledge — beyond the published record. If I had non-public information...*

*...My understanding is that the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement is moribund — and that it has been dead for much more than a decade. And that for varying reasons, no one has bothered to shovel dirt over it publicly.*

*I.e. that there is no functioning network of organizations and parties called the RIM. That the groups listed as being part of the RIM are not functioning as a movement in any recognizable way. That when there are publicly mentioned meetings of communist parties (from South Asia, or at an international level) it is not under the auspices of the RIM (even when nominally RIM parties like the Nepalese organized them).*

analysis a long time ago, so it is should not be surprising that they have chosen to agitate around the interests of multi-millionaire NFL athletes — yet more idiocy from Afakean’s drones. However, this highlights the clear difference between the RIM’s approach and the approach of Maoism-Third Worldism. For one thing, Maoist-Third Worldists don’t think on-the-job injuries suffered by millionaires is a pressing issue that the proletariat cares much about.

The First Worldist organizations of the RIM toss class analysis. Thus, the RIM reads tea leaves to discover that the richest people in the world, the majority of First Worlders, have material interest in overthrowing imperialism and embarking on socialist transformation of society. Tossing Marx’s theory of value, Revolution even goes so far as to make the ridiculous claim that millionaire NFL players are exploited:

*“We need to put a stop to these athletes being used by the NFL to add value to ‘their product’ and then ending up as a vegetable or even worse.”*

The First Worldism of the RIM flies in the face of reality. Contrary to their First Worldism, Maoism-Third Worldism is revolutionary science; our approach is based on materialism. Maoism-Third

Worldism places global class analysis at the center of its analysis. Our approaches to exploitation are scientific. Just about every First World person is consuming more than their share of the pie of global surplus. And, the Third World suffers. We recognize that the principal contradiction in the world is between the exploiting nations and the exploited nations, the First World versus the Third World.

Maoism-Third Worldism is everything that the RIM’s so-called Maoism isn’t. Maoism-Third Worldism actually reflects reality, it is scientifically rigorous, it is creative and undogmatic. The Afakeanists are a movement of cultists, we are a movement of revolutionary scientists and leaders. We know why the RCP appeals to First World peoples. It appeals to First Worlders for the same reasons any cult does. It is a mystery why anyone in the Third World listens to the clowns in the RCP or the RIM. Lately, Maoism-Third Worldism has been making headway in the Third World. We hope people can get their act together and drop so-called “Maoism” and embrace Maoism-Third Worldism. The future of humanity depends on it.

(<http://monkeysmaashesheaven.wordpress.com/2009/03/08/rim-elaborates-on-the-tragic-oppression-of-nfl-millionaires/>)

### *Sorting Things Out*

*There is a difference between the CORIM, the RIM and AWTW News Service. The fact that a committee called CORIM issued declarations for a few years did not mean that an actual RIM was functioning — i.e. that this committee actually represented a movement. And even that somewhat-cynical charade of CORIM statements has stopped happening. (The Nepalis noted acidly that none of these bodies issued any declaration when they emerged as the leading party of Nepal in 2008!)*

*The fact that there is AWTW news service (producing occasional articles) does not mean that their view represents an international movement (or that any international network shares their views).*

*At this point the situation is fragmented.*

*There are groupings of European Maoists working with exile groups along their approaches. A key issue here is the Gonzalo-like belief (among some) of the applicability of “PPW” in Europe — an approach that the RCP will never have rapprochement with.*

*There are bilateral relations the RCP apparently has with groups like Sarbedaran (and a few even-smaller circles — including the RKs in Germany).*

*But since Gonzalo was captured 1992, the RIM (as such) has showed little sign of coherent common life.*

*The only real statement was the RIM millennial statement (which the RCP clearly does not uphold — because of the document’s formulations about principal contradiction and main trend etc.)*

*The Nepalis generally refer to the RIM in past tense, while occasionally their statements reflect the fact that they are still (nominally) within it.*

*However over and over, they have made it clear that they think it “played its role” (which is true) in regrouping maoists after the coup in china — but that the responsibility falls to them to regroup communists internationally. And it is clear that the Nepali initiatives around international regroupment are not within the confines of RIM, nor do they follow the approaches that shaped the RIM (in the 1980s etc) when it had some appearance of cohesion.*

