

*Bob Maier*

**Imperialism: political,  
economic, & social consequences**

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When one tries to analyze the political, economic and social consequences of racism and the inevitable response—REVOLUTION, one needs to discuss imperialism (or neo-colonialism). To understand why the peoples of Asia, Africa and South America are attempting to free themselves from the imperialistic countries, the United States and Western Europe, one should try to understand some of the basic relationships between an industrial “developed” country and a mining or agrarian “underdeveloped” country. That most of the “developed” countries are white and most of the “underdeveloped” countries are non-white is no accident. Imperialism and racism are complementary and reinforce each other in today’s world.

Colonial, semi-colonial and neo-colonial countries are handicapped by deep, widespread poverty, economic backwardness and archaic institutions. These weaknesses tend to tie them to the very imperialism from which they strive to be politically and economically independent. The countries that are at this low level of economic development, whether one gauges economic development by the absolute size of industrial output, productivity per man employed, or by production per capita, comprise nearly all of South America, Asia and Africa.

Western Europe’s and America’s great industrial leap forward and continued growth need not have prevented nor continue to prevent the economic growth in these underdeveloped countries. In fact, through beneficial contact with the technologically and scientifically leading West European countries, these underdeveloped countries might have become economically independent too.

But by the very nature of capitalism that developed in Western Europe and in the United States, the developed countries depended on the exploitation of the undeveloped in order for capitalism to function. The exploitation of these countries took the form of a systematic transfer of labor from the poor country to the industrialized rich country. This transfer of labor and the subsequent social institutions by which this transfer took place, had a devastating effect on these areas. It violently jolted their entire development and drastically altered its course. By breaking up the age-old patterns of their agrarian economy, and by forcing shifts to the production of exportable crops, western capitalism destroyed the self-sufficiency of the underdeveloped country—that is, its rural society. By the seizure of peasant lands for plantation purposes, and by the elimination of local handicrafts through the unbeatable competition of the industrial nation’s products, a vast reserve of poor laborers was created.

The foreign administration systematically destroyed all the foundations of the ancient culture and nothing positive was established in its place. What were set up were legal and property relations related to a market economy and the administrative institutions to enforce these new laws. What this means was that a way of life that once functioned tolerably well, although it was primarily agrarian,

was replaced by parasitic landlords, loan sharks, petty businessmen, speculators, and slums of diseased and starved millions. In other words new classes, tied to the imperialist's rule and system, were created.

Historically, monopoly capitalism and imperialism made it impossible for underdeveloped countries to follow the traditional path of capitalist development. The large monopolistic capitalists of leading capitalist countries sought to eliminate competition. Since investment in development of a country might lead to potential competition, these large monopoly capitalists lost interest in developmental investment. Therefore investment went into exploitation of natural resources to be used as raw materials in the industrially advanced countries. Consequently these underdeveloped countries' economies became one-sided, raw material and food exporting economies.

With its limited demand for manufactured goods supplied amply and cheaply abroad there was no opportunity for profitable investment in a "native" industry that would cater to a domestic market. Most of the equipment the factory needed was bought in the imperialist's country and not in the underdeveloped country. This resulted in an expansion of the advanced country's internal market. This lack of developmental investment resulted in a self-perpetuating lack of investment and continued backwardness. By establishing a "home" industry in the underdeveloped area the capitalist established a monopoly and hindered industrial expansion.

The "beneficial" side effects of imperialism are many and significant in a negative fashion for the underdeveloped country. The internal improvements in the underdeveloped country invariably seem to "accidentally" benefit the imperialist country, e.g., railroads, harbors, roads, and canals. The building of highways, railroads, and power plants does not necessarily benefit the underdeveloped country. If domestic enterprise or the population in general cannot take advantage of this, then it obviously doesn't benefit the people. One important point to remember is that the foreign corporation is the one that chooses what extra facility will be built and where. The underdeveloped country not only suffers a loss due to profits being drained out of the country but also from a forced unfavorable balance of trade. Furthermore the foreign use of natural resources depletes a potential that the underdeveloped country could use if it were left to develop on its own. The one-crop economy utilizes land that could be used for more varied crops and consequently causes real hardships for the local farmers in many countries.

The problem is not that a country specializes in one or two crops (it may be in its best interest), but that the capitalist countries net huge profits and the majority of the population of the underdeveloped country is at a subsistence level.

The incomes of the members of the population who work for the imperialist are very small. If one discounts the amount paid to the overseas managers, goods

bought at the “company store,” and the housing furnished by the company, the total is minute. Nutritionally, the underdeveloped country’s workers are frequently worse off after the imperialist country’s intervention. Although bulkier food is eaten because the employer wants a more productive worker, the diet is often deficient nutritionally. Educationally, the workers are taught such “crucial” items as free enterprise economics, the history of the benevolent imperialist, and non-violence via Christianity.

The nature of this set-up gives rise to a very small group of local wealthy opportunists who have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. This group uses whatever type of government (monarchy, dictatorship, fascism) that will keep it in power to repress the masses. The U.S. supports these governments that suppress all popular movements for social and national liberation, which allows the stifling of economic and social development and therefore continued exploitation. As a result, the U.S. often supports and preserves archaic social and political forms. These feudal habits remain as a heritage of imperialism even after the imperialist has been ousted. Another result of this is that the top leaders of the underdeveloped countries spend money extremely wastefully on their own pleasures. Of course, a lot has to be spent to keep the military and inner police force of these dictators.

It is true that with non-imperialist industrialization there may be some suffering by the people in the underdeveloped country at first. But with real industrialization comes the foundation for a society of well-being. However, if all the surplus leaves the country to go to a country already industrialized and wealthy, and little or none is left to the underdeveloped country, the wealthy become richer and the poor at best stay poor. The results would surely be different if the underdeveloped country were left resources for its own benefit, to harness energy and abilities for the advancement of its own society. Instead, the rich imperialists, with all their brilliant technology and machine industry, not only do not help these countries to develop but support everything backward, medieval and totalitarian. They try to prevent social revolutions whenever possible and to obstruct progress wherever such revolutions have taken place.

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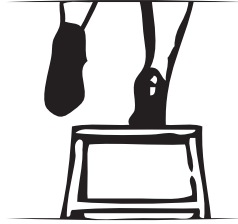
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