#### *The Maoist Movement After Mao*

*One way to look at it: There were a few major Maoist parties in the world, and a number of minor groups with little traction. The major parties were Turkey, India, Nepal, Philippines and Peru. (For simplicity, I’m not discussing the currents of former Maoists who supported the 1976 coup in China.)*

*The RCP played a role in the RIM’s emergence (but itself has been one of the relatively small propaganda groups with little real-world political traction.)*

*After 1992 (and the emergence of Gonzalo’s Assumir document) the RCP parted roads with all surviving factions of the PCP (while the PCP seems to regrouped around Gonzalo after having suffered a steep decline after setbacks).*

*The party in Turkey also suffered important setbacks — including splits and the decapitation of the Maoist party leadership.*

*The Philippine Maoists were never in the RIM.*

*India’s main Maoist group is not in the RIM. The pro-RIM group MCC merged with the Peoples War Group (PWG) to form the current CPI(Maoist)— to the RCP’s obvious chagrin. The RIM’s Naxalbari group adopted a Gonzalo-like line — deeply opposed to Avakian’s politics.*

*And finally, the RCP is now hurling impotent directives at a largely indifferent and rather busy UCPN(M) (complete with heated charges of revisionism and disturbing calls for a split).*

*Meanwhile the RCP has adopted a new view (since Avakian’s auto-coup of 2003) that the dividing line among communists is Avakian’s synthesis (not the previous dividing line of adopting Maoism as the third and higher synthesis of Marxism).*

*Who is with the RCP on their side of that new dividing line? Even forces who have some sympathy with this or that element of Avakian’s view don’t adopt him as the new man of “the level of Mao or Lenin.” I’m curious (for example) to know what the Sarbedaran has said about this new dividing line.”*

*Even today, there are still those who pretend that RIM is still up and running. The RIM played a very counter-revolutionary role in North America overall. In North America, the RIM was mostly a recruitment tool for the RCP. The RCP opportunistically used the RIM to imply that the RCP had some kind of important organizational connection to movements that, at one time, had potential in the Third World. The RCP has a long history of avoiding ideological struggle. The RCP used the RIM the same way that it used the Black Panther Party. They used the RIM as a way to avoid important debates over political line. The RCP would imply that since it had the blessing of the RIM, the RCP’s line was correct. This approach was very effective in lowering the political level of those calling themselves Maoist. Even today, there are naive new comers and, also, fence sitters who can’t see through the revisionist smoke and mirrors. Sometimes it is like playing a broken record, but let us reiterate: If one can’t put politics in command, one should not be calling oneself a “Marxist,” let alone a “Maoist.”*

*The RIM was a step backward, not a step forward. The RIM made no advances ideologically speaking. The oft repeated claim that the RIM was the first to elevate Mao’s theory to a third, higher stage is a false one. That distinction goes to Lin Biao, who was the first to say Mao’s theories constituted a “new, higher stage of Marxism.” Even Charu Mazumdar of the CP India (ML), and follower of Lin Biao, quoted Lin Biao on this point in his many works. Even though Lin Biao was the first to articulate this specific formula, Chen Boda, as editor of the Chinese Party journal Red Flag, had been pushing Maoist theory in that direction for a long time. By*

# REVIEW: 'NICKEL AND DIMED: ON (NOT) GETTING BY IN AMERICA'

Barbara Ehrenreich

New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001

Reviewed by Comrade Serve the People (MSH)

When noted Amerikkkan liberal writer Barbara Ehrenreich bemoaned the plight of "the roughly

four million women about to be booted into the labor market by welfare reform [for] \$6 or \$7 an hour" (p. 1) over lunch at an expensive French restaurant, the editor of Harper's suggested that she try working for that amount herself and report on her findings. Can one get by in Amerikkka on the income from an

unskilled job paying the minimum wage or a bit more? Ehrenreich's "many opportunities to regret" (p. 1) the acceptance of this suggestion have been greatly offset by the royalties on her best-selling book Nickel and Dimed. Her earnings from this project put her squarely in the category of

unskilled job paying the minimum wage or a bit more? Ehrenreich's "many opportunities to regret" (p. 1) the acceptance of this suggestion have been greatly offset by the royalties on her best-selling book Nickel and Dimed. Her earnings from this project put her squarely in the category of

## ***RIM cont***

tolerating revisionists like the RCP (and its embrace of the Theory of Productive Forces and Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution) and opportunists, the RIM never reached the ideological clarity found in the Maoism put forward during the height of the Cultural Revolution. The RIM and The RCP supporters presented themselves as representing a post-GPCR Maoist orthodoxy. The RIM's brand of "Maoism" was a mixture of anything-goes-type liberalism (the RCP, the CPNM, etc.) and a stale kind of phrase mongering. To our knowledge, there was no part of the RIM that was not revisionist. However, we would like to be proven wrong on this. Because the RIM was able, to an extent, to present itself as an orthodoxy, efforts by the Maoist tradition that genuinely advance science tended to get pushed to the side. This did incredible damage to the communist movement. The kind of politics the RIM cultivated was revisionism, gross opportunism, fence sitting, etc. Those in the RIM circles in North America had an approach to politics that had little to do with Maoism. Even today there are fence sitters who are still stuck in the mud, unable to put politics in command. We'd like to reach a hand to them and help them get unstuck.

### **The future**

The communist movement is at a critical time today. No socialist states exist. There are very few Communist organizations. Many have lost the belief that the total human liberation is possible. Many have bought into the Fukuyama-ist consensus that Western liberalism is the best we can do. Nonetheless, we should not lose hope. After all, the facts of our world are as terrible as ever. The vast majority of humanity is being ground down into the dirt day after day. The vast majority exist at subsistence or sub-subsistence level. The vast majority of women and youth suffer day by day, bound by the chains of patriarchal traditions. Gender oppression is one of the main props of the world system. Capitalist development is a runaway train heading off an ecological cliff. A few rich countries in the First World consume far in excess of their share of the world's energy. The current First World standard of living is threatening human life with extinction. The gross consumption of the First World is not sustainable.

Mao said that revolutionaries are optimists. Hope remains. The revolutionary process is a long one. The past

teaches us that the revolutionary process happens in waves. The first great wave of this century surrounded the events of 1917. The second included the great wave of social revolution that piggybacked on national liberation movements around World War 2 and after. We must do what we can to speed the advance of next revolutionary wave. The shape of the next outburst of revolution will be a global people's war. Events can very quickly outpace us. We must prepare ourselves, especially ideologically. Movements that can only repeat old dogma will be unable to adapt to the realities of the current era. It is imperative that we do everything in our power to burst onto the international scene. Our voice must be heard.

Already we have produced materials in English, Tagalog, Polish, Macedonian, Greek, Czech, French, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, and Chinese. We have comrades across the world. Maoist-Third Worldist organizations are beginning to exist in many countries. We must build on this work.

We must take the global people's war to a higher level in the coming years. The sparks that we are beginning to see now will set the world ablaze. Capitalism-imperialism will be burned to ashes. Our day will dawn.

We call on revolutionaries everywhere to plug into the Global People's War. The proletariat cries out for Global People's War organizations to burst onto the scene. As Marx taught, it is not enough to interpret the world, the point is to change it.

We call on those who are beginning to see the our truth to join us — it is your truth too. Take up our banner — it is your banner too. The proletariat cannot afford fence sitting and ideological cowardice. The past mistakes of fence sitters can be rectified.

We call on revolutionaries to take up the revolutionary science of Maoism-Third Worldism, the fourth stage of Marxism. The proletariat cries out for leadership. Those that can must lead.

We call on those can do translation work to translate our materials into as many languages as possible. We must reach as many as possible.

(<http://monkeysmaashesheaven.wordpress.com/2010/05/15/what-about-the-rim/>)

poverty pimp—or would, if she had only demonstrated the existence of poverty among the so-called “working poor” in Amerikkka.

In this thin book of 221 pages, Ehrenreich presents herself “as a scientist” (p. 3), with a PhD in biology that she mentions no fewer than three times. It is perhaps a sad comment on the state of Amerikkkan education that someone with her “scientific” credentials cannot design or perform a proper experiment. Indeed, there was no “experiment” at all, for the outcome was predetermined: Ehrenreich was hellbent on failing to make ends meet. After all, a book proving that it is perfectly possible to live on \$7 an hour in the united \$nakes, as millions of people do, would never have made its way to the New York Times best-seller list.

Nonetheless, let us examine Ehrenreich’s project. First, here are the “rules and parameters” that she established “[i]n the spirit of science” (p. 4):

*“Rule one, obviously enough, was that I could not, in my search for jobs, fall back on any skills derived from my education or usual work—not that there were a lot of want ads for essayists anyway. Two, I had to take the highest-paying job that was offered to me and do my best to hold it; no Marxist rants or sneaking off to read novels in the ladies’ room. Three, I had to take the cheapest accommodations I could find, at least the cheapest that offered an acceptable level of safety and privacy, though my standards in this regard were hazy and, as it turned out, prone to deterioration over time.”* (p. 4)

Immediately after describing these rules for her “experiment,” Ehrenreich admits that she broke every one of them.

Over a period of about a year, Ehrenreich made a one-month foray into the world of “low-wage” labor in each of three parts of the united \$nakes: Key West, Florida; Portland, Maine; and the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul)

metropolitan area in Minnesota. She gave herself \$1300 in start-up funds and a car to use. All other expenses had to be covered from her earnings.

In her home town of Key West, Florida, a remote resort area, she starts by renting a studio apartment for \$500 a month and getting a job as a waitress that supposedly pays not much more than the minimum wage when tips are included. Quitting without notice, she gets a better job at a restaurant that pays about \$7.50 an hour—and promptly moves up to a more conveniently located trailer that costs \$625 a month plus utilities. She walks off this job without a word in the middle of a particularly hectic, even chaotic, day. She also has a one-day stint in housekeeping at a hotel.

In Maine, she goes looking for housing at Old Orchard Beach, a resort area, and ends up renting a hotel room for \$120 a week. She takes a weekend job paying \$7.00 an hour at a nursing home and a job with a maid service that pays \$6.65 an hour, which is quickly raised to \$6.75. She calls in sick on her last day at the nursing home, and she simply abandons the maid service, sticking a co-worker with the responsibility of returning her uniforms and explaining her departure.

In Minnesota, where she arrives in the middle of a housing crunch, she ends up once again staying in motels—first a dump that charges \$255 a week, then a good place that costs \$50 a night. She quickly finds two retail jobs: one at a hardware store that would pay either \$8.50 or \$10.00 an hour (with three hours of overtime every day, which would have been paid at time and a half), the other at Wal-Mart for \$7.00 an hour. She accepts both but calls in to dump the better-paying job just hours before she is supposed to start work. A program for “poor” people suggests that she go into a shelter long enough to save up the money she’d need to get into an apartment (probably less than two months). Although colleagues at Wal-Mart call

her “management material” and hint that a raise is likely, she considers the project a failure because she cannot find a cheap apartment that does not require a lease. Again, she quits without notice.

“Scientist” Ehrenreich does not present a breakdown of her income and expenses, which would allow readers to decide for themselves whether she could have survived on what she earned. (More on this below.) She does, however, provide an evaluation of her results. In all three locations, by her own admission, she could have made a go of it. Florida was the most precarious location; Maine (which she “chose ... for its whiteness”—p. 51), the most promising.

### **Petty Bourgeois Attitudes and Whites Chauvinism**

Despite her amusing and engaging writing style, Ehrenreich comes across as a big-time whiner. For a daughter of a former copper miner, she seems to have led an awfully sheltered existence. She is contemptuous of the very work that she was hired to do and seems to think that no one should have to do it. Cleaning houses and hotel rooms involves scrubbing fecal stains out of toilet bowls and removing pubic hairs from bathtubs. Waiting tables in a restaurant brings one into contact with dirty plates and smelly garbage. Demented residents in a nursing home can smell of excrement and do not make the most stimulating conversation. Why, she seems to wonder from her ivory tower, can’t everyone have a pleasant desk job like mine? Much work is not especially enjoyable in its own right but still has to be done—and Amerikkkans already do far too little of it. (Note that not a single job that Ehrenreich held is in the productive sector. Imagine the bitching and moaning if she had been chained to a sewing machine or sent out to transplant rice seedlings!)

Ehrenreich constantly refers to people by presumed ethnic or “racial” category. This reviewer filled a page listing these epithets—and only

the gratuitous ones, not those that were actually relevant to the account. On one occasion (p. 167), she describes someone as “Asian American or possibly Hispanic.” What could possibly be the point of making a characterization that is so vague? Ehrenreich would never admit this, but she is a white chauvinist.

Indeed, it appears that Ehrenreich labels all the non-white people, without exception. Only three times does she state explicitly that someone was white—and one of those was the husband of a Black woman. Apparently Ehrenreich found the marriage of a Black person and a white person exceptional enough to require comment even though it was not germane to her account. Frequently, however, she implies whiteness by speaking of hair color or other features. A white person might be called “blond,” but a Black person is never called “black-haired” or “brunet”, only “African American.” Again, Ehrenreich takes whiteness as the default and only points out deviations from this “racial” ideal.

Quoting Marx and Mao, Ehrenreich seems to fancy herself a “Marxist.” On page 2, however, she even derides the “dozens, perhaps hundreds, of sixties radicals” in the uS who took on blue-collar factory work to “proletarianize” themselves. (Wow, perhaps as many as a few hundred radicals in the entire united \$nakes!) “Not this girl,” she says. “I felt sorry for the parents who had paid college tuition for these blue-collar wannabes and sorry, too, for the people they intended to uplift.” Well, there were no more proletarians to mobilize by the end of the sixties, so this reviewer has to agree somewhat with the second half of her comment. But that doesn’t mean that working in a factory was completely without merit. And rest assured that that college tuition did not go to waste: those sixties radicals are now retiring from very cushy white-collar jobs, and their leftist rhetoric is little more than a distant memory.

### Explaining her “failure”

How is it that Ehrenreich barely made ends meet in some places and failed altogether in others?

First, her expenses were excessive. She was clearly living beyond her means. Although she does not provide a detailed accounting, she says enough to enable us to conclude this.

Housing was always her biggest problem, consuming an inordinate portion of her income. Indeed, housing is typically the largest expense for an Amerikkkan household. But she did not have to pay so much for housing. Since she intended to stay only one month in each location, she accepted only short-term housing that didn’t require a lease. Of course she had trouble finding anything inexpensive and frequently found herself staying at hotels. But her situation was unrealistic. How many people near the bottom of the Amerikkkan wage scale casually flit from Florida to Maine one month and to Minnesota the next? Could she not have stayed put in one location for a year or so? Then she could have signed a one-year lease on an apartment rather than insisting on expensive short-term accommodations.

She also insisted on living by herself. Why did she not look for roommates? Most of her colleagues at the restaurant where she worked in Florida live with at least one other person. Again, this would have been difficult to arrange for a period of less than a month. If Ehrenreich had put down roots in any of the places where she stayed, she could have found a decent apartment with roommates and spent far less of her income on rent. Living alone is a luxury, not a necessity.

She frequently talks about her food. Most of it comes from restaurants. Typically these are fast-food chains such as Wendy’s (“where I often buy lunch”—p. 165), McDonald’s, Pizza Hut, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Sbarro (“every day ... lunch at Wendy’s, dinner at Sbarro”—p. 175), but she also dips into

a diner for a glass of iced tea, contemplates a Chinese buffet (which she ridicules as a warren of “large Mexican families” and fat-assed “Minnesota Anglos”—p. 159), and spends “\$11.95 plus tip” on a hamburger and a glass of wine at a bar (p. 61). It’s not surprising that she burns through a lot of money that way. One of her co-workers even brings her a sandwich one day, much to Ehrenreich’s embarrassment, because it is obvious that Ehrenreich is wasting her money on hotels and her “high-sodium fast-food diet” (p. 187).

Sometimes she justifies her recourse to restaurants on the grounds that some of the places where she lives have no cooking facilities. Again, this would not be a problem if she stayed in one place long enough to get a proper apartment. But why does she buy salads to go (p. 69) when she does have a kitchen? Wouldn’t it be cheaper to buy vegetables and chop them up oneself? Repeatedly she moans about the limited cooking equipment in her accommodations, as if \$500 a month should buy her Windsor Castle. She rejects the idea of cooking up big lentil stews “because I don’t have a large cooking pot, potholders, or a ladle to stir with ... , not to mention onions, carrots, and the indispensable bay leaf” (p. 28), so instead she frequents fast-food restaurants. This is so ridiculous that it hardly requires comment. A used pot and ladle can be had for a couple of dollars at a charity shop or a garage sale, and onions and carrots are very cheap. Cut the goddam whining and get real.

When she does make her own meals, she usually resorts to expensive processed food, such as “frozen chicken patties” (p. 28), a “Pure Protein sports bar” (p. 97), and “Wheat Thins and Monterey Jack” (crackers and cheese—p. 21). These items often come from convenience stores, which are more expensive than the grocery stores that most people use. Wine, beer, and cigarettes also figure prominently on her shopping

list. She even uses marijuana at one point and then bitches about the \$30 cost of detox supplies to help her pass a drug test for employment purposes.

Her co-workers are not exactly paragons of thrift either. Most of them smoke like chimneys. One “undernourished child” (p. 98) goes to a convenience store for Coca-Cola; others eat nothing but Doritos chips or expensive Pepperidge Farm crackers for their lunch. A waitress feels put out when a new rule ends her “habit” of enjoying “a couple of Zins” (glasses of Zinfandel wine) at the hotel’s bar after work (p. 40). Ehrenreich even indirectly criticizes the people she met for “indulgences” such as “expenditures on ‘carousing’” (p. 196), which involves beer and marijuana (p. 36). She considers herself free of “indulgences” and cannot “see any expenses to cut” (p. 28). Too bad she didn’t consult me.

For that matter, why didn’t she listen to the consultant she had? Through a friend, she met a woman in Minneapolis who had once moved from New York City to small-town Florida without knowing anyone there, in search of lower rent. Arriving by bus, the woman found a church, which offered groceries and other assistance, and then found a job cleaning hotel rooms for \$300 a week. She managed to raise her two children on that income in an apartment that cost \$325 a month, whereas Ehrenreich, making a similar amount by working fewer hours, claimed to be unable to support herself. Ehrenreich kept calling this woman for help with finding a place to live in Minneapolis (and turned down an offer to take her in), but she failed to accept the woman’s advice: “Always find a church” (p. 132). Ehrenreich is, correctly, an atheist and does not hide her proper contempt for KKKChristianity. But churches happen to dispense a lot of aid to the so-called poor in Amerikkka, and Ehrenreich could have swallowed her pride and tried this avenue rather than paying

\$50 a night for a motel room for her entire month in Minneapolis.

Ehrenreich wasted money in other ways. She appeared to use laundromats every day, at least while working as a waitress. At one point she ran a pair of trousers through the washing machine three times in a row, at a cost of \$5.04, just to remove an ink stain (p. 147). She had a telephone wherever she lived, even if it cost extra. She insisted on having a car, for the silly reason that “I just figured that a story about waiting for buses would not be very interesting to read” (p. 5). Although the car was paid for with other funds, its operating expenses— notably gasoline—came out of her income. Using public transportation would have been less convenient but probably cheaper.

The fact is that “millions of Ameri[kkk]ans do [what she did] every day” (p. 6), and, I might add, with a lot more aplomb. Her expenses were unreasonably and unnecessarily high. They reflect petty-bourgeois aspirations and a very Amerikkkan sense of entitlement. In one rant asserting that a “living wage” for an Amerikkkan household consisting of one adult and two children would be around \$30,000 a year (or \$14 an hour), Ehrenreich whines that this grossly inflated figure “does not include restaurant meals, video rentals, Internet access, wine and liquor, cigarettes and lottery tickets, or even very much meat” (p. 213). Why stop there, Ehrenreich? Why not demand SUVs, marijuana, boats, country-club memberships, vacation homes? What exactly must the labor aristocrats of the united \$nakes have before you’ll be satisfied?

Ehrenreich sabotaged the project on the income front as well. She turned down the very highest-paying job offered her. She disdainfully rejected whole categories of work for capricious reasons. Never once did she visit a temporary employment agency or even the states’ job centers, where higher “wages” probably would not have

been difficult to find. She even admits that better jobs than hers are readily available and wonders why her colleagues don’t exhibit the initiative to go for higher pay.

Ehrenreich is oblivious to the basic fact that everything that is consumed has to be produced. She wouldn’t know parasitism if it bit her on the ass. She gloats of her husband’s “escaping” (p. 2) manual labor (in a warehouse—marginally in the productive sector) to become an organizer for the Teamsters (an Amerikkkan trade union) and of her father’s “pull[ing] himself, and us with him, up from the mile-deep copper mines of Butte [Montana] to the leafy suburbs of the Northeast” (p. 18). She avers that “to me, sitting at a desk all day was not only a privilege but a duty” (p. 2), apparently unaware that this “duty” of hers is known as parasitism.

Ehrenreich is even out of touch with the Amerikkkan “working” class, never mind the Third World proletariat. While working on a crew of house cleaners, she seems surprised at the lack of class resentment among her colleagues when their job takes them to the houses of the super-rich. One twenty-four-year-old who owes \$8000 on her credit cards explains: “All I can think is like, wow, I’d like to have this stuff someday. It motivates me and I don’t feel the slightest resentment because, you know, it’s my goal to get to where they are.” (p. 118) Despite the economic disparity between herself and the millionaires using her services, this woman realizes, at some level, that she and they are in the same class—the global bourgeoisie. Her goal to become super-rich herself is entirely feasible in imperialist Amerikkka.

The truth is that these fast-food-eating, Zinfandel-drinking, pot-smoking, car-driving Amerikkkan “workers” are all labor aristocrats. To be sure, fucked-up Amerikkkan society creates difficulties for some people near the bottom, such as a

# ON SECTARIANISM

(MSH)

*“Dear Maoist-Third Worldist,  
Your web page is sectarian. You criticize so many other groups. How can we take you seriously?”*

Thank you for your question.

Most liberals consider criticism of other groups to be the definition of sectarianism. These liberals favor unity at all costs. Liberals of this type think that just because a group waves a red flag that it is on the side of

the oppressed. In the end, these liberals end up disarming the proletariat and oppressed by advocating unity with reformist, bourgeois trends.

This is, of course, not how Marxists understand sectarianism. Marx was engaged in non-stop criticisms of other trends that claimed to be socialist. The last part of the Communist Manifesto, for example, is a catalogue of all the fakes of his day. Lenin, like Marx, polemicized with all the major parties of the Second International when

## ***Nickel and Dimed cont***

shortage of low-end housing in some places (often the result of gentrification), an inegalitarian distribution of health care, and limited public transportation. These problems, however, are incidental to the fact that Amerikkkan “workers” are not exploited at all but in fact benefit from imperialism. That is why a labor aristocrat working at Wal-Mart for \$7 an hour can afford (with or without his employee discount) underpriced clothing made by Third World proletarians paid \$0.50 an hour on average.

### **The Real Proletarian**

Without leaving her comfortable house in u\$-occupied Florida, for which she gets a mortgage-interest deduction amounting to “over \$20,000 a year” (p. 201), Ehrenreich could have learned a correct class analysis just by reading some Maoist-Third Worldist Web literature such as this one. Then she wouldn’t have needed to undertake her self-indulgent project at all, because she would have known that First World “workers” live at the expense of the Third World.

In fact, she knows that anyway, at a certain level. She reports that the clothing sold at Wal-Mart is made in “Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Brazil” (p. 179), or by twelve-year-old children toiling in sweatshops in Honduras (p. 185). Lamenting the corporate sameness that has turned Amerikkka into one great big pallid plastic white monolith of chain stores and fast-food restaurants, she says that “none of

these places is ‘exotic’ anymore, that they’ve all been eaten by the great blind profit-making global machine” (p. 179). That machine has a name: imperialism. But Ehrenreich doesn’t actually say that those Third World workers making garments in sweatshops for export to the united \$nakes are worse off than the u\$ “working class.” Rather, her comment about “the great blind profit-making global machine” seems to imply that Amerikkkan labor aristocrats and Third World proletarians are in the same boat.

A few pages later, that implication is made explicit. “[Y]ou’d need a lot stronger word than dysfunctional to describe a family where a few people get to eat at the table while the rest—the ‘associates’ [Wal-Mart’s sales staff] and all the dark-skinned seamstresses and factory workers worldwide who make the things we sell—lick up the drippings from the floor: psychotic would be closer to the mark” (p. 185). Yes, u\$ imperialism is certainly psychotic. But those Wal-Mart “associates” and all other Amerikkkans do eat at the table: they dine sumptuously on the very flesh and blood of those dark-skinned proletarians who do the lion’s share of the productive work. Ehrenreich is quite wrong to lump \$7-an-hour Amerikkkans into a “class” with \$0.50-an-hour Brazilians and Filipinos. First World labor aristocrats are part of the global bourgeoisie: in forms such as high wages (\$7 an hour puts one into the top 13% globally) and artificially low-priced imports, they receive superprofits derived from the

superexploitation of the Third World masses.

The international proletariat proposes the following writing project to Ehrenreich: Take your 67-year-old Amerikkkan ass to the Third World and tell us about your experience living on \$0.50 an hour from your job at a maquiladora, plantation, or sweatshop producing goods for the u\$ market. See how much fast food, wine, dope, and gasoline you’ll get to consume on those wages. Fortunately for you, this project is impossible, for such reasons as language, nation, and citizenship. But you can try investigative journalism of a different variety. Find out where all those goodies at Wal-Mart—or your favorite upscale boutique—are made. Hire guides and interpreters to help you interview the superexploited Third World workers who produce them. Take a leaf from Comrade Mao’s book and compile some real data on income, expenses, working hours, housing conditions, food intake, health, longevity, etc. Then see whether your “scientific” brain can discern a connection between Third World wages and First World wages, between Third World misery and First World luxury, between Third World starvation and First World obesity, between Third World oppression and First World “freedom.”

(<http://monkeysmaashesheaven.wordpress.com/2008/08/23/book-review-nickel-and-dimed-on-not-getting-by-in-america-by-barbara-ehrenreich/>)

# MISS AMERIKA?

The world's exploited majority  
will absolutely not.



## *Sectarianism cont*

the groups of the Second International turned social imperialist. In the Czarist empire, this meant that the Bolsheviks ended up splitting from the Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks set themselves against almost every party in the world calling itself Marxist at that time. Similarly, Stalin purged the Trotskyists, who had become social imperialists. And, Mao broke with the majority of those calling themselves communist when he broke with the Soviet Union's social imperialism. Those who call us sectarian are the same liberals who once said the same of all the great leaders of the proletariat. Marxists do not seek unity at all costs. Rather, Marxists put politics in command. This means that Marxists unite on the basis of political line, not on the basis of vague feelings of commonality.

“Sectarianism,” as used by Marxists, means the putting of one's organization above the interest of the proletariat and oppressed. Once one understands the Marxist use of the term, one can see why Mao called sectarianism and opportunism two sides of the same coin. This is because to be “sectarian” or “opportunist” is to prioritize one's own interests over the interests of the proletariat. The Maoist-Third Worldist movement is the furthest thing from being sectarian. If we were to put

ourselves ahead of the proletariat, we would pipe down and keep our criticisms of the fakes to ourselves. We would tone down our message in order to seek recruits. Movements like ours are the opposite of sectarian because we seek to win people to us on the basis of political line. We are very unpopular in the First world because we are so unsectarian. In fact, the real sectarians are those organizations that refuse to state their differences with other organizations. Those organizations that paper over differences are sectarian because they are doing a disservice to the proletariat in order to win popularity and recruits. After all, if the proletariat is to make revolution, then the proletariat should be presented with the clear differences between organizations. Those who refuse to tell the proletariat the truth are the real sectarians.

Just like with everything, the First Worldists have everything backward. For the First Worldist black is white, white is black. They call First World exploiters a “proletariat.” And, they call Maoist-Third Worldists “sectarian.” When critics raise the bogey of sectarianism against us, it is really just the old liberal attack on Marxism rearing its ugly head.

(<http://monkeysmaashesheaven.wordpress.com/2009/08/18/on-sectarianism/>)

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